Success for All: A Case Study of a Comprehensive Reform Model's Effect on an Urban Elementary School

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Success for All:

A Case Study of a Comprehensive Reform Model’s

Effect on an Urban Elementary School

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA

By

Lynette K. Scott

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This dissertation for the Education Doctorate degree by

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March 28, 2017
Final Approval Date
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Herman and Carrie Bannister, who taught me the value of faith, that all things are possible.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the love, support and opportunities my parents, Herman and Carrie Bannister, gave me throughout my life. They always told me how proud they were of me; I only wish they were here to accept my dedication of this work to them. To my brother Greg, and his family, Laura, Joshua, and Chantelle, and my mother---in---law Jeannine Scott, thank you for your encouragement and support. I wish to thank my friends Rhonda, Rachel, Marletta, and Lois who never gave up hope. To Peggy Sullivan, Mae Schunk, Capetra Parker, and Dr. DeLariah Jones: thanks for assistance with writing, editing, and resources, and for your constant words of encouragement. Thanks also to all the teachers, teacher assistants, parents and students who previously attended Roosevelt Elementary: without you this study could not have been possible. To my current administrator, Dr. Delores Henderson: thank you, thank you, and thank you for your constant support, push and encouragement to “get it done.” To Dr. Trudi Taylor, we have come full circle, thank you, thank you. To my committee members, Dr. Sharon Radd and Dr. Jeanne Mortinson: thank you for not giving up on me and for helping me realize my dream. To Dr. Bob Brown, my chair: we have come a long way and it could not have been done without your persistence and perseverance. Finally and especially to my loving husband John: thank you for your constant encouragement, patience, patience, patience and never ending love.
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ABSTRACT

Over the past several decades, many reform models have been employed in school settings that attempt to improve student academic achievement. The results of the program implementation are often reported in a strictly quantitative manner, as higher or lower standardized test scores. This research project focused on one such reform model’s implementation, but studied the results in a broader, more qualitative context, examining the impact of the program on the larger school community — administrators, teachers, parents, and students, as well as on quantitatively measureable student outcomes, test scores.

The case study approach, a widely accepted qualitative research methodology, was selected as the most effective means of analyzing the effects of the program for various stakeholders. The program researched was the Success for All reading program implemented at an urban public school, Roosevelt Elementary, in St. Paul, Minnesota. Data analyzed included audio-taped interviews; observations of subjects; school district information; Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) and Success for All Foundation records. All participation in the study was voluntary.

Findings were developed relating to themes of trust, standardization of learning, creativity/flexibility, success/pride, accountability, resistance, and abandonment. Implications for educational leadership and both general and targeted recommendations were identified.
PREFACE

The journey for this study has been arduous and challenging. The coursework with the cohort had been new and exciting, resulting in healthy, thought-provoking, lively discussions. Each course had a purpose that allowed me to reflect on my learning and look at issues through a critical lens. After nearly completing the coursework, I felt fully prepared for the next step, the “dissertation.” My topic was chosen, the research methodology was determined, and my committee members were assembled.

But “life happened” in ways I could not have predicted. There was a seesaw effect that appeared every August for roughly five years: shortly before I was to return for a new academic school year, I would have a minor or major health issue. During this time, I had good intentions and proceeded with intent. I carefully organized my committee and thoughtfully navigated the last coursework to be completed. After taking a doctoral elective course with Dr. Sue Huber, I knew she would be an excellent choice as my chair. I could work with her to complete my dissertation and I valued her professionalism. At that time, Dr. Huber was the Dean of the College of Education, Leadership and Counseling. Shortly after beginning my work with her, however, she was appointed Interim Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer at St. Thomas and was no longer able to serve as Committee Chair.

I reassessed the situation and choose Dr. Bruce Kramer as my Chair. We had a good student/professor relationship and a mutual respect for each other. He was preparing to take a sabbatical and I was preparing the groundwork for my study.
Upon his return from sabbatical, however, the University of St. Thomas had other plans for Dr. Kramer. He was appointed Interim Dean of the College of Education, Leadership and Counseling and would not be able to continue as my Chair due to the responsibilities of his new position.

Disappointed and devastated, I was determined to achieve my goal. I reached out to Dr. Robert Brown who was retired but still deeply involved with the University. He had served as my advisor during the completion of the Collaborative Urban Educator Program (CUE) and master’s degree program. He graciously accepted the role and we began to work.

Both Dr. Brown and I have had our challenges during this time, but persevering through the obstacles in the way, we intend to be victorious in our efforts.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

My passion for advocating for students and for educational opportunity came from my personal educational experience. As an elementary school student, my peers teased me for going to the “dummy class,” “not-so-smart class” or the “special needs class.” I could read, but I had problems with comprehension. The derogatory terms made me feel unintelligent and inferior. The name-calling lowered my self-esteem and my confidence that I could become a good reader. Reading was difficult and I lacked the strategies to be successful at the task.

During my formative years of reading, I was instructed with Dick and Jane primers. The primers lacked characters who were persons of color. (Dick and Jane later added an African American family.) Instruction in reading consisted of phonics taught out of context, spelling and pronouncing sight words. I could read the words, but I had continuing difficulty understanding what I was reading. If I couldn’t understand, how was I going to learn? I put up a mental barrier regarding reading. If the content was interesting, I had no problem. However, I had to read more difficult or technical material multiple times to comprehend the content. Clarification came for me once I could discuss the topic. Over time, I learned to compensate for what I call this “self induced” disability.
As I began my work life, I had no interest in a career in education and almost had a fear of teaching. I was raised with the view that teachers knew everything. As a student in school at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary level, I looked at teachers as the knowledgeable persons who had all the answers and could provide guidance.

After several years of employment changes, my educator friends encouraged me to explore the career option of teaching. The childhood memories returned: how was I going to teach if it required the arduous task of technical reading and understanding difficult text? Particularly, how would I be able to teach reading? I feared the unknown in relation to teaching.

I reconsidered teaching, however, when my desire to excel in the business environment grew ever more challenging in the difficult economy. Teaching came at a time in my life when any other option looked desirable compared to starting over at the bottom of another organization. I applied to the University of St. Thomas Collaborative Urban Educator (CUE) program, a teacher licensure program for individuals who held a bachelor degree in an area other than education and who had extensive experience working with children. After acceptance into the program, I managed the rigorous course work, mastered lesson planning, and learned about teaching specific subjects such as math, science, and reading. The real test came when I was with the mentor teacher and the students. I gained courage and knowledge from my mentor and the confidence to teach and become a licensed educator.
Teaching proved an exciting and rewarding career change. I joined the staff at Roosevelt Elementary School in an urban school district in Minnesota. Through collaborating with master teachers, acquiring classroom management skills, and developing positive relationships with students, I became an effective classroom teacher. My biggest challenge was the instruction of reading and helping struggling readers with comprehension. I developed a passion for teaching reading to the at-risk child, who struggled as I had, but I sometimes found I had insufficient concrete strategies to meet all the needs.

As an educator, my passion for children to read was fueled by my own experience. My philosophy is that every student has the potential for success, including students who struggle with reading. My mentor suggested various reading strategies to meet the needs of the students. While my students read adequately and performed well on standardized test, there was always the need for improvement.

Roosevelt’s student population had become more diverse, with an increase of enrollment of students of color, second language learners and students who came to school with few academic skills. Minnesota at that time was also implementing new and more rigorous assessments and standards. Roosevelt’s principal realized its student population needed more than just a new basal reader. The principal desired a program that focused on reading that would be applicable to all students, including the increasing number of English Language Learners (ELL). The program needed the capabilities to integrate the Minnesota State Standards into the curriculum, and as well needed to be research based and data driven to increase student standardized test scores.
In the fall of 1997, the principal of Roosevelt Elementary began scrutinizing comprehensive reform models that had an emphasis on reading. The principal's research and the collaboration with staff and parents resulted in the implementation of the Success for All™ (Success for All) reading program at Roosevelt and at four other district elementary schools at the start of the 1998 academic school year. Staff at all five urban schools attended extensive training during opening week and throughout the first year of implementation. Each school agreed to a commitment of three years to implement the Success for All comprehensive reform model. After that three---year period, continuation of the Success for All model was at the discretion of each school. The Success for All program materials “guaranteed” measurable success within the three---year commitment.

Roosevelt’s administration, teaching staff and parent community recognized that improvement was needed with reading instruction and test scores based on school evaluations and previous assessment scores. As Success for All implementation progressed, Roosevelt established parental groups, a uniform policy, and red flag meetings to discuss academic and social concerns of students. Students were assigned a personal mentor to follow---up with academic needs, attendance, behavior, and homework support. Stakeholders in the school community were developing a strong vested interest in the success of Success for All, of Roosevelt Elementary and of its students.

The staff began teaching according to the Success for All program, utilizing prescribed strategies for instruction. The newer teachers, as I was, tended to have an easier time adjusting their teaching styles. Some of the more experienced teachers
tended to begin by using a combination of techniques they were familiar with alongside the Success for All model, and a few teachers had difficulty changing teaching styles at all.

The most rewarding experience was to observe the development of the skills of struggling readers --- watching them use strategies learned, begin more fluent reading, and increase comprehension of what they were reading. The smile on their faces and the sparkle in their eyes when they could read was the ultimate reward.

Roosevelt students reached the goal of the mission statement; “All students will be able to read at or above grade level by the end of third grade” (Roosevelt Elementary, 2004/2005). The school gained recognition from Success for All for their success with the Success for All Foundation particularly recognizing the outstanding parent involvement initiative. The urban school district commended the Roosevelt community for increased test scores.

I experienced the students’ success first hand and observed how the reform model worked at Roosevelt. In this same time frame, the school district adopted other reform initiatives including America's Choice and Scholastic Read 180. Comparing Roosevelt’s success with that of other schools that put into practice Success for All or other reform models, my experience led me to wonder why Roosevelt’s experience had been so highly successful. Each urban school followed the same guidelines for implementation and the same assurance.

Although Success for All was first implemented in 1987--88, the developer, Dr. Robert Slavin and his wife, Dr. Nancy Madden, had mainly completed studies of the Success for All program. Other researchers provided valuable information; however,
the question of how the program affected educators, administrators and parents had not been fully addressed. This led me to adopt the research question for my study regarding the experiences of Roosevelt and the Success for All program.

Statement of the Problem

Since few studies had examined the impact of the Success For All model on individuals within a reform setting, the following primary question was adopted to guide my study: how did Roosevelt’s implementation of Success for All affect its stakeholders (teachers, administrator, students, and parents)? Supporting questions to identify certain aspects of the program and clarify participant experiences included: (1) how did leadership affect implementation?, (2) how did the quality of instruction and features of the particular program affect implementation?, (3) how did the staff, individually or collectively, contribute to Roosevelt’s success?, (4) how has this model made Roosevelt a more effective school? The research design allowed me to remain open to other questions or topics relating to participants’ experiences.

Significance of the Problem

The purpose of this qualitative case study of Roosevelt Elementary is to analyze the implementation of the Success for All comprehensive school reform model, particularly related to leadership and the program’s impact on quality of instruction and student reading improvement. The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and subsequent legislation has educators seeking ways for their schools to become more effective in meeting a broad range of student needs while increasing
standardized test scores. It was hoped that a qualitative study of Roosevelt might
enhance educators’ ability to evaluate the comprehensive nature of the programs
and better understand their impact on instruction and leadership of a school. An aim
of the study was to share the experiences of one school as it implemented a
comprehensive reform model, anticipating that educators planning a similar
adoption might benefit from both the positive and difficult elements of the Roosevelt
implementation process.

Overview of the Chapters

Following the introduction to the study, Chapter One includes sections that
provide background on my educational journey, a statement of the problem,
including the research questions informing my study, the significance of the issues,
and definition of terms. Chapter Two provides a review of the literature from the
perspective of historical educational school reform, effective schools research,
related research, interpretation of experts, specific information on Success for All,
and the analytical literature. The methodology of a qualitative single case study is
presented in Chapter Three, including a rationale for the methodology, participant
selection, data collection and analysis information, interview questions, limitations
of the study, and descriptions of the setting and interviewees. Chapter Four
examines the impact of the reform process on the relationships among children,
teachers, administrators and district administration and outlines the assumptions of
administrators for teachers in reform.
Chapter Five provides a summary of key findings, implications of those findings, general recommendations for administrators and policy makers in implementing future reforms, and specific recommendations for St. Paul Public Schools. The final section includes a summary and personal closing statement.

Definition of Terms

The following terms and definitions have been adopted for this study:

**America’s Choice**: a school design school and instructional system to help low performing schools raise their performance.

**Area Learning Center (ALC)**: after school programming focused on academics

**Comprehensive School Reform (CSR)**: a broad concept referring to improving entire schools and raising student achievement using scientifically based research and effective practices

**Direct Instruction (DI)**: a general term for the explicit teaching of a skill-set using lectures or demonstrations of the material to students. Developed by Siegfried Engelmann and Wesley C. Becker.

**Diffusion of Innovations Theory**: theory developed by Everett M. Rogers (1962) related to how an idea or product gains momentum and diffuses (or spreads) through a specific population or social system.

**Mondo**: a research-based comprehensive literacy program which provides a complete, classroom package of student materials and teacher resources for Kindergarten through Grade 5.
Reader's and Writer's Workshop: a widely used method of teaching reading and writing using the workshop model. Designed to meet both whole group's needs as well as differentiating for the needs of small groups and individuals.

Scholastic Read 180: a blended instructional model that includes whole-group instruction and three small-group rotations: adaptive software, differentiated instruction, and independent reading.

Success for All: a standards-based school wide Comprehensive School Reform curricula for early childhood through middle school, developed by Dr. Robert Slavin. Includes the nonprofit organization Success for All Foundation (Success for All, 1996).

