Teacher perceptions of the reform model success for all on student achievement in reading

Sheila Lyle Maxwell
Clark Atlanta University

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ABSTRACT

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TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THE REFORM MODEL SUCCESS FOR ALL ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN READING

Advisor: Dr. Moses Norman
Dissertation dated May 2009

This study was conducted as a qualitative research project at an Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers as it related to the independent variable, Success for All reading program, as impacted by the dependent variable student achievement, in an urban. During the study the researcher investigated the relationship of the teacher perceptions and Success for All as it related to student achievement. The study also investigated whether or not there was a strong probability that Success for All reading program was likely to significantly address the existing problems at the inner-city elementary school.

All six of the participants utilized in the study were drawn from a population of 35 teachers in a school which consisted of kindergarten through fifth grade. Participants
were chosen on the basis that they had successfully implemented the Success for All reading program for two consecutive years.

The problem that existed at the Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School was poor educational achievement in reading. The school identified ranked as low performing due to the fact that out of 11 target areas, the school met only 33% of its 2006-2007 Top Priority Student Performance Goals set by the superintendent.

The qualitative data in the study was obtained from teacher responses related to the Success for All reading program. The data gathered were obtained over the course of the 2008-2009 school year through the use of one on-site, after school in-depth interview session as well as researcher field notes.

In the end, the researcher documented that all six participants who participated in the one time in-depth interview session shared related views on the question regarding the benefits of cooperative learning. All participants had concerns regarding the other four questions: including the staff development experience as it related to the Success for All reform model and whether or not it was beneficial in terms of helping to increase student achievement in reading; the scripted lesson approach utilized in Success for All when compared to other instructional methods that were previously taught; if the observations and evaluations received had been advantageous in terms of improving instructional delivery; and if the Success for All method of instruction had caused students to be more academically successful, and engaged than in the past.

The researcher concluded that the differences in the participants’ responses were directly linked to the participant’s experience teaching, as well as the number of years experience teaching the Success for All Reform Model.
TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THE REFORM MODEL SUCCESS FOR ALL ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN READING

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY
SHEILA LYLE MAXWELL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

MAY 2009
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</th>
<th>ii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting of the Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context of the Qualitative Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergent Themes</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship among the Variables</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Variables and Other Terms</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Contents (continued)

CHAPTER  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Objectives</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with Human Subjects</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection Procedures</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Validity and Trustworthiness</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline for Completion</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. ANALYSIS OF DATA</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Contents (continued)

Recommendations........................................................................................................... 77
Summary..................................................................................................................... 85

APPENDIX

A. 2006-2007 Top Priority Student Performance Goals ........................................ 87
B. 2006-2007 Fifth Grade Writing Results ............................................................... 90
C. sfa Cycle of Instruction.......................................................................................... 91
D. Criterion-Referenced Competency Test Data..................................................... 92
E. SFA Classroom Layout............................................................................................ 95
F. Success for All Reform Model CIPP...................................................................... 96
G. Large Urban School System Observation Instrument ...................................... 97
H. Teaching in A Large Urban School System: What Teachers
   Must Do To Be The Best......................................................................................... 106
I. Study Participants’ Responses.............................................................................. 126
J. Study Participants’ Lesson Observation Teacher Feedback Forms.................. 133

REFERENCES ............................................................................................................. 143
LIST OF FIGURES

PAGE

FIGURE

1. Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Tests: Percentage of Students at the “Does Not Meet” Performance Level..........................8

2. Relationship among the Variables.................................................................28
**LIST OF TABLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Demographic Information for Each Participant</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Participants’ Responses to Staff Development</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Participants’ Responses to the Scripted Lesson Approach</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Participants’ Responses to Observations and Evaluations</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Participants’ Responses to Cooperative Learning</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Participants’ Responses to their Overall Teaching Experiences</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Setting of the Study

Oakland City, a small community located in the southwest section of Atlanta Georgia, is also referred to as the West End. Residents in this community have had easy access to prestigious institutions of higher education located in the downtown Atlanta area. These prominent institutions of higher education are located in the Atlanta University Center, the home of Clark Atlanta University, Interdenominational Theological Seminary, Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, and Spelman College. The U.S. Census Bureau (2007) estimated that the population of the small section in southwest Atlanta, Georgia was 394,929 with 188,754 being male and 206,175 members of the population being female. The median age of the population was estimated to be 34.7 years notably younger in age than surrounding communities which implied the percentage of senior citizens in the population in comparison was subsequently diminutive.

Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School Elementary public school is currently located at the corner of Lee Street and Avon Avenue in the historic Oakland City community of Atlanta, Georgia. Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School Elementary School was formed as a result of the merger of Ragsdale and Arkwright Elementary Schools, two small neighborhood schools that were consolidated due to
downsizing. Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School was constructed on the
previous site of Ragsdale Elementary School and became occupied in January of 2005.
The school was renamed in honor of Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School a
native Georgian fondly known as “The Father of Black Public School Education” for the
city of large urban school system. As a council member, businessman and minister
Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School fought to ensure that public schools were
provided for Atlanta’s Negroes and that education was provided by college educated
Negro teachers. During the time period of the study the Urban Southwest Atlanta
Elementary School had 30 regular education and 2 special education teachers in grades
K-5. There were approximately 478 children currently attending the Urban Southwest
Atlanta Elementary School in grades K-5. The principal was an African-American
female and held a doctorate degree in educational leadership. The remaining members of
the administrative team consisted of an assistant principal, and three individuals
(Instructional Liaison Specialist, Math facilitator, and SFA facilitator) all of which were
African American and female. The majority of the staff members were African
American and female. However, there were two Caucasian female teachers; and five
African-American male teachers.

The Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School’s philosophy was to provide
opportunities for every student to reach his or her maximum potential. The educational
philosophy at the Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School was accomplished
through individual and group learning experiences that enabled each child the ability to
cultivate skills necessary for a successful life. Moreover, these key learning experiences
would allow students to demonstrate behavior that cultivated responsibility, defined consideration, and promoted the ability to exhibit leadership skills as a participating member of society. The vision at the Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School focused on leaving no child behind as the Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School prepared students for success in school and life. Student at the Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School gain skills needed to become responsible citizens in a global technological society. The Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School continued to lay the foundation for success by presenting a challenging curriculum to all students. Students who functioned at a variety of levels were challenged and moved forward. The Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School philosophy, vision, and mission statements addressed the large urban school system Systems’ goals and insured that the entire student body accelerated academically.

The Urban Southwest Elementary School was one of sixteen other Project Graduation Really Achieves Dreams (GRAD) elementary schools within the large urban school system. Additionally, the urban Southwest Elementary School promoted sixth grade students into two of the six middle schools which were also Project GRAD schools. There were three Project GRAD high schools in the large urban school system out of eleven high schools in all. Project GRAD was a national reform initiative that had been in large urban school system since 2000. The overall goal of Project Grad was to promote supportive programs and community based services that encouraged student achievement and increased the graduation rate of high school students. Project GRAD based its need to support at risk, low income, Title 1 schools on research that spoke to the
fact that these kinds of schools tended to have students who demonstrated academic delays. Project GRAD (2008) stated that:

By the end of fourth grade, low income students, by various measures, are already two years behind other students. By the time these students reach 8th grade, they are three grade levels behind in reading and math. If they reach 12th grade, low-income and minority student achievement levels are about four years behind those of other young people. (p. 1)

Project GRAD also ensured that high school graduates were prepared for college. The successes of preparing high school graduates could be seen by the success rate of college graduation rates of large urban school system first Brumley graduates. A large urban school system documented that the Project GRAD program yielded two of its first Brumley-GRAD scholar graduates. Moreover, in 2008-2009 over four hundred additional Brumley-GRAD Scholars would be attending over sixty colleges in over fifteen states. The results of Project GRAD were not in isolation. Project GRAD had documented proven results in reducing the percentage of students absent ten or more days, an increase in students’ performance on standardized tests, an increase in students’ performance on the Georgia High School Graduation Test, an increase in the number of high school graduates, and an increase in the number of GRAD students that attended college.

The Project GRAD programs that offered a sound foundation for a large urban school system at risk, low income, Title 1 schools are as follows:
1. High School/College Readiness (summer initiative program geared at introducing student to college campus life and academics);

2. Mathematics (reasoning and problem solving main thrust of student understanding and not memorizing mathematical facts);

3. Literacy (Success for All program a ninety minute uninterrupted reading block that ensured that students read at grade level or above);

4. Classroom Management (Consistence Management and Cooperative Discipline (CMCD) program geared at establishing a caring and respectful learning environment; and

5. Family support (Communities in Schools of Atlanta (CIS) which offered at-risk students guidance, counseling and community outreach services).

The Success for All (SFA) reform model represented the Project GRAD literacy frameworks. This reform model could be described as a comprehensive school-wide reform model. SFA was recognized for its enthusiastic belief that all students could learn, taking into account that students may learn differently. At the Success for All Foundation, our goal is to help all students achieve at the highest levels—not just children who come to school well fed, well rested, and ready to learn, but everyone, at all levels, whatever it takes (Success for All Foundation, 2008). The SFA Foundation felt that schools had the most impact on students due to the ideology that students spent more time in school, and could be influenced by the adults who oversaw their instructional programs. Whereby, all instructional practices utilized in the delivery of instruction at the classroom level were proven researched strategies, as outlined by No Child Left
Behind Act of 2001. The SFA Foundation went even further by acknowledging that schools may have had an impact on student achievement, but with families involved in impacting student achievement, the results could be even greater. As a comprehensive reform model SFA offered schools: (a) Research-based curriculum materials, (b) Extensive professional development in proven instructional strategies, (c) Assessment and data-monitoring tools, (d) Classroom management techniques, (e) One-to-one tutoring for struggling students, and (f) Ongoing family involvement and community support (Success for All Foundation, 2008).

The Success for All methods of instruction that was utilized at the Urban Southwest Elementary School for beginning readers was as follows: (a) Reading Roots (beginning reading), (b) Adventure Island (reading intervention) (c) Raising Reading Stars (family literacy), and (d) Fast Track Phonics (phonics program) and, My Turn, Your Turn (English language development). The Success for All methods of instruction that were utilized at Urban Southwest Elementary School for upper-elementary readers were as follows: (a) Reading Wings (focus on comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency) and, (b) Comprehension Strategies Intervention (videos, lessons and ongoing practice). The participants in the study all utilized the Reading Wings Success for All reform model instructional method.

Context of the Qualitative Study

Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School was classified as a Title 1 school due to the low socio-economic status of the parents whose students attended the school. Ninety-five percent of the students were identified as economically disadvantaged
(Georgia Department of Education, 2008). The majority of the students at the school received either free or subsidized lunch, a strong indicator that the majority of the Oakland population is living at, just above, or below the poverty level. The school had an extremely high rate of transient students. Due to these student transitions, a teacher will often start with one set of students in the fall and end the school year in May with an entirely different set of students. Furthermore, these abovementioned factors had made it extremely hard for Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School Elementary School to achieve performance targets set by the superintendent of schools in the academic areas and in attendance.

Based on the school’s annual report, the majority of the student population performed below grade level in the primary subjects of reading, math, science, social studies, and English language arts. For example, Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School made 33% (see Appendix A) of its 2006 -2007 Top Priority Student Performance Goals, and fifth grade students did not meet the 2006-2007 standard in writing scoring an average achievement of only 55% (see Appendix B) (large urban school system, 2008). As a result Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School Elementary had been deemed a high-risk school due to the lack of student academic success in the area of reading. The school was attempting to address this lack of student academic success through the implementation of the Success for All reform model. The Success for All reform model had been contracted to combat the difficulties the children in the community face as they attempted to become educated.
In an attempt to increase student academic success, the Georgia Department of Education had implemented a new rigorous reading curriculum and assessment tool. The Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) in reading had been adopted to increase student performance. In 2006-2007 during the first implementation of the GPS, there was an increase in the student achievement gap in fourth grade by 12% (see Figure 1).

![Bar Chart](image)

Figure 1. Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests: Percentage of Students at the “Does Not Meet” Performance Level

In order for the school to rectify the situation of poor student success in the area of reading, the school implemented the Johns Hopkins, Success for All (SFA) method of teaching reading, whereby students were instructed at their own individual reading levels. The Johns Hopkins method of teaching was developed as a comprehensive school wide program focusing on reading achievement. The program utilized “Ability Grouping” which was designed to enable teachers to provide Interactive Learning with customized instruction. Students were, therefore placed in smaller classes according to their reading
levels where customized instruction took place. Through the use of customized instruction teachers utilized a scripted lesson sequence. The scripted lesson sequence was therefore, the methodology for the delivery of instruction in the content area of reading (see Appendix C).

The main focus of the Success for All design was the idea that a great variety of literature-based activities were utilized to ensure success in student achievement. The Success for All program was implemented on a daily basis for a set time of ninety minutes each morning. The Success for All program was comprised of set lock and key components that were critical to the implementation of the program (see Appendix C). Although the school has placed a great emphasis on the Success for All reform model, the program had not yet proven to have demonstrated success in regards to the existing problem.

Statement of the Problem

The problem that existed at Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School Elementary School was poor educational achievement in reading. Approximately 28.3% or 56 students of the 288 students in AYP grades third through fifth demonstrated a problem with reading performance (Georgia Department of Education, 2008). The urban elementary school was considered to be an under performing school due to low Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) scores for the last consecutive three years (see Appendix D). Additionally, the school had been ranked as low performing due to the fact that only 33% of its 2006-2007 Top Priority Student Performance Goals set by the superintendent were achieved (A large urban school system, 2008). For example, there
was an 8% decrease in the number of students in Level 3 Reading which exceeded the standard when comparing the 2007 CRCT to the 2008 CRCT data for grade 3. There was a 5% decrease in the number of students in Level 3 Reading which exceeded the standard when comparing the 2007 CRCT to the 2008 CRCT data for grade 5 (A large urban school system, 2008). When conducting a school comparison of schools within a five mile radius of the Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School, it was noted that school A had a school-wide reading proficiency of 74%, school B had a school-wide reading proficiency of 60%, and school C had a school-wide reading proficiency of 87% (Georgia Department of Education, 2008). School B being Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School Elementary School reconfirmed the lack of student achievement in the area of reading. School B in comparison to school A and C was the only school that actually utilized the Success for All reform model.

The indicators of the problem pointed to unsuccessful educational achievement in reading students created an inability to pass assessments which measure reading skills on their given grade level. In addition, the continued existence of poor student achievement may have been due to high teacher turnover, a large amount of uncertified teachers being employed, a lack of consistency in instructional strategies, and the high rate of transient students who did not spend enough time at the school to learn. The effects of the problem were that students were being promoted without demonstrating proficiency in reading as seen on the Report Card for the 2004-2007 school years (see Figure 1).

In the past, the urban school in Southwest Atlanta had attempted to alleviate the problems by guiding instructional practices through staff development. The school had
implemented after school tutorial sessions on Wednesdays and Thursdays, offering tutorial sessions before school, implementing Hands on Atlanta tutorial program during and after school hours, and involving Fort McPherson enlisted military officers, as tutors and mentors as well.

Consequently, in an attempt to alleviate the poor educational achievement in reading the school utilized a research based reform model. The Johns Hopkins comprehensive school-wide technique, Success for All method of teaching reading was chosen permitting students to be instructed in reading at their own individual reading levels. This method of teaching reading allowed students to be grouped with peers at their own individual reading levels, thus offering a non-threatening approach to addressing the poor educational achievement at the school site. As previously mentioned, the SFA program utilized “Ability Grouping” which was designed to enable teachers to provide Interactive Learning with customized instruction.

Basically, the main focus of the Success for All reform model was to offer a systematic approach to a rich literature based reform model. The lesson instructor actively facilitated student learning in reading during a daily 90-minute uninterrupted instructional block from 8:30-10:00 a.m. During the five to six day lesson cycle, students were actively involved in the following literature based activities: listening comprehension, reading comprehension, active listening, and content, adventures in writing, two-minute edit, and vocabulary review. The rich mix of literature and literature based activities in the SFA program were believed to have had a positive influence on student academic success in reading.
The following Success for All program design description had been provided to assist the reader in understanding the nature of the program. The SFA design utilized in this study was the Scholastic Reading Inventory pretest and posttest used in cooperative learning classrooms, over a period of two consecutive years. The participants utilized the Success for All Reading Wings instruction method of teaching reading. The participants’ students were assigned to homogeneously cooperative learning groups utilizing the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) Assessment. The Scholastic Reading Inventory Assessment instrument’s outcome determined the Instructional Reading Range to which each student was assigned, and determined how they were to be placed in a reading class. The SRI pretest assessment was conducted annually in August at the beginning of each academic school year. The SRI posttest assessment was conducted annually in October, December, and March after a series of eight-week time lapses. The eight-week lapse was in keeping with the Success for All program’s scheduled assessment aimed at continuously monitoring student achievement.

The Scholastic Reading Inventory was presumed to be reliable by the Atlanta Public School System and valid in view of the type, structure and content of the questions and to the extent of what was being measured. Additionally, the Lexile Framework was developed under the auspices of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHID). The research cost two million dollars and took over twelve years to complete. The research team included faculty from the University of Chicago, Duke University and the University of North Carolina. Thousands of students and hundreds of teachers had contributed to the Framework’s development. Meta Metrics,
Inc., is an educational measurement and technology firm in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, which began marketing the Framework in 1996.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers as it related to the independent variable, Success for All reform model, with respect to the impact on the dependent variable student achievement. It was through the findings in this investigation that the researcher sought to determine whether or not there was a strong probability that Success for All was likely to significantly address the existing reading problem at the inner-city elementary school.

Research Questions

The research questions that were utilized in the study were as follows:

RQ1: To what extent had Success for All staff development prepared you to meet the challenges associated with student academic achievement in reading?

RQ2: To what extent had the scripted lessons approach of the Success for All reform model, impacted student success in reading?

RQ3: To what extent were observations and/or evaluations conducted by administrators during your implementation of the Success for All program beneficial to you in increasing student achievement in reading?

RQ4: To what extent had the use of cooperative learning had an impact on student achievement in reading?
RQ5: To what extent, if any, had the Success for All instructional approach provided student academic success when compared to the previously utilized instructional approach by you in teaching reading?

Significance of the Study

The qualitative study focused on explaining why teachers' perceptions to the Success for All reform model were important. In the study, the researcher offered examples of other districts that had implemented comprehensive school reforms models, how reform models could affect other aspects of the school’s curriculum, and how teachers tended to react to comprehensive school reform models. By conducting this research the researcher hoped to inform similar schools, policy makers, administrators, and key stakeholders of the potential impact of Success for All as a means to improve student achievement in reading. Consequently, the study would serve as empirical research in the area of reading instructional reform models for schools, policy makers, administrators, and key stakeholders where low student achievement in reading existed.

Summary

In summary, the Southwest urban Elementary School located in Atlanta had experienced a lack of student achievement in reading for several consecutive years. In order to attempt to alleviate the problem the Southwest Urban Elementary School adopted the Johns Hopkins reform model, Success for All method of teaching reading. The Johns Hopkins method of teaching was developed as a comprehensive school-wide program to combat the lack of reading success. The subject school utilized in the study had implemented the Success for All reform model for four consecutive years. The SFA
program had not yet demonstrated success in regards to the existing problem in the area of reading achievement.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section primarily focused on the different researchers and other literature that would be extremely advantageous with the progression of this study. Consequently, the overall purpose of the related literature chapter was to offer the reader documented research on the independent variable, Success for All, as well as the dependent variable, student achievement. The literature presented came from journals, reports, and books that were considered to be helpful in the advancement of awareness concerning Success for All and how it related to student achievement. An outline of the sections referenced in this chapter is as follows: (a) A Nation at Risk, (b) Goals 2000, (c) No Child Left Behind Act 2001, (d) School Reform Movements, (e) High Stakes Testing, (f) Project Graduation Really Achieves Dreams, and (g) literature that attested to and against the accomplishment of the Success for All Reform model.

Factors such as low performing schools continued to endanger our nation. The United States was no longer producing great educational scholars with the ability to continue the growth that the nation had seen in the past.

