

EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS AND THEIR IMPACT ON CHILDREN IN
POVERTY

by

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EFFECTIVE LITERACY PROGRAMS

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CERTIFICATION OF PROJECT WORK

We, the undersigned, certify that this project entitled *EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS AND THEIR IMPACT ON CHILDREN IN POVERTY* by Justin R. Rokitka, Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science in Literacy Education: Birth-Grade Six is acceptable in form and content and demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by this project.



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EFFECTIVE LITERACY PROGRAMS

Abstract

The purpose of this master's project was to investigate the growing problems of illiteracy in the United States, how it relates to poverty, and both literacy intervention programs and frameworks that may have a positive effect on those students who struggle. The first stage of this investigation involved research into the issue of illiteracy in the United States and its connection to poverty. Research articles were collected on the topics of illiteracy, poverty, and effective literacy programs and frameworks through the use of database searches. The second stage of this investigation was to analyze the relevant research articles discovered and identify which literacy programs and frameworks would have a positive effect on students struggling with illiteracy. The third and final stage of this investigation developed a professional development experience that would most efficiently teach these programs and framework to professionals who may use the information to improve their student's literacy abilities. The findings of this investigation indicated that illiteracy and poverty are correlating educational issues, that READ 180, the 4 R's program, and the RTI framework are possible ways to improve student's literacy abilities, and that professional development experiences may improve teacher's ability to utilize these programs and framework to benefit their students.

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Chapter 1

Background

“The children are our future, teach them well and let them lead the way.” This quote from a Whitney Houston song is often used in educational conversations. The disagreements about education are not typically about the importance of teaching, but about the best way to do it. It is the job of every educator to find the best ways to teach our students, so that the students may have the brightest future possible.

This thesis project and resulting proposal for a professional development workshop explored the two literacy programs and their effectiveness on students in poverty. This topic is important because adult literacy is a growing issue in America today and, therefore, effective literacy programs need to begin early so that they may provide long term benefits for the students involved. Statistics released by the United States Education Department found that about 32 million Americans or 14% are illiterate. In other words about one in seven people cannot read including 63% of prison inmates. It has been suggested that if parents can't read, then there is a strong possibility that their children will struggle to read as well. These statistics suggest that illiteracy amongst adults is a problem and can lead to other life issues. Therefore, teachers need to explore ways that will ensure that literacy programs in the elementary schools are effective and that such programs will enable children to become life-long, productive, citizens.

Adult Illiteracy.

According to Strasburg and the National Right to Read Foundation (NRRF, 1996), the National Adult Literacy Survey discovered that in 1996 42 million adult Americans could not read, and 50 million could only read, on average, at the fourth or fifth grade reading level (Sweet, 1996). This issue however does not only exist in the United States. “In 1990 the International

Bureau of Education investigated the link between poverty and illiteracy. Their article stated that “there is a close connection between illiteracy and poverty at all levels--global, national, and sub national; the countries with the lowest levels of literacy are also the poorest economically” (Adiseshiah, 2000, p.3).

Adult illiteracy is a worldwide issue that is deserving of attention at local, state, and national levels. It is not enough however to just identify an issue without having some idea for a possible solution. While there is no “one fits all” solution to the world’s illiteracy issues, experts have come up with literacy programs and literacy intervention programs that target students who are in danger of falling behind with their literacy skills. A growing body of evidence suggests that “reading problems are preventable for the vast majority of students who encounter difficulty in learning to read, if these students receive extra support in the form of an early intervention program” (Goldenberg, 1994; Hiebert & Taylor, 1994; Reynolds, 1991).

Poverty.

Aside from the academic disadvantages stemming from illiteracy, connections have been discovered between illiteracy and other social issues such as poverty. According to the National Center for Children in Poverty (2011), 43% of adults with very low literacy skills live in poverty. About 70% of adult welfare recipients have lower level literacy skill on the National Assessment of the Adult Literacy (NAAL) and 47% of adult welfare recipients did not graduated from high school. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 15.1% of Americans were living in poverty in 2010. This percentage is up from 14.3% (43.6 million people) in 2009 and 13.2% (39.8 million people) in 2008. Across the country and even the world it has been discovered that areas with a high rate of poverty have a high rate of illiteracy. Statistics show that they tend to be found in the same places, but does one really cause the other? In 1990 the International Bureau of Education

stated that “Poverty breeds illiteracy by forcing children to drop out of school to work, and these illiterate people are forced to stay on the lowest levels of the work force and thus remain in poverty. Thus illiteracy in turn reinforces poverty, and poverty is cyclical in families” (www.ibe.unesco.org/en.html, ¶ 3). It is the cyclical nature of both literacy and poverty that results in such a difficult quandary. Therefore, the answer may lie in effective literacy instruction and intervention.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (2000) reveals that 37 percent of U.S. fourth graders fail to achieve basic levels of reading achievement. The resulting *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read* (NICHD, 2000) has been influential in guiding reading education policy and practice in the United States. To address this gap in the knowledge base, the National Early Literacy Panel (NELP) was convened (Lonigan and Shanahan, 2009). While it is true that illiteracy is a problem facing America today, it is also true that the key time in a child’s life where their literacy development either experiences growth or is hindered is between the kindergarten and third grades. Goldenberg (1994), stated that the majority of issues preventing children from learning to read are preventable if those children receive assistance in the form of early intervention programs. Why is it so important to adjust any literacy issues as early as possible? “Research suggests that children with poor early reading skills continue to struggle with reading and writing in the later grades and are more likely to drop out of school” (Ransford-Kaldon, 2011, p.7). But it is much more complicated than just supplying those children with extra reading help. Literacy incorporates much more than phonics or whole word instruction which is why selecting the correct program for students is vital to their success. The selection of the correct program is complicated by different intervention and early

intervention programs focusing on different aspects of literacy. However, there are a few popular selections when it comes to choosing the “best” program out there.

The Response to intervention framework is defined as a “systematic and data-based method of identifying, defining, and resolving students’ academic and/or behavior difficulties” (Brown-Chidsey, 2010, p.3). This framework provides teachers and school administrators with guidelines for three tiers of instruction that can be matched to student’s needs. “This set up helps teachers monitor progress frequently, guide decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and apply data to important education decisions” (Stepanek, 2009, p.5).

