



GEORGIA  
SOUTHERN  
UNIVERSITY

Volume 3, Issue 2

August 23, 2006

Georgia Center for Educational Renewal  
"Committed to Closing the GAPS"

# RESEARCH YOU CAN USE NOW!

Dr. Charles Reavis

Director and  
Goizueta Professor  
of  
Educational  
Leadership

P.O. Box 8013  
Statesboro  
Georgia  
30460-8013

Telephone  
(912) 681-5719

FAX  
(912) 681-5093

## GOOD LUCK

If you decide to implement this program, please let the Georgia Center know. If you are interested in this program, but feel you need additional advice or support, please contact Dr. Charles Reavis at the Georgia Center for Educational Renewal at [careavis@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:careavis@georgiasouthern.edu) or call 912-681-5719

**Background Note:** The current state of research on teacher efficacy can be summarized with the assertion that research has consistently found that teachers with a strong sense of efficacy (sense that they can teach the students in their classes) are significantly more effective with at-risk students. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) administers an on-line survey, "What Works in Schools" based on the work of Robert Marzano. The survey contains 66 items focused around 11 factors found in Dr. Marzano's research to be effective in increasing student achievement. Respondents are asked to rate each of these items on a 4 point scale in response to three questions: (1) To what extent do we engage in this behavior or address this issue?, (2) How much will a change in our current practices on this item increase the academic achievement of our students? and (3) How much effort will it take to significantly change our current practices regarding this issue? Participating schools are provided with a report on how each item was answered and also the top 5 items that show the greatest potential for school improvement, taking teacher responses to all three questions into account.

**Research:** Results were obtained for 12 schools in southeast Georgia with a total of 534 teacher responses. The Georgia Center for School Renewal utilized an Excel spreadsheet developed by Bobby Smith with the Georgia Department of Education to conduct a fine-grained analysis of the responses by individual item. The research question was, "Of the 11 factors, which emerge as the best bets for improving school achievement, considering the responses on questions 1 and 2?" (Note - ease of implementation, the third question, was considered to be a confounding factor in identifying factors with the greatest potential for school improvement). The paired samples T-test was used to examine the data with the SPSS software.

**Findings:** Only one factor, Home Environment, received a negative  $t$  (-1.13) which means that only this item was higher ranked in response to question 2 than in response to question 1. Only this one factor was seen by the responding teachers as having the potential to significantly improve student achievement above current practice. This is a factor that is relatively difficult for schools to influence. Turning to the factors that teachers can directly alter in their own teaching: Class Management, Class Curriculum, and Instruction, teachers reported moderate effectiveness in these areas, but, unexpectedly, indicated little improvement in student achievement would occur if their practices were improved. As a group, School Level factors were ranked higher than Classroom factors in terms of current practice, but again, teachers did not indicate that much gain in student achievement would occur if improvements were made in this area. In summary, with the exception of Home Environment, teachers did not indicate they felt much improvement would occur with changed practice either at the classroom or school level.

**Implications:** Research in the literature has shown that teachers do have the power to influence student achievement to a high degree. It becomes the task of the principal to help teachers that sense of efficacy and a renewed sense of their potential as agents in improving student achievement. The WWIS can be the beginning of a closer examination of how your school can start to examine its status with a more detailed analysis of teacher responses. The Center would be pleased to aid your schools in that analysis and subsequent interventions.