In A Nation at Risk (1983), it was stated that:

Our society and its educational institutions seem to have lost sight of the basic purposes of schooling, and of the high expectations and disciplined efforts needed to attain them. This report, the result of 18 months of study, sought to
generate reform of our educational system in fundamental ways and to renew
the Nation’s commitment to schools and colleges of high quality throughout the
length and breadth of our land. (p. 1)

Today’s school reform movement originated out of the fact that our nation’s
schools were at risk. Lugar (as cited in Goals 2000) advocated that we were experiencing
a time of unusual prosperity. It was difficult to find another time in history that a nation
possessed such extraordinary opportunities. For us to continue to lead in business,
technology, national security and quality of life, we would need better educational
achievement at all levels. After the publication of a Nation at Risk document, the push
for achievement later led to the enactment of the national agenda known as Goals 2000:
Supporting State and Local Education Reform. The Goals 2000 document noted that,
although student performance has improved in several areas, still there was insufficient
progress in many other areas. The pace at which some improvement was taking place
was still too slow. All American children need a quality education in order to become
lifelong learners and productive American citizens. Within this document, the federal
government’s role was spelled out in Goals 2000:

Education was and must remain a local matter and a state responsibility. It must
also be a national priority if efforts to improve education are to succeed. The
federal government could serve as a partner, with a limited and carefully
defined role, to support and strengthen local and state improvement efforts, not
direct or control these efforts. The plan could provide information and
resources to encourage the spread of successful education practices as rapidly as
possible. Together, the states, communities, and federal government could remove obstacles in the path of education, and open new opportunities for learning. (p. 3)

The enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 felt that it could alleviate the educational turmoil that had plagued the country for so many decades. The No Child Left Behind Act enforced academic standards and the use of statewide testing as a mean of ensuring that the needs of disadvantaged children were met. Henry Levin (as cited in Spring, 2005) stated that:

Almost every major call for education reform argues that reform is needed to create and maintain a competitive labor force . . . These calls for reform also assert that high-stakes testing in schools . . . will foster the economic competitiveness of the nation. He asserts that there is no proof that high-stakes testing in public schools will result in better prepared workers. (p. 21)

It has been documented that today schools test more students with greater frequency, and with a larger number of tests than during any other time in the history of the United States. These tests were known as high stakes tests (Sacks, 1999).

When taking into account the fact that many states still had students with failing test scores, it was this reoccurring evidence that validated the need for poor achieving schools to adopt school reform models. One proven school reform for alleviating failing test scores was Success for All. “Researcher scientist had conducted a series of assessments for Success for All participants which indicated significant improvement in
test scores especially for those students whose pretest scores had placed them in the lowest quartile of their grade” (Madden, Slaving, Karweit, Dolan, & Wasik, 1993, p. 21).

Project GRAD (2002) in Los Angeles, stated: “The Success for All program had been defined as an innovative reading and writing program that delivered intensive academic assistance to all students at Success for All program schools” (p. 2). Every morning students were grouped by reading ability and attended Success for All reading and writing classes for ninety minutes. In order to measure their progress, teachers assessed students every eight weeks and then reassigned and physically moved students to the appropriate reading class. In order to assure teacher support at the school site, the Success for All Foundation required 80% approval vote by faculty members at the school before SFA would be implemented.

Herman (1999), a model researcher at an Arlington Virginia Educational Research Service, stated that Success for All was the most extensively and successfully evaluated of all comprehensive school reform studies in many locations by many researchers had found positive effects of Success for All on student reading performance, reduction in special education placements, and many other outcomes. On the basis of this research, an independent review of 24 comprehensive reform models by the American Institutes for Research found Success for All to be one of only two elementary models to receive the highest ratings for research quality and outcomes.

Success for All program believed that every child could learn. Success for All concentrated on prevention by providing excellent early learning programs, frequent student assessment, improved curriculum, instruction, and classroom management, as
well as establishing relationships with parent. Success for All reorganized every student to be relentless, to try everything, and never to give up!

As Wright (2002) suggested, poor achieving schools must choose a school reform model, such as Success for All, which had proven results that its program's implementation could work. The following were some of the most well documented sites: (a) Abbottston Elementary School in Baltimore, MD had the longest running Success for All program, implemented in the 1987-88 school year, (b) Scott Key School in Philadelphia, PA implemented the first Success for All program for children whose home language was not English, (c) Fannin Elementary School in Wichita Falls, TX was in its second year in the program and, in conjunction with Midwestern State University, had evaluated it using statewide and ongoing program assessment, and (d) Onrton Elementary School in Morton, TX, perhaps the most rural school with this program, served a very impoverished population of children of migrant workers. The program was in its first year of implementation.

It was noted by researchers that Success for All was the largest school reform model to ever exist. Success for All was built around the notion that every child could and must succeed no matter what it took. Although the program once focused only on prevention and early intervention instead of remediation, it has now spread to the middle school level. The authors claimed that the program was “Founded in 1987 by Drs. Robert Slavin and Nancy Maddin at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Success for All had served one million children in the fall of 2000” (Ross & Gream, 2001, p. 3).
Within the Success for All framework, there were some key factors to be noted such as the program was developed specifically for schools with a high concentration of at risk youth where reading levels had traditionally lagged. Success for All was developed specifically for students who were often falling significantly below grade level upon entering middle school; and was the only reform model that provided both a curriculum and specified instructional method. Success for All required that instructional practices be implemented in a uniformed manner across the school to provide students with a consistent and well-articulated approach to learning. The model incorporated cooperative learning that was intended to promote collaboration students of varied abilities and encourage more equal outcomes than did traditional methods.

The staff development component of the Success for All reform model dealt with teachers being provided detailed materials for use in the classroom. The school staff was scheduled to receive implementation of the SFA method of instruction prior to instructional practices beginning. Greenlee and Bruner (2001) stated that school reform efforts had customarily been incremental, targeting specific procedures, structures, or instructional strategies. This belief surrounding the school reform model supported the need for instructional staff to attain SFA training related to the method of instruction utilized during the implementation phase of the program.

The essential elements of effective professional development called for teachers in challenging schools to be especially skilled. The need for teachers to be high skilled was extremely relevant based on the findings that the majority of SFA schools were Title 1, low income, at risk schools. McMahon (as cited in Preedy, Glatter & Wise, 2003)
stated that training courses related to specific innovations i.e., SFA rather than sustained educational opportunities had, had a positive effect on teachers’ practices in the long term.

Therefore, the implementation of a reform model such as SFA enabled school systems to meet the demands of federal and state mandates, which specified that districts were to invest in human resources through constructive professional development in an attempt to add to a teacher’s personal understanding, while not diminishing their needed metacognitive abilities. In the article titled Building bridges: The Mission & Principals of Professional Development issued under the premises of Goals 2000, it was suggested that professional development serve as the bridge between where prospective and experienced educators were now and where they would need to be to meet the new challenges of guiding all students in achieving to higher standards of learning and development.

In a recent study conducted by researcher Taylor (2002), it was recommended that the initial scope of designing professional development would be organized in a systematic logical sequence in an attempt to allow all participants the opportunity to process all components. Hassel (1999) suggested that professional development would be proceeded by the following stages: (a) provide participants and organizers in the professional development process for purposes of input, (b) make a clear plan that includes how the professional development will support the school/district’s long-term plans, (c) include a profession development needs assessment process, (d) make a clear plan that includes professional development goals, (e) make a clear plan that includes
professional development content, process, and activities, and (f) package all of this with supporting research and resources.

Success for All classroom structure dealt with students who worked in cooperative learning groups. According to Joubert (n.d.), cooperative learning was a structured instructional strategy, which emphasized active learning through interpersonal interaction, where students acted as partners with the teacher and each other. The teacher no longer was an instructor but played the role of a facilitator encouraging student learning, participation, responsibility, and self-evaluation. Cooperative learning also took into account the dynamics of social interaction, where students must successfully practice interpersonal skills. The interpersonal skills cited as being enhanced by cooperative learning were (a) communication, (b) leadership, (c) decision-making, (d) conflict management, and (e) team skills such as trust, support and consensus.

According to Johnson and Johnson (as cited in Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001), there were five defining elements of cooperative learning which were: (a) positive interdependence (a sense of sink or swim), (b) face-to-face promoted interaction (helped each other learn, applauded success and efforts), (c) individual and group accountability (each of us had to contribute to the group achieving its goals), (d) interpersonal and small group skills (communicated, trusted, leadership, decision made, and conflict resolved), and (e) group processing (reflected on how well the team was functioning and how to function even better).

There was some belief that cooperative grouping could only be effective when students understood the purpose for which they were assigned to groups. Johnson and
Johnson (as cited in Nelson 1994) suggested that heterogeneous groups were based on positive interdependence the group members who helped and supported one another. The groups’ dynamics would be orchestrated to encourage each member to maximize their learning potential while supporting the next group member to achieve the same academic goals. The group size would never exceed four students, in an attempt to allow the aforementioned group elements to be purposefully conceded within the groups.

In view of small class sizes, the Milwaukee School System allowed student achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) program to conduct a study on class-size reduction. The study was conducted for a minimum of two years in 76 first-grade teachers’ classrooms with class sizes of no more than 15 students in 2001-2002 school year. The results showed student achievement for two successive years using the Terra Nova comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS). The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (2002) stated:

This increased use of individualization in reduced-classes was possible because teachers could spend more time on students and less time on disciplinary issues, teachers had greater knowledge of their students, and felt more enthusiastic about their work. In turn, individualized instruction and more hands-on activities resulted in more in-depth instructional content, more student self-direction, and ultimately, greater student achievement was reflected by higher achievement scores. (p. 5)

In later research, it was noted that the Success for All program had some weaknesses such as the writing component not being creative enough, teachers and
children were expected to become robots, there was no time for the teachable moment, teachers were never given the opportunity to assess what strategies individual students were not using, and the program did not meet the needs of all students. Teachers were also advised to continue at a certain pace whether students understood the material or not. Due to these reoccurring factors there were some students who were left behind and were too far behind to benefit from the rigid program, and there was no way to help them (SFA Teacher Survey Results, 1999).

Taylor's research compared the effects of literacy collaboratively on the reading achievement of third and fifth-grade students with the effects of Success for All on the reading achievement of third and fifth-grade students. In the study, the sample size consisted of 112 Literacy Collaborative and 153 Success for All at two public elementary schools in a southeastern state. The study yielded shocking results it was found that the Success for All school had no more impact on academic achievement when compared to the Literacy Collaborative school site. Additionally, Taylor (2002) mentioned that the SFA school imposed unambitious approaches and repetitious forms of learning that lead to students who were considered proficient readers to lose academic growth over time.

Emergent Themes

The emergent themes in the reviewed literature spoke to the underlying truth that there had been several governmental reforms such as, A Nation at Risk, Goals 2000, and No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 that had been mandated for use in educational institutions even though such reforms had not yet been demonstrated to have the capacity to promote strong academic scholars. Whereby, schools were afraid to be labeled as
failing schools for fear of having to adopt reform models that may or may not be a good fit.

Summary

In summary, the Success for All school reform had been found by research scientists to have indicated significant improvements in test scores after its implementation into, at risk schools. Although some literature pointed to the fact that Success for All did not contribute to academic improvements. In some cases it was noted that there were negative outcomes when students were taught utilizing the Success for All method of instruction. It had been documented throughout the research that Success for All was the largest whole school reform model to ever exist, which provided both a curriculum and specified instructional methods of teaching. Success for All had been utilized in areas such as Baltimore, MD, Philadelphia, PA, and Morton, TX to name a few cities, which had adopted the program and found it to be beneficial.
CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Research Design

The purpose of this research study was to investigate the impact of the Success for All reform model on student academic achievement in reading in a Southwest Atlanta inner-city school. The study looked to examine the relationship of teachers’ perceptions of the Success for All reform model as it related to student achievement. The review of literature conducted in the study pointed out evidence that the Success for All reading reform model indicated significant improvements in reading test scores at a number of other low performing schools other than the inner-city schools. During the study the researcher explored the teachers’ perceptions related to implementation process of the independent variable Success for All (SFA) reform model; the effects of the SFA reform model on the dependent variable student achievement at the present school; and the teachers’ perceptions of student achievement as it related to SFA.

Relationship among the Variables

Figure 2 indicates that student academic achievement was affected based on how the Success for All components (study variables) interacted at the school site. This section also defines operational qualitative terms employed in Chapter IV of this research project.
Teacher Perceptions → SFA Reform Model → Student Achievement

- Staff Development
- Teacher Observation/Evaluation
- Cooperative Learning
- Teacher Experience with Implementing Success for All Reform Model
- Success for All Reform Model

**Figure 2. Relationship among the Variables**

**Definition of Variables and Other Terms**

*Cooperative Learning:* Students worked in small groups and received rewards or recognition based on their group performance.

*Dependability/Conformability:* The researcher systematically gathered and compared data obtained at the research site in a descriptive manner through the use of presenting information logically in coding categories.

*External Audit:* The process of reviewing data, analyzing data, and its interpretation to assess whether the research findings were presented accurately.
**Member Checking**: Through this process the researcher validated research interpretations by allowing participants to check the researcher’s data understandings.

**Mid-year Teachers**: Participants who experienced four to five consecutive years implementing the Success For All Reform Model at the research site.

**New Teachers**: Participants who experienced two to three consecutive years implementing the Success For All Reform Model at the research site.

**Peer Debriefing**: A peer who was not involved in the study explored features of the study investigation to validate the researcher’s data, ideas, and findings related to the study.

**Researcher Bias**: The describing, emphasizing, evoking images, comparing study related findings to accurately perceive and interpret the views of participants in situation-specific events that were linked to the study.

**Staff Development**: Training related to the instructional methodology for the delivery of instruction following a rigid lesson cycle.

**Success for All Reform Model Program**: Johns Hopkins intervention program designed to reduce reading deficiencies in low achieving students.

**Teacher Experience with Implementing the Success for All Model**: Teachers had at least four consecutive years of instructional delivery with the Success for All program.

**Teacher Observation/Evaluation**: The feedback related to key identified lesson cycle components of the Success for All program.

**Teacher Perceptions**: The way in which teachers actively viewed the Success for All reform model in relation to academic student success in reading.
Transferability: The extent to which the findings and context of the study could be applied universally to other settings.

Veteran/Seasoned Teachers: Participants who experienced six to eight consecutive years implementing the Success For All Reform Model at the research site.

Theoretical Framework

This section developed a theoretical framework of the relationship that existed between teachers’ perceptions of SFA reform model as it related to student achievement. In this section the researcher introduced the importance of teachers’ perceptions of the SFA reform model and how individual perceptions influenced student achievement. Theoretical and empirical research to support the proposed relationship between teachers’ perceptions of the SFA reform model and student achievement were intertwined as supporting evidence that validated the importance of the study.

The theoretical framework for this study began by examining the following premise: we could learn how reform models influence teachers’ perceptions of schools. Clearly, the successful implementations of reform models were the key to students’ academic success. Through the research on Success for All reform model, it appeared that, the program clearly sought to eliminate society class structure divisions. The SFA reform model offered at risk, low income students a chance at academic success. As pointed out by researchers Coleman and Jencks (as cited in Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004), students at the bottom of the social order tended to be “frozen” into the status of their parents, but for those who were able to escape (the percentage is small), the schools were the chief route to success. Therefore, comprehensive reform models needed to be
adequately informed as it related to student success by analyzing multiple sources of research data in an attempt to better reevaluate the types of continued support students, and families alike would need to continue to be successful.

If student achievement was to be the main thrust of education, then it was essential that the educational community effectively evaluated reform models. Since SFA’s fundamental expectations were to have had a complete impact on student achievement, communities, and families through the influence of the school in which students attended. Mayer and Peterson (as cited in Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004) stated that schools could exert considerable influence on the child’s experiences, and these experiences could have an effect on education achievement. As previously stated, there was a monumental amount of relevant literature that was positive and negative that had been devoted to the Success for All reading reform model. Such as, in the case of a New Jersey urban School, it was noted that the school district learned how to implement the Success for All reform model through trial and error. As Lytle (2002) stated that we were learning that no program had all the answers for urban school improvement, that each required supplemental elements, and that the model developers still had developmental work to do themselves. However, even with these findings more research needed to address, teachers’ and students’ perceptions of at-risk students to the Success for All reform model, and the overall effectiveness of the program on student achievement. Most of the countless research studies on John Hopkin’s Success for All reform model had ignored the actual accounts of the human subjects under study,
thereby leaving out a very crucial element in understanding beyond what crunching numbers could ever reveal.

What was limited in the research on Success for All were the cognitive perceptions of student achievement by those who facilitated the learning environment. In this study the researcher found great premise in the belief that these cognitive perceptions could not be fully understood apart from the context in which student achievement occurred. This view assumed that learning was situated in the everyday world of human social activity, employed the “tools” (like maps, computers) in the immediate environment, and could not be adequately understood apart from the context in which it occurred (Merriam, 1998). Theory allowed seeing what we would otherwise have missed; it helped us anticipate and make sense of events (Merriam, 1998). Consequently, the researcher attested to the fact that there were clear and discrete messages that surfaced when teachers and students were heard. Framing, as the theory was called, dealt with a combination of beliefs, values, attitudes, mental models, which we use to perceive situations. So the question was, could teachers’ perceptions of Success for All have had positive or negative outcomes on student achievement? Based on this theoretical definition of framing it was important for the educational community to give itself a broader perspective of how SFA impacts student achievement and be able to understand more of how teachers think in relation to the SFA program and student achievement. It had also been documented that human reactions contained both meaning and feeling. Unfortunately, there had been little or no evidence of student reactions to reform models. It was apparent in the article, Teacher’s voices on integrating MCAG into Reading
Assessment tasks, that teachers should be heard. The researchers showed that teacher skills, knowledge, attitudes and beliefs were determining factors in students' academic achievement. It was only through teacher interviews that the researcher Stainthorp (as cited in Guterman & Boxall, 2002) was able to understand that, "The voices of teachers on literacy teaching and its assessment must be audible and listened to during ongoing literacy reforms. Only then would teachers' generating and transformative force as classroom practitioners come into full play" (p. 43). Therefore, the literature researched examined student reactions to such areas as: Language instruction, undergraduate organizational communication course, and spirituality in counseling. Based on these limited findings it was imperative that education recognize the voices and opinions of the students being served. Brandon (as cited in Cooper, 1997) suggested that, key informants needed to develop a procedure for involving students in a review of the evaluator's commendations for curriculum improvement.

Finally, through the process of teacher observation and evaluation the researcher looked to infer meaning. During the observation process the researcher utilized visual and auditory cues to record the actual classroom occurrences. Then after the completion of the observation the researcher then made sense of what was experienced. Clearly the very process of making sense of recorded visual and auditory events was based on the researcher's previously experiences, beliefs, values, mental models, goals, and needs. It was during the recording process that the researcher looked to carefully and accurately record events, simply to describe and make instructional commendations not to pass judgment. The teacher observation and evaluation evidence would be discussed during
the evaluation period to help the teacher who was observed either confirm or reconstruct aspects of the lesson. Through the evaluation process the researcher hoped to allow teachers to self-reflect on individual instructional practices.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study consisted of the fact that only the subject school site would be utilized in the study. Due to high teacher attrition rates the population sample size of six participants involved in the study was considered small. The teacher interviews that were utilized were limited to one in-depth interview per study participant. Due to the researcher’s employment obligations to the school system, availability to conduct the study was limited to noninstructional hours. The participants’ responses in the post hoc qualitative research study may not have been as clear as they should be if interviews had been conducted closer to the closing of the 2007-2008 school year.

Summary

In summary, the purpose of the study at the Urban Southwest Elementary School was to examine the relationship of teachers’ perceptions of the Success for All reform model as it related to student achievement. This study built its premise on the underlying, unheard, and undocumented messages of facilitators who served an active role in the learning process, making this qualitative study unique.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted as a qualitative research project at an Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School. The researcher requested permission to conduct the study at the aforementioned school site. In doing so, the researcher submitted an official request to conduct research (Research Request Application), as well as a copy of the detailed study proposal to the large urban school system Department of Research Planning and Accountability as per guidelines given by a large urban school system for conducting research activities in the large urban school system. Confidentiality of all Atlanta Public School’s staff, and school site where research was conducted was upheld by utilizing pseudonyms in the final reports or presentation of the study outside of a large urban school system.