READ 180 is a literacy program designed for students in elementary through high school whose reading achievement is below the proficient level. The goal of READ 180 is to address gaps in students' skills through the use of a computer program, literature, and direct instruction in reading skills. “The software component of the program aims to track and adapt to each student's progress. In addition to the computer program, the READ 180 program includes workbooks designed to address reading comprehension skills, paperback books for independent reading, and audiobooks with corresponding CDs for modeled reading” (What Works Clearinghouse, 2009).

The 4 R’s program was the second literacy intervention program that was investigated during this professional development project. This program, in particular, focuses not only on the literacy needs of struggling students but on the personal factors that may affect a student’s performance in the classroom and on their literacy related skills. The 4Rs uses high-quality children’s literature and engaging interactive activities to develop students’ skills and understanding in seven areas: building community, understanding and handling feelings, listening, assertiveness, problem-solving, dealing well with diversity, and cooperation. The 4Rs curriculum is grade-specific: Each grade has its own teaching guide, books, and age-appropriate

activities. Each 4Rs unit begins with a read aloud of a children's book, carefully chosen for its high literary quality and relevance to the theme.

Some of the terminology used during this research included: social learning theory, literacy, functionally literate, illiteracy, and poverty. The Social Learning Theory is “an educational theory that explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences” (Bandura, 1977, p.5). The Social Learning theory posits that the education of the learner is shaped by the interaction they have with their environment. Literacy has many definitions but the one referred to for this investigation is that literacy represents the lifelong, intellectual process of gaining meaning from print and other informational sources. Illiteracy is therefore being unable to process information in a given field, most commonly in the reading and writing of print but may also refer to the knowledge provided by other sources. To be functionally literate refers to an individual whose reading and writing skills are adequate enough to perform basic everyday functions but extend no further than the bare minimum needed to “get by” or “function” in society. Poverty is the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions. For example, the poverty level for 2011 was set at \$22,350 (total yearly income) for a family of four. For a group of people or an area to have a high poverty rate, a large percentage of that areas population will have made less annually than the amount in which the poverty level is set.

Theoretical Stance

This investigation followed the school of thought posited by the Bandura's Social Learning Theory. Social learning theory focuses on the learning that occurs within a social context. It considers that people learn from one another, including such concepts as observational learning, imitation, and modeling. Also that people are influenced by their experiences and their

environment. This connects with the idea that poverty and illiteracy are cyclical in families and communities.

If a young student grows up in a family and/or area where literacy is viewed as less important or in some cases completely unimportant, then those ideas may affect the student's view on literacy and literacy related skills. This may in turn result in those students having a negative attitude towards literacy and hinder their development. Children however may not be the only ones affected by the community's conceptions about literacy. Students learn what the teachers and school board members, as well as what people in the community think is important. If the community as a whole struggles with academia then literacy acquisition may not be viewed as a priority amongst the communities members.

The rationale for this investigation is that there is evidence to suggest that illiteracy is an issue for adults in the United States and that it can be connected to poverty. There is also evidence to suggest that if a student struggles with literacy in the early grades then he or she is more likely to continue to struggle in the later grades and have a higher probability of dropping out. Literacy programs have also been shown to have a positive effect on the literacy skills of the students who participate in them. This suggests the overwhelming importance of identifying effective literacy programs in order to benefit students by implementing them as early as possible.

The goal of the investigation was to identify evidence to suggest the following: (1) If a student struggles with literacy in the early grades then there is a good chance that he or she will continue to struggle in the later grades, in turn leading to a higher dropout rate. (2) Illiteracy amongst adults may lead to social issues such as poverty. (3) Both illiteracy and poverty are cyclical within families and communities. (4) Effective early intervention programs can have a positive effect on the student's literacy skills.

Questions

The key questions to be answered are as follows: (1) what is the relationship between literacy and poverty? (2) What impact do literacy intervention programs have on children in poverty if any? (3) Which literacy intervention programs are the most effective?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

While compiling information relevant to this investigation it became necessary to organize the information in a way that made sense and adheres to the topic of the investigation. There were three main sections; the link between illiteracy and poverty, the possible positive impacts that literacy intervention programs and frameworks may have on children in poverty, and effective literacy intervention programs. This third category was split up into three subsections labeled RTI framework, READ 180, and the 4R's program. The correlation between poverty and illiteracy was investigated to show the importance of this topic and why intervention programs are a valued part of the literacy experience. This was followed by a section that focused on the potential benefits that effective literacy intervention programs may have when implemented in a school where they are needed. This section was concluded with information on the RTI framework, and both the READ 180 and the 4R'S program. Articles focusing on the validity of those programs were then grouped by program. The literature review ended with articles devoted to the positive impact that the RTI, READ 180, and the 4R'S program may have on children in poverty.

The relationship between Illiteracy and Poverty

This section reviewed both illiteracy and poverty's relationship to school and to each other. Adiseshiah (1990) addressed the link between illiteracy and poverty that exists on global, national, and sub-national levels. The findings suggested that the countries with the lowest levels of literacy are also the poorest economically. It was stated that "Poverty breeds illiteracy by forcing children to drop out of school to work, and these illiterate people are then forced to stay

at the lowest levels of the work force and remain in poverty” (pg.4). A discussion about the link between poverty and illiteracy, as well as that both are “cyclical within families” was included.

Barton (2006) asserted that although the U.S Census Bureau has reported an increase in the high school completion rate, investigations performed by private institutions have the high school drop-out rate increasing over the last few years. The author discussed possible reasons for the discrepancies, (and investigates reasons) for the augmented high school drop-out rate. Findings revealed that one of the key contributors to the drop-out rate was poverty. The author does not state that students coming from low income or single parent families automatically result in a student dropping out of high school, but suggests that it does present the school with a condition that needs to be overcome to maximize completions.

Limage (1990) discussed the rising rate of adult illiteracy, the importance of literacy across the curriculum, and the link between illiteracy and poverty. The author states that “Out-of-school factors play an even more significant role in the perpetuation of illiteracy among a significant number of children and adults, the most well-documented factor is, of course, poverty” (Limage, 1990, p.2). Limage also suggests that “What we can say with some conviction, and without resort to irresponsible statistics, is that all forms of illiteracy are highest among school-leavers who have not obtained a school-leaving certificate, among ethnic or linguistic minorities, among the long-term unemployed, in regions with high levels of unemployment and among those populations which are most severely disadvantaged” (Limage, 1990, p.2).

