

## Christine Jenter

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**From:** "Christine Gazzara" <gazzara@gse.upenn.edu>  
**To:** "CPRE In-Sites" <CPRENEWS@lists.upenn.edu>  
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## A Nation Reformed? American Education Twenty Years after "A Nation at Risk"

On April 26, 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education report, **A Nation at Risk** warned of a "rising tide of mediocrity" in our schools that imperiled the nation's future. The symbolic opening salvo in a two-decade-long struggle to improve schools, **A Nation at Risk** helped put education reform at the top of the national agenda. **A Nation Reformed? American Education Twenty Years after "A Nation at Risk,"** a new book published by Harvard Education Press, takes stock of 20 years of school reform. Was the nation really ever "at risk" and, if so, is it still? Which reforms have made a difference and which haven't? And where do we go from here?

CPRE researchers Richard Elmore and Susan Fuhrman contributed chapters to this new book. Other contributors are Nathan Glazer, David T. Gordon, Patricia Albjerg Graham, Pam Grossman, Jeff Howard, Timothy Knowles, Kim Marshall, Robert B. Schwartz, and Maris A. Vinovskis. **A Nation Reformed?** presents a balanced, thoughtful look at the past, current, and future effects of school reform on our nation's students, teachers, and communities.

Visit <http://gseweb.harvard.edu/hepg> for a chapter excerpt and ordering information, or call (800) 513-0763.

## The Relationship Between Teacher Implementation and Student Learning

Rarely in educational research do researchers have access to data that allow them to empirically explore the relationships between the practices of individual teachers and the learning of their students. One particular strand of CPRE's evaluation of the America's Choice comprehensive school reform design is one of those exceptional cases. **The Relationship Between Teacher Implementation of America's Choice and Student Learning in Plainfield, New Jersey** explores the relationship between teachers' implementation of different aspects of America's Choice and the learning gains of their students. By working closely with district administrators, researchers were able to link teacher-level implementation data to the district's student achievement databases while retaining the confidentiality of both teachers and students. This study uses data collected in Plainfield as well as teacher data collected from instructors in America's Choice schools across the nation in which individual survey responses about America's Choice are linked to the test scores of the students who were taught by those teachers.

Plainfield is a K-12 urban school district that serves approximately 7,500 students in 10 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and 1 high school. Plainfield is located in central New Jersey, about 30 miles from New York City.

The students in the district are predominantly African American (71%) and Hispanic (28%). Sixty-five percent of the students receive either free or reduced-price lunch.

The pattern that emerged after analysis of the data seems clear and persistent: students of teachers who more deeply implemented the America's Choice model learned more than did the students of teachers who had lower levels of implementation. More specifically, the major findings of this report are:

- The students of teachers with higher levels of implementation of America's Choice gained significantly more on state tests than did students of low-implementing teachers, even after controlling for teacher and student background characteristics.
- When testing the relationship between two aspects of the readers and writers workshops--the essential aspects of the America's Choice literacy model--there were strong and consistent statistical relationships between instructors' preparation to teach readers and writers workshops and student test performance gains.
- Teachers whose beliefs were consistent with the philosophy underlying America's Choice tended to report deeper levels of implementation of the various components of America's Choice. Similarly, teachers who believed that the same standards should be applied to all students also reported deeper implementation of America's Choice. However, teacher beliefs were not statistically associated with gains in student test performance. Rather, it appears, teacher beliefs facilitated the implementation that produced students' learning gains.

Copies of the report will be available in mid-February. To receive a copy, please e-mail us at [cpre@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:cpre@gse.upenn.edu).

## **Who Controls Teachers' Work? Power and Accountability in America's Schools**

**A book by Richard M. Ingersoll**

Who makes the crucial decisions concerning what and how students are taught in school? How much say do teachers have over their work and how much should they have? Are schools decentralized places where teachers work with little supervision or accountability, as some claim? Or are schools overly centralized places with too much top-down bureaucracy restricting teachers, as others argue? And what difference does it make, if any, for how well schools function?

Drawing on data from international and national surveys as well as wide-ranging interviews with teachers and administrators, this book confronts one of the most important, controversial, and misunderstood issues in education--who controls the work of teachers?

