

# **Ignite!** Learning<sup>TM</sup>

*Transforming Classroom Curriculum*

**Research Project - Research Report 2003-04 & 2004-2005**

**Brahler Study of Texas Education Agency  
Social Studies Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Data**

RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY: DR. C .JAYNE BRAHLER

REPORT SUMMARY AND GRAPHICS : AL GAVITO, MA  
HOUSTON CENTRAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

**Texas Education Agency (TEA) Data:** This study utilized a sample of social studies students across the state of Texas. Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) social studies percent met standard and percent of students who scored at the commended performance level are reported. Additionally, teachers rating of Ignite! Learning modules effectiveness in enhancing student learning, increasing student engagement and preparing students to take the state criterion-referenced test are presented. Teachers were also asked open-ended questions regarding Ignite! Learning materials impact on student leaning and engagement as well as learning of Early American History.

**Texas Education Agency Social Studies Department:** The study of social studies is a process that develops from kindergarten through high school. This process helps students understand their place in the world and their role as responsible citizens. Social studies education enables students to develop critical-thinking skills, to prepare to participate productively in society, and to expand their horizons to include people and places far removed from their daily lives. The establishment of social studies as a graduation requirement in Texas's assessment program attests to its importance and will further encourage students' intellectual and civic growth.

## **Ignite! Learning Pilot Project Findings**

Researcher: Dr. C. Jayne Brahler

**Study Description:** Dr. C. Jayne Brahler partnered with Ignite! Learning to review statewide Early American History criterion-referenced test scores for a sample of students tested in 2003-04 and in 2004-05. Dr. Brahler analyzed the performance of students in seven Texas school districts who met standard and the percentage of students who scored in the commended performance level. The study also included teacher rating of their perceived effectiveness of Ignite! Learning modules and open-ended responses to questions regarding Ignite! materials.

### **The purpose of this study was to:**

1. Determine if middle-school students who use Ignite! Early American History (EAH) materials demonstrate significantly different gains in their knowledge of American History compared to matched control students who do not use the Ignite! materials.

The average percentage of students who scored at the "Commended Performance" level for Social Studies was 22.05% at the Ignite! schools compared to only 17.00% achieved by their respective campus comparison group. This difference was statistically significant ( $p = 0.014$ ).

2. Seek information concerning the teaching habits and perceived effectiveness of the Ignite! EAH materials form teachers who use them.

In reporting their overall satisfaction with the Ignite! EAH materials, eight teachers indicated that they were "very satisfied," five said they were "satisfied," and one gave a rating of "dissatisfied." The 1 teacher who reported being dissatisfied with the Ignite! Early American History materials also indicated her/his use of each unit was "none" and the number of computers available to her/his students was "zero".

### **District Pilot Project Profile**

- 7 Districts/ 20 schools in the state using Ignite! program
- 8th grade students
- A sample of students tested with the social studies TAKS test:  
2003-04 = 288,257 students  
2004-05 = 254,927 students
- 14 teachers reported using EAH an average of 5.43 times per month
- Teachers (14) indicated that EAH sessions lasted an average of 16.43 minutes

### **Ignite! Learning Instructional Principals**

- Covering the knowledge skills required by state academic standards
- Ensuring that students learn required materials within an integrated context
- Helping students understand the relevance of the material to their daily lives
- Provision of multiple assessment instruments of the material to demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge
- Pairing print and media to address all learning styles

### **Research Instruments**

- Criterion-referenced test: Percent Met Standard & Percent Commended Performance Level
- Teacher Survey– Likert Scale

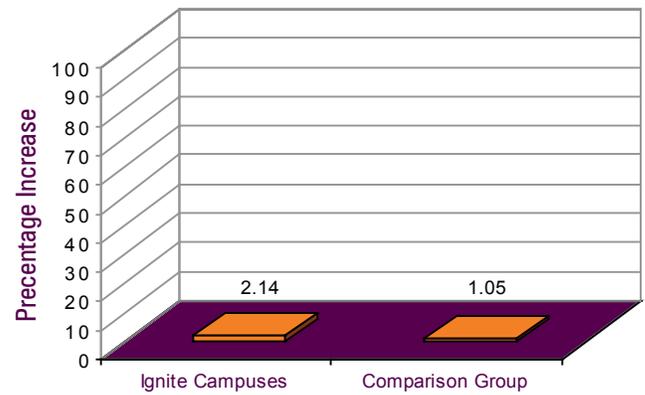
### **Research Time Frame**

- 2002-03 and 2003-04
- 2003-04 and 2004-05

**Research Question 1:** What was the average increase in percentage of eighth grade students across the state who scored at the Met Standard level for Social Studies from 2003-04 to the 2004-05 school year?

