The Instructional Practice Implications of a School Reform Model Versus No School Reform Model on Reading Achievement

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THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

THE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS OF A SCHOOL REFORM MODEL VERSUS NO SCHOOL REFORM MODEL ON READING ACHIEVEMENT

by

Adebimpe Adebisi Solaru Odunjo

Abstract of a Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate School of The University of Southern Mississippi in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2011
ABSTRACT
THE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS OF A SCHOOL REFORM MODEL VERSUS NO SCHOOL REFORM MODEL ON READING ACHIEVEMENT
by Adebimpe Adebisi Solaru Odunjo

December 2011

School reform seems to be the answer to redeeming the US public school system, but as observed by Slavin (1989) the cycle of reform has been for schools to jump from one prescriptive fad to another without any real congealing of ideas. Plagued by earlier installments of school reform programs reading instructional practice has resembled a mass of ideas that differ greatly in varying theoretical approaches.

The NCLB Act of 2000 came under widespread criticism which has lately been revised under President Obama’s initiative Blue Print for Reform. Over the years, the validity of NCLB measures have been doubted and questioned. Many are concerned that school sores are being influenced by outliers that are beyond a school’s control.

Each year and more so significant tax dollars are spent on comprehensive school reform, on the average $72,000 - $90,000 per year for a minimum of three years. It is therefore necessary to closely examine the effectiveness of school reform programs particularly the America’s Choice program, on increasing student achievement outcomes.

This study compared the reading growth scores in Comprehension and Vocabulary of schools that participated in the America’s Choice program versus the reading growth scores of schools that do not participate in the America’s Choice program
in the last seven years. In addition, the study explored the relationship between teacher’s perceptions of autonomy in instructional practice in relation to teaching conditions.

This study was a quantitative study with quasi-experimental methods and a mixed model ANOVA design. The populations of the schools used in this study were determined by enrollment demographics by other subgroups such as Students with Disabilities, Eligibility for Free and Reduced Lunch, Limited English Proficiency and Migrant status.

The analysis of the ITBS scores results of this study show that schools that utilized the America’s Choice (AC) program repeatedly scored significantly lower than the schools that did not utilize the program in every dimension. In the analysis to determine if there is a direct relationship between Teaching conditions and teacher perceptions of autonomy, it was indicated that there was no significant relationship.
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A Dissertation
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Dean of the Graduate School
December 2011

DEDICATION

I thank the LORD, my Shield. I dedicate my achievement to my husband Joseph who prays for, supports and encourages me; to my children, ‘Mayowa, Jaiyeola and Babatunde, who inspire and challenge me to live purposefully; and to my parents and siblings who instilled a competitive spirit for learning.
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Sincere appreciation is extended to Dr. Tammy Greer for providing statistical analysis advice and expertise offered during the completion of my study. I especially want to thank Dr. Maulding for her inspiring vision and determination.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The search to improve the educational lot of students identified as being at risk, and the quest to raise the quality of education currently existent in the United States led to the development of many comprehensive models of school reform. Yet, as observed by Slavin (1989) the cycle of reforms has been recurring, with school systems moving from one prescriptive fad to another. As each new reform is distributed and implemented, the research to support or dismiss issues encountered with the program follows after the schools have typically moved on to the next reform (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2003). With this precedent, the focus for Congress and other policy makers has been on instituting changes to the school culture, the expectations, beliefs and perceptions of what would be quantified and qualified as appropriate roles for the educator, the family and student concerned and simultaneously establishing new instructional practices that will yield stronger educational results (Finnan & Levin, 2000).

What had been typical to implementing change in schools, up until the early 1980s, was to address them idiosyncratically without any congealing of ideas or strategy or team buy-in (Levin, 2002). As reported by Finnan and Levin (2000), the flaw in this approach is that it was haphazard and often poorly received, thereby effecting little to no change at all. Some of these suggested adoptions/ideas for new systems of change were new curriculum packages in different subjects, technology infusions, reduction in class sizes, cooperative learning, flexible grouping, project learning, block scheduling etc. Often times the changes that appeared to occur were nothing more than a jumble of ideas
that were melded in with existing core fundamental practices which typically remained intact (Finnan & Levin, 2000).

The trouble with the ideas of reform in the United States has been that it has only been a mass of ideas (Levin, 2002). Ideas that were not completely thought out were abandoned soon after encountering obstacles and that could not be easily disentangled in order to afford progress. This calls to question if indeed any whole school reform has actually taken place or rather that the undertaking has been a rebranding of old practices under the guise of comprehensive school reform. Traditionally, (Finnan & Levin, 2000), schools would use one or several reform programs within a school year or even in the course of five years, never completing, measuring or comparing outcomes, thus in the relatively short course of time, they would discard whatever program and begin the futile cycle again with yet another promising new reform. In the long term, none of the individual reforms performed or delivered whole school modifications (Cuban, 1993).

According to Rowan, Correnti, Miller, and Camburn (2009), school reform studies avoid measuring instructional practice when explaining student achievement outcomes in reading. Rowan et al. (2009) in the quest to improve the quality of education, assert that, it is important to take a closer look at how particular instructional practices influence growth and achievement in reading. The type of instructional practice utilized, how and when these practices are measured and the results of these practices are central to understanding the reasons for accelerated or retarded growth in students reading achievement.

The usual practice in schools for measuring student achievement is to teach the standard and then test the student repeatedly on the standard to ensure mastery. Studies
show that some reforms have altered the way that teachers teach substantially (Abrams, Pedulla, & Madus, 2003). When teachers’ responses on assessments are examined in states with high and low stakes attached to their improvement, it is observed that the pressure to raise test scores compel some teachers to spend inordinate amounts of instructional time to test preparation and not so much on the quality of the content learned by the student.

Background

Instructional Practice has to do with the methodology by which instruction is disseminated to students (Rowan et al., 2009). A sound set of learning principles is central to the success of achieving the desired outcomes of any developmental program. Effective instructional practice does not exist in a vacuum; it should be dynamic following a logical sequence that will expand knowledge and meet the perceived needs of the learner (Rowan, et al. 2009). Elkind (2006) indicated that the current belief that children should perform uniformly through the grades is causing problems particularly in the early primary grades. Elkind (2006) further states these issues can be traced back to the early years and a change in, what he describes as, the perception of precocity in the parents.

Several decades ago, precocity was looked upon with great suspicion…all that changed markedly during the 1960s (p. 5)….if you did not start teaching your child when they were young, parents are told , a golden opportunity for learning would be lost... In too many schools kindergartens have become “one-size-smaller” first grades and children are tested, taught with workbooks, given homework, and take home a report card. The result of this educational hurrying is
that from 10 to 20 percent of kindergarten children are being “retained” or put in “transition classes” to prepare them for academic rigors of first grade! (Elkind, 2006, p.7)

The primary purpose of reading instruction is to help the learner construct meaning from print to establish growth in reading. The ability to comprehend what is read therefore is based on several factors:

a.) phonemic awareness,
b.) phonics,
c.) fluency,
d.) vocabulary and
e.) comprehension

(National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000).

There are several techniques available to teach the five components listed. The approaches of these techniques differ based on the teaching style of the instructor. Factors such as how much guidance or direction teachers provide during scaffold/independent practices, how explicit and directly teachers explain new skills, whether they specify exactly how to use a particular skill, and whether the skills are taught in a thoughtful sequence. Scientific research reviewed by the National Reading Panel revealed that these different approaches or methods of teaching the five essential components are not equally effective. In their conclusion, the most reliable and effective approach is called systematic and explicit instruction (NICHD, 2000).

Correnti (2005) in his research of best practices quotes the following questions culled from Reid Lyon’s *Overview of Reading and Literacy Initiatives* (1998, p. 12). The
author asks “For which children are which reading instruction models / approaches / methods most beneficial at which stages of reading development and in which classroom environments?” This question represents the crux of the dilemma on selecting which process is best to bring about an increase in student outcomes for all students.

In essence, in recent years what reading instruction looks like is a collection of practices based on widely differing theoretical assumptions that could be adopted and applied to the same children and teachers (Snow, 2002). Experts in language acquisition research have found it difficult to sort through all the research directed at how children learn to read. The result as such is an ongoing debate as to the most effective approach to teaching reading instruction (Correnti, 2005).

The results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) further show the urgency in the need to find a solution to the slipping achievement gains in America’s educational system. In 2009 the percentage of Fourth graders who were identified as proficient or advanced in reading was only 33%. And the percentage of students reading at or below the basic level was 66%. These results show the growing achievement gap evident in Fourth Grade, a critical grade indicative of projected student’s performance in Middle and High School (NAEP, 2009).

Recognizing the effects which unfiltered reform programs have had on American education, and in an effort to be proactive, the U.S. Congress in 2001 passed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) designed to improve schools through a system of standards based accountability (SBA). NCLB’s accountability provisions require each state to develop content and achievement standards, measure student progress through tests, and intervene in schools and districts that do not meet the targets. Since NCLB went into
effect, its accountability provisions have affected every public school and district in the nation (Hamilton et al., 2007).

One of the most widespread criticisms among scholars, of the No Child Left Behind Act is its dependence on measures of achievement that represent the grade-level scores of students at a single point in time. Individual growth models would generally be preferred because they follow the same students over time, defining the performance target in terms of improvement rather than a fixed level of attainment (Hamilton et al., 2007). One recommendation, widely discussed in NCLB’s reauthorization debate, is the adoption of growth-based measurements of student achievement. While some states are now experimenting with growth-based measurements as part of a U.S. Department of Education pilot program, the program requires the existing grade-level measurements to continue to be used and students having 100 percent mastery by 2014. This practice defeats the goal of defining improved performance over time as opposed to a fixed level of attainment. Critics view this as both unrealistic and limited in scope (Hamilton et al., 2007).

In a speech at the 1998 Annual Conference of the Public Education Network, Anthony Alvarado, the San Diego Schools District’s newly hired Chancellor of Instruction, asserted that, There has to be a massive, massive attempt to change school systems into adult learning communities that generate practice, focused on what kids need to learn and be able to do. That’s it. There’s no other agenda’ (Alvarado, 1998, p. 2, emphasis added). Research in the study of instructional practice - states that the trouble in translating effective literacy instruction into standard practice is two-pronged. The first problem is identified as a highly individualized view of reading ability and its
progression along a continuum. The second problem is ascribed to the teachers having the responsibility of moving entire classrooms of students along this continuum. In effect this view suggests that there is little information available to accurately indentify when students have achieved an independent level of proficient/advanced competence and no longer require further unnecessary instruction (Correnti, 2005).

In answer to the complexity of choosing the best instructional practices that will yield the surest and desired lasting measure of achievement, some of the solutions proffered to reducing the gap in instructional methods and outcome of student achievement, have been (a) to have more interaction between the researchers and the teachers to make educational research more convincing, usable and accessible to classroom teachers (Gersten, Morvant, & Brengleman, 1995); (b) aligning practice with current research findings and accelerating the translation of research knowledge for practice (Carnine, 1997; Simmons, Kuykendall, King, Cornachione, & Kameenui, 2000); (c) creating professional roles in local schools for research lead teachers, professionals whose duties include identifying and translating research into practice through work with local teachers (Logan & Stein, 2001); and (d) implementing professional development models that go beyond the traditional one-shot in-service teacher training to effect change in practice (Boudah & Knight, 1999; Boudah, Logan, & Greenwood, 2001; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2001; Vaughn, Hughes, Klingner, & Schumm, 1998).

In as much as these and several other researchers have suggested measurable change, teachers and principals alike doubt the validity of the measurements utilized by NCLB. Teachers are especially concerned that school scores are being influenced by student background characteristics and other factors beyond a school’s control. Adopting
alternative performance indicators that mitigate the influence of external factors might increase the likelihood that teachers will view the performance metrics as reflecting their own efforts. Additionally, given the widespread skepticism that grade-level targets can be reached over the next several years, a growth-based measure might increase the likelihood that educators will view their targets as attainable, and might just perhaps increase their motivation (Hamilton et al., 2007).

According to Hamilton et al. (2007), the current focus on proficiency rates creates incentives to move students from just below to just above proficient but fails to reward teaching that does not push students over this threshold (whether because students’ prior performance is far below it or already above it. A growth-based measurement that gives credit for movement all along the achievement scale could still reflect state or national priorities without ignoring certain types of achievement gains (Hamilton et al., 2007).

Statement of the Problem

Although there are a plethora of research reports in existence that have identified reading practices supported by evidence that they accelerate progress in learning to read (Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 1999; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998); the implementation of these practices is much slower than one would wish. Even with a slow implementation process, there are other factors within the prescribed instructional practices of the reform design that are outside of the framework of the reform design programs which have an impact on improving student achievement.

If in fact there is a specific reading strategy or instructional practice that increases student achievement, it has not yet been clearly identified. There is a need within these studies to clearly measure the extent of reform program instructional practice
implementation and its effect on accelerating or improving the learner’s achievement outcome regardless of confounding variables.

Relationship of the Study to this Problem

Each year and more so recently, the United States government spends significant tax dollars on comprehensive school reform (CSR) models to improve educational outcomes. Districts, schools, teachers and administrative leaders invest many hours and participate in many new initiatives like Race to the Top in efforts to improve their schools through the use of these models. To qualify for federal funding support, these models must be nationally research based best practices. However, with the approximate average cost of any comprehensive school reform being $72,000 per year for a minimum of three years it is important to ask certain questions about the validity and value of the program.

Purpose of the Study

In response to the research opportunities raised in the foregoing studies, this study will explore the direct impact that the instructional practices of one school reform has on student achievement outcomes in reading and explore the relationship between teaching conditions and teacher’s perception of autonomy in instructional practice. The documentation that will provide evidence of learning should strongly match the methods employed to teach (Rowan et al., 2009). The common routine of measuring instructional practice in reading is usually done on a predictive schedule; therefore the outcome of the observation is often inaccurate and biased, thus a closer look at the instructional practices that affect an increase in student achievement becomes necessary.