The proposed research goal was to inform the large urban school system, policy makers, administrators, and key stakeholders regarding the instructional program in the area of reading. The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers’ perceptions on the extent to which the independent variable Johns Hopkins school reform program titled, “Success for All,” had influenced the dependent variable student achievement in the area of reading. The study sought to examine teachers’ perceptions to the “quick fix-it” curriculum implemented in an initial three-day training prior to the opening of school. The study undertaken investigated the comprehensive understanding of the topic,
reflected on the program’s engagement by the teachers, examined the outcome of the Success for All reform model at the Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School, and investigated teachers’ perceptions as to whether or not there had been evidence of student achievement in the area of reading. The study sought to provide additional knowledge relevant to the field of education.

Research Design

The study conducted at the Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School conformed to the following format. The procedure that was conducted at the research site reported on the implementation of the Success for All reform model and its impact on student achievement. Qualitative data was obtained from teacher responses related to the Success for All reform model. The data gathered was obtained during the spring of the 2009 school year through the use of on-site, after school in-depth interview sessions. The interview sessions were conducted one time through the course of the study. The data that was derived during the teacher interviews took into account that all study participants have had at least two consecutive years (2006-2007 & 2007-2008) of experience implementing the Success for All reform model. It was important to point out that the approach of utilizing teacher interviews did provide great insight to the research studies conducted on Success for All. The teachers’ interview results were utilized to summarize the research findings while analyzing the nature of the continuous variable of student achievement. The Scholastic Reading Inventory assessment results were considered by the teachers as a means of supporting interview question responses. Teachers had the opportunity to refer to Scholastic Reading Inventory assessment results in preparation for
their one time only in-depth interview session and were not permitted to bring the assessment documentation with them. Permitting teachers to refer to the results of students' Scholastic Reading Inventory assessment during the actual interviews would limit the researcher's ability to obtain actual teachers' perceptions of the Success for All reform model. The qualitative data obtained during the study was gathered through the use of researcher field notes, and teacher interviews.

The Success for All reform model was structured and scripted where participants followed rigid lesson guidelines during the delivery of instruction. The class sizes were reduced in number to allow teachers the ability to adequately teach during the ninety-minute morning reading block. The classroom site was organized in a way that allowed students to interact in homogenous cooperative learning groups within their instructional reading range. The classroom environment served as a natural setting in which the teachers reflected on during their responses to the interview questions.

The limitations of the study consisted of the fact that only one school site was utilized during the duration of the study. Due to an extremely high attrition rate at the school there was a very small sample size of six participants involved in the study. Teacher interviews were limited to one in-depth interview per study participant. The participants' responses in the post hoc qualitative research study may not be as clear as they should have been if interviews were conducted closer to the closing of the 2008 school year. Time was also considered a limitation based on the fact that the researcher
was employed at the school site as an administrator and could only devote non-instructional hours toward the research study process.

Research Objectives

The study focuses on the following research objectives:

1. Teachers’ perceptions as it related to the Success for All program components (reading achievement, classroom management, and cooperative learning) at an Urban Southwest Elementary School located in Atlanta.

2. The evaluation of Success for All’s effectiveness, on student achievement at an Urban Southwest Elementary School located in Atlanta.

3. Evaluation of teachers’ perceptions to the Success for All reform model at an Urban Southwest Elementary School located in Atlanta.

Working with Human Subjects

All six participants were drawn from an existing population sample of thirty-five teachers in grades kindergarten to fifth at an inner city elementary school in Atlanta, Georgia. Four out of six of the participants were male, all subjects involved in the study had on average six consecutive years as instructional staff; and all participants had implemented the SFA reform model on average of six and a half consecutive years. All participants during the time of the study implemented the Wings instructional level of the Success for All reform model, which was comprised of a 2.2 (second semester of second grade) reading level or higher. All of the six participants had at least three years in the subject school utilized in the study. The participants were purposefully selected from four third, fourth, and fifth grade reading classes on a voluntary basis. Participants were
also chosen based on their years of experience teaching the Success for All reform model. Each participant had taught the Success for All reform model for at least four consecutive years. The post hoc qualitative research study required the participants to have a minimum of at least two consecutive years of implementing the Success For All Reform Model. There were two teachers at each grade level involved in the study. All participants’ anonymity was respected, no personal information was released. As previously mentioned, pseudonyms for participants were used for reporting purposes in the final report. What follows in Table 1 was additional demographic information recorded for each participant.

Table 1

Demographic Information for Each Participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Subjects</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Number of Years of Experience</th>
<th>Number of Years of Teaching</th>
<th>Level of SFA Certification</th>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject A</td>
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<td>BLK</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>T4</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject B</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>BLK</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>T5</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject C</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>BLK</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>T4</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject D</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>T4</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>L5</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject F</td>
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<td>BLK</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>T4</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Treatment

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' perceptions on the extent to which the independent variable, Success for All has influenced the dependent variable student achievement. The study investigated the teachers' perceptions to the SFA reform model, the effectiveness of the SFA reform model as it related to the students' achievement in reading, and whether or not the program could work to solve the existing problem at an Urban Southwest Elementary School located in Atlanta.

The SFA program could be described as a basic framework, designed to make the best use of both teacher and student time by utilizing what was known as educational and instructional best practices, where cooperative learning and classroom layout was key. What follows were examples of the educational and instructional best 28 practices utilized:

Instruction: During the first portion of each lesson, the teachers would prepare students for learning. Through questioning and modeling, students were led through new content which was needed in order to complete the rest of the day’s activities, whether reading sections from a novel, conducting research, or working on a team activity.

Team Work: During this part of the lesson, students took control of their learning, by working as partners on teams. The teachers would circulate through the room to observe individuals and small groups of learners, monitoring comprehension and clarifying misunderstandings. It was during this time that the teachers would have had a chance to meet with students one-on-one for targeted instruction.
Evaluation: This would have taken place both formally and informally across the weekly cycle of instruction. The teachers would informally assess students when circulating around the classroom each day, as well as through the daily products that students or teams would complete and during the wrap-up discussions at the end of class periods. Formal assessments would have taken place at the end of each weekly cycle when individual students had completed a Victory Lap, Cycle Check, or Concept Check.

Team Recognition: Teams earn daily points throughout the cycle for working well together and meeting certain behavioral objectives. Teams also received formal recognition and rewards at the end of each cycle based on both academic improvement of individual team members and the team cooperation points students earned.

Instrumentation

For the purpose of this study, the teacher interviews were conducted at the research site in grades three, four, and five to gather teacher perception data on overall student achievement in reading, classroom management, and cooperative learning. This interview data had been selected to add credence to the usual instrument the Scholastic Reading Inventory assessment, which had been previously utilized in assessing student achievement in the Atlanta Public School System at all Project Graduation Really Achieves Dreams Schools (GRAD). Although teachers would have an opportunity to review student academic achievement recorded for the Scholastic Reading Inventory assessment, the assessment documentation would not be utilized during the interview sessions, thereby allowing teachers the opportunity to solely depend on their own perceptions about SFA as it related to student achievement.
Data Collection Procedures

During the data collection procedural process, the researcher would use results from the teacher interview findings as qualitative data. In utilizing teacher interviews, the researcher would summarize data to explain the continuous variable, student achievement. During teacher interviews, the researcher would gather data related to teachers’ perceptions to the components of the SFA reform model, and record field notes (teacher observations/evaluations) to explain the continuous variable, student achievement.

By conducting qualitative research methods, the researcher hoped to offer the reader a broader, clearer picture of the Success for All program’s impact on student achievement, as perceived by teachers. The methods employed did allow the researcher to move beyond the obvious and comprehend the phenomenon based on first hand experiences. Member checks were completed directly after the in-depth interviews were conducted with teachers. During member checks the researcher would take the interview data and tentative interpretations back to the teachers from whom they were derived and ask if the results were plausible. The researcher looked to strengthen the use of the research by providing verbatim quotes from teachers, and data sources i.e., teacher observations and evaluations.

The Scholastic Reading Inventory assessment would be utilized for teachers to refer to prior to them having the opportunity to respond to interview questions. The SRI was typically administered every eight weeks. The SRI measurement was designed to help teachers adjust instruction according to students’ needs and, track students’ reading
growth over time. By aligning the teacher interviews with the SRI assessment results, teachers had the opportunity to draw on a variety of data sources prior to the interview sessions.

During the instructional delivery phase of this study, the Lexile score of the SRI was utilized as a tool to make it possible to place readers and text on the same scale. The SRI guidelines for the Success for All model of grouping students allowed for students to be homogeneously placed according to their instructional reading range. The researcher would utilize in-depth verbatim interview transcriptions, and the analysis of researcher field notes (teacher observations/evaluations) were conducted to bring meaning, structure, and order to the data collected. This process would lead to the generation of theoretic properties of the categories that were generated and derived the empirical findings of the study.

There were three terms that were important to understand in order to interpret how student Lexile scores were utilized for grouping purposes.

1. *Instructional Reading Range*: This range was for students who understood approximately 75% of what he/she read. This was the range where if the material was too difficult to read alone, an adult was needed to discuss the vocabulary and content with the student in preparation for reading.

2. *Independent Reading Range*: This Lexile range was where students read and understood at least 90% of the material without any outside help from an adult. This also was the range where one would expect students to read a library book for pleasure.
3. *Challenge Reading Range (frustration range)*: This Lexile range was above the instructional range where reading material became too difficult for a student to read. In fact, the comprehension level of the material was 50% or less.

In this study, teacher interviews were conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the Success for All Reform model on student achievement, and assess the teachers' perceptions to the Success for All reform model at an Urban Southwest Atlanta Inner-City Elementary School (see Appendix F). The results of the SRI assessment were prior supportive documentation to be considered by teachers as they respond to interview questions. The researcher field notes were recorded to conceptualize, make sense of, and analyze the Success for All program as explained by the studies participants. The researcher employed the standard observation method currently in practice within the large urban school system (see Appendix G). The large urban school system observation instrument titled, *Teaching In A Large Urban School System: What Teachers Must Do To Be The Best* (see Appendix H) was considered a two-step process for ensuring effective teaching and was maximized by the researcher as a method of recording field notes on a monthly basis. Therefore, all study participants were informally observed a minimum of two times during the duration of the study. This limitation on the number of observations was adhered to as not to overwhelm the participants, or bring unwarranted skepticism by other faculty members.

The APS Observation instrument had been designed as a tool to assist teachers in being as skilled in the area of teaching as possible. The observer was
required to remain for the duration of the entire instructional lesson. APS (2008) deemed the APS Observation instrument structurally sound as an instructional instrument used while preparing for classroom observations. All observers understood that the most critical factor in assuring that all students learned at the highest possible level was the "quality of teaching" that students would experience in their daily lessons. Therefore, the lesson observation process had been designed to ensure that students were receiving the highest level of instruction possible. The lesson observation process looked to examine: (a) the degree to which teachers utilized effective teaching strategies, skills, knowledge that was both grade level and content level appropriate, (b) offered teachers feedback that was on-going and meaningful regarding their teaching and classroom environment, and (c) provided instructional feedback to improve the learning atmosphere within the classroom. 

Through the utilization of the observation instrument, APS (2008) ensured that all observers are looking for the same critical teaching elements, all teaching analyses were based on the same factors, and feedback is provided on those critical teaching elements that are known to extremely influence student learning.

During the observation process, it was the responsibility of the observer to carefully and accurately record in column three of the form every aspect of the lesson that was observed. For example, teacher and student dialogue, and teachers' diagrams of their modeling tasks for instructional strategies with students were recorded. Also, the number of students off task during the lesson was accurately
recorded in the *Student's Off Task Chart* at the bottom of page three of the observation document.

The following codes were recorded in column two of the observation instrument. By coding a 1 in column two, the observer had rated the teacher as exceeding expectations (consistently demonstrates sufficient knowledge of the subject matter, as well as conveyed and acted on high expectations for students by differentiating instruction based on students’ needs); by coding a 2 in column two, the observer had rated the teacher as meeting expectations (consistently developed and delivered lessons that were relevant to students’ interests and responsive to their needs); by coding a 3 in column two, the observer had rated the teacher as below expectations (did not consistently convey or act on high expectations for students by differentiating instruction based on students’ needs); and by coding a 4 in column two, the observer had rated the teacher as needs improvement (did not consistently promote high rates of student interest and opportunities for active and meaningful participation). The expectation levels utilized in the observation instrument were clearly spelled out in the *Large urban school system Teaching in a large urban school system: What Teachers Must Do To Be The Best*.

The final part of the observation required the observer to respond to seven questions during or directly after the observation. Completing these questions allowed the observer to make a judgment regarding the entire lesson, an accurate lesson critique and feedback that was meaningful to the observed.
In order for the observation instrument to be deemed feasible, all teachers were required to attend a mandatory professional development session in August of the school year. The expectations of the performance dimensions that were required by instructional staff were carefully explained and discussed to ensure that the document was fully understood.

After observations were conducted, the study site required that appropriate written and oral feedback be given to instructional staff. At this time it was the observer’s responsibility to carefully point out ways in which proven research strategies could possibly improve the observed teachers’ lesson. The teacher was then free to ask questions and work out an individualized plan of support with the observer. Based on the outcome of the lesson observation the observer may return as soon as necessary to the observed teachers’ classroom to begin instructional support.

What follows was an example of the teacher interview questions that were utilized in the study:

1. Has the staff development that you have experienced related to the Success for All program been beneficial in terms of helping students increase their student achievement in reading?

2. What do you think about the scripted lesson approach utilized in Success for All when compared to instructional methods that you have previously taught?

3. Do you think that the Success for All observations and evaluations you have received have been beneficial in terms of helping you to improve your instructional delivery? Why or why not?
4. How do you think that the use of cooperative learning in the Success for All reform model has been beneficial to student academic success? Explain.

5. Based on your overall teaching experience do you think that the Success for All method of instruction has caused students to be more engaged in their learning process, perhaps leading to further academic success then in the past?

Data Validity and Trustworthiness

The external audit was a way of assessing the trustworthiness of the study. The external audit also attested to the studies dependability from a methodological standpoint. The study utilized conformability by reviewing the data, the analysis of the data, and interpretations to assess whether the findings represent the data accurately. Leininger (as cited in Drisko, 1997) stated that data and analysis must fully convey what local participants know or experience within their local context. The purpose of an audit was to examine the process and the product of the research inquiry. It examined the audit trail materials used by the researcher, such as raw data, data reduction and analysis products, reconstruction and synthesis products, notes, materials related to intentions and depositions, and instrument development information. The object was to determine whether the research process was documented clearly and whether the conclusions and interpretations were supported by the data warranted based on the documentation provided (Miller 1997). The verbatim interview and participant observations/evaluations allowed the researcher to validate how the data corresponded to participants' behavior. By utilizing the interviews and observations the researcher was capable of shaping or reshaping the analysis and interpretation of the data collected by allowing the researcher
to gauge the trustworthiness of the data as depictions of participants’ actions and experiences (Drisko, 1997).

The first component of dependability was avoiding researcher bias. Guba and Lincoln (as cited Ravid, 2000) suggested that, researchers could avoid researcher bias by emphasizing, describing, judging, comparing, portraying, evoking images, and creating for the reader or listener the sense of having been there. Researcher bias was especially important to qualitative researchers because they were the observers and analyst. In this study, researcher bias was eliminated through sufficient credibility and plausibility checks, which were carried out to ensure that the case matches the construction of individuals involved in the study at the research site. Additionally, researcher bias was eliminated by not asking research participants leading questions in the in-depth interview. The questions that were answered by the participants were designed prior to the enactment of the implementation of the study and were not be deviated from. The researcher conducted substantial self-reflections and self-analysis in an attempt to accurately perceive and interpret participants’ views and situation-specific events linked to the study.

The second source of credibility was dependability, and conformability. The purpose was for the researcher to gather and compare data in a descriptive and specific way to represent what was actually seen or heard at the research site. In this study, data sources included Scholastic Reading Inventory results which teachers referred to prior to the interview session but not during the session to isolate the use of participants’ perceptions only, transcriptions of in-depth interviews, and the analysis of researcher
field notes otherwise referred to as teacher observation/evaluation process. Analysis of these sources brought meaning, structure, and order to the data collected. The findings of the aforementioned data were categorized through a system of coding, which allowed the researcher to group similarities and differences in data retrieved into workable categories. Then the coding categories were summarized during the data analysis procedure to convey the participants’ perceptions of the Success for All reform model as it related to student achievement in a feasible, understandable manner.

The third component for ensuring credibility was member checking. Each interview was transcribed and tentative interpretations were given back to participants from whom they were derived and asked if the results are plausible. In this study member checks were done to ensure that the reporting of the phenomenon being studied was as clear as possible. Onwuegbuzie (2002) stated that credibility referred to the extent to which the researcher’s interpretation of an account represents an understanding of the perspective of the group under study and the meaning attached to their words and actions.

The fourth component of credibility was peer debriefing. Peer debriefing had been defined as the process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer to explore aspects of the inquiry that otherwise might remain only implicit in the inquirer’s mind (Cooper, 1997). In this study, a colleague in her final stages of defending her doctoral dissertation at Argosy University aided the researcher in this process. The colleague assisted the researcher with all data related to the study, the sharing of research ideas, findings, related literature, and project-end dilemmas.
Finally, because the study was small and only examined one school in the district, transferability was carefully addressed. Leininger (as cited in Drisko, 1997) remarked that transferability described the applicability of findings and conclusions derived from one context to a second context. Therefore, by conducting this research the researcher hoped to inform similar schools, policy makers, administrators, and key stakeholders of the potential impact of Success for All as a means to improve student achievement in reading. Even though the study had its limitations the findings served as empirical research in the area of reading and instructional reform models for schools, policy makers, administrators, and key stakeholders where low student achievement in reading existed.

Summary

In summary, the Southwest Atlanta Urban Elementary School served as the study host site. At the school site a qualitative research project was conducted. The researcher submitted an official request along with a copy of the detailed study proposal to conduct research in the Atlanta Public School System. In keeping with research guidelines, pseudonyms were utilized for both the research site and participants to conceal their identities.

The goal of the research gathered during the study offered insight regarding instructional programs and as a means by which the Success for All program and/or other programs could be improved. The avenue by which the data utilized in the study was collected was through the use of in-depth teacher interviews.
The six participants documented in the study were asked to respond to questions structured on gaining imminence as to how the components of the Success for All program fully impacted student achievement. Additionally, the study followed very rigid data collection procedures to uphold data validity and trustworthiness.
CHAPTER V
ANALYSIS OF DATA

Findings

In this section, the researcher reviewed the responses given by the six study participants in the qualitative post hoc study to discuss the study findings (see Appendix I). The following questions and responses are indicative of all study participants as documented in this qualitative post hoc study conducted on teachers’ perceptions to the Success for All reform model as it related to student academic success.

RQ1: To what extent has Success for All staff development prepared you to meet the challenges associated with student academic achievement in reading?

In reviewing the responses of the participants to determine whether or not they have had staff development related to the Success for All reform model that was beneficial in terms of helping to increase student achievement in reading, participants’ reviews were mixed. The majority of the participants acknowledged that the staff development that was offered tended to focus more on the scripted program implementation than on increasing student achievement. It was concluded by the researcher that the staff development received could not be considered as meaningful. The one participant who did not agree with this view indicated that the staff development
was beneficial because the outcome was increased student achievement. This participant was cited as saying:

The staff development gave teachers the opportunity to share ideas and strategies that were utilized in the classroom to help increase student achievement in reading. It also allowed the Success for All facilitator the opportunity to share new research based strategies to be implemented throughout the Success for All reading program.

Table 2 presents an overview of direct quotes from each participant’s response to Research Question 1.

