



# CPRE In-Sites

## New from CPRE

### CPRE Releases Capstone Report on The *Study of Instructional Improvement (SII)*

[\*School Improvement by Design: Lessons From a Study of Comprehensive School Reform Programs\*](#), written by Brian Rowan (University of Michigan), Richard Correnti (University of Pittsburgh), Robert J. Miller (University of Michigan), and Eric M. Camburn (University of Wisconsin-Madison), presents key findings from CPRE-Michigan's research project, The *Study of Instructional Improvement (SII)*, a 13-year (1996-2009), multi-method, large scale quasi-experiment that sought to understand the impact of three widely-disseminated comprehensive school reform (CSR) programs on instruction and student achievement in high-poverty elementary schools: the [\*Accelerated Schools Project\*](#), [\*America's Choice\*](#), and [\*Success for All\*](#). The SII study also followed a set of closely matched comparison schools. The purpose of the study was to track implementation of the CSR programs in elementary schools and to investigate the impact of participation in these programs on teachers, students, and schools.

In order to better understand the process of whole-school reform, SII developed a program of research to examine how these interventions operated and to investigate their impact on schools' instructional practice and student achievement in reading and mathematics.

The research program had three components:

- A longitudinal survey of 115 schools (roughly 30 schools in each of the three interventions under study, plus 26 matched control schools);
- Case studies of the three interventions under study; and
- Detailed case studies of nine schools implementing the interventions under study (plus 3 matched control schools).

Field work was conducted during the academic years 2000-2001 to 2004-2004. Since 2005, the project has been focused on dissemination efforts. All of this work had two main purposes: First, to understand the circumstances under which different intervention *designs* and *strategies* could be expected to produce changes in particular elements of instructional capacity in schools; and second, to learn which elements of instructional capacity, when present in schools, worked to produce higher levels of student achievement in reading or mathematics.

The specific findings from SII reveal important insights about the process of school improvement by design and how to study this process in the future. The authors discuss the following key findings in the report

1. The findings suggest that design-based instructional improvement can come in many and varied forms. Intervention providers, for example, can vary in terms of how they organize schools to manage the process of instructional improvement *and* in the kinds of instructional practices they seek to put in place in schools. As the authors argued throughout the report and demonstrated through a discussion of SII findings, both of these design elements must be explicitly studied if we are to understand the conditions under which design-based instructional improvement efforts actually succeed in improving student learning.

2. The findings also show the benefits of moving beyond highly generalized conceptual frameworks for describing program designs, patterns of instructional management, and specific instructional practices in schools.

3. The authors argue that SII shows the benefits of looking closely at instruction when studying the process of instructional improvement. While that point seems obvious, it is nevertheless amazing how much research on school reform avoids directly measuring instructional practice when trying to explain student achievement outcomes.

4. Lastly, the authors argue that the results of SII confirm the larger “logic model” of school improvement by design. That logic model points to the importance of two dimensions of design—the way designs organize schools to produce instructional change, and the kinds of instructional changes the design envisions. The authors note, “Obviously, the results of SII show just how fragile school improvement by design is: A design can fail because of a poor approach to implementation, it can fail because of an ineffective approach to instruction, or it can fail on both counts. That is an important lesson, and one that should guide all future research and development in the area.”

Although the focus of SII was on three comprehensive school reform programs, the goal of the study was much greater—to produce some larger insights into a process that the authors call “school improvement by design.” Coauthor and SII Study Director Brian Rowan explains: “What we found was that design-based school improvement tends to work best when it helps teachers learn how to use a well-specified set of practices through extensive supports as opposed to a process that encourages local educators to invent instructional and organizational solutions to the problems teachers face.”

### **More information about the study:**

SII was based at the University of Michigan's School of Education and was led by Deborah Loewenberg Ball, David K. Cohen and Brian Rowan (SII Study Director).

Funding for SII was provided by the [Atlantic Philanthropies](#), [the U.S. Department of Education](#), [the National Science Foundation](#), and [the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation](#).

For more information about SII, please bookmark the following two websites:

1. The SII website (<http://www.sii.soe.umich.edu/>) provides detailed information about the research study including: a) a complete listing of research papers and publications relating to the study, b) an online report that describes the SII research program and provides a narrative account highlighting selected findings, and c) an opportunity for users to directly download many of the instruments and data files from the study as well as an extensive user's manual.
2. The Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research—the world's largest social science data archive—will house and directly disseminate SII data files (<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/>).

