

COMPARING TWO COMPREHENSIVE REFORM MODELS:
THEIR EFFECT ON STUDENT READING ACHIEVEMENT

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Doctor of Education

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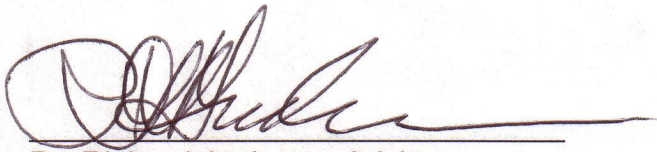
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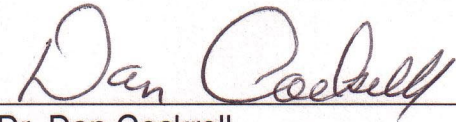
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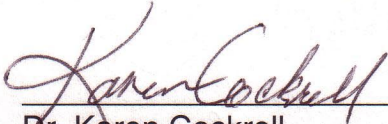
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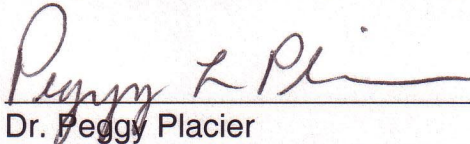
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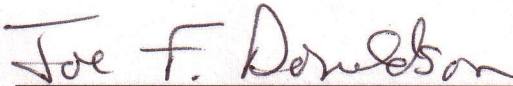
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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study. The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of two different school comprehensive reform models on student reading achievement. The study began by asking the following research question: Is there a difference in student reading performance when two comprehensive school reform models, Success for All and the Accelerated Schools model are compared?

Research Question. Is there a significant difference in student reading performance when two comprehensive school reform models, Success for All and the Accelerated Schools model are compared at 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades?

Procedure. Approximately 400 students in each of grades 3, 4, and 5 from two schools in an urban school district in North St. Louis County participated in the study. The students were nonrandomly assigned and administered the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), pre- and posttest. The data were collected and statistically analyzed using an analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Findings. A significant difference was found between average NCE reading gain scores at grade 3 between the two schools in the study, but no significant differences were found between gender or the interaction between school and gender. No significant differences were found between average NCE reading gain scores for grades 4 and 5 between the two schools. In addition, no significant difference was found for gender, lunch, or the interaction between school

and gender, or the interaction between school and lunch, or the interaction between school, gender, and lunch.

As was the case for 3rd grade, no tests were conducted for ethnicity for the 4th or 5th grade; however, there were sufficient students at the 5th grade to tests for lunch status.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background for the Study

A significant segment of the American population today is at risk. For the first time in history, people must obtain a formal education to stand a good chance of successfully accomplishing adult tasks. Thus, improving the education of high-risk children is one of the most important tasks our nation faces (Comer, 1987). Comer defines high-risk children as those who underachieve in school despite adequate intellectual endowment and, as a result, may under-achieve as adults.

One of the major characteristics of a high-risk student is his or her inability to read. Boehnlein (1987) contends that children who do not learn to read by the end of first grade will fail to achieve in almost all other areas of the school curriculum. Reading failure causes children an immense loss of self-esteem during school years, and their need for additional schooling and remedial service makes them expensive educational liabilities. Boehnlein further indicated that an individual who leaves school as a nonreader continues to be a social liability lacking the basic skills needed for self-support and for making an economic contribution to society.

The consequences of failing to learn to read in the early grades are severe (Slavin, Karweit, & Wasik, 1992/1993). Slavin et al. found that almost all children, regardless of social class or other factors, enter first grade full of enthusiasm, motivation, and self-confidence, fully expecting to succeed in school. By the end of first grade, many of these students have already discovered that their initial high expectations are not coming true, and they have begun to see school as punishing and demeaning. Trying to remediate

reading failure later is very difficult because students who have failed are likely to be unmotivated, with poor self-concepts as learners. They are anxious about reading, and they hate it. Reform is needed at all levels of education, but no goal of reform is as important as seeing that all children start off their school careers with success, confidence, and a firm foundation in reading.

According to Barnett and Escobar (as cited in Slavin et al., 1992/1993), success in the early grades does not guarantee success throughout the school years and beyond, but failure in the early grades does virtually guarantee failure in later schooling. If the negative spiral that begins with early reading failure can be prevented, such prevention must be undertaken. Even very expensive early interventions can be justified on cost-effectiveness grounds alone if these interventions reduce the need for later and continuing remedial and special education services, retentions, and other costs. Given, then, that agreement is growing on the proposition that investments in early intervention are worthwhile, we must turn again to the question of which forms of early intervention demonstrated, are likely to have the greatest impact.

The important task of learning to read and write takes place within a larger context, the sociocultural system that encompasses literate actions. For most children, the process usually goes well, but some experience difficulty. Controversies have arisen as to how to deal with these difficulties; a number of authors seem to agree, however, that the issues are critical for the individual children involved and for society (Pinnell, Lyons, DeFord, Bryk, & Seltzer, 1994). Boyer (1987) concluded that, "If a child is not linguistically empowered in the early years, it is almost impossible to compensate for the failure later on. It's like playing tennis with a broken racquet" (p. 6).

Pinnell et al. (1994) found that both practitioners and researchers have difficulty in sorting through all the research directed at how children learn to read. As a result, disagreement exists as to the most effective approach to reading instruction. Such arguments become increasingly heated when they focus on the education of students traditionally at risk. For these students, instruction is typically most difficult and most critical.

Elkind (1997) indicated the current belief that children should progress uniformly through the grades is causing a major problem in kindergarten and first grade. At the heart of the problem is the belief that, in the postmodern world, the majority of children (about 85%) enter school after having been enrolled in one or another early childhood program. As a consequence, schools have tightened standards and now demand that all children know their letters and numbers before being accepted into the first grade classroom. This demand is based on the modern assumption of a common child nature, that all children of the same age will profit equally from whatever type of early childhood program they have experienced.

Yet, according to Elkind (1997), the truth lies elsewhere. The early childhood years, roughly from age 3 to age 8 are a period of rapid intellectual growth comparable to the period of rapid physical growth of early adolescence. At such a time individual differences in growth rates are most evident. Elkind further states that because of these wide individual differences in growth rate and early childhood experience, children of school age vary tremendously in their readiness for formal instruction. As a consequence in many communities 10% to 20% of the children are being retained or placed in transition classes, and in some school districts the numbers are as high as 50%.

A variety of reasons are offered by “insiders” (administrators and teachers) to explain why the students in their schools or systems do poorly on standardized tests. These reasons lead many educators to conclude that these young people have not learned to read at all or at least they cannot read at grade level. In spite of the billions spent on Head Start, early intervention, at-risk programs, special education, and Title I, many educators do not seem to be gaining on the problem, causing them to feel powerless in the face of such odds. Many schools, however, are overcoming the sometimes overwhelming odds of failure. Administrators and teachers must look at schools and programs where educators are achieving success and learn from them (McEwan, 1998).

Adams, Chall, Goodman and Lie (as cited in Pinnell et al., 1994) found that in recent years our understanding of successful beginning reading instruction has increased considerably. Their research found that many studies have focused on successful practices. Unfortunately, superficial characteristics are sometimes considered in the adaptation of practices; the idea is to move quickly and try everything that works. A collection of practices based on widely differing theoretical assumptions could be adopted and applied to the same children and teachers.

Principals and their teaching staff face a bewildering array of other trends that pose a direct threat to students’ ability to learn to read. For example:

- An increase in the number of young people diagnosed as having a variety of learning disabilities or physical or emotional problems.
- An increase in the number of students from single-parent, no-parent, or dual-income families in which no one may have the time, energy, or inclination to read to children or to provide other important support for learning.

- An increase in the number of high mobility students, whose frequent moves to new schools interrupt their learning and leave them without basic skills.
- An increase in the number of students with limited proficiency in English, as a result of new waves of immigration and higher birthrates among some minority groups.
- An increase in the number of students who suffer from the combined effects of poverty and/or drugs.

As youngsters' out-of-school problems mount, so does their difficulty in staying on track with reading and language development (Carbo, 1997).

The education of disadvantaged students is at a crossroads (Fashola & Slavin, 1998). The academic performance of all students is an important national concern. The success of at-risk students is of particular interest for a number of reasons, including the growing cohort of such students and the increasing level of their disadvantage (Levin, 1987).

Slavin (1996) states that every year, three million children enter our nation's kindergartens. They are remarkable folks. Many of them are bright, confident, hopeful and highly motivated. Everyone is certain that he or she will succeed in school. Only four years later, this same group of children will have experienced the most important years of their school careers. Some students will still be confident, hopeful and highly motivated. However, many will have failed. Slavin goes on to say that in some districts, the majority of students have failed one or more grades by the end of elementary school. Many will be in special education, most often for learning disabilities. These and many other students will be reading far below grade level. When students fail in the early

grades, they begin a cycle of poor self-esteem, poor expectations, poor motivation and further poor performance that all too often leads to despair, delinquency and dropout in the later grades.

Research by Slavin (1996) supports the conclusion that disadvantaged third-graders who have failed a grade or are reading well below grade level are extremely unlikely to ultimately graduate from high school. Waiting for children to fail and only then providing expensive remedial or special education services is futile and foolish. Children who have failed hate school, hate reading, and are anxious and unmotivated. Research and common sense tell us that prevention and early intervention make more sense than remediation and special education (Slavin, 1996).

Much of the current research on school reform suggests that fundamental change in schools occurs when reform is instituted one school at a time (Datnow & Castellano, 2003). While a wide variety of reform programs have demonstrated the capacity to improve academic and other desirable student outcomes in individual schools, few have demonstrated educationally significant effects when implemented on a broad scale (Cooper, 1999).

Slavin (1996) explains that the first goal of reform should be to ensure that every child - regardless of home background, home language, or learning style - achieves the success that he or she so confidently expected in kindergarten, that all children maintain their motivation, enthusiasm, and optimism because they are objectively succeeding at the school's tasks. Any reform that does less than this is hollow and self-defeating. Slavin continues by saying that the most important goal in educational programming for students at risk of school failure is to try to make certain that we do not squander the

greatest resource we have - the enthusiasm and positive self-expectations of young children themselves.

Conceptual Underpinnings for the Study

Our public schools are perhaps more challenged than they have ever been. The schools in our cities, where the largest concentrations of our low-income citizens live, bear the brunt of that challenge. Forty-seven percent of all poor children, twice the rate of non-poor children, score in the bottom quarter on achievement tests. Dropout rates are more than three times higher for poor children than for affluent children (Swap, 1991).

Swap (1991) contends that failure in school is associated with other problems as well. High school boys with poor grades are more than six times as likely as boys earning above-average grades to be in trouble with the law. Low achievers are five times more likely than other students to become dependent on public assistance. To meet these challenges, schools all over the country are engaged in extensive efforts to reform the way they work. Reform plans abound and many call on participants to involve parents and families.

Reform is in the air. From the White house to the schoolhouse, a broad consensus has emerged that a major restructuring of our education system is needed. Two things must happen if a marked improvement in the academic performance of young students is to occur. First, a strong commitment of resources and support must come from policy makers. Solving the problem of school failure is going to take money over the long haul, and it is going to require sustained interest by legislators, political leaders, and the public at large. Second, a proven, reliable, and replicable means of turning money into success for young children must be found. Educational programs far more effective than those in

general use today must be capable of ensuring reading success for virtually all children (Slavin, Karweit, & Wasik, 1994).

Slavin and his colleagues (1994) concluded that virtually every child can be successful in the early grades. The success of every child can be ensured by using programs that are now available and that can (with care) be replicated on a wide scale. “Virtually every child”, according to Slavin et al., means all children who are not mentally retarded or do not have extreme learning disabilities. Extant evidence suggests that most students currently identified as having a learning disability on the basis of reading problems can also be successful if they are given appropriate instruction and other services from the beginning of their school experience or earlier (Slavin et al., 1994).

Many policy makers and educators believe that adding significant resources to schools particularly inner-city schools, is money wasted and that any additional money would simply be misspent or mismanaged. Many others have serious doubts about whether the problems of urban schools are solvable under any circumstances until “underclass” parents begin to behave like middle-class parents (Slavin et al., 1994).

Haynes and Comer (1993) found that urban education is often characterized as being under siege and being pitted against forces bent on destroying the minds and lives of America’s youth. At the center is the urban public school with a population that is typically minority, low income, and *underachieving*. The term *underachieving* is italicized to emphasize the discrepancy between these students’ potential and their actual school achievement.

Often a misalignment exists between the early life experiences, socialization, and

interactions of these students and the demands, expectations, and ways of working of the school. Many of these children are confronted by challenges that they may be unprepared to deal with and by a bureaucratic, inflexible, and sometimes insensitive school system that does not respond adequately to their socioeducational needs (Haynes & Comer, 1993).

All learners, as stated by Crosswhite and Rosmann (1995), must have time to learn. All humans operate on different time clocks; time is a means of allowing a person to grow into the next stage of learning. For some learners, the clock seems quicker or slower depending on the needs of the individuals. When the need, desire or interest demands that learning occur, the student will take risks that help develop learning. The learner who misses the early part of the growing process may later demonstrate anger and fear that seem unresolvable. These emotions can either shut down the learning process or at least inhibit it greatly. When children struggle with the reading process early in school, they often create a barrier that is difficult to overcome. If fear is a factor, risk-taking becomes inhibited, causing the learner to “freeze.” Everything gets harder and less interesting.

Statement of the Problem

Banks (1993) stated that the U.S. labor force is becoming increasingly dependent on women, people of color, and immigrants. Yet a disproportionate number of individuals in these groups do not have the skills and knowledge needed to fully participate in the labor force or in civic discourse. To reduce and eventually eliminate the gap between the skills of these individuals and the demands of our technological society, schools must undergo fundamental change. Changing schools fundamentally requires

that we confront harsh realities. Banks continues by saying we must recognize that, for many low-income and minority students, there is little or no continuity between schooling and the rest of their lives. To be successful in school, they must cross barriers of language, values, cognition, and culture

Trying to make schools work - and work for all - is far too often a daunting task. The stories of failure, of good intentions gone awry, of high hopes dashed are all too frequent (Raywid, 1994).

Purpose of the Study

Many students entering an urban public school district in North St. Louis County, which is approximately 95% African American, are not learning to read in the early grades which places them at risk of early school failure. Both Henry Levin and Robert Slavin agree on the importance of learning to read early as the key to later success, but differ on the model for improving early reading.

If early school failure were, in fact, unavoidable we might have a rationale for continuing with the policies we have now. But a growing body of evidence refutes the proposition that school failure is inevitable for any but the most mentally challenged children. Further, the programs and practices that, either alone or in combination, have the strongest evidence of effectiveness for preventing school failure for virtually all students are currently available and replicable (Slavin et al., 1992/1993). Therefore, the purpose of the study was to determine the effect of two different school comprehensive reform models on student reading achievement for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades.

Research Question

The following question served as the basis of this study. Is there a significant difference in student reading performance when two comprehensive school reform models, Success for All and the Accelerated Schools model are compared at 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested in this study to answer the research question.

Ho1: There is no significant difference in student reading achievement at 3rd, 4th, or 5th grade when a Success for All model or the Accelerated School model was used in two elementary schools in an urban school district in North St. Louis County.

Definition of Key Terms

To better understand the terminology used in this study, the following definitions are provided.

