

SOUTH CAROLINA READING FIRST INITIATIVE

EVALUATION REPORT

2005-2006



South Carolina
Reading First

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Executive Summary

The University of South Carolina's Office of Program Evaluation (OPE) and South Carolina Educational Policy Center (SCEPC) collaborate to evaluate the South Carolina Reading First (SCRF) Initiative. This report presents the evaluation methods, findings, and recommendations for SCRF from the 2005-2006 school year and from activities conducted during the summer of 2006. The 2005-2006 school year was the second year of implementation of the SCRF Initiative. The report is divided into sections by the types of data reported including achievement results, participant group surveys, summer professional development evaluation results, and highlights from the School Leadership Team report. Each section contains information about the data collection and analysis methods used as well as the key findings. Recommendations based on these findings are located at the end of the report.

Summary of Key Findings

- ❖ Students performed better on the Stanford Reading First assessment in the 2005-2006 school year compared with the 2004-2005 school year.
- ❖ Students' scores on the Stanford Reading First assessment improved from fall to spring in 2005-2006 for all grades. In addition, the largest gains were made by students in grade 1 and the lowest gains occurred in grade 2 in 2005-2006, which is also consistent with the 2004-2005 results.
- ❖ Across all grade levels, the percentage of students who receive free or reduced price lunch scoring AGL in spring 2006 is closer to the percentage of full price lunch students scoring at grade level than in spring 2005.
- ❖ Participants have a better understanding of roles and responsibilities in the second year compared with the first year.
- ❖ Teachers and literacy coaches have different perceptions related to the frequency at which coaching activities occur.
- ❖ Collaboration between participant groups is high.
- ❖ Views on assessment have improved for all participant groups in the second year compared with the first year.
- ❖ Participants in summer professional development workshops indicated a high level of satisfaction with the information provided.
- ❖ School Leadership Team members gave positive feedback on the information provided at meetings held over the 2005-2006 school year.

"I have seen a lot of growth in our students and more children reading on a regular basis. All students in grades K-3 participate in independent reading because their teachers incorporate that into their daily schedule. Through professional readings teachers respect the impact it has on their students. This has been a major transition for our teachers."
(Literacy Coach)

- ❖ Over 80% of each participant group rated the initiative either Effective or Very effective. Also, the average effectiveness rating for teachers providing ratings in years one and two increased by an average of over one point on a four-point scale; an increase of almost 30%.

“The SCRF Initiative has increased my abilities and knowledge of teaching the reading strategies to my students. This has been the best year of all my 20 years of teaching.”
(Teacher)

Summary of Recommendations

- ❖ Over the past two years, Stanford Reading First (SRF) achievement results for students in grade 2 show considerably smaller gains between fall and spring semesters compared with students in grades 1 and 3. The assessment administered to students in the spring of grade 2 contains more and longer paragraphs for students to read and then respond to than the test administered in the fall of grade 2. Provide more time for sustained reading for students in grade 2 to improve students’ reading comprehension skills at that grade level and to prepare them for more extensive text reading expectations.
- ❖ Survey results indicate that teachers and literacy coaches have different perceptions related to the frequency of coaching activities that occur between teachers and literacy coaches. Ensure more teachers and/or teachers with the highest needs are involved more often in coaching activities with literacy coaches.
- ❖ Summer School Observation survey results reveal that teachers found professional development through classroom observation to be very helpful. Provide more opportunities for structured classroom observation.
- ❖ Analyze the scores of students who participated in the 2006 summer professional development program and students in year-round schools to examine if either summer school or year-round school reduces or prevents the summer loss phenomena.

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SOUTH CAROLINA READING FIRST INITIATIVE EVALUATION REPORT 2005-2006

Introduction

The Office of Program Evaluation (OPE) and the South Carolina Educational Policy Center (SCEPC) in the College of Education at the University of South Carolina are evaluating the South Carolina Reading First (SCRF) Initiative in collaboration with the South Carolina Department of Education (SDE) to assess the effectiveness of the SCRF Initiative. This ongoing collaborative effort involves regular meetings and communication where project implementation and evaluation activities are planned and results shared. Numerous reports and presentations related to the SCRF Initiative have been completed during 2005-2006 and provided to a variety of audiences. Evaluation results were presented at meetings with SCRF project staff, professional development providers, school leadership teams, and regional literacy coaches, who then shared the results at the school level.

Highlights of the evaluation findings, including Stanford Reading First achievement data, evaluation surveys, professional development evaluation results, and school leadership team meetings evaluation surveys are provided in the following sections of this report (Volume I). This volume features the highlights of the SCRF Initiative evaluation for the 2005-2006 school year. Examples of completed reports, surveys, and other supporting documentation can be found in Appendices A-K in Volume II of this report.

South Carolina
Reading First

Overview of the Initiative

Reading First, part of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, is a nationwide effort to provide states and school districts with support to establish research-based reading programs for students in kindergarten through third grade. The South Carolina Reading First (SCRF) Initiative began providing program services during the 2004-2005 school year to approximately 12,000 students in 52 schools from 24 districts in the state. The 2005-2006 school year was the second year of implementation, serving approximately 11,000 students in 51 schools from 23 districts in the state. Chester Park Elementary participated in the first year of SCRF, but dropped out in the summer before the second year. The goal of the SCRF Initiative is to improve reading achievement in grades K-3 so that all children are reading at the appropriate grade level. To achieve this goal, SCRF has three objectives:

- Enable and motivate teachers to understand and confidently implement scientifically-based reading research (SBRR) reading programs, strategies, skills, and assessments in their classrooms.
- Support the change process from the "bottom up" by supporting collaboration and conversation at various levels to ensure the sustainability of this initiative.
- Establish and expand an increasing pool of teachers and administrators who are knowledgeable about, committed to using, and successful in teaching a comprehensive reading program based upon scientific research.

The teachers in SCRF schools are required to attend professional development sessions focusing on strategies to teach key reading components. The five components of reading instruction that "all K-3 teachers should explicitly and systematically teach include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension" (Reading First Grant Proposal, 2002, p. 5). Phonemic awareness is defined as "the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words" (p. 5). Phonics includes "the letter sound relationship used to read and spell words" (p. 5). Fluency is defined as "the ability to read a text accurately and quickly" (p. 5). Vocabulary includes "the words we must know to communicate effectively" (p. 5). Comprehension includes "the ability to read and construct meaning from text" (p. 5).

In addition, literacy coaches are assigned to various schools to assist teachers with implementing the strategies learned in the professional development sessions. Through professional development and support from literacy coaches, the intent is for teachers to be well prepared to provide appropriate instruction that will lead to improved reading achievement for all of their students.

Student Achievement Results

To measure achievement, students enrolled in SCRF schools in grades 1-3 completed the Stanford Reading First assessment in the fall and spring of each school year, 2004-2005 and 2005-2006. The Stanford Reading First assessment is a version of the Stanford 10 that was developed specifically for the national Reading First Initiative by Harcourt Educational Measurement. The total score for a student on this assessment is composed of the score on a multiple choice section and the score on a teacher-administered, oral fluency section. Five components are assessed in the multiple choice section: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension strategies. Two components are assessed on the oral fluency section: speaking vocabulary and oral reading fluency. Information on the total score as well as the individual components are presented in this report.

Performance Level Analysis

The summary information in this section is based on all students in SCRF schools who took the Stanford Reading First Assessment in each of the four test administrations. The evaluation report to the United States Department of Education (US DOE) requires reporting for all students who take the assessment in each administration rather than for the group of students who have taken the assessment in all test administrations. The number of students in grades 1-3 who took the assessment in each test administration are shown in Table 1. These numbers are reported for schools that participated in SCRF in both 2004-2005 and 2005-2006. The total number of students differs in each semester due to individual students entering or leaving the program during the two years.

Table 1

Number of Students Who Took the Stanford Reading First Assessment by Grade Level

Grade level	Number of Students Tested			
	Fall 2004	Spring 2005	Fall 2005	Spring 2006
Grade 1	3,132	3,110	3,080	3,085
Grade 2	2,852	2,860	2,939	2,924
Grade 3	2,773	2,775	2,686	2,611
Total	8,757	8,745	8,705	8,620

Note. The numbers for fall 2004 and spring 2005 differ from those in the 2004-2005 evaluation report because Chester Park Elementary left the SCRF Initiative.

Scores from the Stanford Reading First achievement test classify a student's performance into one of three proficiency levels. The performance levels are at grade level (AGL), needs additional intervention (NAI), and needs substantial intervention (NSI). Students in the AGL category scored at or above the 40th percentile, students in the NAI category scored between the 20th and the 39th percentiles, and students in the NSI category scored below the 20th percentile. The percentage of students who scored in each of the three proficiency levels on the Stanford Reading First achievement test for the first two years is presented in Figure 1 for grade 1, Figure 2 for grade 2, and Figure 3 for grade 3. Improvement in reading achievement, as measured by the Stanford Reading First assessment, occurs if the percentage of students in the AGL category increases from fall to spring and the percentage of students in the NSI category decreases across the year.

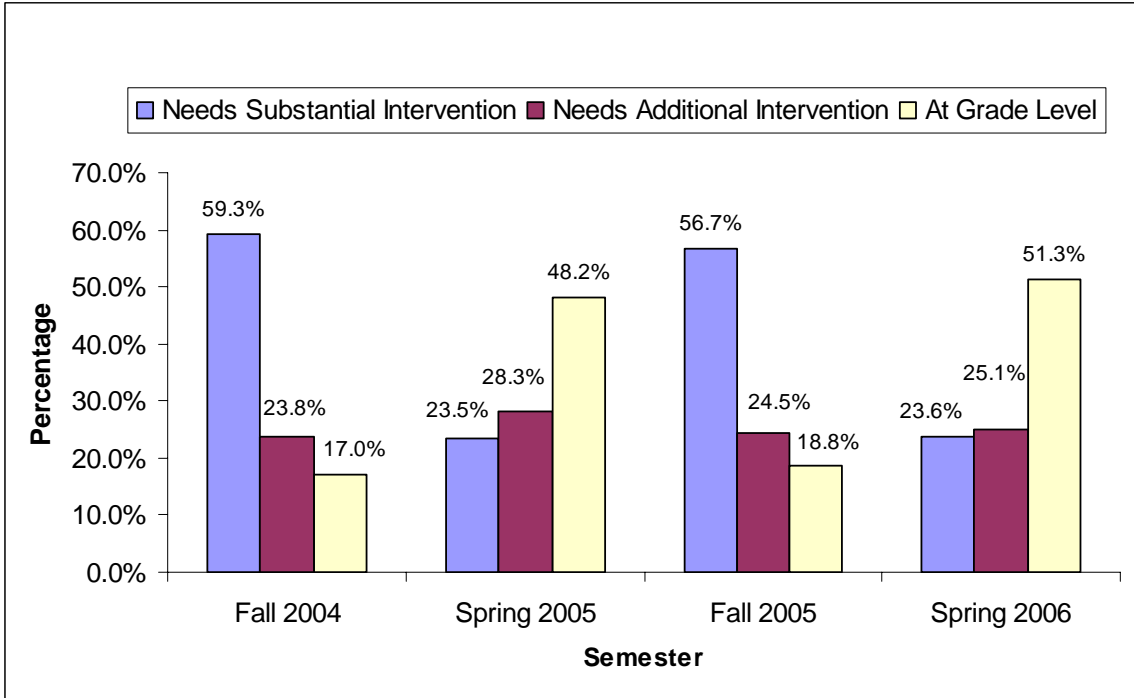


Figure 1. Performance level percentages for grade 1.

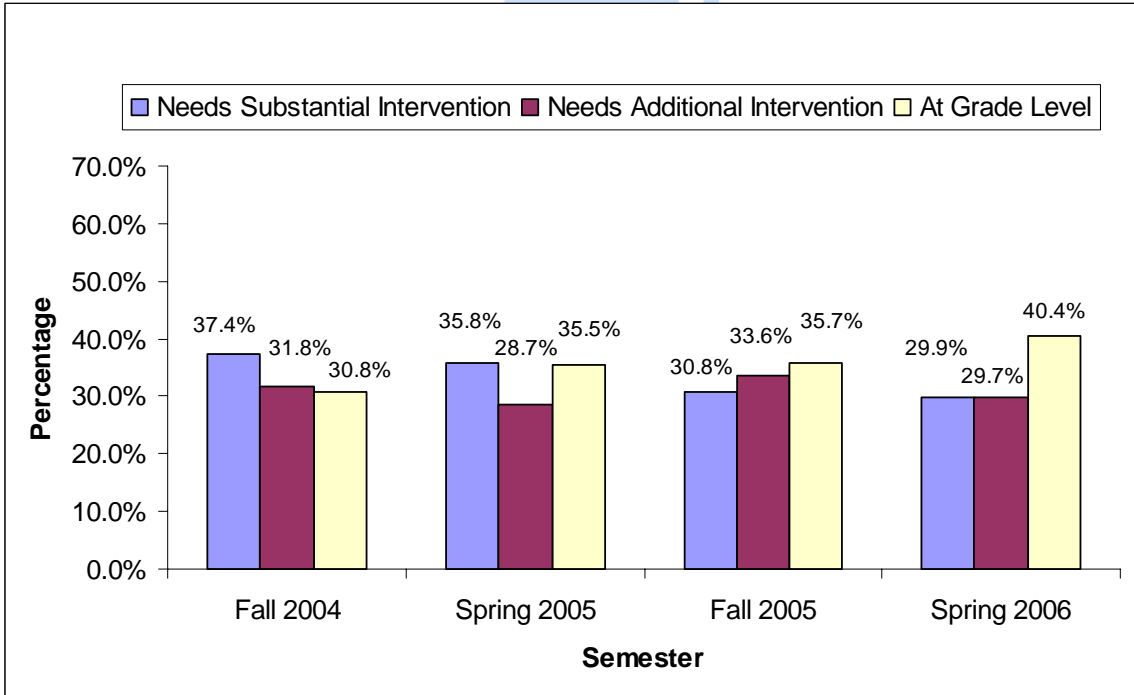


Figure 2. Performance level percentages for grade 2.

