A study investigated the effectiveness of the Success for All (SFA) program developed at Johns Hopkins University. The program emphasizes prevention of failure, personal tutoring, family-school program, and regular evaluation of student progress. In 1996, the program involved schools in northern Israel--Arabic and Jewish, religious and secular. Subjects of the study were 211 students at 3 Jewish schools and 66 students in 2 comparison schools, and 69 Arab children in SFA schools and 67 Arab children in comparison schools. Subjects completed the Shatil Readiness Test, a reading comprehension test, and a writing test. Preliminary results indicated that: (1) Jewish children scored higher on subscales of reading readiness than Arabs, and Arab children scored higher than Jewish children on other subscales; (2) Jewish students surpassed Arab children on all subscales of the reading comprehension test; (3) children from low socioeconomic background, which were most of the SFA students, were similar in their writing achievement of children from more advantaged backgrounds; (4) Arab girls gained the most from SFA and were much closer in their achievements to the Jewish girls; and (5) Jewish boys received the highest writing achievement scores--their stories were evaluated as being better than the girls' writing. (Contains three references and three tables of data.) (RS)
SUCCESS FOR ALL IN ACRE, ISRAEL:

EFFECTS ON HEBREW AND ARABIC READING AND WRITING

(First Year)

International Adaptation of Success for All

AERA Meeting
Chicago
March 24-28, 1997

Prof. Rachel Hertz-Lazarowitz
e-mail: rachelhl@construct.haifa.ac.il

Dr. Bruria Schaedel
Success for All in Acre: Effects on Hebrew and Arabic reading and writing

Success For All (SFA) is an innovative learning environment focused on children’s academic success from early schooling. The program emphasizes prevention of failure, personal tutoring, family-school program, and regular evaluation of student progress. SFA strives to assure a competent level of reading and writing and works to enhance literacy development from kindergarten until the end of elementary school. The program was developed at John Hopkins University (Slavin and colleagues, 1994) and it demands pedagogical and organizational intervention processes. SFA was adopted and implemented in Israel for the first time in Acre - a mixed city of Jews and Arabs in Northern Israel. In 1994 a holistic-wide SFA program was offered to the city of Acre by presenting its principals to several schools. In 1995, SFA was implemented in five elementary schools: two religious and two secular Jewish schools and one Arabic school. Most of the schools are defined by the Ministry of Education as disadvantaged schools. In 1996, the program comprises eight schools (Arabic and Jewish - religious and secular). Three additional schools serve as comparison. Six (out of the eight) schools implementing SFA in first and second grade also implement Cooperative Learning in Literacy (ALASH) in their higher grades (third through sixth). At the beginning of the school year (September, 1996) all of the Arabic kindergartens have joined a pre SFA program.

SFA from its initial steps has been accompanied by in-service teacher training on a regular basis once in two weeks, and also by research evaluation of reading and writing development at the beginning and end of the school year.

Reading readiness test* description

At the beginning of the school year children from five Jewish schools - three implementing SFA (n=211) and two comparison schools (n=66) and Arab children from the same school - 2 classes implementing SFA (n=69) and two comparison classes (n=67) were tested on a revised Shatil Readiness Test. The test was administrated individually and took about 40 minutes. The test developed by Shatil was based on a definition of reading made by Hoover & Gough (1992). They stated that reading is composed of two components: decoding skill and language comprehension. Thus, the tasks of the test were designed to predict reading competence according to both components.

1. **Language comprehension** - this section comprised four tasks: **listening comprehension** - in this task the child was asked to listen to a story and then answer 12 questions **syntactic awareness** - in which the child had to correct 21 syntactically wrong sentences **concepts of print** - checked the child’s ability to understand 16 basic concepts about book reading **vocabulary test** - the child was asked to explain the meaning of 26 individual words read to him by the examiner.