Accelerated Schools Project (ASP) is a process-oriented comprehensive school reform, involving the whole school staff (certified and non-certified), parents, students and members of the community. The model was developed for underperforming schools that serve high proportions of students in at-risk situations. To change the school culture, all stakeholders (faculty, administration, parents, students, and community members) work together to restructure the school while embracing three principles: unity of purpose, empowerment coupled with responsibility, and building on strengths. The model advocates using instructional techniques traditionally associated with gifted and talented instruction to provide accelerated rather than remediated learning. The ASP

emphasizes providing all students with “powerful learning” experiences that translate into increased student learning outcomes. (St. John, Loescher, & Bardezell, 2003)

Adaptive Test is one that is targeted to each individual examinee. As the student takes the test, the questions step up or down in difficulty, with the aid of a computer algorithm, according to the student’s performance. Each examinee takes a unique appropriately leveled test designed for him or her based on his or her abilities. In order to further reduce testing time while still producing precise results, information about the examinee’s prior level of proficiency (based on other standardized test results) can be used to determine the optimal starting point for the test (Scholastic Inc. Educator’s Guide, 2000).

Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) focuses on reorganizing and revitalizing the entire school rather than on isolated, piecemeal reforms. CSR provides teachers with the training, materials, and support they need to help students reach challenging academic standards. In comprehensive school reform, a design becomes the basis for all operations and activities within the school, and provides a vision that helps the school focus its efforts, engage teachers in their work, and build strong parent and community support (Educational Research Service and New American Schools, 1998).

Lexile is a unit of measurement that is used to determine the difficulty of text and the reading level of readers. It is an equal interval scale and can be used to measure growth (Scholastic Inc. Educator’s Guide, 2000).

Curriculum Based Reforms are comprehensive school reform models that are centered on a particular curriculum, or an approach to curriculum reform. Like process-oriented reforms, these models are designed to improve the educational outcomes of all

students. Along with the curriculum are various structural or organizational changes that are geared to increase the effectiveness of a school's educational programs. These reforms often require changes in instructional practices that are associated with the prescribed curriculum used by the model. Some curriculum based models focus primarily on one academic area (such as reading/language arts), but most included curricula for multiple content areas. Schools may adopt one or more of these curricula areas as part of their comprehensive school reform. (St. John, Loescher, & Bardezell, 2003)

Missouri Assessment Program is one of several educational reforms mandated by the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993. As a result of this Act, The State Board of Education directed the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to identify the knowledge, skills and competencies that Missouri students should acquire by the time they complete high school, and to assess student progress toward those academic standards (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1999).

Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) is a normalized student score with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 21.06. NCEs range from 1 to 99. NCEs allow comparison between different tests for the same student or group of students, and between different students on the same test. NCEs have many of the same characteristics as percentile ranks, but have the additional advantage of being based on an interval scale.

That is, the difference between two consecutive scores on the scale has the same meaning (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

Process-oriented Comprehensive Reforms are school restructuring programs designed to improve educational outcomes for all students. They are often implemented in schools with large populations of students in at-risk situations. These models are aimed at comprehensively restructuring the educational program of the school, encouraging changes that may include classroom configurations, modes of working through the processes, the school determines and directs the reform activities and tailors specific changes at the class room level. (St. John, et. al, 2003).

Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) Interactive is a computer-adaptive assessment designed to measure how well readers read literature and expository texts of varying difficulties (SRI Technical Guide, 2001).

Success For All (SFA) is a program that was initially developed as a comprehensive, school wide reform design focusing on reading, with a goal of all students reading on grade level by third grade. The program was developed specifically for schools with high concentrations of at-risk youth where reading levels have traditionally lagged and students often fall significantly below grade level on entering middle school. The program has now expanded to include other subject areas such as math (i.e., Math Wings) and social studies and science (i.e., World Lab). A school may implement any of the programs or all three: Success For All (Reading), Math Wings, and/or World Lab. (St.John, et. al, 2003).

Limitations

1. This study was limited to students in grades 3, 4 and 5 in a school district with predominantly African American schools in North St. Louis County.
2. The study was limited to the validity and reliability of one instrument, the

- Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI).
3. Subjects were selected based on their current grade level. Students of those grades were not directly involved in the decision to participate. This may or may not have an effect on results of the data.
 4. The study only involved two schools and these two schools were not matched pairs.
 5. The study was limited to reform methods advocated and used within the two reform models.
 6. Leadership was not examined.

Summary

School reform models are relatively new and potentially powerful tools for comprehensive school reform. Arising primarily in the last decade, they vary considerably in their approaches. Some provide schools with very specific curricula and instructional strategies. Others offer only general assistance in this area, instead involving school staff in creating their own approaches within a strong process that assures attention to results. All are based in research, provide schools with a common vision, and deal in some way with the critical areas of professional development, school organization, and curriculum and instruction. A particular strength they bring to comprehensive reform is the increased likelihood that all aspects of the reform process will be coordinated across the school (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory [NWREL], 1998).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

As a nation, we cannot afford to continue to allow our school systems to turn out students lacking in the skills necessary to becoming productive citizens. We cannot afford to allow our children to start out on a path that begins with poor achievement and leads to truancy, behavior problems, delinquency, early pregnancy, and dropout. The economic costs, not to mention the social costs of allowing this progression to unfold for so many students are intolerable. The negative spiral that begins with poor achievement in the early grades can be reversed (Slavin, Karweit, & Madden, 1989).

Beginning with the 1970s, educators began to use the term “at risk” to describe a certain category of students. The meaning of this term is never very precise, and varies considerably in practice. One possible definition is that students who are at risk are those who, on the basis of several risk factors, are unlikely to graduate from high school. Among these risk factors would be low achievement, retention in grade, behavior problems, poor attendance, low socioeconomic status, and attendance at schools with large numbers of poor students. All of these factors are closely associated with dropping out of school. Research has found by the time students are in the third grade, we can fairly reliably predict which students will ultimately drop out and which will complete their schooling (Howard & Anderson, 1978).

The issue of students dropping out of school is only one concern. Another major concern includes those students who are unlikely to leave school without an adequate

level of basic skills or unable to pass the minimum requirements on competency-based graduation requirements. These students should also be considered at risk.

John Forsyth (1998) explains that today the American public and policy makers expect schools to raise student achievement to meet higher standards of learning. As education leaders strive to meet this challenge, they are also faced with the task of including in their efforts all students, not only high achievers, but those students who have traditionally been labeled “at risk.”

Forsyth further indicates that many promising programs and approaches are available to school leaders as they strive to meet this challenge. Some programs such as: Reading Recovery or peer tutoring target assistance directly to at-risk students. Recently however, school policy makers are expressing growing interest in the potential of comprehensive schoolwide improvement or reform programs. The research on the effectiveness of various comprehensive schoolwide reform programs in raising student achievement is growing, but it is still uneven and far from complete.

School reform remains at the center of the public agenda even after many years of discussion, legislation, and state and local action. After years of work to improve public education, student achievement is increasing but still remains below acceptable levels. Low levels of achievement are particularly true for populations who traditionally have been poorly served by our schools. For example, on the 1994 National Assessment of Educational Progress reading assessment, 29% of white fourth graders scored below the “basic” level in reading, but 69% of African American students and 64% of Hispanic students scored as poorly. Also found at the national and state levels, a multitude of efforts are in progress to set high standards for student learning. State policies are being

set to challenge, support, and monitor schools as they work to improve learning for all students. Incentives for improvement and sanctions for continued low performance are being established. At the same time, a number of school reform models across the country are beginning to demonstrate the ability to transform entire schools into high-performing learning centers with challenging academic standards, engaged teachers, and strong parental and community support. With the state standards movement maturing and with increasing numbers of model developers showing data to support the effectiveness of their designs, the stage is set to significantly broaden the impact of comprehensive school reform (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1998).

Reading Achievement: Whole Language vs. Phonics

“Because success in reading is so important, principals and teachers face unrelenting pressure to produce high test scores – often with pitifully little support” (Carbo, 1996, p. 36). Carbo (1996) contends that high stakes associated with ensuring that a nation of children become readers has produced a continuing controversy over the merits of whole language and phonics.

Over the years, phonics and whole language have been the two general instructional approaches that have governed reading education (Wren, 2001). People have been searching for the single best way to teach children to read for more than a century, and no matter which approach enjoys a spurt of popularity, reading failures persist. The “look-say” reading method enjoyed popularity for about 30 years (1940 – 1970) before the approach to teaching reading swung to phonics, and was popular for about 20 years (1970 – 1990) before whole language gained a strong foothold. And now, whole language has come under fire and the pendulum has swung back to a more

analytical approach, such as phonics. This swing in popularity continues to fuel the debate as to which approach is better, whole language or phonics (Carbo, 1996).

The whole language approach, as stated by Wren (2001), provides the child with simple, predictable and repetitive text – frequently the text is already familiar to the child, making it that much easier to understand. Emphasis in a whole language classroom is not placed on reading precision and accuracy but is instead on comprehension and appreciation. Children are not expected to read the text verbatim; rather the children are allowed to insert and substitute words as long as they understand the gist of the story. The primary goal of the whole language teacher is to foster a love for the act of reading authentic and connected text, and to keep the process of reading instruction uncontrived.

In a phonics classroom, the emphasis is placed on reading precision. Children are encouraged to read the words exactly as the words appear on the page. Children are explicitly taught rules about the way words are spelled and the spelling-sound relationships of words. After a teacher provides a lesson in a particular phonics rule, the children are presented with a passage of text that contains many words consistent with that rule; this provides the children with the opportunity to apply each phonic rule on a variety of words in the context of a passage. The goal of the phonics teacher is to instill children with the phonics rules and common spelling-sound relationships and to teach children to apply this knowledge in sounding-out each word they encounter and to understand that comprehension and appreciation will be a natural consequence of accuracy (Wren, 2001).

Children who do well with phonics tend to have strong auditory and analytic reading styles. But phonics can be confusing and boring to students who are not analytic,

who don't learn easily when information is presented in small portions, step by step. In contrast, children who do well in whole language programs tend to have a visual, tactile, and global learning styles. Such children can recall words they see and hear repeatedly in high-interest stories. But, whole language can feel disorganized and haphazard to analytic learners (Carbo, 1996).

Taylor (1997) and Carbo (1996) both agree that a combination of both whole language and phonics needs to be presented for students to truly succeed. Wren (2001) contends that very few teachers today would describe themselves as strict advocates of either a phonics approach or a whole language approach – most would describe their teaching as a “balanced literacy” approach.

The reading program in Success For All integrates phonics and whole language approaches to develop decoding skills and comprehension abilities. The Reading Roots component (kindergarten and first grade) emphasizes reading to students, engaging students in discussions of story structure, and developing oral language skills. Students are taught phonetics strategies for unlocking the reading code in the context of meaningful, interesting text. When students reach the primer level, they progress to Reading Wings, which continues through the fifth or sixth grade. The program focus is building comprehension, thinking skills, fluency and positive reading attitudes by integrating uses of the school system's basal readers or novels with cooperative learning, partner reading, process writing, and other components (Ross, Smith, Slavin, & Madden, 1997).

Teachers in Accelerated Schools approach reading by, 1) refining and perfecting their own instructional leadership skills; 2) structuring a shared decision-making system;

3) developing sound, research-based learning objectives and selecting a curriculum and learning materials to meet those objectives; and 4) expecting hard work, commitment to mission, and excellence from teachers, students, and parents. The Accelerated Schools approach also provides a framework for instruction known as powerful learning.

Powerful learning is based on a constructivist approach in which students acquire or construct new understanding through concrete experience, collaborative discourse and reflection. In constructivist learning, students develop the skills to organize, synthesize, interpret, explain, and evaluate information as a means of building new knowledge based on their prior knowledge (Bloom et al., 2001).

Historical Perspective

For the past 40 years, federal education policy in the United States has focused on education for students in situations that put them at risk of failure. While a fundamental shift in the underlying philosophy of education policy from emphasizing equal opportunity to emphasizing excellence for all, occurred after 1980, federal education programs have continued to focus on the students at the greatest risk of failure. Both of these foundational beliefs – equalizing educational opportunity to learn and academic preparation for all – exert a substantial influence on government policy in reading (St. John, Loescher & Bardzell, 2003).

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, the first federal legislation to create sustained national education programs, had a substantial focus on equalizing education opportunity. In the 1950s, the federal government had taken a more activist role in education as a consequence of federal court decisions about desegregation. The ESEA funded special education programs and also introduced a new program under

Title I that provided supplementary resources to schools serving large percentages of low-income students (St. John, et.al. 2003).

While the early Title I program was initially relatively flexible, it later emphasized pulling children with learning difficulties out of the classroom to provide them with supplemental reading instruction. Experimentation with the involvement of parents and instructional aides through Title I took place, and some instructional programs were developed, but Title I did not promote a specific curriculum. Rather, Title I originally provided additional resources for schools serving children from low-income families (Ellson, Barber, Engle, & Kampwerth, 1965; Ellson, Harris, & Barber, 1968; Wong, in press).

In the early 1970s, educational researchers started systematically examining schools in an attempt to dispel a public perception, created in part by the educational research community, itself, that schools had little effect on students' achievement and success when compared to the effects that their family background and socioeconomic situation had (Coleman, et al. 1966; Jencks et al. 1972; & D'Amico, 1982).

Effective schools research, one of the early research models for school reform, grew out of a challenge to the research of Coleman, et al., (1966), who had concluded that a school's resources have little impact on student achievement. Most evidence based on test results seemed to support Coleman's findings that children from middle- and upper- class families generally demonstrate higher achievement than do children from poor families. However, some educators disagreed with the conclusion that schools could have only limited impact. Effective school researchers acknowledged that family background contributes to student achievement levels, but they disagreed with the

conclusions of Coleman that family background determines a child's educational attainment. Effective schools researchers found that if school resources are used effectively. Schools can be successful in teaching all children the essential skills. Brookover, Levine, Stark, Edmonds, Lezotte, Rutter (as cited in D'Amico, 1982), and many others have identified schools that are successful at teaching all students, disadvantaged and nondisadvantaged, the skills needed to succeed at the next grade level (D'Amico, 1982; Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992).

For the most part the studies and reports that resulted from these investigations met these goals. Study after study described schools that were effective and named characteristics which seemed to be associated with that effectiveness. As this evidence seemed to mount, however, a shift in emphasis from theory and research came to policy and practice. The discovery of schools that were effective, irrespective of the family, social, or economic conditions of their students, brought on a movement to use these effective schools and their characteristics as models for school improvement. As this movement gained momentum, effective schools studies became so influential that they were used, in some cases, as a basis for far-reaching educational policy decisions and large-scale school improvement initiatives. In short, effective schools studies were used as recipes for creating effective schools (Mann & Levine, 1980; Edmonds, 1981; & D'Amico, 1982).

Unlike higher education, where the mood was one of confidence and optimism as the 1960s began, America's elementary and secondary schools were struggling to readjust to the new demands of the post-Sputnik era (Ravitch, 1983). While the percentage of students graduating from high school steadily increased from 1960 through

1980, indicating increasing efficacy of programs that promoted equal educational opportunity, the early federal programs were subjected to frequent criticism. Whether increasing high school graduation rates in the 1970s was attributable to the resources provided by Title I and other federal programs remains subject to debate, but the fact that subsequent policy became more curriculum focused is beyond dispute. Further, the focus on providing educational opportunities for students from low-income families and in other situations that put them at risk of failing educationally remained central to educational policy. However, high school graduation rates have not improved since 1980, indicating equal opportunity has not been the underlying concern of policymakers (NCES, 2000; St. John, in press; St. John et al., 2003).