### **Other recent research publications derived from SII:**

Rowan, B. and R. Correnti. [Studying reading instruction with teacher logs: Lessons from A Study of Instructional Improvement. Educational Researcher](#), (2009).

Rowan, B. and R. Correnti. [Interventions to improve instruction: How implementation strategies affect instructional change](#). In, W.K. Hoy and M. DiPaola (Eds.), [Studies in School Improvement](#). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2009.

Camburn, E.M., and Han, S.W. (2009). [Investigating connections between distributed leadership and instructional change](#). In Alma Harris (ed.), [Distributed Leadership: Different Perspectives](#),. New York: Springer Press.

Glazer, J.L. (2009). [How external interveners leverage large-scale change: The case of America's Choice, 1998-2003](#). *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 31, 269-297.

## **Center on Continuous Instructional Improvement (CCII) Update**

CCII is currently assessing, synthesizing and disseminating findings from research on learning progressions in science, mathematics, and literacy, and promoting and supporting further development of progressions as well as research on their use and effects. For more information about CCII, please visit [www.cci-cpre.org](http://www.cci-cpre.org). Here we report on the work in mathematics and science.

## Learning Trajectories in Mathematics Meeting

CCII, along with The DELTA Research Group at NCSU recently sponsored the meeting, "Realizing the Potential For Learning Trajectories Research to serve as Evidence and Validation for Standards and Related Assessments," held from August 10-12, 2009 at the [Friday Institute for Educational Innovation](#), Centennial Campus of North Carolina State University.

For the past year, with support from the [Hewlett Foundation](#) and [Pearson Education](#), CCII has been working to synthesize what is known about learning trajectories/progressions in mathematics. In parallel, the DELTA (Diagnostic E-Learning Trajectories Group) at the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at North Carolina State University, with support from the National Science Foundation, has been pulling together a synthesis of the research on rational number, using learning trajectories as their organizing framework.

DELTA and CCII invited approximately 20 leading researchers and developers to discuss these ideas. The meeting focused on how research on learning trajectories can inform the development of a set of evidence-based Common Core Standards being developed under the auspices of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governor's Association (NGA). The commitment to develop these Common Core standards has been endorsed by 46 states, two territories and the District of Columbia including North Carolina.

## CCII Report on Learning Progressions in Science

(CCII) recently issued a report on the development of learning progressions in science - [Learning Progressions in Science: An Evidence-based Approach to Reform](#), by Tom Corcoran, Fritz Mosher, and Aaron Rogat.

The report addresses

- the nature and quality of existing work on learning progressions in science,
- the essential elements of learning progressions,
- the outstanding issues, challenges and debates about learning progressions in science, and
- the research and development that must be done to realize their potential as tools for improving teaching and learning.

To develop the report, CCII invited experts in science education and cognitive science and formed a panel to review and discuss the state of the current work on learning progressions. The panel met twice in two-day meetings supported by funding from [Pearson Education](#) and the [Hewlett Foundation](#). Joseph Krajcik, University of Michigan Professor of Education, Associate Dean, and Co-Director of the [Instructional Development and Education Assessment \(IDEA\) Institute](#) chaired the meetings. Twenty-one participants including science educators, learning scientists, psychologists, assessment experts, policy researchers, and curriculum developers attended these meetings.

At the meetings, participants reviewed a cross-section of the work on science learning progressions. Additionally, a number of developers shared their work on learning progressions and the procedures to develop and validate them. This led to rich discussions about the development processes used and the characteristics of usable learning progressions. These meeting discussions informed CCII's report on learning progressions, *Learning Progressions in Science: An Evidence-based Approach to Reform*.

Funding for these meetings was provided by Pearson Education and the Hewlett Foundation.