Title I Program: provides financial assistance to local educational agencies and public schools with high concentrations of low income families, to ensure children meet state academic standards.

Summary

Personal experiences in my early educational background led to this study. The first portion of Chapter One described those experiences, told the story of my becoming an educator, and discussed why I developed a passion for helping students, particularly students at risk, become effective readers. “Success for All” described the intention of my teaching.

Chapter One then outlined the purpose of the study, stated the problem, discussed the significance of the problem, and presented an overview of the chapters
and definitions of terms used in the study. The next chapter presents the review of literature relevant to this study.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of the literature review is to build a framework for the proposed research within the context of related literature. According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), “the literature review has four broad functions which include: (a) underlying assumptions behind the general questions, (b) demonstrates the researcher is knowledgeable of related research that supports the study, (c) demonstrates ability to identify gaps in previous research, and (d) further definition of the research question” (p. 43). For the purpose of this study, the literature review focused on historical perspectives of American educational reform, commentary and assumptions on effective schools research, interpretations of the experts, the Success for All program as a Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) model, and the analytical literature.

Historical Perspective of Education Reform in America

The definition of the word or term reform is the improvement of something by removing faults or problems, to make it better (Merriam---Webster, 2017). Societal influences and issues affecting American education and reform in education has a long history. Tyack and Cuban concluded, “Dialogue and debate about the goals of public education are a potent means of defining the present and shaping the future.” It is “one way that Americans make sense of their lives” (Tyack, 1995, p. 42). William
Reese wrote, “There were three aspects to change during key eras of reform: (a) the sources of education change, (b) many-sided demands of reformers, and (c) influences of various reformers on social practices” (Reese, 2000, p. 8).

School Reform in the 19th Century

The 19th century witnessed the establishment of universal tax-supported public schools in the United States. Reese (2000) and Reddick (2004) noted that Catherine Beecher and Horace Mann were prominent reformers during that era who helped champion the cause of universal education. During the 1820’s, Emma Willard and Catherine Beecher were educational theorists and reformers. According to Reddick (2004), education moved from male dominant to female dominated instruction and reforms improved education of women when women still did not have political rights (p. 76). Reddick (2004) stated, “Willard and Beecher might be considered the mothers of “conservative modernization” [in that their arguments helped structure the myth of] ‘traditional’ families and schools” (p. 76). Reddick further stated that Willard and Beecher articulated a 19th-century version of what Michael Apple (2004) called, “educating the ‘right’ way” (p. 76). Reformer Beecher felt that educating children was important in the development of middle class society including class, race, ethnicity, and religion. Some reformers were influenced to promote a common set of skills and moral values. Reese (2000) stated, “Horace Mann, the most famous education leader of the century, at different times claimed that school attendance would lessen crime, increase moral behavior, cut absenteeism in factories, lead to more productive lives, save the republic, assimilate the foreign
born and end poverty” (p. 20). Spring (2005) stated that the “Common school
reformers believed education assured the dominance of the Anglo—American or
white culture, minimized tension among social classes, eradicated crime and poverty,
maintain the political system and develop a patriotic citizen” (p. 73). Spring
identified Horace Mann and Henry Barnard as key figures of the common school
period. Spring (2005) stated “The term ‘common school’ came to have a specific
meaning: a school that was attended in common by all children and in which a
common political and social ideology was taught” (p. 74). Despite the differences,
which existed among the various school reformers in the common school movement,
the outcome from this period of reform is the American school system. The ideology
of the common school movement established the framework of public schooling.
Differences between the northern and southern schools regarding racial segregation
issues forged differing reform movements in those regions (Spring, 2005).

According to Reese (2000),
Mann, a defender for equality of educational opportunity, believed that all
children should have access to schools that offer a high quality of instruction
with common standards which included: (a) common textbooks, (b) common
requirements for high school graduation or college entrance, (c) common test
for promotion or college admission, (d) common core curriculum, (e)
common teacher training (p. 20).

America needed a more literate society to meet the needs of the industrial
revolution work force after the Civil War. A new era in education emerged by the
1890s, as the new education. Reese (2000) stated, “The new education drew on the
writings of Johann Pestalozzi and Friedrich Froebel, taking its most obvious institutional form in the kindergarten. The new education, said its various proponents, promised to treat each child as an individual, to offer a more natural means of educating the young, and to provide instruction in fundamental concepts, not simply through textbooks, but first through familiar objects” (p. 25).

The kindergarten program taught moral habits, cleanliness, politeness, obedience, and promptness, skills which some claimed were no longer provided at home as they had once been, and skills which were required for school success. Spring (2005) stated, “William T. Harris, a social conservative and a U. S. Commissioner of Education, claimed that kindergartens were necessary because traditional socializing agencies such as family, church and community had collapsed” (pp. 209–210). Spring (2005) further stated, “A major goal of the early kindergarten movement was to teach children habits that would reform the home” (p. 210). The social role of the kindergarten movement gave birth to a major reform calling for increased parent education.

Another historical event took place in 1896, the U. S. Supreme Court declared segregated schools were constitutional in *Plessey v. Ferguson* and *separate but equal* also projected restrictions on voting rights of minorities.

In summary, reforms of the 19th century established free public education with taxes as education’s base for funding. The role of women in education changed dramatically. Common standards were established and teaching came to be identified more as a science. The need for ongoing educational reform was established, heeding the demands of articulate, vocal, astute reformers and their
political influence on social practices. The ideology of the common school movement had an impact on reform and established the basic framework for the American school. Both reformers Horace Mann and Henry Barnard believed, according to Spring’s book *The American School*, that equality reduced tension among the social classes, and that the common school was the key to social control and stability. These reformers believed the common school would foster a good society by building up economic conditions, imparting equal opportunities, reducing crime, and preserving political and social order (Spring, 2005, p.76).

**School Reform in the 20th Century**

Reformers of the 19th century laid the groundwork for educational reform in the next era. Even visionary reformers could not fully contemplate the impact urbanization, industrialization, and immigration would have on American society (Reddick, 2004). These social forces transformed the future of America and the world. Huge changes were occurring, for example soon after World War I, more than half the population was living in urban areas. Large numbers of African Americans began migrating into northern cities. Race and economic issues became increasingly intertwined with educational complexities. Some reformers wanted to remake schools in the image of the corporate industry, calling for a more standardized, consolidated and centralized school system run by highly paid individuals (Reese, 2000).

By the end of World War, America was a leading world power, the richest nation on earth, with powerful economic opportunities for some, but not all citizens.
The denial of African American opportunities led to the civil rights movement and to enormous changes for education (Reddick, 2004).

The major federal report, *A Nation at Risk* (1983), exposed the many flaws in America’s schools, particularly from an economic perspective, and brought about demands for greater emphasis on academic excellence. Gardener et al. (1983) stated: “Our society and its educational institutions seem to have lost sight of the basic purposes of schooling, and of the high expectations and disciplined effort needed to attain them. This report, the result of 18 months of study, seeks 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” (para 3). President George H. Bush and state governors, led by Governor Clinton, found a common ground with Republicans to establish a set of national goals for public schools known as the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. The framework sought to establish world-class academic standards, measure student progress, and provide support to meet standards. The reform agenda set objectives for the nation’s public schools by the turn of the century.

Urbanization, industrialization, and immigration polarized the 20th century. American society continued to deal with Civil Rights and educational issues. Reddick (2004) stated, “… contradictions need not lead to failure, instead, they are necessary historical conditions in which educational reform is accomplished” (p. 87). Even though philanthropists, educators, and members of the community are frustrated and dissatisfied with public education, they typically have hoped for an educational transformation and not the elimination of the public school system (2004).
School Reform in the 21st Century

According to Allyson Klein of Education Week, “When most people think about the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), they think of two things: former President George W. Bush, and standardized testing. But the politics, policy, and history of the laws are far more complicated than that” (2015, para 6.). The No Child Left Behind Act, signed into law January 2002, was an update to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The law came about from the concern that the American education system was not competitive, leading to schools being responsible for the success or progress of students. States and schools were required to focus on certain groups, such as English--language learners, students in special education, and poor and minority children with low achievement. Non-compliance by state and schools resulted in loss of Federal funding, such as Title I.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) signed into law December 10, 2015, by President Obama followed the NCLB Act. The ESSA returned authority to state and local government with less mandates from the federal government.

Effective Schools Research

Comprehensive school reform resulted from the need to improve schools so that they could better serve the needs of a rapidly changing nation. Whole-school reform initiatives developed to package management and instructional practices, particularly to help schools with high concentrations of academically disadvantaged students raise academic achievement. Comprehensive reform programs intended to be based on scientifically researched and effective instructional practices. The
The U.S. Department of Education (2002) defines CSR on the basis of 11 components that, when coherently implemented, represent a “comprehensive” and “scientifically based” approach to school reform. Specifically, a CSR program:

- Employs proven methods for student learning, teaching, and school management that are founded on scientifically based research and effective practices and have been replicated successfully in schools;
- Integrates instruction, assessment, classroom management, professional development, parental involvement, and school management;
- Provides high-quality and continuous teacher and staff professional development and training;
- Includes measurable goals for student academic achievement and establishes benchmarks for meeting those goals;
- Is supported by teachers, principals, administrators, and other staff through-out the school;
- Provides support for teachers, principals, administrators, and other school staff by creating shared leadership and a broad base of responsibility for reform efforts;
- Provides for the meaningful involvement of parents and the local community in planning, implementing, and evaluating school improvement activities;
- Uses high-quality external technical support and assistance from an entity that has experience and expertise in school wide reform and improvement, which may include an institution of higher education;
- Includes a plan for the annual evaluation of the implementation of the school reforms and the student results achieved;
Identifies the available federal, state, local, and private financial and other resources that schools can use to coordinate services that support and sustain the school reform effort; and

Meets one of the following requirements: Either the program has been found, through scientifically based research, to significantly improve the academic achievement of participating students; or strong evidence has shown that the program will significantly improve the academic achievement of participating children (para, 7).

An article in the American Educational Research Journal (AER) (Phillips, 1997) stated:

Many researchers and reformers currently claim that schools effectiveness hinges on communal organizations. They contend that shared values and activities, positive adult social relations, positive teacher--student relations, and democratic governance enhance students’ school engagement and their academic achievement.” The article further stated, “...that schools are effective when they offer demanding curricula and employ teachers whose educational expectations for their students are high (p. 633).

For the whole school reform or any comprehensive reform model to be successful there needs to be collaboration on a set of elements or standards the model will employ (Phillips, 1997, p. 633).

The study of Bibb County schools conducted by Vonceil NeSmith summed up effective schools as having: (a) strong instructional leadership, (b) positive school climate, (c) goal directed instruction, and (d) parent involvement and support (NeSmith, 1998).
The above elements are based on research of best practices. If students are involved in this type of model, there are likely to be high levels of achievement. Whole school reform models have the same expectations. This study revealed that effectiveness, as measured by student achievement, depend on these elements (NeSmith, 1998).

A study at the University of Arkansas stated that schools effective in helping low-achieving students to meet challenging academic standards tend to include the following attributes (Summers, et al, 2004). They “(a) utilize standards to drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment, (b) schedule extended instructional time in math and reading, (c) spent proportionally more money on professional development than other schools, (d) utilized systemic assessments to monitor student progress, (e) encouraged parents to become involved with student’s school work and (f) held adults (not students) responsible for students outcome through accountability standards” (p. 3). Selected from among all the school reform models, this study focused on four models that highlighted rigorous evidence of success in improving student achievement. The models were (a) Success for All, (b) Comer’s School Development Project, (c) Direct Instruction, and (d) High Schools that Work (Summer, et al, 2004).
Related Research

A review of related research of comprehensive school reform (CSR) programs such as Success for All showed an increase in program options over time. The *Coleman Report* (1966), a study mandated by the U.S. Congress in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, showed that variations in school quality showed little association with levels of educational attainment, when students of comparable social backgrounds were compared across schools. Student’s educational attainment was not only related to his or her own family background, but also to the backgrounds of the other students in the school (*para 2*). The *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act hastened the popularity of alternatives to conventional public schooling, and school vouchers, charter schools, for-profit schools and CSR program-related schools have made for a complex and politically-charged educational reform landscape.

NeSmith (1998) studied the efficacy of effective schools in the Bibb County school system as measured by student achievement. The NeSmith study was a quantitative comparative study of schools using a CSR model and those that were not using the model. The hypothesis was tested using *t*-tests and the results showed no statistically significant difference between the schools. There were significant increases in achievement as students progressed through the grades.

Berends (2000) studied and wrote a paper on the Comprehensive School Reform Program entitled New American Schools (NAS) and its implementation process. Berends analyzed survey data from teachers and administrators in various sites to determine the effectiveness of the implementation process on educators and student experiences. The findings revealed that for further implementation there
needed to be adequate communication and resources for teacher support of the program (Berends, 2000). The analysis further discussed policy implications (Berends, 2000).

Robert Bifulco (2001) studied three comprehensive school reform models: the School Development Program, the More Effective Schools Program, and the Success for All program. The purpose for the Bifulco study was to determine the impact of the adoption of a CSR model on student academic performance. The study compared schools in New York City and the results found that the School Development Program and the More Effective Schools Model had small positive impacts on student performance in both math and reading. For the students at the schools with the Success for All model, no positive impacts were found (Bifulco, 2001).