Early school reform action from 1980 to 1987, which is also called the “Intensification Era”, was almost entirely located in the government sector. A widespread feeling existed that, while seriously impaired, the educational system could be repaired by strong medicine. Because the government was the dominant player in the educational enterprise, reformers expected the state to develop and administer appropriate remedies. The philosophical infrastructure of early suggestions to repair schooling was highly mechanistic and composed mainly of centralized controls and standards. This approach assumed that conditions of schooling contributing to poor student outcomes were attributable to low expectations, effort, and inadequate tools. Reformers viewed these conditions as subject to revision through top-down initiatives, especially those from the state. In those early reform efforts, using a government model to institute improvement proposals led to an emphasis on policy mechanisms such as prescriptions, tightly specified resource allocation and performance components that focused on

repairing parts of the system (such as writing better textbooks; raising the quality of the work-force by telling employees how to work – for example, specifying instructional models; and mandating higher expectations by increasing graduation requirements). Of special importance here is the fact that the frameworks for these reform strategies were constructed from the growing body of research on teachers' effectiveness and school effects (Murphy & Datnow, 2003, p. 3).

The publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 focused public attention on the educational process. During the 1980s and 1990s state and federal education policy emphasized testing and standards. State and local policy increasingly focused on improving pass rates on standardized tests (i.e., the Missouri Assessment Program). Many states have implemented high-stakes graduation tests, a pattern that complicated efforts to educate students with special needs and low-income students. The intensive focus on standards and testing corresponds with improved college enrollment by high school graduates since 1980, but dropout rates worsened (Jacob, 2001; NCES, 2000; St. John, in press; St. John, et al., 2003).

Substantial changes were also made in the programs that served students in at-risk situations during this period. In the 1980s, independent reformers began to experiment with school-wide reform models that engaged the entire school in the reform process. By the early 1990s, the Title I program began to encourage schools with high percentages of low-income students to try out these models as part of the school-wide reform option under Title I. In the early 1990s, the federal government funded a number of new reform initiatives in an attempt to create new models for schools such as Levin's *Accelerated*

Schools and Slavin's *Success for All* (Hopfenberg, Levin, & Associates, 1993; Slavin, Madden, Karweit, Dolan, & Wasik, 1992; St. John, et al., 2003).

As schoolwide reform continued to increase in popularity as a school improvement strategy, the U.S. congress, in 1994 made it easier for schools to reorganize themselves. For the first time, schools could use Title I funds to improve the entire school. Then, in 1997, Congress authorized an additional \$145 million per year to help low-performing (mostly Title I) schools raise student achievement by adopting "research-based, schoolwide" approaches (Herman, 1999).

Traditionally, federal dollars had been targeted for individual programs - a math program, a literacy program, a program for high-poverty students. What distinguished this new allocation, known as the Comprehensive School Reform Development (CSRDP) Project, was its clear message that a collection of such add-on programs does not necessarily add up to a coherent schoolwide vision that drives effective reform (Education Commission of the States, 1998).

During the period from 1986 – 1995, known by some as the Restructuring Era, this approach came under attack on philosophical and practical grounds. On the first front, analysts were critical of what they saw as an excessive reliance on government as the reform engine and a near exclusion of professionals, markets, and citizens as catalysts for improvement. A sense emerged that the process of change was seriously undervalued. On practical grounds, critics made two points: that reforms did not seem to be producing desired outcomes, and that reforms were never likely to do so because they were not designed to get to the heart of the problem (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; Elmore, 1987; Murphy & Datnow, 2003).

From 1992-Present, reform initiatives of this era indicate that the government reform portfolio is dominated by efforts to develop standards and accountability mechanisms and very recently capacity building strategies. Standards development falls into three groups: content, performance, and opportunity-to-learn standards. Moreover, accountability systems are employing more rigorous assessments of student performance and a host of approaches to hold schools and the professionals that work in them responsible for student outcomes (Murphy & Datnow, 2003).

Nature of Comprehensive School Reform

Comprehensive school reform models have a number of defining characteristics, those characteristics include, as listed by the Education Commission of the States (1998):

High Standards for All Children: Upgrade the education program for all students, rather than particular groups such as “high achievers” or “at-risk students.”

Comprehensive: Address all core academic subject areas, instruction and school organization (including the use of time, staff and other resources), and include all grade levels in the school.

Research-Based: Incorporate research about best practices and help schools reorganize staff, schedule, etc. to use resources more effectively to support instruction – so every school does not have to start from scratch.

Research-Tested: Are the subject of rigorous and ongoing evaluation by independent organizations to assure the highest quality of implementation and results.

Common Focus on Goals: Give a school faculty and community a shared vision for the school and a common focus on goals; provide an organizing framework that shapes and directs the school’s reform efforts, so faculty, parents and students know where they are

going before they start; and help keep schools focused through personnel and leadership turnovers, preventing the frequent derailment of reform efforts.

Professional Development: Incorporate what research shows is most effective: high-quality, on going professional development with in-school support and concrete tools and materials directly related to the school's central focus. Professional development activities are tied clearly to improving student achievement. This approach contrasts with typical professional development activities, which often consist of one-shot workshops without ongoing reinforcement and no opportunity for individual staff members to learn together.

Alignment: Align all resources – human, financial, technological – across grades and subject areas; help schools reorganize structures, systems and staffing; and serve as an organizing framework to reduce fragmentation and refocus the school on teaching and learning.

Parent and Community Involvement: Offer innovative and effective ways to engage parents and community members in schooling, and forge links with service providers that address the students' and families' nonacademic needs.

Missouri's Approach to Comprehensive School Reform

In the mid 1980's the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education began looking for interventions to help schools be successful. After attending a conference in Colorado in the summer of 1987 and listening to a speech by Henry Levin, whose ideas are the basis for Accelerated Schools, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education initiated the Accelerated Schools Project starting with an academy for six pilot schools.

Currently, the Missouri Accelerated Schools network has grown to include over 200 elementary, middle/junior high and high schools in all areas of the state – urban, suburban, small town and rural. These schools are served by five regional centers at five universities (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2004).

Although Missouri has promoted and favored the philosophy of Accelerated Schools for many years, the state began to broaden its scope in the area of comprehensive school reform. In 1995, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education established the office of Comprehensive School Reform (CSR). The office of CSR takes a neutral position and does not promote or assist in the adoption of any particular reform model. However, districts are required to address two major criteria when applying for funds to support the adoption of a reform model – be able to justify the need and have the ability to implement (C. Rector, personal communication, March 15, 2005).

Three Major Components to Successful School Reform

Leadership

Over the past 10 years, comprehensive school reform has grown substantially. While the movement continues to grow, the question as to what helps make comprehensive school reform more successful still remains. As a result of their research, Murphy & Datnow (2003) found that leadership was frequently acknowledged as a prime factor in the successful implementation of comprehensive school reform.

The spotlight of educational leadership is on instructional leadership. Supovitz & Poglinco (2001) stated that as pressure for improving student performance in the current standards-based accountability environment swells and test results are increasingly

scrutinized, school principals are being urged to focus their efforts on the core business of schooling – teaching and learning.

In their research on school reform and its influence on shaping leadership in Chicago schools, a school district with many of the same problems other urban school districts face, Barr & Bizar (2001) found that leadership during times of urban reform is extremely challenging. Barr and Bizar summarized the following findings associated with leadership during times of urban reform: 1) Principals who continue administering schools in an authoritarian manner limit the access of teachers and parents to school decision making; consequently, their perspectives cannot influence the nature of instruction and its responsiveness to the needs of students. Barr and Bizar found that even under a directive principal without parental involvement, instruction may improve; 2) Changing the complex set of expectations that define the roles of principals, teachers, and parents takes a substantial period of time. For the change to occur, it must be supported and sustained through the leadership of the principal; 3) The principalship has become an increasingly complicated role entailing the ability to work with a variety of groups, skill in onsite management and troubleshooting, as well as knowledge of long-term planning and budgeting resources; and 4) Principals must become directly involved in instructional concerns, developing the mutual trust and respect with teachers that are essential for shared decision making.

Although the principal may have many other functions in operating a school organization, the leadership role in establishing an effective instructional program in the school is foremost. The particular style of leadership is perhaps less important than the accomplishment of the tasks that need to be done by the instructional leader. Some may

accomplish the task by directive methods. Others may be successful through indirect methods – by mobilizing other personnel to achieve the desired tasks (Brookover, Beamer, Efthim, Hathaway, Lezotte, Miller, Passalacqua, & Tornatzky, 1982). Brookover et al. (1982) continues by stating that someone in the school organization, ideally the principal, must provide leadership to establish clearly identified and specific learning objectives at each grade level and for each course. They conclude that unless all members of the organization understand what is to be achieved at each grade level and for each course, they are likely to go in many different directions.

Consensus exists that agreement on the objectives is essential for evaluating a school's effectiveness. A single individual, even the most directive principal, is unlikely to identify and specify all of the objectives at the various levels, but (s) he should provide the leadership to see that identifying and specifying objectives at various levels is done. If students in school are not already achieving at high levels, the accomplishment of that goal will involve some changes in the school's operation. Studies of effective schools, however, indicate that school principals can be change agents in modifying the nature of the school and its effectiveness in bringing student to high levels of achievement. A school is certainly unlikely to have high achieving students if the principal and other leaders in the school do not openly seek to achieve that goal. The principal must therefore provide strong leadership or at least actively support other staff to bring about the needed changes (Brookover et al., 1982).

Ronald Edmonds, in his review of studies on effective schools, also found leadership to be a key factor. Edmonds viewed leadership as the most important factor in school effectiveness. In his summary he wrote the most tangible and indispensable

characteristics of effective schools are 1) strong administrative leadership without which the disparate elements of good schooling can be neither brought together nor kept together, 2) schools that are instructionally effective for children and have a climate in which no children are permitted to fall below minimum levels of achievement. Edmonds states that urban schools that teach poor children successfully have strong leadership and a climate of expectation that students will learn (Edmonds, 1979; ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, 1981).

Data derived from a two-year study by Andrews and Soder (1987), on the relationship between principal leadership and student achievement, using gains in individual student normal curve equivalent scores on the California Achievement Test as a measure of academic performance, indicated that the normal equivalent gain scores of students in strong-leader schools were significantly greater in both total reading and total mathematics than those of students in schools rated as having average or weak leaders. Their findings also suggested that teacher perceptions of the principal as an instructional leader were also critical to the reading and mathematics achievement of students, particularly among low-achieving students.

During a conversation with ASCD's Ron Brandt (1987), Richard Andrews, then Chair, Department of Policy, Governance and Administration at the University of Washington, explained that after systematically gathering data from 100 schools over a three-year period, measuring the growth in achievement of individual students within those schools and based on teacher perceptions and other data, three kinds of schools were identified. One group, which was called "high profile" schools, had principals who in the perceptions of teachers were strong instructional leaders. Teachers in these schools

also characterized the schools as having high expectations, frequent monitoring of student progress, a positive learning climate and goal clarity. The second groups of schools where these things were not present, were called “low-profile” schools. The third group fell somewhere in between or were considered as average schools.

Principals today must possess a multitude of skills to be effective leaders. They must serve as instructional leaders for student learning. They must have the skill to work with teachers to strengthen skills. They must be able to collect, analyze and use data for improving student performance. Principals must have the skill to rally teachers, parents, and community around the common goal of improving student performance. Principals must have the leadership skills and knowledge to exercise the autonomy and authority to accomplish these functions. Murphy and Datnow concluded that principals are crucial to the success of school reform and that the success of the reform can be achieved by performing the following key functions: 1) serving as gatekeepers by signaling their acceptance and strong support of reform efforts, 2) supporting the reform by locating resources and buffering reform efforts from external distractions, and 3) nurturing teacher involvement and leadership (Murphy & Datnow, 2003; Lashway, 2003).

While acknowledging the full range of responsibilities of school leaders, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium team decided to focus on topics that formed the heart and soul of effective leadership. First the team focused on framing a model of standards for school leaders. Next, to continually focus on matters of learning, teaching, and creating a powerful learning environment, the consortium team established six standards, now being used by at least thirty-five states, to guide principal preparation programs. The six standards are as follows:

- Facilitating shared vision
- Sustaining a school culture conducive to student and staff learning
- Managing the organization for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment
- Collaborating with families and community members
- Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner
- Influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context

These six standards, which serve as a guide for principal preparation, have one overriding goal – student achievement (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996; Lashway, 2003).

In a review of research studies conducted by Rutter, Brookover, Austin, and Edmonds on principal leadership, found in ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management (1981), the one person who has the most influence on the school and the environment needed to produce student achievement is the principal. The principal is the one who makes the difference. The principal should have more than technical expertise. He or she should have the mind, heart, will, and desire to see every child succeed. The desire to see students achieve should motivate the principal to set and communicate high standards for him or herself, staff, and students. The principal must make sure that when students succeed, they are rewarded, and when they fail, they should be reminded of the standards. Finally, the effective principal is the one who ensures that the expectation for high standards and student success permeates the whole building.

Professional Development

Beginning with the middle 1980's, the subsequent years of educational reform, restructuring and renewal in the United States, a body of research has identified the essentials of "best practices" in professional development. This knowledge base, if used, can help sustain systematic changes that will improve the quality of learning for students in their school and district. Marsha Speck (1995) states, "Until professional development is based on best practices, learning and growth opportunities provided for teachers and administrators will not meet the demands of educational reform." (p. 33)

Speck's article, *Best Practice in Professional Development for Sustained Educational Change* explores a model for designing professional development that contributes to sustained change in schools. The model, *Essentials of Best Practice in Professional Development for Sustained Change Model*, is based on the growing body of research in professional development, adult learning theory, shared leadership, effective schools, and the change process, also the experience of schools with restructuring efforts (Bertani & Tafel, 1989; Bridges, 1991; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Fullan, 1993; Lieberman 1995a, 1995b; Lieberman & Miller, 1992; Speck, 1996; Wood & Kleine, 1988, 1989; Wood & Thompson 1993; Wood, Thompson, & Russell, 1981).

The *Essentials of Best Practice in Professional Development for Sustained Educational Change Model* is based on the following elements that bring about that change:

- Increasing student learning is the goal.
- The school is the unit of change.
- Professional development is a multiple, diverse, and ongoing process, not a one-shot approach.
- All educators should be involved throughout their careers – lifelong learners.
- The Principal is the key to guiding the professional development process.

- Improvement goals should involve stakeholders in the school.
- Efforts must recognize and address the values, norm, and beliefs that shape school practice and culture.
- Policies and practices must be connected to change and constructed by practitioners in context.
- Teachers develop ownership and commitment through input to change.
- The primary goal is school improvement – however, professional development must support both school and individual growth.
- School district must provide resources.
- Planning and implementation should utilize adult learning theory.
- Coaching and systematic support are required for the transfer of learning from training into daily practice.
- Schools should provide recognition and rewards for efforts to grow professionally.
- Stakeholders must share decisions about time, schedules, curriculum, personnel, space, and materials.
- Professional development should support instructional and program improvement linked to instructional supervision, teacher evaluation, and curriculum implementation.
- Teachers must have authentic opportunities to learn from colleagues “inside” the school.
- Opportunities, time and support mechanisms should be provided inside the school to discuss, try out, reflect on, and hone new practices.
- Broader support mechanisms outside the school are needed.
- Cross-role participation stimulates shared understandings and new approaches.

In the current effort to reform the nation’s schools, Lieberman (1995) stated that not only are there new concepts of teaching, learning, and schooling, but a wide variety of practices that support teacher learning. Lieberman goes on to say that these practices run counter to some deeply held notions about staff development and inservice education that influence educators and views held by the public of teachers. Lieberman further indicates that in the traditional view of staff development, educators attending workshops and conferences outside of the school or district count, but authentic opportunities to learn from and with colleagues inside the school or district do not count. Most of the inservice training, according to Lieberman, or staff development teachers are exposed to is of a

formal nature, unconnected to classroom life and often full of abstract ideas that pays little attention to the ongoing support of continuous learning and changed practices.