The aim of exploring the impact of instructional practice on reading growth is to obtain evidence on which school districts can rely to make more appropriate decisions.
School Districts will be able to identify which educational interventions should be allocated funding. This study will further engage educators to polish specific instructional practices that have been proven to be effective. School leaders will be more knowledgeable of ways of implementing institutional change to produce a more efficient mechanism for increasing and sustaining student achievement in reading.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is graphically displayed below. The study’s conceptual framework is based on the five areas that affect comprehensive school reform: historical background of educational reform, implementation practices, professional development, teacher, support and training, teacher beliefs/autonomy, and student achievement.

![Conceptual Framework](image)

*Figure 1. Conceptual Framework*
Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a difference in reading growth scores between students participating in the America’s Choice reading program compared to students who are not participating in the America’s Choice reading program?

2. Is there a relationship between Teaching Conditions and teacher’s perceptions of autonomy in practice?

Research Hypotheses

H₁. There will be no difference between students who are in the America’s Choice program and students who are not in the America’s Choice Program.

H₂. There will be a relationship between teaching conditions and teacher’s perceptions of autonomy.

Assumptions

There will be three assumptions regarding this study. First, the obtained archived school data of Third and Fifth Grade Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) in Reading (Vocabulary and Comprehension) are accurate and valid. Second, teachers’ responses to survey instrument items were given without the influence of power coercion. Third, teachers responded independently and honestly to survey items.

Delimitations

The delimitations for this study are as follows:

1. The (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) ITBS scores of 3rd and 5th grades have been selected for this study.
2. The scores of other grade levels, middle school and high school will not be utilized in this study.

3. Eight America’s Choice schools will participate in this study.

4. This sample population for this study will be 350.

5. The socio economic status of the students utilized in this study is above the poverty level.

6. The average number of years of professional teaching experience of teachers is 10 years.

7. This research is limited to the study of instructional practices America’s Choice comprehensive school reform only.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided to assure consistency and understanding of these terms throughout the study.

1. Adequate Yearly progress (AYP): States hold schools and district accountable for AYP toward the goal of all students meeting their state defined proficient levels by the end of the school year 2013 -2014. Adequate yearly progress is a measure of year to year student achievement on statewide assessments. Title I schools that fail to make AYP must offer their students the option of transferring to other public schools or receiving supplemental educational services outside the school. Title I schools that fail to improve over time can be restructured, converted into charter schools or taken over by their district or state (Georgia Department of Education, 2010).
2. America’s Choice (AC): Comprehensive reform program that focuses on writing skills.

3. At-risk student: A student who has fallen behind in academic performance in reading and language (Slavin, 1991).

4. Comprehensive School Reform (CSR): Comprehensive School research-based approaches to school improvement that incorporate instructional content and strategies, shared decision making, the use of student data, professional development, and parent involvement. CSR has been guided by the principle that improvement strategies should be grounded in research.

5. District Benchmark test: is considered to be the methods used by a school district in which pedagogy and core curriculum is matched with assessments to measure student improvement every 9.5 weeks during the school year. (Assessment & Accountability Comprehensive Center)

6. Instructional Capacity building: The development of a schools core skills and capabilities, such as leadership, management, finance and fundraising, programs and evaluations, in order to build the organizations effectiveness and sustainability. It is the process of assisting an individual or group to identify and address issues and gain the insights, knowledge and experience needed to solve and implement change (Lambert, 2005)

7. No Child Left Behind (NCLB): the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110) sets demanding accountability standards for schools school districts and states including new testing requirements designed to
improve education. States must categorize adequate yearly progress (AYP) objectives and disaggregate test results for all students and subgroups of students based on socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, English Language proficiency and disability.

8. Professional Learning Communities: when everyone works collectively to seek and share learning and act on that learning to improve their effectiveness as professionals so that students benefit, they are functioning as a professional learning community (Du Four, 2004)

9. Reader’s Workshop: this refers to a daily, one and one half hour block of time dedicated to oral language development, vocabulary instruction, comprehension and the development of fluency in reading. Students learn effective strategies for comprehending text and how to study literature. They connect what they read to their own lives, other texts they have read and their knowledge of the world (Tucker & Codd, 1998)

10. School-Wide Title I School: This refers to schools receiving Title I Federal funds and having at least 50% of their student population on the free or reduced price lunches (U.S. Department of Education, 1996)

11. Title I: A multifaceted federally funded program that provides additional funding to schools based on their high ratios of students ranked at or below poverty level (Georgia Department of Education, 2010).

Justification

This research will help to provide school leaders with a framework to further understand components of comprehensive school reform that affect student achievement
outcomes. The findings in the study will contribute to the ongoing research to pinpoint effective instructional practices that impact student achievement outcomes in reading. The study will also lend itself to explain the balance of effects between teacher autonomy in instructional practice and empowerment to contribute to professional decisions about teaching and learning.

The effects of leadership on teacher beliefs about perceived autonomy in instructional practice and how these beliefs affect student achievement will be discussed. Further, this study will contribute to the body of knowledge on the efforts to understand and to identify instructional practices that impact student achievement. A variety of approaches that may be contributing factors which affect student motivation that in turn effect an increase in student achievement will also be explored.

Summary

This study will explore how the instructional practices of America’s Choice have affected reading achievement scores of students in fourth grade in elementary schools that have implemented the program in the last five years and explore the relationship between teacher autonomy in instructional practice and increase in student achievement outcomes.

NCLB has instituted accountability measures to develop content, achievement, and instructional practice, in the hopes of improving student achievement. These measures are problematic. Conflicting results are bound to occur due to slow implementation of practices, teachers highly individualized views of reading ability and its progression along a continuum, the teacher having the responsibility of moving entire
classrooms of students along the continuum and the predictive nature of measuring instructional practice that often yields inaccurate and biased outcomes.

The depth of research that some reform programs base their practices and the amount of federal dollars that are allocated to these programs is enough to ask more questions about the program’s validity, value and effectiveness. Many Districts invest substantial hours in professional development and initiatives that will enhance each student’s educational experience in the hopes of ringing bout an increase in student achievement. If in fact there is a specific reading strategy of instructional practice that will surely increase student achievement as other reform programs claim, it has not yet been clearly identified and this study will contribute to the search to do so.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The need to ensure that American children can effectively participate in the future job market is critical. With the ever increasing gap in achievement between White and minority (Black and Latino) students, the urgency to establish continuity between the minority student’s education and the rest of their lives is foremost on the agenda of rebuilding the educational system. According to a 2009 national report on the reading ability of Fourth Grade students, 78% of White students read at or above basic levels, 48% of Black Students read at or above basic levels and 49% of Hispanic students read at or above level (NAEP, 2009). Making access to world class education work and making it work for all is indeed a daunting task, but it cannot be viewed as being impossible or unachievable.

One of the key areas of education to probe is at the elementary level. It is at this stage that foundation is laid for future success. To be functionally illiterate in the early grades places students at risk in the future (Correnti, 2005). Currently, there is much debate over the types of educational reform programs that will be the most effective in supporting students learning to read. Meanwhile, American children lag behind in reading/literacy achievement levels in comparison to other developed nations (PISA 2009). In the report, *Blue Print for Reform*, President Obama stated that a generation ago, America led all nations in college completion. According to the Department of Education, today four out of every ten students that are college bound are unprepared for higher education academic rigor (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Having this in mind, if progress is to be made in revamping the educational structure of the United
States, one of the first places to begin is to take a critical look at the factors of systems of accountability that contribute to aiding or impeding advancements in instructional practice that affect student achievement.

A Brief History

Ron Edmonds, a significant researcher in *The Effective Schools Movement* in the 1970s is credited with bringing attention to the way in which effective and ineffective schools differed. The result of Edmond’s call to action, it is claimed, was that other researchers joined the movement to develop models that would address the entire school by altering their organization, resource allocation and information flows (Levin, 1997).

In other studies regarding the Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) movement was first initiated by the New American Schools Development Corporation (NASDC) a private not-for-profit organization. NASDC was founded as part of then President George H. Bush’s America 2000 initiative. NASDC was later renamed New American School (NAS). The New American Schools Development Corporation sought front line models for school change and by the late 1990s a push for research based school improvement came to be known as the Whole School Reform (WSR) or Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) (Rowan et al., 2009).

The replicable nature of the CSR was further explored and gave birth to the idea of a systemic move toward standards based reform. By the late 1990s and early 2000s, CSR had become a national trend. Publications that spoke of major works on school change by experts such as Fullan (1991); Hargreaves, Liberman, Fullan and Hopkins (2000), began emerging that led to the establishment of federal legislation for

The CSR was established as a demonstration program in 1998 and authorized as a full program legislatively in 2002 as part of the No Child Left behind Act (NCLB). CSR emphasizes two major concepts (U.S. Dept of Education, 2008). First the approach mandates that the school reform should be comprehensive in nature strengthening all aspects of school operations, curriculum development, professional development, school organization, and parental involvement. Second, CSR involves the use of scientifically based research models. That is, models with evidence of effectiveness in multiple settings.

CSR focuses on reorganizing and revamping entire school systems rather than on implementing a number of specialized and potentially uncoordinated school improvement initiatives. The funding for CSR has been targeted toward the schools that are most in need of reform and improvement: high poverty school with low student test scores. Data from the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory states that schools which received money to implement CSR models have an average poverty rate of 70% while Title I schools made up about 40% of the schools that received CSRD funds and 25% or more of the schools were identified as low performing schools by state or local policies (U.S. Dept of Education, 2008).

The other significant funding source of CSR programs has been Title I of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. With the reauthorization of Title I as the NCLB Act, the CSRP and Title I have come together as the same legislation. Thus Title I, Part F, CSRD is now a significant source of the growing federal
support scientifically based efforts to reform low-performing high-poverty schools across the nation.

NCLB defines CSR as containing 11 components which are assumed to work together to undergo reform. These components are:

1. Proven Methods
2. Comprehensive Design
3. Professional Development
4. Measurable goals
5. Support from Staff
6. Support for Staff
7. Parent and community involvement
8. External Assistance
9. Evaluation
10. Coordination of Resources
11. Scientifically-Based Research

In addition to adopting the 11 components CSR schools are expected to use the reform models with a strong scientific research base. According to Hale (2000) the one unique aspect of CSR is its expectation that schools will collaborate with expert partners to implement research-based whole school reform methods with a successful replication record.

Since its inception there has been an onslaught of school reform programs, starting in the early 2000s. Programs such as Accelerated Schools project, America’s Choice, Success For All, School Development Program, the Core Knowledge Project,
New American Schools and more have come to the foreground each recommending a prescription to overhaul the education of America.

*School of Improvement by Design*

The idea of having Schools of Improvement by Design was a concept pursued by the US government in the 1950s, in a bid to build research and development centers that would be dedicated to the field of education. The idea then, was that research would be conducted in universities and through other non-governmental organizations, working together to build a network of educational laboratories and research development centers to promote the dissemination and utilization of innovative designs for teaching practice, a move authorized by the Cooperative Research Act of 1954 and carried out by the United States Office of Education. Policy makers wanted to tackle the mammoth project of improving schools by creating research based processes that would address the practical problems that commonly prevail in organizational change. Results from this angle would then become a springboard to move on to develop new educational programs and instructional practices that could be widely disseminated and utilized in practice (Rowan et al., 2009).

*Implementation Practices*

Despite the long history and recent proliferation of Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) designs, there is surprisingly limited rigorous, scientific or independent evidence on their effectiveness in either implementation quality or most critically raising student achievement. According to Borman et al. (2003), prior to their recent meta-analysis of 29 popular models, there have been only five major practitioner oriented reviews or catalogs (Ross et al., 2004).
Borman et al. (2003) state a common complaint amongst researchers, that although there have been several publications that have provided some appraisals of CSR models, very few have offered a comprehensive, quantitative synthesis of the overall effects of the various CSR models. Of what is available, the reviews typically contain summaries of the general attributes of the CSR model appraisals of the level of support that is provided by the developers, the costs associated with implementing the program and ratings on the strength of research that supports the CSR program. This is not very helpful when one tries to seek empirical studies that link actual practice to student achievement. Borman also states that the developers are typically the evaluators of their own programs.

However biased or impartial the reviews by others may be, by omission or commission, there are certain common threads or factors that have significant bearing on the success or failure of externally developed reform programs as highlighted by Borman et al. (2003).

1. The quality of the CSR model implementation is key.
2. An externally developed model that is clearly defined and is implemented with fidelity, yields stronger effects on teaching and learning than reforms that are less clearly defined (Bodily, 1996, 1998; Nunnery, 1998).
3. Well implemented reforms tend to have strong professional development and training components and effective follow-up to address teachers’ specific problems in implementing change within their classrooms (Muncey & McQuillan, 1996; Nunnery 1998).
4. In order for external models to make an important impact within schools, teachers and administrators must support buy in and or even help to co construct the reform design (Borman et al., 2000; Datnow & Stringfield, 2000).

As such, it is expected that the quality of implementation will vary when reforms are taken to scale and implemented in many sites. As stated in a study by Supovitz & May (2004), a RAND report supported this notion, demonstrating that the variation in the quality of implementation of comprehensive school reform (CSR) programs during the past decade was quite large (Berends, Bodilly, & Kirby, 2002). Along with the support for the variation in the quality of implementation, the study also revealed that there are greater variations within schools that implemented versions of instructional practice than across schools. Essentially a school wide adoption held strictly by the guidelines of implementing a particular instructional practice design had failed. “This finding suggests that variation in the implementation efforts of individual teachers may be a very important factor in determining impact. Although no empirical link between implementation and effectiveness is made in the RAND report, a low level of implementation is given as a possible explanation for the small observed effects on student performance” [in reading] (Supovitz & May, 2004, p. 390).