## CCII Partners with the National Research Council to Explore Core Ideas in Science

The Board on Science Education (BOSE) at the National Research Council (NRC) recently hosted three meetings devoted to the core ideas in science. The meetings, held between August and October of this year, convened key

stakeholders interested in the development of national science standards, including representatives of the National Science Teachers Association, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Achieve, policy makers, state and district science supervisors, science education researchers, and others interested in the issue. The purpose of these meetings was to begin a conversation about what the core ideas in science are, what criteria to use to select them, and how they should be reflected in standards. There was a strong interest in using CCII's work on learning progressions to help members of BOSE think about the core ideas in science. CCII researchers Tom Corcoran (Director), Fritz Mosher (Senior Research Consultant), and Aaron Rogat (Senior Scientist) offered perspectives on learning progressions based on their recently published report, *Learning Progressions in Science: An Evidence-based Approach to Reform*. Corcoran, Mosher, and Rogat also wrote a summary of their longer report on learning progressions at the request of the BOSE to help inform these discussions. The summary is available on the CCII website.

## Strategic Management of Human Capital (SMHC) Project Update

The goal of SMHC is to dramatically improve student achievement by restructuring HR systems to recruit top teacher, principal and central office talent and to performance-manage those individuals so the most effective instruction is deployed in all classrooms. The project is first focusing on the country's largest and most urban districts. For more information about SMHC, please visit [www.smhc-cpre.org](http://www.smhc-cpre.org).

### SMHC Report Offers a Blueprint for Reform for State and Local Policymakers

Earlier this month, after the fourth and final meeting of the National Task Force, SMHC released a report outlining the dramatic steps necessary to improve teacher and principal talent. *Taking Human Capital Seriously: Talented Teachers in Every Classroom, Talented Principals in Every School* comes in response to U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan's August challenge, in which he called upon SMHC to advance bold ideas for major reforms. This report offers 6 guiding principles, 10 state actions, and 10 local actions to improve student achievement by aligning recruitment, development, evaluation, compensation and retention of more effective teachers and principals. For states, the report said raising the bar for who can enter undergraduate-level teacher education programs—perhaps by requiring a minimum score on the SAT or the ACT—is necessary to improve the talent that enters the profession. States also should require a rigorous content test before prospective teachers can earn an initial teaching license, it says. In addition, states should support, with policy and funding, more alternative pathways into teaching, such as Teach For America and the New Teacher Project, and should require all new teachers to go through an intensive induction or an internship experience that resembles a medical residency.

The report recommends that states adopt a multi-tiered licensing system; require evidence of effectiveness before granting tenure; and use performance-based evaluation systems to drive professional development and help reset teachers' salary schedules. The final recommendation to states is to create performance-based evaluation and pay systems for principals.

In its recommendations for school districts, the report calls for local leaders to follow the lead of places like Chicago and Long Beach, Calif., to expand their pipelines for recruiting teachers, to eliminate decades-old practices of central-office-forced placements and seniority "bumping," to develop intensive induction and mentoring programs for new teachers, and to revamp district-level human-resources operations.

Click [here](#) to download the report.

Also, *Education Week* recently featured an article about the SHMC report (November 11, Vol. 29, Issue 11). Click [here](#) to visit *Education Week's* online magazine. Note: you must subscribe to *Education Week* in order to access the full article.

### SMHC Hosts Second National Conference

The second annual SMHC National Conference was held November 3-4, 2009 at the Capital Hilton in Washington, DC. Keynote speakers included Governor of Minnesota and SMHC Task Force Chair, Tim Pawlenty; Atlanta Public Schools 2009 Superintendent of the Year and SMHC Task Force member, Beverly Hall; Partner of McKinsey &

Company and SMHC Task Force Vice-Chair, Sir Michael Barber; Advisor to the Secretary of Education, Brad Jupp; and Senior Program Officer for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Steve Cantrell. The conference featured overviews of comprehensive district led SMHC reforms by Denver, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Baltimore, Montgomery County, and Austin, and in depth presentations on new approaches to professional development, teacher performance-based evaluations (Washington DC and Chicago), using value-added to assess classroom and school effectiveness, and using human capital metrics to drive education reform.

You may view the conference agenda [here](#). Please visit the resources section of the SMHC website ([www.smhc-cpre.org/resources/national-conference](http://www.smhc-cpre.org/resources/national-conference)) to view PowerPoint presentations from the conference.

Attendees had great things to say about the conference including, “Without a doubt—best conference I have attended in years. I am very excited to join SMHC” and “This conference was meaningful and productive, and I hope that it is held again next year!”