If reform plans are to truly be effective, which will allow teachers to significantly change the way they work, then teachers must have opportunities to discuss, think about, try out, and direct attention to new practices. This means that they must be involved in learning about developing and using new ideas with their students. Lieberman (1995a) concluded that this can be done in a number of ways: 1) by creating roles, such as teacher leader, peer coach and teacher researcher; 2) by creating problem-solving groups and decision-making teams; 3) by working on new tasks such as journal and proposal writing, learning about assessment, creating standards, analyzing or writing case studies of practice; and 4) by creating a culture of inquiry, where professional development is expected, sought after, and an ongoing part of teaching and school life.

In the article, *What to Consider When Evaluating Staff Development*, Guskey and Sparks (1991) writes, “A school district’s teachers spend 30 hours learning and then implementing a set of instructional skills. After three years of training and follow-up, students’ scores on standardized achievement tests show no improvement. Was the staff development a failure? Or was the program by itself insufficient to improve student learning” (p.73)?

Guskey and Sparks (1991) presented a model that illustrated the relationship between staff development and student outcomes, as well as the external factors that influence that relationship. Guskey and Sparks tell us that if program evaluations are to truly inform, the potential impact of these factors must be considered. Factors listed in Guskey’s and Sparks’ model for staff development, which they believe influences improvement in

student learning outcomes, are the content of the staff development program, the quality of the staff development program, and organizational climate and culture.

Professional development is crucial to schools engaged in systemic change. It not only helps staff understand the change process, but supports the change. Teacher learning becomes a way for supplementing change and ultimately, motivating all staff toward continuous school improvement (Valdez Perez, et al., 1999).

The only way we're going to get from where we are to where we want to be is through staff development . . . When you talk about school improvement, you're talking about people improvement. That's the only way to improve schools.

Ernest Boyer (in DuFour, 1991, p.4; Sparks, 1984, p. 35)

Professional development today also means providing teachers with opportunities to reflect critically on their practice and to form new knowledge and beliefs about content, pedagogy and learners. Teacher development must focus on deepening teachers' understanding of the processes of teaching and learning, and of the students they teach. Effective professional development involves teachers as both learners and teachers. It allows them to struggle with the uncertainties that come with each role. The key challenge for teachers' professional development is the situation-specific nature of the kind of teaching and learning envisioned by school reformers, it is the primary obstacle to policy makers' efforts to implement systematic reform (Darling-Hammond, 1995).

Guidelines based on the *Principals of Professional Development* developed by the U.S. Department of Education, which may be useful in helping districts design and/or assess whole-school professional development programs within comprehensive school

reform models, are divided into four sections (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2005):

Goals and Outcomes – the goal development process should involve teachers, as well as administrators, community members and others in deciding how needs will be assessed. There should be connections between the professional goals, activities, and expected teacher and student outcomes. There should be a belief that these goals will lead to improved student learning based on research and best practices.

Professional Development Design and Implementation – the professional development efforts should be an integral part of the school’s every day life rather than implemented as a “quick fix.” Activities should be aligned with the school’s or district’s professional development goals, outcomes, and overall improvement goals.

Evidence of Success – data should indicate that all students are progressing toward or achieving high standards of learning and that student progress is connected to changes in teacher practice. There should be evidence between professional development and student learning. The evidence should include both quantitative and qualitative data.

Implications for the Field – school and districts should document their infrastructure, content, and process components so others can learn from their experiences. They should reflect on the lessons learned in order to improve their program and professional growth.

In a conversation with the *Educational Leadership* (Willis, 2002), James Stigler shared some of his ideas on how school districts can improve professional development. Stigler stated that for the past several years, professional development has changed substantially. The standards movement has created a need for teacher learning, so people are looking more critically at the kinds of learning experiences being provided for teachers. Today, educators believe that professional development should be directly tied to teacher practices. It should be site-based and long-term, on-going and a part of the teacher’s daily work, not just something without any relevance. It should be curriculum based so that it can help students master the curriculum at a higher level.

Stigler described past professional development practices as having been divorced for the most part from practice, often taking place outside of schools at a hotel or university.

It has been generic, because the people providing the professional development have created programs to work for all teachers no matter what curriculum they are using. For the most part, it has not been research-based and when data was collected about whether professional development really works, the data indicated that it really didn't help teachers or students learn more.

The traditional kind of staff development consisted of and still is, dependent on release days for large groups of people. If you ask most teachers, they would say it involves training events in which someone stands up and tells them what they ought to be doing. The new form of staff development is most likely to be smaller groups of teachers working together to make things better. This does not mean that they should not attend district meetings or national conferences, but a problem for most teachers is that they have been limited by spending most of their time working with students and have not had the privilege of sitting and talking with colleagues (Sparks, 1998).

The National Staff Development Council (NSDC), a nonprofit professional association that promotes staff development and school improvement, issued revised staff development standards that are intended to increase the knowledge and skills of millions of teachers throughout the United States. These new standards reflect a shift in thinking regarding how professional development standards should be administered. With the current trend of accountability-based education reforms, the newly revised NSDC standards for staff development are the first to tie teacher learning directly to student learning. The standards are divided into three categories: Context standards, process standards, and content standards. All three standards are designed with one goal – staff development that improves the learning of all students (NSDC, 2001/2002).

Principals as well as teachers need training that focuses on instructional issues as well as management. As more and more emphasis is placed on setting high standards and principals are expected to direct high performing schools, professional development for principals becomes even more important. *Education Week* quoted Dennis Sparks, the executive director of National Staff Development Council as saying, “The kind of staff development that we’re visualizing and advocating has principals learning together in their schools, serving as critical friends to one another.” Every leader is expected to be a learner and a developer with those with whom they work (Reid, 2000, p. 1).”

Appelbaum (2002) writes that one of the critical roles districts play in comprehensive school reform is that of supporting and/or providing professional development. Appelbaum continues by saying that while professional development is usually a central piece of what reform model developers provide, the designs do not provide this service in every academic and administrative area. In districts where implementation of a school model was successful, the staff understood that the design could not fill in all the gaps and therefore, filled in the gaps by providing services the model could not provide.

Parent/Community Involvement

Despite the excitement and possibilities surrounding parental involvement, Don Davies, founder of the Institute for Responsive Education stated that very few schools, only about one in ten public school, have moved beyond traditional forms of parent involvement. In addition, only a few of the major new reforms and standards-based initiatives place parents in a central role (The National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, 2000, p.7).

“The meaningful involvement of parents in children’s schooling can enhance the educational process. Parents can contribute insights and knowledge that complement the professional skills of schools, staffs in ways that strengthen academic and social programs. However, for parent involvement initiatives to be successful, they should be part of a contextually focused school improvement process designed to create positive relationships that support children’s total development”(Comer & Haynes, 1991, p.271).

In order to meet today’s challenges, schools all across the United States are engaged in efforts to reform the way they work. Many reform models call on participants to involve parents and families. The evidence that support the belief that parent involvement activities enhance children’s school success is overwhelming (Swap, 1991). Comer and Haynes (1991) stated that the involvement of parents in their children’s education is widely accepted as desirable and even essential to effective schooling.

Involving parents in their child’s schooling is associated with positive outcomes. This association has promoted efforts to increase such involvement through formal programs. Research reviews suggest that the few programs that have been rigorously evaluated do not appear to have made much impact to improve children’s outcomes. Data used from a study of 193 Los Angeles area second and fifth grade children and their mothers, attempted to confirm the relationship between parent involvement and child outcomes. The findings indicated that parent school involvement contributes to positive child outcomes. However, the researchers stated that the involvement appeared to be a manifestation of parental enthusiasm and positive parenting style (Zellman & Waterman, 1998).

Educational research, over the past several decades, has found that parental involvement is related to student achievement, overall school performance, student behavior, graduation rates and enrollment in higher education. Research also suggest that community involvement is important because it opens the door to a wide variety of services for children as well as a large supply of volunteers (Hansel, 2000 p. 35). Parents and community members, according to Barr and Bizar (2001), can be a valuable resource because of the unique knowledge they have of their children and the community. Barr and Bizar further indicates that when the parents and community are listened to, problems that are in need of consideration can be identified. If principals and teachers feel secure in their own professional knowledge, the ideas of parents and community members will be welcomed.

Based on the work of Epstein at the Johns Hopkins University (Hansel, 2003), the National Parent Teacher Association provided six *National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs* to follow for parental involvement in schools.

The national standards are:

- 1) Communication: Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.
- 2) Parenting: Parenting skills are promoted and supported.
- 3) Student Learning: Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.
- 4) Volunteering: Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.
- 5) School Decision Making and Advocacy: Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.

- 6) Collaborating with Community: Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

When these standards are used as guidelines, they can direct leaders to move from discussion to action in developing outstanding programs for improving student achievement through parent involvement. As with any program, for effective long-term reform, the integration of standards must be weighed and based on local needs and circumstances (Hansel, 2003).

Henderson (NCPIE, 2000), who has done extensive literature review on the topic of parent involvement, concluded that for the first time, we have clear standards about what children should know and be able to do as a result of standards-based reform. However, Henderson also noted that standards-based reform is a forked road. She stated that the **high road** of standards gives families tremendous leverage. It gives them the ability to be involved in their children's schools working toward common goals. It also allows them to be involved as families in a community that is pressing the schools for better outcomes. The **low road** approach to standards-based reform is one that focuses on test scores not student performance. It is top down and punitive. Instead of giving support, it gives criticism. Instead of children being helped, they are punished for not having the opportunity to learn and teachers are humiliated. Successful standards-based schools avoid the blame game. They place all of their energies in creating school communities where everyone is responsible for making sure all students learn.

Lewis and Henderson (1997), contends that the school reform movement, although at first glance, seems to be doing well, is failing to change in a significant way what and how students learn. Lewis and Henderson used case studies to develop a report

that examined various reform strategies. They found that the key ways parents and families are engaged in school reform are: 1) pushing the system, pressing for higher standards, a system of effective accountability, insisting on high quality public schools, and creating alternative public schools if the local schools fail; 2) helping design local school improvement by sitting on school improvement committees, monitoring results, and checking student work to ensure it reflects both high standards and high performance; 3) taking part in the parent involvement opportunities created by the reforms, helping more parents to become actively involved in the school, and attending staff development sessions.

Finn (1998) lists parent involvement as an important ingredient in major reform efforts and interventions. Parent involvement in a child's schooling can lead to real academic benefits. Research studies have found that role of parent involvement at home and in school play a supporting role in the student's academic achievement. Researchers have identified three types of parental engagement at home that is consistently associated with school performance:

- Actively organizing and monitoring the child's time.
- Helping with homework.
- Discussing school matters with the child.

For younger children, parents reading to and being read to by their children has been found to be a type of engagement that is effective (Finn, 1998).

The opportunity for parents to stay involved in the school diminishes as the student becomes more independent and as peers come to have greater influence (Epstein, 1983; Finn, 1998; Steinberg, 1996). At the same time however, parents can continue to

be involved in school activities by visiting the school, attending school events and performances, athletic performances; and initiating meetings with teachers and administrators. A parent who does not have the time for in-school involvement, may, out of frustration, not consider more effective ways to help their child at home (Finn, 1998).

In a conversation with the editor of *Educational Leadership* (Ron Brandt, 1989), Epstein discussed her findings from research, conducted for over a decade, on teachers' practices of parent involvement and the effects of family-school connections on student, parent, and teachers. Epstein discussed the five major types of parent involvement and the fact that parents who want to be more involved in their children's learning need clear direction from the schools. The five major types of parent involvement are:

- Type 1. The basic obligations of parents refer to the responsibilities of families to ensure children's health and safety; and parenting and child-rearing skills needed to prepare children for school.
- Type 2. The basic obligations of schools refer to the communication from school to home about school programs and children's progress.
- Type 3. Parent involvement at school refers to parent volunteers who assist teachers, administrators, and children in classrooms or other areas of the school.
- Type 4. Parent involvement in learning activities at home refers to parent-initiated activities or child-initiated request for help and ideas from teacher for parents to monitor and assist in their child's learning.
- Type 5. Parent involvement in governance and advocacy refers to parents' taking decision-making roles in PTA/PTO, advisory councils or other committees at the local or state level (p. 25).

In order to increase parent involvement, schools must develop relationships with parents that are based on communication, trust, and an understanding of language and cultural differences. In order to increase parent involvement, it requires developing a partnership between the parents and the schools; and that both partners are aware of their

own roles, and trust that the partnership is beneficial. The overall goal of the partnership is one that must benefit the students (Winlock, 1994).

Program Interventions

Table 1 on the next page list the similarities and differences between the two reform models, Accelerated Schools and Success For All, in terms of their attention to (a) primary goal, (b) approach, (c) age span, (d) curriculum, (e) instruction, (f) parental involvement, and (g) governance structure. (For additional features see Appendix A) Subsequent pages will describe in more detail, the components listed for both models.

Table 1

Compare and Contrast: Accelerated Schools and Success for All

Components	Accelerated School	Success For All
Primary Goal	Bring at risk students up to grade level; the responsibility belongs to all levels: family, community, and government.	All students can and should succeed; it is the school's responsibility to see that they do.
Approach	Facilitative	Prescriptive
Age Span (Elementary School Programs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention over remediation • Address multiple influences that affect a child's life (media, day care, TV, and home) • Attend to broad range of needs (education, nutrition, shelter) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention over remediation. • Structured school programs for preschool and kindergarten • Curriculum includes music, art, movement, and prereading
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes reading

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language stressed in all disciplines • English proficiency for students from non-speaking families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured language arts program • Learn through practical application
Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller classes to facilitate student-faculty relationships • Cooperative learning • Peer tutoring • Extended day program • Avoid pullout programs; maintain regular classroom instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability grouping (15 students/group) for reading and math to facilitate a more personal attention • Cooperative learning • Reading tutor program (1-1 pullout) • Provision for pullout in reading tutor programs to support regular classroom instruction
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign agreement of responsibilities • School provides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family support team (1parent and 2 social workers, conduct

	<p>opportunities for involvement (Parents Room)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support success of children through high expectations and interest in education 	<p>home school visits, provide parenting workshops, give referrals to social agencies, recruit parent volunteers)</p>
Governance Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on process (inquiry based learning) • Site-based management • Community control with some guidance from the site team at the outset or if there is a problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory committee (principal, program, facilitator, teacher, representative, social worker, Johns Hopkins staff)

Note. From "Meeting the Educational Needs of At-Risk Students: A Cost Analysis of Three Models," by J. King, 1994, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 16 (1), pp. 1-19.

Accelerated Schools Project

Background

The Accelerated Schools Project was established in the U.S. in 1986 and had been adopted by more than 1,100 schools in 41 states as well as Australia and Hong Kong. The Accelerated Schools Project is one of the oldest comprehensive school reform models in the U. S., therefore, it draws upon considerable experience at transforming schools (Levin, 1998; Levin, 2001).

The Accelerated Schools goal was to transform traditional schools, where at-risk students typically receive remedial education, into schools that provide all students with enriched academic experiences – with the ultimate goal of improving student achievement. The Accelerated Schools promoted the belief that at-risk children are more likely to catch up to the educational mainstream if they are placed in learning environments where expectations are high and challenging materials are introduced at a fast pace (Bloom, Rock, Ham, Melton & O'Brien, 2001).

As the model has grown more widespread over the years, so has the evolution of the model (Bloom et al., 2001). Some examples are outlined in the paragraph that follows.

The original training provided by ASP placed heavy emphasis on using direct instruction methods to train teams of administrators, teachers, staff, and parents to implement the model at their school. Little follow-up training or support was provided. In 1992, ASP began to use more interactive methods for training trainers as coaches instead of school staff. The concept of powerful learning, which is at the center of the Accelerated Schools approach, had difficulty being implemented by many Accelerated

Schools consistently. Between 1994 and 1996, the definition of powerful learning was improved for better understanding. Powerful learning was not emphasized until a need in changes of the governance structure was needed. ASP focused on whole-school change. One key change in strategies employed by ASP was to encourage schools to implement powerful learning alongside the changes in governance.