Most research and policy, this book shows, overlook a fundamental fact: schools are not simply organizations engineered to deliver academic instruction to students, as measured by test scores; teachers also play a large part in the social and behavioral development of children. Researchers and reformers misunderstand how much and what kinds of control and accountability currently exist in schools, and how much and what kinds should exist. As a result, many educational reforms--charter schools, school choice, educational accountability, school restructuring, teacher professionalization, and school-based management--too often begin with inaccurate premises about how schools work and so are bound, not only to fail, but to exacerbate the problems they propose to solve.

Richard M. Ingersoll is an Associate Professor of Education and Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania and a member of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

This book was published by Harvard University Press. To obtain a copy, please go to their website at <http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog/INGWHO.html>, call (800) 405-1619, or write Harvard University Press, 79 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

## **Association for Supervision and Curriculum**

## Development's 58th Annual Conference and Exhibit Show

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) is holding its Annual Conference in San Francisco, California from March 8-10. This year's conference, "Igniting the Passion for Learning," will have 650 sessions from which attendees can choose. Discussions will take place on a variety of education topics, including: what it takes to create better schools, how to improve programs for teaching and learning, which education approaches are most likely to work, how to build stronger learning communities, which practices ensure that all students are learning, how to get results, and what to question about traditional practices.

This year's event agenda includes general session speakers of national prominence such as Andrew Young (co-founding Principal and Chairman of GoodWorks International, author, former U.S. Congressional Representative, and former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations), a strong supporter of improving the opportunities for those who are poor and underserved; Linda Ellerbee (television producer, journalist, and author) who is known for advocating direct and respectful communication to children about important and controversial issues; and Edward James Olmos (actor and community activist) who addresses Latino perspectives of schooling and his experience in leading a national gang prevention program funded by the U.S. Department of Justice.

At the ASCD Exhibit Show, the newest tools and technologies for teaching and learning will be on hand so that participants can get experience with new curriculum materials and instructional aids. And, in the Conference Exhibit Hall, the CPRE Communications Department will be hosting a booth where research publications will be available free-of-charge, and representatives will be available to answer questions about CPRE research. Be sure to visit us in **booth #1536**; we look forward to meeting you there!

Registration for this conference is open until February 14. Please visit the housing section of [ASCD's Website](#) to make hotel reservations, or for general information on the conference, please visit the [ASCD Website](#).

## Recent Publications by CPRE Researchers

### [Impact of America's Choice on Student Performance in Duval County, Florida](#)

(Jonathan Supovitz, Brooke Snyder Taylor, and Henry May, October 2002)

This report examines the impact of the America's Choice School Design on student standardized test performance in Duval County, Florida. Results are presented for the first two years of the Design's impact in elementary and middle schools in writing, reading, and mathematics using test data from 1999-2001.

### [The Limits and Contradictions of Systemic Reform: The Philadelphia Story](#)

(Tom Corcoran and Jolley Bruce Christman, November 2002)

This report summarizes the findings and lessons learned from the five-year evaluation of the Children Achieving Challenge with particular emphasis on systemic reform as an effective reform model.

### [The Varieties of Knowledge and Skill-based Pay Design: A Comparison of Seven New Pay Systems for K-12 Teachers](#)

(Anthony Milanowski, October 2002)

Knowledge and skill-based pay rewards teachers with base pay increases and/or bonuses for acquiring and demonstrating specific knowledge and skills needed to meet educational goals, such as improving student achievement. This report examines a study of seven knowledge and skill-based pay systems for teachers that have been developed by U.S. schools or districts, and discusses the implications of the K-12 sector and for policymakers and program designers.

### [What Large-scale, Survey Research Tells Us About Teacher Effects on Student Achievement: Insights from the Prospects Study of Elementary Schools](#)

(Brian Rowan, Richard Correnti, and Robert Miller, November 2002)

This report examines conceptual and methodological issues that arise when educational researchers use data from large-scale, survey research studies to investigate teacher effects on student achievement. This large-scale, survey research effort gathered abundant data on instructional processes and student achievement in a large

sample of U.S. elementary schools during the early 1990s.

## **CPRE on the World Wide Web**

For more information about CPRE research, check out our websites:

[CPRE-University of Pennsylvania website](#)

[CPRE-University of Michigan website \(Study of Instructional Improvement\)](#)

[CPRE-University of Wisconsin-Madison website](#)

[CPRE-University of Wisconsin-Madison website \(School Finance\)](#)

[CPRE-University of Wisconsin-Madison website \(Teacher Compensation\)](#)

### **Editors' Notes**

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