Jessica Wolff (2002) wrote a policy report for the Campaign for Fiscal Equity summarizing the research evidence presented on programs that offer expanded platforms for learning. The Success for All, Reading Recovery, Intensive School-Day Program, and Project Read were some of the programs researched. It was established that for students to receive an adequate education, they needed more time on task. The evidence presented demonstrated that students who participated in these programs benefited from the models (Wolff, 2002).
Interpretations of the Experts

Robert Slavin (2000) developed Success for All with colleague Nancy Madden (2000). Slavin, Madden, and other researchers involved with Success for All along with others not involved with Success for All have done extensive research of the Success for All program. A Phi Delta Kappa article authored by Slavin and Madden (2000) stated:

All of this research has compared Success for All to matched control schools on standardized measures of reading, both individually administered measures. Not every study has found positive outcomes, but the great majority have --- especially when program implementation has been adequate. The studies have been published in some of the most rigorous journals in education. Reviews of research on comprehensive reform design by American Institutes of Research and by Thomas Fordham Foundation have identified Success for All as one of two elementary programs (the other is Direct Instruction) with strong replicated evidence of effectiveness for student achievement (pp. 38---39).

Venezeky (1994) studied one of the first Baltimore schools to use the system, and found that at the end of fifth grade, Success for All students scored below grade level on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS). Walberg and Greenberg (1999) argued that independent evaluations concluded that the program was not effective.

One well-established critic of the Success for All program was Professor Pogrow, University of Arizona, who specialized in school reform and administrative
and instructional uses of technology and is the developer of the Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) program and Supermath. Pogrow (2000) disputed the effectiveness of comprehensive school improvement models and instead focused on improvement in one or two key areas. He was skeptical about the necessity to design an effective one--size--fits--all school--wide model. He expressed skepticism of attempting to solve multiple problems facing schools through one comprehensive program. In an article in *Phi Delta Kappa*, Pogrow (2002) questioned the effectiveness of the reform models New America Schools and Success for All. Datnow and Castellano (2001) used qualitative data from six Success for All schools to examine how principal leadership shapes and are shaped by a reform model.

**Specifics of Success for All**

Success for All is a research based, data driven comprehensive school reform program, which formally started in 1987. It evolved from research developed at Johns Hopkins University in the mid 1907s, spearheaded by Robert Slavin and Nancy Madden. Because of the rapid growth of Success for All, the developers broke away from John’s Hopkins and emerged as the Success for All Foundation. Success for All is in 48 states, and serves about 1,500 schools and over one million children. The goal of the Success for All Foundation is to transform schools by using researched---based programs. Its founder, Robert Slavin, stated, Success for All was named as an example in the 1997 legislation that first established comprehensive school reform. More recently, the latest guidance
places a stronger emphasis on adoption of programs ‘based on scientifically--

based research, which are defined as programs that have been extensively

evaluated in rigorous experimental--control comparisons, have been published

in scientific journals, and have been studied by many investigators.’ Research on

Success for All meets this definition better than any other comprehensive reform

model. Furthermore, we now offer Success for All---Reading First and Early

Reading First, specifically tailored to meet the needs of the No Child Left Behind


Success for All is a CSR restructuring program for elementary schools. It is

based on the following principles:

- Emphasis on prevention, early and intensive intervention, and tutoring
  for students with academic difficulties.

- Incorporation of state-of-the-art curriculum and instructional methods.

- Emphasis on the integration of phonics and meaning-focused instruction,
  cooperative learning, and curriculum-based assessments.

- Writing/Language arts instruction emphasizing writer’s workshops.

- Pre-school/kindergarten instruction with story telling and
  language development.

- Adaptations for Spanish and English as a second language.

- A family support program engaging parents, community members,
  and integrated services.

- Extensive professional development throughout the elementary
For a school to have success with the program, implementation must be followed as prescribed. The Success for All program consists of nine components which are as follows: (a) the reading and writing program, (b) eight weeks assessments, (c) tutors, (d) kindergarten corner (kindergarten), (e) cooperative learning, (f) family support team, (g) facilitator, (h) staff support team, and (i) professional development. (Retrieved from http://www.successforall.org).

Figure 2.1 illustrates the components utilized at Roosevelt Elementary for student achievement. Through the Success for All program, there was 90 minutes of instruction in reading daily, 20 minutes of reading nightly for homework, focus on attendance, tutoring, and parent involvement. Figure 2.2 shows the instructional component at grade levels of KinderKorner for kindergarten, Reading Roots for grade one, and Reading Wings for second, third, and fourth grades. There is a Spanish component, which is used for English Language Learners called Lee Comingo, used with grade one Spanish speakers. (See Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2.)
Figure 2.1 Format of Success For All

Success For All Model

- 90 Minute Instruction Block
- Parent Involvement
- 20 Minute Reading Nightly
- Attendance
- Tutoring

Figure 2.1 Format of the Success For All model at Roosevelt Elementary School.
**Figure 2.2 Success For All Instructional Components**

**Success for All Reform Model Components**

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>KinderCorner</strong> Kindergarten</th>
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<td></td>
<td>strong focus on oral language and vocabulary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>scaffolds and prompts</td>
<td>student interaction and partner work</td>
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<td>social-emotional skill and strategies</td>
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<td>professional development</td>
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<td>online data tools and analysis</td>
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<th><strong>Reading Roots</strong> Grade 1</th>
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<td></td>
<td>lessons to foster creative thinking and problem solving</td>
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<td></td>
<td>professional development for teachers</td>
<td>online data tools and analysis</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>alignment with 21st century standards</td>
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<th><strong>Reading Wings</strong> Grade 2 -- 4</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lessons to foster creative thinking, problem solving and innovation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>routines, rubrics and structure for powerful discussion and teamwork</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>scaffold instruction to build core reading skills and strategies</td>
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<tr>
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<td>online data tools and analysis</td>
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<td>alignment with 21st century standards</td>
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*Figure 2.2 Success for All instructional component at each grade level.*
Analytical Literature

Analytic theory provides a theoretical lens to view a study’s findings and to identify emerging patterns and themes (Maxwell, 2005). I adopted several theoretical frameworks to analyze the challenges experienced in implementing a comprehensive reform system in an urban school. The issues were examined through economic, political, taxonomic, and critical lens.

Students bring personal issues into the classroom, making it challenging for the teacher to reach them. Challenges of student behavior and issues within their home life affect their performance in the educational setting. Some teachers feel they spend increasingly more time on discipline and other issues and increasingly less time on academics in the classroom as the society around them becomes more complex. School systems continue to look for ways to keep the workforce intact and educate children at the same time. There are numerous programs that address the issues school systems face. Reform models like Success for All are designed to consider a student’s academic success within the realities of today’s society.

Economic Lens

Karl Marx’s ideology might react to the Success for All program in two ways. Marx might observe that Success for All supports the whole system by serving all, because it is inclusive and does not exclude anyone. The program intends to equally support the interest of all participants without prejudice (i.e. without regard for
nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, etc.). However, in reality all students are not successful. Some of the students will not be helped in this program. Marx might argue with the slogan *Success for All*, since the name implies everyone will be successful. Dialectical materialism is a way of understanding reality, thought, emotions, or the material world (Eagleton, 1999). Dialectics is a method of thinking in which concepts are flexible and mobile (Berlin, 1995). The philosophy of Marxism might reflect that dualistic approach in regards to the *Success for All* program.

According to Muller (1995), “Adam Smith suggested that universal public education is at the expense of the government. He felt everyone, even the poor, could acquire the necessary skills of reading, writing, and math” (p.150). Smith did not say that school should be mandatory, but did insist it had to be accessible and useful to individuals (Muller, 1995). Smith thought that an education would benefit individuals and the state. If one were better educated, then there was less of a chance of that individual responding to “the delusions of enthusiasm and superstition” (Muller, 1995, p. 151) or being persuaded by con artists. Smith thought an educated population would make for greater social cohesion through shared respectability. Smith would likely have appreciated the components of the *Success for All* programs, because of the focus on reading, writing, and math behaviors, and on shaping the whole person. Smith, however, might not agree with the implementation of *Success for All* if it were not accessible to all. If *Success for All* were mandated by school districts or states, then it might be considered more accessible to all.
Both Karl Marx (1995) and Adam Smith (1995) advocated equality for all, however, each for different reasons. Marx might have viewed Success for All from a dialectic materialistic perspective, while Smith might have considered the program from an economic viewpoint.

Political Lens

Edelman (1988) suggested that the central connotation of leadership is innovation: leaders point the way so that others can emulate their initiatives. Mary Rosario, the principal at Roosevelt, had a mandate to implement a reform model at her school. As a leader, she was innovative in accomplishing this task. As a leader, she had to take risks and plan so that Success for All would have the best possible chance to produce results to meet her expectations. Edelman would characterize her as a strong leader. Edelman (1988) stated “Strong leaders typically win reputation through policies that bring risk, suffering, or death to large numbers of people” (p. 38). Edelman (1988) continued,

“... some people are born leaders; leaders possess certain traits (resourcefulness, originality, courage, foresight, mediating talents, self-sacrifice in the public interest) in greater degree than others; that individuals become leaders is itself evidence that they surpass others in the necessary qualities or that they represent the public will, divine will, merit, the average citizen, or whatever other symbol is accepted as legitimate at a particular time and place. To list these commonplace assumptions about leadership is to raise questions about their validity; but in everyday discourse they are likely
to be intoned rather than examined because leadership provides vital psychological gratifications” (p. 39).

Mary Rosario, exhibiting her leadership style, displayed those traits in having the foresight for Roosevelt to adopt a reform model before the district took control and made the decision for them.

**Taxonomic Lens**

Implementing the Success for All program at Roosevelt required core stakeholders to accept and practice new rituals and routines while abandoning others that they had performed perhaps for many years. Additionally, they had to adjust to the practices of the Success for All monitors as new supervisors, supervisors who balanced both mentoring and monitoring functions.

Officials from Success for All would come at least three times a year to monitor implementation of the program. During these visits, stress levels were high and tempers occasionally flared among the teachers. Teachers were observed and sometimes felt challenged. Success for All teaching plans are very detailed, to the point of timing one’s teaching to the minute. Student behaviors, the inability to comprehend the lesson, and demographics of the classroom were seen as sometimes not being taken into consideration. Points were deducted from evaluations for non-displayed Success for All program literature (posters) or for signals not used by the student and teacher in the classrooms. Evaluation of the total program based on Success for All observer visits to certain rooms for a few minutes were not always seen as representative.
The teacher facilitator did surprise visits. While not threatening or intrusive, the process could be flusterling if someone were a nervous person or had something to hide. The facilitator did observations as a way of getting those teachers not doing the program to be on board with the other teachers and for accountability. The facilitator maintained the integrity of the program to the specification of Success for All.

Lincoln (1989) suggested,

... that ritual performance can contribute powerfully to the maintenance of society---a crucial insight of functionalist and structural---functionalist theoreticians remains an accepted truism, and others who write from a Marxist position have advanced powerful arguments in support of the view that rituals is both intrinsically and categorically conservative in nature (p. 53).

At Roosevelt there was evidence of dominance and resistance going on. There were teachers doing the program to the best of their ability and to the specifications of Success for All. Other teachers gave the appearance of doing the program but in reality resisted doing the program whenever an opportunity made itself available. Lincoln (1989) in his discussion of the Swazi Newala stated:

Thus, domination may be defined as the attempt (never entirely successful) of a given group (A) to absorb other groups (B, C, etc.) within a higher level of social integration (I) in which the members of A occupy a position of hierarchic, material, and sociopolitical supremacy. Domination is thus the
imposition of an unwanted and exploitative fusion on groups that are converted into subordinate segments of the new social aggregate. Conversely, resistance is the (sustained, but never fully successful) refusal of given group (such as B) to accept absorption into a higher level of integration, the polico---economic realities and dominant ideology of which are imposed by an initially alien group (A) that seeks to establish itself as the ruling stratum of the new aggregate. Resistance---which may take material, political, cultural, ritual or countless other forms---is thus continued visionary pressure against an unwanted and exploitative fusion imposed from outside (p. 73).

As previously mentioned, Success for All had a 3-‐year commitment and strict rules or guidelines to follow. The dominant culture was the Success for All program in the school. Said (1993) stated “the term imperialism means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory.” (p. 9). At Roosevelt, the Success for All model was in place and the remainder of the curriculum had to adjust to its schedule. With Success for All having these strict guidelines and commitment it was able to maintain its program and presence as a reform model. It might be considered an empire. Said (1993) stated, “Imperialism is simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an empire” (p. 9).

Looking through both the political and taxonomic lens the problem centers on leadership and the anomaly. Anomalies are a fact of reality. Anomalies will continue to be a threat to the dominant culture. An anomaly is not necessarily a bad thing.
The presence of an anomaly is a taxonomic structure that exposes faults, inadequacies and inconsistencies of a structure.

**Critical Lens**

Kevin Kumashiro explained *right, left* and public education.

One way to understand the various reforms in education is to contrast the efforts of those who want to maintain the status quo, particularly its hierarchies and privileges, with the efforts of those who want to change the status quo by raising awareness of and challenging the racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression that permeate schools and society. The former is led by the political Right in the United States; the latter, by the Left (Kumashiro, 2008, p. 5).

To identify the groups by issue is difficult. Conservatives or Republicans identify with the *Right*, and liberals and progressives with the *Left*. What defines or differentiates the *Right* and *Left* (and which can differ at any time) are their underlying goals: The *Left* aims to change the status quo and *Right* aims to maintain it (Kumashiro, 2008, p. 5--6).

Diane Ravitch and Michael Apple are well-respected contemporary reformers of education who advocate for excellent public educational opportunities for all children. According to Ravitch (2013):

All children deserve a curriculum that includes the arts, history, civics geography, the sciences, foreign languages, mathematics, and literature.

Children of the poor need good schools and adequate resources as much as –
perhaps even more than children of the affluent, especially since they are far less likely to have their education supplemented by private art or music lessons after school or in the summer, as afforded the children in well-to-do families (p. 298).