In the next section are descriptions of three central principles upon which Accelerated Schools are built and primary interventions of the Accelerated Schools Project. Accelerated Schools are built upon the active practice of three central principles described by Levin (2001): The principles:

Unity of purpose refers to an active collaboration among parent, teachers, students, support staff, administrators, and the local community toward setting and achieving a common set of goals for the school. The goals and values are the focal point of everyone's effort.

Empowerment coupled with responsibility refers to the ability of the participants of a school community in both the school and at home to make important educational decisions, take responsibility for implementing those decisions, and take responsibility for the outcome of those decisions.

Building on strengths refers to utilizing all of the learning resources that students, parents, all school staff, and communities bring to the educational purpose.

The Accelerated School Project has developed a systematic process that was designed to establish for schools a unified purpose, shared decision-making and responsibility, and the capacity to build on strengths unique at each site. Levin (2001)

provided a brief picture of the following steps schools could initiate in the implementation of the process.

- Stock-Taking. First, the school takes stock of where they are at the beginning of the change process. The entire school gathers quantitative and qualitative information on the history of the school; data on students, staff, facilities, communities, curricular and instructional practice, test score, attendance, culture, and other measures of student performance. This information provides a useful record of the school's status at the beginning of the transformation process and can be used to measure progress over a period of time.
- Forging A Vision. Second, the school community forges a desired picture of the school they would like to become. The entire school community – including teachers, support staff, principal, parents, central office administrators, community, and students engage in creating a vision.
- Setting Priorities. Third, the school community compares the taking stock information with the vision in order to assess where they fall short. The school community together identifies and sets three to five initial priorities that will become the immediate primary focus of the school community.
- Governance. Next, after setting priorities, the school establishes its governance structures that focus on participatory decision-making. All staff and representative students and parents select one of the priority areas on which to work.
- Inquiry Decision-making. The inquiry process provides schools with the opportunity to identify, define and examine challenges in an in-depth manner; to

look for alternative solution; implement and evaluate those solutions. It also encourages the school community to produce knowledge for its own use and building on strengths. Inquiry empowers those at the school site to make changes they know are best for the students.

- Assessing Progress. On a regular basis, the Accelerated School community examines their practices, student experiences, and climate to see if they meet the standards set for all students. Progress is assessed by a system that focuses on both school and student development. Assessment is based on the premise that “if the school is not good enough for the children of staff, it is not good enough for any child”.
- Capacity Building. The Accelerated Schools Project prepares an external coach at least 25% of the time, the principal, and an internal facilitator at least 25% of the time to work together as a team in transforming the school. Coaches are at the school site on a weekly basis to build capacity and trouble-shoot. There is also follow-up training and guidance at the school site if necessary. In addition, participants in the project have opportunities to attend national conferences and workshops.

Bloom et al. (2001), examined the impact of the Accelerated Schools reform on a sample of eight elementary schools that had implemented the reform in the early 1990s – early in the model’s development - and had reached a level of maturity by the beginning of the evaluation. These early generation schools as Bloom and others called them were chosen because according to their evaluation, a reform process orientation, such as Accelerated Schools, must be implemented for several years before its effects can be

evaluated. To measure the impacts of the reform on student performance, standardized test scores in reading and math of third-grade cohorts in three consecutive baseline years, before the reform was implemented, were compared with third-grade cohorts in five consecutive follow-up years after the reform was implemented. Each cohort included all third-grade students who were tested in a given school in a given year; analyses were controlled statistically for year-to-year changes in students' background characteristics (although small). The impacts were averaged across the eight study schools.

Summary of Findings

The following summary of findings for students' test scores in both reading and math were reported by Bloom et al. (2001).

In follow-up years one and two, there were no systematic changes in average test scores. In follow-up year three, the schools began to experiment with instructional changes. In follow-up years four and five, test scores gradually rose above the baseline level as instructional changes were implemented more fully.

In follow-up year five, the average reading and math scores were 0.19 standard deviation and 0.24 standard deviation above their respective baseline levels. Relative to the populations in the sample schools, the impact on scores reflected an overall increase in average reading performance of six percentile points, from 37th percentile at baseline to the 43rd percentile in follow-up year five; and an overall increase in average math performance of seven percentile points, from the 46th percentile at baseline to the 53rd percentile in follow-up year five.

The lowest performing schools relative to their state or national norm at baseline were found to most likely experience large relative gain scores. The reform did not

appear to affect the scores of students at the lower end of the distribution. However, the reform did improve the scores of students who fell in the middle of their school's distribution. This was found to be especially true of middle performing students at the initially low performing schools.

Success for All

Background

Robert Slavin and Nancy Madden at Johns Hopkins University developed The Success for All approach. The Success for All model was designed in response to a challenge from Baltimore City Public Schools to develop an approach that would address the problems of urban students, based on research about effective instructional practice. The first Success for All school was established in 1987. Since its inception, Success for All has been adopted by over 1,500 preK-6 schools, in 450 districts, of which mostly all are Title 1, in 47 states. Success for All has been adopted in Canada, Mexico, Australia, Israel, and England. Although Success for All was designed primarily for urban schools, many schools in rural and suburban areas use the approach. Slavin and Madden plan to add another 400 to 600 schools per year (Herman, 1999; Hurley, Chamberlain, Slavin & Madden, 2001).

The main goal of Success for All is to ensure success in reading. The model's secondary goals include reducing the number of referrals to special education, reducing the number of students who are retained, increasing daily attendance, and addressing family needs (Herman, 1999).

The program structure and components of Success for All are based on two main principles: 1) students need to be successful the first time they are taught; and 2) schools

should organize all possible resources, including tutors and family to ensure support (Livingston, Cummings & Madden, 1996).

To ensure success, the developers of Success for All included the program components as set forth and listed by Herman (1999), in the next section:

Organizational Change, Staffing, and Administrative Support. Schools need to make extensive changes in order to implement Success for All. The first change schools need to make is adding staff. They must have a full-time facilitator to help implement the program, and hire more teachers or paraprofessionals for the required one-on-one tutorials for struggling students.

Second, reading classes must be structured to meet the required 90 minutes of reading instruction per day targeted to classes grouped by reading level. Groups are revised every week based on individual reading assessments.

Third, schools are encouraged not to refer students for special education or retain students. Students are expected to learn in the general education classes. District policies on retention and referrals should be considered for revision.

Curriculum and Instruction. Success for All uses a highly structured curriculum focused on reading and English language arts. The Early Learning Program for prekindergarten and kindergarten focuses on developing oral language skills using material provided by the developer. In first grade, students begin Reading Roots, a beginning reading program where students work with controlled –vocabulary mini books and repeated oral reading.

In grades two through six, students work with Reading Wings, which uses a wide range of commonly available basals, anthologies, and novels. In addition to writing activities, the developers provide a curriculum that focuses on writing.

Success for All includes an extensive tutoring program in grades one through three.

In assigning tutors, priority is given to first grade.

Supplies and Materials. Success for All requires teachers in grades prekindergarten through first grade to use materials designed by the developers. Teachers in other grades may use materials by other publishers and adapt them to fit the Success for All program. The developers also provide materials called “Treasure Hunts” tailored for grades two through six. The teachers review all materials before they are used. The developers require all schools to have enough material to address the components of the program.

Monitoring of Student Progress and Performance. Success for All requires formal assessments of students every eight weeks. The assessments are embedded in the curriculum. Reading groups use the results to reevaluate and regroup the students. Informal assessments are ongoing and encouraged. Students identified through the regular reading assessment, receive one-on-one tutoring for 20 minutes per day, other than during their regular reading time.

Family and Community Involvement. Parent involvement is critical to Success for All. Each Success for All school has a family support team. The goal of the team is to encourage parents to read to students, involve parents in school activities, and help parents address any problems they may have at home that effects the student’s learning.

The team consists of an administrator, Success for All facilitator, social workers, teachers, counselors, and volunteers.

Hurley, et al. (2001) used the state of Texas for a large-scale evaluation of Success for All. Texas was used because first, there were a large number of SFA in the state. Second, Texas was one of the first states to make its state assessment and school-level demographic data available on the Internet. Third, Texas used the same assessment from 1994 to 1998 with very few changes in the test itself or how the scores were computed; making it possible for longitudinal analyses.

There were 111 Texas schools participating in the evaluation. Almost all of the schools were Title I school wide projects with high poverty levels. On average, 85% of the schools were designated as economically disadvantaged. Most of the schools in the evaluation were in large cities, with some in small towns or rural areas. Some were in inner suburban districts. Of the schools studied, a higher percentage of minority students were studied.

Summary of Findings

An overall analysis of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) reading scores were averaged for each of the 111 schools across grades 3, 4, and 5. Each cohort consisted of schools that implemented SFA in 1994 and used the program for four years. Gains from the spring before the program was implemented to the spring of 1998 were computed and compared to gains for the state as a whole.

The gains for each cohort of SFA schools were greater than gains for the state during that same period. The gains showed an increase for each additional year of

implementation from a difference of 4.6 percentage points for one-year schools to a difference of 7.7 percentage points for four-year schools.

On average, the SFA schools gained 5.85 percentage points more than the state, a difference that was statistically significant. The effect size, the mean difference divided by the standard deviation of school means was +0.59.

Barriers to Reform

Despite the efforts of many dedicated individuals and groups, and despite occasional successes, the fact remains that reform efforts in education are often fragmentary and uncoordinated; funding, resources, personnel, and time are limited. Yet, often times, the response to the demands of school improvement is to try to reconfigure the schedule, add on breakfast and evening meetings, and hold more weekend and summer retreats. There is a tendency to try to create more time, energy, and resources for reform without figuring out how to shape the reform efforts so that they do not exceed the time, resources that are expected to be available (Hatch, 1998).

When one commits to major reform, it is often best to start small and experiment, gradually expanding on the successful:

“The objective of evolutionary planning is to capitalize on the “low risk “quality of smaller-scale innovation to increase certainty. This, in turn, increases motivation and the possibility of concerted, more “tightly coupled” action across the school (Fullan, 1992; Louis & Miles, 1990, p. 211).”

If the problems of students at risk are to be successfully addressed, Stringfield (2004) contends that schools must be improved. For school to improve, educators, parents, and other concerned citizens must be involved in the development of the organization. Stringfield cites several reasons why organizational reforms that would benefit students have not taken place. First, educators, often being criticized from outside the organization, are often reluctant to openly discuss problems from within. Second, once problems have been identified, clear solutions are not always readily available. Third, for programs that work, they need to be compatible with the current strengths of the schools in which they are placed. Fourth, practitioners, administrators and boards often underestimate the human and fiscal costs of effective implementation. Finally, there seems to be a profound individual and societal ambivalence about action in the public good.

Educators and educational institutions vary in their responsiveness to innovation. On their own, educators as individuals and schools as institutions may more or less be ready to consider and adapt to a change program. Resistance to change seems to be a normal human reaction. The particular reform itself may cause people to be resistant. Many improvement programs pay little attention to the educators who must accomplish change or the practical problems of institutional innovations, which in some cases, is often detrimental to the success of the program. Overlooking and underestimating the human and organizational components of change has routinely sabotaged programs to improve our schools. No innovation can succeed unless it attends to the realities of people and place (Evans, 1996).

There are three factors that affect the success of a reform model. These factors are the school level, district level, and model developers. Each of these factors is briefly discussed in the section that follows:

School level. Before selecting a reform model, schools need to decide how much time and energy they are able and willing to commit to school improvement. Schools that are not functioning well may not be fully prepared to implement reforms. The best way to launch a new reform is to ensure that the whole staff is involved early in the planning and decision-making. This is the best way to ensure staff buy-in of reform goals. This is vital for success. The principal must continually encourage and support faculty as they work together to make changes; to keep everyone focused on the purposes of the reform. High staff turnover from year to year, often associated in low performing schools can disrupt and affect buy-in and derail efforts.

District level. The entire school community creates the reform vision; however, the superintendent must ensure that the reform effort remains focused on student achievement and the initial goals.

Model developers. Model developers should help schools understand the goals and rationale of their model, identify resources needed to fully implement the models and set realistic expectations for programs, and establish measurable goals. Developers and schools must understand that CSR is a whole-school effort and cannot omit components such as parent and community involvement (Appalachia Educational Laboratory, 2000).

Unfortunately, “There is a system that is resistant to change, backed up by people who take the stance that these kids can’t learn (National Center for Effective Schools Research and Development, 1989, p.6).” In a conversation held between James Comer

and Ronald Edmonds, Comer went on to say that there are some teachers and administrators who don't believe that all kids can learn, especially low-income, inner-city, mostly minority kids. This resistance to change was evident when teachers and principals were asked to do more work, to begin to think differently.

Comer's approach is to get in and make change occur so that the change in itself breaks resistance, rather than telling people what they must do to make change happen. This only suggests to teachers that they are not doing what they should be doing. Such an approach only adds to their resistance.

Summary

If school improvement efforts are ever to attain their full potential, educators must expand their thinking about the way improvement efforts are planned and implemented. The practice of introducing an innovation as an isolated new idea without regard to other ideas must be eliminated. Throughout all stages of improvement initiatives the relationship between existing and new strategies must be clearly described. This will help practitioners at all levels to understand that improvement does not necessarily mean replacement, but enhancement (Guskey, 1995).

When innovations are introduced, we must provide support and follow-up activities for an adequate period of time. Improvement means change; and change is a gradual process, taking place over a period of days, months, and in some cases, years (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Guskey, 1995)).

Achieving optimal integration of innovations is not easy, but is essential if school improvement efforts are to sustain their momentum, continue to expand, and bring about the kind of change for which the innovations were intended. The primary task is not so

much to generate new ideas as to integrate them, not so much to find individual ideas that work as to make a collection of ideas that work together (Guskey, 1995).

Comprehensive, schoolwide programs have begun to build up a body of research suggesting that reform programs hold promise for improving student learning. Federal legislators have revised Title I funding and created new funding through the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program to assist schools with funds to initiate comprehensive school reforms. Through this new funding, policy makers have searched for new ways to serve economically disadvantaged students. Comprehensive school reform appears as one approach that can assist disadvantage students, but also improve schooling for all students in many different school settings (Forsyth, 1998).

The growing interest in a comprehensive approach to school improvement rests on the realization that more traditional approaches have not worked as well as expected for large numbers of at-risk children. The focus of this study was not to examine the approach to reading, but the total impact of the reform models effect on reading achievement.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Although effective programs for at-risk learners are needed at all educational levels, from preschool through high school, Ross et.al (1995) believes the assumption can be made that the earlier programs start, the greater the potential impact of the programs will be. That is, if early learning deficits are prevented, the chances will be lessened that learning failure will occur and that additional special interventions will be needed in higher grades. A second assumption is that, of all basic skill domains, learning to read is the most critical to disadvantaged children's success in school. Children who cannot read at or near grade level will almost certainly experience difficulties with skills in most other school subjects, such as solving story problems in mathematics. In early grades, school success is essentially identical to reading success; few children are retained or assigned to special education solely on the basis of failure in subjects other than reading. (Kellam, 1990; Kolhberg, Ricks, and Snarley, 1984; Lloyd, 1978; Ross, Smith, Casey, and Slavin, 1995). The purpose of the study was to determine the effect of two different school comprehensive reform models, Success for All and Accelerated Schools, on student reading achievement.