The average increase in the percentage of students scoring at the “Met Standard” level in Social Studies from the 2004 TAKS to the 2005 TAKS was more than double for the Ignite! schools (2.14%) compared to their respective campus comparison groups (1.05%).

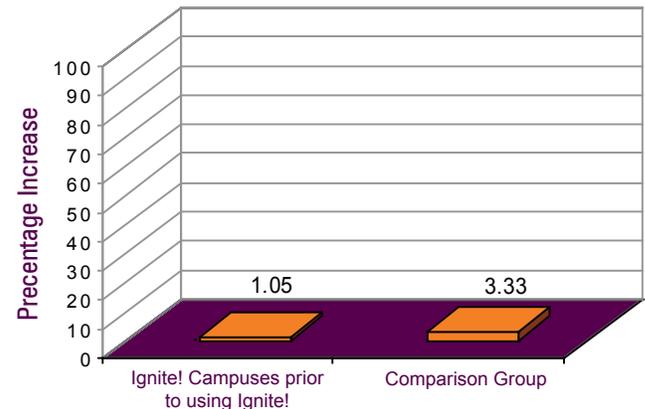
Average Increase in Percentage of Eight Grade Students Scoring at the Met Standard Level for Social Studies 2003-04 to 2004-05



**Research Question 2:** What was the average increase in percentage of eighth grade students across the state who scored at the Met Standard level for Social Studies from 2002-03 to the 2003-04 school year?

Results are especially remarkable when one considers that in the year prior to using Ignite!, these same campuses showed an average increase in the percent of eighth grade students who met standard for TAKS in Social Studies from the 2003 TAKS to the 2004 TAKS that was only one-third that shown by their respective campus comparison groups (1.05% and 3.33%), respectively.

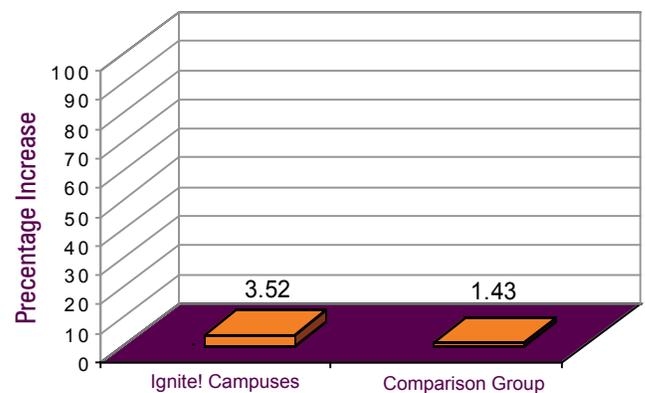
Average Increase in Percentage of Eight Grade Students Scoring at the Met Standard Level for Social Studies 2002-03 to 2003-04



**Research Question 3:** What was the average increase in the percentage of students scoring at the “Commended Performance” level in Social Studies from the 2003-04 to the 2004-05?

The average increase in the percentage of students scoring at the “Commended Performance” level in Social Studies was also more than double for the Ignite! schools (3.52%) compared to their respective campus comparison groups (1.43%).

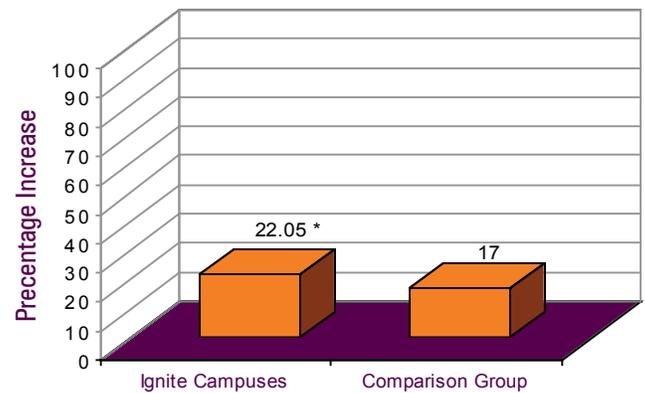
Average Increase in Percentage of Eight Grade Students Who Scored at the Commended Performance Level for Social Studies 2003-04 to 2004-05



**Research Question 4:** Is there significant difference between the average percentage of students who scored at the “Commended Performance” level for Social Studies in the 2004-05 school year between the treatment and control group?

The average percentage of students who scored at the “Commended Performance” level for Social Studies was 22.05% at the Ignite! schools compared to only 17.00% achieved by their respective campus comparison group. This difference was statistically significant ( $p = 0.014$ ).