Ravitch (2013), as a school reform historian, noted that, “What is happening now is an astonishing development. It is not meant to reform public education but is a deliberate effort to replace public education with a privately managed, free-market system of schooling” (p. 298).

Apple (2008) stated:

... conservative modernization. This is a powerful, yet odd, combination of forces that is in play in education, a combination that many educators, community activists, critical researchers, and others believe poses substantial threats to the vitality of our nation, our schools, our teachers, and our children. As I noted, we are told to free our schools by placing them into the competitive market, restore our traditional common culture and stress discipline and character, return God to our classrooms as a guide to all our conduct inside and outside the school, and tighten central control through more rigorous and tough-minded standards and tests (p. 4).

According to Kumashiro (2012), “Neoliberalism values competitive markets and attempts to redistributes resources or accountability, often manifesting in politics that reduce governmental regulation of trade, increase the privatization of public services, and support the growth of business” (p. 38). Kumashiro further stated, “Neoliberalism ...promotes an understanding of equality and freedom that
presumes a level playing field, and that expects some to win and many others to lose” (p. 39).

Ravitch (2013) commented, “The majority of Americans received a public education in our public schools. Americans want neighborhood schools, not schools that pick and choose their students, and despite promises made by charter corporations and political allies, the public is awakening to the threat posed by privatization” (p. 319).

Kumashiro (2012) stated,

…the concept of privatization is that of personal responsibility, which is the reliance on oneself rather than on others, and consequently the rejection of political or social—welfare structures that could hamper one’s own sense of independence and development, instead, a system of unfair distribution of resources and undeserved rewards (p. 38).

Neoliberal ideology framed the reform of public education in countries around the world. According to Kumashiro, “In the United States, neoliberal ideology did not characterize educational reform until the end of the 20th century” (p. 41). Federal funding was directed to equity programs and formula grants targeted low income families, English—languages proficiency and disability concerns. Federal funds have moved to market solutions and competitive grants. Kumashiro (2008) stated, “...such initiatives continues to grow, despite compelling research revealing their ineffectiveness in improving school performance and teacher quality. Nonetheless, within this logic, competition is what will make schools and teachers better” (p. 42).
According to Apple (2006) “For Neoliberals, one rationality is more powerful than any other---economic rationality. Efficiency and an ethic of cost--benefit analysis are the dominant norms. All people are to act in ways that maximize their own personal benefits” (p. 31).

Ravitch (2013) stated,

The corporate reform movement has capitalized on the American public’s infatuation with consumerism. The advance of privatization depends on high---stakes testing. The federally mandated regime of annual testing generates the data to grade not only students and teachers but also schools. Given unrealistic goals, a school can easily fail. When a school is labeled a failing school under NCLB or priority or focus school according to the metrics of the Obama administration’s program, it must double down on test preparation to attempt to recover its reputation, but the odds of success are small especially after the most ambitious parents and students flee the school” (p. 319). Ravitch (2013) continued, “public education is an essential part of the democratic fabric of the American Society” (p.320).

Ravitch’s defense of public education is particularly timely given the current politically charged debates on how to best educate our nation’s children. Betsy DeVos, recently selected as U. S. Secretary of Education, represents a side of the debate that does not appear to share Ravitch’s deep commitment to public education. John Rosales, in a NEA Today article wrote that DeVos comes to the position, “With no experience as an educator or elected official, and despite a decades---long record of
undermining public schools by promoting taxpayer--funded vouchers for private
and religious schools” (January 11, 2017).

Sara Meade, opinion contributor for *US News*, cautioned that the stakes for
children are too high for the nation to allow partisanship to dictate education
policy. She stated:

The challenges that face our schools and our country today are
complicated ones. It's possible to simultaneously believe both
that our schools lack sufficient funding and that existing
resources could be used more effectively; that schools alone
cannot counteract the devastating impact of poverty on
human development and that our existing school system
compounds the problem by consistently giving the poorest
students lower quality learning experiences; that test scores
alone fail to measure a large part of what matters in education
and that they predict children's later chances of life success. If
our public dialogue on education issues can't encompass
multiple causes for complex problems, or accommodate
diverse perspectives on values trade-offs, we're unlikely to
reach effective policy responses to the complex challenges we
face (January 26, 2017).
Summary

In Chapter two, I discussed the historical perspective of educational reform from the 19th, 20th and 21st century. Also included were effective schools research, related research, interpretations by experts and specifics of the Success for All program. The analytical literature was reviewed through economic, political, taxonomic, and critical lens. In the next chapter, the methodology for this qualitative case study will be described.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes description of the study's research design, rationale, participant selection, data collection and analysis, and interview and follow-up interview questions. I included discussions of researcher bias, limitations of the study, and descriptions of the setting and of the study's participants to complete the chapter.

The research methodology for this study is qualitative. Marshall, et al. (1999) noted, “Qualitative research is a broad approach to the study of social phenomena; its various genres are naturalistic and interpretive, drawing on multiple methods of inquiry” (p. 2). Qualitative research takes place in a natural setting using multiple methods involving interactions with humans and the data is developing and interpretive (p. 3).

One method of qualitative research is a case study, defined by Merriam (1988) as follows: “A qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (p. 21). Case studies seek to answer “how” or “why” questions with a focus on real-life or contemporary settings (Yin, 2007). Merriam (1998) described a case study’s overall intent as “one that presents a detailed account of the phenomenon” (p. 38). I sought to learn about Success for All based on the experiences of the participants, learning from teachers, administration facilitators, parents, and a Success for All official.
Research Design

This dissertation is a qualitative case study focusing on the impact of implementation of the Success for All program at an urban elementary school in Minnesota. The University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the proposal for the study (05-011-3). A qualitative methodological approach framed by Bogdan and Bilken’s (2003) five features of qualitative design was utilized. The five features (pp. 4-7) include that:

- The research is conducted in a natural setting and the researcher is the key instrument.
- Data are collected in the form of words.
- The process is concerned with outcomes. The focus is on perspectives and opinions.
- Analysis of data is inductive.
- The objectives are making meaning and are concerned with participant’s perspectives.

In this study, I conducted interviews of teachers, administration, and parents utilizing an audio tape recorder. The interviews focused on the school’s environment, the academic achievement of its students, and Roosevelt’s administration leadership style in the implementation of the Success for All reading model. Interviews were useful in capturing the subjects’ opinions and perceptions of the impact of the Success for All program’s curriculum strengths, weaknesses, and instructional techniques, as well as of the leadership style at Roosevelt Elementary. There was a need to re-interview certain participants for clarification of specific
ideas. After the study, I revisited or re-interviewed selected subjects to gain their opinion and perspective of the closing of Roosevelt Elementary and the Success for All model.

Yin (2014) wrote that a case study should take place in the real-world setting, creating opportunities for observation:

Observational evidence is often useful in providing additional information about the topic being studied. If a case study is about a new technology or a school curriculum, for instance, observations of the technology or curriculum at work are invaluable aids for understanding the actual uses of the technology or curriculum and any problems being encountered (p.114).

This approach allowed for informal participant observations of the staff, students, families, and leadership / administration to examine the social interactions among the groups. Observations were documented by using field notes. Through these observations, I was able to gain insight into the school environment.

In addition to interviews, I was informed by documents from the Success for All Foundation containing their research and statistics of the success of the Success for All model in other settings. Roosevelt’s assessment results and statistics from the state of Minnesota for the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) and statistics from the urban school district on the Metropolitan Achievement Test 7(MAT 7) and the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT 10) were used to evaluate student achievement in reading.

During the course of this study, I visited a Success for All school with comparable demographics and characteristics to Roosevelt Elementary. I contacted
the Success for All Foundation for a list of recommended schools that matched the selection criteria and followed the appropriate guidelines to request permission for a visit.

**Rationale**

My case is bounded or defined by the phenomenon of educational reform experienced by the elementary teachers in an urban school district. A school district functions as an institution, and could be considered a “bounded system, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries” (Merriam, 2009, p. 40), an appropriate setting for a qualitative case. Merriam (2009) stated, that the boundedness of a case study is determined by “whether there is a limit to the number of people involved” (p. 41), and those people are particularly involved in an instance of some specific process. A case study allowed me to examine issues regarding current change in education through interviews of teachers and administrators, a comparison of teachers’ perceptions and administrators’ perceptions of change, and an analysis of teachers’ experiences with reform initiatives. Results from this case study will be helpful to administrators and educational leaders in preparing for future educational reform initiatives.

**Participant Selection**

Selection of participations began by sending a letter to all staff and to past and present families requesting their participation in the case study of Roosevelt Elementary and the Success for All™ reading program. In the letter, I introduced
myself as a doctoral student and requested their voluntary participation in my study. (See Appendix A.) When I met with each participant, I discussed the consent form, asked that he/she sign the consent form as outlined in the IRB procedures, and provided each participant a copy of the consent form for signature. Participants agreeing to participate completed a consent form. (See Appendix B.) Copies of the letters, consent forms, and scheduled interviews of participants for the research study were documented in a notebook. No students were interviewed for the study.

Data Collection

The primary method of data collection was interviews. All the data collected for this study was kept confidential as outlined on the consent form. Pseudonyms were used to protect identities. Interviews were conducted off campus at a convenient location for the participants, either at a local restaurant or coffee house at my expense. The individual interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

The transcripts from the interviews were available to subjects upon their request. The collected data from audiotaped interviews and field notes were kept in a locked file cabinet in my personal home office. A transcriber and I had access to the audiotaped interviews. I listened to the audiotaped interviews as I read the transcript aloud for accuracy. The data were available to the transcriber for transcription and the transcriber signed a confidentiality statement. Ethically, my advisors may review the data for the purpose of advising the research study. All audiotapes, transcriptions and field notes were kept confidential and stored for in a locked file cabinet.
I supplemented the interviews with my observational comments and field notes. During the study, participant observations were done at Roosevelt Elementary. The observations did not interrupt or impact the instructional or learning time. The observations specifically documented how instruction of Success for All requirements, rituals and routines were used throughout the instructional day.

Selected follow-up interviews were conducted to allow participants to reflect on the urban school district’s decision to close Roosevelt Elementary School and its impact on their professional teaching career. The study of Roosevelt Elementary School’s implementation of Success for All was completed before its closure at the end of the 2009 – 2010 school year.

**Data Analysis**

Coding data is the formal representation of analytic thinking (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). I coded the interview data, identifying categories, themes and patterns within the data. I followed these steps in developing an analysis process:

- Data collection
- Identification of key categories and themes
- Data coding
- Data analysis from the participants’ interviews describing patterns and themes from their experiences with Success for All
Interview Questions

The interview questions were intended to examine perceptions of the Success for All reading model, its effectiveness in improving Roosevelt Elementary School students’ reading abilities, and leadership. I structured the research questions in a manner that would motivate the interview subjects to truthfully share their innermost thoughts, opinions and experiences of the Success for All reading program and its implementation. The following research interview questions were designed to collect the research data. (See Appendix C.)

1. What was your reaction when the new reading program came into the school?

2. How did the new reading program affect your thinking about a school wide curriculum?

3. What effect did teaching a prescribed reading programs have on you?

4. Have you lost instructional creativity in the classroom because of this reading program? Explain.

5. Discuss the effectiveness of the components of the reading program.

6. Has the reading program helped increase student achievement? Explain.

7. As a parent/teacher, has the reading program been beneficial to all the students in the school? Explain.

8. What are your thoughts on the twenty minutes of reading each night for homework?

9. What are your thoughts about the implementation visits from official Success for All members and the visits/observations from the facilitator in the building?
10. Why did you choose to leave the school? Explain. (If the participant were no longer with the school.)

**Follow-up Interview Questions**

The study required further data collection due to the fact that Roosevelt Elementary closed. These interview questions were structured to allow the participants to be open to reflect on their experiences. (See appendix D.)

1. How did you feel when your local urban school district no longer supported Roosevelt and the implementation of Success for All?

2. Did or do you continue to use some of the strategies, materials, rituals and routines of the Success for All program?

3. How has the loss of the Success for All model impacted your professional career as an educator? Explain.

**Researcher Bias**

**My Role in the Study**

I was a third grade teacher at Roosevelt Elementary. I liked the Success for All model because it is prescriptive and I taught students how to read using researched best practices. My relationship with the facilitators and the administrators was one of trust and mutual respect. My relationship with colleagues was positive. Teachers did occasionally talk among themselves about Success for All program. Because
Roosevelt was the subject of my study, I was cognizant of the many factors I had to consider when I interviewed and interpreted the data. I included my personal relationship to the subject in the list of limitations of the study.

**Limitations of the Study**

The limitation of this study included:

1. my familiarity with and favorable bias toward my colleagues and the Success for All program. I had worked at the same school for over ten years.
2. that the study was conducted in only one urban school setting.
3. that student participation was limited to quantitative data. Students were not interviewed.
4. that data were collected only from those stakeholders who volunteered to participate in the study.

**Setting: The Implementation Process**

There were five elementary schools in the Urban School district that implemented the Success For All comprehensive reform model. They were North End Elementary, Prosperity Elementary, Jackson Elementary, Riverview Elementary and Roosevelt Elementary. When it first implemented Success for All, Roosevelt was a Kindergarten through third grade school, eventually becoming Kindergarten through sixth grade. The school district then moved to a K--- 5 model with grade six joining with the middle or high school level.
Roosevelt was a Title I school serving about 370 students, Kindergarten through fifth grade, and employed 37 full time teachers. The student to teacher ratio was about 10 to 1. The demographics were Hispanic 42%, African American 34%, Asian 17%, Caucasian 6% and Native American 1%. Free and reduced lunch rate was 96%.