Table 2

*Participants’ Responses to Staff Development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ1</th>
<th>Direct Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant T1-3rd</td>
<td>At times, maybe, but overall I believe that SFA teaches students to simply pass the test and not excel or become stronger readers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T2-3rd</td>
<td>I don’t feel the staff development that I have received has been beneficial to improving student achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T3-4th</td>
<td>I don’t believe that the staff development that I have received related to Success for All program has been beneficial for helping students increase their student achievement, because I really haven’t received any meaningful staff development. I have attended workshops and observed other teachers at work; however not too much staff development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ1</th>
<th>Direct Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant T4-4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>No, I did not find the staff development helpful for me to increase student achievement for all students. It was helpful in terms of me improving my implementation of the scripted program, and as a result my advance students’ skills were reinforced not increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T5- 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Personally, because of the greater focus on student development, the staff development that I have received has not been beneficial in helping students increase their achievement in Reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T6-5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>The staff development related to SFA has been beneficial in terms of helping students increase their student achievement in reading. From the staff development teachers are able to share ideas and strategies that they are using in the classroom to increase student achievement in reading. Staff development also allows the SFA facilitator to share new strategies that are research based that will be implemented throughout the reading program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RQ2: To what extent had the scripted lessons approach of the Success for All reform model, impacted student success in reading?

In reviewing the responses of the participants as to how they responded in relation to the scripted lesson approach utilized in Success for All when compared to other instructional methods previously taught, it was noted that veteran teachers acknowledged that they should be given autonomy in the classroom to teach what students truly needed.
The participants indicated that they should be authors of their own literacy instructional programs and have the flexibility of teaching instructional components at an acceptable pace. It was also noted, that the use of the Success for All scripted lesson approach left little or no room for creativity without losing the fidelity of the program. Participants indicated that by using the scripted lesson approach accountability was diminished and they were left feeling incompetent and unvalued. The researcher documented that through the use of the lock-step instruction literacy program, Success for All students and teachers alike had become bored. The participants expressed that the program offered no room for unpredictability.

One participant acknowledged the fact that he/she had never taught any other instructional methods other than the Success for All approach and therefore, had nothing to compare it to. The participant went on to express that utilizing the non-scripted approach in other subject areas offered unlimited flexibility. This participant also went on to agree with other participants who stated that the scripted lesson approach was useful to new and first time teachers as a reference/guide to build upon. Out of the six participants involved in the study only one participant replied:

I felt that the scripted lesson approach utilized in Success for All was a good approach for teachers to teach reading because, it provided a benchmark on how to effectively use their time during reading, and the program was flexible enough to allow the teacher to have those teachable moments.

This participant indicated that the Success for All reform model helped keep the pacing of instruction, and the flow of the lesson eliminating non-instructional down-time.
This participant went on to discuss the fact that even though SFA was scripted, the program did provide some level of flexibility throughout the lesson. He/she stated that each component of the SFA program had areas where the teacher could differentiate the lesson to fit the students in the classroom. For example, one component of SFA was building student background knowledge. Through the instructional method of building student background knowledge students were allowed time to remember what they read previously. During this block of time the teacher had the flexibility of using different strategies for students to retell the story such as: acting it out, using a graphic organizer, and/or expressing what happened verbally.

Table 3 provides an overview of direct quotes from each participant’s response to Research Question 2.

Table 3

Participants’ Responses to the Scripted Lesson Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ2</th>
<th>Direct Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant T1-3rd</td>
<td>I believe it takes accountability away from the teachers and makes teachers feel incompetent and unvalued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T2-3rd</td>
<td>The scripted lesson plans don’t allow room for creativity, which is needed to help make the reading process fun and interesting. The scripted lessons become so routine, that it becomes boring to the students and the instructor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ2</th>
<th>Direct Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant T3-4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Considering the fact that I been in a scripted lesson approach since my first year of teaching I can not compare it to a previous method. With that said I will say this, compared to other subjects that are not scripted I feel that there is more flexibility to present skills in non scripted lesson approach. However I feel scripted model are useful to new and first time teachers as a reference/ guide to build upon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T4-4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>I am not a fan of the Success for All reading program. I do not find it beneficial for students in the second and fourth or fifth grade to be in an instructional setting together exclusively because they read on the same level. SFA also lacks room in the scripted lesson for reteaching and differentiation of instruction. I think a scripted program is help for new teachers, however committed and veteran teachers should be provided with autonomy of the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T5- 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>With the time restraints, and having to do certain elements EXACTLY how the program says, after a while, makes it uninteresting for both student and teacher; therefore the students don’t learn. Not only that, although we may be told that we can “spice up” a lesson or an area for it to fit our class, there is only so much you can do without losing the fidelity of the program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ2</th>
<th>Direct Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant T6-5th</td>
<td>The scripted lesson approach utilized in SFA is a good approach for teachers to teach reading because it provides a benchmark on how to effectively use their time during reading, and it is also flexible enough to allow the teacher to have those teachable moments. The SFA program helps teachers keep up with the pacing of instruction; this helps with the flow of the lesson, not allowing a lot of down time in the classroom. Even though SFA is scripted, the program does provide flexibility throughout the lesson. Each component of SFA has areas where the teacher can differentiate the lesson to fit the students in the classroom. For example, one component of SFA is building background. This allows the student’s time to remember what they read previously. During this time, the teacher has the flexibility of using different strategies for students to retell the story such as: acting it out, using a graphic organizer, expressing what happen verbally, and etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RQ3: To what extent were observations and/or evaluations conducted by administrators during your implementation of the Success for All program beneficial to you in increasing student achievement in reading?

In reviewing the responses of the participants as to whether or not they stated that the Success for All observations and evaluations given had been beneficial in terms of helping to improve their instructional delivery it was noted that there were very real concerns about students becoming better readers. The majority of participants stated that
the observation/evaluation process did not address instructional gaps, and did not improve individual instructional delivery. The cause of these statements pointed to the fact that administrative feedback regarding the Success for All reform model was minimal. One of the six participants acknowledged that observation and evaluation feedback was only beneficial early in his/her career while he/she were still trying to learn and grasp the program. Furthermore, this participant acknowledged that the observations and evaluations were unjustified when related to the teachers' ability to thoroughly teach the SFA lesson cycle. The participant reported, "I don't see how a ten minute window in my instruction was going to concretely determine how well I deliver material on a consistent basis." Only one participant acknowledged that the observation and evaluation process was beneficial. The participant reported, "The process gave teachers feedback on how effectively they were utilizing the program and how they could improve certain aspects of it." He/she acknowledged that the feedback shared gave teachers knowledge on what they were doing and also set a goal to improve instructional delivery.

Table 4 provides an overview of direct quotes from each participant's response to Research Question 3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ3</th>
<th>Direct Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant T1-3rd</td>
<td>Yes, but I feel that there are still concerns about the program as it relates to moving students to become better readers. There are still instructional gaps in the layout of the program that cannot be changed by the evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T2-3rd</td>
<td>I feel that the feedback that I have gotten has not been beneficial in helping me deliver the program. Most of the feedback that I receive is usually generic for everyone under the Wings program; I am not given anything specific.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T3-4th</td>
<td>Early in my career while I was still trying to learn and grasp the program the observation and evaluation were very beneficial. However now that I am a veteran teacher and understand teaching and how to critique and evaluate myself, I feel the observations and evaluations are excessive. I don’t see how a ten minute window in my instruction is going to concretely determine how well I deliver material on a constant basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T4-4th</td>
<td>I have not found that the observations and evaluations beneficial in helping me improve instructional delivery partly because the feedback has been minimal. The staff development has been helpful in increasing my understanding of how the program is to be implemented.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ3</th>
<th>Direct Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant T5-5th</td>
<td>The observations and evaluations are somewhat beneficial. The only thing that I gain from the observations and evaluations is what I did or did not do. It doesn’t help to improve my delivery because normally, we are told what to do. But we aren’t given the opportunity to practice on one another to make sure that we are all on one accord as teachers to improve our instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T6-5th</td>
<td>Yes, I believe the evaluations that I received have been beneficial in terms of helping improve instruction delivery. The reason why I said yes, the evaluations are beneficial because it gives the teacher feedback on how effectively they are utilizing the program and how they can improve certain aspects of it. This gives the teacher knowledge on what they are doing well and also sets a goal to improve instructional delivery.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RQ4: To what extent has the use of cooperative learning had an impact on student achievement in reading?

In reviewing the responses of the participants as to whether or not the use of cooperative learning in the Success for All reform model had been beneficial to student academic success, it was noted that all participants agreed that cooperative learning was beneficial to students because it encouraged students to work as a team, developed leadership skills, and promoted student achievement as group members’ worked
collectively to inspire one another. One participant said, “Cooperative learning in the classroom prepared students for the world. The use of it promoted the ability to gain advancement in life while learning to work together, and how to genuinely respect other peoples' opinions.” It was also noted that cooperative learning was so beneficial that it should be incorporated into all subject areas. One participant shared that the dynamics of cooperative learning allowed the classroom to be student centered not teacher centered.

Table 5 provides an overview of direct quotes from each participant’s response to Research Question 4.

Table 5

*Participants’ Responses to Cooperative Learning*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ4</th>
<th>Direct Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant T1-3rd</td>
<td>It forces students to work with others and it causes them to encourage each other so that all students achieve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T2-3rd</td>
<td>I feel that one of the best components of the program is the cooperative learning part. This allows the students to pool and share their ideas with others, which I feel is important in a time where teamwork has become the chime word in corporate America.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T3-4th</td>
<td>I feel cooperative learning is very beneficial to student success not just academically but in all aspects of school. In a world were people must cooperative to gain advancement in life, learning to work together and respect other opinions and ideas is essential.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ4</th>
<th>Direct Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant T4-4th</td>
<td>Cooperative learning is a great instructional strategy and is one of the positive aspects of the reading program. I see the benefits of students reading with each other to practice their fluency. Students are also able to work with each other to answer reading comprehension questions which also allow students to have meaningful discussions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T5-5th</td>
<td>It teaches the students how to work with one another, fostering a sense of teamwork, and it develops leadership skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T6-5th</td>
<td>The use of cooperative learning in the Success for All program is beneficial to student academic success because it allows students to share ideas with one another. It also changes the dynamics of the classroom by allowing it to be student centered not teacher centered. Cooperative learning is a great tool to use throughout all subjects allowing the teacher to assess student’s knowledge of content by listening and observing their conversations. It allows for every student voice to be heard through the use of strategies such as: think pair and share, number heads and partner reading and team talk discussion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RQ5: To what extent, if any, has the Success for All instructional approach provided student academic success when compared to the previously utilized instructional approach by you in teaching reading?
In reviewing the responses of the participants as to whether or not their overall teaching experiences made them feel that the Success for All method of instruction had caused students to be more academically successful and engaged than in the past, participants had mixed reviews. Some participants stated that the Success for All reform model had not caused students to be more engaged but reflected just the opposite. The majority of the participants stated that the program had promoted students to dislike the monotony of its routine. This monotony has led to boredom among the student body. Finally, the comment was made that students appeared to be functioning as though they were robots completing a familiar, consistent routine. One of the six participants disagreed stating that although there had been a significant increase in student engagement during the learning process, there had not been a great deal of academic success. Moreover, on other assessments used to measure student gains continued to be minimal showing little or no growth. One of the six participants believed that the brighter the student in the Success for All reform model the greater the engagement in the learning process, yielding a higher level of academic success when compared to the overall majority of students. This participant went on to conclude that they could not determine whether or not Success for All was the result of academic success, or these students were initially good students. One participant acknowledged that the Success for All method of instruction had caused students to be more engaged in their learning process, because the program presented different strategies that students could incorporate throughout all subjects. This participant also acknowledged that by placing students in reading classes according to their reading ability, created an environment
where lower readers would strive to improve, and students that were excelling would continue to excel.

Table 6 provides an overview of direct quotes from each participant’s response to Research Question 5.

Table 6

*Participants’ Responses to their Overall Teaching Experiences*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ5</th>
<th>Direct Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant T1-3rd</td>
<td>No, I believe it has caused them to become robots simply completing a routine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T2-3rd</td>
<td>I don’t feel that Successful For All causes the students to be more engaged in the learning process. The scripted program keeps the learning from expanding and holds a lot teachable moments that could really get the students engaged in the learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T3-4th</td>
<td>My experience with SFA leads me to believe the brighter or exceeding students in SFA tend to be more engaged in their learning process, and further academic success. Now I don’t know if that is a result of SFA, or the fact that they are already good students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel SFA is a fair method to instruction (which is relative to any given situation), I think it can be manipulated to increase success while being implemented, but I also feel it burns students out and tends to turn them off after an extended amount of time. I feel students would benefit more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ5</th>
<th>Direct Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>if the program was reduce in daily allotted time as well as a biweekly day off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T4-4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>No, I definitely feel that the students are less engaged. The monotony of the program causes students to become bored and doodle on their work folder. I can also by tell their joyful responses to not having SFA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T5-5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>While we have witnessed a significant upswing of students’ engagement in the learning process, in my opinion, we still have not seen a great amount of academic success as a result. Honestly, I’m not sure if it’s because more time is needed before we can adequately measure our success, or if it is because the program is not an appropriate fit for our students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant T6-5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Yes, I believe the SFA method of instructions has caused students to be more engaged in their learning process, because it presents to them different strategies they can incorporate throughout all subjects. Students are placed in classroom according to their reading level. This help students that have a lower reading level to strive on improving their reading score and students that are on a higher reading level to continue the learning process with students on their level are above.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additionally, in this section the researcher also reviewed the findings gathered during the observation process of the six participants in the qualitative post hoc study to examine the study findings. The observations that were conducted were recorded during the 2008–2009 school year (see Appendix J). Each participant was observed twice during the duration of the study in an attempt to eliminate skepticism of other staff members. The observation instrument yielded that the teachers had an excellent command when it came to the following performance dimensions:

1. The teacher effectively demonstrated content knowledge, clarity of presentation and the regular use of strategies to maintain high rates of student engagement for all students;
2. The teacher demonstrated effective teaching methods and exhibited the capacity to effectively organize and manage the learning environment; and
3. The teacher effectively utilized a variety of student assessment processes and procedures.

As a whole, the participants had no difficulty demonstrating his/her knowledge of the subject matter and communicating it to all students; classroom and group discussions occurred at appropriate times during the lesson; students were required to respond to questions at levels of thinking beyond simple recall; and teachers assessed (formally and informally) students’ level of understanding during the lesson. The biggest disconnect found, regarding the observation recording of the Success For All reform model, was related to performance dimension 4 (The teacher employed technology and/or other multimedia for instructional and administrative purposes). All participants clearly had a
conflict with performance dimension 4 and the Success For All lesson requirements. The Success For All reform model, unlike the large urban school system observation instrument, did not incorporate the use of technology and/or multimedia into the reform model.

Summary

In conclusion, based on the findings from the post hoc qualitative study that examined teachers’ perceptions of the Success for All reform model as it related to student achievement, the researcher concluded that the teachers’ views were consistent in regards to only one question recorded during the researcher participant one time in-depth interview process. The six participants who participated in a one time in-depth interview session shared related views on the question regarding the benefits of cooperative learning. All participants had concerns regarding the other four questions: including the staff development experience as it related to the Success for All reform model and whether or not it was beneficial in terms of helping to increase student achievement in reading; the scripted lesson approach utilized in Success for All when compared to other instructional methods that were previously taught; if the observations and evaluations received had been advantageous in terms of improving instructional delivery; and if the Success for All method of instruction had caused students to be more academically successful, and engaged than in the past.

In regards to the Success for All reform model and the large urban school system Observation Instrument, performance dimensions 1, 2, and 3 were clearly aligned to the programs requirements, whereas performance dimension 4 was not. The
researcher indicated that the alignment of the SFA program and APS observation
instrument left teachers and administrators questioning the reliability and validity of the
observation instrument as it related to the Success for All reform model.
CHAPTER VI
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings

Based on the findings in the study, the researcher can conclude that the participants' responses to the teacher interview questions clearly pointed to the fact that the majority of participants had mixed reviews on all questions except for the question that dealt with cooperative learning. All participants acknowledged that the use or practice of cooperative learning within the classroom offered present and future benefits to the students. For example, participants acknowledged that the current practice of cooperative learning was beneficial in that it encouraged students to work together to solve problems, support one another in the learning environment, and build leadership skills. In addition, participants indicated that utilization of cooperative learning practices in the classroom were that students could draw on these instances when they were out in the workplace dealing with real world group dynamics.

Conclusions

The researcher interpreted the findings of the research in the following manner. Based on the findings of Research Question 1, it was concluded by the majority of the teachers that the staff development received related to the Success for All reform model was not overall beneficial. Additionally, the staff development only offered strategies regarding the implementation of the components of the Success for All reform models
and did not necessarily address the overall progression of student achievement. This could very well be an indicator that has lead to the continued lack of student achievement in reading at the research site. It was also concluded that the five out of six teachers who had less experience tended to share the view that staff development had not had a positive impact on student achievement. On the other hand, one of six participants who was among the most experienced seemed to express that staff development sessions were an opportune time to share research based strategies that were useful in the process of increasing student achievement. The researcher recapitulated that the participant’s statement in conjunction with the high rate of teacher turn over points to the fact that there were not enough seasoned teachers implementing the program to have an overall effect on the larger numbers reported related to student achievement in reading. The researcher concluded that the links in the chain between the process of conceiving student achievement and the effects on students were too long and too weak. The focus on student performance simply became lost in the delivery of staff development.

Based on the findings of Research Question 2, it was concluded by the majority of teachers that the scripted lesson approach utilized in Success for All when compared to other instructional methods previously taught was limited. The majority of teachers indicated that their creativity was stifled due to the SFA program structure, and as professionals they were seen as incompetent and undervalued. It was further concluded by the researcher that in order for comprehensive school reforms to be truly beneficial all partakers influenced by its implementation must express a sincere sense of commitment.
Additionally, the researcher concluded that without the teachers having some level of creative input into the program there would be a certain degree of continued disconnect. Accordingly, teachers must have an affiliation with the Success for All reform model in order to see its total worth.

Based on the findings of Research Question 3, it was concluded that the majority of participants did not acknowledge that the Success for All observations and evaluations received had been beneficial in terms of helping them to improve their instructional delivery. The researcher concluded that the teachers who had less experience received the greatest positive impact from the observation feedback sessions. Newer teachers' feedback sessions clearly allowed less experienced staff the parameters to identify their instructional challenges, formulate next steps, and implement suggested avenues for improvement. Moreover, the researcher was genuinely convinced that these were the individuals who exhibited a high rate of anticipation correlated with the next opportunity to be observed.

Overall, all participants indicated that the APS observations and evaluations instrument were not a good fit with the components of the Success for All reform model. For example, the feedback instrument required that teachers offer a variety of learning activities/teaching strategies that reflected the teachers' understanding of students' needs, strengths, special interests learning styles, and required learning time. Within the confines of the Success for All lesson format, components, and pre-prescribed lessons this practice was not feasible. The large urban school system's feedback instrument also made the recommendation in performance dimension 4 that computers were available
and used to engage students in lesson-related activities. The usage of computers were also not addressed in the Success for All lesson cycle format, program components, or pre-prescribed lessons, also making this suggestion unrealistic. Consequently, the researcher concluded that regardless of the misalignment of the APS instrument to the SFA reform model there should be alternate methods of assessing instructional professional growth for older teachers. Perhaps, analyzing the teacher’s wherewithal and the number of years experience implementing the SFA program should supersede the number of mandated observations.

Based on the findings of Research Question 4, it was concluded, that all participants agreed that cooperative learning was beneficial to students in that the use of cooperative learning encouraged students to work as a team, developed leadership skills, promoted student achievement as group members, and helped students to work collectively to inspire one another. The researcher concluded that the favorable use of cooperative learning as an instructional practice mandated that it should be implemented into all content areas and the long run would yield positive affects. The researcher further concluded that the benefits of cooperative learning would increase academic life long learning.

Based on the findings on Research Question 5, it was concluded that the majority of the participants stated that their overall teaching experiences executing the Success for All method of instruction had not caused students to be more engaged in the learning process, and did not lead to further academic success when compared to other traditional forms of teaching reading. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the Success for All
method of instruction had not caused students to be more academically successful, and engaged than in the past. The researcher further concluded that there may have been a negative correlation as it related to student engagement and academic success. The researcher further inferred that as student engagement intensified in the program student achievement decreased. In a final analysis the researcher indicated that student boredom may have encouraged a continued lack of student academic success.