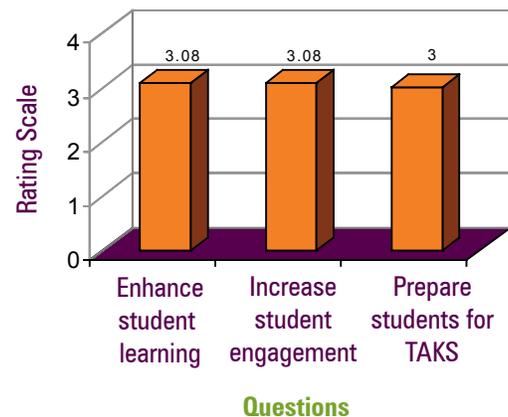
Average Increase in Percentage of Eight Grade Students Who Scored at the Commended Performance Level in Social Studies 2004-05



**Research Question 5:** What effectiveness rating did Ignite! teachers give the EAH modules?

Teachers reported that the Ignite! EAH materials were effective in facilitating student learning. Using a scale of 1-4 (4 Very effective; 3 Effective; 2 Mostly ineffective; 1 Not at all effective), survey respondents provided their opinions on the effectiveness of the Ignite! materials to enhance student learning (mean score 3.08), to increase student engagement and interest in the content (mean score 3.08), and to prepare students for the TAKS (mean score 3.00).

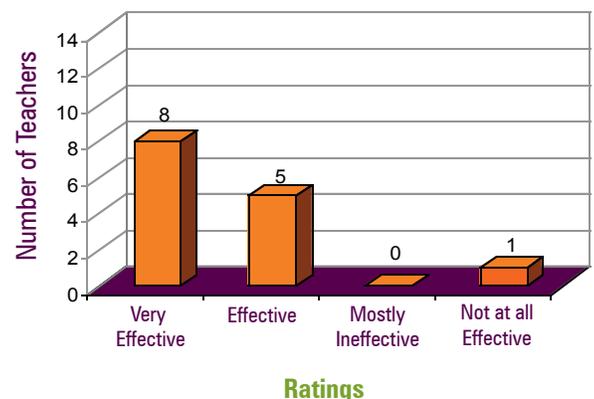
Teacher Rating of the Effectiveness of Ignite! Learning Modules



**Research Question 6:** What rating did the 14 EAH Ignite! teacher’s give the EAH materials?

In reporting their overall satisfaction with the Ignite! EAH materials, eight teachers indicated that they were “very satisfied,” five said they were “satisfied,” and one gave a rating of “dissatisfied.” The 1 teacher who reported being dissatisfied with the Ignite! Early American History materials also indicated her/his use of each unit was “none” and the number of computers available to her/his students was “zero”.

Teachers Overall Satisfaction With Ignite! Early American History Materials



## Teacher Open-ended Responses:

### Research Question 7: How did Ignite! enhance student learning?

- “It was very helpful in offering information meeting the 7 intelligences.”
  - “It enhances student learning because the student remembers the jingles. Even today when we were reviewing I sang the Henry David Thoreau song, someone else sang manifest destiny, etc.”
  - “The students enjoy reading, discussing, viewing, and singing along with the media. They remember information because of the repetition.”
  - “They relate to it so easily. It makes learning a more interesting experience for them.”
  - “It was student centered... students took control of their learning.”
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### Research Question 8: How did Ignite! help prepare the students for TAKS?

- “Students would get the information in a different way.”
  - “Gave them another means of studying for the TAKS----97% passed in our school!!!”
  - “It was an integral part of my lesson plans. I believe it helped my students grasp certain aspects of history that may have otherwise eluded them.”
  - “It was easier for the students to comprehend early American history.”
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### Research Question 9: What did your students think about Ignite! Early American History?

- “LOVED IT! They would walk in the room and ask if we were going to the computer lab. I did all my after-school tutoring in the computer lab.”
  - “It was exciting and fun. These were some of the reactions that I got from most of the students. The music and graphics were always commented upon by the students.”
  - “They enjoyed it, although I was not always favorably impressed with their level of recall.”
  - “They enjoyed it but only for about 30 min. a session.”
  - “They loved it! Some were singing the songs on the program, while others remembered the games and activities.”
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## Summary

Ignite! Early American History (EAH) materials are having favorable effects on student learning of social studies. Two distinctly different forms of evidence support this statement. Namely, student achievement was enhanced after using the Ignite! EAH materials and campuses that used the Ignite! EAH materials outperformed their respective campus control groups. Although not always reaching statistical significance, all trends in the current data indicate that student achievement was enhanced by using the Ignite! EAH materials. Although only campus-level data were available, all of the findings in the current study indicate that Ignite! EAH materials enhanced student achievement.