The study took place in an urban public school system within a Mid-west metropolis. The superintendent of schools saw a need for schools to research school reform models or explore ways to improve student achievement. The superintendent wanted the schools to investigate reform models that addressed: (a) parent involvement (b) assessment, (c) high expectations, (d) student achievement, and (e) community involvement.

The superintendent envisioned phasing in the reform models over several years until all schools in the district implemented a plan to address the above core issues. Roosevelt Elementary and Riverview Elementary were two schools in the second wave of schools to have a reform model in place. School administrators from the two schools joined forces and collaborated to investigate, research, observe and select a reform model. A team of teachers, parents, psychologists, and principals were sent to observe a highly researched program founded by Robert Slavin and Nancy Madden called Success for All. The Success for All program and its founders guaranteed their program could turn schools around academically, improve attendance, improve test scores, and increase parent involvement (1991).

According to their materials, Success for All is a comprehensive and effective school—restructuring program based on educating children in reading, writing, math,
and social sciences. The program is research based, requires a 3-year commitment from participating schools and administration and a financial commitment from the school district. The program addresses professional development for teachers, special education, disadvantaged, minority, and academically handicapped students, and family support. Success for All is both a preventive and accelerated model. Achievement outcomes are related to the quality of implementation. Creators Robert Slavin and Nancy Madden (1991) stated:

Success for All does not work for every child in every school. However, the story of Success for All is one of relentless efforts by a remarkable group of developers, researchers, trainers, teachers, school leaders, and communities to put proven programs into every school willing to undergo extensive reform. We have not achieved Success for All but with every passing year we move closer and closer to that goal (p. 593-599).

The teams from Roosevelt and Riverview appeared to be a fairly unbiased group. However, looking back, the teams tasked with choosing a reform model were strategically chosen as a group of individuals who would be influential in staff buy-in. The teams returned from observation visits highly motivated and encouraged the staff to adopt the program. Roosevelt’s administrator expressed her understanding that the future trend in education would be the adoption of a Comprehensive School Reform model. Roosevelt’s administrator encouraged staff to move ahead and not have change forced by the district administration. Teams from each school gave presentations on what they witnessed from their fact finding trip and also visited additional schools in other districts within the state of Minnesota. Individuals from
Success for All gave presentations to staff for clarification and reassurance that the program would works.

Success for All required that for a school to implement their program, 85% of the school staff had to vote in favor of the Success for All reading program and the school had to commit to a 3-year contract. Roosevelt and Riverview's staff voted to implement Success for All. Meanwhile, three other elementary schools in the same district recognized the need to adopt a reform model or have the district choose a program for them. The other three schools had an interest in Success for All; however, they choose another approach to investigate Success for All and implementation. Instead of sending a team to gain information on Success for All and present the reform model to their staff members, principals at those schools presented the Success for All reform as an ultimatum/requirement to their staff. Staff members at the three schools were bitter, felt unappreciated, and some exited from the school.

One school, because of a discrepancy in the process, had to vote twice. The staff members at these schools were skeptical and mistrusting of administration. Many changes in staff members took place at these schools, which resulted in disruption of implementation and delays in instruction.

The five elementary schools collaborated for training, however, implementation of the instructional components of the program had some differences, because some schools were K-3 and others served K-6. Other differences among the schools were use of ability grouping, demographics, and levels of family
and community involvement. Some specialist staff (physical education, music, special education, etc.) felt threatened and in some cases their positions were actually eliminated because of changes in the school structure. The program had different impact on the other three schools that did not take the time to take a team to investigate Success for All.

All five schools started the program the same year. It was a new mode of instruction for most teachers with Success for All prescribing 90 minutes of reading instruction each day. During this same time period, the school district hired a new superintendent. The district’s new administration brought about a new agenda. During her transition, the new superintendent started making changes and encouraged high expectations for all students. The superintendent implemented a rating system for improvement of schools based on Minnesota state assessment scores. Schools on probation, based on test scores, resulted from this new system. Schools not performing that had not adopted a reform model were required to adopt or design a model for implementation. The five schools that had adopted Success for All were considered established models. Two of the five schools that adopted Success for All were placed on academic probation.

While Roosevelt was not on probation, there were other issues. At the district level, with a new administration, the Success for All model was not as well supported as had been anticipated. It appeared the district was waiting out the three-year commitment. Despite the lack of district support, Roosevelt Elementary was making gains with test scores and acquired national recognition for their achievements with the Success for All program. The district began to acknowledge the Success for All
schools’ efforts because of their success with addressing and solving the very issues the district was attempting to improve: student achievement, attendance, and parent involvement.

The school administrator, Mary Rosario, was very positive about the Success for All program because the students, including specific groups, were reading and making gains on standardized tests, especially in the area of comprehension. However, 70% of English Language Learners (ELL) population scores were lower overall, a fact attributed to vocabulary instructed in isolation.

Staff had mixed feelings. They appreciated that there had been steady gains in test scores, attendance, and parent involvement and that, after receiving national publicity, the district had finally recognized Roosevelt’s efforts.

But even with the successes in the implementation of the reform model, conflict remained. Some teaching staff members were either modifying or avoiding teaching the Success for All model altogether because of its prescribed or scripted methods. Some felt that Success for All took away individual creativity, while others found creative ways to enhance their instruction; Success for All researchers inquired about their ideas and shared them with other schools.

Scheduled implementation visits from Success for All officials were for two days per month and included observing classrooms during the 90-minute instruction reading time. Observers documented information on tasks and time and interviewed students. Students were asked specific questions regarding the components and terminology of the program and instructional strategies and techniques.
Roosevelt developed a team to modify the basal and various literature to adapt to the Success for All components. The building facilitator, a former classroom teacher, was committed to the Success for All model and to the success of the students’ achievement. Aware of the stress teachers were experiencing, the facilitator worked to make the transition effortless for teachers and provided safe environments for open discussion about frustrations. The facilitator advocated for teachers, insisting that their voices be heard to resolve tension. The facilitator also worked at making instruction of the components in the Success for All program easily accessible for teacher preparation. Even with additional teacher supports in place, there remained those who were not 100% with the program, and as could have been predicted through Rogers’ (1962) Diffusion of Innovations Theory model, a few remained who did not like being told when, where, what, and how to teach.

Assessing students every eight weeks increased accountability and positively impacted Success for All’s effectiveness. Positive data strengthened implementation and the principal’s support strengthened the commitment of the staff.

The facilitator and the principal monitored implementation and were visible in classrooms throughout the building. The principal was aware of those teachers who were not meeting the needs of the students and were not using the Success for All framework. The result of their instruction was that their students were not moving to the next level. There was one particular incident when a teacher decided to show a film instead of teaching reading. The principal confronted the teacher and set the tone of a no-nonsense approach to leadership.
Teachers not conforming to the implementation of Success for All, as few as there were, were an anomaly. Those teachers had an alliance and did create tension. According to Lincoln (1989),

*Anomalies remain always a potential threat to the taxonomic structures under which they are marginalized, for in the very fact of their existence they reveal the shortcomings, inadequacies, contradictions and arbitrary nature of such structures. A paradoxical relation and dialectic tension thus exist between taxonomy and anomaly: The latter, called into existence by the former, can also prove its genitor’s undoing. What is more---and this is the central point---it is not simply a matter of logical structures because just as taxonomy can encode and legitimate, indeed, help construct sociopolitical and economic orders, so conversely can anomaly be used to delegitimate and deconstruct those same socio---taxonomic orders. (p. 166)*

After 3 years of implementation, there was still not 100% of staff in favor of using the Success for All model, despite most of them having voted for it. Outliers remained, those who choose to do what they wanted, not Success for All.
Description of Interviewees

In this section I describe each of the seventeen interviewees. I provide a description of each participant and their personal connection to the study. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

Mary

Mary is a principal/administrator and has been in the field of education for twenty-nine years. She has held the position of multicultural resource teacher, intern for administration and elementary principal. Mary has been at Roosevelt for 10 years and was instrumental in the implementation of Success for All at Roosevelt and other schools in the urban school district. While not having been a classroom teacher herself, she was a visionary in regards to the education of children. She felt strongly about sharing her experiences and success with others because:

“using my background, My Hispanic background is giving cultural info of sharing information about the Spanish culture and history. Also, to be an example of success and a trailblazer.”

Sam

Sam is a caring principal/administrator who showed a passion for student learning and knew students could be successful. Sam earned his teaching credentials at a local university through an alternative licensure program. He was at another school within the school district, employed as an intermediate classroom teacher (grades four through sixth grade) and was appointed to his first administrative
position at Roosevelt. Prior to his arrival to Roosevelt five years before, Success for All had been implemented and Roosevelt was in the midst of a transformation to becoming a K-6 school. Sam said, “... the expectation I [had] received from the senior administration was to move away from Success for All and move toward the use of the Reader’s Workshop model.” This would be a challenging task with the staff at Roosevelt.

Julia

Several other official Success for All members preceded Julia, the final Success for All member. She worked for Success for All for several years and was working with Roosevelt through the close of the school in 2009. Julia’s involvement with St. Paul Schools was limited to three schools, Roosevelt, Riverview and North End. She stated, “At North End and Riverview I dealt only with the reading coach for half of a year before the contracts were eliminated. The Principal was not involved.” She was not a coach at the other Success for All schools, Prosperity Elementary and Jackson Elementary.

Lynn

Lynn is a master teacher. She has worked in several schools in the urban district for over 25 plus years. She became the facilitator of the Success for All comprehensive reform model. Her demeanor exuded a sense of confidence and trust; she was not intimidating and was very approachable, and teachers felt
comfortable expressing their concerns to her. Lynn had an open door policy and the administrator valued her.

**Jon**

Jon is an ELL teacher who had taught for fifteen years. He has a calm spirit, and demeanor. He previously worked with primary students (grades K--3) on language development and pre--literacy skills and taught reading and writing to grades one, two and three. Because of his knowledge of the developmental aspects of reading and language, combined with his personality, he was selected as the successor to the facilitator of Success for All. Jon was not at Roosevelt when they first implemented Success for All and this was his first leadership and/or administrative position.

**Shirley**

Shirley is a kindergarten teacher and is described by some colleagues as having the personality of a grandmother with her students and parents as well as with her colleagues. Previously she taught sixth grade for thirteen years. She has been teaching for thirty---seven years. Shirley was not at Roosevelt when implementation began, but felt valued as an educator because:

“I had a wonderful facilitator, who realized that I knew something about educating children because I had taught a long time; and she respected that... and her door was open to me and I felt I could always go to her, and I did.”
Martha

Martha is an English Language Learner (ELL) teacher who had been teaching for fifteen years. She was new to Roosevelt and was not teaching at Roosevelt when Success for All was first implemented. Martha was hired in the urban district as an ELL teacher, not as a reading or math teacher. As an ELL teacher, she supported students learning the English language. At Roosevelt, Martha felt she had to compromise her way of teaching the ELL students. Martha stated, “Traditionally phonics is kind of ‘pooh---poohed’ in the ELL world; there isn’t enough emphasis on comprehension, which is really the most important element for ELL students.” Martha knew that the ELL student needs extra time for visuals and comprehension.

Lucy

Lucy is a middle-aged woman teaching Gifted and Talented (G/T) students. She has worked in education from the time she graduated either part time or full time. She has been at Roosevelt for about eight years, supporting instruction in various ways as a Science, Technology, Environment, and Math (STEM), remedial reading and math teacher. She taught several types of reading programs depending upon what the school implemented at the time. Lucy was involved in the implementation of Success for All.

Yvonne

Yvonne is a classroom teacher who has been teaching for thirty-five years and has taught either second or third grade at Roosevelt for that amount of time. While
Yvonne is a soft-spoken individual, she has a passion for verbalizing her viewpoint with regard to educational matters and the education of children. I classified her as a master teacher. She stated, “I knew things the children needed to know, so I made sure, even if the Success for All program didn’t touch on it, somewhere in the lesson I was able to talk about or discuss it.” Yvonne is knowledgeable about curriculum and has been exposed to a variety of initiatives, curricula, and programs implemented by the school, district and state during her tenure.

Jean

Jean is the school counselor. She is self-assertive and outspoken. If she doesn’t like something, she doesn’t have any problem letting you know her feelings. Jean has worked in the field of education for thirty-four years. She was a classroom teacher and went back to school to become a counselor. Jean has been at Roosevelt for eight years and was not here when they first implemented the Success for All comprehensive reform model.

Robert

Robert is the school psychologist, who has worked in education for thirty years. He was a high school psychology teacher early in his career, however now he is a fulltime psychologist. He is an advocate for students and parents. Robert feels the research on Success for All is well grounded because, “...seems to be effective and seems to be working at least at Roosevelt. The family involvement component, I think in many ways is probably one of the more challenging parts and that can
always use improvement. But I don’t think of it as a negative. I think we can always do a more effective job of problem solving around students who are at risk and that’s the piece that I’m directly involved with.” Robert further expressed, “the only thing about Success for All that bothered me occasionally was that it sometimes took on the sense of a cult, and I don’t think this was the intention of the writers or the developers, but it could take on the tenor of a cult.”

**Monica**

Monica is a third grade classroom teacher. She is a very quiet individual, however, she is a team player and collaborates with her team. She values the expertise and knowledge of her colleagues. Monica was part of the staff that first implemented Success for All. She was in favor of implementing the Success for All program, however she reluctantly stated, “Well, we didn’t know what we were getting into because we had to have some sort of reading program.” Monica said, “Everybody has had a fair chance of voicing their opinion whether they wanted to or not.”

**April**

April is very outgoing with a self-described “bubbly personality” and “loves the children.” She has been teaching for thirteen years, either first or second grade. April is dedicated to the education of her students. This passion extends to other duties like the after-school program where she is site coordinator of the Area Learning Center (ALC) for Roosevelt. April was in favor of the implementation of
Success for All. She expressed, “We definitely needed a reform model, and it was important to be on the same page.”