Numerous research studies exploring the effects of other school reform initiatives on the education of at-risk students have also suggested that higher levels of implementation are associated with greater student performance gains. As stated by Berends et al. (2002), “schools [willing to contract comprehensive school reform designs] need strong leaders- principals who can bring a unified sense of vision to the school and
staff, provide instructional leadership and organizational leadership in terms of making sure the teachers have the necessary time, resources and support to fully implement the design” (p. 127) There is no doubt that a school’s capacity for change influences the quality of implementation. However the observed variety of effects of CSR on student achievement is still an issue. Perhaps what is needed is adequately captured by the conclusion made by Datnow (2004) in her research:

Support needs to be provided to schools not just at the initiation phase, but also during implementation and in planning for the future. States could have a key role as well, most important in providing follow up to schools to ensure quality implementation and helping develop school’s short and long term capacity for improvement (Datnow, 2004, p. 135).

In other studies, researchers evaluating the impact of the Success for All (SFA) program in Fort Wayne, Indiana and in Memphis, Tennessee consistently found that schools with high levels of implementation experienced the greatest improvements in student performance, whereas schools with low levels of implementation experienced little or no improvement in student performance relative to control schools (Ross, Smith, & Casey, 1997). In yet another SFA study, Datnow and Castellano (2000) found that there was similar variation in teachers' support for and implementation of SFA in a school "experiencing implementation success" and a school "experiencing difficulty with implementation" (p. 780).

In a study conducted by Camburn, Rowan and Taylor (2003), teachers in America’s Choice (AC) schools received a curriculum guide, were taught a set of recommended instructional routines for teaching writing (called “writers’ workshop”),
and worked with locally appointed AC coaches and facilitators to develop “core writing assignments” and clear scoring “rubrics” for judging students’ written work. Thus, in the area of writing instruction at least, AC was trying to implement a well-specified, standards-based curriculum grounded in professional consensus about what constitutes a desirable instructional program.

Even where seemingly rigorous studies have been performed the determination of educational program effects in school settings may be influenced by many extraneous variables (Berliner, 2002). One such variable is the potential bias due to design factors that might favor the experimental over the control group or due to the involvement of developers in researching their own models. A second factor is evidence becoming dated as a result of a model undergoing changes over time or being implemented in schools affected by different national or local policies than existed in the past. Yet a third factor could be the many contextual variables that influence how a program or model is perceived by school staff, integrated with administrative structures and other initiatives, implemented by teachers and sustained over time (Cuban, 1993; Datnow, Borman, & Stringfield, 2000; Fullan, 2000). In view of these considerations, it is not surprising that a given CSR model can have positive effects at one school but fail to succeed at a similar school in the same geographic area and school district (Ross et al., 2004).

Experts on program evaluation and effectiveness research agree that studying implementation of instructional practice is an important part of any effort to measure the impact of a program (Rossi, Freeman, & Lipsey, 1999; Weiss, 1997). Even an effective program would presumably have a lesser impact when poorly implemented than when implemented well.
Profile of Reform Programs

Success For All (SFA)

Success For All was developed in the late 1980s by Robert Slavin and his associates at John Hopkins University (Slavin & Madden, 2001). The overall goal is to enable every child in participating schools to read at grade level by the end of Grade 3. SFA emphasizes strategies for early intervention and prevention of reading failure. The key components of SFA consist of: (a) a research based reading program comprised of Reading Roots in Grades k-1 and reading wings in higher grades, (b) a strong emphasis on developing both phonemic awareness and comprehension skills; (c) individual tutoring by certified teachers for students most in need; (d) regrouping of students so that ability-grouped multi-age classes are established for a daily 90 minute reading block; (e) a family support team to bolster attendance and parent involvement; (f) a full time facilitator; and (g) extensive, ongoing professional development (Ross et al., 2004).

Soar to Success (SS)

The primary goal of Soar to Success is to increase students’ understanding of what they read through an approach called reciprocal teaching. Essentially, reciprocal teaching is a lively dialogue between the teacher and the students where students are taught to use the cognitive strategies of summarizing, clarifying, questioning, and predicting. Soar to Success lends itself to a variety of settings and may be taught by classroom teachers, reading specialists, special education teachers, and other educators. The components of each grade level include 18 literature books, a comprehensive, highly detailed teacher’s guide, assessments including an Informal Reading Inventory and protocols for oral reading fluency and retelling, an aligned student guide, posters of the
strategies and graphic organizers, and a staff development video. A phonics/decoding screener is also available as well as additional phonics lessons to accompany each book for students in need of extra support.

Instruction for Soar to Success occurs in small groups of 5-7 students that meet daily for 30-40 minute lessons for 18 weeks. Each lesson consists of five parts: Revisiting, Reviewing, Rehearsing, Reading and Reciprocal teaching, and Responding/Reflecting. Students read one book for four to five consecutive lessons, with a specific chunk of the book as the focus of each lesson.

Read 180

Read 180 is a comprehensive reading intervention program designed to meet the needs of students in elementary through high school whose reading achievement is below the proficient level. The Stages of instruction include targeting elementary students, targeting middle school students and targeting high school students. Read 180 is based on the work of Dr. Ted Hasslebring at Vanderbilt University and Janet Allen a writer, whose works have dealt extensively on the practice of teaching. The instructional design of Read 180 is based on the use of technology to enhance learning for students with mild disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

Comer Model (School Development Program)

Developed in 1968 by James Comer, a child psychiatrist at the Child Study Center of Yale University, the Comer School Development Program is based on Comer's belief that "the relationship between school and family is at the heart of a poor child's success or lack of it" (Goldberg, 1990). In his book School Power (1980), Comer describes the dissolution of the communal bonds that once united poor
communities and bound them to the educational institutions that served them, resulting in the loss of adult power to influence children. Through initial empirical work in the New Haven public schools, Comer and his colleagues developed a process to reconnect schools and their communities and redistribute power in decision-making between parents and school staff in order to improve students' overall development and academic achievement.

*America’s Choice Program (AC)*

The *America’s Choice* program (AC) designed by the National Center on Education and the Economy as a comprehensive school reform with the objective to raise academic achievement by providing a rigorous standards based curriculum and safety net for all students. It’s goal; is to ensure that all students excepting those that are the most severely handicapped attain an international standard of English Language proficiency by the time they graduate (Supovitz & Poglinco, 2001).

The blueprint of the *America’s Choice* design program is based on a set of principles about the purpose of school and ideologies on how a school ought to run and principles based on those ideologies. Essentially *America’s Choice* principles include having high expectations for the students, a laser like focus on literacy, a common core curriculum, standard based assessments, distributed school leadership structure, safety nets and professional commitment to the program from teachers as well as coaches to support instructional practice of the program. *America’s Choice* was first implemented in 1998 and is currently being used in more than 1,000 schools across the United States.
Instructional Practices of the America’s Choice Literacy Program

Writer’s workshop opens with a short mini-lesson of about 7-10 minutes. There are three kinds of mini-lessons: procedural, craft and skills. Procedural mini lessons are geared to teach the strategies that authors use to produce effective writing like technique, style, and genre. Skills mini-lessons often incorporate student writing by using examples of student work where conventions need to be reviewed. An independent work period, lasting 35-45 minutes, should follow in which student are engaged in the writing process, including planning, drafting, revising, editing and polishing/publishing. Students work either individually or in small groups. Response groups provide students with an opportunity to elicit feedback on drafts from partner or small group of peers. Writers workshop ends with short (five minute) closure session, frequently author’s chair, in which individual students share selections of their work in progress (Supovitz & May 2004).

Reader’s workshop is structured to begin with a whole class meeting in which the class might do a shared reading and have a mini lesson in a 10-15 minute time period. The mini-lesson can cover phonics based skills, decoding word analysis, comprehension skills or procedures. This mini lesson is usually followed by a period of independent/guided reading and /or reading conference period in which number of activities like partner reading or book talks occur for about 45 minutes. In independent reading students focus on reading appropriately leveled text for enjoyment and understanding. Partner reading allows the students to work with slightly more difficult text, practice reading aloud and model “accountable talk” and think aloud strategies. Reading aloud provides an opportunity for the teacher or other proficient reader to
introduce authors or topics and model reading for the while class. Shared reading allows the teacher to work with the smaller groups of readers on reading strategies. Reader’s workshop may end with a book read independently or a book read aloud to the group (Supovit & May, 2004).

Impact and Program Effectiveness

While the CSR movement gained initial momentum and the information was seemingly quick and easy to disseminate through the education systems, implementation was difficult at the sites (Bodily, 1996; Berends et al., 2002) and evaluations of the program’s effectiveness uncovered patterns of weak effectiveness on the overarching goal of the reform program – to improve academic achievement of the students (Borman et al., 2003).

In a study conducted by Supovitz and May (2004) to link program implementation directly to student test scores, the results of their research revealed that school level factors have relatively little influence on implementation than teacher level implementation. Most of the variations that may exist in programs occur within schools amongst the teachers implementing the program rather than between schools, thus explaining variations on results obtained nationally. Some schools have differing results from using the AC, model, because they roll out phases or sequences of the program at a time, others have high overall implementation, whilst some other schools have teachers implementing the program but in varying degrees.

Time for implementation of the literacy components were the key measures in Supovitz and May’s research. The time that teacher’s spent implementing the components was not directly associated with student gains in the primary and upper
elementary grades. In the particular school that was used in their study, the quantity of time spent implementing the reform did not produce any gains in student learning.

However, the level of teacher preparation or commitment to the program, showed a stronger correlation to an increase in student learning, particularly in the upper elementary grades than in the primary grades at that school. Other researchers have supported the idea that if teachers feel prepared and understand the design of a program, then they will implement the program with high fidelity in the classroom therefore producing greater gains in student learning (Supovitz, Poglinco, & Bach, 2002). Supovitz and May suggest that quality of implementation is necessary for maximum impact of a CSR program.

On the other hand, they pose that it is indeed a herculean task to systematically test the relationship between implementation and impact of a CSR for two main reasons; one, since school level factors have little influence on implementation, measuring the implementation at the school level then would yield useless data. The second offered is that linking the degree of teacher level implementation to the measurable increase to students scores is very difficult to determine, due to external factors that may not be in ones control. Bearing this in mind, the approach suggested in this study is to measure the extent of teacher’s conformity to the AC instructional program and its effect on student achievement.

Another perspective is offered by Rowan et al. (2009), to the evaluations conducted by Borman et al. (2003), suggesting that there is an interpretive flaw or omission in the report. Borman et al. (2003) show in their report that CSR programs had little to no effect on student achievement; however there was a great deal of variability in
the in program to program effect sizes that were observed. It would be remiss to dismiss the CSR programs as not being effective at all. Rather in fact, some CSR programs worked better than others in improving student achievement. Rowan et al. (2009) states that taking a closer look and developing an explanation for the variable effects on student achievement that occur when schools embrace a design based instructional program is worth noting. Further, Rowan states that previous reviews of CSR programs typically examine only three dimensions of the program’s success: 1. the nature of the problem being addressed by a social policy or program; 2. the nature of the program itself; 3. the social context in which the intervention is attempted (Rowan et al., 2009).

Rather profound in their observation, Rowan et al. (2009), commented that organizations that provide design based assistance to schools cannot succeed in raising student achievement unless their design for instructional practice are different from and more effective than the existing instructional practice. Four assumptions are made by Rowan et al. (2009):

1. Building a CSR program around an effective instructional design does NOT guarantee improved student learning unless there exists an effective strategy for getting that instructional design implemented in schools.

2. An externally developed program works when it is built around an effective instructional design and a sound implementation strategy.

3. A program can fail if it is built around an instructional design that is more effective than existing practice when it has poor design for implementation.
4. An external program might be built around poor ideas and about both instruction and implementation, twin issues that earlier reports on CSR have omitted in data collection.

*Program Effectiveness and Student Achievement*

Borman et al.’s (2002) meta-analysis report, suggests that in the study of a comparison of effectiveness of CSR and program components that one begin with an examination of a diverse range of studies already completed. The analysis of the various methodologies for the estimation of CSR effects would allow methodologists and researchers to recognize the biases in the literature and to understand empirically both their frequency and magnitude.

In a report prepared for the United States Department of Education (2009), their overall findings in the comparison of the effectiveness of CSR programs demonstrate that there were inconsistencies. These inconsistencies included that more statistical association could be made in mathematics than in reading and in the lowest performing schools. The report also contends that the CSR models studied do not offer compelling evidence that the strength of the program is strongly and consistently associated with achievement improvements.

The report goes on to question, why it appears that scientific research based models are consistently more strongly related to achievement gains in mathematics and reading. A possible explanation is proffered in that the answer may be in the way that the programs are rated by the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center (CSRQ). CSRQ rates or determines the strength of the model by the components of the evaluation
design, with more weight given to programs that are more rigorous in design and the
number of programs evaluated that use such design.

In addition, the measure of rigor itself may be an issue. CSRQ chose scales that
were originally developed to guide school decision making in selecting a program with
strong scientific evidence of effectiveness. In an effort to replicate the program at the
adopting sites the populations may have been very different and reliability in such sites
would have been limited.

Borman et al. (2003) try to explain the causes of differences in CSR effects. One
of the relevant explanations given is that perhaps taking strong actions to involve parents
and the local community in school governance and reform, may help the school grow as
an institution, but these actions are unlikely to have strong impact on student achievement
(Epstein, 1995). The focus should be on helping families enrich their children’s lives
outside of school which will far more likely help students succeed with specific academic
goals.

