Using Correlates of Effective Schools

Anderson, C.J

(2014)

To Cite:

Anderson, C.J. *Using correlates of effective schools.* [PDF document]. Retrieved from Lecture

Notes Online Website

Using Correlates of Effective Schools (Anderson, 2014)

Introduction

Based on the Framework for Effective Schools Research, the Sustainable School Reform worksheet (appendix A) helps identify essential elements or "correlates" of effective reform, and critical components while reviewing case studies involving school improvement initiatives. While a metacognitive tool is very useful for effectively and efficiently organizing, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information, prerequisite understanding of the information comprising the tool is necessary to optimize usage of the metacognitive tool. The purpose of this paper is to describe the six essential attributes of school reform, describe how the Seven Correlates of Effective Schools are utilized as leading indicators, and explicate how and why these basic beliefs involving Effective Schools provide an effective framework for improvement.

The Six Essential Elements (Attributes) and Their Importance

As identified on the Sustainable School Reform worksheet, the six essential attributes for school reform are:

1. Data Driven
2. Results Oriented
3. Research Based
4. Focused on Quality and Equity
5. Collaborative Is Form
6. Ongoing and Self-Renewing

The importance of these essential attributes are more readily recognized when analyzing the Correlates of Effective Schools in relation to any case studies seeking to examine sustained school improvement. Following World War II, W. Edwards Deming developed a Total Quality Management (TQM) system comprised of14 data driven points that he contended, "were essential for business success" (Davenport & Anderson, 2002, p. 33). The Brazosport reform

initiative used Deming's TQM system and his "Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle" (p.34) as the Superintendent sought to implement results-oriented and research-based school reform.

When a school's mission statement describes a preferred future then the importance of the mission statement is to provide the staff with a clear projection for growth and benchmarks for assessing progress. By contrast, when a school's mission statement merely represents current reality, the mission is less inspiring and less energizing (Lew, 2001). The effective leader will be able to communicate this clear vision grounded in optimistic values.

Without combining quality principles with its school reform efforts, continuous improvement would be less likely. Through an examination of tenets derived from Effective Schools research, Ravitch (1985) advocates for an indissolvable link between the issues of quality and equity. Given this, it is highly advisable for schools to seek out and identify systems promoting equity in quality.

Development of a Clear and Focused Mission often encounters resistance by educators who are fearful of making bold statements such as "Learning for all." Fear rules the day when staff collectively worry about what happens if the school falls short of its stated mission? A strong leader of educational reform makes it a moral journey for followers to collaboratively join the effort. A detriment to reliance on a charismatic leader during reform efforts without including quality principles in the initiative is that if the leader then leaves before the initiative becomes institutionalized, then effort often dies and the gains are quickly lost.(GCU, 2011, p. 2).

Although the interconnectedness of the correlates of Effective Schools requires a strong educational leader, once the reform efforts institutionalize quality principles then the likelihood for continuous improvement is increased. In the Brazosport case study, such institutionalization resulted from analyzing, synthesizing, and implementing Mary Barksdale's successful classroom

approaches into an eight-step process "similar to Deming's Plan, Do, Check, Act, cycle" (Davenport & Anderson, 2002, p. 48).

Using Correlates as Leading Indicators for Continuous Improvement

As a counter to Coleman's (1966) report that extensively absolved schools of responsibility for student achievement, Edmonds began extensive research designed to investigate successful schools with large populations of low SES students. His subsequent findings resulted in a call for equity grounded in a commitment to promoting the academic skills of low socio-economic status (SES) children to levels of mastery of basic skills. By addressing the equitable distribution of goods within a society, Edmonds's (1979) work was framed in socio-political terms whereby all children could be educated and the school's treatment of children was seen as a critical factor in each child's academic success. Edmonds believed there are six factors that schools can actually control, which can optimize academic success for poor children. These included:

1. strong administrative leadership;
2. a climate of expectation that children would succeed;
3. orderly school atmosphere;
4. primary emphasis on student acquisition of basic skills;
5. school energy and resources focused on basic skills; and
6. frequent monitoring of pupil progress (p. 18).

The six factors identified by Edmonds (1979) were reinforced by Pechman's and King's (1993) identification of six essential factors for successful school reform, which included:

1. a stable and safe school environment;
2. the ongoing support from district staff for reform;
3. the presence of teacher leaders within the school;
4. the collaboration and support of the whole faculty;
5. the acceptance and commitment by the faculty to participate in the change process; and
6. a principal who facilitates the changes and encourages collegiality.

Additionally, as reported by Childress (2009), six types of essential involvement need to be included in any program of school reform. This comprehensive program of school-family-community partnerships, as explicated by Epstein (1995), includes:

1. parenting--helping all families establish home environments that support children as students;
2. communicating--designing and conducting effective forms of communication about school programs and children's progress;
3. volunteering--recruiting and organizing help and support for school functions and activities;
4. learning at home--providing information and ideas to families about how to help students with schoolwork and school-related activities;
5. decision-making--including parents in school decisions and
6. collaborating with the community--identifying and integrating resources and services from the community to strengthen and support schools, students and their families (p. 16).

The basic conclusion of Edmonds (1979) comparative research on Effective Schools was that public schools can and do make a difference, even if comprised of students from low SES backgrounds. As a result of effective public schools, all children can learn at high levels including children from low SES backgrounds. Unique characteristics and processes found in schools where all students were learning at high levels regardless of SES status were correlated with student success therefore the term "correlates" has been subsequently referenced in Effective Schools Research. These interconnected correlates include:

- Safe and Orderly Environment
- Clear and Focused Mission
- Climate of High Expectations for Success
- Opportunity to Learn & Student Time on Task
- Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress
- Positive Home-School Relations
- Strong Instructional Leadership (Lezotte, 1991)

As a bridge between the initial work by Edmonds and more recent research related to school reform, the research by Levine and Lezotte (1990) focused upon correlates of

effectiveness, processes for creating effective schools, and achievement criteria for determining the success of these efforts. During this time, Levine and Lezotte encouraged an emphasis on dual research that focused upon the instructional features of effective teaching and the organizational features of effective schools. Ultimately, the Seven Correlates and Six Essential Elements of School Reform formed the basic beliefs framing improvement for Effective Schools.