Implications

The results of the study have noteworthy implications for schools that utilize and intend on continuing to utilize comprehensive reform models. The findings in the study allowed the researcher to confer that the only selected component of the Success for All reform model that all participants chose that was beneficial was cooperative learning. The participants all agreed that the cooperative learning component had a positive impact on student academic achievement.

Future qualitative efforts on Success for All reform model could replicate the present study in a larger number of schools in school districts of various sizes. This might account for any cultural factors that may exist in any one district and improve the generalizability of the results.

The participants in the study reported the greatest disconnect to be between the programs expectations, the goals related to student achievement, and participants actual everyday accounts of the SFA program’s implementation. The notion of collective learning on the part of the Success for All reform model intent to be proactive in addressing students’ unique needs was under-represented according to participants’
perceptions and data analysis procedures conducted by the Georgia Department of Education.

The implications of the findings in this study to current and future theory and practice as it related to understanding teachers’ perceptions of the Success for All reform model and its impact on student achievement led the researcher to confer that perceptions are key to making instructional programs really work. All reform programs must allow for the voices of the unheard to be analyzed, critiqued, and valued in order for true academic improvement to occur.

Limitations of the Study

The qualitative post hoc researcher’s study explored the teachers’ perceptions related to the implementation process of the independent variable Success for All (SFA) reform model; the effects of the SFA reform model on the dependent variable student achievement at the present school; and the teachers’ perceptions of student achievement as it related to SFA. The study addressed the need for classroom facilitators who utilized the Success for All comprehensive reform components to legitimize their accounts. Nevertheless, replications of this scholarly research inquiry would further address the reliability of its findings.

Furthermore, the study’s results are not necessarily generalizable beyond the sample from one urban elementary school to another. Consequently, time was a constraint. If the researcher had more time to implement the study, the researcher would have incorporated additional questions to probe even deeper into certain problematic SFA program areas. For example, the researcher would have included further observation/
evaluation findings to determine if feedback given over a longer period of time would yield a favorable level. To determine if participants could acknowledge that feedback sessions were constructive in terms of being able to make use of the feedback information received.

Finally, the use of only six participants in the study was considered a real limitation. The researcher speculated whether the actual findings would have differed if the number of participants were increased in the study. The researcher speculated whether the actual findings would have differed if the participants’ gender were changed i.e., either to all female or to all male and/or if age, or the number of years teaching were manipulated. Additionally, the researcher pondered as to whether looking at the background experiences in the field of education could very well have played a minimal part in how the Success for All reform model was viewed.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions related to staff development and the Success for All reform model, the researcher recommends that:

- The Success for All facilitator who implements site based staff development tier the process based on where teachers are in their careers, and what teachers need based on a set of discrete characteristics. It is obvious that the “one size fits all” approach has not benefited the overall staff in improving their instructional delivery to impact student achievement in a positive manner.
- The district should review alternate times to have staff development workshops. Mandated after school workshops have proven to be a real waste
of time and effort. Teachers often react in an unfavorable manner to the extended school days due to exhaustion causing and inability to comprehend material being delivered.

- The SFA facilitator should differentiate staff development at the school site by constructing it to be more empowering and promoting deep engagement by the participants. Teachers would be more excited to see their colleagues present proven strategies that have been utilized within their classrooms. There may even be a more open environment where teachers are comfortable with addressing concerns and challenges.

- The district may wish to seek outside consultants and/or experts in the field of staff development to create a satisfying work place, attract and retain excellent staff. Also by developing the careers of the staff an increase would occur in each individuals' skill assets, improvement in intellectual capital, and expertise from which to draw on for the benefit of the organization.

Based on the findings and conclusions related to the scripted lesson approach and the Success for All reform model, the researcher recommends that:

- The school acknowledge that instructional staff should understand what the philosophy (components) of the reform model is, what components look like, which components are required to implement the program, how program components will be monitored, by whom the overall program will be monitored, as well as what may possibly be at stake for the school as a whole. Often times teachers don’t make the connections that reform models were
being adopted based on the lack of student academic success, the need to address student mobility issues, and the need to address student attendance issues. The researcher indicates that by sharing this information with teachers, teachers would be more accepting when it came to implementing reform programs. Most of all teachers have to consider the fact that the reform models are for the students and not teachers.

- The school should analyze ways in which teachers could possibly implement creativity within the confines of the Success for All reform model.

- Finally, if educating teachers regarding the philosophy of the program does not alter the less than positive reports regarding the scripted lesson approach, then perhaps the program should be modified and eventually phased out.

Based on the findings and conclusions related to the benefits of the Success for All reform model observations and evaluations, the researcher recommends that:

- The school gives credence to the fact that new staff members confirm that their comfort level with instruction is increased as the number of observation and feedback are increased as well. Therefore, administration needs to take into account that new teachers unlike older staff may benefit more from a greater number of observation feedback sessions. It may also be considered that newer teachers have a greater potential to make greater strides in instructional growth. Based on the assumption that newer staff tends to be highly energetic and enthusiastic.
The school must recognize and address the fact that teachers who have acquired mid-year and beyond teaching experience need an alternate approach to the usual observation-evaluation-feedback methods previously utilized. I recommend that for these select teachers the collaborative coaching method be utilized to create a more professional learning environment. Collaborative coaching is an effective partnership where you can brainstorm, define your vision and goals, and move forward to readily create what you desire. By utilizing this collaborative approach teachers would be given the opportunity to examine standards for: (a) engaging and supporting all students in learning; (b) developing as a professional educator; (c) assessing student learning; (d) creating and maintaining effective environments for student learning; (e) understanding and organizing subject matter for student learning; as well as planning instruction and designing learning experiences for all students.

Following this impressive coaching method as opposed to the current method would allow older staff more career autonomy to examine their craft reflectively. Teachers would self-examine what is working, identify their challenges/concerns, identify next steps, and work with the coach to determine what are the next steps needed by them to assist in their professional growth.

If there is a consensus on the part of the district not to allow for an alternative observation feedback method perhaps reconsidering the number of observation feedback sessions for older staff who have accumulated mid-year
teaching experience and beyond should be reduced as in comparison to new staff.

- A large urban school system must determine a common ground for alignment to accurately measure teacher performance when utilizing the district observation instrument. The common ground must take into account teacher performance, the fidelity of the Success for All reform model, and the length of time designated to evaluating ninety minute Success for All classes on the part of building administrators. If the district does not adhere to the alignment the researcher indicated that in the future this may very well account for the lack of confidence in the APS observation process.

Based on the findings and conclusions related to the use of cooperative learning in the Success for All reform model, the researcher recommends that:

- The school continue to implement the cooperative learning component throughout the curriculum at every grade level and with multiple tasks. By doing so the teachers and students alike would continue to anticipate the use of it in daily instructional lessons and student performance would increase in the long run.

- Teacher continue to ensure that students experience intellectual controversy to promote curiosity, motivation to learn, reconceptualization of what one knows, high quality decision making, greater insight into the problem being considered, and many other important benefits to promote continuous student academic growth.
Based on the findings and conclusions related to the participants’ teaching experiences and the Success for All reform model method of instruction’s impact on students being more academically successful, than in the past, the researcher recommends that:

- The Success for All Reform Model program curriculum developers need to ensure that students are propelled by curiosity, driven by the intense need to explore, interact with and make sense of their environment in ways that are relevant to their lives.
- The district should inform the Success for All Reform Model program curriculum developers regarding the need to include materials that are based on student interest; incorporate into the program a wide range of reading material and activities to add novelty to the program, and allow for the program components to be differentiated in order to eliminate boredom amongst the student body.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following future recommendations were made regarding the findings of teacher perceptions regarding the Success for All reform model and how it related to student academic success in reading:

- The federal government should allocate funding to research educational reform models to assist schools in need by suggesting recommended reforms. Perhaps matching schools based on student demographic information to compatible reform programs would assist schools. The Federal government
should diminish the NCLB mandate requiring low performing schools to implement a comprehensive reform after the school has demonstrated that students are academically back on track and can continue to manage student learning.

- States should allow schools time for academic growth with or without reform programs before the mandate to choose a comprehensive reform model is necessary. States need to look at successful research such as the work of Ron Edmonds Effective Schools as a means of a common sense approach to educating all students successfully.

- Superintendents and executive directors should decide what school reforms are essential for the student population(s) within a given district. Superintendents and executive directors should not allow reforms to do a free for all, yielding a high number of reforms sited in one district. Based on the researcher’s past experiences it is believed that the reduction of the number of reforms in one district would reduce the confusion when students transfer to other district schools within the same district. Parents would know what to expect and students would be prepared to meet the demands of the enrolling school’s comprehensive reform.

- Principals should understand the dynamics of the reform model chosen and understand what that means for the population to be served. Principals must assume the role of instructional leaders possessing the ability to inform the parents, teachers, students, community, and stakeholders of the benefits
associated with adopted reforms. Too often administrators seem out of the loop of program logistics, overwhelmed by managerial type tasks, and do not have a real hands-on approach to instructional delivery implemented in his/her school.

- Parents and students should have the opportunity to evaluate the program to determine what has been beneficial and what has not been beneficial for students in the past. They should also have the opportunity to offer suggestions for improvements to the instructional literacy program. As stated in the Success for All research, when schools and families work together there is a higher rate of student academic success.

- Community stakeholders should have some clear involvement in determining what directions schools should take when educating students. Community involvement should very well be limited as to not interfere with the overall instructional program as it relates to student academic improvement. Community stakeholders input should be considered mainly due to the fact that in many instances they provide monetary or other types of tangible funding.

- Other researchers looking to examine teacher perceptions of Success for All reform Model should conduct a follow up interview session with participants to reevaluate initial study findings. By conducting in-depth interview follow up sessions the researcher would be allotted more time to impact the outcome of the study.
Summary

Based on the findings, the researcher was led to conclude that teachers who were serving as new instructional staff in schools that utilized the SFA reform model did not have a problem utilizing the scripted lesson approach to instruction. These teachers would most likely consider the Success for All reform model as a resource or guide that mapped out the literacy program enabling them to do very little thinking. With having to not focus on instruction teachers would be allowed to spend more time focusing on classroom management. Past research has shown that classroom management is one of the most focused on areas of acclimation to the classroom for new teachers. Whereas, veteran teachers want more autonomy than what the Success for All reform model was willing to offer. Seasoned teachers tend to have little or no difficulties with classroom management, yielding the ability to spend more time being creative. It is important to point out that the only aspect of the program that all participants acknowledged that was beneficial was the use of cooperative learning. Therefore, the researcher considered the cooperative learning aspect of Success for All Reform Model to be the essential instructional delivery component of the program.

The researcher interpreted the favorable findings related to cooperative learning as a key component to teaching students who have limited skills. When students who are academically low performers work in cooperative learning groups it allows the teacher instructional leave-way to focus on other aspects other than students getting the answer and stepping them through the process. Researchers Johnson and Johnson (2009) affirmed that cooperative learning consistently improves achievement and retention,
creates more positive student relationships, and promotes students' psychological health and self-esteem. Students who work in cooperative learning groups tend to rely on group members to help them understand concepts, remain on task, and complete assignments in a timely manner. Furthermore, there are over 900 research studies validating the effectiveness of cooperative over competitive and individualistic efforts (Johnson, & Stanne, 2000). Therefore, students in cooperative groups don’t need to depend so heavily on the teacher. In cooperative learning classrooms teachers are perceived as a facilitator of learning, thereby; allowing the classroom environment to be student centered.

Furthermore, a common ground must be determined to account for teacher performance, the fidelity of the Success for All reform model, and the length of time designated to evaluating ninety minute Success for All classes on the part of building administrators. As administrators struggle weekly with spending an hour and thirty minutes in a classroom because the observation instrument requires that the entire lesson be observed. Completing observations is extremely obstinate for administrators when the entire school is implementing the SFA reading reform model during the same block of time. Administrators are therefore, forced to observe one teacher during the implementation of the Success for All reform model each day. Consequently, in the past the observation requirements have forced administrators to spend long periods of time evaluating how to manage both time and tasks.

Finally, the large urban school must determine a common ground for an alignment of the instructional program and the observation instrument that will accurately measure teacher performance.
APPENDIX A

2006-2007 Top Priority Student Performance Goals

Large Urban School System
Top Priority Student Performance Goals
for
Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School

PERFORMANCE RESULTS 2006-2007

INSTRUCTIONAL PRIORITY AREA: READING

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OBJECTIVE: DECREASE the percent of students NOT MEETING STANDARD in Reading on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests.

OBJECTIVE: INCREASE the percent of students EXCEEDING STANDARD in Reading on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests.
INSTRUCTIONAL PRIORITY AREA: *LANGUAGE ARTS*

**OBJECTIVE:** DECREASE the percent of students NOT MEETING STANDARD in Language Arts on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests.

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**OBJECTIVE:** INCREASE the percent of students EXCEEDING STANDARD in Language Arts on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests.

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INSTRUCTIONAL PRIORITY AREA: *MATHEMATICS*

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**OBJECTIVE:** INCREASE the percent of students EXCEEDING STANDARD in Mathematics on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests.

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Appendix A (continued)

INSTRUCTIONAL PRIORITY AREA: SOCIAL STUDIES

OBJECTIVE: DECREASE the percent of students NOT MEETING STANDARD in Social Studies on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests.

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OBJECTIVE: INCREASE the percent of students EXCEEDING STANDARD in Social Studies on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests.

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INSTRUCTIONAL PRIORITY AREA: ATTENDANCE

OBJECTIVE: DECREASE the percent of students absent 10 days or more.

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APS/Research, Planning, and Accountability
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8/08/07
APPENDIX B

2006-2007 Fifth Grade Writing Results

2007 Grade 5 Writing Assessment Results
By Grade Level/ 82 Students

Overall as a grade level 55% of the regular education students meet standards, 45% did not meet standards, 5% were classified as gifted, 9% were identified as being eligible for the Principal’s Honor Roll, 30% were identified as being eligible for A-B Honor Roll, 3% of PEC students met, 16% did not meet, 49% were female, 51% were male, 96% were black, and 4% were multi-ethnic.
APPENDIX C

SFA Cycle of Instruction

Reading Wings

Cycle of Instruction

TEACHER PRESENTATION

↑↑
Guided Practice
Teacher Modeling

↑↓
PARTNER/TEAM PRACTICE
Partner Practice

↑↑
Independent Practice
Peer Pre-assessment

ASSESSMENT
TEAM RECOGNITION

91
3rd Grade Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT)
Percentage of students at each Performance Level: Comparison For All Students

School: 2007-2008
Number Tested

All Students
Reading 16 74 10 61
English/Lang. Arts 16 66 18 61
Mathematics 30 39 31 61
Social Studies 18 67 15 61
Science 33 48 20 61

School: 2006-2007
Number Tested

All Students
Reading 38 44 18 77
English/Lang. Arts 25 56 19 77
Mathematics 17 58 25 77
Social Studies 21 70 9 77
Science 55 35 10 77

School: 2005-2006
Number Tested

All Students
Reading 35 56 8 57
English/Lang. Arts 35 46 19 57
Mathematics 11 68 21 57
Social Studies 19 70 1 57
Science 18 70 1 57

School: 2004-2005
Number Tested

All Students
Reading 21 57 22 68
English/Lang. Arts 26 57 16 68
Mathematics 28 59 13 68
Social Studies 24 71 6 68
Science 38 59 3 68
4th Grade Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT)
Percentage of students at each Performance Level: Comparison For All Students

School: 2007-2008

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School: 2006-2007

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School: 2005-2006

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Legend:
- Does Not Meet
- Meets
- Exceeds
5th Grade Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT)  
Percentage of students at each Performance Level: Comparison For All Students

**School: 2007-2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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**School: 2004-2005**

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<td>English/Lang Arts</td>
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<td>Mathematics</td>
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APPENDIX F

Success for All Reform Model CIPP

Success For All Reform model Structure & Treatment

Context of Problem:
- Poor social skills
- Discipline
- Lack of student achievement
- Low SES
- Lack of collaboration in learning, skills, use of technology

Causes of the Problem:
- High teacher-abuse rate
- Lack of consistency in instruction to students
- Inadequate of classroom and students

Content:
- Instruction of Instruction
- Teaching of Instruction
- Learning of Instruction
- Assessment of Instruction

Input:
- Cooperative Grouping
- Homogeneous Grouping
- Independent Practice

Process:
- Asking HOT Questions
- Teaching Strategy
- Modeling
- Decoding Strategy
- Clarification Strategy
- Practice
- Coaching
- Three-Pare-Share Strategy

Output:
- Student Achievement
- Testability
- Improved Social Skills
- Team Recognition
- Perfectionism in Learning Instruction, and:
  - Georgia Reference Competency Test
  - Atlanta Public Schools, Administrative Testing
APPENDIX G

Large Urban School System Observation Instrument

LARGE URBAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

Enhancing Teaching In All Schools

LARGE URBAN SCHOOL SYSTEM OBSERVATIONS

The Lesson Observation Process
The Lesson Observation Form
Seven Critical Questions
Teacher Observation Feedback Form

Instructional & Accountability Systems, Inc.
Dan Saltrick & Jeff Schiller

97
A LARGE URBAN SCHOOL SYSTEM LESSON OBSERVATION PROCESS

A TOOL FOR IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING

While preparing for classroom observations, all observers must understand that the most critical factor in assuring that all students learn at the highest possible level is the quality of teaching that students should experience in their daily lessons.

Teachers at all grade levels are facing significant challenges in their classrooms given: (a) the new high standards that they must teach to all students, (b) the fact that many students are below-standard when they begin the school year, and (c) that most classrooms consist of students who differ significantly in what they know and do not know, requiring teachers to differentiate instruction based on students’ needs, learning styles, and required learning time.

The Lesson Observation Process is designed to:

(a) gather information regarding the extent to which teachers are using effective teaching strategies, skills, and knowledge as described in What Teachers Must Do To Be The Best. The document describes what teachers must do to perform at the highest and most effective level,

(b) provide teachers with on-going, accurate, and meaningful feedback regarding their teaching, and concrete suggestions to assist them in addressing teaching strategies and learning activities that require improvement.

The appropriate use of the Lesson Observation Process will make it possible for all observers (principals, assistant principals, instructional directors, model teacher leaders, and central office staff) to conduct effective and relevant classroom observations, and provide teachers with accurate and meaningful feedback that can be very valuable in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

The use of the Lesson Observation Process and Form throughout a school district will assure that: (a) the school district’s expectations for effective teaching and learning are the driving force behind all teacher observations, (b) all principals and other observers are looking for the same critical teaching elements, (c) all teaching analyses are based on the same factors, and (d) feedback is provided on those critical teaching elements that are known to extremely influence student learning.
The Lesson Observation Process Consists Of Two Interrelated Parts:

Part 1: Lesson Observation Form
( Including Seven Important Questions)

Part 2: Teacher Observation Feedback

PART 1:

LESSON OBSERVATION FORM

A. FOUR VITAL STEPS FOR COMPLETING THE LESSON OBSERVATION FORM:

Step 1. Prior to your observation, reviewing each best practice described in Column I. Pay special attention to the level of performance that would have to be observed to rate a teacher as having implemented the teaching expectations/best practices as described.

Step 2. Accurately record (in Column 3) what you observe during the entire lesson.

Step 3. Accurately record (on page 3, the Students Off-Task Chart) the number of students off-task during each five minute interval.

Step 4. Use the information that was recorded in Column 3, the data in the Student Off-Task Chart, and impressions developed during the observation, to complete Column 2. Make a judgment in Column 2 (using the following codes) regarding the intensity of the teaching expectations/best practices as it is described in Column 1, and in the APS document—What Teachers Must Do To Be The Best.