Further, the school specific and model specific differences in the way that model
components are actually implemented will give far more information than simply
knowing whether or not the CSR model needs the components or not (Borman et al.,
2003). In other studies included in Borman et al. (2002), links to the success of school
reform with regard to the level and quality of implementation are discussed (Berman &
McLaughlin, 1975; Datnow et al., 2000). In sum, they suggest that the coordination and
fit of the model to local school circumstances and the relationship between the CSR
developer and the local school would help to explain the variability in the results of CSR
effect on achievement.
Findings on Instructional Practice

Correnti (2005) argues that teacher practice precedes student achievement in the causal chain of events and is more aligned with the goals of innovative programs. Typically, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of a program, case studies research overly-rely on results from standardized tests. According to Correnti (2005), in review of the prior evaluations there is support given to the notion that teacher practice is a better evaluative measure in research on instructional improvement because it is the direct target of implementation. For as much as these case studies have been very informative about the implementation process, they have given much description as to how particular reform programs are effective, but have not shown a direct cause within the program of what exactly causes the program to be effective (Correnti, 2005).

Correnti (2005) suggest that when evaluating program effectiveness and instructional practice on a large scale, evaluations should focus on alternative measures. “Future third party researchers need to address the impact of the program on higher order skills assessed using open ended questions” (Munoz & Dosset, 2004). However, even when trying to use alternative measures there have been limitations to carrying out this assessment. The potential lack of resources, the inability of design team members to agree on a set of assessments, political mandates and accountability measures of the school district and state are just a few of the examples of limitations of alternative measures (Berends et al., 2002).

Berends et al. (2002) highlight in their research that the hazard that exists in using standardized tests as the overall/sole measure of student achievement in view of a reform
program, the results will not be favorable because the standardized tests were not central to the goal alignment of the program.

The typical outcome measure used in public accountability systems provides a very limited measure of student and school performance. Years of evaluations indicate that the best way to measure whether an intervention is having an effect is to measure variables most closely associated with the interventions \textit{[teacher practice]}…thus tension will be a constant hindrance to understanding the impact of innovative approaches unless alternative indicators and assessments are developed in ways that are well aligned with what the reforms are trying to do (Berends et al., 2002, p. 150) (emphasis added).

In further analysis, Correnti (2005) draws attention to the problems of previous studies that have relied solely on standardized tests. One issue was that the mechanism (teacher practice) through which the programs had effects on schools was unexamined. Second, the teachers and involved stakeholders were driven by the idea that the innovative program once implemented at a large scale will have considerable effects on student achievement that would be observable immediately. Correnti notes that the error was that the previous researchers could have missed other factors that could not or were not part of the measures in standardized tests or that observable gains in student achievement while using the program could have occurred in subsequent years (Correnti, 2005).

Some questions arise about the authenticity of change in teachers’ instructional practices. Datnow and Castellano (2000) have documented teachers reporting that they do not enjoy teaching as much within highly prescriptive reform programs yet some have grown to defend the designs. Some even with opposing philosophical outlooks continue
to use the program because they have seen an improvement in academics for the student (Gersten, Carnine, Zoref, & Cronnin, 1986; Datnow & Castellano, 2000) though not necessarily gains. Accepting change can be difficult, it is expected that even effective programs will generate a fair share of disgruntled teachers (Fullan, 1991).

In an earlier study, Huberman and Miles (1984) reported that extreme changes in instructional practice of teachers is not an easy task, it requires a lot of concerted energy and there is the risk in the loss of variety in tasks and ultimately “sacrifice of other favorite activities” (p. 274). In essence if the solution to increasing student achievement was as simple as changing habits of practice, studies on instructional practice would have been concluded years ago. While some teachers who are involved in the implementation of a new program gain an increased level of responsibility to ensure the program succeeds or yields favorable desired increase in student achievement outcomes, these same teachers lose confidence about their teaching abilities (Guskey, 1984). According to Correnti (2005), change therefore becomes a difficult pill to swallow because it involves personal responsibility for outcomes in the past and also in the future. It then becomes indeed a difficult concept to “wrap the mind around” when a highly effective instructor has to question or seemingly second guess his/her teaching ability and to come to terms with the possibility that instructional practice could have been more effective. In as much as change in instructional behavior is difficult, the question remains when encountering problems with the implementation of reform programs. And that is, how do they affect student achievement, and do these highly specified reforms programs inadvertently generate great amounts of disgruntled teachers rather than supporters (Correnti, 2005)?
This aspect of school reform pertaining to teaching behaviors is often overlooked when evaluating programs. In their report about teacher commitment to reform, Little and Bartlett (2002) observe that the there is more research underway that will suggest that the preoccupation with instructional practice which stimulates teachers to engage in their work and offers rich opportunities to learn may also be the source of stress, conflict and disappointments. They surmise that “a mounting body of evidence suggests certain paradoxes; reform stimulates teacher enthusiasm and results in burn out, expands some learning opportunities and erodes others, intensifies professional bonds and ferments professional conflict” (Little, 2001b, pp. 24-25). So, do the reform design programs help teachers learn how to teach better? What exactly do these designs teach teachers? Correnti (2005) posed these questions believed to be pivotal in uncovering the cause of the variety of effects observed in reform at the sites.

The previous position as stated by Datnow & Castellano (2000) that when teachers understand the program and are prepared, they will implement the design program with high fidelity supports the theoretical approach suggested by Correnti (2005) that teachers should develop their own reform agenda thereby being the active catalysts to effect the change so desperately needed. The idea is that if teachers are able to do so, they will be more motivated to follow through with the reform program and would already have bought in to the change process (Nunnery, 1998).

Richard Correnti (2005) in three statements summarizes considerations in using instructional practice as a measure of program effectiveness. He states that instructional practice is the best criteria for evaluating implementation outcomes. Second, measuring several instructional practices of teachers ensures that no single program design is
disadvantaged because their brand of instructional improvement is not measured. Third, no single instructional practice can adequately summarize the whole of a teacher’s literacy instruction. Correnti (2005) goes on to say that what is known is that the most effective literacy teachers have a tendency to teach multiple reading strategies explicitly and give their students greater opportunities to read and discuss texts. In the same vein highly effective teachers provide instruction on the writing process and integrate reading and writing into their lessons.

*Effects of leadership on teacher autonomy in instructional practice.*

Supovitz and May (2004) explored in their studies the relationship between teacher beliefs and concepts that underlie gains in student learning but could not detect a direct relationship. Some studies have shown that the teachers’ belief that all students can learn is an important factor in providing high quality learning opportunities for all students. Supovitz and May were able to allude to the premise that the belief of the teacher does have an effect which influences the instructor preparations which contributes to the extent of teacher implementation of the reform that produces increased student learning gains.

Loeb, Knapp and Elfers (2008) provide an alternative view. They state that because teacher’s efforts are central to the success of any reform, it is imperative for policy makers to take a closer look at the beliefs about instruction that are rooted in reform theory. Loeb et al state that the starting point to obtain clarity on the potential impact of state reforms would be on improvements on teaching and learning is to re-examine theories of action of reform programs. Loeb et al suggest that reformers’ theories of action are likely to be incomplete in the sense that they ‘highlight particular
actions and causal sequences over which reformers exert the greatest control, while leaving other actions or conditions, which lie in a zone of ‘wishful thinking’ beyond the ‘reformers control’ (Hill & Celio, 1998). More so, the researchers state that much work has gone into investigating the implementation and effects of state based reforms and some other research has taken the time to attend to what teachers think and do in the reform environment in which they find themselves. One of the areas of concern for researchers in examining the impact of a reform program is to investigate teacher’s response to aligned curricular reforms and second to pay attention to teachers’ responses to assessment and accountability.

Studies show that some reforms have altered the way that teachers teach substantially (Abrams et al., 2003). When teachers’ responses to their improvement on assessments in states with high and low stakes achievement tests, is examined, it is observed that the pressure to raise test scores compel some teachers to spend inordinate amounts of instructional time to test preparation. Loeb et al. (2008) suggests that these types of changes to instruction give rise to another level of teacher level response to educational reforms: teachers have found it difficult to carry out the basic idea of reforms that all students should be helped to succeed. In a variety of settings teachers simply do not believe that all students are capable of meeting state standards or they hold different meanings for ‘all children can succeed.’ The root of this belief system is deep and it suggests that the creators of the school reform programs have a common bond – the experiences of middle class mainstream children.

J.W. Little and L. Bartlett (2002), conducted a study to take a closer look at the other side of teachers are prepared and willing to contribute to the machinery of reform to
studying the effects of teacher’s participation in whole school reform and what it means relative to daily instructional practices, and satisfaction of teaching. The researchers reported that teacher advocacy for the capacities of reform will remain minimal unless a concerted effort is made to understand what the structure of a reform active environment is like within the context of teaching. Little and Bartlett (2002), observed in their studies that the experiences of teachers in large scale reform has depended on how the teachers defined themselves professionally. In reflecting, the teachers considered factors such as what matters to them, how they define their intellectual and moral obligations, their beliefs about schools, teaching, learning and preparation (Little & Bartlett, 2002). In Little’s report the researcher states:

Put most broadly, the reform climate moved from a relatively progressive mood to a starkly conservative one, from resource flexibility to resource controls, from open-ended invitations to ‘restructure’ to uniform mandates centered on state standards and high-stakes testing (Little, 2001b, p. 291).

According to Assaf (2008) there are a number of research studies that document the effect that high stakes testing have on those (teachers) who give the tests and that prior to these studies the focus had been on the those (students) who took the tests (Bomer, 2005; Dooley, 2005; McNeil, 2000; Pennington, 2004; Rex & Nelson, 2004). In the opinions of these researchers, the pressure of high stakes assessments and accountability has been a heavy indicator of reasons why teachers decide to leave schools that have been identified as low performing. Other fall out effects of the mounting pressure are that teachers request grade level changes or worse still leave the profession all together (Bomer, 2005). Assaf (2008) asserts that when high stakes assessments take
over the political and cultural landscape of the school, they can have devastating effects on the instructional practices and decision making practices of teachers. With the demands that the NCLB requires to ensure student achievement, high stakes testing then becomes a key factor to consider when measuring fidelity, or the lack of it, in the implementation of reform programs instructional practices.

In other evaluative reports, the issue of teacher autonomy is further discussed. Sunderman and Nardini (1999) explore institutional constraints on implementing school reform. Their report outlines the analytical complexity of implementing a reform program stating the organizational structure of the schools as well as the actions of teachers can create conditions that will either facilitate or limit the effectiveness of the implementation of a reform program. They further propose that teacher autonomy and the institutional structure as a whole be figured in to the design of the reform program. Barring this, institutionalizing long term change would be unlikely.

From Sunderman and Nardini’s analytical perspective, to understand the effects that external partners have on effecting change in schools, one must also consider the nature of teaching, which they describe as structured to give teachers a high degree of autonomy or discretion in how they teach. With regard to the complexities of institutional structures the researchers proffer that attending to the technical core of schooling only may be insufficient to change pedagogy if the organizational structures that support or produce those practices are not considered and perhaps altered as well.

Notably quoted in the same report is Richard Elmore (1996). He linked the institutional structures on a broader scale to the specific problems of incentives, which he says that the problem includes both the incentives that operate on individuals and the
“individual’s willingness to recognize and respond to these incentives as legitimate” (p. 15). Elmore reasons that “if teachers are actually going to change how they teach, institutions must offer them reasons to do so” (Emphasis added). He further suggests that there be internal systems of rewards or salary increments linked to changes in practices, release time to work on standards or new curriculum units, among others. Sunderman and Nardini (1999) conclude that schools have failed to effectively use their institutional incentives to improve teaching practice. They go on to summarize that the issue for success in the whole school reform models is not found within the design itself but the extent to which the programs incorporate strategies that address the broader issues [factors that may facilitate or constrain implementation].

**Student Achievement**

With all the research that abounds, how is the issue of student achievement tackled? Which instructional practice approach would be best? In what ways, and why, do effects of instructional practice differ for different types of students? And how are effective instructional practices maintained in light of the frequent changes in leadership and reform strategies that plague American school systems? These are some of the questions that spur the search to clearly identify how and what instructional practice effects have on student achievement.

In answer to the most effective instructional strategies, two schools of thought have their arguments for the non-coexistence of instructionism and constructivism as factors for increasing student achievement. “Instructionism refers to educational practices that are teacher-focused, skill-based, product-oriented, non-interactive, and highly prescribed. Constructivism refers to educational practices that are student focused,
meaning-based, process-oriented, interactive, and responsive to student interest” (Johnson, 2009, p. 90). Both camps argue that one instructional approach is more dominant and effective than the other and that each one’s approach to learning is the surest yield of increased student achievement (Johnson, 2009). However there are very few defining research studies that empirically support or reject the idea that these two practices can coexist in the same reform program.

Perhaps an answer to why there exists such a vast range of outcomes for student achievement is variety in the approaches of measuring instructional effectiveness. Instructionist researchers, and those educators who employ direct instruction and other skills-based curricular approaches, are more likely to use science to establish the effectiveness of instructional methods. The results of their investigations may account for the abundance of evaluative studies focused on skills-based instructionist approaches (Carlson & Francis, 2002; Rosenshine, 2002; Snow et al., 1998; Swanson, 2001). On the other hand, constructivists feel strongly that students should be able to make meaningful analysis that will not reduce literacy to decoding and educators/evaluators should not limit learning outcomes to prescribed responses on standardized tests of achievement (Krashen, 1999).