Statement of the Problem

Trying to make schools work - and work for all - is far too often a daunting task. The stories of failure, of good intentions gone awry, of high hopes dashed are all too frequent (Raywid, 1994). Many students entering an urban public school district in North St. Louis County, which is approximately 96% African American, are not learning to

read in the early grades which places them at risk of early school failure. Both Henry Levin (1987) and Robert Slavin (1994) agree on the importance of learning to read early as the key to later success, but the two authors differ on the model for improving early reading.

If early school failure were, in fact, unavoidable we might have a rationale for continuing with the policies we have now. But a growing body of evidence refutes the proposition that school failure is inevitable for any but the most retarded children. Further, the programs and practices that, either alone or in combination, have the strongest evidence of effectiveness for preventing school failure for virtually all students are currently available and replicable (Slavin et al., 1992,1993).

Research Question

The following question served as the basis of this study. Is there a difference in student reading performance at 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade when two comprehensive school reform models are compared, Success for All or the Accelerated Schools model?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested in this study to answer the research question.

H₀1: There is no significant difference in student reading achievement at 3rd, 4th, or 5th grade when a Success for All model or the Accelerated Schools model was used in two elementary schools in an urban public school district in North St. Louis County.

District Profile

An urban public school district located in North St. Louis County encompasses a 12 square mile area of several municipalities. The district is home to approximately 31,

944 residents according to the 2000 census.

The district, established in 1926, has 13 facilities with an enrollment of approximately 8000 students, 95 % of whom are African American and 5 % White. The facilities include an early childhood center, nine elementary schools (kindergarten through grade six), two middle schools (grades seven and eight), and one senior high school (grades nine through twelve). Over 82% of the students in the district are from low-income families and are eligible for free and reduced lunch.

The mobility rate of students in the district, which stood at 37 % in the 1999 – 2000 school year, has steadily decreased over the past five years and now stands at 24 %. Due to the mobility of students, the district averages enrollment of over 1,000 new students each year.

There are 448 teachers in the district, with a student teacher ratio of 19:1. The teaching staff is 56% white, 41% black, and 3% other. The average years of experience of the professional staff is 11.3 years. For the past five years, the district has hired, on average, approximately 50 new teachers to replace teachers who left the district due primarily, to retirement or resignations.

In 1997, the district, in an effort to raise student test scores, adopted the Accelerated Schools reform model for all of its schools with the exception of the high school. A new elementary school was built in 1998; based upon their research, school personnel chose to adopt the reform model they believed to be more effective, the Success for All reform model.

Population Sample

The populations utilized for this study were 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students from an Accelerated School and Success for All school in an urban public school district in North St. Louis County. In the study sample, 126 students were in grade three; 129 students were in grade four; and 142 students were in grade 5. Over 96% percent of the students in the study were African Americans.

Instrumentation

The Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) was used for the collection of data for this study. SRI Interactive is a computer-adaptive assessment designed to measure how well readers read literature and expository texts of varying difficulties. SRI Interactive measures reading comprehension by focusing on skills readers use when studying written materials sampled from various content areas. These skills include: 1) identifying details in a passage, 2) identifying cause-and-effect relationships and the sequence of events, 3) drawing conclusions, and 4) making comparisons and generalizations (SRI Technical Guide, 1999).

Several methods were used by Scholastic to estimate the reliability and validity of the SRI. As noted in the technical manual of the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), the SRI “is a theory-referenced measurement system for reading”. (1999, p. 1) Those individuals familiar with construction of tests, such as the SRI, suggest that traditional indices of test quality, such as internal consistency, are not critical considerations. What is important is how well individual and group performances conform to how we would expect them to perform based upon underlying theory. The SRI used the Lexile Framework to estimate reliability (SRI Technical Manual, 1999).

As noted in the SRI Technical Manual, “Measurement is the process of converting observations into quantities via theory. There are many sources of error in the measurement process – the model used to relate observed and theoretical measurements, the method used to determine those measurements, and the moment when the measurements are made” (p. 1). To estimate the model specification error, the SRI was developed using the Rasch one-parameter item response theory model. This model was designed to relate the reader’s ability and the difficulty of the items on the test. The model error for each score has been averaged and is presented in the following Tables (see appendix).

As noted in the SRI Technical Manual, “these values represent the lower bound of the error associated with an individual score on the SRI” (p. 5). Other sources of error – method (the specific items measured) and moment (the response of the reader to the items) – must also be examined to accurately describe the error associated with a single test score. Not only should a test be reliable within a reasonable range, the test should also be valid.

The validity of a test is the degree to which the test actually measures what it is supposed to measure. In other words, validity provides a check on how well the test fulfills its intended purpose. “The process of ascribing meaning to scores produced by a measurement procedure is generally recognized as the most important task in developing an educational or psychological measure, be it an achievement test, interest inventory, or personality scale” (Stenner, Smith & Burdick, 1983, p. 305).

The construct validity of a test is the extent to which the test measures a theoretical construct or trait, such as reading comprehension” (SRI Technical Manual, p.

6). Of the number of ways identified by Anastasi (1982) that construct validity of a test can be examined, three were judged to be appropriate by the test developers of the Scholastic Reading Inventory. The three were: (1) examine developmental changes in test scores for traits that are expected to increase with age; (2) examine the “correlations between a new test and other similar tests ... [the correlations are] evidence that the new test measures approximately the same general areas of behavior as other tests designated by the same name” (Anastasi, 1982, p. 145) and (3) examine the convergent and discriminate validity evidence (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). For a test to have construct validity requires the test to “show not only that a test correlates highly with other variables with which it should theoretically correlate, but also that it does not correlate significantly with variables from which it should differ” (Anastasi, 1982, p. 147, SRI, p. 6).

As used by Scholastic in this study, reading comprehension was considered as the process of the student to independently construct meaning from a particular text that the student had read. As noted by Anastasi (1982), student scores from tests designed to measure the same construct, in this research “reading comprehension,” should be moderately correlated. Test developers at Scholastic conducted studies designed to test the relationships between the SRI and other tests that purport to measure reading comprehension – the North Carolina End-of-Grade Test (NCEOG) and the Stanford Achievement test, Version 8 (ST8). In both cases the correlations were moderately high. For the NCEOG they were .85 ($n = 93$) and .90 ($n = 126$) for second to third and fourth to fifth grades respectively. For the SAT8 they were .82 ($n = 16,921$) for fourth and .79 ($n = 16,870$) for fifth and sixth grade ($n = 20, 888$) students.

The third measure used by Scholastic was to measure convergent and discriminant validation. According to the SRI Technical Manual, “the Lexile Framework has been found to be related in expected ways with age, grade, gender, SES, grade attained, books in the home, income, occupations, and many other demographic variables” (p. 12). The developers of the SRI designed studies to examine the relationships between reading ability and gender and ethnicity. “The only difference between males and females greater than one standard error of measurement was at grade 4, with females scoring significantly higher” (p. 12). The other two differences were not significant at the .05 level.

In regard to ethnicity, SRI conducted a study of students in grades 4 through 9 in a large urban district. Students were administered an earlier version of the SRI in October 1998 and the Stanford Achievement Test Version 8 in May 1998. “There were no differential predictions of reading comprehension between the SRI and the SAT8 due to ethnicity (largest difference between correlations was 0.06)” (p. 13).

Data Collection

Permission from the superintendent of the school district was used to determine which students would participate in the study. The data used were collected as part of the district’s annual assessment of student performance. The Success for All and Accelerated School programs both utilized the Scholastic Reading Inventory to determine if the reform model was successful. The pre-test data were collected by the school district in August 2004, using the Scholastic Reading Inventory. A second version of the Scholastic Reading Inventory was administered to students in March 2005. Only students who were available for pre and post-test were used in the study. The data were

coded and aggregated at the school-site level thus protecting the anonymity of the students who participated in this study.

Method of Statistical Analysis

This study is quasi-experimental using a non-equivalent comparison-group design. The statistical method used was an analysis of variance, a procedure for determining whether the difference between the mean scores of two or more groups on a dependent variable is statistically significant. When the groups have been classified on several independent variables (factors), the procedure can be used to determine whether each factor and the interactions between the factors have a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). An analysis of variance was used to test the difference between average Normal Curve Equivalency (NCE) reading gain scores of the students from the pre-test to the post-test in the Accelerated School compared to the average reading gain scores in the Success for All school.

The Normal Curve Equivalent or NCE is a way of measuring where a student falls along the normal curve. NCEs divide the distribution of scores of the norming sample into 99 equal units, ranging from a low of 1.0 to a high of 99.0. There is a fixed relationship between NCEs and percentile ranks. The primary use of NCEs are in the calculation of Battery scores and in the derivations of percentile ranks for group summaries. As a result of fixed intervals between NCEs, a change of 5 NCEs at one point of the scale is the same at any other point on the scale.

If the scaled score goes up and the NCE goes up – greater than expected growth has occurred. If the scaled score goes up and the NCE stays the same – expected growth has occurred. If the scaled score goes up and the NCE goes down – less than expected

growth occurred. If the scaled score stays the same and the NCE goes down – no growth has occurred. If the scaled score goes down and the NCE goes down, this indicates negative growth.

An NCE change reflects a change in relative position in comparison with the norm group. A gain in NCE units or percentile rank indicates that the student has grown more than the norm group. No change in the NCE indicates that the student has grown as much as the norm group.

One year of growth in grade equivalent units represents normal growth for students scoring around the 50th percentile. Normal growth for students scoring above the 50th percentile is typically greater than one school year and for students scoring below the 50th percentile, normal growth is typically less than one school year. Grade equivalents however, are not usually recommended for measuring growth.

A statistically significant change in a student's NCE is approximately five NCE units, which equates roughly to ten percentile points in the middle of the score distribution. Five percentile points represents a significant change in a group of 50 – 100 students. Two percentile points represents a significant change in a group of more than 1000 students (W. Borgen, personal communication, July 6, 2005).

Summary

In the study, approximately 400 students at grades 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade from an Accelerated School and a Success for All school in an urban public school district in North St. Louis County completed the pre and post-test of the Scholastic Reading Inventory. The instrument utilized is a computer-adaptive assessment designed to measure how well readers read literature and expository texts of varying difficulties. An

analysis of variance was used to test the differences between the Accelerated School and the Success for All school using average NCE reading gain scores.

Chapter 4 presents the steps used to analyze the data collected from the study, the study design that contains the research question, null hypothesis, population sample, data collection and method of analysis. Presented next, are the descriptive findings that contain school demographic data, hypothesis testing, and summary of findings.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of two different school comprehensive reform models on student reading achievement. In addition, the study attempted to examine the relationship between selected student demographic variables – grade level, gender, ethnicity, and lunch status and their NCE gain scores in reading.

Chapter Two contained the review of related literature. The chapter reviewed literature on the historical perspective and nature of school reform, the three major components of successful school reform, and program interventions and barriers to reform. Chapter Three presented the research question and hypothesis, district profile, participants, instrumentation, data collection, and method of statistical analysis. In the section that follows are presented the study design, data, and findings.

Study Design

Research Question

The following research question was examined during the completion of this study. Is there a significant difference in student reading performance when two comprehensive school reform models, Success for All and the Accelerated Schools model are compared for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade.

Null Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested in this study:

H₀1: There is no significant difference in student reading achievement for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade when a Success for All model or the Accelerated Schools model was used in

two elementary schools in an urban public school district in North St. Louis County.

Population Sample

The subjects in the study were 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students from the Accelerated School and the Success for All school in an urban public school district in North St. Louis County. The study sample consisted of 126 students in grade three; 129 students in grade four; and 142 students in grade 5. Over 96 percent of the students in the study were African Americans (low income/high FRL).

Instrumentation

The Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) was used for the collection of data for this study. SRI is a computer-adaptive assessment designed to measure how well readers read literature of varying difficulties.

Several methods were used by Scholastic to estimate the reliability and validity of the SRI. Scholastic used the Lexile Framework to estimate reliability which tests how well individual and group performances conform to how the developers would expect them to perform based upon underlying theory (SRI Technical Manual, 1999).

The test construct validity was determined on SRI to have the measurement of reading comprehension. Construct validity was determined by: (1) examining developmental changes in test scores for traits that are expected to increase with age; (2) examining the correlations between a new test and other similar tests; evidence that the new test measures approximately the same general areas of behavior as other tests designated by the same name; and (3) examining the convergent and discriminate validity evidence.

Data Collection

Permission from the superintendent of the school district was used to determine which students would participate in the study. The data used were collected as part of the district's annual assessment of student performance. Pretest data were collected from both schools in August 2004 using the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI). A second version of the SRI was administered to students in March 2005. Only students available for both tests were used in the study. The data collected were coded and aggregated at the school site in order to protect the anonymity of the participants in this study.

Method of Statistical Analysis

This study is quasi-experimental using a non-equivalent comparison-group design. The statistical method used was an analysis of variance, a procedure for determining whether the difference between the mean scores of two or more groups on a dependent variable is statistically significant. When the groups have been classified on several independent variables (factors), the procedure can be used to determine whether each factor and the interactions between the factors have a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). An analysis of variance was used to test the difference between average Normal Curve Equivalency (NCE) reading gain scores of the students for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades from the pre-test to the post-test in the Accelerated School compared to the average reading gain scores of the Success For All School.

The Normal Curve Equivalent or NCE is a way of measuring where a student falls along the normal curve. NCEs divide the distribution of scores of the norming sample into 99 equal units, ranging from a low of 1.0 to a high of 99.0. There is a fixed

relationship between NCEs and percentile ranks.

A statistically significant change in a student's NCE is approximately five NCE units, which equates roughly to ten percentile points in the middle of the score distribution. Five percentile points represents a significant change in a group of 50 – 100 students. Two percentile points represents a significant change in a group of more than 1000 students (W. Bargen, personal communication, July 6, 2005).

Descriptive Findings

School Demographic Data

As presented in Chapter 3 there were two schools that participated in this study. One school used the Accelerated Schools comprehensive school reform model; the other school used the Success for All model. Presented in Table 2 are the numbers and percentages for the demographic variables for the two schools that participated in the study.

Table 2

Number and percentage of students by school, grade level, ethnicity, gender and free lunch status.

	Grade 3 N	Percent	Grade 4 N	Percent	Grade 5 N	Percent	Total N	Total Average
Ethnicity								
Accelerated School								
Black	55	96.5	47	97.9	73	94.8	175	96.4
White	2	3.5	1	2.1	4	5.2	7	3.6
Total	57	100	48	100	77	100	182	100
Success for All								
Black	69	100	81	100	62	95.4	212	98.5
White	0	0	0	0	3	4.6	3	1.5
Total	69	100	81	100	65	100	215	100
Gender								
Accelerated School								
Male	37	64.9	24	50	44	57.1	105	57.3
Female	20	35.1	24	50	33	42.9	77	42.7
Total	57	100	48	100	77	100	182	100
Success for All								
Male	37	53.6	38	46.9	36	55.4	111	52
Female	32	46.4	43	53.1	29	44.6	104	48
Total	69	100	81	100	65	100	215	100
Lunch								
Accelerated School								
Free	48	84.2	40	83.3	63	81.8	151	83.1
Full pay	9	15.8	8	16.7	14	18.2	31	16.9
Total	57	100	48	100	77	100	182	100
Success for All								
Free	62	89.9	70	86.4	53	81.5	185	86
Full pay	7	10.1	11	13.6	12	18.5	30	14
Total	69	100	81	100	65	100	215	100

As can be seen in Table 2, a total of 397 students participated in the study – 182 Accelerated School students and 215 Success for All students. Thus very little variance appears between the two schools. As represented in Table 2, the similarity in enrollment size, ethnicity, gender, and free lunch status in both schools indicates that the schools serve a similar population. For example, the Success for All School has only 33 more students enrolled than the Accelerated School. Both schools have a population over 98 percent of students who are African American, an average of 83 percent vs. 86 percent on free lunch status, an average of 57 percent vs. 52 percent male students between the two schools, and an average of 43 percent vs. 48 percent females between the two schools. Therefore, one can assume that any differences between the two schools cannot be attributed to the distribution of students examined in the study.