B. CODES TO INSERT IN COLUMN 2

CODE 1 = The performance was at the intensity of the teaching expectation/best practice as described in Column 1 (exceeds expectations)

CODE 2 = The performance was not quite at the level of the described intensity of the teaching expectation/best practice but was still effective (meets expectations)

CODE 3 = The performance was somewhat responsive to the described intensity of the teaching expectation/best practice, but did not have a meaningful and positive impact on the teaching and learning process for all students in the observed lesson (below expectations)

CODE 4 = The performance was not responsive to the described intensity of the teaching expectation/best practice (needs improvement)
Appendix G (continued)

C. PROVIDING BRIEF BUT SUCCINCT ANSWERS TO SEVEN IMPORTANT QUESTIONS:

These answers will assist you in understanding the effectiveness of the overall lesson and in crafting appropriate feedback to the teacher. The observer can answer questions during the lesson, or immediately following the observation by reviewing the information that was recorded in Column 3.

A Special Point: The following Lesson Observation Form is designed to assist the observer in making a judgment regarding the entire sequence of a lesson; not merely judging a single part of a lesson. This requires that the observer observes an entire lesson. Merely observing one part of a lesson cannot provide the observer with enough quality information to allow for the development of a complete, accurate, and fair lesson critique, and accurate/meaningful teacher feedback.

LES S ON OBSERVATION FORM

School: __________ Teacher: __________ Grade Level: __________
Subject: __________ # of Students: _____ Date: _____ Observer: _____

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
<th>Column 3</th>
<th>Column 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEACHING EXPECTATIONS/ BEST PRACTICES</strong></td>
<td><strong>Intended Level Code #</strong></td>
<td><strong>Performance Dimension</strong></td>
<td><strong>OBSERVATION RECORDING</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. All materials, supplies, and equipment were ready prior to the beginning of the lesson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accurately record observation data that will be used to complete Column 2, answer the Seven Important Questions, and complete the Teacher Feedback form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Teacher reviewed students’ understanding of a previous lesson to make connections to current instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PD 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PD 1
### Appendix G (continued)

#### TEACHING EXPECTATIONS/BEST PRACTICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
<th>Column 3</th>
<th>Column 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accuracy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Performance</strong></td>
<td><strong>OBSERVATION RECORDING</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity Level Code #</td>
<td>PD Code</td>
<td>Accurately record observation data that will be used to complete Column 2, answer the Seven Important Questions, and complete the Teacher Feedback Form.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. The lesson objective and/or *Essential Question* were aligned to the grade level standard and effectively communicated to all students

4. Teacher demonstrated his/her knowledge of the subject matter and communicated it to all students

5. The teacher modeled what students were to know and be able to do and applied what was taught to real-life situations

6. Classroom and group discussions occurred at appropriate times during the...

7. Students were provided with opportunities to be group leaders, facilitators, decision leaders, peer tutors, and peer leaders

8. Students were required to respond to questions at levels of thinking beyond simple recall

9. Questions went beyond simple recall and required student to think, synthesize, evaluate, and conclude

10. Students were required to explain their responses/answers

**Code1: Exceeds Expectations**  **Code 2: Meets Expectations**  **Code 3: Below Expectations**  **Code 4: Needs Improvement**
### Students Off-Task Chart

Enter The Number Students Off-Task For Each Five Minute Interval

Record the number of students off-task for each five minute interval (i.e., students who are not engaged in the learning activities, not listening or responding to the teacher, not working on assigned tasks for 3 of the 5 minutes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>5th</th>
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<th>16th</th>
<th>17th</th>
<th>18th</th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
<th>Column 3</th>
<th>Column 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. The variety of learning activities/teaching strategies reflected the teacher’s understanding of students’ needs, strengths, special interests learning styles, and required learning time</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Computers were available and used to engage students in lesson-related activities</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Independent activities, research assignments, station/center/computer tasks, were available (and aligned to the lesson objective) for students if they completed assignments before other students</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Reteaching activities were provided for students who need additional instruction <em>(didn’t get it the first time)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Lesson was characterized by a variety of student grouping strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The instructional activities, materials, and resources were appropriately aligned to the grade level lesson objective and/or Essential Question</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The skills, concepts, and content that were taught, were appropriately aligned to State and local performance standards.</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Skills, concepts, and content were taught at the appropriate levels of complexity</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Students were informed as to how well they followed directions, completed tasks, and were likely to achieve the lesson objective</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Homework and follow-up assignments were differentiated to meet the varying needs and strengths of the students</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 3</td>
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</table>
Appendix G (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students Off-Task Chart</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enter The Number Students Off-Task For Each Five Minute Interval</td>
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</tbody>
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Record the number of students off-task for each five minute interval (i.e., students who are not engaged in the learning activities, not listening or responding to the teacher, not working on assigned tasks for 3 of the 5 minutes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. A review of the lesson objective, feedback regarding students' understanding of what was taught, and a preview of the next lesson is provided through lesson closure

22. Connections were presented within and across content areas by the teacher and students

23. Teacher related the new learning to application in real-life situations

24. A well managed learning environment fostered equity, diversity, and fairness that resulted in students trusting and cooperating with each other

25. Teacher assessed (formally and informally) students' level of understanding during the lesson

26. Students used a variety of resources, materials (print and non-print), and manipulatives


Seven Critical Questions: Responses to each question should be brief, accurate, and narrowly focused. Answering these questions is designed to enable the observer to more effectively understand the nature and quality of the observed lesson, and to provide the kind of detail required to provide accurate/meaningful feedback to teachers.

1. What was the lesson’s objective or Essential Question? (If there were none, indicate that fact)

2. What did the teacher do to provide students (who needed it), with additional instructional time?
### Appendix G (continued)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Did the teacher have the students use a variety of resources? If yes, describe the resource that were used in the observed lesson. (If only a single resource was used, indicate that fact)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>What did the teacher do to close the lesson? (If there was no lesson closure, indicate that fact)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Did the teacher differentiate instruction based on students' needs, learning styles, and required learning time? If yes, describe the teaching strategies used by the teacher. (If there was no differentiation of instruction, indicate that fact)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>How did the teacher assess students' level of understanding during the lesson? (If there were no assessments implemented during the lesson, indicate that fact)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Assuming that computers were in the classroom and their use would have been appropriate for the lesson, how did the teacher use computers to engage students in lesson-related activities? (If computers were present and not used, and could have been used to enhance the lesson, indicate that fact.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PART 2: TEACHER OBSERVATION FEEDBACK FORM

To assure that teachers are able to meet the school district’s teaching expectations they must be made aware of how their teaching practices rate when compared to the district’s expectations and, if they are not yet up to par, what they need to do to improve their teaching practices and learning activities.

Providing effective and meaningful feedback requires that the observers are intimately familiar with the teaching expectations/best practices, know them when they see them, and are honest in their ratings regarding the extent to which they are being put into action. In addition to providing teaching expectation/best practice ratings to teachers, meaningful/effective feedback needs to be accompanied by:

(a) specific suggestions regarding what a teacher can do to improve teaching and learning, and

(b) (if needed) what resources, assistance, and support the principal/Executive Director, SRT staff, and central office staff will provide to the teacher to help him/her improve teaching and learning.
Appendix G (continued)

And, to be effective, teacher feedback must be provided to the teacher shortly after the observation.

The Lesson Observation Teacher Feedback Form serves as a guide for principals, assistant principals, Executive Directors, SRT staff, Instructional Directors, professional development staff, model teacher leaders, and central office staff to use in developing their feedback and teacher training sessions.

It is important for all observers to know that when the Lesson Observation Teacher Feedback Form is completed, it must be delivered (to the teacher) by the principal.

LESSON OBSERVATION TEACHER FEEDBACK FORM
(use as many pages as necessary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School:</th>
<th>Teacher:</th>
<th>Grade Level:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject:</td>
<td>Number Of Students:</td>
<td>Date Of Observation:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date Feedback Provided: 

Overall impressions of the lesson, including commendations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insert Best Practices/Expectations Coded 3 or 4</th>
<th>Suggestions For Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe What The Teacher Must Do To Perform At Higher Levels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Suggestions For Improvement: 

2. Suggestions For Improvement: 

3. Suggestions For Improvement: 

4. Suggestions For Improvement: 

5. Suggestions For Improvement: 

APPENDIX H

Teaching in a Large Urban School System: What Teachers Must Do To Be The Best

LARGE URBAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

Teaching In a Large Urban School System: What Teachers Must Do To Be The Best

THE TWO-STEP PROCESS FOR ASSURING EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Step I: Focusing On Expectations For Effective Teaching
Step II: Observing Teachers Effectively

106
LARGE URBAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

THE TWO-STEP PROCESS FOR ASSURING EFFECTIVE TEACHING

The most critical factor in assuring that all students in large urban school system (APS) learn at the highest possible level is quality teaching.

Teachers at all grade levels face significant challenges in their classrooms: (a) new high standards they must teach to all students, (b) many students below-standard when they begin the school year, and (c) classrooms that consist of students who differ significantly in what they know and do not know. To help teachers and administrators meet these challenges, APS developed the Two-Step Process For Assuring Effective Teaching. Step I defines APS' expectations for effective teaching; expectations that every teacher must strive to meet. Step II describes the process that principals and others must use to: (a) determine the extent to which the teaching best practices/expectations are met, and (b) provide meaningful feedback to teachers.

The application of the Two-Step Process will assure that:

- all teachers, principals, assistant principals, directors, SRT staff, model teacher leaders, and other central office staff share a common understanding of the characteristics of effective teaching and learning,
- all principals and other observers are looking for the same critical teaching elements,
- APS' expectations for effective teaching and learning are the driving force behind all teacher observations,
- all observers gather information regarding the extent to which teachers use effective teaching strategies, skills, and knowledge based on best practices identified through research and used in all effective schools,
- all teachers are assessed on the same factors,
- teachers are given meaningful feedback regarding their teaching practices and well-defined suggestions to improve their teaching,
- high priority areas for on-going district-wide professional development are identified, and
- principals have the information they need to effectively implement APS' Teacher Evaluation Process.

This document describes the two interrelated steps:

Step I: Focusing On Expectations For Effective Teaching

Step II: Observing Teachers Effectively
When one examines decades of research, or reviews the practices of schools that have been consistently effective, there is only one major conclusion that can be drawn: It is the teacher who makes the difference—not the textbooks, the number of computers in the classroom, or even class size. It is what teachers do that determines the extent to which they will reach and teach their students.

In addition to appropriate pre-service training, effective induction activities, support for new teachers, and on-going professional development for all teachers, one of the most important factors contributing to effective teaching is for teachers and administrators alike to have a common understanding of precisely what constitutes effective teaching. Teachers need to understand precisely what it is they need to do to be effective, and administrators need to understand precisely what they should be looking for as they observe teachers in order to provide them with appropriate feedback.

This document describes precisely what large urban school system (APS) expects from its teachers who are performing at the highest levels. These teacher expectations are based on a review of research regarding effective teaching, analyses of what makes effective schools effective, and suggestions from APS principals and teachers. The teacher expectations should be viewed as APS’ expectations for all of its teachers; expectations that define what teachers must do on a daily basis to be highly effective—expectations that will take time to fully achieve.

APS’ teaching expectations are expressed in practical teaching performance terms representing actions that should regularly be seen in all classrooms, without regard to grade or subject. They are universal actions.

The teaching expectations are organized in the same six Performance Dimensions as used in the State’s Evaluation System. Although the Performance Dimensions are the same, the actions that teachers need to take to be considered as performing at the highest-levels are more detailed and research-driven.

**PERFORMANCE DIMENSION #1:** The Teacher Effectively Demonstrates Content Knowledge, Clarity Of Presentation And The Regular Use Of Strategies To Maintain High Rates Of Student Engagement For All Students

**PERFORMANCE DIMENSION #2:** The Teacher Demonstrates Effective Teaching Methods And Exhibits The Capacity To Effectively Organize And Manage The Learning Environment

**PERFORMANCE DIMENSION #3:** The Teacher Effectively Utilizes A Variety Of Student Assessment Processes And Procedures
Appendix H (continued)

PERFORMANCE DIMENSION #4: The Teacher Engages In Professional Development Activities And Uses What Is Learned In The Context Of The Classroom

PERFORMANCE DIMENSION #5: The Teacher Employs Technology and/or Other Multimedia For Instructional And Administrative Purposes

PERFORMANCE DIMENSION #6: The Teacher Effectively Demonstrates Professional Conduct and the Highest Professional Standards

PERFORMANCE DIMENSION #1

The Teacher Effectively Demonstrates Content Knowledge, Clarity of Presentation, and the Regular Use of Strategies to Maintain High Rates of Student Engagement For All Students

Best Practice 1: The Teacher Who Exceeds Expectations Consistently Demonstrates Sufficient Knowledge of the Subject Matter

What Effective Teachers Do: The teacher consistently and effectively demonstrates appropriate knowledge of the subject matter and is always effective in communicating that knowledge to all students. The teacher maintains a current understanding of the subject matter through staff development programs, coursework, journals, and reading a wide variety of resources and texts. The skills, concepts, and content of all lessons are appropriately aligned to the State and local performance standards, and are taught at the appropriate level of complexity.

The teacher also: (a) shares his/her experiences, knowledge and strategies in this practice with other staff members, (b) assists other staff members in this practice, and (c) teams effectively with others to make this practice more effective in teaching all students.

Best Practice 2: The Teacher Who Exceeds Expectations Consistently Develops and Delivers Lessons That Are Relevant To Students’ Interests And Responsive To Their Needs

What Effective Teachers Do: Daily lessons are consistently and effectively built on students’ previous knowledge, have a clear purpose, and where appropriate, relate the new learning to applications in real-life situations. Before new skills/content/concepts are introduced, the teacher assures that all students have a common understanding of prerequisite skills and content.

The teacher also: (a) shares his/her experiences, knowledge and strategies in this practice with other staff members, (b) assists other staff members in this practice, and (c) teams effectively with others to make this practice more effective in teaching all students.
Appendix H (continued)

Best Practice 3: The Teacher Who *Exceeds Expectations* Consistently Conveys and Acts on High Expectations For Students By Differentiating Instruction Based On Students’ Needs

*What Effective Teachers Do:* The teacher consistently and effectively teaches the approved performance standards/curriculum and constantly sends clear messages to all students that they are expected to master the performance standards/curriculum at the appropriate level of complexity. The teacher demonstrates a commitment to providing rigorous instruction to all students. Student work and performance are clear indicators that all students are taught at the appropriate level of complexity. Instructional activities and strategies take into account students’ needs, learning styles, and the time they require to master the material. Students who already know what is being taught are given enrichment activities related to the standards. Students without prerequisite skills (to understand what is being taught) are taught those prerequisite skills while also taught the grade-level performance standards.

The teacher also: (a) shares his/her experiences, knowledge and strategies in this practice with other staff members, (b) assists other staff members in this practice, and (c) teams effectively with others to make this practice more effective in teaching all students.

Best Practice 4: The Teacher Who *Exceeds Expectations* Consistently Promotes High Rates of Student Interest and Opportunities for Active And Meaningful Participation

*What Do Effective Teachers Do:* All instructional activities are consistently and effectively designed to address students’ varying needs, respond to their strengths, and include areas of special interest. The instructional activities are responsive to students’ learning styles, and include opportunities for students to work together on problem-solving situations and tasks that require cooperative efforts. Instructional strategies engage all students and provide opportunities for students to be group leaders, facilitators, discussion leaders, peer tutors, and team leaders. Instructional activities are varied and provide students with opportunities to use a variety of resources to gather information, identify/solve problems, make decisions, and suggest solutions. Whole-class instruction is not the prevalent teaching strategy. Classroom discussions are used frequently, questioning strategies are varied to meet the needs of a differentiated classroom population, and all students are asked to respond to questions that require different levels of thinking.

The teacher also: (a) shares his/her experiences, knowledge and strategies in this practice with other staff members, (b) assists other staff members in this practice, and (c) teams effectively with others to make this practice more effective in teaching all students.
Best Practice 1: The Teacher Who *Exceeds Expectations* Consistently Teaches Lessons That Are Appropriately Focused

*What Effective Teachers Do:* The teacher’s long and short-range plans consistently and effectively indicate that the teacher is aware of and committed to teaching what is required to be taught at grade-level. Daily lessons are planned, structured, focused and include the following *lesson elements*:

1. *Instructional objectives* and *essential questions* that are based on the performance standard, are at the appropriate level of complexity, and effectively communicated to all students. Each lesson must be based on the prior lesson, and always be standards-driven.

2. *Multiple instructional activities and materials* that are aligned to the instructional objective at the appropriate level of complexity, are appropriate for addressing students’ academic needs and learning styles, and encourage meaningful student engagement. When using these materials and activities teachers regularly deepen students’ understanding by providing relevant examples and applying content to a variety of *real life* situations.

3. *Questioning* that goes beyond simple recall, requiring students to think, synthesize, evaluate, and conclude. The majority of questions are *higher order* questions that probe student comprehension of what was taught, require students to combine information from various sources, require students to explain their answers, and extend and apply what was taught to *real life* situations.

4. *Connections* within and across content areas that focus on strengthening literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum (wherever possible).

5. *Assessment data* that documents student performance and is used to monitor instructional effectiveness, and provide the basis for reteaching.

6. *Lesson closure* that reviews the instructional objective, assesses students’ understanding of what was taught, and previews the next lesson.

The teacher also: (a) shares his/her experiences, knowledge and strategies in this practice with other staff members, (b) assists other staff members in this practice, and (c) teams effectively with others to make this practice more effective in teaching all students.
Appendix H (continued)

Best Practice 2: The Teacher Who *Exceeds Expectations* Always Uses Instructional Time Efficiently

*What Effective Teachers Do:* Virtually all allotted instructional time is consistently and effectively used for *teacher-directed* activities aligned to what students are expected to know and be able to do -- as defined by the grade-level performance standards. Instructional activities are designed to assure that some students do not waste time learning what they already know, while others waste time in activities for which they have no pre-requisite skills or understandings. Independent activities, research assignments, stations, centers, computer programs, etc., are available for students who complete their assignments before other students.

The teacher also: (a) shares his/her experiences, knowledge and strategies in this practice with other staff members, (b) assists other staff members in this practice, and (c) teams effectively with others to make this practice more effective in teaching all students.

Best Practice 3: The Teacher Who *Exceeds Expectations* Regularly Maintains High Student Engagement Rates

*What Effective Teachers Do:* Instructional activities are consistently and effectively varied to assure that all students are actively and meaningfully engaged in the lesson. Grouping strategies and learning activities are used to address the varying needs of all students without reducing instructional time for some students. Reteaching activities are provided for those students who *did not get it the first time.* Classroom discussions are used frequently, and questioning strategies are varied to meet the needs of a differentiated classroom population. Few students (and only for a few minutes) are *off-task* and the teacher quickly redirects them. The teacher consistently and effectively responds to the differences in the learning experiences, needs, and learning styles of students, and student misbehavior is minimized by engaging students in challenging learning activities.

The teacher also: (a) shares his/her experiences, knowledge and strategies in this practice with other staff members, (b) assists other staff members in this practice, and (c) teams effectively with others to make this practice more effective in teaching all students.

Best Practice 4: The Teacher Who *Exceeds Expectations* Always Provides Prompt and Specific Feedback (To Students) In A Constructive Manner

*What Effective Teachers Do:* The teacher consistently and effectively acts on the understanding that students perform at higher levels when they are aware of the instructional expectations that they must meet, and know where they are in regards to meeting those expectations. Students are informed (through teacher comments and feedback) as to whether they are following directions, if they are completing the instructional tasks, and if they are on track to achieve the lesson objective.
Appendix H (continued)

The teacher also: (a) shares his/her experiences, knowledge and strategies in this practice with other staff members, (b) assists other staff members in this practice, and (c) teams effectively with others to make this practice more effective in teaching all students.

Best Practice 5: The Teacher Who Exceeds Expectations Constantly Maintains A Positive Classroom Atmosphere and Interacts In a Professional Manner with Students

What Effective Teachers Do: Students are consistently and effectively greeted when they enter the classroom and informed about the objective and related tasks for the lesson. Teachers create a classroom climate in which students trust and cooperate with each other, and in which there is mutual respect between teacher and students. All students are provided opportunities to participate in class activities. The teacher creates an appropriate, well-managed learning environment that fosters equity, diversity, and fairness. No student is ever humiliated or put down. The behavior code is applied fairly to all students. Classroom displays and student work areas reflect the school’s curriculum, current topics of study, and models of expected student performance. The classroom is organized in ways that support a wide variety of activities that go beyond whole-class instruction (grouping, stations/centers, interest areas, independent work areas, student project areas, etc.). The room arrangement may change during the year in response to new topics and students’ progress in becoming more independent learners, and the room is always neat and well organized.