2. **Decoding** - this section asked the child to turn letters to sounds in four different tasks: **Short Term Memory** - in which the child had to repeat 20 nonsense words of differing length **Pseudoword repetition** - the task comprised 20 pseudowords the child had to repeat after the examiner **letter naming** - the child had to name 14 letters presented on a card **syllabic learning** - the child had to learn meaningless signs which represented three different syllables. The Arab students were not tested on this task because it was too difficult to be translated and adapted to Arabic.
Reading readiness test results
Table 1 depicts the range and means of the Jewish and Arab sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Jews N=277</th>
<th>Arabs N=136</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Correction</td>
<td>0 - 21</td>
<td>4.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Comprehension</td>
<td>0 - 12</td>
<td>7.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts of Print</td>
<td>0 - 16</td>
<td>8.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>0 - 26</td>
<td>8.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Term Memory</td>
<td>0 - 20</td>
<td>9.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter naming</td>
<td>0 - 14</td>
<td>7.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabic Learning</td>
<td>0 - 21</td>
<td>12.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudoword Repetition</td>
<td>0 - 20</td>
<td>16.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 indicated a higher mean score of the Jewish sample in some of the subscales while the Arabs scored higher in others. There were salient differences on subscales of sentence correction, letter naming and syllabic learning in favor of the Jewish students. This finding can be explained by the adaptation done for the first time in Israel of readiness test (aimed at a Jewish population) to an Arabic sample; Adaptation which might not have captured all the cultural nuances of the Arabs. It was also found that within the Jewish sample religious children scored on average higher than children learning in secular schools.

Reading comprehension test description
At the end of the school year Shatil developed a test to examine children's reading comprehension skill. The test was administrated collectively to the whole class. The students were asked to read the tasks silently and circle the correct answer. Only the instructions were read aloud by the examiner and explained; the teachers were instructed not to help the children read the texts. In the Jewish sample seven schools participated in the evaluation - five of the pre-test and two additional comparison schools. In the Arabic school all of the classes took the test. The test included three sections:
1. Sentence Comprehension - the child was asked to read a sentence and circle the correct inference of it. In this section 8 sentences were included.
2. Scrutiny of Comprehension - this task consisted of a story in which one sentence was unrelated to the rest. The child was instructed to underline it.
3. Story Comprehension - in this section were three short stories followed by questions about the text. The child had to circle the correct answer. Each story was followed by 3 - 4 questions.
Reading comprehension test results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Jews N=395</th>
<th>Arabs N=208</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Comprehension</td>
<td>0 - 8</td>
<td>6.69</td>
<td>4.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrutiny of Comprehension</td>
<td>0 - 2</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story Comprehension</td>
<td>0 - 11</td>
<td>8.05</td>
<td>6.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td>0 - 21</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>11.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 indicates that the Jewish students surpassed the Arabs in all the subscales measured. This finding may result from translation of the test to Arabic, which might have not considered many of the cultural and linguistic differences between the languages.

The impact of SFA
The data are still in process of analysis. An overview of school ranking in pre-post comparison reveal school differences related to quality of implementation. It was found that schools implementing SFA more consistently gained higher scores than the comparison sample even though they were defined as more disadvantageous schools.

Writing test description
At the end of the school the children were also assessed on their writing skill. The writing task was administrated collectively to the whole class.
In the Jewish sample implementing SFA were 180 students and in the comparison schools 53 students. 66 Arabs were in the SFA group and 61 in the comparison.
The writing task asked the children to compose a story book based on four pictures which the student received in an envelope; most of them pasted the pictures and wrote according to them a story in sequence. (There was no right order by which the pictures had to be arranged) A group of experts developed criteria for assessing the children’s stories. These criteria included 19 points of reference which were scored according to their importance to the story construction. These measures were divided to three major categories by a cluster analysis:
1. Story quality - which included all the criteria related to story content (e.g. text complexity; plot development; originality; language being used). Overall 9 measures were clustered under this category and were scored to a maximum of 70 points.
2. Writing conventions - this cluster included all the measures related to technical writing skill (e.g. spacing between words; graphomotoric ability; readability of the text). 7 measures were clustered under this category and were scored to a maximum of 25 points.