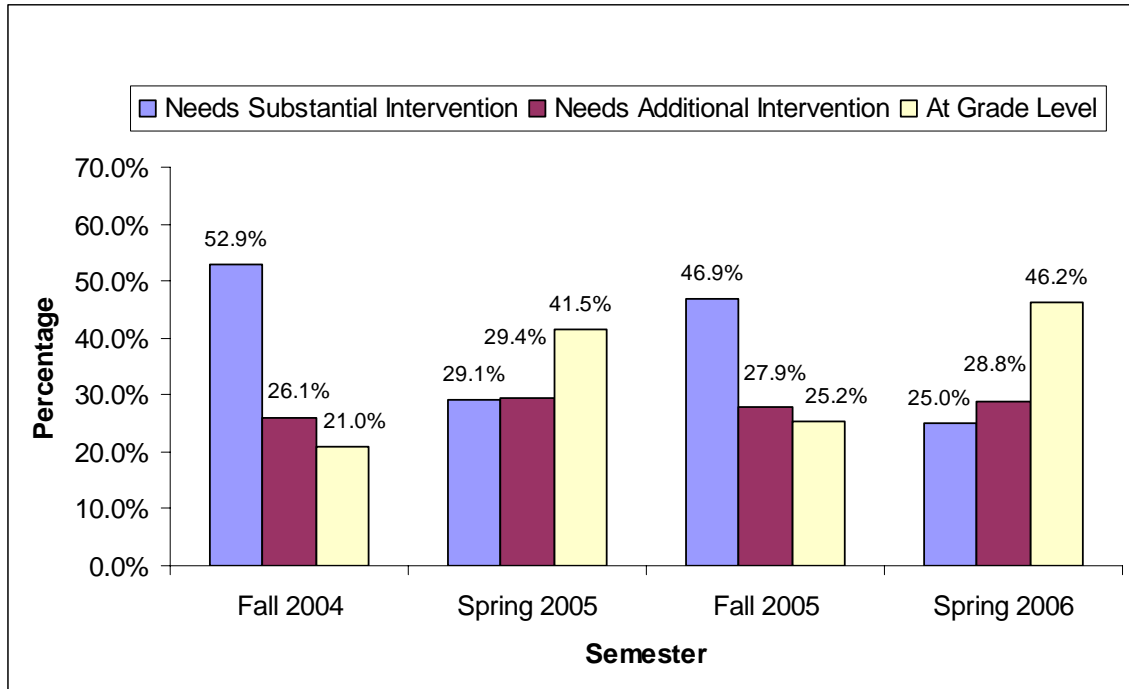


Figure 3. Performance level percentages for grade 3.

The results for all students indicate that there was a greater percentage in the AGL category and a lower percentage in the NSI category in fall 2005 than in fall 2004. Further, there was a greater percentage in the AGL category and a lower percentage in the NSI category in spring 2006 than in spring 2005. This indicates that students in the second year of the SCRF Initiative are starting at a higher level and ending at a higher level on the Stanford RF assessment. This pattern is true for each grade level except for the percentage of students classified as NSI in grade 1 in spring 2005 compared with spring 2006 in which the percentage essentially remained the same with an increase of only 0.1 point.

Grade 1 students made very large gains in the percentage AGL both years (over a 30% increase from fall to spring each year). Grade 3 students also had large increases in the percentage AGL (over a 20% increase from fall to spring each year). Grade 1 also showed the largest declines, of over 30%, in the percentage of students categorized as NSI between fall and spring in both years. The percentage in the NSI category in grade 3 from fall to spring also declined during both years by over 20%.

Grade 2 had the highest percentage in the AGL category and the lowest percentage in the NSI category in each fall semester compared with grades 1 and 3. However, grade 2 had the smallest increase in percentage AGL and the smallest decrease in percentage NSI from fall

to spring each year among the three grade levels. This outcome could be explained if the test used in the spring of second grade is substantially more difficult than the test used in the fall.

If gains in the percentage of students scoring AGL are increasing from one year to the next, it provides some indication that the program is improving. This outcome occurred to a small degree for grades 1 and 3. During the 2004-2005 year, the percentage of students in grade 1 scoring AGL increased 31.2% while it increased 32.4% in 2005-2006. This was a 1.2% greater increase in the second year. Similarly, the percentage of students in grade 3 scoring AGL increased 20.5% in 2004-2005 and 21.0% in 2005-2006. This was a 0.5% increase in the second year. Increases in the percentage of students scoring AGL were equivalent (4.7%) in 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 for grade 2.

Closing Achievement Gaps

The achievement gap between selected student subgroups was also examined between the two years. Comparisons were made between students in lower and higher socio-economic classes (as indicated by whether they receive subsidized lunch) and between African-American and Caucasian students. The categories within each subgroup have historically displayed differential achievement nationwide, including in South Carolina specifically. In fact, the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee has produced annual reports identifying schools that were successful in closing achievement gaps for these two subgroups since 2003.

Table 2 shows the differences in the percentage of students scoring AGL on the SRF assessment by socio-economic status. Across all grade levels, the percentage of students who receive free or reduced price lunch scoring AGL in spring 2006 is closer to the percentage of full price lunch students scoring at grade level. Students receiving free or reduced lunch also made larger gains in 2005-2006 across the semesters than students who paid full price for their lunch. This provides an indication that the program has better addressed the needs of economically disadvantaged students in its second year, while still improving the achievement of both groups.

Table 2

Achievement Gaps between Socio-economic Status Subgroups

	Spring 2005	Spring 2006	Gap Reduction Percentage
Grade 1	22.8%	16.9%	5.9%
Grade 2	30.7%	22.7%	8.0%
Grade 3	26.5%	22.4%	4.1%

Note. Achievement gaps indicate the differences in the percentage of students scoring At Grade Level on the SRF assessment between students receiving full price and students receiving lunch free or reduced price lunch.

Analysis of SRF data by ethnicity revealed small changes in achievement gaps between Caucasian and African-American students. Table 3 shows small reductions in the gaps for grades 1 and 2 of 0.5% and 2.0%, respectively and a small gap increase of 1.9 for grade 3. The percentage change by these two ethnic groups was small enough to be attributed to chance differences.

Table 3

Achievement Gaps between Caucasian and African American students

	Spring 2005	Spring 2006	Gap Reduction Percentage
Grade 1	9.5%	9.0%	0.5%
Grade 2	22.1%	20.1%	2.0%
Grade 3	19.9%	21.8%	-1.9%

Note. Achievement gaps indicate the differences in the percentage of students scoring At Grade Level on the SRF assessment between Caucasian students and African-American students.

Component Analysis

The total score on the Stanford Reading First assessment provides a measure of how students perform overall. An analysis was also conducted to determine how students performed on each of the five multiple choice components and the two oral fluency components. Table 4 contains the results for all three grades combined for each test administration for all schools participating in the SCRF Initiative in both the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years.

Table 4

Performance Levels for All Students in SCRF

	<i>Test Semester</i>			
	<i>Fall 04</i>	<i>Spring 05</i>	<i>Fall 05</i>	<i>Spring 06</i>
<i>Phonemic Awareness</i>				
<i>AGL</i>	64.5%	76.9%	66.1%	78.7%
<i>NAI</i>	17.4%	11.7%	15.5%	11.0%
<i>NSI</i>	18.2%	11.4%	18.4%	10.3%
<i>Phonics</i>				
<i>AGL</i>	14.9%	22.9%	14.6%	25.0%
<i>NAI</i>	32.8%	21.6%	34.2%	22.4%
<i>NSI</i>	52.3%	55.5%	51.1%	52.6%
<i>Vocabulary Development</i>				
<i>AGL</i>	35.4%	36.4%	35.0%	38.6%
<i>NAI</i>	31.6%	23.3%	31.6%	22.5%
<i>NSI</i>	33.0%	40.3%	33.4%	38.9%
<i>Reading Fluency</i>				
<i>AGL</i>	33.1%	42.9%	32.6%	44.5%
<i>NAI</i>	21.3%	23.1%	22.2%	23.4%
<i>NSI</i>	45.6%	34.0%	45.1%	32.1%
<i>Reading Comprehension Strategies</i>				
<i>AGL</i>	29.7%	44.0%	31.5%	46.0%
<i>NAI</i>	26.1%	24.3%	25.0%	24.2%
<i>NSI</i>	44.1%	31.6%	43.4%	29.8%
<i>Speaking Vocabulary</i>				
<i>AGL</i>	34.8%	56.2%	45.1%	63.4%
<i>NAI</i>	26.3%	26.6%	24.5%	23.1%
<i>NSI</i>	38.9%	17.2%	30.4%	13.6%
<i>Oral Reading Fluency</i>				
<i>AGL</i>	27.9%	50.7%	34.0%	55.2%
<i>NAI</i>	22.1%	21.7%	22.4%	19.9%
<i>NSI</i>	50.0%	27.6%	43.5%	24.9%

Note. AGL = at grade level, NAI = needs additional intervention, NSI = needs substantial intervention

As Table 4 shows, the percentage of students performing AGL was higher in fall 2005 than in fall 2004 on phonemic awareness, reading comprehension strategies, speaking vocabulary, and oral reading fluency. In addition, there was a less than 1% decrease in percentage AGL from fall 2004 to fall 2005 on phonics, vocabulary development, and reading fluency. This indicates that students performed the same or better on the seven components initially in the 2005-2006 school year than in the 2004-2005 school year. Table 4 also indicates that the percentage of students scoring AGL was higher in spring 2006 than in spring 2005 for all seven components. The largest gains in the percentage AGL between fall 2005 and spring 2006 were in oral reading fluency (21.2% increase) and speaking vocabulary (18.3% increase). Substantial gains were also made for reading comprehension strategies (14.5% increase), phonemic awareness (12.6% increase), and reading fluency (11.9% increase). This pattern mirrored the order of gains observed during the 2004-2005 year. Between the fall and spring of both years, the smallest gains in the percentage AGL were in vocabulary development. This indicates that student outcomes on all components in the spring improved in the 2005-2006 school year.

Improved student achievement is also evident when the percentage of students NSI decreases across the semesters and years. As Table 4 shows, this trend was observed for all components except phonics and vocabulary development. For both phonics and vocabulary development, the percentage of students categorized as NSI increased during the 2004-2005 year, the 2005-2006 year, and between the spring of both years. The percentage of students in the NSI category on phonics increased by 3.2% from fall to spring in 2004-2005 and increased by 1.5% from fall to spring in 2005-2006. Compared with the spring outcome in 2004-2005, there were 2.9% fewer students in the NSI category on phonics in the spring of the 2005-2006 school year. On vocabulary development, there was a 7.3% increase in NSI category from fall to spring in 2004-2005 and a 5.5% increase in the NSI category from fall to spring in 2005-2006. Compared with the spring outcome in 2004-2005, there were 1.4% fewer students in the NSI category on vocabulary development in the spring of the 2005-2006 school year.

The percentage of students categorized as AGL for each component was also examined by grade level for the 2005-2006 school year. The results of this analysis are presented in Appendix A. The percentage of students categorized as AGL increased from fall 2005 to spring 2006 for all components except grade 1 phonics (decrease of 4.9%), grade 2 reading comprehension strategies (decrease of 28.2%), and grade 3 phonemic awareness (decrease of

10.8%) and vocabulary development (decrease of 10.6%). This suggests components that each grade level should consider in planning instructional strategies to improve achievement scores in the 2006-2007 school year.

Matched Normal Curve Equivalent Analysis

In addition to the analyses of absolute performance levels (i.e., proficiency levels), an analysis of normal curve equivalent (NCE) scores on the Stanford Reading First assessment was conducted after matching students who completed the four administrations of the Stanford Reading First achievement test. Results are presented for students who advanced from grade 1 in 2004-2005 to grade 2 in 2005-2006 (grade 1 to 2) and for students who advanced from grade 2 in 2004-2005 to grade 3 in 2005-2006 (grade 2 to 3). The matched analysis provides a meaningful measure of growth in reading achievement for students who participated in the SCRF program for both school years. Student scores were matched across the years only if the students participated in the Reading First program throughout both years and were promoted to the next grade from 2004-2005 to 2005-2006. The entire group of matched SCRF students consisted of 3,933 students with 2,085 in the grade 1 to 2 matched group and 1,848 in the grade 2 to 3 matched group.