The teacher also: (a) shares his/her experiences, knowledge and strategies in this practice with other staff members, (b) assists other staff members in this practice, and (c) works/teams effectively with others to make this practice more effective in teaching all students.

PERFORMANCE DIMENSION #3

The Teacher Effectively Utilizes a Variety of Student Assessment Processes and Procedures

Best Practice 1: The Teacher Who Exceeds Expectations Always Monitors The Learning Activities Of Students And Reacts Appropriately To Student Performance

What Effective Teachers Do: The teacher consistently and effectively adjusts instruction (for individuals and groups of students) based on the students’ understanding and mastery of appropriate grade-level standards/objectives. Formative (formal or informal) diagnostic assessments are consistently and effectively used to determine which students need additional instructional time, opportunities for reteaching experiences, and enrichment and extension activities. Summative assessments are used to determine the academic growth of students over-
time, to identify successful teaching strategies and activities, and determine which students are prepared to move on to higher levels. These data are also used by the teacher to determine if he/she is on track in teaching the approved performance standards and curriculum.

The instructional program is driven, in large part, by students’ documented needs and strengths, and not textbooks. Instructional activities, teaching strategies, questioning strategies, and student assignments reflect the teacher’s knowledge of students’ identified needs and learning styles.

The teacher consistently and effectively informs students how close they are to mastering the objectives for their grade level. Throughout each lesson, individual students are informed as to whether they are following directions, and completing the instructional tasks appropriately. Periodic (and multiple forms of) assessments are used to provide students with information regarding their progress and continuing areas of need. Writing assignments are accompanied by prompts and rubrics. Tests, homework, and other assignments are quickly returned with teacher’s comments regarding how well students did or how they could obtain a higher level of achievement.

The teacher also: (a) shares his/her experiences, knowledge and strategies in this practice with other staff members, (b) assists other staff members in this practice, and (c) teams effectively with others to make this practice more effective in teaching all students.

Best Practice 2: The Teacher Who Exceeds Expectations Maintains Accurate Records Documenting Student Performance

What Effective Teachers Do: The teacher is aware of the importance of documenting students’ needs, strengths, and achievement. Daily records document student attendance, participation, and completion of assignments and are available for review by the administration, students, and parents. Test results are consistently and effectively recorded, analyzed, and used for instructional planning. Samples of students’ work are maintained throughout the year to show student growth and identify on-going instructional needs.

The teacher also: (a) shares his/her experiences, knowledge and strategies in this practice with other staff members, (b) assists other staff members in this practice, and (c) teams effectively with others to make this practice more effective in teaching all students.

**PERFORMANCE DIMENSION #4**

*The Teacher Employs Technology and/or Other Multimedia for Instructional and/or Administrative purposes*

Best Practice 1: The Teacher Who Exceeds Expectations Uses Available Instructional Media, Computers, and Materials Effectively
Appendix H (continued)

What Effective Teachers Do: The teacher consistently and effectively manages and uses a variety of materials, resources, and technology (if available and in working order), and media to assure that student learning goes beyond the text so that students have many opportunities to become aware of different understandings, different points of view, and different ways to solve problems. A wide variety of materials are used to have students become familiar with the various resources that should be used in their on-going learning, and to assure that their different styles of learning are appropriately addressed. Instructional media and materials are used to assure that students are exposed to, and use, current information from a wide range of print and non-print materials and software.

The teacher also: (a) shares his/her experiences, knowledge and strategies in this practice with other staff members, (b) assists other staff members in this practice, and (c) teams effectively with others to make this practice more effective in teaching all students.

**PERFORMANCE DIMENSION #5**

The Teacher Engages in Professional Development Activities and Uses what is Learned in the Context of the Classroom purposes

Best Practice 1: The Teacher Who Exceeds Expectations Is One Who Has Knowledge Of Appropriate Child And/or Adolescent Development Theory, And Uses That Knowledge In Daily Instruction.

What Effective Teachers Do: The teacher maintains knowledge of contemporary trends in developmental learning theory, and utilizes this knowledge to accommodate the learning needs of all students.

Best Practice 2: The Teacher Who Exceeds Expectations Is One Who Participates In All Relevant Professional Development Activities, Uses What Is Learned, And Communicates Regularly With Colleagues Regarding Instructional Issues

What Effective Teachers Do: The teacher is consistently aware of his/her needs for on-going improvement and actively seeks out professional development opportunities. The teacher consistently and effectively adopts what is learned in professional development sessions in his/her classroom, and actively shares what he/she learned with other staff members. The teacher consistently analyzes the effectiveness of what he/she does, and when appropriate, adjusts his/her instructional practices.

The teacher communicates with the grade level, as well as vertically across grade levels to facilitate the continuity of rigorous, relevant instruction. To facilitate this communication, the teacher works at developing positive relationships with other staff.
The teacher also: (a) shares his/her experiences, knowledge and strategies in this practice with other staff members, (b) assists other staff members in this practice, and (c) teams effectively with others to make this practice more effective in teaching all students.

PERFORMANCE DIMENSION #6

The Teacher Effectively Demonstrates Professional Conduct and the Highest Professional Standards

Best Practice 1: The Teacher Who *Exceeds Expectations* Adheres To All School System Guidelines/Policies For Attendance, Ethical Behavior, Dress, And Behavior

*What Effective Teachers Do:* The teacher consistently and effectively represents the highest behavioral standards (as defined by APS guidelines/policies) and represents the school system in ways that reflect those guidelines/policies. The teacher consistently models appropriate behaviors for other staff and students through regular attendance, classes starting on time, appropriate dress, and not attending to any personal business during class time.

Best Practice 2: The Teacher Who *Exceeds Expectations* Speaks and Writes Clearly, Correctly, and At an Appropriate Level of Understanding

*What Effective Teachers Do:* The teacher effectively communicates with other teachers, administrators, students, parents, and community members. The teacher’s command of the English language is sound. Lesson objectives are clearly written and/or stated in terms that students understand. Clearly described behavioral and instructional expectations are distributed to students and parents early in the year. For teachers whose “first language” is not English, they demonstrate improvement in English, over time.

Best Practice 3: The Teacher Who *Exceeds Expectations* Aggressively Advocates For Students’ Needs, And Involves Parents In Supporting At Home What Students Are Taught In School.

*What Effective Teachers Do:* The teacher consistently and effectively responds to students’ needs and, when appropriate, links students to other staff or service providers (e.g., health clinics, counselors, mentors, etc.). The teacher also helps keep parents abreast of student’s performance and suggests to them what they can do to enhance that performance. Students/parents regularly receive written and oral reports regarding their academic achievement and needs. The teacher is available at convenient times to meet with parents, students, and community members.
PART I: COMPLETING THE LESSON OBSERVATION FORM—FIVE IMPORTANT STEPS

Step 1. Prior to the classroom observation, review each best practice/expectation described in: The Two Step Process For Assuring Effective Teaching—Step1: Focusing On Expectations For Effective Teaching. Pay special attention to the high level of performance that must be observed to rate a teacher as having effectively implemented the best practice.

Step 2. Record (in Column 4) what is observed during the entire lesson.

Step 3. Record (on the Students Off-Task Chart) the number of students off-task during each five minute interval.

Step 4. Use: (a) the information recorded in Column 4, (b) the data in the Student Off-Task Chart, and (c) impressions developed during the observation, to complete Column 2. Using the following codes regarding the intensity of each best practice/expectation in Column 1, as described in The Two Step Process for Assuring Effective Teaching, Step 1: Focusing On Expectations for Effective Teaching, complete Column 2.

   Code 1 = The performance was at the intensity of the best practice/expectation as described in Column 1 (exceeds expectations)

   Code 2 = The performance was not quite at the level of the described intensity of the best practice/expectation, but was still effective (meets expectations)

   Code 3 = The performance was somewhat responsive to the described Intensity of the best practice/expectation, but did not have a meaningful and Positive impact on the teaching and learning process for all students in the observed lesson (below expectations)

   Code 4 = The performance was not responsive to the described intensity of the best practice/expectation (needs improvement)

Step 5. Answer the Seven Important Questions on page 15. These answers will assist in understanding the effectiveness of the overall lesson and in creating appropriate feedback to the teacher. Observers can answer questions during the lesson, or
immediately after the lesson observation (by reviewing the information that was entered in Column 4).

Note: Column 3 designates the specific Performance Dimension (in the APS/State Teacher Evaluation Process) that each of the best practices reflect. This enables the principals to use the results of completed observations to create the year-end APS/State Evaluation Form.

A Special Point: The APS Lesson Observation Form is designed to assist observers in making judgments regarding the entire sequence of a lesson; not merely a single part of a lesson. Observing just a part of a lesson cannot provide observers with enough quality information to use in developing a complete, accurate, and fair lesson critiques, and meaningful teacher feedback.

PART II: COMPLETING THE OBSERVATION FEEDBACK FORM

Within 72 hours of the observation, principals give their completed Observation Feedback Form to the teachers and give them an opportunity to review the completed form with them. Observation Feedback Forms completed by Executive Directors or other central office staff (during Instructional Profiles or other classroom visits) are to be submitted to the principal who will deliver them to the teachers for review and discussion.

Observers must be sure that:

(a) their observation comments are honest and fairly judged against the best practices/expectations described in Teaching In The large urban school system: What Teachers Must Do To Be The Best, and (b) their suggestions for improvement are as specific as possible.

PART III: COMPLETING TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM FORM

The Teacher Professionalism Form is completed by the principal at the end of the official evaluation process, and represents judgments made during the school year based on observations, discussions with the teacher, and any information provided by the teacher regarding any of the best practices listed on the form.

IMPORTANT NOTE: While this form is completed toward the end of the school year, if specific teaching practices are identified as needing improvement during the school year, they must be addressed when they are identified.
## PART I: LESSON OBSERVATION FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
<th>Column 3</th>
<th>Column 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BEST PRACTICES/EXPECTATIONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Record What Is Observed During The Entire Lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ All material, supplies, and equipment were ready prior to the beginning of the lesson</td>
<td></td>
<td>Performance Dimension</td>
<td>Enter observation data that will be used to complete Column 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Teacher reviewed students' understanding of a previous lesson to make connections to current instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ The lesson objective and/or <em>Essential Question</em> were aligned to the grade level standard and effectively communicated to all students</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Teacher demonstrated his/her knowledge of the subject matter and communicated it to all students</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ The teacher modeled what students were to know and be able to do and applied what was taught to real-life situations</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Classroom and group discussions occurred at appropriate times during the lesson</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Students were provided with opportunities to be group leaders, facilitators, decision leaders, peer tutors, and peer leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Students were required to respond to questions at levels of thinking beyond simple recall</td>
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School: ___________ Teacher: ___________ Grade Level: _____ Subject: ________

# Of Students: _______ Date: ___________ Observer: __________________________
Appendix H (continued)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BEST PRACTICES/EXPECTATIONS</strong></td>
<td>Intensity Level Performance Dimension</td>
<td>Record What Is Observed During The Entire Lesson Enter observation data that will be used to complete Column 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Questions went beyond simple recall and required student to think, synthesize, evaluate, and conclude</td>
<td>Intensity Level</td>
<td>Performance Dimension</td>
<td>PD 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students were required to explain their responses/answers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The variety of learning activities/teaching strategies reflected the teacher’s understanding of students’ needs, strengths, special interests learning styles, and required learning time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 1</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Students Off-Task Recording Chart**

Enter The Number Students Off-Task For Each Five Minute Interval

Record the number of students off-task for each five minute interval (i.e., students who are not engaged in the learning activities, not listening or responding to the teacher, and/or not working on assigned tasks for at least 3 of the 5 minutes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
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</table>

**Column 4**

**Code 1: Exceeds Expectations**  **Code 2: Meets Expectations**  **Code 3: Below Expectations**  **Code 4: Needs Improvement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
<th>Column 3</th>
<th>Column 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Computers were available and used to engage students in lesson-related activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Independent activities, research assignments, station/center/computer tasks, were available (and aligned to the lesson objective) for students if they completed assignments before other students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reteaching activities were provided for students who need additional instruction (didn’t get it the first time)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column 1</td>
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<td>Column 3</td>
<td>Column 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Lesson was characterized by a variety of student grouping strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ The instructional activities, materials, and resources were appropriately aligned to the grade level lesson objective and/or Essential Question</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ The skills, concepts, and content that were taught, were appropriately aligned to State and local performance standards.</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Skills, concepts, and content were taught at the appropriate levels of complexity.</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Students were informed as to how well they followed directions, completed tasks, and were likely to achieve the lesson objective</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Homework and follow-up assignments were differentiated to meet the varying needs and strengths of the students</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>◆ A review of the lesson objective, feedback regarding students’ understanding of what was taught, and a preview of the next lesson is provided through lesson closure</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Connections were presented within and across content areas by the teacher and students</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Teacher related the new learning to application in real-life situations</td>
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<td>PD 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ A well managed learning environment fostered equity, diversity, and fairness that resulted in students trusting and cooperating with each other</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Teacher assessed (formally and informally) students’ level of understanding during the lesson</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Students used a variety of resources, materials (print and non-print), and manipulatives</td>
<td></td>
<td>PD 1</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H (continued)


SEVEN IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

*Use the recorded comments in Column 4 to assist in responding to these questions.*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>What was the lesson’s objective or <em>Essential Question</em>? Describe it only if it is really a lesson objective or Essential Question that clearly defined the standard being taught and what students should be able to do as a result of the lesson. (If there was none, indicate that fact.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>What did the teacher do to provide students (who needed it) with additional instructional time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Did the teacher have the students use a variety of resources? If yes, describe the resources that were used in the observed lesson. (If only a single resource was used, indicate that fact.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Did the teacher effectively close the lesson by summarizing what was taught? If yes, describe what was done. If there was no lesson closure, indicate that fact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Did the teacher differentiate instruction based on students’ needs, learning styles, and required learning time? If yes, describe the teaching strategies used by the teacher. (If there was no differentiation of instruction, indicate that fact.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>How did the teacher assess students’ level of understanding during the lesson? (If there were no formal and/or informal assessments implemented during the lesson, indicate that fact.)</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Assuming that computers were in the classroom and their use would have been appropriate for the lesson, how did the teacher use computers to engage students in lesson-related activities? (If computers were present and not used, and could have been used to enhance the lesson, indicate that fact.)</td>
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PART II: TEACHER OBSERVATION FEEDBACK FORM
(used as many pages as necessary)

School: ___________ Teacher: ___________ Grade Level: _______

Subject: ___________ Date Of Observation: _______ Date Feedback Provided: _______

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall impressions of the lesson, including commendations:</th>
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| Insert Best Practices/Expectations coded 3 or 4            |
| (Feedback for Best Practices/Expectations coded 2 is optional) |
|                                                            |
| Best Practice/Expectation Requiring Feedback:              |
|                                                            |
| Best Practice/Expectation Requiring Feedback:              |
|                                                            |
| Best Practice/Expectation Requiring Feedback:              |

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<tr>
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<td>Describe What The Teacher Must Do To Perform At Higher Levels</td>
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Appendix H (continued)

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<tr>
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**Best Practice/Expectation Requiring Feedback:**

**Suggestions For Improvement:**

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</table>

**PART III: TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM FORM**

Teacher: __________ Grade: ___ Subject: ________________ Date: _____

Principal: ___________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
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<th>Column 4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BEST PRACTICES/EXPECTATIONS</strong></td>
<td><strong>Intensity Level:</strong> Enter Code #</td>
<td><strong>Performance Dimension</strong></td>
<td><strong>COMMENTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher actively seeks out professional development opportunities and applies, in his/her classroom, what is learned.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>PD 5</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## BEST PRACTICES/EXPECTATIONS

| Teacher consistently analyzes the effectiveness of what he/she does, and when appropriate, adjusts his/her instructional practices. |
| Column 1 |
| | Column 2 |
| | Column 3 |
| | Column 4 |
| | **COMMENTS** |
| **Intensity Level:** Enter Code # | **Performance Dimension** |
|  | **PD 5** |
| Teacher is aware of and uses appropriate theory and practices from child and/or adolescent research. | **PD 5** |
| Teacher represented the high behavioral standards as defined by APS guidelines and practices, including attendance, dress, starting class on time, etc. | **PD 6** |
| Teacher communicates to others (students, teachers, parents) clearly and has a sound command of the English language | **PD 6** |
| Teacher (when appropriate) links students to other service providers (e.g., health clinics, counselors, mentors, etc.) | **PD 6** |
| Teacher keeps parents abreast of student performance and how they can reinforce at home what is taught in school. | **PD 6** |
APPENDIX I

Study Participants’ Responses

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THE REFORM MODEL SUCCESS FOR ALL ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN READING

What follows are the teacher interview questions that will be utilized in my study. I would like to point out that no one is aware of who are the actual participants in the study. In keeping with APS I must uphold the confidentiality of all study participants. Therefore, the study will utilize pseudonyms to represent each study participant. Please try to answer all questions in a complete manner as to allow me the opportunity to make the most of your response to each question. I am asking that you submit your interview responses back to me November 26, 2008 as I am on a tight schedule trying to finalize the study findings.

Q1. Has the staff development that you have experienced related to the Success for All program been beneficial in terms of helping students increase their student achievement in reading?

   Personally, because of the greater focus on student development, the staff development that I have received has not been beneficial in helping students increase their achievement in Reading.

Q2. What do you think about the scripted lesson approach utilized in Success for All when compared to instructional methods that you have previously taught?

   I don’t believe that the scripted lesson approach gives us as teachers the opportunity to be as creative. With the time restraints, and having to do certain elements EXACTLY how the program says, after a while, makes it uninteresting for both student and teacher; therefore the students don’t learn. Not only that, although we may be told that we can “spice up” a lesson or an area for it to fit our class, there is only so much you can do without losing the fidelity of the program.

Q3. Do you think that the Success for All observations and evaluations you have received have been beneficial in terms of helping you to improve your instructional delivery? Why or why not?
The observations and evaluations are somewhat beneficial. The only thing that I gain from the observations and evaluations is what I did or did not do. It doesn’t help to improve my delivery because normally, we are told what to do. But we aren’t given the opportunity to practice on one another to make sure that we are all on one accord as teachers to improve our instruction.

Q4. How do you think that the use of cooperative learning in the Success for All reform model has been beneficial to student academic success? Explain.

Cooperative Learning is important in student success. It teaches the students how to work with one another, fostering a sense of teamwork, and it develops leadership skills.

Q5. Based on your overall teaching experience do you think that the Success for All method of instruction has caused students to be more engaged in their learning process, perhaps leading to further academic success than in the past?

While we have witnessed a significant upswing of students’ engagement in the learning process, in my opinion, we still have not seen a great amount of academic success as a result. Honestly, I’m not sure if it’s because more time is needed before we can adequately measure our success, or if it is because the program is not an appropriate fit for our students.

* * *

Q1. Has the staff development that you have experienced related to the Success for All program been beneficial in terms of helping students increase their student achievement in reading?

At times, maybe, but overall I believe that SFA teaches students to simply pass the test and not excel or become stronger readers.

Q2. What do you think about the scripted lesson approach utilized in Success for All when compared to instructional methods that you have previously taught?

I believe it takes accountability away from the teachers and makes teachers feel incompetent and unvalued.

Q3. Do you think that the Success for All observations and evaluations you have received have been beneficial in terms of helping you to improve your instructional delivery? Why or why not?
Appendix I (continued)

Yes, but I feel that there are still concerns about the program as it relates to moving students to become better readers. There are still instructional gaps in the layout of the program that cannot be changed by the evaluation.

Q4. How do you think that the use of cooperative learning in the Success for All reform models has been beneficial to student academic success? Explain.