Finn (1990) wrote about the resistance of working-class children to the kind of education they typically receive which is designed to make them useful workers and obedient citizens. Finn discusses a multitude of topics related to literacy including the type of literacy instruction the

students receive, the perceptions and abilities of the teachers to provide it, and how the student's background may either help or hinder their effort and success in a classroom. Finn suggests very strongly that the student's background may hinder the ability of that student to excel in literacy and that attitudes about literacy and education that a community has may affect the student's perception and performance. Finn also discusses that students in poverty may receive a different level of instruction than students from schools that do not have a high poverty rate.

Anyon (1980) developed a case study in which five different fifth grade classes from five different schools were used. An "executive elite" school where the family breadwinners were top corporate executives, an "affluent professional" school where the breadwinners were doctors and advertisement executives, a "middle class" school where the breadwinners were highly skilled blue and white collar workers such as teachers and accountants, and two "working class" schools where the breadwinners were blue collar workers or in some cases unemployed. Anyon's study found that schools from different "classes" were given different types of education. In short, the students from the elite upper class schools were taught to think creatively and take control so that they may one day become top executives themselves, while the high poverty working class students were just taught to do the "very basics." They were in essence "born and raised" to be in the working class and only taught just enough of what was needed for them to do their jobs and fulfill their "station."

Effects of Literacy Programs on Children in Poverty

This section discussed different types of literacy programs that may be available for use with children in poverty. This section also discussed strategies and approaches to literacy instruction that may be potentially beneficial to children in poverty.

Allington (2002) examined the different aspects of a literacy curriculum and how they interact to create an effective program. The author reviews different case studies and literature related to the teaching of literacy and highlights 6 “t’s” as the driving force behind an effective literacy program. These six t’s are time, texts, teachers, talk, tasks, and texts. Allington goes into detail describing each of the t’s and not only why he chose them but how they work together to create an effective literacy program. The author goes on to give examples of each of the t’s and how to use them.

Judkins, St. Pierre, Gutmann, Goodson, von Glatz, Hamilton, and the Institute of Education Sciences (2008) conducted a case study on the Even Start Family Literacy Program. This program was started in 1989 to help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy for low income families. The study presents the two year impact of curriculum on child language literacy, and social competence. One hundred preschool students were selected at random across the 120 programs and 33 states that the Even Start program was available. The key findings were that according to the impact analyses the combined curriculum had statistically significant, positive impacts on some of the hypothesized precursors to the development of children’s early literacy skills

Pressley, Roehrig, Bogner, Raphael, and Dolezal (2002) reviewed the evidence for balanced literacy instruction in the elementary years. The authors were investigating the dominance of teaching either holistic literacy opportunities or skills instruction such as phonics. The authors wrote to 50 reading supervisors across the nation and asked them each to nominate a kindergarten, grade one, and grade two teachers: who were the most effective at literacy education for their students. The teachers nominated were then asked to list ten instructional practices essential to their literacy instruction. After examining the instructional practices the

authors found that the results were split almost exactly down the middle with holistic and skill based instructional skills each accounting for roughly half of the compiled data.

Sweet (1989) analyzed research of past methods for the teaching of literacy in school and the effectiveness of each method. The author compiled his information from case studies that have been done on this topic over the last 40 years and provide evidence that the reading program being used was effective. Sweet found that historically reading programs tend to go back and forth between programs that stressed the whole word approach to reading to programs that dealt with phonics and other skill related strategies. Sweet states at the end of the article that the data collected indicated that the cure for the “disease” of illiteracy is the “restoration of the instructional practice of intense, systematic phonics in every primary school in America” (p.7).

Anderson (2005) discussed the ideological nature of literacy education across a broad range of literacy contexts. The author studies family, community, and school literacies through case studies performed in different settings. Anderson discusses the belief that literacy experiences should be a combination of the multiple literacies that a person has coming together simultaneously. Also, the author discusses the positive benefits of literacy intervention, particularly for lower income families headed by parents with low levels of literacy.

Slavin, Lake, Davis, and Madden (2009) completed an extensive report for Johns Hopkins University investigating which elementary reading approaches have been proven most effective in helping struggling readers succeed. This report was a best evidence synthesis that summarizes evidence on six different types of programs designed to improve the reading achievement of children having difficulty in learning to read by examining professional case studies on these programs. These six types of programs are one to one tutoring by teachers, one to one tutoring by paraprofessionals and volunteers, small group tutorials, classroom

instructional process approaches, classroom instructional process programs with tutoring, and instructional technology. The key findings of this report were that the best approach for struggling readers is to provide high quality instruction first, followed up with intensive instruction to the hopefully small number of students who continue to have difficulties despite high quality classroom instruction. The findings support the idea that high quality intervention over many years is needed for lasting impacts, in contrast to the expectation that brief, intensive tutoring will put struggling readers permanently on track.

Response to Intervention, an Intervention Framework

This section discussed the response to intervention frameworks that is currently in use today and may potentially be beneficial when implemented with students in poverty.

Brown-Chidsey and Steege (2010) discussed and defined the response to intervention (RTI) framework, as well as the best strategies and practices to utilize the framework effectively. Response to intervention is defined as a “systematic and data-based method of identifying, defining, and resolving students’ academic and/or behavior difficulties” (p.3). Brown-Chidsey and Steege divided RTI into five stages that describe what this framework does and how it works. Stage one is problem identification. This is the moment when a student’s difficulties are initially identified, usually by the classroom teacher. Step two is problem definition. This step includes “evaluating the nature and the magnitude of the problem and determining whether the problem requires an intervention” (p.10). Step three is the designing of an intervention plan. This step involves putting in place empirically validated activities and procedures specifically designed to assist the student.

Step four is implementing the intervention and progress monitoring. This step is split into implementing the intervention plan and then monitoring the progress of the student. The plan

will be implemented the way it was designed and data collection will be started immediately after the plan is put into place. Step five is problem solution. The most important part of step five is that it “allows for recognition of success by noting when certain preset criteria for success are met” (p.11).

Klotz and Canter (2007) discussed the benefits of the RTI framework and how to help implement the framework in a way that makes it easy for the parents of students to understand. The authors discuss the key components and terminology of the RTI framework and how parents can be involved in the RTI process. The potential benefits to the RTI framework as discussed by Klotz and Carter are that it eliminates the “wait to fail” scenario for students by giving them help promptly in a general education setting and helps distinguish between students whose achievement struggles are due to learning difficulties and those whose are due to other factors.

Klinger and Edwards (2006) discussed the Response to Intervention framework and their opinion of culturally responsive literacy instruction. Throughout the article the authors discuss the potentially positive effects that RTI can have on student learning and on both culturally and linguistically diverse children. Klinger and Edwards conclude that RTI presents a “new beginning and a novel way of conceptualizing how we support student learning” (p. 15).

