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Project Abstract:

Collaborating with Head Start programs in Waltham and Boston, Massachusetts, the researchers are implementing and assessing the Program-Delivered Literacy Through Inservice Training (PD-LIT) to work with Head Start programs to create systems that include in-service training, supervision, and program self-evaluation that enable programs to support children's language and literacy development. PD-LIT has three goals: (1) deepen knowledge of language and literacy among all center staff, (2) develop a center-wide shared vision of good practice; and (3) enhance children's language and literacy development significantly.

PD-LIT is a two-year intervention that includes literacy concepts and practices workshops, professional conversations and demonstration classrooms, and supervisory methods to ensure valued practices are implemented. Researchers will train Head Start staff to become PD-LIT mentors and deliver training to their own staff.

Using HLM, the researchers are examining the impact of PD-LIT on English- and Spanish-speaking children, comparing fall-to-spring change scores in children in PD-LIT classrooms to fall-to-spring change scores of comparison group children. The comparison group data were collected using the same tools and procedures as for PD-LIT. In Phase III a qualitative study will assess the stability and impact of PD-LIT. The researchers are studying PD-LIT replicability using a random assignment design, and are also conducting a process evaluation throughout the study period.

High/Scope Educational Research Foundation

Project Title:

Achieving Head Start Effectiveness Through Intensive Curriculum Training

Grantee:

High/Scope Educational Research Foundation

Project Funding Years:

2001-2006

Project Staff:

Lawrence J. Schweinhart and Marijata C. Daniel-Echols

Head Start Partners:

Oakland Livingston Human Services Agency
Wayne County Head Start

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Project Abstract:

The research question of this project asks whether intensive training in, and confirmed practice of, a proven curriculum model enables Head Start teachers to contribute significantly to children's development, especially their development of language, literacy, and the ability to resolve social conflict. It also asks the related question of whether Head Start teachers who claim to use a proven curriculum but have little or no training in it, and have not confirmed their practice of it contribute significantly to children's development. The proposed project will use a curriculum model of proven effectiveness, the High/Scope curriculum framework, to test this hypothesis. The intervention we propose involves intensive curriculum training and curriculum implementation confirmed by systematic observation. We ask if meeting these conditions contributes significantly to children's development.

The primary intervention will involve 20 Head Start classrooms of Oakland Livingston Human Services Agency. From March to August 2001, we will plan and provide 30 days of training, observation-feedback, and discussion for the teaching staff, collecting curriculum data quite regularly. We will track their classroom program for two years, collecting observational data on children regularly throughout. We will identify a second Head Start agency for the secondary intervention, randomly assigning 20 classrooms to a comparison group and 20 classrooms to the intervention group, which will receive 30 days of training, observation-feedback, and discussion during the

2002-2003 program year. We will track their classroom programs for two years, following the same data collection schedule as before for both groups.

Today's key challenge to Head Start is to identify program practices that contribute to program effectiveness. The High/Scope curriculum model is one of the few interventions with evidence that it serves this purpose. We propose to test the effectiveness not of this proven curriculum model, but rather of intensive training in this validated curriculum model and its verified implementation in Head Start. In this way we will determine whether the tougher curriculum standards we propose - validated curriculum model, intensive curriculum training, and verified implementation - are critical to Head Start's success.

Quality Counts, Inc.

Project Title:

Supporting Children's Individualized Learning in Head Start

Grantee:

Quality Counts, Inc.

Project Funding Years:

2001-2006

Project Staff:

Martha Abbott-Shim and Richard Lambert

Head Start Partners:

Jefferson County Committee for Economic Opportunity Head Start

Ninth District Opportunity Head Start

McIntosh Trail Early Childhood Development Council Head Start

Coastal Georgia Area Community Action Authority Head Start

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