
The **Success for All** Reading Program
&
Scientifically Based Reading Research

Success for All is the most extensively and rigorously evaluated core-reading program in existence. Forty-seven experimental-control comparison studies have evaluated the reading program in grades K-3. Of these, 30 were done by third parties (see Borman et al., 2003). Many of these studies have been published in the most selective journals in education. Independent reviews have consistently placed Success for All among the most rigorously and successfully evaluated programs. These include reviews by the American Institutes of Research (Herman, 1999), The Thomas Fordham Foundation (Traub, 1999), the Milken Family Foundation (Schacter, 1999), Pearson & Stahl (2002), and Borman et al. (2003). Many programs, including Success for All, incorporate the five elements derived from the Nation Reading Panel (2000) review, but only Success for All and one other reading program, Direct Instruction, have been subjected to replicated, rigorous experimental studies and found to be successful in comparison to control groups.

A description of research on Success for All according to the federal definition of scientifically based research follows.

►1. Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment, according to the following indicators:

a. A solid theoretical or research foundation

Research on the Success for All reading program is grounded in the same theory and research that formed the basis of the National Reading Panel (2000), and earlier reviews by Adams (1990) and the National Research Council (Snow et al., 1998), as well as theory and research on cooperative learning (Slavin, Hurley, & Chamberlain, 2003), Talent Development theory (Boykin, 1996), coaching (Joyce, Calhoun, & Hopkins, 1999) and many others.

b. Careful design to avoid biased findings and unwarranted claims of effectiveness

In each of the 47 experimental-control studies of Success for All reading, researchers have designated schools to use Success for All and others that are carefully matched in prior achievement, demographics, location, and other factors. The control schools continue with their traditional reading methods or alternative innovations. The children have been pretested in kindergarten and first grade, and then followed for from one to eight years. Posttesting has taken place each spring, consisting of individually-administered tests (e.g., Woodcock, Durrell), group administered standardized tests (e.g., Gates McGinnitie), state assessments (e.g., Texas Assessment of Academic Skills), or combinations of these. Outcomes have then been compared using analyses of covariance (ANCOVA) or equivalent methods. The use of such well-matched longitudinal studies with treatment groups specified in advance provides a high level of confidence that the outcomes can be accepted as valid.

c. Delineation of how the research was conducted, by whom it was conducted, and on whom it was conducted

In each of the 47 studies, detailed reports are available, either as journal articles or as technical reports. These specify in detail how and by whom the research was carried out, and who the subjects were.

►2. Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn, according to the following indicators:

a. Design to minimize alternate explanations for observed effects

The 47 experimental-control studies, by comparing schools using Success for All to well-matched control schools, minimize the chance that observed effects might be due to other factors. For example, control groups would experience any changes due to history or maturation that the experimental groups experience. With careful matching, the only important difference between experimental and control groups is the treatment itself.

b. Consistency of observed effects with the overall conclusions and claims of effectiveness

In each of the studies of Success for All, outcomes have been completely reported, so that conclusions are based on data the reader can confirm.

c. Convincing documentation that the observed results were the result of the intervention

The use of well-matched, longitudinal, experimental-control comparisons makes it highly likely that observed results were due to the treatment and not to extraneous factors.

d. Description of the population studied by age, demography, cognitive, and academic behavioral characteristics

Each of the studies of Success for All extensively describes the characteristics of the populations involved.

e. Description of the population to whom the findings can be generalized

Because the populations in each study are described in detail, it is clear to whom the findings should generalize. The studies have involved urban, rural, and suburban locations in all parts of the U.S., African American, Hispanic, White, Native American, and Asian American students, and school settings of many kinds. While there is little research in non-Title I schools, there is a strong basis for generalizing outcomes of Success for All to all Title I schools.

f. Full description of the outcome measures

Outcome measures are well known, widely accepted measures of reading, and are fully described in each study.

13. Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across multiple measurements and observations, according to the following indicators:

- a. **Data collected by multiple investigators in numerous locations**
Across the 47 studies, more than 50 different investigators have been involved in locations throughout the U.S. (see Slavin & Madden, 2000).
- b. **Procedures in place to minimize researcher bias**
The use of objective measures and rigorous experimental designs reduces possibilities for researcher bias. The fact that many researchers in many locations have carried out the studies means that no one bias is likely.
- c. **Documentation that results in consistency and continuity**
Each study of Success for All is adequately documented to ensure consistency and continuity.
- d. **Detailed description of study interventions that allow for replicability**
An entire book (Slavin & Madden, 2001) describes the Success for All program and research in great detail, facilitating replication. Extensive teacher's manuals, videos, and other supports also aid replication. Each study also describes the program as implemented in that particular case.
- e. **Explanation of how instructional fidelity was ensured and assessed**
Most studies of Success for All have described and used measures of quality of implementation. Slavin & Madden (2001) describe strategies used in all Success for All schools to ensure high-quality implementations.

14. Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review, according to the following indicators:

a. Documentation of careful review by unbiased persons who were not part of the research study

Many of the studies of Success for All have been published in peer-reviewed journals, including the *American Educational Research Journal*, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *Elementary School Journal*, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, and *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*. In each case, impartial, anonymous reviewers unaffiliated with the project have carried out reviews of the research and recommended publication. As noted earlier, several independent reviewers of research have also supported the quality and impact of the program's research.

b. Documentation that the findings have been subjected to external scrutiny and verification

See 4A above.

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