Leroux, Vaughn, Roberts, Fletcher, & the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness (2011) presented the findings from a three year treatment within a RTI framework from students in grade six with reading difficulties. This was a quantitative study done on sixth graders from three highly diverse middle schools from Austin and Houston, Texas. The findings of this study were that students who participated in the RTI “treatment” made statistically significant improvements in scores by the end of the study.

Ransford-Kaldon, Sutton Flynt, and Ross (2011) presented a case study that they conducted to determine the efficacy of the tier two Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) program. This was a quantitative study where a total of 28 LLI teachers, 125 classroom teachers, and 427 students participated in a short term LLI intervention program. The key findings were that there was a significant difference in literacy performance at the end of the study where the students who participated in the LLI program outperformed the control group who did not.

Stepanek and Peixotto (2009) completed a case study on the use of the RTI framework for states considered to be in the Northwest Region. The authors collected data for their qualitative study through web based searches of RTI initiatives and programs as pertaining to the states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. These five states were chosen because they were starting to implement the RTI framework at a statewide level. The key findings of this case study were that since RTI was originally implemented, all five states have promoted RTI as a general educational initiative. It was identified as a means of supporting schools in providing evidence based curriculum and instruction and in making data based decisions about how best to support student learning.

Fuchs and Fuchs (2006) introduce RTI as a major development in education in the United States. Teachers and practitioners were earlier encouraged to use IQ achievement to identify students with learning disabilities, the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Improvement Act now allows for those practitioners to use RTI. The authors suggest that pre-service and in-service teachers professional development activities may be influenced because RTI may provide a larger role for literacy specialists. Before data is collected to determine if students are benefitting from intervention, a sup group of at risk students is selected that non-responders may

emerge from. Practitioners using RTI have the option of using a problem solving approach to intervention.

Klingner and Edwards (2006) focus on the use of RTI in education for culturally and linguistically diverse students. The authors state that the change from IQ based student evaluations to RTI “has dramatic implications for culturally and linguistically diverse students who historically have been disproportionately overrepresented in special education programs” (p.108). In conclusion the authors suggest a possible four tier RTI model. Tier one should be culturally responsive instruction with ongoing progress monitoring by teachers who have developed culturally responsive attributes. Tier two begins when a student does not reach the desired benchmarks and intensive support that supplements the curriculum and is based on student needs as identified by ongoing progress monitoring. Tier three would begin with a referral to a teacher assistant team or a child study team. “The make-up of this team should be diverse and include multiple members with expertise in culturally responsive pedagogy” (p.114). The fourth and final tier proposed by the authors would be special education.

Read 180 and the 4 R’s Program

This section discussed literacy programs that are currently in use today and may potentially be beneficial when implemented with students in poverty. The content would then be broken up into two sub groups according to the program that they discuss. The first set of articles discussed the READ 180 program, and the second grouping of articles discussed the “4 R’s” program.

READ 180 Program.

The Florida Center for Reading Research (2008) identified READ 180 as a comprehensive reading intervention program for struggling readers in grades four through twelve.

“The goals of the program are to increase students’ decoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing skills” (p.1). Daily, 90–minute lessons utilize an instructional model consisting of one 20-minute whole group session, three rotating, small group sessions of 20 minutes each, and a 10-minute whole group wrap up.” Small group, teacher-led instruction provides students with differentiated levels of support by teaching, reinforcing, and extending skills introduced during whole group instruction” (p.3). This is a time for teaching and extra practice in phonics, fluency, reading, vocabulary and word study, comprehension and writing skills. The READ 180 program also includes reading software. “Students in the topic software group receive customized, technology-based instruction in four different areas: the Reading Zone, the Spelling Zone, the Word Study Zone, and the Success Zone while a supportive audio mentor offers corrective feedback and encouragement” (p.3).

Haslam, White, and Klinge (2006) conducted a case study on 343 seventh and eighth grade students from the Austin Independent School District in Austin, Texas. This was a quantitative study conducted on the effects the READ 180 program had on students who were low English proficient, special education students, or students performing below grade level on measures of reading proficiency. The findings suggest that participation in the READ 180 program is associated with notable gains in reading proficiency as evident from their performance on the Scholastic Reading Inventory test.

What Works Clearinghouse (2009) completed an intervention report regarding the effectiveness of the READ 180 program. This report compiled data from 101 studies investigating the effects of the READ 180 program that were reviewed by What Works Clearinghouse. The report found that READ 180 addresses gaps in student’s literacy skills through the use of a computer program, literature, and direct instruction. The report concluded

that the READ 180 program was found to have potential positive effects on comprehension and general literacy skills.

Pearson and White (2004) completed a study of the impact of READ 180 on student performance at a school in Fairfax county public schools. This was a quantitative study done on 548 students in 11 middle schools who participated in READ 180 in 2002-2003. The key findings of this study were that although the students who participated in the READ 180 program did show gains, with more than half of the participants improving the equivalent of two grade levels, the authors found that these gains may not be solely attributed to READ 180. Surveys completed by the READ 180 teachers at the end of the study indicated that they believed the students with the lowest reading comprehension levels benefited from the program more than the students with moderately low comprehension levels. The surveys also indicated that the amount the READ 180 program was used in the classroom may have varied from class to class and affected the results.

Zhu, Loadman, Lomax, and Moore's (2010) presented a case study of incarcerated youth using the READ 180 program. This was a qualitative longitudinal study where 1149 youths from the Ohio department of Youth Services participated in the study to define the effectiveness of the READ 180 program on incarcerated youths. The key findings of this study were that the READ 180 program had a positive impact on the low performing incarcerated youth in the state of Ohio, even though they did not receive the entire amount of intended READ 180 treatment.

Loadman, Sprague, Hamilton, Coffey, and Faddis (2010) discussed using randomized trials to determine the impact of reading intervention on struggling adolescent readers. This was a qualitative study conducted on roughly 5,551 students across dozens of schools in Springfield, Newark, Memphis, Ohio, and Portland. The key findings of this study were that although READ

180 provided improved scores in all of the five locations the program was tested, the gains were only viewed as statistically significant increases in some of the five locations. The gains were viewed as statistically significant in Newark, Ohio, and Portland. However, the study conducted in Springfield only reported significant gains in some students whereas the study conducted in Memphis reported no difference in scores between the control group and the READ 180 group of students.