**Becky**

Becky is a first grade teacher who has been teaching for about ten years. She is generally quiet, except for talking about her passion for the students and instruction. Her personality can be outspoken, energetic, and courageous. Becky remembered the process of Success for All implementation as “stressful”. She said, “There was a little pressure, we either had to do this [Success for All] or be told what to do.”

**Holly**

Holly is an ELL teacher who was at Roosevelt when Success for All was implemented. She taught a year after implementation and transferred to another school within the district. Holly stated, “I am glad I chose to leave, as the program did not meet my educational philosophies and I was in teaching for the students, not to socialize with my colleagues. I was not feeling the joy of teaching anymore and dreaded going to work each day.”

**Angela**

Angela was an ELL teacher and parent of a Roosevelt Elementary student. She joined the staff at Roosevelt when the population of ELL students increased and we
needed to service those students. She was not at the school when Success for All was adopted as a reform model.

**Jill**

Jill was an Educational Assistant (EA), tutor for the Success for All program, and as well the parent of a Roosevelt student. Jill was not part of the implementation process for Success for All, however, as a parent she was part of the parental involvement aspect of the reform model.

**Summary**

In this chapter, I described my methodology for research. Within the methodology, I presented the research design, which included a rationale for the case study approach and methods of data collection and analysis. I described the setting of the study and provided a description of the participants interviewed for the research. The next chapter presents the study's findings and the themes that emerged from the data.
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

This case study explored the impact of the Success for All model on Roosevelt Elementary and its school community. Chapter Four presents the participants' observations and in-depth interview results. Focused findings were organized thematically, and participant confidentiality was protected by the use of pseudonyms.

Seventeen individuals participated in the study and their interview responses were analyzed thematically. Eight of the seventeen participants had at least thirty years of education experience, four of the seventeen had fifteen years of school related background, three had ten years or less of experience, and two participants were parents of Roosevelt School students who were also employed by the school. The participants represented a broad range of educational roles, including classroom teacher, English Language Learner instructor, principal, counselors, psychologist, and educational assistant.

The themes that emerged from interviews with the participants related to Trust, primarily reflected in the relationship between the participants and the Success for All mentors, although also involving peer relationships; Standardization of Learning, primarily concerned with participant comfort level with the relatively prescriptive instructional methodologies inherent in Success for All; Creativity/Flexibility, relating to how teachers found creative and flexible ways to adapt to the
new expectations for themselves and for their students; and **Success/Pride**, reflected as a sense of accomplishment as the educators began to see positive results from their efforts and watched their students gain academic skills and confidence in reading. Additional themes of accountability, resistance, and abandonment are also included.

**Trust**

*Merriam-Webster* (2017) defines trust as reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something and one in which confidence is placed. Issues relating to trust (and in some cases distrust) were expressed by multiple participants who found themselves dealing with new rituals and practices; with high expectations for major behavioral change; with altered interpersonal relationships (some colleagues they had already worked with now had different roles); and with new interpersonal relationships (mutual trust needed to be developed with the external Success for All observers who served in the unique dual roles of program coach and monitor).

Participants expressed the trust and distrust between themselves and the Roosevelt staff facilitator and the Success for All team members in their interviews. Martha, in spite of not having been at Roosevelt during implementation, was able to develop a trust relationship with the Success for All facilitator Lynn. Lynn was a well-known Roosevelt staff member who many teachers knew prior to her accepting the role of school-level facilitator for the Success for All project. Martha noted that the facilitator “was very conscious of making me feel comfortable, letting me know that it
takes a while to get used to the schedule and procedures."

Kindergarten teacher Shirley also developed a trust relationship with Success for All facilitator Lynn based on the professional respect she felt she received from Lynn and that Lynn made herself readily available. Shirley stated, “I had a wonderful facilitator, Lynn, who realized that I knew something because I had taught a long time; and (she) respected that. Her door was always open to me and I felt I could always go in to see her…. and I did.”

Holly expressed trust issues related more to her colleagues than to Success for All personnel directly. She felt some teachers did not trust the systems or the administrators enough to be honest with them. She expressed her experience with colleagues:

One aspect of Success for All that was the most frustrating and professionally discordant for me was that some teachers simply nodded their heads during the trainings and would go into their rooms and do their own teaching without using the structures of the Success for All program. These teachers disagreed with the Success for All program and the policing of the time controlled aspects of the program, but did not speak up. This left other teachers seemingly ‘complaining’ when concerns were raised about the efficacy of the program.”

Interviewees generally described the relationship with the Success for All facilitators and with peers as positive. Monica said, “I guess we’ve been here together too long, we’re comfortable with each other. And Lynn makes sure you really, you know, receive constructive criticism, and she needs to know you learn
from those comments.” Monica noted that familiarity with known educators in the situation created a trusting atmosphere, even when roles changed. She commented on Jon, as he moved into the Roosevelt Success for All facilitator role, and noted that, “He’s been a Wings teacher and a literacy teacher, so we’ve been working together for a while, so that is okay.”

April, a second grade teacher who stated that she “gets nervous when observed,” affirmed that she developed sufficient trust of facilitator Lynn to disclose when she did not understand a concept. “I’d ask her to sit there and help me if I didn’t understand how to do something and she would. Or I’d ‘show off,’ if we’d just done something great, you know.” Regarding Jon, April remarked as he took over Success for All responsibilities that “he’s really learning, he’s got really big shoes to fill, and I think he’s going to come along just fine.”

Becky, a first grade teacher who noted she was generally very comfortable with people observing in her room, disclosed that trust issues had to be continually evaluated. Her comments indicated the person-specific nature of the trust issues. Regarding times when Lynn observed her teaching, she stated:

I feel fine because I, I don’t know, a lot of people always come to my classroom. It really, really doesn’t bother me. But I know sometimes Lynn will come and she’ll make comments, and then she’ll just stay there like for a second, and she’ll walk away and then you don’t think about it, and then until later.

Becky went on to say, “Jon, since this is his first year, you know he’s still learning everything; I maybe saw him twice this year. Jon didn’t bother me because he just,
you know, sometimes he’ll talk to the kids and see how things are going, but you know he doesn’t make comments to me.”

Lynn, the Success for All facilitator, created an environment that was based on trust and personal relationships. She gained the trust of the teachers in order to do her job. Lynn described the reaction to her observations of teachers:

That was not a problem because I had so much classroom experience and I did not try to know everything but rather worked with and built on people's success and strengths. They knew I would help with discipline and provide what they need.

Interview responses disclosed that throughout the implementation and practice of the Success for All program at Roosevelt, intergroup and interpersonal trust development remained a major theme for both Roosevelt and Success for All staff members. Learning whom individuals could trust was expressed in both positive and somewhat less than positive ways. Some of the Roosevelt participants communicated that they felt positively about the official Success for All observers, that they were genuinely very well versed in the instruction of Success for All, and that they could be trusted not to judge, but rather to guide the teachers through the process. Other teachers had interesting descriptions of the various official Success for All observers and articulated less trustful or positive views. Martha described one as a person who was “very severe and never smiled, and she didn’t seem to understand that we needed affirmation.” April described the Success for All observers as the “Success for All Police.” Holly referred to the implementation visits as “Stress for All,” a play on Success for All.
Trust /distrust issues went both ways. According to Success for All official Julia, her initial reception by both the staff and principal was “not welcoming.” Julia felt she had come at a time when leadership was transitioning for Roosevelt, intensified by a new superintendent and union changes. She sensed that teachers were not receptive and remembered one specific visit when “the staff refused to meet with me and I ended up sitting by the reading coach’s desk and catching folks [teachers] as they left the ladies room to talk about their students.” Julia’s experience changed, however, over the course of the support visits. She noted that feelings improved and trust began to develop as the principal began to see the value of the reform model and how the changes in mindset were beginning to enrich the students and further their academic achievement.

Jon and Lynn had similar attitudes toward the Success for All observers. They both knew the implementation visits were to benefit Roosevelt. Lynn’s experience was with earlier Success for All visitors, and she states, “Although they (Success for All visitors) were stressful it was a new set of eyes that helped us strengthen what we were doing. I liked some and did not like others. I made a decision as to who to listen to.” Jon stated,

When I walk with a Success for All visitor, there are two things that can happen. One is that the program is not being implemented as it should be and another is that something is being taught slightly different from what Success for All has prescribed, but it’s been a decision that we have made as a building. When I say as a building, I mean the principal and the teachers, because we try to meet our children’s needs and sometimes we have to do things a little
differently. So that is a decision that I have to defend with Success for All visitors with a rationale as to why we are doing what we are doing.

The two facilitators choose different ways to handle the Success for All observers.

**Standardization of Learning**

A major theme that emerged from the interviews and that was confirmed through observation had to do with participant comfort level with the relatively prescriptive instructional methodologies inherent in Success for All. Prior to the implementation of Success for All, Roosevelt’s reading instruction was different in every classroom. Mary described what was occurring: “People were teaching reading, but they were teaching reading based on their own theory of how children learn. Some of the teachers taught using full group, others did it within small groups and within their own classroom.” The variation was partly what motivated Mary’s decision to research reading programs leading to comprehensive reform models. After attending a conference that confirmed her position, her statement to staff was that, “We need to be in the forefront with accountability and ahead of the ball game. It was something that I knew that was going to happen throughout the United States.” Both Mary and Lynn thought the Success for All program was very achievable and believed that it could work for all children, regardless of color or income level.

Lynn saw the need for a school-wide curriculum and noted that to succeed, it would need to be “effectively monitored and easily accomplished with all the support needed.” Lynn sensed that “too many times a curriculum is introduced and then the
doors are closed and it is not monitored, or materials are not provided and teachers reinvent the wheel. But each wheel is different and therefore not able to be evaluated.”

Prescribed instruction was new and challenging for teachers. Martha and Holly both worked with the ELL population. With Success for All, they were teaching reading to ELL students and later servicing the ELL student needs. Martha felt a particular challenge with timing, “Knowing what to do when and then trying to fit it all into a 90 minute program is difficult enough. Trying to do that with the ELL kids who need extra time for visuals and comprehension is a big, important deal for them.”

Holly had strong thoughts about prescribed instruction, “Success for All is a highly time dependent/controlled program and does not allow time or materials to build background knowledge and introduce unfamiliar vocabulary.” She added that the “Success for All program was supplanting reading instruction for ELL students. ELL students were and are legally entitled to instruction that supplements the curriculum.” All students received Success for All instruction, and “it was considered the students’ ELL instruction if they received their Success for All lessons taught by an ELL teacher.”

Jon was comfortable with the organizational consistency of the program. He noted the chunking of time with the four components of the reading program. He described it as “being given 20 minutes for fast track phonics, and then we move to the next component, which is the shared story, and then we’re given X amount of time for the next component, and so forth.”
Becky, on the other hand, did not like the time constraints on instruction. She said, “It’s a little stressful, and sometimes it’s a little irritating because if I’m right in the middle of something but time is up, or the kids don’t get it, I have to move on because the book (manual) tells me I have to move on.” While Becky had a good relationship with her Success for All team and embraced elements of the reform model, she took the instructional time constraints personally and felt they negatively impacted the professional instruction of her students.

Monica struggled with the change of instruction and expressed “mild depression” with the reform model. She said, “Well, I guess I’m just overwhelmed with all the new things that are added every year.” She felt Success for all has taken over, “Success for All cannot be interrupted and dictates a big part of our building schedule.” She noted frustration and described the Success for All model of instruction as “like constantly switching, and it’s 20 minutes of this, and move on to the next part, just constantly moving.”

The Success for All prescribed twenty minutes of reading nightly for homework as an extension of instruction. Like most teachers, Yvonne thought this was important and was a way of connecting with parents, of supporting the child, and of personalizing the reading for the individual child. Jon, however, expressed concern that the expectation was unrealistic for some families. He stated that the “20 minutes of reading is not going to be something that will take place at every home, for every family, for every child.” Robert felt the requirement was “realistic and appropriate for some, but not for every family.” April went further to comment on the importance of the homework component and to stress that if students did not get
homework done at home, then there were systems to help them complete the work during the day at school.

Jean worked with the entire school population and recognized the domination of the Success for All instruction philosophy in the building. She expressed that teachers were generally accommodating and that whether individual teachers were comfortable with the changes or not, the Success for All systems “dominate the consciousness of the classroom teacher.”

April expressed concern about the time-bound, prescribed nature of the Success for All instructional model and also described concern with the financial aspects of Success for All. April noted that Success for All “was suddenly the Bible, and supposed to be the best thing ever. We had to fix a lot of it, which --- for as expensive as the program was --- bothered a lot of people. I was one of those people who most bothered!” She recalled that when Success for All was first implemented, “I remember setting that timer, and thinking: Wait! This is a teachable moment! I don’t want to stop and go on to the next thing! But I’ve learned now how to wrap things up and stay on track, because it works better if you do.” April stated that she found the Success for All prescribed instruction workable when you got used to it, but claimed that other teachers she talked to found it constricting.
Creativity/Flexibility

In addition to reactions to the specific standardization of instructional timing built into the Success for All instructional model, another major theme that emerged from participant interviews related to instruction of curriculum, but within a broader context. The impact of the Success for All model on individual and collective creativity and flexibility was a concern for both teachers and administration. Initial concerns were deeply held, and several teachers expressed that they wanted to leave the building or did not buy into Success for All. Mary stated, “I think they thought it was going to take all creativity away from them and that it was going to be very structured, that you couldn’t deviate from it, and couldn’t add to it. And indeed,” she continued, “The program initially was very structured. As we implemented it, there were areas that allowed flexibility, but it (the program) was done as a team and it was decision making process always focused on the outcome.” As teachers became more familiar with the program, she added, “what we did was modify, we don’t change the program.”