As presented in Chapter 3 all students in grades 3, 4 and 5 were administered the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI). Students were administered a pre-test in the month of August and posttest in the month of March. Presented in Table 3 are the group statistics for the means and standard deviations of students by school and grade level for the two schools that participated in the study. The results of the analyses of these data are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Mean, Standard Deviation and Number of Students by School and Grade Level for Students Given the Pretest in the Accelerated School and the Success for All School

School	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Group Statistics: Grade 3 pretest				
Accelerated Schools	57	28.66	22.28	2.95
Success for All	69	32.02	21.26	2.56
Group Statistics: Grade 4 pretest				
Accelerated Schools	48	41.74	20.64	2.98
Success for All	81	38.88	19.29	2.14
Group Statistics: Grade 5 pretest				
Accelerated Schools	77	36.85	21.97	2.50
Success for All	65	42.26	18.67	2.32

As presented in Table 3, the mean score for grade 3 in the Success for All school was 32.02 compared to 28.66 for the Accelerated School. However, in the Accelerated School, the reverse was true for grade 4. The mean score for the Accelerated School at grade 4 was higher (41.74 vs. 38.88). As was the case for grade 3, the mean score for grade 5 in the Success for All school was higher than the mean score in the Accelerated School (42.26 vs. 36.85).

No significant difference was found between the two schools at grade 3 ($F= 0.76$; $p < 0.38$), grade 4 ($F= 0.01$; $p < 0.91$), and grade 5 ($F= 3.10$; $p < 0.08$) on the pretest. This analysis suggests that very few variances on the pretest for all three grade levels existed at both the Accelerated School and Success for All school.

The number of students tested and the resulting means and standard deviations for third grade students by gender are presented in Table 4. For purposes of this study, a threshold of 10 students was determined to be a minimum n for purposes of analysis. In as much as 100 percent of the third grade students in the Success for All school were

African American and approximately 90 percent were on the free lunch program, no statistical analyses were performed on these two demographic variables and only gender and total students were tested. The results of the analyses of these data are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Mean Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) Reading Gain Scores, Standard Deviation and Number of Students by Gender for Third Grade Students in the Accelerated School and the Success for All School

Dependent Variable: gain

SCHOOL	GENDER	MEAN	ST. DEVIATION	N
Accelerated School	Male	13.00	17.52	37
	Female	18.10	14.34	20
	Total	14.79	16.52	57
Success for All	Male	10.59	12.99	37
	Female	8.26	16.87	32
	Total	9.51	14.85	69
Total	Male	11.80	15.36	74
	Female	12.04	16.52	52
	Total	11.90	15.79	126

Presented in Table 4 are the average NCE reading gain scores and the standard deviations for male and female students in the two schools. As can be seen in Table 4, the mean NCE reading gain score for females in the Accelerated School was 18.09 compared to 13.01 for males. However, in the Success for All school, the reverse was true. The average NCE reading gain score for males was higher than females (10.59 vs. 8.26). However, the total average gain for male and female in the Accelerated School was 14.79 compared to 9.50 for all students in the Success for All school. The analysis of variance for these data is presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Analysis of Variance for Grade Three by School and Gender

Dependent Variable: gain

Source	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
School	1108.65	1	1108.65	4.53	0.04*
Gender	55.87	1	55.87	0.23	0.63
School + Gender	405.79	1	405.79	1.66	0.20
Error	29855.41	122	244.72		
Total	48982.98	126			
Corrected Total	31154.40	125			

* p <.05 (= significant)

As presented in Table 5, a significant difference was found between average NCE reading gain scores for third grade between the two schools. However, no significant difference was found for gender or the interaction between school and gender. This analysis suggests that the third grade students in the Accelerated School made significantly higher gains in reading than did the students in the Success for All school ($F = 4.53$; $p < .035$)

The number of students tested and the resulting means and standard deviations for fourth grade students by gender and total students are presented in Table 6. In as much as 100 percent of the fourth grade students in the Success for All school were African American and over 86 percent on the free lunch program these variables were not tested. The results of the analysis of the data for gender and total students are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Mean Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) Reading Gain Scores, Standard Deviation and Number of Students by Gender for Fourth Grade Students in the Accelerated School and the Success for All School

Dependent Variable: gain

SCHOOL	GENDER	MEAN	ST. DEVIATION	N
Accelerated School	Male	9.78	16.92	24
	Female	7.66	11.46	24
	Total	8.72	14.34	48
Success for All	Male	5.78	16.71	38
	Female	8.13	13.02	43
	Total	7.04	14.81	81
Total	Male	7.33	16.77	62
	Female	7.96	12.40	67
	Total	7.66	14.61	129

As presented in Table 6, the mean NCE reading gain score for females in the Accelerated School was 7.66 compared to 9.78 for males. However, in the Success for All school, the reverse was true. The average NCE reading gain score for females was higher than the males (8.13 vs. 5.78). The total average gain score for all students in the Accelerated School was 8.72 compared to 7.04 for all students in the Success for All school. The scoring pattern for grade 4 differs from the scoring pattern for grade 3 in the fact that males scored higher than the females in the Accelerated School and females scored higher than the males in the Success For All school. Although the pattern differs, there is still no significant difference. The analysis of variance for these data is presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Analysis of Variance for Grade Four by School and Gender

Dependent Variable: gain

Source	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
School	93.96	1	93.96	0.43	0.51
Gender	0.35	1	0.35	0.00	0.97
School + Gender	150.53	1	150.53	0.66	0.41
Error	27055.84	125	216.45		
Total	34874.60	129			
Corrected total	27307.60	128			

p < .05 (= significant)

As presented in Table 7, no significant difference was found between average NCE reading gain scores for fourth grade between the two schools. In addition, no significant difference was found for gender or the interaction between school and gender. This analysis suggests that gains made by fourth grade students in both the Accelerated School and the Success for All school were statistically about the same.

The number of students tested and the resulting means and standard deviations for grade five students by gender, lunch status, and total students are presented in Table 8. In as much as 95 percent of the students in both schools are African American, ethnicity was determined not to be used for purposes of analysis. The results of the analysis for gender, lunch status, and total students are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Mean Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) Reading Gain Scores, Standard Deviation and Number of Students by Gender and Lunch Status for Fifth Grade Students in the Accelerated School and the Success for All School

Dependent Variable: gain

School	Gender	Lunch	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Accelerated School	Male	free/reduced	9.07	14.70	38
		full pay	10.07	12.16	6
		Total	9.21	14.26	44
	Female	free/reduced	11.76	16.23	25
		full pay	6.04	17.42	8
		Total	10.38	16.44	33
	Total	free/reduced	10.14	15.25	63
		full pay	7.76	14.99	14
		Total	9.71	15.14	77
Success for All	Male	free/reduced	10.13	16.13	29
		full pay	6.67	10.45	7
		Total	9.46	15.13	36
	Female	free/reduced	7.18	15.13	24
		full pay	-5.64	12.24	5
		Total	4.97	15.28	29
	Total	free/reduced	8.79	15.60	53
		full pay	1.54	12.42	12
		Total	7.45	15.24	65
Total	Male	free/reduced	9.53	15.22	67
		full pay	8.24	10.92	13
		Total	9.32	14.56	80
	Female	free/reduced	9.52	15.71	49
		full pay	1.55	16.19	13
		Total	7.85	16.01	62
	Total	free/reduced	9.52	15.36	116
		full pay	4.89	13.95	26
		Total	8.68	15.17	142

As presented in Table 8, the total mean NCE reading gain score for females in the Accelerated School was 10.38 compared to 9.21 for males. However, in the Success for All school, the reverse was true. The average NCE reading gain for males was higher than females (9.46 vs. 4.97). The average gain for all students in the Accelerated School was 9.70 compared to 7.45 for all students in the Success for All school. The males and

female students in the Accelerated School, regardless of lunch status, scored higher than the male and female student in the Success For All school regardless of lunch status.

The scoring pattern for grade 5 is the same as the scoring pattern for grade 3. In fact, despite different grade levels males scored higher than the females across both schools. Females scored higher than the males in the Success For All school.

The scoring pattern for grade 5 differs from grade 4 in that males outscored females at the Accelerated School. Females scored higher at the Success for All school. Despite the difference in the average NCE scores, there were still no significant differences.

A question for further discussion is to understand the pattern change from 3rd and 4th to 4th and 5th. The analysis of variance for these data is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Analysis of Variance for Grade Five by School and Gender

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects
Dependent Variable: gain

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1479.67	7	211.38	0.91	0.50
Intercept	3932.01	1	3932.01	17.01	0.00
School	445.51	1	445.51	1.93	0.17
Gender	354.66	1	354.66	1.53	0.22
Lunch	567.69	1	567.69	2.46	0.12
School * Gender	249.66	1	249.66	1.08	0.30
School * Lunch	171.40	1	171.40	0.74	0.39
Gender * Lunch	332.82	1	332.82	1.44	0.23
School * Gender * Lunch	8.95	1	8.95	0.04	0.84
Error	30981.56	134	231.21		
Total	43148.39	142			
Corrected Total	32461.22	141			

p < .05 (= significant)

As presented in Table 9, there was no significant difference found between

average NCE reading gain scores for fifth grade between the two schools. There was no significant difference found for gender, lunch, or the interaction between school and gender, or the interaction between school and lunch, or the interaction between school, gender, and lunch. This analysis suggests that gains made by fifth grade students in both the Accelerated School and the Success for All school were statistically about the same.

Summary of Findings

Presented in this chapter were the descriptive data obtained from students in grades 3, 4, and 5 completing the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) pre- and posttest. An analysis of variance was used on the data for each grade level to measure the average Normal Curve Equivalency (NCE) reading gain scores. The hypothesis, there is no significant difference in student reading achievement for 3rd, 4th, or 5th grade students when a Success for All model or the Accelerated School model was used in two elementary schools, was tested. A significant difference was found between average NCE reading gain scores at grade 3 between the two schools, but no significant difference was found between gender or the interaction between school and gender. Because of an insufficient number of subjects, no tests were conducted for ethnicity or lunch status.

As was presented in the analysis, no significant difference was found between average NCE reading gain scores for grade 4 and 5 between the two schools. In addition, no significant difference was found for gender, lunch, or the interaction between school and gender, or the interaction between school and lunch, or the interaction between school, gender, and lunch.

As was the case for 3rd grade, no tests were conducted for ethnicity for the 4th or

5th grade; however, there were sufficient students at the 5th grade to tests for lunch status. The hypothesis for average NCE reading gain scores between the two schools for grade 3 was rejected. The hypothesis for grades 4, and 5 was accepted.

Provided in Chapter Five are the summary, discussion, conclusions, and recommendations that result from this study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Elementary schools are expected to teach children many skills that form the basis for success in later education and the labor market. The typical response of schools to low academic achievement, especially among poor minority students, has been remedial education programs that slow down the pace of instruction or simplify the content of the curriculum. This approach has serious limitations and can put students who are at risk of school failure at still greater disadvantage (Bloom et al., 2001).

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of two different school comprehensive reform models, Accelerated Schools and Success for All, on student reading achievement at 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades. The study began by asking the following research question - is there a difference in student reading performance when two comprehensive school reform models are compared?

The following null hypothesis was tested in this study.

Ho1: There is no significant difference in student reading achievement at 3rd, 4th, or 5th grades when a Success for All model or the Accelerated School model was used in two public elementary schools in an urban public school district in North St. Louis County.

The study continued with a review of literature and research relating to the comprehensive school reform movement. The review of literature and research provided information on the following: (1) the historical perspective and nature of school reform; (2) the three major components of successful school reform; (3) the Missouri context to school reform; and (4) program interventions and barriers to school reform.

To conduct the study, data were collected from 397 students in grades 3 (n= 126), 4 (n=129), and 5 (n= 142) from two schools in an urban public school district in North St. Louis County. Students participating in the study were nonrandomly assigned and administered the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) pre- and posttest. The data collected were statistically analyzed using the SPSS statistical analysis software package.

The study involved an analysis of variance (ANOVA). The ANOVA provided the researcher with a procedure to determine whether the difference between the average mean NCE reading scores between two schools on a dependent variable (gain) is statistically significant.

Discussion

In this section, research findings are discussed. In addition, conclusions are drawn based on the study data and results.

The results of the analyses of the pretest data collected from this study found no significant differences in the mean pretest scores for grades 3, 4, and 5 between the two schools participating in this study.

Results from data indicate that the average mean NCE reading gain score for 3rd grade female students in the Accelerated School was higher than the males. In the Success For All school just the opposite was found; the average mean NCE reading gain score for males was higher than the females. There were no statistically significant differences for both Accelerated Schools and Success for All reform models. The analysis of variance did find a significant difference between the two schools for average NCE reading gain scores, but no significance was found between the two schools for the

interaction between school and gender. No analyses were conducted for ethnicity and lunch status because of insufficient number of students.

The average NCE reading gain score for males in the fourth grade at the Success For All school were higher than the Accelerated School. At the fifth grade level, the average NCE reading gain scores for females in the Accelerated School was higher than the males. However, these differences were not significantly different.

The results of analyses found no significant differences at fourth grade for average NCE reading gain scores between the two schools. Also, no significant differences were found for the interaction between gender and school between the two schools. The results of the analyses found no significant difference at the fifth grade for average NCE reading gain scores between the two schools. Also, no significant differences were found for the interaction between gender, lunch, or the interaction between school and gender, or the interaction between school and lunch, or the interaction between school, gender and lunch.

Conclusion

The reform models, Accelerated Schools and Success For All, examined in this study have much in common. Both models: (1) prescribe prevention over remediation, (2) emphasize reading, (3) are research-based and research-tested, (4) provide a shared vision and focus on goals, (5) incorporate high quality professional development, (6) align all resources - human, financial, and technological, and (7) identify parent involvement as a major component of reform and include parents in every aspect of the school program, (8), have high standards for all children, and (9) address all core academic subject areas, instruction and school organization at all levels (ECS, 1998).

In the examination of data analyzed for this study, only one significant difference; the average NCE reading gain scores for third grade between the two schools was found. The difference was in favor of the Accelerated School over the Success for All school. Therefore, no determination could be found/made as to which Comprehensive School Reform model has a greater effect on reading achievement. Very few demographic variances in enrollment size, ethnicity, gender, and free lunch status existed between the two schools.

However, research analyzed by Herman (1999) on Success for All indicates strong evidence of positive effects on student achievement based on the size of the research and consistency of findings. In this analysis of the research, Herman detailed information from sixteen empirical studies from about two dozen different sites. All but one used sufficiently rigorous methodologies. Most of the studies used a matched control technique in which researchers compared Success for All students with students in similar schools. Herman's analysis of the research found that Success for All schools showed significant improvement in students' reading performance on standardized test.

Herman (1999) also found five research studies on Accelerated Schools that showed marginal evidence of positive effects on student achievement. Four of the studies followed a single school for two years; the fifth compared eight Accelerated Schools with schools that had implemented other reform models. Two of the five studies were considered sufficiently rigorous. Of the two rigorous studies that reported student effects, both suggested that Accelerated Schools improves student achievement, at least on certain measures, such as word attack.

Borman, Overman and Brown (2003) conducted a meta-analysis review of research on the achievement effects of comprehensive school reform (CSR) and summarized the specific effects of 29 widely implemented models. For a CSR to be considered for their study, the reform needed to be (a) a whole-school reform or schoolwide reform design; (b) the subject of at least one prior study, whether positive or negative, on which they could base their review; (c) disseminated by developers external to the schools; and replicated in 10 or more schools.

