School reform and beyond: The science and practice of alignment within and across grades

Invited Symposium for SREE Conference, Fall 2012

Chair: Lawrence Aber, New York University

Discussants:
1. Research looking to practice: Karen Bierman, Penn State University
2. Practice looking to research: Vivian Tseng, William T. Grant Foundation

Overview

The purpose of this symposium is to present the work of a multi-institutional, interdisciplinary collaborative of researchers and practitioners (School Reform and Beyond, SRB) who are using advances in developmental psychology, neurobiology, and prevention science to develop research based interventions designed to improve academic outcomes for all children, particularly those from low-income households, from minority families, or with English language challenges. SRB’s overarching goal is to both build knowledge and capacity and develop a set of key research-practice partnerships that will enable us to create integrated and synergistic approaches to learning that target children’s social, emotional, and cognitive development. Ultimately we hope to develop and take to national scale a sustainable, efficient, and comprehensive set of interventions that accelerates learning from birth onward. The primary components of SRB’s agenda include the following: (1) Maximizing the start to schooling (pre-K to Grade 3) by building upon the best evidence-based strategies for promoting academic proficiency, with strategies to promote self-regulated learning. (2) Elevating school readiness by supporting parents with research-based practices to more effectively prepare children from infancy (ages 0 to 3) for healthy, successful entry to pre-K. And, (3) optimizing non-educational contexts that research has demonstrated have the greatest synergistic impacts on age-appropriate learning and healthy development from birth onward. In particular, this symposium will describe the theoretical link between current advances in developmental psychology, neurobiology, and prevention science and key behavioral and academic outcomes for children and then will explain how this theory has been used to begin to develop, and implement, in partnership with a set of existing programs, an integrated suite of interventions designed to improve outcomes for children.

The symposium will include 3 presentations/papers:

1. Self-Regulation as a Key Building Block to Behavioral and Academic Development: This presentation will describe a developmental sequencing approach to social-emotional learning focusing on Executive Function (EF) and Self-Regulation as core developmental processes tied to both behavioral and academic/cognitive development. The presentation will include research from the cognitive, neuro-, and developmental sciences and will highlight a
conceptual model for the development of EF and Self-Regulation from early childhood through early adolescence.

a. Presenters: Fred Morrison (UMich), John Foxe (Einstein/Cornell), Stephanie Jones (Harvard)

2. **Developing SECURE: A Self-Regulation and Literacy Intervention for Students in K-5: Social Emotional Cognitive Regulation and Understanding in education (SECURE) is a school-based intervention for pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade that is designed to build skills in social-emotional learning (focusing on EF and Regulation as core processes) and literacy. This presentation will describe the process of developing SECURE and integrating it with its literacy-based whole school reform platform (Success for All, SFA). Presenters will highlight how the applied work of SECURE and SFA is aligned with the developmental theory described in the first paper in addition to describing the basic working components of the intervention. Preliminary findings from the first year of pilot data on the intervention will be presented.**

   a. Presenters: Robin Jacob (UMich), Stephanie Jones (Harvard), Nancy Madden (SFA)

3. **Building Self-Regulation in Pre-K and Beyond: The ultimate goal of the School Reform and Beyond (SRB) collaboration is to build a suite of integrated and developmentally appropriate interventions to improve academic integrated achievement for all students, beginning at birth. This presentation will describe a project currently underway to develop a PreK intervention that will integrate seamlessly with the K-5 version of SECURE. We will describe lessons learned during the first year of piloting this new intervention and discuss the implication these lessons have for developing a parent-focused 0-3 strategy to support high-quality parent-child interactions and build children’s readiness for preschool and school.**

   b. Presenters: Stephanie Jones (Harvard), Robin Jacob (Umich), Pamela Morris (NYU)