The NCE score on the total test was used for the analysis. NCEs are converted from percentile ranks, but have an advantage over percentile ranks in that NCEs provide an equal-interval scale and permit valid reporting of averages. NCEs range from 1 to 99 and have an average of 50. Therefore, if a student has an NCE of 50, this means he/she is performing average as compared with a norm reference group. Results are provided for the fall and spring of each school year.

Figure 4 displays the average NCE scores for both groups (grade 1 to 2 and grade 2 to 3) for all four test administrations. On average, both sets of matched students showed gains during each school year. Both groups of students experienced a decline in average NCE from spring 2005 to fall 2005. This decline is associated with lack of instruction over the summer. Students in the grade 1 to 2 group showed less growth across the second grade school year (average NCE gain of 1.0) than they achieved during their first grade school year (average NCE gain of 16.6). Students in the grade 2 to 3 group showed more growth in their third grade year (average NCE gain of 11.0) than they did in their second grade year (average NCE gain of 1.4). The average NCE gain was also computed from fall 2004 to spring 2006 to give an overall measure of progress over the two years of the SCRF Initiative. Students in the grade 1 to 2

group had an overall average gain of 10.6 NCEs while students in the grade 2 to 3 group had an overall average gain of 6.7 NCEs over the two school years.

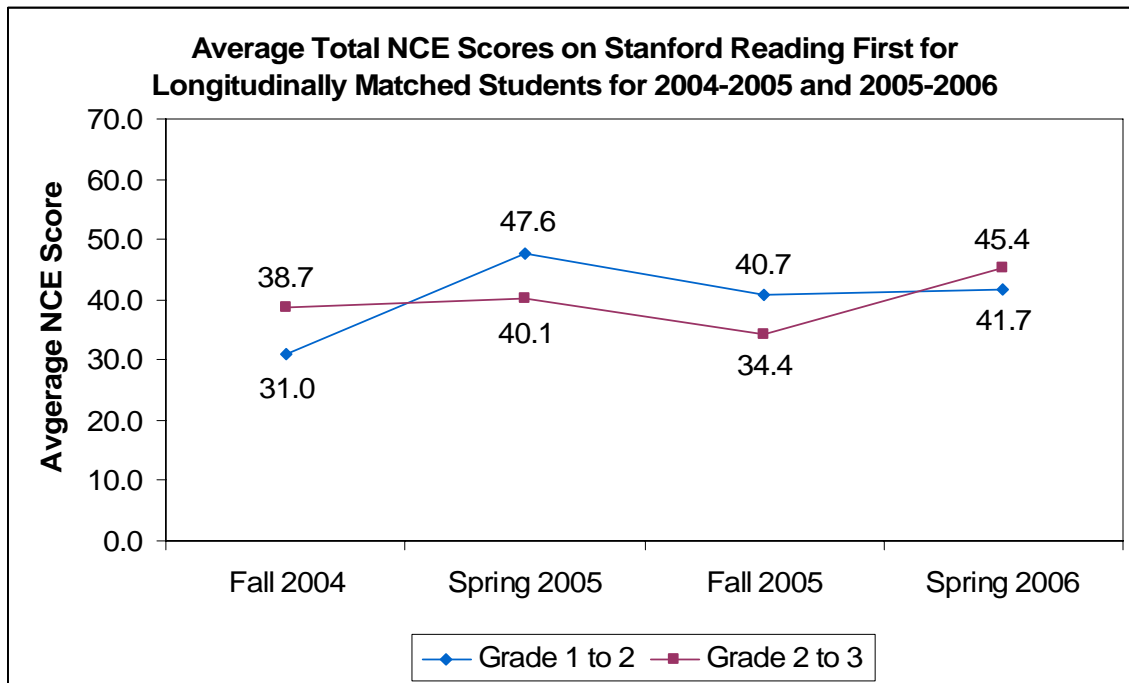


Figure 4. Average total NCE scores in 2004-2005 and 2005-2006.

Ranked Gains Across Districts and Schools

Gains in achievement based on the percentage of students scoring AGL on the Stanford Reading First assessment were calculated at the school and district level for 51 schools and 23 districts. Students who completed the assessment in spring 2005, fall 2005 and spring 2006 were included in the ranked gains analysis. The differences in the percentage of students at grade level were calculated using two points of reference: (1) between fall 2005 and spring 2006; and (2) between spring 2005 and spring 2006. The fall 2005 to spring 2006 results indicate the districts and schools that made the most progress in student achievement over the course of the second year of SCRF. The spring 2005 to spring 2006 results reveal the districts and schools that showed the most growth in student achievement from the first to second year of implementation of the SCRF Initiative.

Ranked Gains From Fall 2005 to Spring 2006

All districts demonstrated gains between fall 2005 and spring 2006. The five districts with the largest gains include:

- ❖ Williamsburg with two SCRF schools (42.8%)
- ❖ Aiken with two SCRF schools (28.9%)
- ❖ Marion 7 with two SCRF schools (28.6%)
- ❖ Dillon 2 with two SCRF schools (26.5%)
- ❖ Marion 2 with two SCRF schools (26.5%)

All schools demonstrated gains between fall 2005 and spring 2006 as well. The five schools with the largest gains include:

- ❖ D. P. Cooper Elementary School in Williamsburg (53.0%)
- ❖ Rains Centenary School Elementary School in Marion 7 (33.4%)
- ❖ Battery Park Elementary School in Williamsburg (32.4%)
- ❖ North Mullins Primary School in Marion 2 (30.8%)
- ❖ Ridge Spring-Monetta Elementary School in Aiken (28.8%)

Ranked Gains From Spring 2005 to Spring 2006

When examining gains between spring 2005 and spring 2006, 19 out of 23 districts demonstrated gains in the percentage of students testing at grade level. The districts demonstrating the largest gains include:

- ❖ Hampton 1 with two SCRF schools (11.8%)
- ❖ Aiken with two SCRF schools (10.7%)
- ❖ Laurens 56 with two SCRF schools (9.4%)
- ❖ Marion 7 with two SCRF schools (8.9%)
- ❖ Spartanburg 7 with three SCRF schools (8.2%)
- ❖ Dillon 2 with two SCRF schools (8.2%)

Individual schools also demonstrated gains between the subsequent spring semesters, with 34 out of 51 schools demonstrating increases in the number of students at grade level. The five schools with the largest gains include:

- ❖ Park Hills Elementary School in Spartanburg 7 (16.3%)
- ❖ Fennell Elementary School in Hampton 1 (12.6%)
- ❖ South Elementary School in Dillon 2 (11.4%)
- ❖ Varnville Elementary School in Hampton 1 (11.3%)
- ❖ Eastside Elementary School in Laurens 56 (11.2%)

Three districts, Aiken, Marion 7, and Dillon 2, were among the districts with the largest gains for both the 2005-2006 school year and between the first and second year of SCRF. Two schools, South Elementary in Dillon 2 and Ridge Spring-Monetta Elementary in Aiken, were

among the schools with the largest gains for both fall 2005 to spring 2006 and spring 2005 to spring 2006.

Section Summary

In summary, students performed better on the Stanford Reading First assessment in the 2005-2006 school year compared with the 2004-2005 school year. Similar to the 2004-2005 results, students' scores on the Stanford Reading First assessment improved from fall to spring in 2005-2006. In addition, the largest gains were made by students in grade 1 and the lowest gains occurred in grade 2 in 2005-2006, which is also consistent with the 2004-2005 results.



South Carolina
Reading First

Participant Groups Survey Results

OPE and SCEPC administered surveys to SCRF participants in spring 2006. Classroom teachers in grades K-3, interventionists, school literacy coaches, and principals completed the surveys. The purpose of the surveys was to offer these SCRF participants an opportunity to provide feedback about various aspects of the Initiative including implementation, support, roles, responsibilities, professional development needs, and overall effectiveness. The surveys were comprised of a series of closed and open-ended questions. Some items were common across all of the surveys, and some were unique to certain groups. Participants' responses to each survey item are available in Appendices B-E. As shown in Table 5, the response rates for the four participant groups were high; ranging from over 97% to 100%.

Table 5

Participant Response Rates for Spring 2006 SCRF Surveys

	<i>Surveys Provided</i>	<i>Surveys Collected</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>
Literacy Coaches	53	53	100.0%
Principals	51	50	98.0%
Teachers	764	747	97.8%
Interventionists	79	77	97.5%

Survey data from the spring 2006 administration were also compared with data from the spring 2005 surveys to evaluate changes in participants' practices and beliefs about the program and changes in practices between the first and second year of the SCRF Initiative. To make such comparisons, program participants were matched by their identification number and/or name. The responses of 442 teachers, 54 interventionists, 40 principals, and 50 literacy coaches were matched. Responses were compared for survey items that were identical on the 2005 survey and the 2006 survey. The results of these analyses can be seen in Appendices F-I.

Preparation and Professional Development

The initial section of the surveys sought information related to participation in and reactions to various SCRF preparation and professional development activities. In addition, this section provides information regarding the need for further professional development, and the helpfulness of Dominie and Stanford Reading First assessments. Dominie Reading and Writing Assessment Portfolio is a diagnostic tool which is individually administered to students in grades

kindergarten through eight (Pearson Learning Group, 2004). It is used to assess reading, writing, spelling, and phonics (DeFord, 2000). The purpose of the assessment is to aid teachers in documenting growth and making instructional decisions.

Participation in SCRF Preparation and Professional Development Activities

Each of the groups reported high participation rates at various SCRF activities, workshops, and meetings. Participation in meetings and information sessions was high. For instance, 100% of principals and interventionists and 99% of teachers participated in study groups. Respondents also indicated receiving preparation in the form of assistance from interventionists and literacy coaches. One hundred percent of school literacy coaches, 98% of principals, and over 93% of teachers received assistance from the SCRF regional literacy coach. Similarly, 100% of interventionists and over 98% of principals indicated that they received assistance from the regional intervention coach.

Observation was another form of preparation and professional development in which respondents participated. One hundred percent of literacy coaches observed in other SCRF school classrooms, and most of them also observed in other SCRF schools (78%). Over 50% of interventionists and over 40% of teachers observed in other SCRF classrooms. However, only 37% of interventionists, 25% of principals, and less than 15% of teachers observed in other SCRF schools.

Impact of SCRF Preparation and Professional Development Activities

Overall, participants believe that SCRF activities are effective. More than 80% of respondents from every participant group consider these activities as being helpful or very helpful (see Figure 5). Across groups, observing other SCRF classrooms was considered the most helpful activity, followed by SLT meetings, observations in other SCRF schools, and assistance provided by both regional intervention coaches and regional literacy coaches.

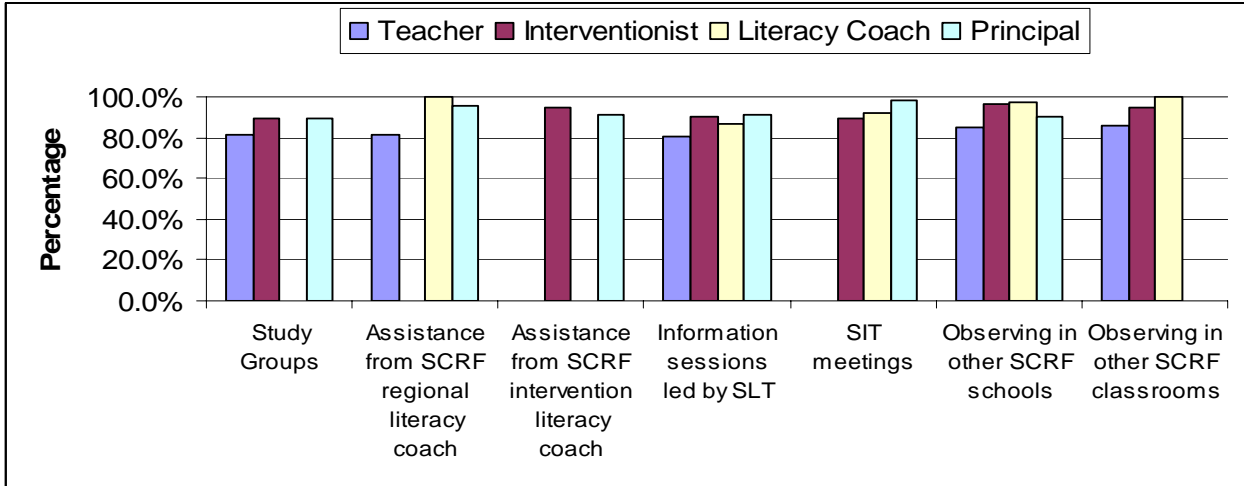


Figure 5. Perceived helpfulness of the SCRf activities.

Note. Some activities are only offered to specific participant groups. Therefore, some groups were not asked to report about their participation or perceived helpfulness of those activities. The absence of a bar indicates that a group was not involved in that activity.

Professional Development Needs

Survey results indicated areas where respondents believe more professional development is needed. As show in Figure 6, all participant groups believe that out of the five components of reading instruction, *comprehension* is the component in need of most attention. However, participants indicated a need for additional professional development in each of the five components of reading instruction.