How are Basic Beliefs of Effective Schools an Important Part of School Improvement?

The seven correlates of effective schools are interdependent and not intended for implementation in isolation. Although there is utility in considering each correlate one at a time for purposes of becoming familiar with the related research, each correlate must be viewed as a necessary, but not sufficient, part of the entire effective school as a system that successfully produces learning for all. Given the interdependency of the seven correlates, school leaders must therefore approach them with the view of implementing them all at once. Thus, a clear and focused mission as well as strong instructional leadership is required to move the other interdependent correlates from being an ideal to effective practice.

Since Effective Schools research demonstrates that a result of schools ignoring the interdependence among the seven correlates is slow progress, then without strong, respected instructional leadership that can help bring consensus for a clear and focused mission, confusion about how to simultaneously incorporate all the correlates would prevail. For example, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, educators who were formerly advocates of the comprehensive Effective Schools Process broke off certain elements of that process and overemphasized them, to the detriment of the whole process. When educators attempted to run with one or two correlates of Effective Schools, their efforts were unsuccessful.

Conclusion

In recent years replication research (Comer, 1998; Reeves, 2008) reaffirmed the earlier findings by Edmonds (1979) and Lezotte (1991) that the basic beliefs of effective schools are important for school improvement. The correlates clearly describe schools where children are learning and these correlates remain absent from schools where children are learning at an observably lower level of success. These replication studies involved diverse schools ranging from urban, suburban, and rural settings, including elementary middle, and high schools, in affluent, middle class communities, and low SES communities. Therefore, consistently, the seven correlates have been shown to provide schools with a comprehensive framework for identifying, categorizing, and solving the problems confronting schools and school districts. When utilizing the Effective Schools Model, by implementing a faculty-administrator-parent-community team-planning approach, which utilizes student achievement data and the seven correlates to develop and implement a long-range improvement plan, the schools and school districts exhibit school improvement. Most importantly, research proves the Effective Schools Model promotes district-wide, systemic restructuring that provides continuous improvement, thereby ensuring every child has access to a quality education and an equal educational opportunity.

Appendix A

Worksheet 1: Sustainable School Reform

Based on the

Effective Schools Research Framework

As you read any the case study material intended to evaluate school reform efforts, print this worksheet and use it to take notes regarding what the district did and how it went about doing it. There may be elements listed on the worksheet not mentioned or even implied in the case material. If this is the case, you should note that related information was not provided. In addition, you should "score" (3 = very important, down to 1= little importance) for each component that is discussed in the materials. At the completion of the exercise, you should list questions that could be addressed by any educators involved in the case study, thereby providing a deeper understanding of what occurred.

1. Essential Elements and Critical Components

    a. Data Driven

    b. Results Oriented

    c. Research Based

    d. Focused on Quality and Equity

    e. Collaborative Is Form

    f. Ongoing and Self-Renewing

2. Five Ts of Continuous Improvement

    a. Theories

    b. Teams

    c. Tools

    d. Time

    e. Technology

3. Correlates of Effective Schools

    a. High Expectations for Success

    b.   Strong Instructional Leadership

    c.   Clear and Focused Mission

    d.   Opportunity to Learn/Time on Task

    e.   Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

    f.   Safe and Orderly Environment

    g.   Positive Home/School Relations

4.   Implementation Processes

    a.   Involvement Processes

    b.   Clarifying Mission/Belief

    c.   Defining Essential Student Learning

    d.   Analyzing the Data

    e.   Searching for Solutions

    f.   Action Planning

    g.   Executing Action Plans

References

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication Manual of the American*

Psychological Association (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Childress, S. M. (2009). Six Lessons for Pursuing Excellence and Equity at Scale. *Phi Delta*

Kappan, *91*(3), 13-18.

Comer, J. P. (1998). Educating poor minority children. *Scientific American*, 259(5) 42-48.

Davenport, P., & Anderson, G. (2002). Closing the achievement gap: No excuses. Houston, TX:

APQC.

Edmonds, R. (1979). Effective Schools for the Urban Poor. *Educational Leadership,* 37,

15-24.

Grand Canyon University (producer). (2011, October). EDA805 Module 1 Lecture

Levine, D. U., & Lezotte, L. W. (1990). *Unusually Effective Schools: A Review and Analysis*

of Research and Practice. Madison, WI: The National Center for Effective Schools

Research and Development.

Lezotte, L. W. (1991) *Correlates of Effective Schools: The First and Second Generation*.

http://www.effectiveschools.com/images/stories/escorrelates.pdf

Northouse, P. G. (2009). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (5th ed.)*.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Publications, Inc. ISBN: 978-1-4129-7488-2.

Pechman, E. & King, J. (1993). *Obstacles to restructuring: Experiences of six middle-grades*

schools. New York, NY: National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools and

Teaching. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED362985)

Stober, D. R. (2008). Making it stick: coaching as a tool for organizational change. *Coaching: An*

International Journal Of Theory, Research & Practice, *1*(1), 71-80.

doi:10.1080/17521880801905950

Taylor, B. O. (2002). The Effective Schools Process: Alive and Well. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 83(5), 375.