In practice, San Diego City Schools (SDCS) conducted a study to test and report the validity of a similar approach to increasing student achievement that utilizes constructivism and instructionism. They labeled their program initiative as the Balanced Literacy approach. This instructional practice is a mixture of constructivism and instructionism philosophies. The students are actively engaged in the learning process and there is a strong emphasis placed on ‘accountable talk’: an approach to engagement
to text that seeks to foster student responsibility of learning. Another strategy that was used by SDCS to foster student responsibility in learning was the incorporation of methods that engage students in creating meaning at multiple levels of their literacy competence, a key component of constructivism. This approach aims to gradually release the students to become responsible for their own learning by utilizing instructional methods that range from a high level of teacher control and modeling (e.g., through a teacher reading aloud) to a high level of student independence (e.g., through independent reading) (Bitter, O’Day, Gubbins, Socias, & Holtzman, 2007).

Other researchers believe that students’ meaningful causal thinking processes may be linked to their academic achievement in reading. Mayer (2002) poses this theory on causal thinking and meaningful causal thinking. He reasons that the difference between causal thinking and meaningful causal thinking is similar to the difference between rote learning and meaningful learning. The individual that acquires knowledge by rote learning can remember the concepts or events whenever they are asked. However, if asked to solve a problem by using this knowledge, he cannot succeed in applying this knowledge to the new situation, because the individual possesses relevant knowledge that was not understood and is unable to transfer. On the other hand, an individual that acquires knowledge by meaningful learning can remember the concepts and events, by actively using cognitive processes to construct meaning by way of integrating incoming information with existing knowledge.

Relating this theory to reading achievement another researcher, Berkant (2009), documents that reading and writing abilities gained at the preschool and primary grades not only teach how to read, but also how to think, understand and be aware (Earle, 2005).
According to Berkant’s interpretation of constructivist theory, reading comprehension ability is described as a process in which an individual establishes connections between the text, his experiences, and his mind. The author reports that other research experts have documented that students cannot learn beyond their knowledge level when their reading comprehension abilities are not sufficient. This observation, relates back to the problematic state of education in the primary grades that was described by Elkind (2006).

The results of Berkant’s study found that the correlation between meaningful causal thinking and student achievement declined when the reading comprehension scores were controlled for using a standardized test. On the other hand causal thinking, where the students had a choice, showed an increase in student achievement.

Summary

Comprehensive School Reform remains the salve to a growing American problem: ‘dumbing down’ the curriculum/system. A number of researchers have developed programs that they hope will compete with internationally recognized systems in producing well educated and rounded contributing citizens of the world.

America’s Choice, has been under scrutiny for a number of years in an effort to seek the best program that will yield lasting and proven effectiveness towards the overarching goals of CSR: improved student achievement. Studies show that implementations and fidelity to a well defined and research based CSR program will yield the greatest returns, and that there may some variations and external factors that will cause data results to vary considerably.

There is still a significant gap in the link that measures what the CSR program prescribes, how the program is interpreted and how it is implemented by the teacher to
impact student’s achievement. Several studies show that many schools report absolute
fidelity to the program and enjoy high student achievement scores, but most of those
studies are supplied by the developer of a reform program or groups that benefit from the
program (Rowan et al., 2009) The fragmentation that occurs in implementation of these
programs is still an area to be examined, particularly where teacher autonomy is
concerned. CSR studies and research generally do not take into account the response of
teachers to reform programs, rather they assume many factors as a given to the
implementation and success of the programs.

The results in this study then will provide additional discussion that will examine
the complex relationship between evidence of effectiveness derived from the
implementation of educational interventions (comprehensive school reform) programs
and authentic instructional practice has on increasing student achievement.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In 2000, all schools in the state of Georgia were challenged by the state’s Department of Education to get at least 50 percent of their students to proficiency in English language arts and mathematics on a new state test within three years. The reform program selected by the state to affect this turnaround was America’s Choice, making more than 100 elementary, middle and high low-performing schools “Choice” schools. Choice Specialists focused on strengthening school leadership and instructional practices in literacy and mathematics.

According to reports from the foundation, thirty middle schools of the selected 100 America’s Choice schools improved at an average annual rate of 6 percent in English language arts, compared with 4 percent for middle schools as a whole. Also from the foundation’s report, in mathematics, America’s Choice schools improved at an average annual rate of 6.6 percent, compared with 5 percent in all middle schools. America’s Choice schools reportedly outpaced the state growth in English language arts and mathematics over four years and by the year 2004, America’s Choice students had met the challenge set forth by the department of education (America’s Choice, 2010).

Results from the program’s implementation had been encouraging but issues still remain. Although, the data used in this study was from Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) assessment, Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) results for the district are presented in tables 1-5. ITBS results are particularly helpful in identifying reading or math skills where students may need additional instruction; by administering the test in
the Fall, teachers have time to work with students before Spring Criterion Referenced Competency Testing CRCT begins. Core subjects tested by the ITBS include reading, language arts, and math. Results presented in the following tables show the performance of the selected district’s 4th Grade students on the Reading and English Language Arts Criterion Reference Competency Tests (CRCT). This grade level, 4th, was chosen to represent its results, because it is the critical grade when most students’ reading achievement levels are observed to decline significantly (NAEP, 2009).

The percentage of Hispanic (84%) and Black (90%) students results for “Meet and Exceed” Reading standards for AYP is similar but both groups lag behind White children. The percentage of Black students (10%) who “Do Not Meet” AYP standards was quite high in comparison to the percentage of White students (2%) who “Do Not Meet” AYP standards. An obvious question to ponder is why there exists such a gap. One longstanding indicator used to explain this achievement gap for African-American students had been socio-economic status (SES). Indeed it was one of the indicators, but other factors came into play as well, such as residential stability, school attendance, and family structure.

A metropolitan school district was used in this study. The District is responsible for educating 106,000 students, with a staff population of 15,240.

- The district has a diverse population of students and staff that is constantly evolving in an ever-changing suburban environment. The district focuses on four key areas:

  - improvement of student achievement
  - developing leaders
• fiscal responsibility
• building relationships among schools, families, businesses and the community in general

The District has a total of 114 schools.

❖ 68 Elementary schools
❖ 25 Middle schools
❖ 16 High schools
❖ 1 Open campus
❖ 2 Special education centers
❖ 1 Adult Learning Center

The demographic makeup of 3rd and 5th grade students in the district is displayed as follows by ethnicity and subgroups respectively:

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment of 3rd and 5th Grade Students in the District by Ethnicity (2009 -2010)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 3rd and 5th Grade enrollment = 16,362
The percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch/breakfast program was 41%. The financial impact on the district of students who received free and reduced meals was significant. The amount of money received from the Federal government per district per pupil depends on the number of students identified in the program.

According to state academic standards the district must meet and exceed state standards for Academic Yearly Performance (AYP). In the following tables the performance of the students by ethnicity and subgroups as a district, is shown.

Table 2

*Enrollment of Students in District by other Subgroups (2009-2010)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students with Disabilities</th>
<th>Limited English Proficiency</th>
<th>Students Eligible for Free and Reduced</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total enrollment in system = 106,574

Table 3


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Nat. Am.</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does Not Meet</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>39.8%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet+ Exceed</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
<td>97.7%</td>
<td>90.8%</td>
<td>86.3%</td>
<td>92.8%</td>
<td>97.5%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>48,665</td>
<td>2374</td>
<td>15,430</td>
<td>8245</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>21,022</td>
<td>1506</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students With Disabilities</th>
<th>Limited English Proficiency</th>
<th>Economically Disadvantaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does Not Meet</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>69.3%</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet+ Exceed</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
<td>88.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

Results of study’s selected AC schools performance in 2011 CRCT Reading and Language Arts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AC School I</th>
<th>AC School II</th>
<th>AC School III</th>
<th>AC School IV</th>
<th>AC School V</th>
<th>AC School VI</th>
<th>AC School VII</th>
<th>AC School VIII</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Does Not Meet</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>55.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet &amp; Exceed</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>83.7</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>94.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Test Participants</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Design

This section contains the data measures and methods used in the study to answer the following research questions as presented in Chapter I:
1. Is there a difference in reading growth scores between students participating in the America’s Choice reading program compared to students who are not participating in the America’s Choice reading program?

2. Is there a relationship between teaching conditions and teacher’s perceptions of autonomy?

Research Hypotheses

H₁. There will be no difference between growth scores of students who are in the America’s Choice program and those who are not in the America’s Choice program.

H₂. There will be a correlation relationship between teacher’s perception of autonomy in practice and teaching conditions.

Participants

The University of Southern Mississippi’s Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A) districts and the schools involved in the study (see Appendix B) approved this project prior to any data collection.

First, the sample of teachers and students survey results and data were described. Included in this section is the response rates associated with data collection and simple descriptive statistics for teacher and student demographics will be tabled. Survey responses were organized into scale scores that will measure different dimensions of teacher implementation of America’s Choice program.

Next a description of the statistical methods used to estimate the relationships between teacher’s levels of implementation of America’s Choice and students test scores reported for the system and individual school scores followed; in this section also a
detailed description of the Teacher Autonomy Scale (TAS) that investigated the extent to which teaching conditions were related to teacher’s perceptions of autonomy. Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) average system scores reported for all students in the system and individual school scores were the dependent variables.

Archived 3rd and 5th grade ITBS average school scores made available on the school districts website for elementary schools that currently utilize the America’s Choice program and elementary schools that do not use the America’s Choice program were obtained. District demographics were extracted from the Georgia Department of Education website. Teachers were asked to complete surveys that contained items to assess the level of implementation of the America’s Choice program and that measure teacher autonomy in instruction.

Instrumentation

Two instruments were employed in this study. The first was developed by Supovit and May (2004) (see Appendix C) and was designed to examine the relationship between implementation and the impact of America’s Choice comprehensive school reform. The instrument has four subscales. Cronbach’s Alpha for the subscales of the instruments was as follow: “(1) Writers Workshop Preparation Scale (α = .96); (2) Readers Workshop Preparation Scale (α = .94); (3) All Students Can Learn Scale (α = .60); and, (4) Same Standards Should Apply to All Students Scale (α = .74) (Supovitz & May 2004). See Appendix D for a complete list of subscale items. This scale has been shown to relate to teacher’s attitudinal characteristics, teacher’s acceptance, experience, receptiveness and teacher self reported preparation to teach.
Teacher Autonomy Scale (Charters, 1974) was designed to measure perceptions of educators’ autonomy of practice. Cronbach’s Alpha (Pearson & Hall, 1993), for 171 cases was determined with the total scale (18 items) internal consistency coefficients ranging from .80 to .83. The reliability coefficients for the subscales indicating general autonomy and curriculum autonomy ranged .80 to .85. The correlation between the general and curriculum autonomy subscales is moderate (r = .49; Moomaw, 2005).

Data is collected as part of the district’s quarterly and annual assessment of student performance. All the district’s elementary schools utilize the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. The summaries of scores for the school’s grades are available on the school district’s website as public domain. The ITBS is a norm-referenced test that ranks student performance according to percentiles. For example, a student in the 75th percentile scored equal to or better than 75 percent of all students across the nation who participated in the ITBS at the same grade level. Also reported are grade equivalents, or GE scores. The numbers in the GE score that come before the decimal represent the grade level of the student’s performance, while the digits that follow the decimal represent the month within the grade. A GE score of 5.2 means the student’s performance was similar to that expected of a fifth grader taking the same test during the second month of school.

Procedures

The Supovitz and May (2004) Survey of America’s Choice level of Implementation and the Teacher Autonomy Scale will be administered to teachers in Grade 4 in a metropolitan public school system in the south east of the United States. The teachers were asked to respond to the two surveys. ITBS scores were obtained from the school district’s website.
The surveys that measured the extent of America’s Choice Implementation and Perceptions of Teacher Autonomy in Instructional Practice took the teachers no more than 35 minutes to complete. Hardcopies of the instrument were made, a cover letter explaining the instrument, and an envelope to return the completed survey were provided for the teachers in the selected schools. The cover letter was signed by the appropriate school principal and researcher to encourage teacher participation in the survey. The teachers were requested to complete the survey, enclose and seal it in the envelope, and return it to the researcher within two weeks of receipt.

The scores from district administered standardized reading assessment tests of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) were used to determine growth in reading achievement due to the type of reading reform implemented at the school. Administration of the ITBS assessment allowed the district to compare the performance of its students to that of other students across the nation who took the same test at the same time of year.

Data Analysis

This study was a quantitative study with quasi-experimental methods and a mixed design. The following data analysis procedures were used to assess the hypothesis of this study.

1. In order to determine whether there was a difference in reading growth scores between students participating in the America’s Choice reading program compared to students who are not participating in the America’s Choice reading program a mixed model ANOVA was conducted with type of test (vocabulary and comprehension) scores on the ITBS as a repeated measures
variable and participation in the America’s Choice curriculum (yes, no) and grade (3 and 5) as grouping variables.

2. In order to determine whether there was a relationship between teaching conditions and teacher perceptions of autonomy in practice, Pearson’s correlation was computed between scores on the Teacher Autonomy Scale and Teaching Conditions Survey.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality of the teachers completing the instrument was ensured since neither their names nor any other means of relating a particular instrument to a particular teacher was recorded on the instruments. All instruments, once completed, were sealed in identical envelopes and deposited in the main school office. The envelopes were opened only by the researcher, who had no way to ascertain which teacher completed which instrument.

Summary

The researcher ensured confidentiality of the subjects and the schools involved in the study. The author secured IRB approval prior to administering any instruments.

Two instruments were used in this study. One instrument sought to measure the extent of the implementation of instructional practice that directly impacted an increase in student achievement. The second instrument sought to measure the extent of teaching conditions relationship to teacher’s perceived autonomy in instruction.