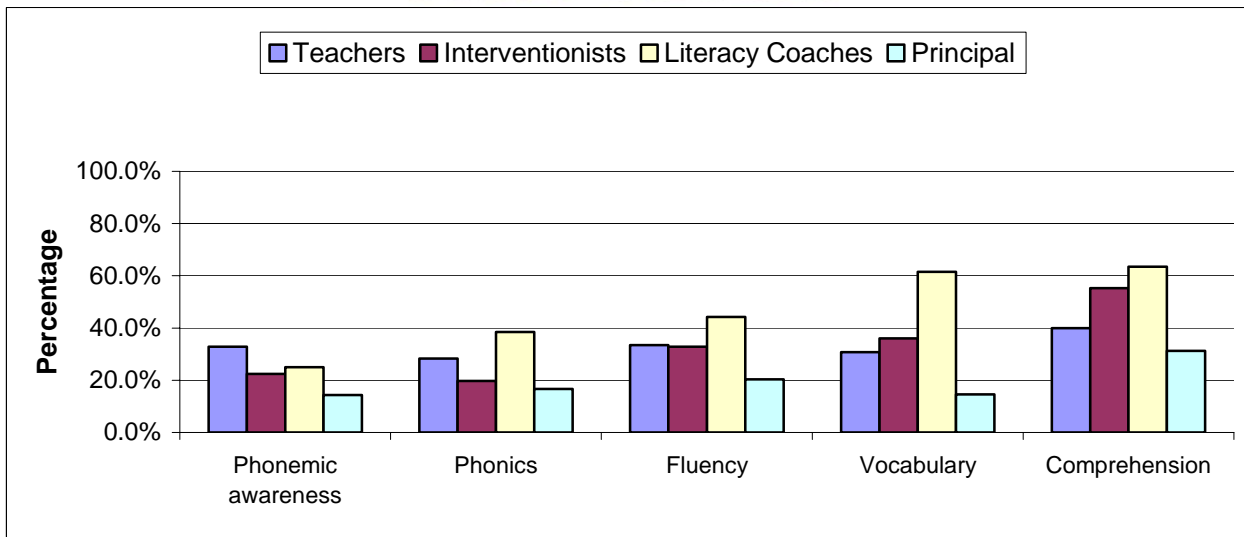


Figure 6. Professional development needs on the five components of reading instruction.

Participants also reported professional development needs in other areas. For instance, as illustrated in Figure 7, over 60% of participants from each group indicated that professional

development is needed in using effective instructional strategies for students below grade level. Also, more than half of each group indicated a need for more training on small group instruction.

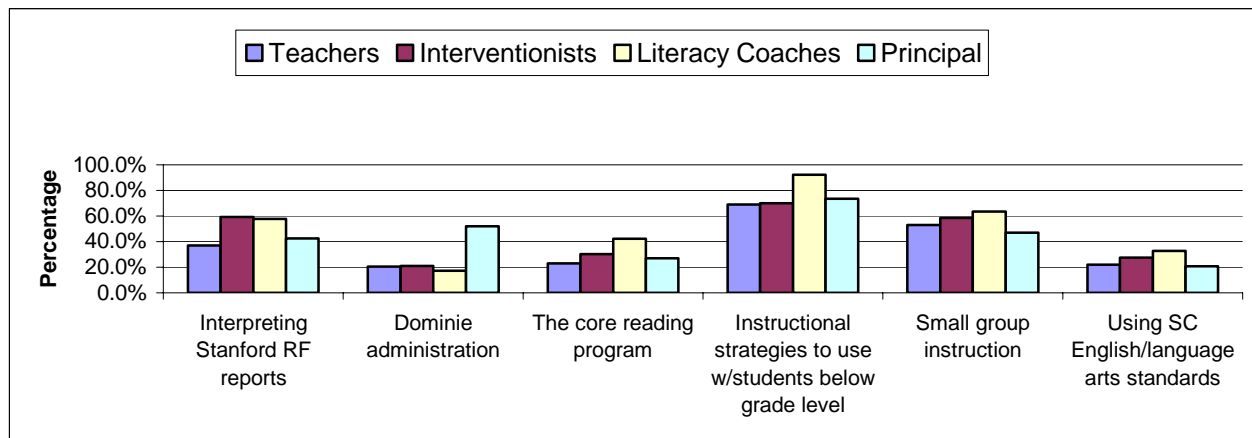


Figure 7. Additional professional development needs.

Literacy coaches, interventionists and teachers requested professional development on using Dominie assessments. They were asked to provide more information about what type of training was necessary. Approximately 50% reported that Dominie professional development was needed to improve instructional decisions and to diagnose specific needs of individual students.

Assessments for Monitoring Progress

Literacy coaches reported their beliefs about the Dominie and the Stanford Reading First Assessments. Over 90% of literacy coaches reported that the Dominie assessment was helpful, especially in regard to identifying students' instructional needs and monitoring their progress. Literacy coaches were less positive towards Stanford Reading First. Still, more than half believe that this method of assessment helps with reviewing students' progress, screening for their instructional needs, and making instructional decisions.

Literacy coaches also identified classroom assessments that they encourage teachers to use. According to this data, 100% of respondents encourage the use of Dominie, conferencing with students, running records and kidwatching/observation. The great majority also suggests using anecdotal notes (98.1%), writing samples (94.3%), rubrics (73.6%), student portfolios (71.7%), checklists (66.0%), and miscue analysis (66.0%) to monitor students' progress.

Comparing the 2006 survey results with the 2005 survey results, the views on assessment have improved for all participant groups. In 2006, principals viewed the Stanford Reading First assessment as more valuable in screening for students instructional needs (mean

increase of 0.31 on a 6-point scale). The responses of interventionists reflect an increase in the belief that Dominie can provide valuable information to diagnose specific needs of students (mean increase of 0.26 on a 6-point scale) and monitor student progress (mean increase of .048 on a 6-point scale). Teachers also perceived Dominie as more useful in monitoring student progress (mean increase of 0.23 on a 6-point scale) as well as screening for students instructional needs (mean increase of 0.18 on a 6-point scale). Additionally, principals perceived literacy coaches as having more knowledge about assessment this year (mean increase of 0.30 on a 6-point scale).

There were some noteworthy changes in classroom assessment practices as well. Teachers reported using miscue analysis more frequently (12.3% increase) and writing samples less frequently (28.4% decrease). Interventionists reported using more the Dominie (11.2% increase) and student portfolios (12.9% increase) more often compared with the previous year.

Context and Implementation

This section of the survey sought to address the culture and climate for implementation as perceived by principals, literacy coaches, interventionists, and teachers. In particular, participants provided information about (1) their level of support for the initiative, (2) their understanding of each others' roles and responsibilities, (3) the extent of collaboration and support between participants, (4) services provided to students, (5) coaching activities, and (6) their reactions to implementation.

Support for the Initiative

Participant support for and agreement with the philosophy of the initiative is critical to successful implementation (American Federation of Teachers, 1999). Overall, the level of buy-in and support from all participant groups is high. One hundred percent of literacy coaches and interventionists, and a vast majority of teachers (83.5%) and principals (91.8%) support the SCRF initiative. Perceived support for the initiative from school administrators is also important for successful implementation. Approximately 90% of interventionists and teachers believe the principal supported the SCRF initiative. However, fewer literacy coaches (79.2%) reported that the principal supported the initiative.

Teacher support for the initiative on the 2006 survey remained about the same compared with the 2005 survey. However, support from principals declined slightly (mean decrease of 0.16, on a 6-point scale). Both literacy coaches and interventionists perceived their

principal as less supportive of the initiative this year than last year (mean decrease of .60 and .25, respectively, on a 6-point scale).

Understanding Roles and Responsibilities

Understanding roles and responsibilities is also important for the success of an initiative (Freiberg, 1999). Over 90% of teachers, interventionists, literacy coaches, and principals understood the goals of the SCRF and their individual roles and responsibilities. Also, slightly smaller percentages of respondents reported that other participant groups understood their roles. For instance, only 81.1% of literacy coaches thought their role and responsibilities were understood by principals and SCRF teachers.

Compared with the 2005 survey results, participants better understood their roles in the SCRF program in 2006. Interventionists, principals, and teachers all agreed that they better understood their roles this year (mean increase of 0.45, 0.26, 0.21, respectively, on a 6-point scale). Teachers also identified that they better understood the roles of interventionists and literacy coaches (mean increase of 0.28 on a 6-point scale). Likewise, literacy coaches thought that their roles were better understood by teachers this year (mean increase of 0.42 on a 6-point scale). Interventionists better understood the roles of literacy coach and regional literacy coaches than last year (mean increase of 0.37 and 0.39, respectively, on a 6-point scale).

Collaboration and Support between Participants

Mutual respect and collaboration among educators are essential for successful teaching and learning and yet another characteristic of a successful initiative (Cornbleth & Ellsworth, 1994; Blase & Blase, 1999). Relationships between participants were examined in the areas of trust, respect, and collaboration. Respect between participants is evident. Approximately 96% of literacy coaches and interventionists respect teachers and believe the teachers treat them with respect. More than 95% of principals and teachers respect literacy coaches and believe the literacy coaches treat them with respect. Approximately 92% of literacy coaches respect their principal. Fewer literacy coaches (88.7%) than interventionists (94.8%) believe the principal treats them with respect.

In general, collaboration between program participants appears high. Approximately 82% of principals reported working closely with the district project director to execute the plan for the initiative. Also, over 87% of principals, interventionists, and teachers agreed or strongly agreed that teachers, interventionists, administrators, and literacy coaches worked together to successfully implement the initiative. Slightly fewer literacy coaches (79.3%) recognized this

sense of collaboration. For instance, only 75% of literacy coaches believed the principals communicated with them on a regular basis concerning SCRF and less than 70% said they worked collaboratively with the principals to provide school-level professional development opportunities for teachers in reading. Collaboration occurred in part through information-sharing from SLT members. A moderate amount of literacy coaches (67.9%), teachers (68.6%), interventionists (72.8%), and principals (79.6%), agreed or strongly agreed that this practice occurred.

Collaboration is also evidenced when participants share similar views. More than 90% of principals and teachers reported that they shared similar views with the literacy coach on how to teach reading. Also, approximately 81% of literacy coaches reported that they shared similar views with teachers on how to teach reading.

There is a sense of teamwork between participant groups that demonstrates collaboration. Principals (92.0%) and teachers (89.1%) agreed or strongly agreed that the school-based literacy coach helps teachers work together as a team. All interventionists reported that they worked collaboratively with the school-based literacy coaches. Also, most literacy coaches (86.8%) and interventionists (85.3%) believe teachers work collaboratively with them to address student needs.

Participant groups indicated greater collaboration on the 2006 surveys than in the previous year of implementation on the 2005 surveys. Literacy coaches felt that they were working more collaboratively with teachers (mean increase of 0.20 on a 6-point scale). More frequent collaboration may also explain why literacy coaches and teachers also developed more similar views on how to teach reading this year as compared with last year (mean increase of 0.34 on a 6-point scale).

According to teachers, their relationships with literacy coaches improved in 11 out of 11 areas in which they were asked to make judgments. The most pronounced changes included that participants felt more comfortable asking their literacy coach for help with instruction (mean increase of 0.24 on a 6-point scale), used more of the instructional strategies that the literacy coach taught them (mean increase of 0.36 on a 6-point scale), worked together as a team with the literacy coach more (mean increase of 0.31 on a 6-point scale), and more often perceived literacy coaches as having enough knowledge about assessment to assist teachers (mean increase of 0.36 on a 6-point scale). Improvements in these relationships might be explained by the increasing interaction between literacy coaches and teachers.

Interventionists also felt that that their relationship with literacy coaches had improved in that they had more respect for the literacy coaches (mean increase of 0.21 on a 6-point scale)

and received more respect from them (mean increase of 0.24 on a 6-point scale). Overall, interventionists felt more that they were a part of a team making joint decisions (mean increase of 0.31 on a 6-point scale).

Although many positive changes in the collaboration between program participants were reflected in the comparison of 2005 survey data with 2006 survey data, changes in participant responses revealed that literacy coaches did not feel that there was as much collaboration between program participants as last year (mean decrease of 0.28 on a 6-point scale). Although they felt that collaboration with teachers improved, they identified that they were not working as collaboratively with the principal (mean decrease of 0.34 on a 6-point scale). Changes in collaboration may be associated with changes in support for the SCRF Initiative. As mentioned previously, according to interventionists and literacy coaches, principal support appears to have decreased from the previous school year. The change in support might explain any decreases in collaboration between literacy coaches and principals.

Support between Participants

Support was operationalized as responding to requests for consultation, providing professional development consistent with needs, and giving feedback about performance. Participants' beliefs were examined to determine if their designated support person had enough knowledge about content and assessment to meet their needs. In general, SCRF participants agreed or strongly agreed their efforts were supported in the following ways:

- ❖ Approximately 98% of principals' requests for consultation were responded to by the regional intervention coach, regional literacy coach, and school-based literacy coach.
- ❖ More than 98% of literacy coaches stated that their regional literacy coach responded to their request for consultation, provided assistance based on their professional development needs, and gave feedback about their coaching and facilitation of study group.
- ❖ More than 98% of interventionists reported receiving support from SCRF literacy coaches and teachers.
- ❖ Exactly 96% of interventionists indicated that the regional intervention coach responded to their request for consultation and provided assistance consistent with their professional development needs.
- ❖ Interventionists (93.4%) stated the regional intervention coach provided feedback about their teaching of reading.