Hewes, Palmer, Haslam, and Mielke (2006) conducted a five year case study of the READ 180 program in Des Moines, Iowa. This was a qualitative study done on 1200 special education students in the Des Moines Independent Community School District over the course of five years. The key findings of this study were that participation in the READ 180 program had a positive, statistically significant effect on three of the five achievement measures but little to no effect on the other two. The READ 180 program had a significantly positive effect on the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, the Scholastic Reading Inventory test, and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills/ Educational Development focusing on fluency. The study reported positive results in the areas of comprehension and vocabulary but gains were not viewed as statistically significant.

4 R'S Program.

Fusaro (2010) discussed an evidence-based approach for fostering positive social behaviors in school. The 4 R'S program (reading, writing, respect, and resolution) is a program whose curriculum is based on a philosophy that the best ways to have students internalize positive social and emotional behaviors are to have them learn in settings where social and emotional skills are directly taught, and where teachers routinely model and explicitly demonstrate positive behavior themselves. The 4 R'S program embeds direct instruction in

conflict resolution within lessons that meet academic requirements in language arts. Educators use high-quality children's books as a springboard for discussion, role play, and other interactive activities in seven areas: building community, feelings, listening, assertiveness, problem solving, diversity, and cooperation. In addition to a curriculum, teachers receive training and ongoing coaching and support from program staff developers on implementing the 4Rs' curriculum throughout the school year.

Payton, Weissberg, Durlak, Dymnicki, Taylor, Schellinger, and Pachan (2008) compiled findings from three different scientific reviews discussing the positive impacts social and emotional skills can have on academic skills. Collectively, the three reviews included 317 studies and involved 324,303 children. Findings from the both quantitative and qualitative review indicated that the "SEL programs conducted during the school day and of SEL programs conducted in after-school settings showed that these programs significantly impacted a wide range of outcomes across multiple domains in children both with and without identified emotional or behavioral problems" (p.16). Areas the program improved include "attitudes toward self and others; positive social behaviors; reduced conduct problems; emotional distress; and improved academic performance" (p.16). In conclusion, the review indicated that improving the socio-emotional skills of students may improve their academic skills as well.

Jones, Brown, and Aber (2010) conducted a study on the three year cumulative impacts of the 4 R'S program on children's socio-emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes. This was a qualitative study of 1184 children and 146 teachers from 18 public inner-city elementary schools in a large metropolitan city in the Eastern United States. The key findings of this study were that integrated socio-emotional and literacy program provides clear evidence that this

universal intervention has both broad impacts on social-cognitive processes and behaviors in the socio-emotional domain, and targeted impacts in the academic domain.

Berg, Torrente, Aber, Jones, and Brown (2010) reported the findings of a case study using administrative data to evaluate impacts in a school randomized trial of the 4 R'S program. This was a quantitative study done on all first through fifth grade students who were present in the 18 study schools in October of 2004 in New York City. Nine intervention and nine control public elementary schools in low-income schools were used for this study with the average school containing roughly 656 students. The key findings of this study were that variations between math and language arts standardized achievement scores were statistically significant and positively affected by participation in the 4 R'S program.

Brown, Jones, and Aber (2010) conducted a study about the longitudinal impact of a universal school-based social-emotional and literacy intervention on classroom climate on teacher processes and practices. This was a quantitative study that examined the impact of the 4 R'S program on 147 third and fourth grade classrooms during the 2005-2006 school year and 191 third, fourth, and fifth grade classrooms during the 2006-2007 school year. This study also included 299 teachers across the third, fourth, and fifth grades from New York City public schools. The key findings of this study were that the 4 R'S program has demonstrated positive influences on both classroom climate and affective teacher pedagogical process.

Chapter 3

Methodology

These investigations lead to a professional development project based on the topic of literacy intervention programs and the RTI framework. The methods used to answer the questions were to compile data on the topics contained in the questions (the best literacy intervention programs for students in poverty) and to display the findings. Information was collected through library research using the *ERIC* educational database, *Google*, *Google Scholar*, *Educational Research Complete*, and hard copies of educational journal articles available through the library. Terms that were used to search for relevant materials include *poverty*, *literacy*, *elementary*, *primary*, *illiteracy*, *intervention programs*, *response to intervention*, and *effective literacy intervention programs*.

For an article to be considered relevant enough for the investigation it needed to accurately represent at least two of the key search terms. The reason for this is because the professional development project focused primarily on connections found between the terms being searched. This investigation was not about poverty, illiteracy, or literacy programs alone. It was about the connections between poverty, illiteracy, and literacy programs as well as how they all affect one another. Articles discussing poverty were not selected unless it related to elementary school or had connections to literacy as well in the same article. Adult illiteracy was a concern related to the investigation. However, only articles connecting adult illiteracy to poverty or early literacy difficulties were relevant to the topic of this investigation.

Information retrieved from the research process was organized by both question and topic. All the articles related to the connection between poverty and illiteracy were grouped together, followed by articles discussing the potential good that effective literacy programs may have on

student's skills. Articles were then organized by the literacy program or framework that they discuss. The articles also had to come from a peer reviewed journal or other source.

Chapter 4

Professional Development

While planning the framework for this professional development project, it became necessary to keep in mind both Bandura's social learning theory and the types of professional development most appropriate for RTI and effective literacy programs. The idea that learners, regardless of age may be influenced by peers plays a large role in both the content and framework of this professional development project. The framework that was chosen for this project, including duration and style, was supported by evidence based research.

Professional Development Research

Birman, Desimone, Porter, and Garet (2000) highlighted six features that framed the context for a professional development project. Those six features include form, duration, participation, context focus, active learning, and coherence. Form was described by the authors as how the activity is structured, such as small group networking or a traditional workshop. Duration was described as the amount of hours the workshop lasted and over what time span it took place. Participation, on the other hand, was described as whether or not the participants worked collectively or individually. Context focus was described as the degree to which the activities addressed the attendees' content knowledge and actively engaged them in teaching and learning. The authors described coherence as how well the activities encouraged professional communication and aligned both with their personal goals and state standards. Table 4.1 identifies the six features mentioned above and how they were incorporated during this professional development experience.

