New research shows uncertain benefits after grade two

January 15 2013

Education researchers Paul Hanselman and Geoffrey D. Borman have evaluated the impact of literacy instruction in grades 3 through 5. Their findings were published in *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* (*EEPA*) in Online First. *EEPA* is a peer-reviewed journal of the American Educational Research Association.

The researchers examined Success for All, an instructional approach that is among the most mature and proven school reform models, to identify impact on reading achievement among older elementary students. This study, a follow-up to an earlier one that found beneficial effects of Success for All intervention in kindergarten through grade 2, found neither positive nor negative effect from its use in grades 3 through 5. This finding led the researchers to conclude that "Success for All may not be beneficial for students who are not exposed to the program before third grade."

The University of Wisconsin researchers note that only a third of fourth-grade students scored at the proficient level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress in 2009, a reality that provides motivation to expand the body of evidence on the effectiveness of instructional approaches for later elementary students.

Hanselman and Borman report that "Although Success for All instruction seems to be no worse than the alternative, educators and policymakers need to explore more effective strategies to promote stronger impacts for this important policy group." Student mobility—particularly in

schools targeted by school reform—requires evidence of effectiveness of specific interventions independent of earlier instruction.

More information: Hanselman, P., & G. D. Borman (2012). The impacts of success for all on reading achievement in grades 3: Does intervening during the later elementary grades produce the same benefits as intervening early? Advance online publication: doi: 10.3102/0162373712466940

Provided by American Educational Research Association