- ❖ Classroom teachers indicated that the school-based literacy coach responded to requests for consultation (93.5% of teachers) and they used the instructional strategies learned from the literacy coach (93.4% of teachers).
- ❖ Classroom teachers (87.2%) stated the professional development provided by the literacy coach met their needs.

In addition, most literacy coaches and interventionists perceived that the support they provided was well received. Approximately 94% of literacy coaches reported that the teachers were receptive to their support via suggestions about the teaching of reading. Slightly less than 80% of literacy coaches believed the teachers were receptive to making instructional changes based on assessment data. Some interventionists (86.0%) indicated that teachers supported their intervention methods and were aware of teachers incorporating the intervention strategies into their classroom instruction.

More than 92% of principals implied the interventionist, school-based literacy coach, regional literacy coach, and regional intervention coach have the content knowledge necessary to help the teachers. They also indicated that these individuals had enough knowledge about assessment to provide support. More than 91% of teachers, interventionists, and school-based literacy coaches felt similarly about the knowledge level of their respective coaches.

Coaching Activities

The SCRF model calls for a full-time, school-based literacy coach to facilitate after school study groups and work with teachers individually to improve their use of SBRR instructional practices. Literacy coaches and teachers provided information about the frequency of these coaching activities.

As shown in Table 6, teachers and literacy coaches have different perceptions about the frequency at which coaching activities occur. Classroom management appears to be the area of greatest discrepancy. While over 98% of literacy coaches report that they assist with classroom management sometimes or often, only about 38% of teachers indicated the literacy coaches helped with classroom management sometimes or often; a difference of approximately 60%.

Table 6

Perception of Frequency of Coaching Activities Between Literacy Coaches and Teachers

Activities	Literacy Coaches ^a	Classroom Teachers ^a	Difference
Developing assessment for reading	60.4%	50.1%	10.3%
Sharing or demonstrating reading strategies for instruction	100.0%	82.8%	17.2%
Incorporating SC English language arts standards within lessons	77.4%	59.0%	18.4%
Analyzing student assessment results	98.1%	74.4%	23.7%
Selecting supplemental activities	92.4%	68.6%	23.8%
Using the core reading program	88.7%	64.3%	24.4%
Using students' assessment data to improve teaching	96.2%	71.3%	24.9%
Demonstrating or modeling lessons	94.3%	66.5%	27.8%
Helping plan or develop lesson plans	83.0%	52.4%	30.6%
Providing meaningful feedback	100.0%	69.1%	30.9%
Observing teaching	96.2%	60.7%	35.5%
Helping with classroom organization	96.3%	59.5%	36.8%
Team teaching	64.1%	26.9%	37.2%
Helping with classroom management	98.1%	38.3%	59.8%

^aPercentage of respondents in the group who believe the activity occurs sometimes or often.

Teachers and literacy coaches also provided information about their areas of interest for future coaching activities. The activities for which most teachers wanted more emphasis were demonstrating or modeling lessons (32.6%) and selecting supplemental activities for students who need additional help in reading (32.1%). The activity for which the most literacy coaches want more emphasis is using student assessment data to improve teaching (77.4%).

Services Provided to Students

Implementation activities and strategies targeting students are the key areas of implementation through which the SCRF Initiative is able to accomplish its goal of increasing students' reading abilities.

Intervention services provided to students.

Interventionists described the structure of their service to students, the number and grade level of students they serve, the frequency and length of time they spend serving students, and their pattern of reporting student progress to teachers. Most interventionists provided service through the use of Reading Recovery® (81.8%) and/or small group instruction (92.2%). Some also provided one-on-one tutoring (18.2%), Early Success® (7.8%), or Soar to Success® (5.2%). These services were mainly provided to students in first, second, and third grade. Only 20% of interventionists provided services to kindergarten students. On average,

each interventionist served eight students one-on-one and 31 students in the small group structure.

Small groups contained between three and nine students (mean=5 students) and most lasted for 31 or more minutes. Approximately 95% of the interventionists served individual students for 21 or more minutes. After providing services, most of the interventionists (81.8%) reported students' progress to teachers at least several times a month.

Compared with 2004-2005, interventionists served more students in 2005-2006 as 16.8% more teachers reported that their students received services from interventionists this year. Interventionists also indicated that they are working more with each grade level and especially second and third grade students. The kinds of services that the interventionists provided in 2005-2006 also differed from the previous year. In 2005-2006, interventionists as a whole utilized more small group instruction (9.2% increase) and less one-on-one tutoring (11.1% decrease). In addition, the number of students in the small groups declined by 1.9 students from 2005 to 2006. Interventionists worked with more small groups per day and more interventionists (19.4% increase) spent 40 minutes or longer working with each small group in 2005-2006 compared with 2004-2005.

Instructional services provided to students.

Teachers used a variety of instructional methods in their classrooms including, one-to-one sessions with students (82.8% of teachers), whole group instruction (89.3% of teachers), and small group instruction (94.6% of teachers). Also, over 93% of teachers provided 120 minutes or more of uninterrupted English language arts instruction daily.

Teachers and interventionists provided instructional services to students based on the five components of reading instruction (comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, phonics, phonemic awareness) using a variety of instructional strategies (see Appendices B and E for percentages of interventionists and teachers using specific strategies). More than 92% of classroom teachers integrated comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary into reading instruction 4-5 days per week. However, fewer classroom teachers integrated phonics (85.2%) and phonemic awareness (82.6%) into classroom instruction 4-5 days per week. Over 94% of interventionists integrated all five components into reading instruction 4-5 days per week.

Survey questions inquired about the use of the core reading program to teach the five components. Over 94% of literacy coaches encouraged their teachers to use the core reading program to teach the five components. More than 88% of teachers indicated that they used the core reading program.

Supplemental reading activities.

Teachers provided supplemental reading activities in their classroom which included additional reading instruction (82.1% of teachers), peer tutoring (65.8% of teachers), and computer-assisted instruction (63.5% of teachers). Students also received supplemental reading activities from other participant groups. As shown in Table 7, approximately 67% of teachers taught students who received services from the interventionists.

Table 7

Percentage of Teachers Whose Students Received Services From Other Participant Groups

Participant Group	Percentage^a
Interventionists	67.4%
Other professionals	51.1%
Paraprofessionals	34.5%
Volunteers	29.5%

^aThe sum of all percentages exceeds 100% because participants were asked to select all that apply.

Additional services to enhance student growth.

Principals provided information about the additional services provided by the school to enhance student growth. As shown in Table 8, 90% of schools provided after-school programs for their students and 86% provided computer-assisted instruction.

Table 8

Additional Services to Enhance Student Growth

Additional Services	Percentage^a
After-school programs	90.0%
Before-school programs	14.0%
Computer-assisted instruction	86.0%
Family literacy	48.0%
Homework centers	56.0%
Mentoring programs	44.0%
Summer school programs	72.0%
Tutoring	64.0%

^aThe sum of all percentages exceeds 100% because participants were asked to select all that apply.

Reactions to Implementation

Participants' reactions to implementation were generally positive. At least 70%, of principals, literacy coaches, interventionists, and teachers indicated that SCRF implementation

has gone smoothly this year. Also, at least 70% of each participant group reported the climate for implementation was positive and that the program should continue next year.

Compared with the 2004-2005 school year, teachers, interventionists, and principals reported that the implementation of SCRF has gone more smoothly this year (mean increase of 0.34, 0.39, and 0.36, respectively, on a 6-point scale). However, according to literacy coaches, implementation was not as smooth in 2005-2006 (mean decrease of .26 on a 6-point scale).

Effectiveness Ratings.

Participants rated the effectiveness of the SCRF Initiative on a scale from 1 (Not effective) to 4 (Very effective). As illustrated in Figure 8, the feedback is overwhelmingly positive. More than 80% of respondents rated the Initiative as either *Effective* or *Very effective*. The only group assigning a rating of *Not effective* was teachers, and only 18 out of 740 teachers (2.4%) assigned this rating.

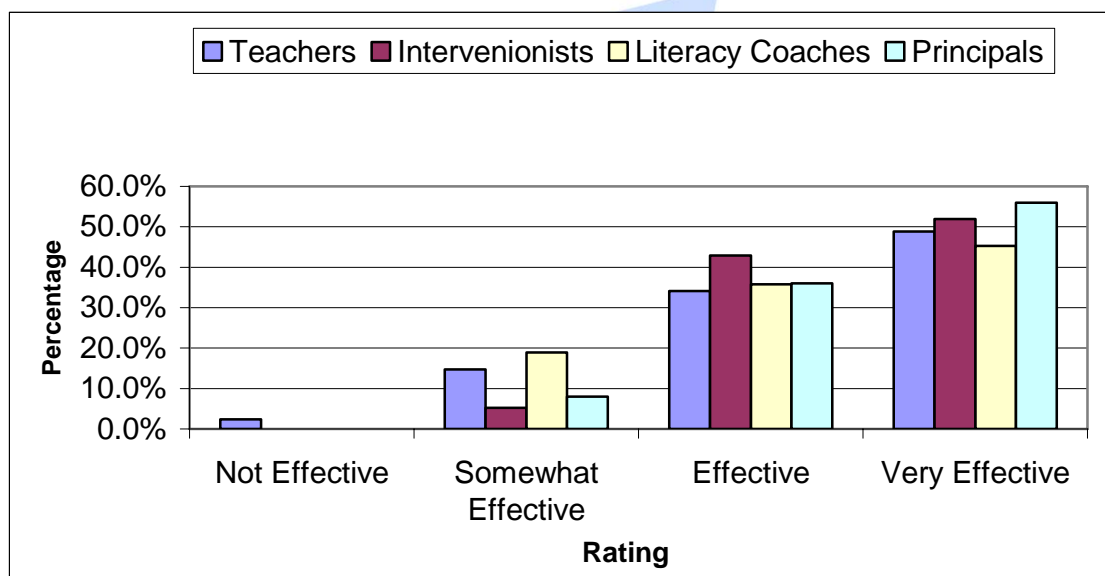


Figure 8. Participant ratings of the effectiveness of the SCRF Initiative.

A follow-up open-ended question asked for the reason behind the ratings assigned. The five most commonly reported reasons across participant groups for giving a rating of *Very effective* are depicted in Figure 9. The two most commonly cited reasons are that teachers or interventionists have grown professionally and that students have made academic progress or that student achievement has improved. The following statements are examples of participants' quotations related to these reasons:

“The teachers have grown tremendously in their knowledge about the teaching of reading. They are comfortable taking risks and trying new ideas and strategies. They share more with each other and they are starting to see themselves as a collaborative team of professional educators.” (Principal)

“Teachers are effectively and successfully using SCRF strategies, great communication between faculty & staff.” (Interventionist)

“I have seen a lot of growth in our students and more children reading on a regular basis. All students in grades K-3 participate in independent reading because their teachers incorporate that into their daily schedule. Through professional readings teachers respect the impact it has on their students. This has been a major transition for our teachers.” (Literacy Coach)

“The growth that I have seen in children's reading ability has shown that this initiative is very effective.” (Teacher)

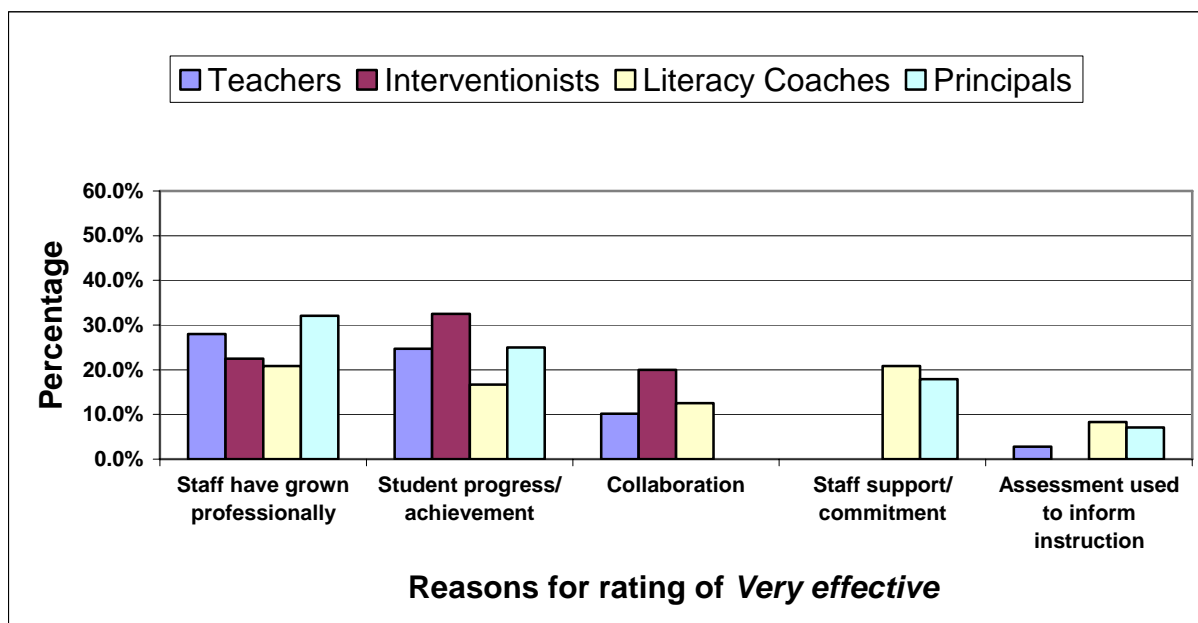


Figure 9. Reasons for rating the SCRF Initiative *Very effective*.