Danielson, Doolittle, and Bradley (2007) described the best way to design and implement RTI professional development. The authors explained that because the No Child Left Behind Act

and the Individuals With Disabilities Act provided incentives to improve k-12 instruction and one possible way to do that was to provide teachers and practitioners with evidence based professional development in RTI instruction. Professional development building the capacity necessary for sustained implementation, and addressing current research needs for the RTI model was discussed. The key components of a system of RTI as it should be implemented in an education setting and sets the framework for professional development were then laid out. “Successful implementation of RTI was multifaceted and involved knowledge of evidence-based interventions, multitier intervention models, screening, assessment and progress monitoring, administering interventions with a high degree of integrity, support and coordinated efforts across all levels of staff and leadership within the school, and sustaining systems of prevention grounded in an RTI framework” (p.2).

Crowther and Cannon (2002) conducted a research study exploring the duration of two different professional development models on 47 practicing teachers from the Nevada Operation Chemistry program and 37 teachers from the Nevada Operation Physical Science program. The first model was a three weekend course and the other was an intensive two week course with a follow up session. It was discovered throughout the course of this investigation that although initially there was no difference found in outcome expectancy, the model consisting of three weekend sessions did show a significant change in expectancy after a follow up meeting four months later. This positive outcome expectancy change difference is “maintained by the fact that the teachers had time to go back to their classrooms and practice things which they learned” (p.13).

Bozdogan (2011) conducted a study of 47 pre-service elementary school teachers from Giresun University’s educational faculty. The study aimed to increase the knowledge base of

pre-service teachers regarding global warming through the use of visual materials. The findings were that although both control and experimental groups showed gaps in their knowledge base, “the experimental group was more successful in rectifying those gaps and misconceptions via instruction with visual materials” (p.1).

Through the examination of the research articles regarding RTI, READ 180, and the 4 R’s programs professional development, it became apparent that to maximize the effectiveness of this professional development project, certain characteristics are necessary to include. The professional development project should involve both small group and whole group activities that increase the participants’ content knowledge and encourage communication amongst professionals. It is also suggested by the research that to maximize effectiveness the professional development experience should include both the use of visual aids and allow the participants an opportunity to utilize what was learned through the experience in their own classroom. This would allow for the participants to come back and share their experiences with the other participants and ask any questions that they may have. Based on the information suggested by the research the professional development experience will contain both visual aids such as PowerPoint, and take place over a few weeks so that participants will have an opportunity to use what they learn in their own classrooms and then share their experiences with the group. The experience will also consist of opportunities to meet with other professionals in both small group and whole group situations.

Table 4.1 Six features as described by Birman, Desimone, Porter, and Garet (2000)

Six Features	Use in this Professional Development Project
Form- Structure of the professional development experience.	Mix of whole group and small group activities
Duration- Length of the professional development experience.	Six hours over the course of three days, a week a part
Participation- Do participants work collectively or individually.	Participants work both collectively and individually.
Context- Do activities address the attendees content knowledge related to the topic of the professional development experience.	Activities involve the participants utilizing content knowledge and prior knowledge
Active Learning- Do activities promote active learning?	Participants are encouraged to engage in active learning by putting project information into practice
Coherence- Do activities encourage professional communication	Activities involve collaboration with other professionals

Professional Development Organization

In order to provide the attendees of this professional development experience with the most effective instruction on RTI and effective literacy programs, research regarding effective professional development experiences was utilized. As shown in table 4.2 below, to provide the

attendees with the most effective experience, research indicated that appropriate timing, setting, and visual aids should be used.

Table 4.2 Implementation of Professional Development Research

Research	Use in this Professional Development experience
(Danielson, 2007)- Professional development should be completed in a professional setting.	This professional development experience took place in a professional classroom setting.
(Crowther, 2002)- Professional development experiences should take place over multiple days with time between each meeting.	This Professional development experience took place over the course of three days, each a week apart to allow for attendees to implement what they learned.
(Bozdogan, 2011)- The use of appropriate visual aids may improve the retention of information.	This professional development experience made use of a PowerPoint presentation, as well as multiple posters and manipulatives.

This professional development project will take place over the course of three days, each a week apart. This three day experience with time between each lesson was chosen because according to Crowther and Cannon (2002), the positive outcome expectancy change difference from their study was thought to have been “maintained by the fact that the teachers had time to go back to their classrooms and practice things which they learned” (p.13) Day one will last an hour and consist of a PowerPoint presentation beginning with an introduction to the problem of illiteracy in America, and how when students struggle in the early grades they have a higher

probability of struggling in the later grades and have a higher dropout rate. This is also known as the “Matthew Effect” which maintains that when students struggle with reading early on they become frustrated or develop a dislike for reading, which in turn hinders their performance later on. Where as a student who performs well in reading early on may develop an affinity towards reading and continue to perform well. The PowerPoint will then discuss the connection between illiteracy and poverty, as well as a possibly solution to the issue of illiteracy in the form of the RTI framework and both the READ 180 and the 4 R’s literacy program. A brief background was given on the RTI framework and the other two literacy intervention programs. Including what type of instruction is covered throughout the course of these programs and citations for case studies conducted that prove the programs validity and reliability. The PowerPoint will be completed with a question and answer period on the information presented in the PowerPoint. Attendees may have questions regarding the effectiveness of the literacy programs or about the materials required for those lessons to be completed.

Once the PowerPoint is over the attendees will have the opportunity to walk around the classroom and view posters made up on the RTI framework and both the READ 180 and 4 R’s programs. Both the PowerPoint and posters were chosen as a medium because according to Bozdogan (2011), instruction via visual materials was believed to have led to the experimental group in his study being more successful in retaining information. Attendees were given the option to go over to a poster with information on a program that they found interesting and wished to know more about to ask more specified questions if they wish. The RTI visual aid will discuss how and why the framework became popular. The poster will also cite peer reviewed articles supporting the use of RTI and the positive effect that this framework may have when implemented in schools. The 4 R’s program and READ 180 visual aid posters will contain

information relevant to the credibility of the program, including peer reviewed articles in support for each program and the positive effect they have when implemented in a classroom. Tables 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 express the information presented on RTI, READ 180, and the 4 R's program respectively.

Table 4.3 Research Findings of RTI

Brown-Chidsey and Steege (2010)	RTI is a “systematic and data-based method of identifying, defining, and resolving students’ academic and/or behavior difficulties” (p.3).
Klotz and Canter (2007)	RTI eliminates the “wait to fail scenario”
Klinger and Edwards (2006)	RTI presents a “new beginning and a novel way of conceptualizing how we support student learning” (p. 15).
Stepanek and Peixotto (2009)	RTI is a means of supporting schools in providing evidence based curriculum and instruction and in making data based decisions about how best to support student learning.
Fuchs and Fuchs (2006)	RTI is a major development in the United States. Teachers and practitioners were earlier encourages to use IQ achievement to identify students with learning disabilities, the IDEA now allows for those practitioners to use RTI.

