

Educational Interventions and Reforms: Is this the Right Step for Improving Education?

Recent educational changes have been implemented by the federal government which demands greater accountability at the teacher, student, school, and district level through complying with No Child Left Behind (Ansell, 2004). Schools' common goal is to provide additional support for students who are struggling in the classroom (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). According to the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE), some of No Child Left Behind's (NCLB) goals are to close the academic achievement gap by using best practices of what works, describing what methods teachers will use, making sure all students reach academic proficiency, and using data from the school district annual report card to provide information about the school's progress (United States Department of Education 2004). Additionally, a majority of the states have signed up to implement Common Core Standards and other programs to meet the goals set by NCLB (Common Core Standards 2012). Ten years after NCLB was signed into law, there has been a continuation of the problem NCLB is trying to remedy such as dropout rates and poor reading ability.

This paper examines the goals and purpose of NCLB, while examining the reading intervention programs and other policies (e.g. Common Core Standards), implemented to meet NCLB's goals. I then move on to discuss how NCLB and these intervention programs perpetuate the notion that the gap between students is an achievement gap focusing on intelligence rather than troubling the disinvestment in communities of color (Ladson-Billings 2006). To conclude, I stress that there needs to be a remedy for the issues facing our nation's students (e.g. poor reading skills and the dropout rate) as I expand on Ladson-Billings' (2006) idea of an education debt rather than an achievement gap to help policymakers and educators best meet the needs of all students.

