

During the initial phases of beginning program implementation a Success for All trainer comes to the school or district and provides an intensive three day training in the reading curriculum teachers will be using. About six weeks into the school year this trainer will also come to the individual school sites and provide feedback and additional training to the teachers. This type of visit occurs two times a year during the initial phases of implementation. The facilitator at the school sites also provides feedback and a small amount of training for staff as they continue to improve their teaching and implementation techniques. Staff meetings are focused around Success for All at least once a month. However after a three-year trial period schools are asked to re-vote on the program. It is at this point that schools can elect to continue to use the program. Of course, they can drop the program sooner if they like, but after three years Success for All formally asks all schools about their choice to continue the implementation process.

Curriculum Evaluation

The evaluation of the Success for All curriculum is very mixed. In all honesty it was a challenge to find authentic evaluation that was not conducted by the founders Slavin or Madden. Most of the external and internal reviews have Slavin's name connected to them in some way. Large portions of the negative feedback on the program centered on this phenomenon. The overall method that Success for All has used in creating evaluation is by pairing SFA schools with a control school in the same area. This control school is selected because it has the same demographics and other supporting statistics. Over time SFA uses the growth differences as a way of evaluating the program model and its effectiveness (Research and Results of the SFA Program Model, 2006).

Internal Reviews

According to the results posted on the SFA website, schools who use the SFA curriculum show an effect change of positive 47. Students in SFA schools were tested using a variety of non-SFA standardized reading assessments and 3.9 percent of the student population were not reading at grade level. This was in comparison to the control group where 11.7% of students were not reading at grade level at the time of the assessment. In all of the internal reviews, the level of implementation and the years of implementation are the critical components to the success of the program within individual schools. In schools that complete full implementation (quality implementation using the best practices, etc. prescribed by SFA) there was an effect size change of 47. In a school that utilizes a medium level of implementation the effect size change was 37. Finally the effect size change of the schools that implement at a small level of implementation was only 13. Overall the results across the states using the SFA curriculum show improvement in reading performance. However, significant effects were not seen at every grade level. These results were however consistent in the positive impact of the program model long term.

External Reviews

The external reviews of the Success for All program are less glowing obviously than those done internally. The main complaint about the program evaluation is the lack of authenticity. The main critique is that the assessment process that is used to compare the SFA schools with the control schools is biased because it is the SFA created assessment that is used. The SFA schools use the SFA created assessment as evidence for the national program. Another critique of the program model is that internal

evaluators are used during the program creation and development. Very little input has been added from external evaluators. The dilemma surrounding this critique is that internal evaluators, like SFA creators Slavin and Madden, are going to be prone to make decisions that favor their own program model.

My Own Critique of Success for All

*Who is writing the critiques?
What is their research background?*

Does the curriculum help learners acquire the problem solving they will need now and in the future?

I felt that the curriculum is not necessarily the tool that provides the outright skill base necessary for success now and in the future. The materials that the students use are not the missing links that provide for success. Rather, it is the methodological approach to learning that push students to succeed and improve academically. The cooperative learning is a piece to this puzzle, however ultimately it is the nature that students are held accountable for their improvement that holds the entire puzzle together. In a typical classroom, students are not assessed enough to know when they are not achieving. In the SFA structure the students are assessed often. If they seem to not be showing signs of improvement in their reading they receive one-on-one tutoring and a family support intervention. The combination of all of these factors make it possible for students to acquire the skills they will need both to finish their schooling, but also as they enter the careers of their future.

*good insight about the cooperation
But what about "problem solving"?*
Do some of the planned goals relate to the society or the community within which the curriculum is being implemented? >??

The goals presented within the SFA curriculum are that every child can and will learn to read at grade level by the third grade. This is the goal for all children, and there are no exceptions. Generally the SFA curriculum is implemented in lower