Some participant groups surveyed indicated other reasons for assigning a rating of *Very effective* that the other groups did not mention. For instance, several literacy coaches (12.5%) think implementing the 120 minutes block has made a difference, while some principals (10.7%) believe teachers are now more aware of students' needs. Some teachers also attribute the high level of effectiveness to (1) the competency and helpfulness of the literacy coach (10.2%), (2) increased student enthusiasm for learning (6.4%), and (3) their belief that SCRF is a beneficial program for their schools (7.8%).

Participants also provided reasons for rating the SCRF Initiative as *Effective*. Participants' reasons for this rating ranged from positive aspects about the program, such as teachers have grown professionally to negative aspects about the program, such as the program is too demanding on teachers and teachers have not bought into the program. For example, participants wrote:

"The initiative is effective because it has focused our teachers in same direction, and it has caused all of them to teach the five components of literacy." (Principal)

"As a new teacher, I like the emphasis on reading instruction and the Book Studies. They provide useful information to me and my growth in teaching." (Teacher)

"I said effective because we do have the majority of our teachers on board. However change does take time and there are many areas that we still need to work on. If all teachers were on board doing everything Reading First asks then I would have to rate us Very Effective and that's where we want to be." (Literacy Coach)

"I believe the majority of teachers and [the] other interventionist at my school are being quite effective but we do have some that are really not really being a part of our community of SCRF. Some still believe this is just extra work & a bother." (Interventionist)

Figure 10 shows the five most commonly cited reasons for assigning a rating of *Effective* and the percentage of participants in each group who provided these reasons.

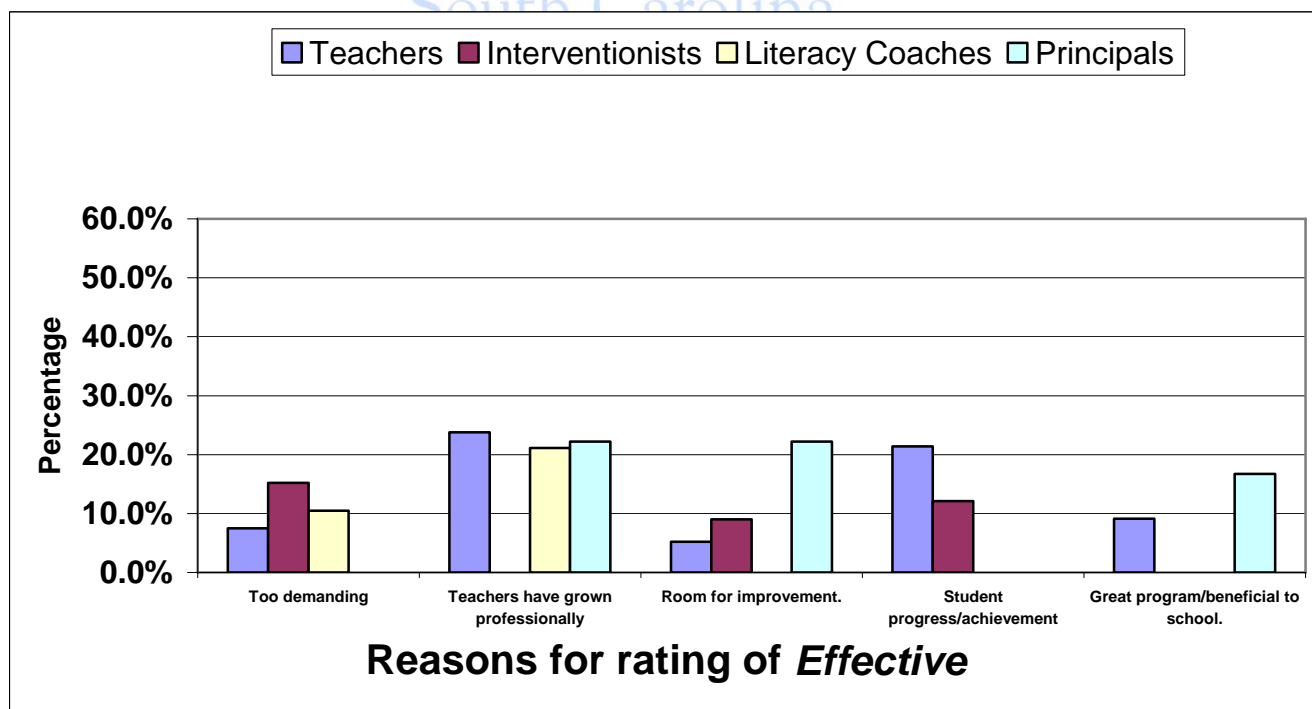


Figure 10. Reasons for rating the SCRF Initiative *Effective*.

Less than 19% of any participant group rated the SCRF initiative *Somewhat effective*. The majority of reasons cited for this rating indicated areas for improvement. For instance, as shown in Figure 11, of the participants assigning this rating, 50% of the principals (n=4), 30% of literacy coaches (n=10), and 12% of teachers (n=109) indicated the program was too demanding in terms of time/work required. Another major concern for the literacy coaches (n=10, 30%) and the interventionists (n=4, 50%) was the need for more support from school and district administrators. For example, participants wrote:

“Due to the amount of time we have to spend with other required “duties,” I don’t feel I am able to commit the time it takes to use this program to its fullest potential.” (Teacher)

“The initiative has had a positive impact, but the regulatory mandates of the initiative have worked against its effectiveness. With some flexibility in the mandates, the program could be very effective.” (Principal)

“The initiative has certain goals and guidelines. It seems that the districts and schools also have their own goals and guidelines - and sometimes they conflict. It is hard to implement everything effectively if it is not the main focus.” (Interventionist)

“Due to lack of leadership from principal implementation was less effective than it could have been.” (Literacy Coach)

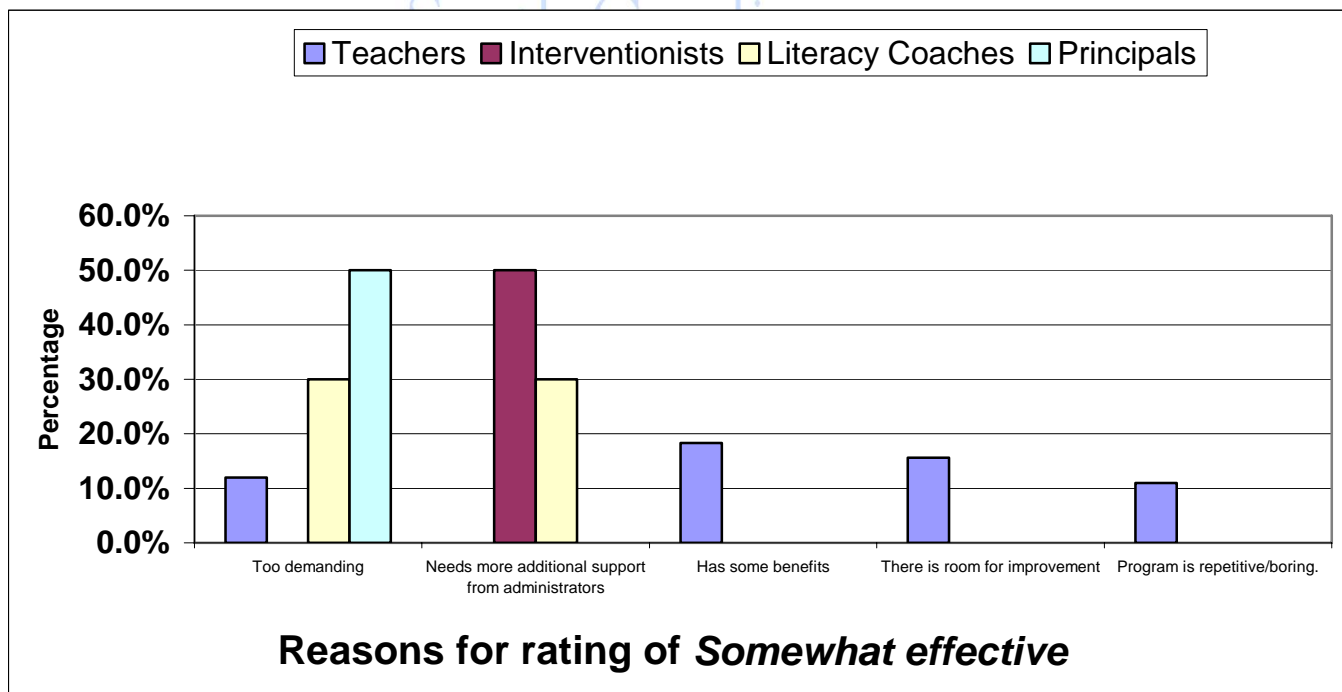


Figure 11. Reasons for rating the SCRF Initiative *Somewhat effective*.

Teachers (n=18) were the only respondents who considered the SCRF Initiative *Not effective*. As shown in Figure 12, the most commonly cited reason for this rating was that they considered the program repetitive or boring (33.3% of teachers). Teachers also reported that there was a lack of buy-in/commitment from some teachers, the program was too demanding in terms of time/work required, and assessments are not beneficial or are taking too much time.

The following statements represent teachers' responses:

"The classes did not provide any new strategies/info that we did not already know. The initiative is not sensitive to the time and lives of teachers. It is more of a problem, instead of being a solution to reading issues at our school."

"It's overwhelming to have to keep up with all the requirements plus do study groups, as well as other required documentation from our district."

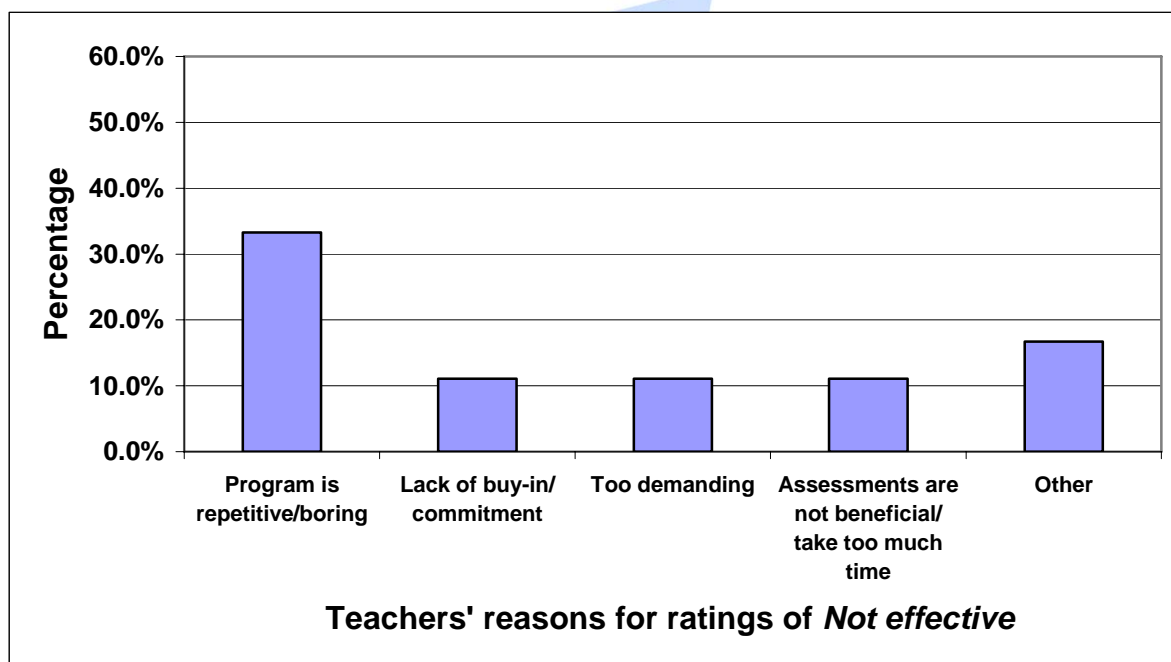


Figure 12. Teachers reasons for rating the SCRF Initiative *Not effective*.

The explanations provided for the different effectiveness ratings identify both areas for program improvement and outcomes for celebration. The amount of support for and commitment to the initiative at both the school and district level arose as an area in need of additional attention. Time and energy demands on teachers and teachers' opinions about the repetitiveness of the program might feed into the extent to which they buy into, support, and are committed to the initiative. Support for the SCRF Initiative can be built by communicating and

celebrating accomplishments. These areas for improvement do not generalize to all districts, all schools, or participants. As mentioned previously, over 80% of each participant group rated the program *Effective* or *Very effective*, giving reasons that they saw positive changes in teachers and students.

The effectiveness ratings were also compared between the 2005 and 2006 survey administrations. The mean ratings for all participant groups increased between the two years. This indicates that those who participated in the program for both years viewed the program more favorably, on average, after the second year. The most notable increase occurred for teachers. Their average effectiveness rating was 1.16 points higher in 2006 than in 2005. This increase is substantial as the ratings were on a four point scale.

