

COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIC READING STUDY

OMB Clearance Request— Appendix A

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PREPARED FOR:

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DISTRICT RECRUITMENT LETTER



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[Date]

[Title] [Name First] [Name Last]
[Department]
[School District]
[Address]
[City], [State] [Zip Code]

Dear [Title] [Last Name],

We are delighted to inform you that you have been identified as a potential partner in a ground breaking research study. Your district is one of a select few being asked to partner on this study that REL Southwest will be conducting, starting Fall 2007. REL Southwest is funded by the US Department of Education, Institute for Education Sciences to support education in the region by conducting high quality research. We are currently identifying a pool of districts for a study examining the effectiveness of the *Collaborative Strategic Reading* intervention (CSR) on reading comprehension skills for 5th grade students and are hoping to include approximately three to five schools from each district. Your district matches the participation criteria for this study and we will be contacting you via phone [XX weeks/days later] to further discuss whether your district would be interested in participating.

We have a well respected team in place to conduct the study. When the work is completed, we hope to have strong evidence on whether CSR can meet a critical educational need for [state]. CSR is an inexpensive teaching approach that incorporates elements of reading comprehension strategies and cooperative learning techniques. CSR is implemented with the social studies textbooks your district has adopted. Previous research results have indicated that **CSR has a positive impact on reading achievement, particularly for ELL students**, and can be used at a time when these students are typically transitioned into English-only instruction. Proper application of CSR may also benefit students whose primary language is English. Therefore, it may be a good tool for teachers who work with both groups of students in their classroom.

The *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act emphasizes raising achievement in reading for all students, including those with special learning needs like ELL students. This study will use rigorous methodology, a randomized controlled trial which is a gold standard for research, and program evaluation to objectively evaluate the potential of CSR to improve ELL and non-ELL 5th graders' reading achievement. The results will confirm whether CSR is a good strategy to help school districts improve reading achievement.

The study will randomly assign teachers to implement CSR during social studies instructions (treatment group) or to teach social studies using the regular district curriculum without CSR (control group). Random assignment of teachers makes ascertaining the effectiveness of the CSR intervention possible. In addition to randomly assigning teachers, we plan to randomly assign students to classrooms. Random assignment of students helps keep the number of school and teachers participating in the study smaller, thus reducing the burden of study participation school districts.

Take Advantage of Research Benefits:

Teacher Benefits

- Free Collaborative Strategic Reading professional development for half of 5th grade teachers
- Free coaching and follow-up for CSR teachers
- Compensation for time and data collection activities of all participating teachers



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Student Benefits

- An opportunity to increase 5th grade students' (both ELL and non-ELL) academic achievement in reading comprehension

District Benefits

- Research evidence of the effects of CSR on students' performance in your district. If the overall study finds positive results for using CSR, you will have teachers who are trained in a cutting edge intervention that meets the needs of a vulnerable population, and they will have the skills needed to teach others to use the approach
- Participating in a study that will help all school districts wrestling with certain issues such as ELL students
- Research evidence based on student performance in your district
- Recognition as an elite research partner in communications to educators, parents, and the community

I would very much appreciate your support of this significant study. Representatives from REL Southwest will contact you shortly to discuss next steps. In the meantime, we've enclosed a brochure about the study for you to share with others. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact [Name & Title] at [Phone Number] or send an email to [email address].

Please visit [xxx website xxx] to find out more about this research study.

Sincerely,

[REL Contact]

[REL Title]

[Enclosures]

Responses to this data collection will be used only for statistical purposes. The reports prepared for this study will summarize findings across the sample and will not associate responses with a specific district or individual. We will not provide information that identifies you or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATIONAL LETTER



Regional Educational Laboratory - Southwest

[Date]

*****SCHOOL LETTERHEAD WILL BE USED IF SCHOOL DISTRICT/SCHOOL WILL COLLECT INFORMED CONTENT FORMS ON THE BEHALF OF REL-SOUTHWEST *****

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are delighted to announce that your child's school has agreed to be a partner in a ground-breaking study. We are contacting you to provide information about the research study taking place in your child's school, including all 5th grade classrooms (teachers and students). The study examines the use of a reading approach called Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR). The study is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and conducted by the Regional Educational Laboratory—Southwest (REL Southwest). Education research is critical in providing guidance for programs that will improve student achievement. In this study, we hope to learn more about how to help students to become better readers. The results of the study will help schools and teacher to be able to improve future reading instruction.