This quantitative study with quasi-experimental design will utilize a mixed model analysis (having longitudinal and cross-sectional components) to address hypotheses. Items from the America’s Choice level of implementation survey instrument used in a
study conducted by Supovitz and May (2004) were administered and demographic items were administered to teachers in Grades 3-5 in the selected schools for this study. Demographic data was collected in an effort to identify differences between professional characteristics of teachers and their perceptions of their level teacher autonomy.

The data from Iowa test of Basic Skills (ITBS) scores were used in this study and were accordingly coded to protect the identity of the school. The purpose of the data collection and administration of the surveys was to determine if in fact students gained points in reading achievement due to the type of reading reform instructional practice implemented at their school or from the absence of one such practice. The Teacher Autonomy survey sought a correlation between teaching conditions and teachers perceived autonomy in instructional practice.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter reports the results of the analysis of the data. This section includes tables that describe characteristics of the populations and presents the results of the analytical procedures.

The participants for this study were 3rd, 4th and 5th Grade teachers who taught Literacy in suburban schools that currently utilize the America’s Choice literacy program and also teachers who taught 3rd, 4th and 5th Grade Literacy in schools that do not use the America’s Choice Literacy Program. Table 6 shows the demographic data obtained from the teachers who participated in the study.

Table 6

Teacher Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>Bachelors</th>
<th>Masters</th>
<th>Ed Specialist</th>
<th>Doctorate</th>
<th>Average years of teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ØAC</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

District demographics data were extracted from the Georgia Department of Education website presented in tables 7 and 8.
Table 7

*Enrollment of 3rd and 5th Grade Students in the District by Ethnicity (2009-2010)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi Racial</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 3rd and 5th Grade enrollment = 16,362

Table 8

*Enrollment of Students in District by other Subgroups (2009-2010)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited English Proficiency</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The schools were matched based on enrollment demographic including percentages of students in subgroups such as Students with Disabilities, Eligibility for Free and Reduced Lunch, Limited English Proficiency and Migrant status. Table 9 presents the demographic data of the schools used in this study.

Table 9

*Demographics of Schools Used in This Study by Sub Groups*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>SWD</th>
<th>LEP</th>
<th>FRL</th>
<th>Migrant rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AC I</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC II</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC III</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9 (continued)

Demographics of Schools Used in This Study by Sub Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AC IV</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC V</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC VI</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC VII</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC VIII</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ØAC 1</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ØAC 3</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ØAC 5</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ØAC 6</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ØAC 7</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ØAC 8</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ØAC 9</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ØAC 10</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ØAC 11</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ØAC 12</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ØAC 13</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ØAC 14</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ØAC 15</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ØAC 16</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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</table>

Archived 3rd and 5th grade ITBS school averages were obtained from the school district’s website of elementary schools that currently utilize the America’s Choice program and elementary schools that do not use the America’s Choice program. Table 10 presents Grades 3 and 5 ITBS district average percentile rank scores and grade equivalents.
Table 10

*Grades 3 and 5 ITBS district Percentile Rank Scores and Grade Equivalents.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Score Type</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
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<td>%tile</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%tile</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%tile</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>66</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%tile</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>65</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2006</td>
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<td>63</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2008</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%tile</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10 (continued).

Grades 3 and 5 ITBS district Percentile Rank Scores and Grade Equivalents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>GE</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>GE</th>
<th>GE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>67</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%tile</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers were asked to complete surveys that contained items to assess the level of implementation of the America’s Choice program and that measure teacher autonomy in instruction. The response rates associated with data collection is tabled below.

Table 11

Response Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>312</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Sample surveyed</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responders</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non responders</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey responses were organized into scale scores that measured different dimensions of teacher implementation of America’s Choice program (Appendix D).

The research questions of this study follow:

1. Is there a difference in reading growth scores between students participating in the America’s Choice reading program compared to students who are not participating in the America’s Choice reading program?
2. Is there a relationship between teaching conditions and teacher’s perception of autonomy?

**Question 1**

In order to address research question 1, regarding the difference in reading growth scores between students who participated in the America’s Choice reading program compared to students who did not participate in the America’s Choice reading program, a mixed model ANOVA was conducted with type of test (vocabulary, comprehension) as the repeated measures variable and participation in America’s Choice curriculum (yes, no), as well as Grade (3, 5) as grouping variables.

Although mixed model ANOVA results indicated a significant Type of Test x America’s Choice Participation x Grade interaction, F (1,312) = 12.78, p < .001. Tukey’s HSD pairwise comparison of means, however, indicated significant pairwise differences for each AC versus non AC school (HSD = 2.59 for grade 3 and 2.43 for grade 5 verbal and comprehension scores) with both verbal and comprehension scores from the non AC school significantly higher for both third and fifth graders as can be seen in Figure 2.

![Graph](image.png)

*Figure 2. Comparison of Means for AC and Non AC Schools (Vocabulary and Comprehension)*
There was, as well, a test by AC status interaction with an analysis of simple effects of AC status for each type of test indicating significant AC status differences on both Vocabulary, \(F(1, 158) = 22.041, p < .001\), and Comprehension scores, \(F(1, 158) = 17.281, p < .001\). AC schools scored lower on both Vocabulary and Comprehension tests than non AC schools (\(M_{AC} = 31.63\) (SD = 7.53) versus \(M_{Non\ AC} = 39.62\) (SD = 11.43) on vocabulary and \(M_{AC} = 40.32\) (7.56) versus \(M_{Non\ AC} = 46.75\) (10.14) on comprehension. There was a larger difference for Vocabulary scores (mean difference = 7.99) than for Comprehension scores (mean difference = 6.53).

There was a test X grade interaction, \(F (1, 312) = 25.74, p<.001\), that was followed-up with an analysis of simple effects of test at each grade level. Results from the analysis of simple effects indicated a significant difference between vocabulary and comprehension scores at both third grade (\(F (1,73) = 339.15, p<.001\)) and fifth grade (\(F (1,85) = 91.15, p<.001\)). An examination of mean differences between vocabulary and comprehension scores indicated that third grade differences in those test scores (\(M_{Vocab} = 36.16\) (1.22) versus \(M_{Comp} = 45.51\) (1.24), mean difference = 9.35), were larger than fifth grade differences \(M_{Vocab} = 37.40\) (1.22) versus \(M_{Comp} = 43.63\) (0.97), mean difference = 6.23). There was a significant type of test main effect (\(F (1,312) = 689.14, p<.001\)) with Verbal (M = 36.34, SD = 9.96) scores significantly lower than Comprehension scores (M = 44.02, SD =8.65). Finally, there was a main effect of AC status (\(F(1,312) = 60.15, p<.001\)) with the composite vocabulary and comprehension score averaged across grades 3 and 5 lower for AC schools (M = 36.25, SD =14.41) than for non AC schools (M = 44.12, SD=10.66).
Question 2

In order to determine whether there was a relationship between teaching conditions and teacher perceptions of autonomy in practice, Pearson’s correlation was computed between scores on the Teacher Autonomy Scale and Teaching Conditions Survey. Results indicated no significant relationship, $r(62) = -0.092, p = 0.447$, between those variables.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the direct impact that the instructional practices of one school reform had on student achievement outcomes in reading and to determine if there was a relationship between teaching conditions and teacher’s perception of autonomy in practice.

Mixed model ANOVA was used to determine if the America’s Choice program had an effect on student’s reading growth measured against the reading growth scores of schools that did not participate in the America’s Choice program.

The populations of the schools used in this study were determined by enrollment demographics by other subgroups such as Students with Disabilities, Eligibility for Free and Reduced Lunch, Limited English Proficiency and Migrant status as shown in Table 9. The response rate for this study was approximately 45%, as shown in Table 7. Demographic data collected of teachers who participated in the study was shown in Table 8.

Tukey’s HSD pairwise comparison of means indicated significant pairwise differences for each AC versus non AC school with both verbal and comprehension scores from the non AC school significantly higher for both third and fifth graders. A test
by AC status interaction with an analysis of simple effects of AC status for each type of
test indicated significant differences as a function of AC status on both Vocabulary and
Comprehension scores with AC schools scoring lower on those tests than non AC schools
and a larger difference for Vocabulary scores.

There was a test X grade interaction that was followed-up with an analysis of
simple effects of test at each grade level. Results from the analysis of simple effects
indicated a significant difference between vocabulary and comprehension scores at both
third grade and fifth grade. An examination of mean differences between vocabulary and
comprehension scores indicated that third grade differences in those test scores were
larger than fifth grade differences. There was a significant type of test main effect with
Verbal scores significantly lower than Comprehension scores. Finally, there was a main
effect of AC status with the composite vocabulary and comprehension score averaged
across grades 3 and 5 lower for AC schools than for non AC schools. In the analysis to
determine if there is a direct relationship between Teaching conditions and teacher
perceptions of autonomy, it was indicated that there was no significant relationship.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

As an aid to the reader, this final chapter of the dissertation restates the research problem and reviews the major methods used in the study. The major sections of this chapter summarize the results and discuss their implications.

In response to the research opportunities raised in the foregoing studies, this study explored the direct impact that the instructional practices of one school reform had on student achievement outcomes in reading and explored the effect that teacher conditions have on teacher’s perception of autonomy in instructional practice. The common routine of measuring instructional practice in reading usually done on a predictive schedule meant that the outcome of the observations would be inaccurate and biased, therefore a closer look at the instructional practices that affected an increase in student achievement became necessary.

The aim of exploring the impact of instructional practice on reading growth was to obtain evidence on which school districts can rely to make more appropriate decisions. School Districts will be able to identify which educational interventions should be allocated funding. This study further engages educators to take a critical look at specific instructional practices that have been proven to be effective. School leaders are challenged to find ways of implementing institutional change to produce a more efficient mechanism for increasing and sustaining student achievement in reading.

Limitations

1. Of the eight schools petitioned and that initially agreed to participate in this study, only two AC schools were willing participants.
2. The sample for this study was 62.
3. The Socio economic status of the population selected for this study was below the poverty level.
4. Access to teachers in AC schools was restricted in all but two schools.
5. There were noticeable inconsistencies in the type of data requested by the researcher that warranted using archival data rather than live data.
6. The Area superintendent for the schools used in this study was unwilling to approve the study in a timely manner which affected the collection of time sensitive data.

Summary of Findings

As explained in Chapter II, numerous research studies exploring the effects of other school reform initiatives on the education of at-risk students have also suggested that higher levels of implementation are associated with greater student performance gains. This research primarily used a quantitative perspective in attempting to analyze the impact that one school reform program had on reading growth scores of schools that used that reform program compared to the growth scores of schools that did not use that reading reform program. The levels of implementation of the reform program could not be adequately measured because the sample size was too small to report significant measures. The response rates was also problematic for the researcher, as the schools that were initially selected and had agreed to participate in the program, later opted not to participate or were uncooperative and unresponsive to the researcher.

Two instruments were used in this study. One instrument sought to measure the extent of the implementation of instructional practices direct impact on increases in
student achievement. The second instrument sought to measure the extent of teaching conditions that might influence teacher’s perception of autonomy in instruction.

This study was quantitative with quasi-experimental design utilizing a mixed model analysis (having longitudinal and cross-sectional components) to address hypotheses. Items from the America’s Choice level of implementation survey instrument used in a study conducted by Supovitz and May (2004) were administered and demographic items were administered to teachers in the selected schools for this study. Demographic data was also collected in an effort to identify differences between professional characteristics of teachers and their perceptions of autonomy.

The data from Iowa test of Basic Skills (ITBS) scores were used in this study and were accordingly coded to protect the identity of the school. The purpose of the data collection and administration of the surveys was to determine if in fact students gained points in reading achievement due to the type of reading reform instructional practice implemented at their school or from the absence of one such practice. The Teacher Autonomy survey sought to find out if there was a correlation between teachers perceived autonomy of practice and teaching conditions that may influence instructional practices.

Mixed method ANOVA was used to determine if the America’s Choice program had an effect on student’s reading growth measured against the reading growth scores of schools that did not participate in the America’s Choice program.

The analysis of the ITBS scores results of this study showed schools that utilized the America’s Choice program repeatedly scored significantly lower than the schools that
did not participate in the program. ITBS scores for both 3rd and 5th grade students were lower for students in the AC program and for both reading and comprehension.

Discussion

As had been mentioned earlier, the turnover of school reform programs within school districts is quite frequent (Slavin 1989). Schools that do retain a reform program for extensive periods of time at times do so most likely because of a mandate they have been handed and not necessarily because the program has been effective or has been revised and improved upon. Whereas the researcher is clear that it would take some doing to disestablish school reform programs, the researcher recommends that schools that do utilize a comprehensive school reform program take deliberate steps in actively participating in how the program is evaluated for success.

There is a need to assess reform a program’s instructional practice as an influence on student achievement at all points of the continuum as the program is being utilized, and not just at the beginning and at the end of the implementation period. The use of authentic tests that are unique to each school should be included in the evaluation process, rather than over relying on the sole use of standardized tests scores to inform the validity of a program’s success. After all, a reform program’s success should not be defined only by the use of one specific instrument alone. If a student has mastered how to read by being tutored with acclaimed successful research based superior instructional practices endorsed and designed by a reform program, then success in multiple facets of reading should be recorded and observable in any type of assessment given, unless the instructional practices of the reform program was designed to produce only one type of learner.
It is imperative that school districts conduct their own independent research on the effectiveness of a school reform program and not simply rely on the reports provided. Many times, these research reports are written by the program developers themselves, or persons or companies that stand to gain by their affiliation with the program. In addition to the school district conducting their own independent research, it would be wise to seek independent evaluative research reports from researchers and companies that implement or have implemented the program who do not receive any personal gain directly or indirectly from the program developers/creators. “Future third party researchers need to address the impact of the program on higher order skills assessed using open ended questions” (Munoz & Dosset, 2004).