## Recent CPRE Publications

### CPRE-Michigan Senior Researcher David Cohen Coauthors a New Book Examining the Development and Progression of the Title I Program

*The Ordeal of Equality: Did Federal Regulation Fix the Schools?* by David K. Cohen and Susan L. Moffitt, provides an historical policy analysis of K-12 education and federal regulation. Published this fall by Harvard University Press, the book looks at the development of the Title I program and examines its accomplishments and downfalls, and the contributing factors for each. With incisive clarity and wit, the authors argue that enormous gaps existed between policies and programs, and the real-world practices that they attempted to change.

To order a copy of the book, please visit [Harvard Education Press](#).

### CPRE-Stanford Senior Researcher Michael Kirst Coauthors a New Edition of Popular Education Politics Textbook

This new edition of *The Political Dynamics of American Education*, by Michael W. Kirst and Frederick M. Wirt, is a major revision of the most widely used text in the politics of education. The authors have devised an original conceptual framework to organize and chart the increasingly complex political web of American education. This edition places more emphasis on school choice, reflecting the political conflict and stress evident in recent reform challenges. The authors expand both on the current increase in local political activity and on the external context of local schools to analyze the political momentum behind education standards. At the same time, the limits of both deregulation and centralized strategies are stressed as academic standards policies confront complex local politics. The most contemporary issues are treated: the 2008 election, politics of charter schools, mayoral control, and the evolutionary politics of NCLB. Each chapter covers the latest school politics research and reviews new “political” research dimensions and the current state of education politics scholarship. This text is designed in part for practitioners involved in education--administrators, teachers, state officials, and lay groups.

To purchase a copy visit [McCutchan Publishing](#).

## Progress and Gaps in College Preparation Policy

Stagnant college completion rates, high postsecondary remediation rates—and the high costs associated with postsecondary remediation—make clear that better alignment is needed between K-12 and postsecondary. In the October 2009 issue of the *ECS Perspective*, CPRE Senior Researcher Michael Kirst identifies four policy levers necessary for true reform to take place and evaluates state progress to date in each of the four areas.

Please visit the [ECS website](#) to download this *Perspective* issue.

### SMHC Co-Director Allan Odden and Co-author Sarah Archibald Release a Timely Book for these Challenging Budget Times

*Doubling Student Performance...And Finding the Resources to do it* (Corwin Press) describes the strategies dozens of districts and schools around the country have used to produce dramatic improvements in student learning (what the book terms doubling performance), the programmatic efforts behind those efforts and their resource needs, and ways resources can be found to fund those programs, including resource reallocation. The ideas and suggestions in the book could guide strategic budget cuts as well as strategic use of any new resources. The final chapter also shows how all the resources needed can be included in restructured state school finance structures designed to link state funding to ways schools and districts can boost student learning.

To purchase a copy of the book, please visit [Corwin Press](#).

## **CPRE-Teachers College Co-Director Tom Corcoran Shares His Experience with Evidence-based Education Reform**

The Best Evidence Encyclopedia (BEE) recently interviewed CPRE Co-Director and CCII Principal Investigator Tom Corcoran about his experience with evidence-based education reform. In the interview, Corcoran discusses education research, connections between education practice and policy, and the role the BEE has played in his work. Please visit [The Best Evidence Encyclopedia](#) to read the full interview.

## **CPRE on the Web**

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

[CPRE-University of Pennsylvania website](#)

[Center on Continuous Instructional Improvement](#) (CCII)

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

[Strategic Management of Human Capital](#) (CPRE-University of Wisconsin-Madison)

### **Editor's Notes**

We appreciate your interest in CPRE research and welcome any comments or questions. Please e-mail us at [insites@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:insites@gse.upenn.edu).

Also, we respect your privacy and will not share or sell your email/contact information. To unsubscribe, click on the link below. Write "Remove" in your subject heading, and we will promptly remove you from our listserv: [insites@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:insites@gse.upenn.edu).

With the growing use of anti-spam filters, we have seen an increase in the number of returned e-mails when we send out this newsletter. If you have a colleague who you think would be interested in this issue of *CPRE In-Sites*, please pass it along!

**Managing Editor:**  
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