All fifth grade classrooms at your child's school will participate in this study. Half of the 5th grade teachers in your child's school will use CSR instruction in their teaching, while the other half of the teachers will teach the academic program without using CSR.

What are the benefits for my child to participate in this research?

There are potential benefits to this study, as it may improve your child's reading comprehension. In the CSR classrooms students will incorporate reading comprehension strategies and will collaborate with each other when learning new material. This study will *not* interrupt your child's learning, and there are *no* risks or discomforts of any kind. In fact, preliminary research indicates that Collaborative Strategic Reading has a positive impact on student achievement. If your child will not be placed in CSR classroom, he/she will receive the district's normal reading related instruction.

How will my child participate in this study?

With your permission, your child will be given a test in reading once in the fall and once at the end of the school year. The test is similar to normal reading tests given to fifth graders throughout the school district. The test will be administered at your child's school, in cooperation with school officials and teachers. Testing time will be scheduled with your child's teacher so that your child does not miss class work.

What other information about my child will be collected?

With your permission, we will ask your school district to provide us with records about your child's background and academic achievement. Every school district maintains this type of information about students, and in an effort to not burden you or your child with additional surveys and tests, we will use the information that already exists.



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Will information about my child remain private?

We will not share the information collected from or about your child with anyone outside the research team. Your child's test results and district-provided information about him or her will only be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the CSR intervention. **The reports prepared for this study will summarize findings across the students, classrooms, and schools and will not associate information with a specific child.** We will not provide information that identifies your child to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

No child's name will be used or appear in any written work. In addition, your child's participation in the study will not affect his or her grades or treatment at school. Please note that you may withdraw your child from the data collection at any time without penalty. Your child also does not have to answer any test questions he or she does not want to answer.

We hope you will see the value of this research and agree to consent to your child's participation. Please sign below and return this letter to your child's teacher.

If you have any questions, please free to e-mail [XXXXXX] or call [XXXX] at [XXXXX].

Sincerely,

[REL Contact Name]
[REL Contract Title]

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT LETTER



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Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) Study Parent/Guardian Informed Consent Form

I understand that my consent for my child's participation in the Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) study conducted by the Regional Educational Laboratory—Southwest (REL Southwest) means that:

- My child will take a reading test twice during the school year, once in the fall and once at the end of the school year.
- Background and academic achievement information about my child will be provided by my child's school district to the study team.

Additionally, I understand the following statements about my child's rights as a participant in the study:

- Any information obtained during the study that could identify my child will not be provided to anyone outside the study team.
- The reports prepared for this study will summarize findings across the sample and will not associate any information with my child.
- My consent for a) my child's participation in the CSR study-related reading test and b) the district's sharing of my child's background and academic achievement information with the study team is voluntary and I can revoke my consent at any time.
- My child's participation in the reading tests is voluntary, and he or she may refuse to complete any portion of or all of the test.
- If I have questions about this study or my rights, I can contact [Title & Name] by telephone at [XXXX] or by email at [XXXX].

Please check the appropriate box and fill in the information below. Please return this form to your child's teacher. THANK YOU!

YES, my child can participate in the CSR Study-related reading tests, and for my school district can share my child's background and academic achievement information with the CSR Study team.

NO, my child may NOT participate in CSR Study-related reading tests, and my school district may NOT share my child's background and academic achievement information with the CSR Study team.

Parent or Legal Guardian Name (*please print*) _____

Child's Name _____

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

TEACHER CONSENT FORMS FOR CSR INTERVENTION AND CONTROL GROUP TEACHERS



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[Date]

TEACHER CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN CSR RESEARCH STUDY (CSR INTERVENTION TEACHERS)

I, _____, a teacher at _____, hereby agree to participate in the Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) study, conducted by the Regional Educational Laboratory-Southwest (REL Southwest).