Section Summary

Survey results revealed the following strengths: support for the initiative is strong, participants have a better understanding of roles and responsibilities, collaboration between participant groups is high, students are receiving more direct services from interventionists, and student and teacher outcomes have been realized. Survey results also revealed areas for program improvement including declining support from principals and discrepancies in perceptions of the frequency of coaching activities. In summary, program implementation has progressed smoothly and participants believe the SCRF Initiative is effective.

South Carolina
Reading First

Highlights of School Leadership Team Report

The school leadership teams (SLT) consist of the district contact, principal, literacy coach, curriculum coordinator, representative K-3 teachers, representative special education teachers, and the library/media specialist. The role of the SLT is to develop the schools' plan for implementing scientifically based reading research and instruction and to support teachers in their efforts to raise reading achievement (Reading First Grant Proposal, 2002, p. 5).

The SDE held five meetings of the SLTs during 2005-2006. Participants at the meetings held on March 7, 2006 and March 8, 2006 were asked to complete a summative evaluation of the SLT meetings held during the year. The evaluation form provided to participants consisted of three demographic items, 15 Likert scaled items with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), one dichotomous item (Yes or No) regarding sharing of information with school faculty, and three open-ended questions regarding the impact of the SLT meetings. In total, 273 SCRF SLT meeting evaluation forms were collected and analyzed. Complete report details can be found in Attachment J.

Participants at the two days of SLT meetings represented 51 schools in South Carolina. The majority of the respondents identified themselves as either school literacy coaches ($n=50, 18.3\%$), classroom teachers ($n=45, 16.5\%$), media specialists ($n=40, 14.7\%$), principals ($n=40, 14.7\%$), or special education teachers ($n=33, 12.1\%$). Interventionists, district project directors, curriculum coordinators, and assistant principals were also in attendance at the SLT meetings.

Participants generally responded positively to the closed-response items. Participants found the information provided at the SLT meetings relevant and useful. For instance, about 94% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that the information shared during the meetings was useful to their team, their understanding of the topics presented had increased from the previous year, and those topics assisted their team with the implementation of SCRF. More than 89% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the information gained at SLT meetings helped their team provide direction, leadership, and a vision for their school. Over 81% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they learned new leadership strategies at the meetings.

Participants also reported positive feedback about the presenters and logistics of the SLT meetings. More than 95% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the presenters were knowledgeable, were well prepared, kept the discussion focused, and allowed sufficient time for discussion among the individual SLTs. The percentages of respondents who agreed or

strongly agreed that the presenters encouraged participation, provided opportunities for questions, and were able to answer questions were slightly lower (87-91%).

In the final section of the SLT survey, participants provided written feedback regarding their perspective on the procedures used for routinely sharing information at their school, what they valued most about participating in the meetings, and information or topics they would like to see presented in future SLT meetings.

First, participants were asked to respond to a two-part question. Part 1 asked if their team has a procedure for routinely sharing information with faculty at their school. Part 2 asked the participants to comment on their response to part one by describing the procedures used or explaining why they responded *No*. Figure 13 shows that 81.3% ($n=222$) of respondents agreed that their SLT has a procedure in place for routinely sharing information with faculty at their school.

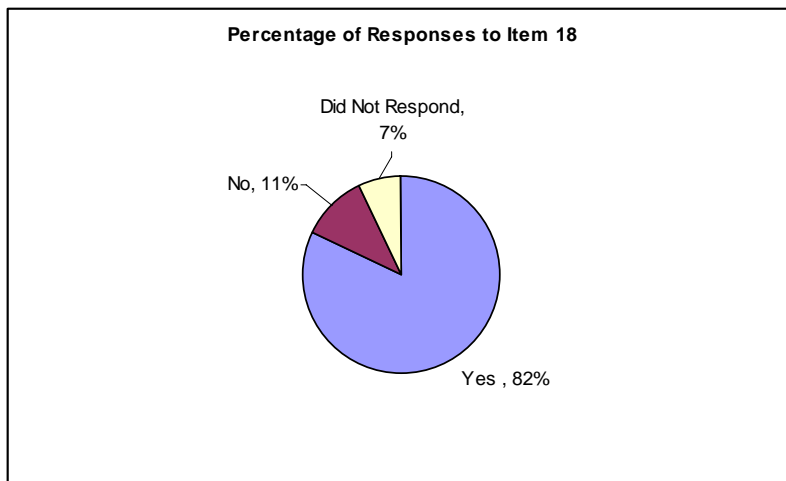


Figure 13. Percentage of SLTs with routine procedures for sharing information with faculty.

Most of the respondents who indicated that there is a procedure for sharing information stated that information is routinely shared through meetings. The following two quotes are examples of respondents' comments:

"We meet on the first Wednesday of every month. Grade level representatives share information during their grade level meetings. School interventionists/literacy coach hold meetings monthly/ever[y] 6th week to discuss students and teachers' needs for intervention services. State SLT meetings are highlighted at these meetings."

"Our team shares this information at our monthly school SLT meetings, grade level meetings, & faculty meetings. Sometimes we re-emphasize the information in memos and in study groups."

When asked to describe the most valuable aspect of participating in SCRF SLT meetings, there was a wide variety of responses. As shown in Figure 14, almost 47% of participants identified the *knowledge acquisition* as the most valuable aspect of SLT meetings, followed closely by *teamwork* (40.6%).

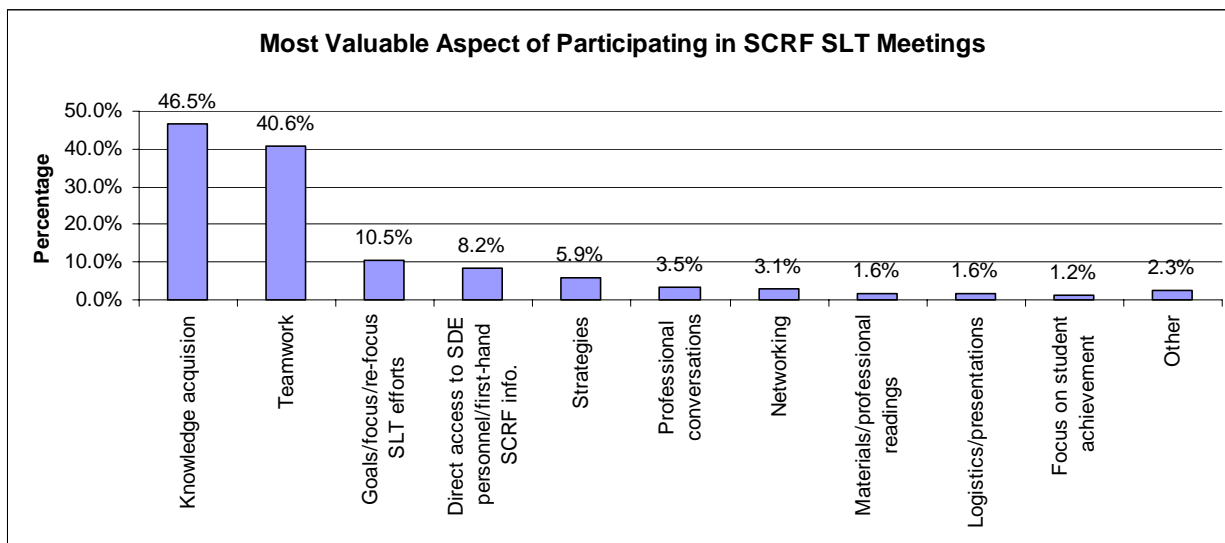


Figure 14. Most valuable aspect of participation.

Knowledge acquisition includes responses related to general knowledge gained from the information that was shared, experiences shared by other schools, clarification of the roles within SCRF, and overviews of the “big picture” of SCRF. The greatest number of responses in this category fell under the shared experiences of other schools and districts. The participants found it particularly valuable to hear success stories and lessons learned in terms of SCRF implementation. Some respondents in this category stated:

“Learning from each other. When other schools share we walk away refreshed and challenged. Refreshed to know that we are doing lots of good things and challenged to try new things. “

“The most valuable thing about participating in SCRF SLT meetings was that it helped me understand the role of each person (i.e. Interventionist, Media Specialist, Literacy Coach) and how we all can collaborate for the common good of the students.”

For planning purposes, participants were asked to provide suggestions for information or topics they would like addressed in future SLT meetings. As Figure 15 reveals, most of the

responses related to instructional strategies, implementation, the opportunity to learn from each other, and curriculum.

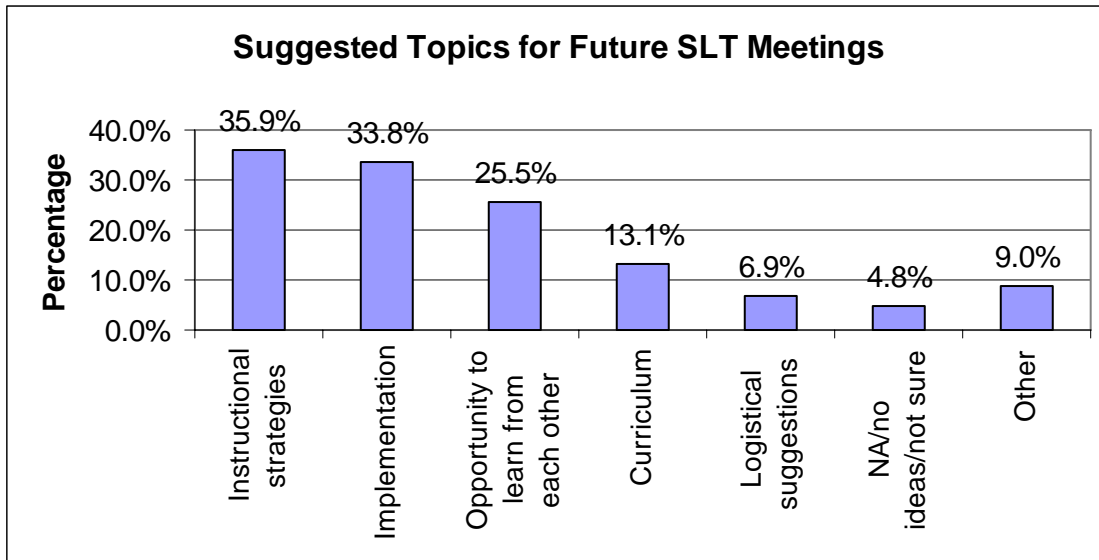


Figure 15. Suggested topics for future SLT meetings.

Complete details of the qualitative themes identified (as well as sub-themes) can be found in the full report, located in Attachment J.

Section Summary

Overall, the results were positive regarding the SLT meetings held during the 2005-2006 school year. Participants gained valuable information from members of their own teams, other teams, and SDE personnel. They expressed satisfaction with the content of the information provided and confidence in the delivery of the information. In general, the evaluations elicited positive responses from participants, and also obtained helpful feedback for future program planning and improvements.

Professional Development Surveys

This section of the report highlights evaluation results for professional development workshops held during the summer of 2006. Three types of workshops were conducted: (1) a teacher workshop on small group instruction; (2) administrator workshops, entitled, *Administrators as Literacy Leaders*; and (3) summer school observations and professional development. At the end of each workshop, participants were asked to complete a workshop evaluation survey. The full summer professional development is available in Appendix K.

Teacher Workshop on Small Group Instruction

The SDE offered a one-day teacher workshop on small group instruction on each day, June 19-22, 2006. The purpose of the teacher workshop on small group instruction was to assist teachers with providing effective small group instruction in the area of reading comprehension. At the end of the session, 117 teachers completed a workshop evaluation survey providing feedback on the practical application of the content, the quality of the presentation, and the effectiveness of the presenters. The survey consisted of 16 items with a 6-point Likert scale response format. Ten of the items focused on practical applications and the other six asked about the presentation and presenters. Teachers from 19 school districts attended, with two-thirds teaching 1st, 2nd, or 3rd grade (see Figure 16). The remaining 33% of teachers taught pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, 4th, 5th, 6th, or multiple grades.

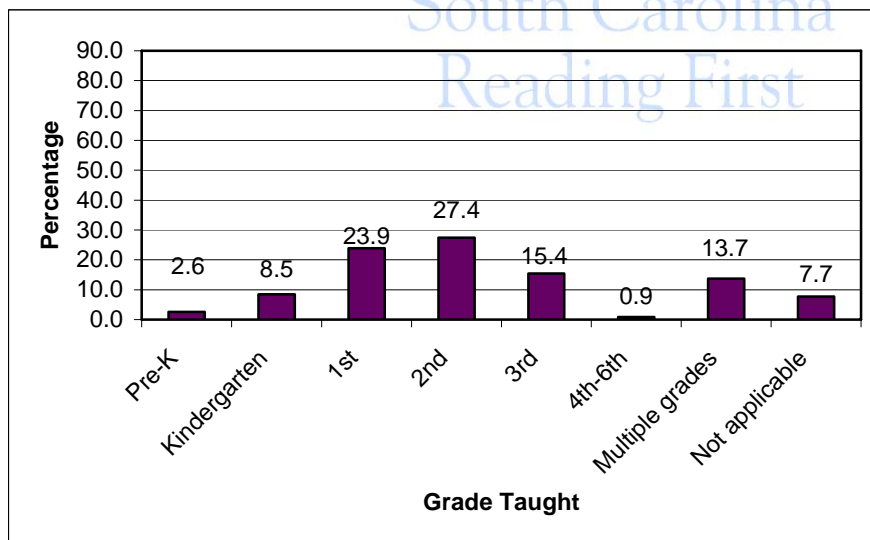


Figure 16. Distribution of teachers by grade taught attending Small Group Instruction Workshop.