Literacy awareness - under this cluster were grouped all the measures related to external structure of a book (e.g. writing an author’s name; giving a name to the story). 3 measures were included in this category and were scored to a maximum of 5 points.
Table 3 - Mean and Std. Deviation of Story Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Measure</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SFA N=89</td>
<td>comparison N=26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story quality</td>
<td>40.83 (11.08)</td>
<td>46.23 (7.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing conventions</td>
<td>20.49 (4.35)</td>
<td>21.31 (3.77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy awareness</td>
<td>2.66 (1.31)</td>
<td>2.31 (1.72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total score</td>
<td>73.99 (13.30)</td>
<td>79.85 (9.32)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The impact of SFA

Table 3 indicates a salient difference between boys in the SFA and the comparison group on story quality measure while girls in both groups were much closer in their mean score. On the other two measures no significant differences were found. It was also found that Children from low socioeconomic background, which were most of the SFA students, were similar in their writing achievement to children from more advantaged background. In the Arab group SFA contributed to greater achievements in significant measures of story writing - quality of story, print awareness and total score. The Arab girls gained the most from SFA and were much closer in their achievements to the Jewish girls. The Jewish boys got the highest scores - their stories were evaluated as better than the girls’ writing.

References


I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: Success for All in Acre (Israel): Effects on Hebrew and Arabic Reading and Writing

Author(s): Rachel Hertz-Lazarowitz, Bruria Schaedeel

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, Resources in Education (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic/optical media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) or other ERIC vendors. Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following options and sign the release below.

Check here

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

______ Sample ______

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Sample sticker to be affixed to document

Sample sticker to be affixed to document

or here

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

______ Sample ______

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Sample sticker to be affixed to document

Sign Here, Please

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but neither box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

Rachel H. Lazarowitz (Ph.D.)
School of Education
Haifa Univ., Haifa, Israel 31905

"I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic/optical media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries."

Signature:

Rachel D. Lazarowitz

Position:

Professor, School of Education

Organization:

Haifa University, Israel

Printed Name:

Rachel Hertz-Lazarowitz

Address:

32 Freud Str.
Haifa, Israel 34753

Telephone Number:

011 972 (4) 8290-855

Date:

March 26, 1994
February 21, 1997

Dear AERA Presenter,

Congratulations on being a presenter at AERA¹. The ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation invites you to contribute to the ERIC database by providing us with a printed copy of your presentation.

Abstracts of papers accepted by ERIC appear in Resources in Education (RIE) and are announced to over 5,000 organizations. The inclusion of your work makes it readily available to other researchers, provides a permanent archive, and enhances the quality of RIE. Abstracts of your contribution will be accessible through the printed and electronic versions of RIE. The paper will be available through the microfiche collections that are housed at libraries around the world and through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service.

We are gathering all the papers from the AERA Conference. We will route your paper to the appropriate clearinghouse. You will be notified if your paper meets ERIC's criteria for inclusion in RIE: contribution to education, timeliness, relevance, methodology, effectiveness of presentation, and reproduction quality. You can track our processing of your paper at http://ericae2.educ.cua.edu.

Please sign the Reproduction Release Form on the back of this letter and include it with two copies of your paper. The Release Form gives ERIC permission to make and distribute copies of your paper. It does not preclude you from publishing your work. You can drop off the copies of your paper and Reproduction Release Form at the ERIC booth (523) or mail to our attention at the address below. Please feel free to copy the form for future or additional submissions.

Mail to: AERA 1997/ERIC Acquisitions
The Catholic University of America
O'Boyle Hall, Room 210
Washington, DC 20064

This year ERIC/AE is making a Searchable Conference Program available on the AERA web page (http://aera.net). Check it out!

Sincerely,

Lawrence M. Rudner, Ph.D.
Director, ERIC/AE

¹If you are an AERA chair or discussant, please save this form for future use.