Borman et al. (2003) listed the models in their study in one of four categories, models showing (a) the strongest evidence of effectiveness, (b) highly promising evidence of effectiveness, (c) promising evidence of effectiveness, and (d) greatest need for additional research. Borman et al. through their research placed Success for All in the category of models showing strongest evidence of effectiveness on student achievement. The Accelerated Schools model was placed in the category of models showing promising evidence of effectiveness on student achievement.

Implications

The findings of this researcher suggest that both models had a positive impact on achievement in reading. Both schools in the study greatly exceeded the expected NCE gain score, suggesting that both reform models were implemented according to the developers' design.

Bargen (2005) explains that the primary use of NCEs is in the calculation of Battery scores and in the derivations of percentile ranks for group summaries. As a result of fixed intervals between NCEs, a change of 5 NCEs at one point of the scale is the same at any point on the scale. If the scaled score goes up and the NCE goes up – greater

than expected growth has occurred. If the scale score goes up and the NCE stays the same – expected growth has occurred. If the scaled score stays the same and the NCE goes down – no growth has occurred. If the scaled score goes down and the NCE goes down, this indicates negative growth.

Bargen contends that an NCE change reflects a change in relative position in comparison with the norm group. A gain in NCE units or percentile rank indicates that the student has grown more than the norm group. No change in the NCE indicates that the student has grown as much as the norm group.

Researchers, such as Herman and Borman et al., clearly found evidence that suggests the Success for All model is significantly more effective than the Accelerated Schools model. This finding suggest that had the results of this particular study been consistent with other researchers, the null hypothesis would have been rejected for all grade levels in the study. Thus findings of Herman and Borman et al. suggest that the results of the data from this study were an anomaly.

Porter and Soper (2003) contends that in properly implemented Comprehensive School Reform efforts, everyone involved in a school community has mutually-held goals and a common language to describe what is happening in the school.

Comprehensive change is planned; it becomes deliberate and is not a happy accident.

These data suggest that both schools have an environment that is positive and conducive to learning. Findings also suggest that both schools produce levels of learning higher than the average school on SRI.

Recommendations

Further Research

1. Additional research is needed using other reading tests (e.g., Gates-McGinitie Reading Test, Missouri Assessment Program, SAT 9, etc.) to determine whether the results found in this study are reliable.
2. Additional research is needed to test for a reform model's impact on student achievement in other academic areas and grades.
3. Additional study is needed to determine whether a school reform model has an impact on student achievement in reading by using larger samples and replication sites.
4. Further research should include qualitative measures for factors such as leadership, attitude, or perception of expectations.
5. Further research should examine the extent to which components of the model were implemented and be associated with increased student achievement in reading.

Clearly, improving the education of high-risk children remains an important task for our nation. The data revealed in this study suggest that while both programs resulted in greater than expected gains, these gains came not as a result of the differences in the two programs. The study suggests that the greater than expected gains can be attributed to the programs themselves. Thus, for committed researchers, dedicated to the finding of instructional methods that will produce the reading gains we desire, the work is not done. The data suggest further exploration into varied programs, methods and other factors that have impact on the reading skills for our children.

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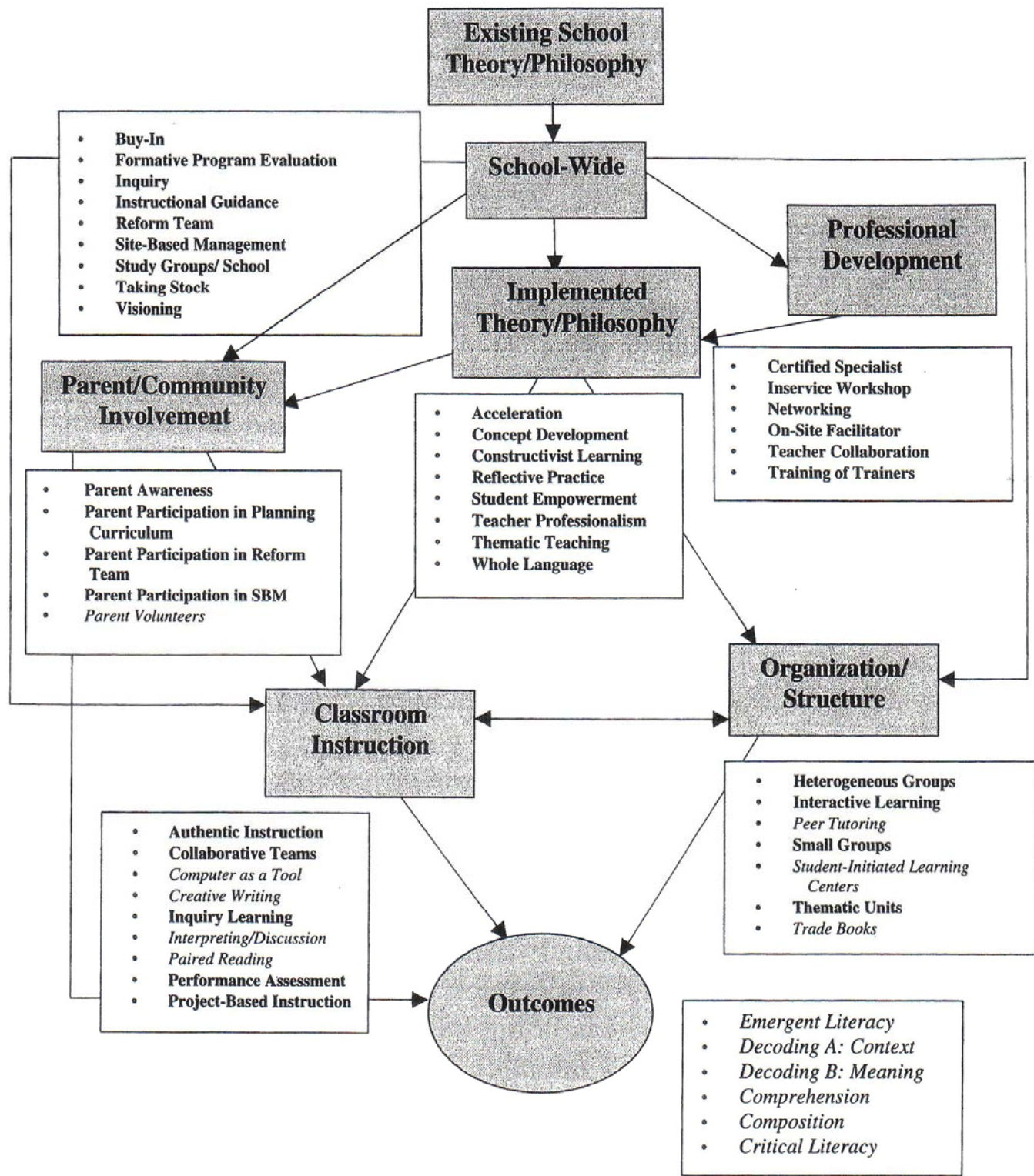
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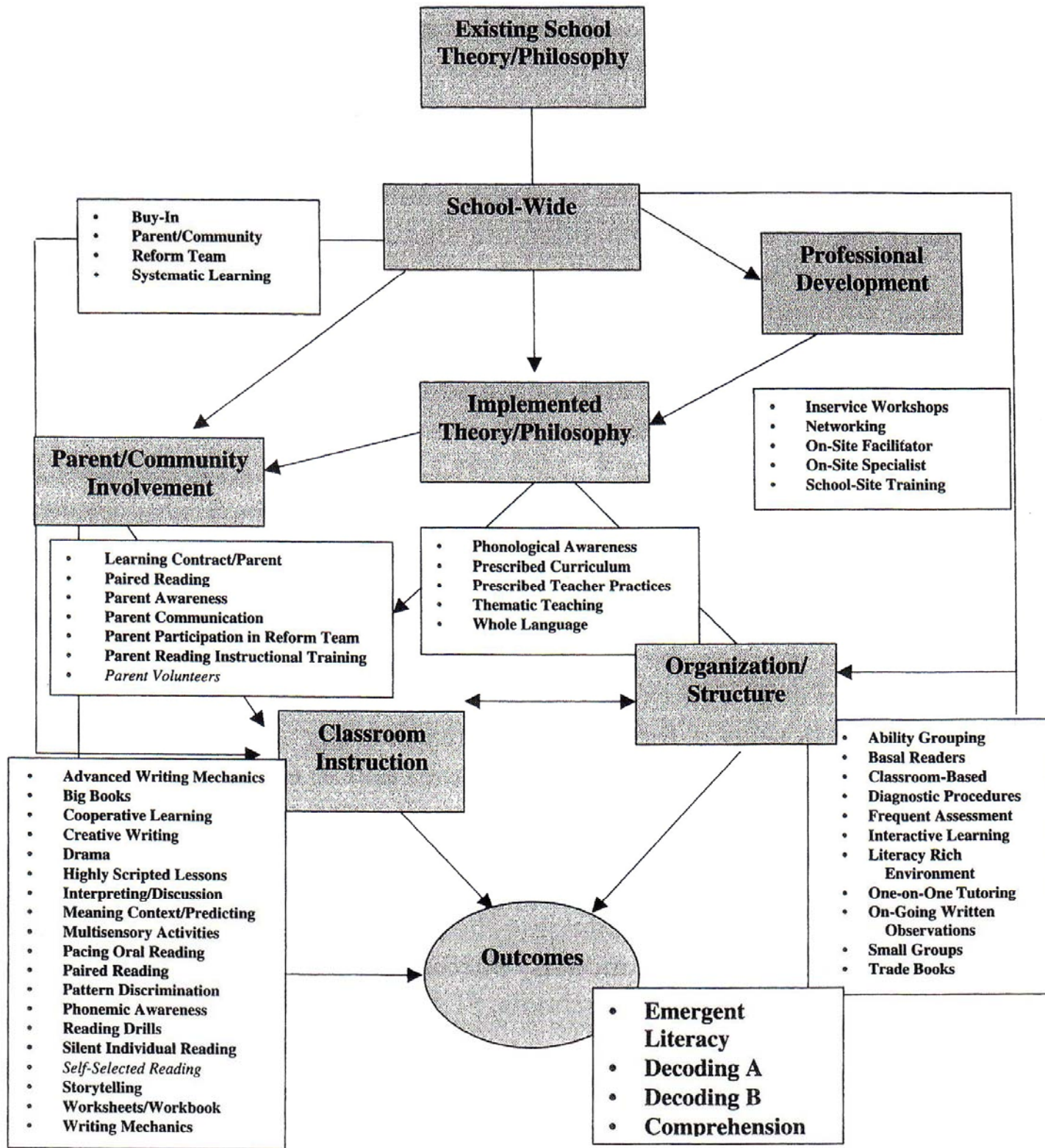
Appendix A
Reform Model Diagrams

Accelerated School



Bolded features are part of the reform; *italicized features* are sometimes adopted by schools implementing the reform.

Success for All



Bolded features are part of the reform; *italicized features* are sometimes adopted by schools implementing the reform.

Appendix B
SRI Lexile Tables

Use the results from the
**Scholastic Reading Inventory to Monitor Progress
 And Match Students to Appropriate Texts
 Grade 3 (end of year)**

For RGSD* Use Only	Proficiency Level	Lexile Range	Percentile Rank	Suggested Guided Reading Levels
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Below Grade Level

Approximately 2 Years or More Below Grade Level	At Risk	Below 250	1-13%	A-G
	Basic 1	250-400	13-26%	G-I
Approximately 1 Year Below Grade Level	Basic 2	400-500	26-38%	I-L

On Grade Level

	Low Proficient	500-600	38-52%	J-M
	Proficient	600-700	52-67%	L-P
	High Proficient	700-800	67-81%	N-Q

Above Grade Level

	Advanced	Above 800	81% & above	P-T
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*This grade level interpretation column was created after consultations with three SRI representatives during the week of January 5, 2004.

Use the results from the
**Scholastic Reading Inventory to Monitor Progress
 And Match Students to Appropriate Texts
 Grade 4 (end of year)**

For RGSD* Use Only	Proficiency Level	Lexile Range	Percentile Rank	Suggested Guided Reading Levels
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Below Grade Level

Approximately 2 Years or More Below Grade Level	At Risk	Below 350	1-11%	A-I
	Basic 1	350-500	11-25%	I-L
Approximately 1 Year Below Grade Level	Basic 2	500-600	25-36%	J-N

On Grade Level

	Low Proficient	600-700	36-50%	M-P
	Proficient	700-800	50-64%	N-Q
	High Proficient	800-900	64-79%	P-S

Above Grade Level

	Advanced	Above 900	79% & above	S-T
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*This grade level interpretation column was created after consultations with three SRI representatives during the week of January 5, 2004.

Use the results from the
**Scholastic Reading Inventory to Monitor Progress
 And Match Students to Appropriate Texts
 Grade 5 (end of year)**

For RGSD* Use Only	Proficiency Level	Lexile Range	Percentile Rank	Suggested Guided Reading Levels
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Below Grade Level

Approximately 2 Years or More Below Grade Level	At Risk	Below 450	1-13%	I-L
	Basic 1	450-600	13-22%	J-M
Approximately 1 Year Below Grade Level	Basic 2	600-700	22-33%	L-P

On Grade Level

	Low Proficient	700-800	33-48%	N-Q
	Proficient	800-900	48-64%	Q-S
	High Proficient	900-1000	64-80%	R-T

Above Grade Level

	Advanced	Above 1000	80% & above	S-T
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*This grade level interpretation column was created after consultations with three SRI representatives during the week of January 5, 2004.

Appendix C
Permission Letter

Bobby E. Gines

1858 Kilmory Drive * Florissant, MO 63031 * Phone: 314.839.4487 * Fax: 314.388.6003 * bogines@rgsd.org

April 15, 2005

Dear Dr. Williams,

I am a doctoral student at the University of Missouri-Columbia requesting permission to use district Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) data for my study entitled "Comparing Two Comprehensive Reform Models: Their Effect On Student Reading Achievement." The data is part of the district's annual assessment of student performance.

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of two different reform models, Accelerated Schools and Success for All, on student reading achievement. A code list will be developed where each school will be assigned an alphabet letter. The code list will be maintained exclusively by the researcher. In all written materials, the schools will only be referred to their alphabet code. The students in this study will be kept anonymous by the use of alphabetic designations (e.g., "A", "B", "C", etc.).

If you are in agreement with my use of this data, please sign below granting your permission. This signed document will become a part of the university's Institutional Review Board records.

W. Williams

Superintendent's Signature

4.22.05

Date

Bobby E. Gines

Student's Signature

4/22/05

Date

VITA

Bobby Eugene Gines was born June 25, 1945, to Juanita and Henderson Gines. Bobby is married to Brenda Joyce Gines; they have three children and eight grandchildren.

He received his elementary and secondary education in the Ritenour School District in North St. Louis County and graduated from Ritenour High School in June 1964.

In August 1968, he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Central Missouri State University. He received from the University of Missouri – Kansas City: Masters of Arts with an emphasis in science (1975), Certification for Elementary School Administration (1985), and Education Specialist Degree in Elementary Administration (1989). In July 2005, he received his Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from the University of Missouri - Columbia.

He has been in education for 37 years. Of those 37 years, 16 years were spent as a classroom teacher, 4 years as an Instructional Guide, and 1 year as an assistant principal in the Kansas City Public School District. Bobby received a principalship in the Hickman Mills School District in 1988 and served in that position for 5 years before being promoted to Assistant Superintendent in 1993. In 1997, Bobby accepted a position in the Riverview Gardens School District as Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Support; a position he currently holds.