Table 4.4 presents information on READ 180

	READ 180
Description of the program	The Florida Center for Reading Research (2008) identified READ 180 as a comprehensive reading intervention program for struggling readers in grades four through twelve. “The goals of the program are to increase students’ decoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing skills” (p.1).
Benefits of the program	What Works Clearinghouse (2009) The report found that READ 180 addresses gaps in student’s literacy skills through the use of a computer program, literature, and direct instruction. The report concluded that the READ 180 program was found to have potential positive effects on comprehension and general literacy skills.
Research evidence	Haslam, White, and Klinge (2006). The findings suggest that participation in the READ 180 program is associated with notable gains in reading proficiency as evident from their performance on the Scholastic Reading Inventory test.
Research evidence	Hewes, Palmer, Haslam, and Mielke (2006). The READ 180 program had a significantly positive effect on the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, the Scholastic Reading Inventory test, and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills/ Educational Development focusing on fluency.
Lesson materials	Computer program, workbooks designed to address reading comprehension skills, paperback books for independent reading, and audiobooks with corresponding CDs for modeled reading

Table 4.5 Information on 4 R's Program

	4 R's program
Description of the program	Fusaro (2010). The 4 R'S program (reading, writing, respect, and resolution) is a program embeds direct instruction in conflict resolution within lessons that meet academic requirements in language arts. Educators use high-quality children's books as a springboard for discussion, role play, and other interactive activities in seven areas: building community, feelings, listening, assertiveness, problem solving, diversity, and cooperation.
Benefits of the program	Payton, Weissberg, Durlak, Dymnicki, Taylor, Schellinger, and Pachan (2008). Areas the program improved include "attitudes toward self and others; positive social behaviors; reduced conduct problems; emotional distress; and improved academic performance" (p.16). In conclusion, the review indicated that improving the socio-emotional skills of students may improve their academic skills as well.
Research evidence	Jones, Brown, and Aber (2010). The key findings of this study were that integrated socio-emotional and literacy program provides clear evidence that this universal intervention has both broad impacts on social-cognitive processes and behaviors in the socio-emotional domain, and targeted impacts in the academic domain.
Research evidence	Berg, Torrente, Aber, Jones, and Brown (2010). The key findings were that math and language arts standardized achievement scores were statistically significant and positively affected by participation in the 4 R's program.
Lesson materials	Each grade has its own teaching guide, high quality children's books, and age-appropriate activities.

The posters discussed in tables 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 also contained additional information about lesson outlines and materials for each of the two programs. Sample materials were also provided. After viewing the posters, all of the participants went back to their own classrooms to reflect on the content of the professional development project. Twice, in the evenings, over the following two weeks, the participants met as a large group, again, to discuss “next steps”. This provided the attendees with an opportunity to go back to their classrooms and think about the information presented and come back with any other questions they might have. This also allowed for the attendees to implement any of the strategies discussed relating to RTI and the two literacy programs in their own classrooms. Attendees then came back for a night in each of the next two weeks and obtained more specific information needed to answer their questions, as well as an opportunity to discuss experiences while in their classrooms.

Night two consisted of providing information on the 4 R’s program and READ 180 including the program and lesson components, materials needed, sample assessments, and assessment requirements. Information provided explained how both READ 180 and the 4 R’s program fit into the RTI framework. Sample lesson from each of the two literacy intervention programs, followed by another question and answer period regarding more detailed information on the two programs was provided. Lessons lasted roughly an hour. The attendees were then divided into small groups to discuss their thoughts on the programs and ideas for implementation in their classrooms. After sharing with the larger group, the attendees were given the opportunity to implement what they learned. Night two lasted roughly two and a half hours.

Night three consisted of a discussion that highlighted the ways in which Read 180 and the 4 R’s program correspond to the RTI framework, and one final opportunity for the attendees to ask any questions that they may have. Night three also allowed time for the attendees to

discuss their experiences implementing READ 180 or the 4 R's program and any impressions that they had. The duration of this third meeting was roughly an hour and a half. Timing was based on participation and academic discussion. Table 4.6 outlines each of the three sessions in the professional development experience.

Table 4.6 Outline for Professional Development Experience

Day 1 (session one)	Day 2 (session two)	Day 3 (session three)
Introduction- 10 minutes	READ 180 lesson- 1 hour	READ 180 and RTI
PowerPoint- 25 minutes	4 R's lesson- 1 hour	correspondence- 30 minutes
Poster Viewing- 10 minutes	Questions and Discussion-	4 R's program and RTI
Questions and discussions-	30 minutes	correspondence- 30 minutes
15 minutes		Questions and discussions-
		10-30 minutes
Estimated duration- 1 hour	Estimated duration- 2 ½	Estimated duration- 1 - 1 ½
	hours	hours

Bandura's social learning theory focuses on the learning that occurs within a social context. It considers that people learn from one another, including such concepts as observational learning, imitation, and modeling. This fits into the style of this professional development project because the project allows the attendees to go back to their classrooms so they may practice and model what was learned through the professional development experience. Attendees were then encouraged to discuss their experiences with their peers and learn from each other's experiences. Social learning theory is reflected in the ideas covered in the PowerPoint, from day one (the first session), that poverty and illiteracy are cyclical in families and communities. The way in which a

student's community members view of literacy, may reflect the student's opinion of literacy.

Therefore, in some cases, students may imitate the opinions that the community members are modeling and not view literacy acquisition as important.

Chapter 5

Significance

Overview of the Findings

Illiteracy and Poverty.

After the investigation into effective literacy programs, multiple conclusions were reached. Limage (1990) discussed the rising rate of adult illiteracy in the United States. As indicated by the Matthew Effect, when a student struggles with reading early on, he or she may continue to struggle in the later grades. Barton (2006) suggested that an increase in struggling readers in the later grades may be a possible reason for the increase in high school dropout rate. Not only is illiteracy a growing concern in the United States, but according to Adiseshiah and the International Bureau of Education (1990), poverty and illiteracy are connected on both community and national levels and are both cyclical within families. Both poverty and illiteracy are growing problems that have a significant impact on teachers and literacy specialists. This is why it is important to provide teachers, parents, and literacy specialists with the most effective ways to improve illiteracy instruction and to prevent the Matthew Effect from taking place. One of the most effective ways to do this is through the use of effective literacy programs. A growing body of evidence suggests that “reading problems are preventable for the vast majority of students who encounter difficulty in learning to read, if these students receive extra support in the form of an early intervention program” (Goldenberg, 1994; Hiebert & Taylor, 1994; Reynolds, 1994). The issues surrounding poverty and illiteracy guided this investigation. This search resulted in the identification of two effective literacy programs, READ 180 and the 4 R’s program as well as the Response to Intervention (RTI) literacy framework.