Almost 95% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the content of the session was useful. In general, teachers who attended the small group instruction session thought that the

information presented had practical applications for teaching in their classrooms and increased their knowledge and understanding of instructional strategies. Approximately 90% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they learned new instructional strategies that will help them improve student learning. Participants also gained information about using assessment to inform instruction. Ninety-two percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the session increased their understanding of using assessment to form flexible small groups.

Teachers reported that the instructional materials and methods were understandable. Regarding the presentations and presenters, participants thought the discussions were productive and focused and that the presenters were knowledgeable and well prepared for the session. Most of the respondents (94.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that the presenters offered practical examples of application in the classroom and 100% agreed or strongly agreed that the presenters encouraged participation during the session.

Overall, the workshop was considered beneficial and evaluations were positive. Teachers reported that they learned new, relevant information. Over 93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the workshop was helpful.

Administrator Workshop: Administrators as Literacy Leaders

The SDE offered a three-day workshop specifically for administrators, on June 5th-7th and June 12th-14, 2006. The purpose of this workshop was to prepare administrators to serve as literacy leaders in their schools. Thirty-four participants completed a workshop evaluation at the end of the session regarding the practical application of the workshop content, the quality of the presentation, and the effectiveness of the presenters. The survey consisted of 16 items with a 6-point Likert scale response format. Ten of the items focused on practical applications and the other six asked about the presentation and presenters. The administrators represented 16 school districts. As shown in Figure 17, almost 71% of the respondents were principals.

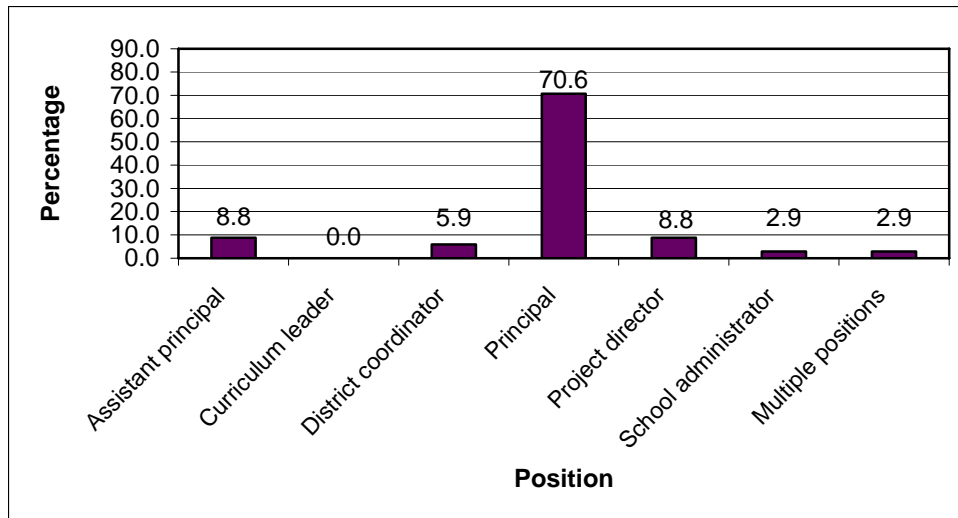


Figure 17. Distribution of administrators by position attending Administrators as Literacy Leaders Workshop.

In general, administrators who attended the workshop expressed that the content of the workshop will be useful to them. Over 94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their understanding of the topics presented increased. Most administrators indicated that the workshop equipped them with additional knowledge and practical strategies for improving instruction in their schools. For example, 91% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the sessions increased their understanding of how the SCRF Observation Tool can be used to help teachers make more informed literacy instruction decisions. Additionally, 95% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the sessions increased their understanding of how the SCRF School Report can be used to make better informed literacy instruction decisions.

Administrators also indicated that the workshop increased the knowledge and understanding of using assessment to inform instruction. Over 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they learned new strategies and increased their understanding for using assessment to inform literacy instruction. Also, 94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the demonstrations of how to use assessment to inform instruction were useful.

Finally, participants reported that the instructional materials and methods were understandable. With respect to the presentations and presenters, 97% of administrators agreed or strongly agreed that the presenters were knowledgeable, well prepared, kept the discussion focused, and encouraged participation.

Overall, the workshop was beneficial to administrators. Over 94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the sessions were helpful to them. They expressed that their

understanding of the topics presented has increased and that they gained new ideas for improving instruction in their schools.

Summer School Observation Professional Development

The SDE offered SCRF participants a voluntary opportunity to participate in a four-day summer school professional development with a focus on classroom observation. The opportunity to observe literacy instruction in summer-school settings was provided at four different locations to serve SCRF personnel across the state. Participants observed how to (1) effectively integrate the five components of reading into the 120-minute uninterrupted block of instruction, (2) use literacy centers, and (3) use assessment to guide daily instruction. The summer school professional development provided opportunities for teachers to gain ideas and skills for the classroom, while providing opportunities for students in SCRF schools to receive supplemental instruction over the summer.

At the end of the training, participants were asked to complete a survey consisting of 27 items with a 6-point Likert scale response format and two open-ended questions. Out of 304 respondents, almost 82% were classroom teachers equally representing Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades (see Figure 18).

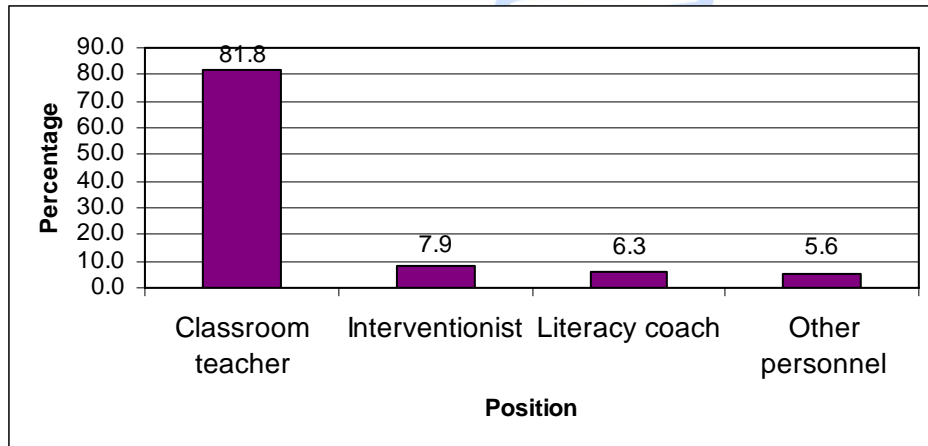


Figure 18. Distribution of participants by position attending the summer school observation professional development.

Respondents thought the opportunity for classroom observation was beneficial. As shown in Table 9, for 9 out of 10 target areas, over 89% respondents agreed or strongly agreed that classroom observation increased their understanding in those areas. The lowest area of knowledge growth, indicated by about 70% participants, was in the use of the SCRF Observation Tool.

Table 9

Percentage of Participants Who Gained Knowledge in Targeted Areas

Target Area	Percentage
Planning for 120-minute block	96.4%
Small group instruction	96.0%
Instructional strategies for reading	95.0%
Whole group instruction	94.1%
One-on-one instruction	93.1%
Procedural classroom management	89.7%
The role of the SCRF interventionist in the classroom	89.7%
How to integrate the five components of reading in the	89.5%
The role of the SCRF literacy coach in the classroom	89.1%
The use of the SCRF Observation Tool	69.7%

Note. Percentage indicates the percentage of respondents who marked agree or strongly agree.

Classroom observations also increased teachers' understanding about how to use assessments such as Dominie and anecdotal records to inform instruction. Teachers indicated that the debriefing sessions were also beneficial. In particular, 97% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that coaching conversations during the debriefing session helped them understand what they observed in the classroom. A slightly smaller percentage (91.1%) of the respondents rated the professional development workshop provided by the PDPs as helpful or very helpful, compared with their ratings of the classroom observation and debriefing sessions.

Participants responded to two open-ended questions about what they believed was the most helpful aspect of the training and their suggestions for improvement. In response to the first question, over 63% of respondents reported that classroom observations were the most helpful. Examples of participants' comments include:

"Classroom observation was the most helpful aspect because I was able to see best practices modeled, hear teachers' dialog, see other ideas (i.e., songs and games), and to be an 'unstressed'--focused--observer able to kidwatch across the room."

"The most helpful aspect of the 3-day SCRF summer school experience was being able to see how to form and use small group instruction based on need. Also how to set up small group and workstations."

Respondents also identified a variety of aspects as most helpful including debriefing sessions, networking or combinations of the three major aspects.

A second open-ended question asked participants to list one suggestion for improving the professional development. While almost 20% of respondents stated that no changes were

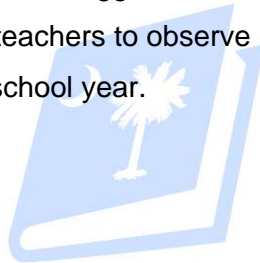
needed, others provided ideas for improvement. Suggested changes related to the structure of the training, classroom observations, and time to interact with students and other teachers.

Examples of participants' comments include:

"I would like to include the K-assistants in on our training. It's nice for me to get all this great knowledge and understanding, but my assistant will be like my students, waiting on me for all knowledge of the 5 components."

"Do this during the school year so you see more progress--maybe by picking teachers to have model classrooms that others can visit--throughout the year."

Overall the responses to the three-day summer school professional development workshop were positive. Teachers appreciated the opportunity to observe literacy coaches model lessons and to discuss what they observed. They gained knowledge and skills to use in their own classrooms. Based on teachers' suggestions, SCRF personnel should consider providing additional opportunities for teachers to observe literacy coaches and/or one another teach in a classroom throughout the school year.



South Carolina
Reading First

2005-2006 SCRF Strengths

Student achievement has improved between the first and second year of implementation of the SCRF Initiative. Surveys administered to various participant groups indicated high ratings on many aspects of the SCRF program. In particular, the perception of the program's effectiveness has increased from the first to second year, especially for teachers. SLT members gave positive feedback on the information provided at meetings held over the 2005-2006 school year. In addition, participants in summer professional development workshops indicated a high level of satisfaction with the information provided.

2005-2006 Recommendations for SCRF

The following section contains recommendations based on the findings presented in this report. Please note that the following recommendations are provided from the perspective of the external evaluation team and are meant to serve as topics for further discussion with SDE administrators. Factors such as resources, capacities, political context, and organizational context will affect the extent to which these recommendations can and should be implemented. However, the recommendations should provide guidance for interpreting and using the data collected during the 2005-2006 school year.

- ❖ **Second grade, reading comprehension:** Over the past two years, Stanford Reading First (SRF) achievement results for students in grade 2 show considerably smaller gains between fall and spring semesters compared with students in grades 1 and 3. When examining the component analysis data for grade 2 (see Appendix A), the percentage of students testing at grade level increases between the fall and spring semesters for six out of seven components. However, the percentage of grade 2 students at grade level for reading comprehension declines by approximately 25% from fall to spring each year.

The Stanford Reading First assessment administered to students in the spring of grade 2 contains more and longer paragraphs for students to read and then respond to than the test administered in the fall of grade 2. Teachers should work with students on sustained reading during second grade to improve their reading comprehension skills and prepare them for the more rigorous testing on those skills in the spring.

- ❖ **Coaching activities:** Survey results indicate that teachers and literacy coaches have different perceptions related to the frequency of coaching activities that occur between

teachers and literacy coaches. These discrepancies might exist due to the amount of time some literacy coaches have to work with their teachers. Literacy coaches might facilitate coaching activities at the rate they reported. However, if they regularly work with only a few teachers, then some teachers may not be involved in these activities as often. In other words, literacy coaches might facilitate activities more often than some teachers realize because they are facilitating the activities with other teachers. Furthermore, only 66% of school-based literacy coaches agreed or strongly agreed they have enough time to work with the SCRF teachers at their school.

If additional resources are available, SDE may consider allocating resources for hiring additional literacy coaches. More teachers could be reached more often because the ratio of teachers to literacy coaches would decrease. Alternatively, school literacy coaches should identify the needs of individual teachers and allocate the time literacy coaches spend with a particular teacher based on the needs of individual teachers.

- ❖ **Professional development through classroom observation:** Surveys results reveal that teachers found professional development through classroom observation to be very helpful. Teachers who participated in the summer school professional development provided glowing feedback about the opportunity to observe instruction in a real classroom with students. SDE should consider providing more structured observation opportunities for teachers throughout the year and across grade levels.
- ❖ **Summer loss:** Some achievement gains made during the school year are being lost over the summer as shown in a matched longitudinal analysis of Stanford Reading First scores. The scores of students who participated in the 2006 summer professional development program and students in year-round schools should be analyzed to examine if either summer school or year-round schools reduces or eliminates summer loss.

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