



Factors that Influence the Implementation of a New Curriculum: Results from Three Years of Implementation

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THE CHALLENGE

Children's School Success (CSS) is a comprehensive curriculum that focuses on literacy, science math and social competence for preschool children who are at risk for school failure

Our challenge was to provide professional development that would help teachers implement the curriculum and to adopt effective instructional practices through inservice training and on-going coaching and support

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What factors are associated with teachers' implementation of CSS with a high degree of fidelity?

What factors are associated with teachers' limited implementation of CSS?

PARTICIPANTS & SETTINGS

45 teachers (3 classrooms per year in CA, IN, KS, MD, WV). Teachers were in Head Start, state-funded Pre-K programs, and in a community-based preschool

DATA COLLECTION

- Collection of field notes during trainings and during classroom observations.
- Interviews of teachers, assistants, and program administrators.
- Fidelity of implementation observations.
- Estimate of percentage of curriculum elements completed

Four-Phase Data Analysis

- Phase 1* – Case study development
- Phase 2* – Theme generation related to teacher implementation of CSS using case studies
- Phase 3* – Cross site analysis; themes clustered into areas of curriculum, teacher, classroom and administration. Analysis limited to high implementers (n=22) or low implementers (n=11)
- Phase 4* – Review and final identification of 10 themes

Validity of Data and Theme Generation

- Trustworthiness through convergence among data sources, cross-site analysis and member checks
- Prolonged engagement in sites
- Triangulation between our identification of teachers as high or low implementers with fidelity metric

Primary/Secondary Theme Total Across All Years and All Sites

	Degree of Implementation	
	HIGH	LOW
	22 (44)	11 (22*)

Curriculum and Instruction Themes

Previous Curriculum and Instructional Approach	3 7%	0
Classroom Mgmt.	4 9%	3 14%
Integration Expansion of CSS Concepts	14 32%	7 32%
Individualization	0	0

Teacher Themes

Partnership in CSS Development	4 9%	0
Teacher Characteristics	14 32%	9 41%

Beyond the Teacher Themes

Adult Relationships	3 7%	2 9%
Administrative Issues	0	0
External Events	0	1 5%
Coaching	2 5%	0

*Total teachers and total themes



THEMES

10 themes associated with the implementation of CSS

Curriculum and Instruction Themes

Previous Curriculum and Instructional Approach – curriculum that the teacher used before using CSS and how structured the teacher was in presenting instruction before CSS

Classroom Management - both managing individual children and managing classroom routines

Integration and Expansion of CSS Concepts – did the teacher demonstrate an understanding of the concepts underlying a particular lesson? did the teacher extend lessons throughout the day?

Individualization for Diverse Learners – did the teacher individualize the curriculum for learners who had disabilities? who were English language learners?

Teacher Themes

Teacher Characteristics – personal attributes teacher brings to CSS implementation

Partnership in CSS Implementation - teachers' interest in being a research partner

Beyond the Teacher

Adult Relationships - how did the adults work together in the classroom?

Administrative Issues/Interface of Administration with Classroom – issues surrounding the program administration and administrators' relationship with the teacher

External Events – this theme encompasses events that happen in the classroom or in the lives of the teachers that affect CSS implementation. They could be *classroom* or *life* events

Receptivity to Coaching – each teacher was provided with a coach who was part of the CSS research team. The role of the coach was to meet with the teacher on a weekly basis to: train the teacher in CSS, help with lesson planning, help organize materials, and provide feedback on CSS lessons. How receptive was the teacher to the coaching? Did the teacher work with the coach as a partner in implementing CSS?

RESULTS

At each site we identified 2 themes that were most associated with CSS implementation for that teacher

High implementers: 2 themes that had strong and positive impact – 44 possibilities (22 teachers x 2 themes for each teacher)

Low implementers: 2 themes that had strong and negative impact – 22 possibilities (11 teachers x 2 themes for each teacher)

Of the 10 themes we identified, each did not have an equivalent impact on teachers' implementation of CSS. Two factors were major influences on whether teachers did or did not successfully implement CSS:

- Teacher characteristics
- Integration/expansion of CSS concepts

Other important factors for high implementers:

- Classroom management
- Partnership in CSS development
- Previous curriculum and instructional approach
- Adult relationships
- Coaching

Other important factors for low implementers:

- Classroom management
- Adult relationships
- External events

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

A complex array of factors determined teachers' success in implementing CSS. Factors were most related to teacher variables rather than geographic or program model differences. High implementers enjoyed learning new information and appreciated additional support. For low implementers even extensive support did not overcome their reservations or motivation.