Even in instances when the program has had several research reports published about the validity and effectiveness of the program, the school district should follow up on the claims of the program developers and investigate the currency of their findings. The school districts should demand more assessment measures and should keep track of and measure the success of their own schools, within the district, that utilize the program and compare outcomes. This practice holds the developer, school district and individual schools accountable in justifying the investment in the purchase of the reform program, verifying that the program is indeed worth keeping and as a means to identify which instructional practices do have an effect on increasing student achievement.

So, beginning with independent research of the school program, schools should then follow with identifying at least three areas that they would have a laser focus on improving. The school should collect all possible data before implementing the reform program. Measures such as the student demographics by population, background and
subgroups (Socio-economic status, Limited English Proficiency, Migrant status), evaluations on current instructional practices should be taken. Then a uniform, within-school, independent assessment of students scores in reading skills and ability level as well as assessment scores from reliable standardize test used by the school should be recorded. It would be beneficial for the school to focus on reporting student’s growth as a measure for success at various points in time rather than at a single point in time. (Hamilton et al 2007). Coupled with this, scientifically researched based evaluation instruments of instructional practice should be used to determine levels of program implementation. Pre-determined collection points of data while the program is implemented should be strictly adhered to and results should be compared to those as reported by the reform program. The data collected each time, can be analyzed by an independent statistician employed by the school or can be performed within the school using a reliable statistics instrument that is easy to use such as SPSS. From the output, clearly identify and define variables that have an effect on impeding or accelerating growth. Make necessary adjustments, plan for the revision and continue to track changes. At the end of the implementation period, compare results at the beginning, along and at the end of the continuum. Compare results to program reports and evaluate outcome/achievement. This should be done with all the teachers involved and not independent of them with results prepared and presented by the administrators.

The America’s Choice program bases its approach to reform on what it claims to be a set of revolutionary literacy solutions to help students become strong readers and effective writers. Within districts, the America’s Choice program is the reform program designed specifically with the students with limited English Proficiency in mind and was
designed to boost the performance of students who are two or more years below grade level in literacy. Proponents of the America’s choice promise that this program is foolproof once implemented with fidelity, which the researcher does not doubt.

However, the schools in this study, schools that have utilized the America’s Choice program for a minimum of eight years, were selected based on their SES match up, had a significant similarity in ethnic populations, but scored lower than non AC schools on every dimension measured. The researcher tried to obtain data from the schools to measure the levels of implementation of America’s Choice, but was unsuccessful due to bureaucratic delays that impeded the collection of time sensitive data.

Initially, the schools that indicated their willingness to participate, which would have provided the adequate amount of respondents, were withdrawn from the list of participants by the Area Superintendent for those schools in order to protect them, because the Area Superintendent was of the notion that the researcher did not firmly grasp what America’s Choice was about and would be biased. [The researcher has more than ten years experience with the America’s Choice Workshop model and firmly grasps the format of the program.] The result was that out of the eight AC schools petitioned to participate; only two AC schools were willing and the data from the survey obtained from these two schools was too small a sample size to report any main effects.

From the closely guarded access to data of actual scores that would shed some light in explaining why the students in these particular areas of the school district do not record as high academic gains as students in other areas of the district who do not use a type of school reform program, it can only be surmised that the lack of effectiveness of the program are well noted by the appropriate office. However, the question remains that
why would the district continue to purchase and implement the America’s Choice program though it has been ineffective? From the analysis of the last seven years of ITBS assessment scores of these schools, an assessment used by the district’s admission, to gauge students projected performance in its state standardized CRCT assessment, 3rd and 5th Grade scores were consistently lower than the 3rd and 5th Grade scores of schools that did not utilize the America’s Choice program.

Finding a common link within the schools that used the America’s Choice program, such as having very similar SES match up, significant similarity in population by ethnicity, the researcher concludes that the decision of the school district to adopt this program for these particular schools in this particular cluster was deliberate. America’s Choice program promised higher scores and a record of higher student achievement gains particularly for this particular population of students, particularly in the area of reading, except with a caveat- that the program be implemented with utmost fidelity. The students in the schools used in this study represent an overwhelmingly high percentage of African American and Latino population in the district. If the students are performing below grade level in reading ability in comparison to their peers nationally, which they are, then the odds of these students graduating from high school prepared for the rigor of higher education is slim, further widening the achievement gap that is erroneously reported to be closing each year. Having not been granted full access to teachers in the America’s Choice school, it was difficult to evaluate the extent of the implementation of the program and how it may have affected student reading growth outcomes.

A few teachers, who taught in America’s Choice schools used in the study, were also of the opinion that the program was largely ineffective for their student population.
They cited the linguistic feat of code switching those students with a weak phonemic awareness, phonologic, literal foundation and limited English proficiency had to endure in order to translate the nuances of the English language to gain understanding. These ‘interferences’ in learning greatly affected the student’s level of interest and ultimately adversely affected the students’ motivation to perform better. The teachers also cited their handicap in being monolingual. They shared examples of colleagues who were bilingual whose class assessment data consistently showed that their students had even greater records of student’s achievement gains in reading than those students whose teachers were monolingual.

It is the researcher’s opinion that schools of education should require all teachers to be proficient in one foreign language by the completion of their teaching degree. The United States is the only country in the world that does not require its students to be fluent speakers of at least one foreign language. It would be beneficial for teachers to also take linguistics courses that will aid in understanding various dialects and will make educators more amenable to learning the nuances of various languages apart from those present in the English language. Being bilingual adds to the versatility of the teacher to teach diverse cultural groups and to impact academic outcomes for students positively.

While wishing to remain anonymous and commenting in general on the level of implementation of the America’s Choice program, there were differing opinions and views. Some of the teachers reported that their school did not implement the program with fidelity, that they were often directed and mandated by their school administration to ‘mix methods’. Others stated that their schools did implement with ‘approximated’ fidelity [approximated, meaning that the schools practiced most of the programs design,
but with adjustments, such as improvising where a certain material may not have been available]. At some schools, the teachers commented that the training they received for using the program was often inadequate and inconsistent with the defined model of America’s Choice. The coaches who should have been supporting the teachers were often assigned additional administrative duties that limited their availability to coach. At other schools the teachers complained that another inadequacy of the America’s Choice program was its inability to accommodate various types of learners in its model. The teachers stated that the design of the workshop model is restrictive and does not really take into consideration differentiating instruction.

More than a few teachers who participated in this study voiced their concerns about the use of ITBS as a predictor for how students will perform in CRCT. For many educators a logical relationship between the two types of assessment is difficult to establish though statistically, the tests are very closely correlated. In another study conducted by Ervin (2011), it was found that, although Title I schools, which was another distinguishing feature of the schools used in this study, had passing scores of 800 on the CRCT, their scores on the ITBS failed to reach the 50th percentile, though the students’ scores were almost identical at similar levels in both the CRCT and ITBS assessments. Ervin concluded that using the results from CRCT was not an inappropriate measure of student achievement due to the very low cut off point required for passing CRCT in comparison to the ITBS tests. A policy recommendation to the Georgia Department of Education is consider raising the minimum passing score on the CRCT from 800 to 825. By increasing the minimum passing score on the CRCT, students will be challenged to compete and achieve at higher levels nationally.
Relationship of Current Study to Prior Research

This study explored the relationship between implementation of a school reform program and student’s level of achievement in reading. As explained by Correnti (2005), to be functionally illiterate in the early grades places students at greater risk in the future. The effects of being literally handicapped can be easily observed today as the achievement gap widens between American students and students of developed nations. If American public schools are to empower its students to be literate, there is a need to clearly identify factors of systems of accountability that contribute to aiding or impeding advancements in instructional practice that affect student achievement, but such systems of accountability must be grounded in research.

In his article, *Accountability at a Crossroads*, Douglas Reeves (2005) correctly identifies that educators are ‘angry with federal and state legislators for the use of accountability as a blunt instrument of reform.’ He accurately observes that educators are also upset that they have bought in to the theory that authentic teaching, learning and achievement can be purchased in a pre packaged box and that such a program bearing a brand name would be able to take the place of almost impossible changes. Reeves highlights three critical decisions that educators have to make in the face of accountability measures as are evident in education today.

Decision#1: To be compliant or to follow moral imperatives: Reeves makes a case for why compliance is important such as complying with laws. On the other hand, he states that compliance driven leadership would only yield limited returns, because it has to resort to severely penalizing its followers for apparent non compliance to standards. Recording levels of academic achievement cannot be quantified and contained only by
the boundaries of a set of standards. This is agreed but as Reeves points out, there is a need to have standards and there is a greater need to improve upon them.

Decision #2: Data or Analysis. The researcher is in agreement with Reeves that the most important aspect of any data analysis is the relentless search within all that output for best practices. Clearly indentifying strengths that bring about an increase in student achievement outcomes and using test data to draw meaningful glimmers of understanding that will create opportunities for improved instructional practice is the goal.

Finally, Reeves challenges educators to decide if adoption or implementation is the answer to revealing if a particular reform program works or not. In his summary, Reeves reinforces that the most important skill for any school leader is the articulation of expectations for adults not the students. This failure to articulate expectations on the part of the school leaders gives in part, according to Reeves, an explanation of why some of the schools are poor performers.

Recommendation for Further Study

Additional research seems necessary in determining if there is a difference in student academic outcomes due to an increase in teacher autonomy in instructional practice. The autonomy factor is important with the need for teachers to be content and committed in their profession, rather than simply being superficially compliant.

Though it may be difficult to establish, the researcher recommends that there is a need to conduct a study to find an empirical link between levels of implementation of a school reform program and instructional practices that affect student achievement outcomes.
And finally, there is a need for more in-depth research studies that evaluate school reform program effectiveness and success, in particular, America’s Choice program, that should be conducted by independent third party researchers.

Conclusion

While the success of any school reform program is heavily dependent on the fidelity of implementation, generally the effectiveness of the program is ultimately measured by student achievement outcomes. Schools that do not utilize a school reform program, but are able to develop a culture of network learning, a laser focus on the instructional core and a plan for improving instructional practice on a higher level, have a greater advantage in increasing student achievement outcomes in reading, than do prescribed programs that do not allow for much flexibility in instructional practice, are less likely to be implemented with fidelity and are designed to produce a finite type of learners.

While the schools district used in this study utilized ITBS scores to determine the performance of students in CRCT, it would be beneficial to raise the cut off points of passing in CRST to match ITBS. Whereas, students are reported as passing in the 50th percentile in CRCT, they are failing in ITBS. The cutoff points in CRCT are too low and need to be increased in order to observe true levels of student achievement and competence as assessed by both tests.
APPENDIX A

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI IRB APPROVAL

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.

Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 11060204
PROJECT TITLE: The Instructional Practice Implications of a School Reform Model versus No School Reform Model on Reading
PROJECT TYPE: Dissertation
RESEARCHER/S: Adebimpe Adelbsi Odunio
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education & Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership & School Counseling
FUNDING AGENCY: N/A
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt Approval
PERIOD OF PROJECT APPROVAL: 07/28/2011 to 07/27/2012

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair

Date
APPENDIX B

SCHOOL DISTRICT APPROVAL LETTER

May 17, 2011

Ms. Adebimpe Odunjo

Dear Ms. Odunjo:

Your research project has been approved. Listed below are the schools where approval to conduct the research is complete. Please work with the school administrator to schedule administration of instruments or conduct interviews.

Should modifications or changes in research procedures become necessary during the research project, changes must be submitted in writing to the Office of Accountability and Research prior to implementation. At the conclusion of your research project, you are expected to submit a copy of your results to this office. Results cannot reference the names of students or any District schools or departments.

Research files are not considered complete until results are received. If you have any questions regarding the process, contact our office at [Contact Information].

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Judith A. Jones
Chief Accountability and Research Officer
APPENDIX C

PERMISSION LETTERS

(Sample letter to Principals)

Adebimpe A. Odunjo
(404) 981.8775

February 28, 2011

Dear Principal ____________,

I am presently a doctoral student in Educational Leadership and Administration at the University Of Southern Mississippi conducting research for my dissertation.

Specifically, I am studying the impact that instructional practice has on student achievement outcomes. I will need to collect the DRA scores for the 2010/2011 academic year of the 4th Grade students at your school and conduct a survey with the teachers only.

Attached are the survey instruments that I plan to administer. I estimate that completion of the instruments will take no more than 20 minutes. I have obtained the Superintendent approval but also seek your approval to administer these instruments to the teachers at ______ Elementary. In conducting my research, I can assure you complete anonymity to protect the confidentiality of the teachers involved. The teacher’s names will not be recorded nor the instruments pre coded in any manner to be able to relate the results of any instrument to any particular teacher. I understand the demands placed on your time and would be very grateful for your support. I would be happy to meet with you at your convenience to discuss the research project in more detail. Thank you for your attention to my request, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Adebimpe A. Odunjo

Attch:

Reader’s Workshop Preparation Survey

Teacher Autonomy Survey
February 28, 2011

Dear ______________ Elementary School Teachers,

I am presently a doctoral student in Educational Leadership and Administration at the University Of Southern Mississippi conducting research for my dissertation.

Specifically, I am studying the impact that instructional practice has on student achievement outcomes. I will need to collect the DRA scores for the 2010/2011 academic year of the 4th Grade students at your school and conduct a survey with the teachers only. I estimate that completion of the instruments will take no more than 30 minutes. Attached are the survey instruments that I plan to administer.

I have obtained Superintendent ______ and Principal ____________’s approval to ask each of you to assist me by completing the two attached survey instruments, sealing them in the enclosed envelope and dropping it by the administrative office where I will retrieve them. Please do not sign the instruments or envelopes to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

I realize the imposition on your time but I really need your help. The research study is a partial fulfillment of my requirements for a doctoral degree and the instrument return rate is crucial to the success of the research. Completion of the instruments is completely voluntary and return of the completed instruments constitutes implied consent. Please take the time to assist me.

