# An Examination of the Impact of the Temple University Reading Project on the Delivery of Instruction and its Influence on CTE Students

by

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The reading instructional materials used in the delivery of 5 Governors Institutes on Integrating the Pennsylvania Standards on Reading, Writing, and Speaking and Listening were developed in response to a concern with the low reading skills of many Career and Technical Education (CTE) Professional Development in Career and Technical Education students.

students in selected CTE programs in Pennsylvania through a research and development project conducted by the Temple University Center for Professional Development in CTE

This instructional modification, i.e. the use of selected reading strategies integrated into the instructional process, were designed to provide the CTE student, who may be a marginal reader, with the reading skills that the good reader already has developed. Further, this will provide the CTE student who is already a good reader with skills that will likely further enhance their reading ability.

The population identified for this research effort consisted of all of the 262 individuals who participated in the 5 Governors Institutes between 2003 and 2007 was N=270, this population was reduced to N=262, due to 8 undeliverable emails. These individuals were contacted by means of a web-based electronic survey using a Zoomerang platform. The initial distribution of the survey yielded a self selecting sample of 43 (a 16% response rate). A follow-up survey which was conducted 3 weeks later, increased the response rate to 29%, (N=75).

**Success in Implementation of RWSL Strategies**

The vast majority of the RWLS Governor's Institute respondents (92%) indicated they had either a moderate (58%) or a high (35%) success rate in the implementation of the RWLS strategies. It should be noted that this same proportional success rate in the implementation of the RWLS strategies reported by respondents appeared to be consistent over the 5 year period that the Governor's Institutes were delivered. Only a little more than 1% of the respondents indicated they had no success in the implementation of the

## Improvement of Student Achievement due to Integration of RWSL Strategies

A large majority of the respondents (82%) indicated that there was a medium (62%) to high level (19%) of improvement of student achievement due to the integration of the RWSL strategies in their instructional practices. Slightly more than 15% of respondents indicated a low level of improvement in student achievement associated with the integration of RWSL strategies, and less than 3% of the respondents indicated no improvement in student achievement as a result of integrating RWSL strategies. A complete listing of the reported levels of student achievement associated with the implementation of RWLS strategies in classroom instructional practices is provided in Table 7.

## Changes in Classroom Behavior Attributed to use of RWSL Strategies

Changes in classroom behavior which were attributed to the use of RWSL strategies were reported by respondents in the categories of increased reading activity (18%), increased reading comprehension (25%), increased discussion (26%) and overall increased levels of subject matter interest (20%). There was also a reported 7% drop in discipline infractions that were attributed to teacher use of the RWSL strategies the instructional process. A complete listing of the changes in student classroom behavior attributed to the use of RWSL strategies is provided in Table 8.

## Increased Scores on Selected Measures Attributed to the use of RWSL Strategies

Increases in student scores levels on various measures were reported by respondents that were attributed to the use of RWSL strategies on several measures. These included Pennsylvania State Student Assessment, PSSA, (16%), the student version of the National Occupational Competency Assessment NOCTI which is used as the basis for the award of Pennsylvania Skills Certificate, (11%), publisher made tests, (10%), teacher made tests, (41%), and the Pennsylvania 4-Sight Test (9%).

Slight gains (01% each) were also reported in 3 other measures, TABE, STAR and Industry Based Certification. It should be noted these very modest gains can be attributed to the very limited use of these measures which resulted on the calculation of very low percentages. It may therefore be inappropriate to cast doubt on the influence of the use of RWSL strategies may have had on the outcomes associated with these 3 measures. Further, it is possible these 3 measures will be used in greater frequency in the future. A complete listing of the score increases on selected measures attributed to the use of RWSL strategies is provided in Table 10.

RWLS strategies

## Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The reading instructional materials used in the delivery of 5 Governors Institutes on Integrating the Pennsylvania Standards on Reading, Writing, and Speaking and Listening were developed in response to a concern with the low reading skills of many Career and Technical Education (CTE) students. Further, the reading strategies incorporated in these materials were selected for their proven effectiveness with students from a variety of backgrounds, and in particular, with students in selected CTE programs in Pennsylvania through a research and development project conducted by the Temple University Center for Professional Development in Career and Technical Education funded by the Pennsylvania State Department of Education, Bureau of Career and Technical Education, (Wichowski & Garnes, 2003-04).

A Facilitators Guide was developed by the Center for Professional Development in Career and Technical Education to support a train–the–trainers model to support the integration of reading strategies in CTC classrooms, (Garnes and Wichowski,2001). The strategies included in these instructional materials are divided into 3 major categories; Reciprocal Teaching, Scaffolding, and Journaling. Each of the Guidebooks for Facilitators includes the following, (1) Power Point Presentation, (2) List of Materials, (3) Facilitator Instructions, (4) Participant Instructions, (5) Facilitator Readings, and (6) Handouts for the Delivery of the Presentation.  The Power Point presentation for each of the strategies is on a CD ROM provided with the instructional materials notebook. This Facilitators Guide served as the instructional core for Governors Institutes between 2003 and 2007.

Although each Governors Institute was evaluated extensively throughout the week of the institute and through a series of six month follow-up evaluations which were highly positive, there are several extended term research questions that were answered in this investigation. These included:

Who were the respondents to this survey?

Which reading strategies from the Governor's Institute have been adopted on a long term basis?

Which reading strategies are used most frequently?

What delivery model was used for the training of other teachers in the use of the reading strategies?

How frequently were helping conferences or small group support discussions held during the implementation of the reading strategies?

How many applications of a reading strategy did it take to develop a high level instructional comfort?

What changes were noted in student classroom behavior that could be attributed to the use of reading strategies in the instructional process?

In what way were the reading strategies from the Governors Institute modified?

How did the implementation of the reading strategies impact on the reading ability of CTC students as measured by:

PSSA test scores

publisher made tests

student NOCTI tests

teacher made content tests

independent measures

The following summary statements have been made in regard to the major areas examined in this research activity.

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## Perceived Benefit to Students due to use of RWSL Strategies

A very high overall level of perceived benefit to students as a result of using RWSL strategies in their instructional practice was reported by respondents (combined level of 88%). In a disaggregated form, this benefit level was reported to have affected few students (08%), some students (33%), or most students (47%). Only slightly more than 01% of the respondents reported no student benefit as a result of using the RWSL strategies.

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## Conclusions

Based on the data collected and interviews conducted, the following conclusions have been made in regard to the integration of the RWSL strategies into their instructional practices as reported by the respondents in this research:

There was a very high level of successful reading strategy adoption by teachers, (92%), over the six year time period measured.

There were large gains in student achievement reported by most respondents, (82%).

There were increases in student comprehension, (25%), increased classroom discussion, (26%), and increased interest in subject matter, (20%) reported by respondents.

There was an overall very high level reported benefit to students, (88%).

There were reported increases in student achievement on PSSA tests,(16%), and teacher made tests, (41%).

There was a high level of administrative support provided to teachers to aid in the implementation of the strategies, (86%).

## Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made as a result of the data collected and interviews conducted in this study:

Provide funding to revise and update the RWSL train-the-trainer instructional materials to support the delivery of a series professional development webinars

Provide funding to Professional development activities be provided to train CTE teachers in the use of the RWSL strategies in the form of a series of webinars.

Provide funding to support professional development activities to CTE administrators on supportive actions necessary to optimize the implementation of the RWSL strategies through a series of webinars.