Interesting comparisons arose when it became known that some teachers now using Success for All had previously had experience instructing with another reading program, Companion Reading, before the adoption of Success for All. Like Success for All, Companion Reading was research based. Companion Reading is considered a more flexible model and is promoted as a reading program, whereas Success for All is a broader based program, with the reading instruction serving as a major element of a school---wide reform initiative.

Yvonne remembered Roosevelt School as having had some degree of success
with Companion Reading. She stated, “kids could pick up any book and read any word, but they couldn’t comprehend what they were reading, whereas with Success for All, they can understand what they read.”

Becky’s experience started with teaching Companion Reading. She assessed the program as being more flexible and creative than Success for All program. Becky said, “a little more creativity yes, because you can do more things with it. There was only one little manual and you didn’t have to follow it to the T, and there was no timer.”

April and Monica both agreed there was some lost instructional creativity. However, they found that the Success for All “Adventures in Writing” component brought excellent opportunities for creativity. April reported that she was told by Success for All staff that if she felt she had something better that followed the line of what the objective is to be taught, she could use it. Monica stated, “You can do your own adventures in writing, as long as it’s connected to the story.”

Becky articulated that due to the time and curricular constraints that Success for All put on each component, some teachers really didn’t have time to do anything else creatively. Yvonne, however, reported that after several years using the Success for All methods, when she knew the program well enough, she became very creative within the program parameters. She said, “There was enough leeway there that you could be more creative with the way you taught.”
Success/Pride

Most of the staff present during the initial Success for All program period expressed great pride in the accomplishments that Roosevelt had attained once implementation was underway. The district superintendent for their academic progress recognized Roosevelt staff for several years. (See Appendix E and Appendix F) Mary reflected that she was “pleased with the program and its results.” Initially, Mary was cautious because the key to implementation of the program was having a good facilitator, a person who understood both the teachers’ concerns and the specific process of Success for All implementation. Mary felt the success with the staff was due primarily to the facilitator [Lynn] who had established a “trusting environment.” Lynn remembers being “skeptical of Success for All at first until I saw it in action and was able to visualize how effective it could be if done well.”

Robert reported that for him, the impact of Success for All has been extremely positive. “We are having more success with more students than we would have had without it and there is a sense of cohesion among the staff that didn’t use to exist.” He remembered back to the days when, in his words, “basically pretty much every teacher did their own thing. Then the previous principal started the process of bringing the staff together and insisted that we all focus on goals for the kids.” Robert felt that, “Mary really did a very nice job gently pulling everybody along, and I think that you know there really is something to be said for common curriculum and common strategies and common vocabulary so that everybody can communicate about what is going on.”
Sam, at the time of his appointment to Roosevelt, sensed the pride. Even the physical building environment displayed the sense of pride. He stated, “The staff was hardworking and had displayed banners in the office to show off the academic achievements they had earned.” He noted that the staff voiced their positive opinions that improved standardized test results were a “direct result of the school-wide implementation of Success for All and the commitment to fidelity to the program.” Sam named part of the demonstrated success as “positive numbers of the third grade students reading at grade level.” Later as Sam analyzed Roosevelt’s academic performance closely, he noticed a “plateau” in the data. Roosevelt at the time was under a directive from the Superintendent to expand from K-3 to K-5 and Sam was expected by the district administration to move away from the Success for All model and move the school towards the Reader’s Workshop model.

Jon was very passionate when he reported, “Success for All has worked for us.” He further stated, “Our staff has seen the success that we have had with the program – that has been positive, I would say, because when we thought about having a unified writing curriculum, it was because we had seen that Success for All worked.” He credited the idea of having a unified writing curriculum for the building to the fact “that we had been successful with Success for All.”

Jon suggested that the Success for All experience demonstrated to the Roosevelt community that they could change, grow, and see things from a different perspective by organizing their thinking. He continued, “The idea was to have a challenging curriculum so that every child is exposed to good learning, good teaching and quality curriculum.”
Becky and Monica both felt Success for All was beneficial to most students, if not necessarily all. Monica stated that Success for All was a really good program that was “benefiting every child in our school, whether with oral reading or comprehension.” Becky responded that it remains more intense for the second language learner, because comprehension is inherently more difficult for the ELL learner who does not necessarily share the same life experiences and oral language background of first language speakers.

Yvonne was personally pleased with Success for All, referring to it as a solid program. “Our students are learning skills that make them good writers, besides being good readers." Yvonne said the new skills transfer into other subjects, and students are better able “to build background knowledge with non-fiction, social studies and science.”

Lynn was excited to share that from her perspective, the Success for All reform model benefitted all students. She claimed:

Special needs students worked with trained teachers and often moved out and up. Gifted students were challenged and held to a higher standard. Others moved in when ready. Because all students moved for reading no one felt as though they were having difficulties.

Jill tutored students and felt “privileged” to help students make academic progress. Students were tutored for six weeks. Jill described the students, “as able to leave the tutoring session within the six weeks feeling successful and with demonstrated academic growth.” Jill believed many students benefited from “one---
on—-one tutoring” and that tutoring sessions greatly helped individual students get caught up to where they should be academically.

Angela, a foster parent, was impressed with the Spanish component, which instructed first in Spanish and then transitioned into English. She described her foster son’s experience with Success for All as “miraculous!” He was able to read at a grade 2 level in Spanish in first grade and was reading at grade level in English by the end of first grade!” Her son is fluent in both Spanish and English.

Appendix E. shows the percentages of Roosevelt Elementary School students who achieved proficiency on the Minnesota Comprehensive Reading Assessment (MCA) test in the five—year period during Success for All implementation. The percentages and the letter confirm the legitimacy of the school community’s pride.

**Follow—up Interviews: Accountability, Resistance, and Abandonment**

After the study was complete the urban district closed Roosevelt Elementary. Through follow—up interviews, I was able to further examine some of the participants’ feelings and additional longer—term impacts of the Success for All implementation.

Roosevelt Elementary School went through many transitions since the initial implementation of Success for All. Attendance was initially for K---3 students, adding a grade per year until it became a K---6 school. The administrator was promoted, the facilitator retired, a new administrator was hired, a bridging of Success for All and Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop was put into practice. And then, the district closed Roosevelt School. The following section addresses some of the staff’s perspectives
since Roosevelt was closed with regard to their sense of accountability, resistance, and abandonment.

**Accountability**

Out of all the participants in the study, none of them emphasized school-wide accountability. However, accountability was a significant part of Mary’s purpose of investigating a comprehensive reform model.

Mary wanted to be in the “forefront with accountability,” the educational “buzz” word at the time. When Mary was seeking a comprehensive reform model, the educational journals, educational conferences and discussions at the state and federal level were centered around school reform and the need for greater accountability. The literature Mary researched was rich with calls for accountability in instruction and accountability for children and their families in order for schools to be more successful. “Successful” in the contemporaneous rhetoric was (and remains) highly tied to (easy to quantify) test score performance.

**Resistance**

Senior district administration expected Roosevelt to implement Reader’s Workshop school-wide. It was like a tug-of-war. Sam had experience with Reader’s Workshop and noted its demonstrated success, responses to students’ reading needs, and researched student growth in reading skills. Eight out of the fifteen teachers in the school, however, each with over 30 years of teaching experience, disagreed with the district. Several participants with years of professional development and proven
results with Success for All resisted the idea of switching to a reading program that appeared to have no definable structure. Teachers and the principal resisted the changes. Participants recall the district having professional development designed specifically to bridge Success for All with the Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop structure. Additionally, at this time the district was embarking on adoption of new curricular materials from Mondo Publishing. Participants reported being overwhelmed, and expressed feelings of confusion, desire for resistance, and betrayal.

Julia experienced the resistance as push back from the teachers and from the senior administration at the district level. She expressed her concern that “the teachers did not want to be observed or have feedback sessions with me after ‘forced’ observations. They felt it was evaluative rather than support.” Initially the purpose for the support was not clarified and leadership did not strongly support the efforts, so there were not clear expectations for staff. As the year progressed, the principal worked at becoming more of an instructional leader in the building and tried to initiate his own learning walkthroughs of classrooms. His efforts were hampered, however, by the perception that he was now “part of the system.”

Abandonment

Angela, in thinking about the Success for All program, felt the urban district had abandoned the Success for All curriculum and the professional development it provided for English Language Learners (ELL) teachers. She said the Success for All program “provided all the tools needed and a clear curriculum so that I could focus
more on student need and growth and less on finding the resources and materials.” She further explained that the professional development providing “ongoing training and coaching to improve our teaching” was lost. Angela felt that losing the curriculum, training, and coaching made for a “difficult transition” to Reader's and Writer's Workshop, much less to Mondo materials. She expressed disappointment that there was little to no training and limited coaching to assist teachers in “trying to navigate and adapt to a new curriculum that was lacking.”

**Summary**

Chapter Four shared the data gathered from interviews and observations of participants in the implementation of the Success for All reform model at Roosevelt Elementary School. Participant responses were organized by emergent themes, and related to Trust, Standardization of Learning, Creativity/Flexibility, and Success/Pride. Additional follow-up interviews explored education’s emphasis on accountability, and reviewed participant responses of resistance and the sense of abandonment to district policies. Administration policies had resulted in changes in the curriculum and resulted in the closing of Roosevelt Elementary School. The next Chapter presents the study's implications and recommendations.
CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the case study findings, implications of the study, and recommendations for educators instituting similar reform models. The research project focused on the Success for All program’s implementation at Roosevelt Elementary School and the impact of that process for selected participants in the Roosevelt community. Seventeen persons participated as subjects, and data from interviews and observations were analyzed thematically. The study identified the following main themes: trust, standardization of learning, creativity/flexibility, and success/pride. Additional themes that materialized were accountability, resistance, and abandonment.

Findings

The outcomes of the Success for All program implementation at Roosevelt Elementary School in St. Paul, Minnesota, were generally perceived as positive for members of the school community. Student success was the ultimate aim of the implementation; increased student achievement was externally verified by both improved test scores and by district and Success for All recognition. Much of the credit for the positive results was attributed to a leadership style which fostered
broad buy-in from the very beginning of the project. As soon as it had been determined that the school would incorporate a reading-centered reform model, school leadership made certain that staff had ownership in all decisions, including on the critical decision about which model to select. The staff at Roosevelt had, as a whole, agreed upon the implementation of Success for All, based on teacher teams observing Success for All in operation at other schools locally and around the country. Leadership consistently addressed major issues to dispel stakeholder concerns and was transparent with the staff. The school maximized efforts for the reform practice by working collaboratively on implementation of each of the program’s major components (90 minutes of instruction, parent involvement, attendance, 20 minutes of reading as nightly homework, and tutoring). The stability of leadership and teacher positivity influenced the reform. Ongoing monitoring and refinement of best practice strategies were central aspects of Success for All, as required by the program.

While not the focus of this case study, which concentrated on only one school setting, Roosevelt’s success with implementation occurred concurrently with other school building reform initiative attempts. Not all were as successful as the Roosevelt project. Roosevelt’s positive achievement in adopting and implementing a reform model is highlighted when compared with the difficulties faced by other schools attempting the same type of change. For example, in an article in The Atlantic, Lemann (November, 1998) discussed how New York P. S. 114 took three attempts to get a vote of 80 percent of its teachers to agree to implement Success for All. He suggested that their reluctance was the perception that Success for All "takes
over a school and substantially limits teachers' freedom" (part 3). At Roosevelt, findings indicated that, despite early concerns, through the cooperative work of teacher teams, program observers, and facilitators, most interviewees did not find the Success for All techniques and creative instruction to be mutually exclusive concepts.

While a majority of the participants, regardless of experience, used the Success for All curricula as prescribed, those participants with extensive teaching experience reported being more comfortable with incorporating creative instructional strategies. Participants noted that over time they were increasingly able to creatively modify their instruction within the scope of the program. Acceptable variations within the program were determined through collaborative efforts involving teachers, facilitators, and Success for All observers. Ultimate decisions were made based on the likelihood of the variation positively impacting student outcomes.

Most of the participants at some point during the interviews expressed some level of unease with the strict time constraints required in the Success for All model. They also reported having more control of lesson timing during the writing aspect of the program and some found their creative instructional niche in that portion of the program.

Administration appreciated the accountability aspect of the reform model, noting school-wide gains in student test scores. Teachers spoke less about the broad accountability element of the program, and tended to discuss accountability, instead, in terms of one of their individual student’s successful achievement gains. Emphasis
throughout the implementation was on instruction to attain improved student outcomes and gains were emphasized by the facilitator. While implementing Success for All, Roosevelt students made rapid and steady improvement, according to measurement on the state Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments. The successes were recognized with the Superintendent’s Award for Continuous Improvement and by the Success for All Foundation.

Staff and the school community expressed pride in their accomplishments while recognizing that sustaining school improvement was an ongoing challenge. Continuing hurdles to overcome included, among others, issues of: student mobility, veteran and new staff movement, the need to develop teacher leaders, promotion of administrators, changes in district administration, and diminishing resources. These realities suggested that any reform initiatives undertaken in rapidly changing urban school settings would be undertaken within a tumultuous setting.

Factors affecting student mobility are often beyond the control of school personnel, as educators work within the parameter of a district and the resources of Success for All or similar programs. Frequent school level and district level personnel movements can make it difficult to sustain positive program momentum. Changes in personnel were sometimes seen as creating setbacks for the project, but participants in this study generally credited much of the success of the implementation to relatively stable, effective administrative and teacher leadership. When changes were necessary, administration carefully considered individuals from within and were mindful of the school’s goal of continuous improvement of student achievement.
Experienced staff advancement to administration, district administrative changes and diminishing resources did, however, eventually impact the sustainability of the reform and its successful performance. As time progressed, some participants rebelled when the original administrator was replaced with a new and less experienced administrator. Some participants became less cooperative when Success for All officials visited. Tension was increasingly obvious between teachers, Success for All officials, and the administration. This negative energy influenced the performance of the reform model and participants noted that there was a breakdown of trust, communication and support.