Sincerely,

Adebimpe Odunjo

Attach:

Teacher Autonomy Survey
Reader’s Workshop Preparation Survey
APPENDIX D

PERMISSION LETTERS FROM RESEARCHER TO USE INSTRUMENTS

from Kelly A. Stanton <stantonk@gse.upenn.edu>
to Adebimpe Odunjo <aodunjo@gmail.com>
date Thu, Mar 3, 2011 at 10:37 AM
subject Re: CPRE permission letter
mailed-by gse.upenn.edu
March 2, 2011
Dear Adebimpe,
On behalf of Jonathan Supovitz, CPRE Co-Director, and Henry May, CPRE Researcher and Statistician, CPRE grants you permission to use the scale and items on the Survey Scale from the research report, *The Relationship Between Teacher Implementation and Student Learning* (2003). We ask that you please use the proper citation below:


Sincerely,
Kelly Fair
CPRE Communications Manager

from: Col William moomaw <wmoomaw@embarqmail.com>
to: aodunjo@gmail.com
date: Tue, Mar 15, 2011 at 12:57 PM
subject: Teacher Autonomy
mailed-by: embarqmail.com
signed-by: embarqmail.com
hide details Mar 15 (10 days ago)

Permission is hereby granted to Ms. A. Odunjo to use the Teacher Autonomy Scale referenced in "Teacher Autonomy: Validation of the Teacher Autonomy Scale."
Dr. William E. Moomaw, Col. USAF Retired
APPENDIX E
SUPOVITZ & MAY SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Items in Writers Workshop Preparation Scale

(Based on a four point scale ranging from ‘not adequately prepared” to somewhat prepared” to “fairly well prepared, to “very well prepared”)

How prepared do you feel to:

• teach mini lessons on the craft of writing
• teach mini lessons on writing skills
• teach mini lessons on classroom procedures
• hold writing conferences with students
• conduct narrative studies
• conduct informal genre studies
• conduct author studies
• identify and assist students with common writing problems
• conduct author’s chair
• Conduct writing conference in small groups of students.
• Facilitate student writing response groups
• Use elements of the standards to guide/revise your instruction
• Teach students strategies for revising and editing their writing
• Teach students to self assess their own writing using the standards.

Items on Reader’s Workshop Preparation Scale

(based on a four point scale ranging from ‘ not adequately prepared’ to ‘somewhat prepared’ to “fairly prepared” to “fairly well prepared” to “very well prepared”)

How prepared do you feel to:

• Do guided reading with students
• Have students read independently
• Teach mini lessons on phonics based skills
• Teach mini lessons on comprehension skills (Story maps, creating images, connections, summarizing, etc)
• Teach mini lessons on decoding skills and word analysis
• Teach mini lessons on classroom procedures (rituals and routines)
• Match students with leveled texts
• Conduct reading conferences with small groups of students
• Assess students using running records
• Develop plans for student guided reading
• Facilitate student book talks.

Items on Same standards should apply to all students scale

(based on a four point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to ‘somewhat disagree” to ‘somewhat agree’ to ‘strongly agree’)

Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree….

• Special education students who are placed in regular classes should be expected to meet the same standards as other students
• Limited English Proficient students who are placed in regular classes should be expected to meet the same standards as other students.
• I use the same criteria for all students to judge the quality of an assignment
• Teachers should use the same standards in evaluating the work of all students in the class.

Items on All Students Can learn scale

(based on a four point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to ‘somewhat disagree” to ‘somewhat agree’ to ‘strongly agree’)

Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree….

- the achievement of my students is primarily due to factors beyond my control
- if my students have adequate time they can master the knowledge and skills expected of them
- My students are not ready for problem solving until they have acquired the basic skills
- Many of the students I teach are not capable of learning the material I am supposed to teach them
- It is impractical for teachers to tailor instruction to the unique interest and abilities of individual students
- My students cannot work together without close supervision
- My students success is based more on ability than effort

The factors that will comprise the survey are described in this section. The items will later be used to create scales in which individual responses will be aggregated.

*America’s Choice overall implementation:* This 10 item scale will represent an overall picture of a teacher’s implementation of the Classroom components of America’s Choice, including the use of 25 Book Campaign, the Criterion Reference Competency Test, book logs and rubrics.

*Time Teaching Reader’s Workshop:* this single item will ask teachers how long they have been teaching AC readers workshop.

*Reader’s Workshop Preparation:* This single item will ask teachers how they prepared they felt to teach America’s Choice reader’s workshop.

*Time Teaching Writer’s Workshop:* this single item will ask teachers how prepared they feel to teach the AC writer’s workshop.

*Belief that All Students Can Learn:* this will be a seven item scale question that will ask teachers for their agreement with a series of statements designed to gauge teachers beliefs about student learning.

*Belief that Same Standards Should Apply to all Students:* This will be a seven item scaled questions that will ask teachers for their agreement with a series of statements that is intended to assess their belief that all students should meet high standards of performance. (Supovitz & May, 2003)
APPENDIX F

TEACHER AUTONOMY INSTRUMENT

Items on Teacher Autonomy Survey

(based on a three point scale ranging from “all the time” to ‘often’ to ‘fairly often’)

18 Teacher Autonomy Scale Condition questions used on other empirical studies

1. I am free to be creative in my teaching approach
2. The selection of student learning activities in my class is under my control.
3. Standards of behavior in my classroom are set primarily by myself.
4. My job does not allow for much discretion on my part
5. In my teaching, I use my own guidelines and procedures
6. I have little say over the content and skills that are selected for teaching.
7. The scheduling of use of time in my classroom is under my control
8. My teaching focuses on those goals and objectives I select myself.
9. I seldom use alternative procedures in my teaching
10. I follow my own guidelines for instruction
11. I have only limited latitude in how major problems are resolved.
12. What I teach in my class is determined for the most part by myself.
13. I have little control over how classroom space is used.
14. The materials I use in my class are chosen for the most part by me.
15. The evaluation and assessment activities are selected by others.
16. I select the teaching methods and strategies I use with my students.
17. I have little say over the scheduling of use of time in my classroom.
18. The content and skills taught in my class are those I select.
14 Teacher Autonomy Scale Condition questions used on other empirical studies
(based on a four point scale ranging from 1 being the least and 5 being the best)

1. How satisfied are you with your current employment

2. How would you characterize the instructional load placed on you in your classes?

3. How would you describe the paper work load placed on you as a teacher?

4. How satisfied would you describe the stress level of your work environment?

5. Are you active on any work groups or committees within your school?

6. Are you active on any work groups or committees at the district level?

7. Do you have an interest in moving into an administrative or supervisory position in the near future?

8. Have you begun work on a more advanced degree?

9. How often does your school’s administration consider the opinion of the faculty about matters that directly affect them?

10. How would you rate the school administration in terms of involving the instructional staff in the development of school policy which affects their work?

11. How often are concerns of the instructional staff taken into account in the decision made by the school administration?

12. How would you rate the openness and accessibility of the school administration to the faculty?

13. How would you rate the schools administration in terms of providing frequent recognition for high performance among the faculty?

### APPENDIX G

#### SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

**Writer’s Workshop Preparation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How prepared do you feel to:</th>
<th>Not adequately prepared 1</th>
<th>Somewhat prepared 2</th>
<th>Fairly well prepared 3</th>
<th>Very Well prepared 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teach mini lessons on the craft of writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Teach mini lessons on writing skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Teach mini lessons on classroom procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Hold writing conferences with students</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Conduct narrative studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Conduct informal genre studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Conduct author studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Identify and assist students with common writing problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Conduct author studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Identify and assist students with common writing problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Conduct author’s chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Conduct writing conference in small groups of students</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Facilitate student writing response groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Use elements of the standards to guide/revise your instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Teach students strategies for revising and editing their writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Teach student to self assess their own writing using the standards</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Reader’s Workshop Preparation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How prepared do you feel to:</th>
<th>Not adequately prepared 1</th>
<th>Somewhat prepared 2</th>
<th>Fairly well prepared 3</th>
<th>Very Well prepared 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do guided reading with students</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Have students read independently</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Teach mini lessons on phonics based skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Teach mini lessons on comprehension skills (Story maps, creating images, connections, summarizing, etc)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Teach mini lessons on decoding skills and word analysis</td>
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<td>6. Teach mini lessons on classroom procedures (rituals and routines)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Match students with leveled text</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Conduct reading conferences with small groups of students</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Assess students using running records</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Develop plans for student guided reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Facilitate student book talks</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Same Standards Should Apply to all Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree:</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree 1</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree 2</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree 3</th>
<th>Strongly Agree 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Special education students who are placed in regular classes should be expected to meet the same standards as other students</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Limited English Proficient Students who are placed in regular classes should be expected to meet the same standards as other students</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I use the same criteria for all students to judge the quality of an assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Teachers should use the same standards in evaluating the work of all students in the class.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## All Students Can Learn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree:</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The achievement of my student is primarily due to factors beyond my control</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. If my students have adequate time they can master the knowledge and skills expected of them</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. My students are not ready for problem solving until they have acquired the basic skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Many of the students I teach are not capable of learning the material I am supposed to teach them</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Teach mini lessons on decoding skills and word analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. It is impractical for teachers to tailor instruction to the unique interest and abilities of individual students</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. My students cannot work together without close supervision</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. My student’s success is based more on ability than effort.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Overall Implementation of America’s Choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please rate the extent to which you agree:</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The whole school community implements the 25 Book Campaign</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The principals Book of the Month program is in place</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Students work that approaches or meets the standards along with appropriate standards and elements are displayed on bulletin board in classrooms and halls.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Model literacy classrooms are established at the second and fourth grades and Skills block in kindergarten/ first grade classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. The Upper Elementary coach implements small group and tutorial programs for students needing assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Time is scheduled for meetings of teams of grade level and same subject teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. The master schedule includes a 2.5 hour Literacy Block and a 1 hour Math block and time is scheduled for meetings of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
grade level same subject teachers.

8. There are scheduled teacher Meetings coordinated by the Coaches, focusing on classroom teaching and learning.

9. There are scheduled Study Group meetings of teachers to read and discuss monographs.

10. Class teachers are identified who will teach the same students for the next 2-3 years and allocated to teaching teams for the commencement of the following school year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Teaching Reader’s Workshop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please indicate the number of years with ( ✓ )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. How long have you been teaching AC Reader’s Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How long have you been teaching AC Writer’s Workshop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Total number of years teaching</th>
<th>_____ years and or _____ months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2. Highest Academic Degree | □ Bachelors  
□ Masters  
□ Educational Specialist  
□ Doctorate |

| Grade Level (Circle one) | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
### Teacher Autonomy Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Definitely True 1</th>
<th>More or Less True 2</th>
<th>More or Less False 3</th>
<th>Definitely False 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I am free to be creative in my teaching approach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The selection of student learning activities in my class is under my control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Standards of behavior in my classroom are set primarily by myself</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>My job does not allow for much discretion on my part</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>In my teaching, I use my own guidelines and procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I have little say over the content and skills that are selected for teaching</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The scheduling of use of time in my classroom is under my control</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>My teaching focuses on those goals and objectives I select myself</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I seldom use alternative procedures in my teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Follow my own guidelines and instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I have only limited latitude in how major problems are solved</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>What I teach in my class is determined for the most part by myself</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I have little control over how classroom space is used</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The materials I use in my class are chosen for the most part by myself</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The evaluation and assessment activities are selected by others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I select the teaching methods and strategies I use with my students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I have little say over the scheduling of use of time in my classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>The content and skills taught in my class are those I select.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX H

TEACHING CONDITIONS SURVEY

Teaching Conditions

1. How satisfied are you with your current employment?
   - Very satisfied
   - Generally satisfied
   - Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
   - Generally Dissatisfied
   - Very Dissatisfied

2. How would you characterize the instructional load placed on you in your classes?
   - Very Heavy
   - Fairly Heavy
   - Neither heavy or light
   - Fairly light
   - Very light

3. How would you describe the paper work load placed on you as a teacher?
   - Very Heavy
   - Fairly Heavy
   - Neither heavy or light
   - Fairly light
   - Very light

4. How would you describe the stress level of your work environment?
   - Very high
   - Fairly high
   - Neither high nor low
   - Fairly low
   - Very low
5. How satisfied are you with your current salary?
   - Very satisfied
   - Generally satisfied
   - Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
   - Fairly Dissatisfied
   - Very Dissatisfied

6. Are you active on any work groups or committees within your school?
   - Yes
   - No

7. Are you active on any work groups or committees on the district level?
   - Yes
   - No

8. Do you have an interest in moving into an administration or supervisory position in the near future?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Sure

9. Have you begun work on a more advanced degree?
   - Yes
   - No

10. How often does your school administration consider the opinions of the faculty about matters that directly affect them?
    - Always
    - Most of the time
    - Half of the time
    - Seldom
    - Never
11. How would you rate your school’s administration in terms of involving the instructional staff in the development of school policies which affect their work?

- Excellent
- Above average
- Average
- Below average
- Unsatisfactory

12. How would you rate your openness and accessibility of the school’s administration to the faculty?

- Excellent
- Above average
- Average
- Below average
- Unsatisfactory

13. How often are the concerns of the instructional staff taken into account in the decisions made by the school administration?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Half of the time
- Seldom
- Never

14. How would you rate the school’s administration in terms of providing frequent recognition for high performance among the faculty?

- Excellent
- Above average
- Average
- Below average
- Unsatisfactory
REFERENCES


http://proquest.umi.com/pqdlink?did=982790911&Fmt=2&clientId=79356&RQT=309&VName=PQD