RTI Framework.

The Response to intervention framework is defined as a “systematic and data-based method of identifying, defining, and resolving students’ academic and/or behavior difficulties” (Brown-Chidsey, 2010). According to Fuchs (2006), teachers and practitioners were earlier encouraged to use IQ achievement to identify students with learning disabilities, the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Improvement Act now allows for those practitioners to use RTI. This three tiered intervention framework is a popular and research supported system that when used in conjunction with an effective literacy program may have positive effects on students.

Effective Literacy Programs.

Effective literacy programs may have a positive impact on students who struggle with literacy in the early grades, and in particular students in poverty. The READ 180 program is one literacy program that may potentially have a positive effect on comprehension and general literacy skills. In 2009, the What Works Clearinghouse investigated 101 studies that investigate the READ 180 program. The report found that READ 180 addresses gaps in student’s literacy skills through the use of a computer program, literature, and direct instruction.

The 4 R’s program (reading, writing, respect, and resolution) suggests that the best way to improve upon childrens literacy skills is to first help them handle other issues that may be a distraction to their schooling. The 4 R’S program embeds direct instruction in conflict resolution within lessons that meet academic requirements in language arts. “Educators use high-quality children’s books as a springboard for discussion, role play, and other interactive activities in seven areas: building community, feelings, listening, assertiveness, problem solving, diversity, and cooperation” (Fusaro, 2010). In addition to a curriculum, teachers receive training and

ongoing coaching and support from program staff developers on implementing the 4R's curriculum throughout the school year.

Both literacy programs and in particular the 4 R's program are somewhat lesser known, but are very effective and incorporate Bandura's social learning theory. The social learning theory posits that students are influenced by the people and circumstances in their surroundings and that these things have an effect on their schooling. This is why utilizing a literacy program that focuses on building community, problem solving, diversity, and cooperation is a perfect fit, particularly for students in areas of poverty. This also ties into the Matthew effect because since illiteracy and poverty are typically found in the same areas, students in areas of poverty should receive effective literacy instruction early to avoid a situation where they fall behind in their literacy abilities and cannot catch up. In addition to their effectiveness, both the READ 180 program and the 4 R's program lend themselves to the RTI framework, which is a research supported framework that improves the acquisition of knowledge by successfully improving the skills of students who start to fall behind.

Professional Development.

Evidence suggests that the best way to design and implement RTI professional development is to provide teachers and practitioners with evidence based training in RTI instruction (Danielson, 2007). One possible way to do this is through effective professional development experiences which may enhance the acquisition of content knowledge. Six features that develop the context for a professional development project. include form, duration, participation, context focus, active learning, and coherence (Birman, 2000). An effective professional development experience should incorporate all six of the features listed above, as well as contain visual aids (Bozdogan, 2011) and provide the attendees with an opportunity to go

back and practice what they learned during the professional development experience (Crowther 2002).

Significance of the Finding

These findings are significant because illiteracy is a growing concern in the United States, and illiteracy and poverty are intertwined. Students in poverty are struggling early on in their educational careers and then having a very difficult time “catching up.” As a result, those same struggling students then have a lower graduation rate, resulting in lower paying jobs and start the cycle over again with the next generation in their family and communities. READ 180, the 4 R’s program, and the RTI framework were found to be significant because they are educational options that benefit those students who are starting to struggle. Research shows that both literacy programs and the RTI framework were effective in helping students acquire literacy knowledge. In addition to improving students’ literacy acquisition in general, the programs can all be used with students who live in areas of poverty to combat the Matthews Effect and stop the negative cycle.

Teachers should be made aware of both literacy programs and the RTI framework because of their effectiveness in aiding students in literacy acquisition and the potentially positive effects that utilizing these programs and frameworks would have on students. Teachers should attend this professional development project because READ 180, the 4 R’s program, and the RTI framework are effective in helping students acquire literacy knowledge. When used in a classroom, these programs and frameworks will help those teachers improve their students’ literacy skills and give the students a better chance for school success. Attending this professional development project would provide teachers with the information they need to utilize these programs and framework in their own classrooms successfully. Also, as an educator

it is necessary to obtain knowledge on the recent educational theories and programs available and keep up to date on the best ways to help their students.

Research Answers

Communities with high poverty rates typically reflect high illiteracy rates. This is important for educators to know because if they teach in these areas then poverty and illiteracy are going to be factors affecting their student's literacy acquisition and they will need to be aware of these issues.

Literacy intervention programs can have a positive effect on children in poverty and both the READ 180 and the 4 R's program are effective literacy programs. This information is significant because there are things a teacher can do and programs that can be implemented that will improve the literacy abilities of students in poverty and help to break the illiteracy and poverty cycle. A majority of literacy related problems are preventable if students receive effective literacy instruction.

Read 180, the 4 R's program, and the RTI framework were all found to have positive effects on students in schools in which they were implemented. This information is significant because educators should stay up to date on all of the programs and research that is available to improve their students' chances of school success.

Limitations of the Findings

Several limitations of this investigation were identified. First, time was a major limitation to this investigation. More time would have allowed for an opportunity to actually implement the professional development experience. A second limitation to this investigation was that only two literacy programs and one literacy intervention framework were identified and incorporated into the investigation. Lastly, one other major limitation to the findings of this investigation was that

the two literacy intervention programs identified were not well-known. There are many other programs available for investigation and it is possible that some may be more effective than the programs discussed in this investigation.

Suggestions for Further Research

Suggestions for further research on this topic include the following: investigate different literacy programs, investigate different literacy frameworks, and investigate different methods of professional development. There are a wide variety of literacy intervention programs available and in order to ensure the most effective programs are being used, all of the literacy programs should be investigated and researched. This investigation included the RTI literacy framework, although this framework is popular, it is not the only literacy framework available and all other frameworks should be investigated to identify the most effective option for a school and its students. It is a very important framework and one that all teachers should know in depth. It is viewed as “the” framework for struggling readers. Effective ways of conducting professional development experiences should also be investigated. Professional development activities and strategies should be investigated to ensure that the attendees are benefitting from the most effective professional development ideas available.

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