The district administration was in transition as well. Participants reported that both the previous and current superintendent had supported the reform and its efforts in aligning state, district and school aspirations. Support had been in the form of funding to provide consulting, facilitators/instructional coaches, and professional development for teachers. A decline in the impact of the Roosevelt School Success for All program became inevitable when the funding was curtailed and when the new school level administrator was given a directive to essentially halt the reform effort. While the directive was subtle, using descriptive words like blending or bridging the Success for All reform model with Mondo materials and with Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop strategies, it was obvious that the district was moving on with different expectations. Some participants who had expended enormous effort into effectively implementing Success for All felt unsupported and abandoned.
Implications

Effective programmatic changes take time and sustained support.

Effective schools fundamentally intend to educate students to become capable, lifelong learners equipped with the abilities needed to contribute to the common good. Educational reform models such as Success for All attempt to provide a means to achieve that end. Effective utilization of any such program requires both time and sustained support.

Many changes occurred in the district during the years that Roosevelt was implementing Success for All, and the initial support for the model was not apparent at the district level in later years. A disconnect between the school and the district was noticed by Julia, a Success for All official. She had commented that, “In order for any reform change model to be successful, three criteria need to be in place for all the different levels within the system, (at leadership, teacher, and student levels). These three ingredients include a clear understanding of expectations; providing adequate support to ensure success; and finally, building a system of accountability.” The Success for All initiative at Roosevelt eventually was not able to sustain its success without adequate support, the second ingredient listed by Julia.

At the school level there were changes in teacher leadership and administration. The administration at the district level and the building administration were not always consistent in their priorities, and the emphasis became more on rewards and accolades instead of what was right for students to be successful. Ultimately accountability, resistance, and abandonment emerged as
factors in the waning influence of the Success for All program at Roosevelt Elementary.

Some participants reported feeling that superintendents had ambitious ideas and attempted major changes with insufficient staff development support and with inadequate research to determine if the changes were succeeding. Before giving programs an opportunity to be successful, they moved on to something else.

The phenomenon of the short-term-fix mentality has been evident at the state and national levels as well as at the district level. Educational laws are changing and new ideas are often not given the benefit of full implementation before there is a change to something else. For example, both emphasis and standards changed between the No Child Left Behind (2002) legislation, under the Bush administration and the Obama administration’s Every Student Succeeds Act (2015). How can Success for All or any other reform model succeed when changes are not given time to work?

Success for All listened to the teachers’ concerns, but with the change in district administration’s emphasis on data driven instruction, the Roosevelt School community was told the district was moving from Success for All to the Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop model, and would be using new Mondo materials. Success for All assessed students every eight weeks and moved students accordingly, but that pattern was apparently not sufficient to satisfy new district requirements.

Working with dissenters to make them supporters is critical to the success of a new program. While a majority of staff at Roosevelt School supported the Success for All program, there were a few who opposed the program. They were
an anomaly. The anomaly sometimes posed a threat or danger to the Success for All program. Lincoln (1989) suggested:

it is possible to see how an anomaly may both pose danger to and be exposed to danger from the taxonomic order in which it is anomalous, just as deviants are considered outlaws when the legitimacy of legal systems is affirmed, but rebel when such systems are judged illegitimate” (p. 165).

If leadership had not dealt with those individuals, they might have had a negative effect on the morale of the staff, test scores, student performance and all aspects of the Success for All program. The dissenters did not respond to the facilitator’s subtle monitoring and continued to promote negativism at every opportunity. The principal needed to deal with those individuals, and did so effectively, because the administrator has the ultimate say in the reputation of the school and in maintaining the vision created.

Leadership continued to manage the anomaly on an individual basis. Ms. Rosario used various strategies to win the dissenters over, for example, by inviting them to join the leadership team or having them serve on committees reviewing data related to developing a more inclusive approach for Roosevelt. She helped the individuals see the big picture of the Success for All program and how aspects of the program positively affected Roosevelt. Eventually, while some dissenters joined the dominant culture, a few skeptics remained. If the anomaly had not been dealt with, the dominant culture might have felt unsupported by leadership.
Rewards can be used strategically to encourage the success of a new program. Too often, behaviors that we do not want to encourage are the ones that are in reality rewarded. For example, the child who acts out often gets much more of the parent’s attention than the child who consistently is well behaved. There was a need at Roosevelt to make accountability to the Success for All program approach part of the formal reward structure, the teachers’ performance evaluation system. For leadership to continue to be strong or effective, it needed to approach each situation from the view of teacher accountability and responsibility to parents and students, community members and officials of the Success for All program.

**General Recommendations**

- There must be investment in programs and practices for early intervention to insure that students gain the knowledge and skills needed to make choices in their lives.

- There is a need for policy makers and educators to implement practical and innovative programs for disadvantaged students to reverse the trend of generational poverty and low graduation rates for those who have limited opportunity to advance their education and professional careers.

- There has to be greater alignment of state, district, and building objectives for any significant changes to occur and for all levels to be accountable for their actions.

- In order to succeed, new reforms or programming must include all stakeholders - including administrators, teachers, students, school board members, parents, and
others. Leaders must foster project ownership from all stakeholders. If all stakeholder categories are not involved, program success is unlikely.

- Trust and transparency are necessary for any new program.
- School districts must give any new programming time to work.
- School improvement does not occur in a vacuum. There must be accountability, but there must also be recognition of resistance as a normal element in any major change process. Those who are slow in accepting the changes (the Rogers Curve predicts about 16 per cent of laggards with most innovations [2003]) need additional support instead of condemnation. (See Figure 5.1)
Classic Adoption Curve

Diffusion of Innovations according to Everett Rogers.

Figure 5.1


Recommendations for St. Paul Public Schools

□ New programs should be implemented only after there is adequate preparation of administration and staff.

□ Each innovative program should have enough time to determine its effectiveness before a replacement program is started.

□ A new superintendent must be adequately prepared to understand the expectations of the school board and staff in order to be effective.

□ The program for developing new school leaders should include lessons on how to create and/or support innovative programs.

Summary and Closing Thoughts

This research study focused on the implementation process of one reform model in one urban elementary school. While such reform initiatives have an ultimate goal of improving student academic achievement, the process also impacts the larger school community --- administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Rather than concentrating primarily on quantitative test score data as indicators of program impact, this study focused on analyzing the effects of the program for various stakeholders. Employing a case study approach, data sources included analyzed audiotaped interviews; observations of subjects; school district information; comprehensive assessment test results and Success for All Foundation materials. Findings were developed relating to trust, standardization of learning, creativity/flexibility, success/pride, accountability, resistance and abandonment. Implications for educational leadership and recommendations were identified.
Chapter Five provided the findings of this case study and then used those findings to suggest implications and recommendations derived from the “lessons learned” from the Roosevelt experience. Implications included that effective programmatic changes take time and sustained support; that working with dissenters to make them supporters is critical to the success of a new program; and that rewards can be used strategically to encourage the success of a new program. The recommendations addressed practical issues involved in implementation of innovative reform programs, the types of programs that are increasingly being tried to address the persistent and pernicious achievement and opportunity gaps.

How can we best serve students, helping them become discerning citizens, able to contribute to the common good? As an educator, I ask myself that question every day. No one program, no matter how well researched and implemented, can give the full answer, but through the process of working and thoughtfully planning together we can make dramatic progress, as happened in one school in one urban community with one reform model program.

My passion for education and educational programming has grown and evolved over the years. I believe that every student has the potential to achieve and be successful, and I believe every learner can benefit from effective programing implementation. All stakeholders – from school administrators to tax payers – must be willing to give educational reforms the time and support required to create lasting positive effects for learners.
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APPENDICES
Appendix A
Letter of Invitation to Participants

Lynette K. Scott
13620 Bryant Place
Burnsville, MN 55337
952-882-1438  lksaka@aol.com

April 14, 2005

Dear Staff and Parents:

My name is Lynette Scott and I am currently a doctoral candidate at the University of St. Thomas (UST). I am conducting a research study on the Success for All™ (SFA) reading program and its impact on Roosevelt Elementary School.

I would like you to voluntarily participate in individual or group interviews. I will be conducting the interviews utilizing an audio tape recorder. It is very important for me to learn your opinions. Your interview will be strictly confidential. If you feel uncomfortable answering the interview questions, you may withdraw from the study and your information will not be included in any final report published. If you agree to participate in this study I would like you to complete the consent form and return it to me in the enclosed envelope.

If you have any questions, you may contact me at 952-882-1438, or by e-mail at lksaka@aol.com, or my advisor Dr. Bruce H. Kramer at UST 651-962-4894.

Sincerely,

Lynette K. Scott
Doctoral Candidate
University of St. Thomas

Dr. Bruce H. Kramer
University of St. Thomas
Advisor
Appendix B

CONSENT FORM
UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

A Case Study of Roosevelt Elementary School and the Success for All Reading Program
IRB Log Number 05-011-3

I am conducting a study about the Success for All Reading program and Roosevelt Elementary School in Saint Paul Public Schools. I invite you to participate in this research. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a teacher or parent of a student who attends or attended Roosevelt Elementary School. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Lynette Scott, doctoral candidate, Dr. Bruce H. Kramer, (advisor) Department of Leadership, Policy and Administration.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to examine the Success for All reading program at Roosevelt Elementary School. This study may benefit administrators seeking to understand the perception of the Success for All Reading program at Roosevelt Elementary School.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following: Participate in individual or group, audio taped, interviews lasting approximate 30 minutes. There may be a need to participate in follow-up interviews based on initial responses.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

The study has the potential for possible risks. The possible risk would be your identity revealed in an unfavorable response or comment. The risk of being identified is unlikely. I will take precautions by using pseudonyms for individuals and the school. The only persons having access to the transcribed interviews will be me and the transcriber who will sign a confidentiality statement.

There is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study.
Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept confidential. In any sort of report I publish, I will not include information that will make it possible to identify you in any way. Research records will be kept in a locked file cabinet in my personal home office. I am the only person who will have access to the data. A transcriber and myself will have access to audio taped recordings. After transcription I will listen and read the transcribed interviews for accuracy. All transcribed notes and audio tapes will be kept confidential and stored for five years in a locked file in my basement. The data collected will be used for educational purposes and will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Roosevelt Elementary School or the University of St. Thomas. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. Should you decide to withdraw, data collected about you will not be used.

Contacts and Questions

My name is Lynette Scott. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me at 952-882-1438 or Dr. Bruce H. Kramer at 651-962-4894. You may also contact the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board at 651-962-5341 with any questions or concerns.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to participate in the study. I give my permission to have my interview audio taped.

______________________________  ______________________
Signature of Study Participant           Date

______________________________  ______________________
Signature of Parent or Guardian (If applicable)           Date

______________________________  ______________________
Signature of Researcher           Date

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Appendix C

Interview Questions

1. What was your reaction when the new reading program came to the school?

2. How did the new reading program affect your thinking about a school wide curriculum?

3. What effect did teaching a prescribed reading program have on you?

4. Have you lost instructional creativity in the classroom because of this reading program? Explain.

5. Discuss the effectiveness of the components of the reading program?

6. Has the reading program helped increase student achievement? Explain.

7. As a parent/teacher has the reading program been beneficial to all the students in the school? Explain.

8. What are your thoughts on the twenty minutes of reading each night for homework?

9. What are your thoughts about the implementation visits from official Success for All members and the visits/observations from the facilitator in the building?

10. Why did you choose to leave the school? Explain.
Appendix D

Follow-up Interview Questions

1. How did you feel when your local urban school district no longer supported Roosevelt and the implementation of Success For All?

2. Did or do you continue to use some of the strategies, materials, ritual, and routines of the Success for All program?

3. How has the loss of the Success for All model impacted your professional career as an educator? Explain.
### Roosevelt Elementary School
#### Reading Results of Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Number of Students Proficient</th>
<th>Percent Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1998</td>
<td>24 of 137</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1999</td>
<td>37 of 134</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2000</td>
<td>47 of 126</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2001</td>
<td>47 of 133</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2002</td>
<td>51 of 128</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of students’ proficient on Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) Reading test in the five-year period during Success for All implementation.
Appendix F

April 19, 2004

The Staff of Roosevelt Elementary
Roosevelt Elementary
160 East Isabel Street
St. Paul, MN 55118

Dear Roosevelt Staff Members,

I wish to express our appreciation for allowing Stacy and I to visit with you on April 13th and 14th. As I review in my mind our visit, we wish to commend you for your dedication to students and commitment to student achievement. It is reflected in everything you do. In retrospect, what makes your school unique as a Success For All school and not a Success for Some or Most school? Roosevelt is a “Success For All” school because:

- It is a “Learning School for All” — for students, staff, and parents. You not only support the learning of students but of each other and your community. There is a presence of master teachers who bring out the best in the faculty.
- It has “High Expectations for All” — Students and Teachers are expected to perform at a high level. No Excuses! Hard work on the part of all stakeholders — teachers, students, and administration.
- There is a “Clear focus on Reading Achievement for All” — the staff and school are not distracted by other concerns; all resources are focused on student successes in reading.
- The use of regular assessment with the focus on continuous student achievement.

I could go on for pages but I want to make this short and to the point so....

I feel the best compliment I could give a staff like yours is the following — “I would not hesitate to send my grandchildren to your school and would be happy with whatever teacher they were assigned.”

Thank you for dedicating your professional life to student success. Keep up the good work!

Jane