*It forces students to work with others and it causes them to encourage each other so that all students achieve.*

Q5. Based on your overall teaching experience do you think that the Success for All method of instruction has caused students to be more engaged in their learning process, perhaps leading to further academic success then in the past?

*No, I believe it has caused them to become robots simply completing a routine.*

* * * *

Q1. Has the staff development that you have experienced related to the Success for All program been beneficial in terms of helping students increase their student achievement in reading?

*The staff development related to SFA has been beneficial in terms of helping students increase their student achievement in reading. From the staff development teachers are able to share ideas and strategies that they are using in the classroom to increase student achievement in reading. Staff development also allows the SFA facilitator to share new strategies that are research based that will be implemented throughout the reading program.*

Q2. What do you think about the scripted lesson approach utilized in Success for All when compared to instructional methods that you have previously taught?

*The scripted lesson approach utilized in SFA is a good approach for teachers to teach reading because it provides a benchmark on how to effectively use their time during reading, and it is also flexible enough to allow the teacher to have those teachable moments. The SFA program helps teachers keep up with the pacing of instruction; this helps with the flow of the lesson, not allowing a lot of down time in the classroom. Even though SFA is scripted, the program does provide flexibility throughout the lesson. Each component of SFA has areas where the teacher can differentiate the lesson to fit the students in the classroom. For example, one component of SFA is building background. This allows the student’s time to remember what they read previously. During this time, the teacher has the*
Appendix I (continued)

flexibility of using different strategies for students to retell the story such as: acting it out, using a graphic organizer, expressing what happen verbally, and etc.

Q3. Do you think that the Success for All observations and evaluations you have received have been beneficial in terms of helping you to improve your instructional delivery? Why or why not?

Yes, I believe the evaluations that I received have been beneficial in terms of helping improve instruction delivery. The reason why I said yes, the evaluations are beneficial because it gives the teacher feedback on how effectively they are utilizing the program and how they can improve certain aspects of it. This gives the teacher knowledge on what they are doing well and also sets a goal to improve instructional delivery.

Q4. How do you think that the use of cooperative learning in the Success for All reform model has been beneficial to student academic success? Explain.

The use of cooperative learning in the Success for All program is beneficial to student academic success because it allows students to share ideas with one another. It also changes the dynamics of the classroom by allowing it to be student centered not teacher centered. Cooperative learning is a great tool to use throughout all subjects allowing the teacher to assess student’s knowledge of content by listening and observing their conversations. It allows for every student voice to be heard through the use of strategies such as: think pair and share, number heads and partner reading and team talk discussion.

Q5. Based on your overall teaching experience do you think that the Success for All method of instruction has caused students to be more engaged in their learning process, perhaps leading to further academic success then in the past?

Yes, I believe the SFA method of instructions has caused students to be more engaged in their learning process, because it presents to them different strategies they can incorporate throughout all subjects. Students are placed in classroom according to their reading level. This help students that have a lower reading level to strive on improving their reading score and students that are on a higher reading level to continue the learning process with students on their level are above.

***

* * *
Q1. Has the staff development that you have experienced related to the Success for All program been beneficial in terms of helping students increase their student achievement in reading?

No, I did not find the staff development helpful for me to increase student achievement for all students. It was helpful in terms of me improving my implementation of the scripted program, and as a result my advance students' skills were reinforced not increased.

Q2. What do you think about the scripted lesson approach utilized in Success for All when compared to instructional methods that you have previously taught?

I am not a fan of the Success for All reading program. I do not find it beneficial for students in the second, and fourth or fifth grade to be in an instructional setting together exclusively because they read on the same level. SFA also lacks room in the scripted lesson for reteaching and differentiation of instruction. I think a scripted program is help for new teachers, however committed and veteran teachers should be provided with autonomy of the classroom.

Q3. Do you think that the Success for All observations and evaluations you have received have been beneficial in terms of helping you to improve your instructional delivery? Why or why not?

I have not found that the observations and evaluations beneficial in helping me improve instructional delivery partly because the feedback has been minimal. The staff development has been helpful in increasing my understanding of how the program is to be implemented.

Q4. How do you think that the use of cooperative learning in the Success for All reform model has been beneficial to student academic success? Explain.

Cooperative learning is a great instructional strategy and is one of the positive aspects of the reading program. I see the benefits of students reading with each other to practice their fluency. Students are also able to work with each other to answer reading comprehension questions which also allow students to have meaningful discussions.

Q5. Based on your overall teaching experience do you think that the Success for All method of instruction has caused students to be more engaged in their learning process, perhaps leading to further academic success then in the past?
Appendix I (continued)

No, I definitely feel that the students are less engaged. The monotony of the program causes students to become bored and doodle on their work folder. I can also by tell their joyful responses to not having SFA.

***

Q1. Has the staff development that you have experienced related to the Success for All Program been beneficial in terms of helping students increase their student achievement in reading?

I don't believe that the staff development that I have received related to Success for All Program has been beneficial for helping students increase their student achievement, because I really haven't received any meaningful staff development. I have attended workshops and observed other teachers at work, however not too much staff development.

Q2. What do you think about the scripted lesson approach utilized in Success for All when compared to instructional methods that you have previously taught?

Considering the fact that I been in a scripted lesson approach since my first year of teaching I can not compare it to a previous method. With that said I will say this, compared to other subjects that are not scripted I feel that there is more flexibility to present skills in non scripted lesson approach. However I feel scripted model are useful to new and first time teachers as a reference/guide to build upon.

Q3. Do you think that the Success for All observations and evaluations you have received have been beneficial in terms of helping you to improve your instructional delivery? Why or why not?

Early in my career while I was still trying to learn and grasp the program the observation and evaluation were very beneficial. However now that I am a veteran teacher and understand teaching and how to critique and evaluate myself, I feel the observations and evaluations are excessive. I don't see how a ten minute window in my instruction is going to concretely determine how well I deliver material on a constant basis.

Q4. How do you think that the use of cooperative learning in the Success for All reform model has been beneficial to student academic success? Explain.

I feel cooperative learning is very beneficial to student success not just academically but in all aspects of school. In a world were people must
Appendix I (continued)

be cooperative to gain advancement in life, learning to work together and respect other opinions and ideas is essential.

Q5. Based on your overall teaching experience do you think that the Success for All method of instruction has caused students to be more engaged in their learning process, perhaps leading to further academic success then in the past?

My experience with SFA leads me to believe the brighter or exceeding students in SFA tend to be more engaged in their learning process, and further academic success. Now I don't know if that is a result of SFA, or the fact that they are already good students.

I feel SFA is a fair method to instruction (which is relative to any given situation), I think it can be manipulated to increase success while being implemented, but I also feel it burns students out and tends to turn them off after an extended amount of time. I feel students would benefit more if the program was reduce in daily allotted time as well as a biweekly day off.
APPENDIX J

Study Participants’ Lesson Observation Teacher Feedback Forms

LESSON OBSERVATION TEACHER FEEDBACK FORM

School: Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School

Teacher: ___________________________ Grade Level: _______ Subject: SFA

Number of Students: 20 Date Of Observation: 12/5/2008

Date Feedback Provided: 12/8/2008 Observer: Ms. Maxwell

Overall impressions of the lesson, including commendations: The classroom environment was conducive to learning. Students were very attentive as you transitioned through the lesson at a smooth pace. **Objective**: By the end of the lesson cycle TSWAB identify the main ideas in narrative text with 95% accuracy, **Essential Question**: Would you describe Sadako as brave? Why or why not? **Story Title**: Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes, and **School-wide Strategy**: Clarification. **Objective**: By the end of the day the students will write summaries of Sadako and the thousand Paper Cranes with 90% accuracy.

**Essential Question**: Pretend that you are Sadako. How do you feel? Do you feel scared? Do you want to be brave?

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<tr>
<th>Insert Best Practices/Expectations Coded 3 or 4</th>
<th>Suggestions For Improvement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teacher demonstrated his/her knowledge of the subject matter and communicated it to all students</td>
<td><strong>Suggestions For Improvement:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Continue to relate the content to a real life situation in an accurate manner. This was evident in the writing assignment when you asked student to pretend that they were the main character in the story and write how they felt.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Continue to Organize and focus curriculum on essential information, understandings, and skills based on the standards. You did an excellent job when you asked the students to restate the objective before beginning to refocus on characterization. During the lesson if was evident that the students understood characterization.</td>
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### Appendix J (continued)

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<th>Insert <em>Best Practices/Expectations</em> Coded 3 or 4</th>
<th>Suggestions For Improvement</th>
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| 2. Classroom and group discussions occurred at appropriate times during the lesson | **Suggestions For Improvement:**
- Continue to organize classroom and classroom management to support group discussions, group transitions, etc.
- Continue to use management mechanisms such as: go-around cup, classroom managers, count off for groups, predetermined groups, color coding, centers, to group students and manage time.
- Establish meaningful tasks for classroom and group discussions. Your questioning was very well planned out i.e., Why do you think the character lied about the number of shoes? What strategies or text clues did the author utilize to tell us that the character lied. |
| 3. Students were required to respond to questions at levels of thinking beyond simple recall | **Suggestions For Improvement:**
- Continue to use questions to help students to connect important concepts, including previous learning. For example, you asked why did the girls tease Wanda? In order for students to answer this questions they were required to summarize, recall story details, and make connections to story events.
- Continue to ask questions in an evenly paced, easily identifiable order. Students might be confused by random, rapid-fire questions. Use questions to signal a change of topic or direction in the lesson. This practice was evident throughout your lesson as you transitioned smoothly from one component to another.
- Continue to use vocabulary students understand. (Or be sure to explain new vocabulary and check for understanding) Students cannot respond well to a question with unfamiliar terms. The vocabulary review ensured that as the students examined the words the students were able to utilize a set of strategies to obtain meaning. The students were asked to look at the base word, define the word, identify the part of speech of the word, and then utilize the word in a sentence. |
| 4. Teacher assessed (formally and informally) students’ level of understanding during the lesson | **Suggestions For Improvement:**
- Continue to ask questions (Bloom’s Taxonomy) to assess student learning (see question section for more detail).
- Add to your characterization map as the story proceeds this would allow students to reconfirm the characters traits, or understand that characters/ people can change over time. |
Appendix J (continued)

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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Describe What The Teacher Must Do To Perform At Higher Levels</td>
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<td>Suggestions For Improvement:</td>
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LESSON OBSERVATION TEACHER FEEDBACK FORM

School: Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School

Teacher: ___________________________ Grade Level: _______ Subject: SFA

Number of Students: 18 Date of Observation: 12/5/2008

Date Feedback Provided: 12/9/2008 Observer: Ms. Maxwell

Overall impressions of the lesson, including commendations: The classroom was conducive to learning. Students were attentive those who decided to get off task where quickly reminded of the lesson objectives by you in an appropriate manner. **Objective**: By the end of the lesson cycle t.s.w.b.a.t. recognize when they don’t understand word pronunciations or meanings with 95% accuracy.

**Essential Question**: What does Fred suggest they do to find THE BOOK? Does Sam think it will work?

**Objective**: By the end of the lesson cycle t.s.w.b.a.t. write a time travel story, the story will need a beginning, where characters, destination, and method of time travel are introduced. The story also will need a middle, where the method of time travel is introduced. The stories also will need middle, where the characters try to get home, and an end where the characters finally make it home. This week, the student will plan their stories and begin writing their first draft with 85% accuracy.

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1. Teacher reviewed students’ understanding of a previous lesson to make connections to current instruction</td>
<td>Suggestions For Improvement:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Continue to ask students to summarize orally the previous lesson. I could tell form the questions stated during the lesson cycle that you had spend a lot of time on building background knowledge utilizing information beyond the text. I believe the children were very interested because you were enthusiastic about the topic as you taught.</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Continue to pose a thought-provoking question to bring out the learning from the previous lesson. You asked, “Do you think there is treasure? Why?” Students were so engrossed by trying to gather information to answer the why that the lesson flowed very smoothly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Continue to present an application/ scenario that requires understanding of previously taught material for a response. Again this point goes back to the fact that you did a tremendous job on building background knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insert Best Practices/Expectations Coded 3 or 4</td>
<td>Suggestions For Improvement</td>
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| **2. The lesson objective and/or Essential Question were aligned to the grade level standard and effectively communicated to all students** | **Suggestions For Improvement:**  
- Continue to begin, teaching, and close reviewing/restating/connecting the grade level standard. The standard was reviewed throughout the lesson. This was clearly a upper grade level class reading below grade level you handled guided the students through drawing out the information in the text and making connections in the ext at an extremely high level.  
- Continue to make connections to the standards throughout the lesson by referencing throughout the learning. To reinforce what students should know and be able to do.  
- Continue to have the students record standards learned each day for self-monitoring of their own standards mastery. |
| **3. Teacher demonstrated his/her knowledge of the subject matter and communicated it to all students** | **Suggestions For Improvement:**  
- Continue to relate the content to a real life situation in an accurate manner. You did an excellent job moving from the test to factual information related to the topic of Egypt. You also discussed the religious beliefs of the time and the religious beliefs currently practiced. This forced the children to think and make real life connections throughout the lesson.  
- Continue to use correct content, jargon, and information related to the subject matter. If uncertain, verify information prior to lesson using resources including colleagues, texts, research, etc.  
- Continue to teach information in multiple ways to demonstrate understanding of subject matter to support student leaning styles. The graphic organizers utilized allowed the students to reference information that may have been covered at an early time. This is a strategy students can carry with them into other subject areas. |
| **4. Classroom and group discussions occurred at appropriate times during the lesson** | **Suggestions For Improvement:**  
- Continue to plan lesson to include a variety of student grouping to support high levels of student learning with a focused task. |
### Suggestions For Improvement

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<td>- Continue to ask questions in an evenly paced, easily identifiable order. Students might be confused by random, rapid-fire questions. Use questions to signal a change of topic or direction in the lesson. Throughout the lesson you pointed out the clues to understanding the way in which the text was organized. You discussed the main heading and subheadings of the text and led the students in a discussion on how this information is useful.</td>
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<td>- Continue to use questions to help students give you feedback. (How does this learning help you….? Which part was most challenging and why?)</td>
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<td>- Continue to plan questions at high level of complexity (upper levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy). Consider instructional goals and emphasize questions that reinforce them. The questions asked should help students see what concepts and ideas are important.</td>
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LESSON OBSERVATION TEACHER FEEDBACK FORM

School: Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School

Teacher: __________________________ Grade Level: ______ Subject: SFA

Number of Students: 15 Date Of Observation: 12/9/2008

Date Feedback Provided: 12/11/2008 Observer: Ms. Maxwell

Overall impressions of the lesson, including commendations: Overall the classroom environment was very orderly and conducive to learning. It was clear that you had well established boundaries and routines. You facilitated the lesson objectives and requirements in a clear, concise manner. What follows is the active instruction and Adventures in writing objectives that were posted. Objective: By the end of this lesson students will identify the main idea by using section headings to predict the important information in expository texts with 100% accuracy. Essential Question: Do you think there was enough food for everyone after the earthquake? Support your answer. Objective: By the end of this lesson, students will write a newspaper article with 100% accuracy. Essential Question: Do you think there was enough food for everyone after the earthquake? Support your answer. Recommended suggestions:

- Your inside bulletin board next to computers should have teacher commentary that is specific to the task/standard i.e., **You did an excellent job with your use of subject verb agreement. I can see from your writing that you are improving in this area.**

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1. All material, supplies, and equipment were ready prior to the beginning of the lesson

Suggestions For Improvement:
- Continue to demonstrate effective lesson planning, include materials and equipment needed for the lesson in the plan. Prior to starting the lesson assemble all materials and have them ready to use for the lesson. While in your room I observed you passing out the information necessary for the next story. You did this in such a smooth manner I could tell the students are use to responding to several task at one time. This is a good means of utilizing “bell to bell” instruction.
- Continue to prepare materials for lesson and have them ready for the next day. Materials are out and ready, instructions on board, room arrangement ready, etc.
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</tr>
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</table>
| 2. Teacher demonstrated his/her knowledge of the subject matter and communicated it to all students | **Suggestions For Improvement:**  
- Continue to use correct content, jargon, and information related to the subject matter. If uncertain, verify information prior to lesson using resources including colleagues, texts, research, etc. You did an excellent demonstration of this when you explained that a headline should allow the reader to make a prediction about the text, and ketch the reader’s attention.  
- Continue to teach information in multiple ways to demonstrate understanding of subject matter to support student leaning styles. |
| 3. The teacher modeled what students were to know and be able to do and applied what was taught to *real-life* situations | **Suggestions For Improvement:**  
- Continue to plan for modeling the lesson in a real life context by planning lesson working up through Bloom’s Taxonomy. The one student that I did see did a great job with his oral book review. He was able to point out the important facts as well as recall information in a sequential manner. This demonstrated that the student had internalized the material read. |
| 4. Students were provided with opportunities to be group leaders, facilitators, decision leaders, peer tutors, and peer leaders | **Suggestions For Improvement:**  
- Continue to utilize classroom managers/roles for students. Standardize roles for students and allow flexibility for students to perform that role. During my visit group leaders were instructed to assist the members of their group with preparing to move to the next activity. |
| 5. | **Suggestions For Improvement:** |
LESSON OBSERVATION TEACHER FEEDBACK FORM

School: Urban Southwest Atlanta Elementary School

Teacher: ______________________ Grade Level: _____ Subject: SFA

Number of Students: 17 Date of Observation: 12/5/2008

Date Feedback Provided: 12/9/2008 Observer: Ms. Maxwell

Overall impressions of the lesson, including commendations: Classroom learning environment was orderly. Students were seated and attentive to the teacher's directives. Objective: By the end of the lesson cycle TSWAB evaluate cause and effect connections between the book's characters and their actions with 95% accuracy. Essential Question: So now we know that the narrator, Mrs. Frankweiler, is a wealthy art collector. Didn't she say earlier that she does not like to donate things? What do you think caused Mrs. Frankweiler to donate the angel statue to the museum? Objective: By the end of the week the students will draft, edit, and produce a persuasive letter trying to convince someone to do something with 90% accuracy.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Insert Best Practices/Expectations Coded 3 or 4</th>
<th>Suggestions For Improvement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. All material, supplies, and equipment were ready prior to the beginning of the lesson</td>
<td>Suggestions For Improvement:</td>
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<td>▪ Continue to ensure that during your lesson planning, include materials and equipment needed for the lesson in the plan. Prior to starting the lesson assemble all materials and have them ready to use for the lesson. This was very evident as you moved from one component to another you did not have to stop to look for materials or equipment.</td>
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<td>2. Teacher reviewed students' understanding of a previous lesson to make connections to current instruction</td>
<td>Suggestions For Improvement:</td>
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<td>▪ Continue to ask students to summarize orally the previous lesson.</td>
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<td>▪ Continue to pose a thought-provoking question to bring out the learning from the previous lesson. You allowed the students to preview the questions before reading the selected section of the text. By doing this you allowed students to make connections to what was previously read, as well as make predictions about the information that would be covered in the text on today.</td>
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<td>▪ Continue to present an application/ scenario that required understanding of previously taught material for a response.</td>
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### Appendix J (continued)

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<th>Insert Best Practices/Expectations Coded 3 or 4</th>
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| **3. Classroom and group discussions occurred at appropriate times during the lesson** | **Suggestions For Improvement:**  
  - Continue to organize classroom and classroom management to support group discussions, group transitions, etc.  
  - Continue the practice of developing open-ended questions, prompts, and scenarios to facilitate discussions, with time boundaries. Before reading you had the students to review the purposes for reading and to reflect on each, then to give example of each type. This was a good way of building the purpose for reading for this section on the text. |
| **4. Questions went beyond simple recall and required student to think, synthesize, evaluate, and conclude** | **Suggestions For Improvement:**  
  - Continue the practice of prior to responding; discuss what the question is asking. Teach student to ask clarifying questions.  
  - Continue to encourage students to defend/justify their response.  
  - Place more emphasis on connect learning to a real life application of learning. |
| **5.** | **Suggestions For Improvement:** |

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**Notes:**
- Describe What The Teacher Must Do To Perform At Higher Levels.
REFERENCES