- I understand that any information obtained during the study that could identify me or any teacher in the school will not be provided to anyone outside the study team. Responses to this data collection will be used only for statistical purposes. The reports prepared for this study will summarize findings across the sample and will not associate responses with a specific district or individual. We will not provide information that identifies you or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.
- I understand that in the reports, information such as average scores and percentages rather than individual classroom data will be reported.
- I understand that half of the 5th grade teachers in my school have been randomly assigned to implement the CSR intervention. All teachers have had an equal chance to be assigned to receive CSR intervention, including CSR related professional development and coaching.
- I will be asked to distribute and collect parental consent forms, letters to my students' parents asking permission for their child's participation in the study related testing/data collection
- I will be asked to complete 2 surveys that address 1) teacher background and 2) the classroom instructional environment including the availability of assistants and aides and characteristics of students. As compensation for my completion of the surveys, I will receive 1) \$20 for completing the teacher background survey in the fall and 2) \$10 for completing the classroom survey in the spring.
- I understand that all teachers in my school are asked to be observed once during the study.
- Student in my classroom will be observed twice a year to see how they are using CSR intervention.
- I understand that REL Southwest will test my students and that testing will take place during one day in the fall and one day in the spring
- **I understand that as a CSR intervention teacher**
 - I will be asked to participate in 2 days professional development training related to CSR. As compensation for my participation in CSR training, I will receive \$ [\$\$XX will be based on hourly salary of teacher] if the professional development training takes place during non-work/non-contract time



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- o For the purposes of coaching, I will be observed 1 time per month during the first 4 months of the project and will also receive feedback as part of the training and implementation. As compensation for attending each feedback session, I will receive [\$XX will be based on hourly salary of teacher] per feedback session if it takes place during non-work/non-contract time.

I further understand that my participation in the study related professional development, surveys and observations is voluntary and that I can refuse to participate in any aspect of this data collection.

If I have further questions about this study or my rights, I can contact [Title & Name] by telephone at [XXXX] or by email at [XXXX].

Sincerely,

[REL Contact Name]
[REL Contract Title]

Teacher Name (*please print*) _____

Teacher's Signature _____ Date _____

E-mail Address: _____ Phone: _____

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www.edvanceresearch.com <http://edlabs.ed.gov/RELSouthwest>



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[Date]

**TEACHER CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN CSR RESEARCH STUDY
(CONTROL GROUP TEACHERS)**

I, _____, a teacher at _____, hereby agree to participate in the Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) study, conducted by the Regional Educational Laboratory-Southwest (REL Southwest).

- I understand that any information obtained during the study that could identify me or any teacher in the school will not be provided to anyone outside the study team. Responses to this data collection will be used only for statistical purposes. The reports prepared for this study will summarize findings across the sample and will not associate responses with a specific district or individual. We will not provide information that identifies you or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.
- I understand that in the reports, information such as average scores and percentages rather than individual classroom data will be reported.
- I understand that half of the 5th grade teachers in my school have been randomly assigned to implement the CSR intervention. All teachers have had an equal chance to be assigned to receive CSR intervention.
- I will be asked to distribute and collect parental consent forms, letters to my students' parents asking permission for their child's participation in the study related testing/data collection
- I will be asked to complete 2 surveys that address 1) teacher background and 2) the classroom instructional environment including the availability of assistants and aides and characteristics of students. As compensation for my completion of the surveys, I will receive 1) \$20 for completing the teacher background survey in the fall and 2) \$10 for completing the classroom survey in the spring.
- I understand that all teachers in my school are asked to be observed once during the study.
- I understand that REL Southwest will test my students and that testing will take place during one day in the fall and one day in the spring.

I further understand that my participation in the surveys and observations is voluntary and that I can refuse to participate in any aspect of this data collection.

If I have further questions about this study or my rights, I can contact [Title & Name] by telephone at [XXXX] or by email at [XXXX].



Regional Educational Laboratory - Southwest

Sincerely,

[REL Contact Name]
[REL Contract Title]

Teacher Name (*please print*) _____

Teacher's Signature _____ Date _____

E-mail Address: _____ Phone: _____

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