

7-25-2013

The Impact of RTI Practices on Student Reading Achievement

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THE IMPACT OF RTI PRACTICES ON STUDENT READING ACHIEVEMENT

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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May 2013

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The purpose of this study was to evaluate whether elementary schools that endorse implementing core components of Response to Intervention (RTI) differ in student outcomes on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) Reading Assessment when compared to schools that do not endorse implementing RTI practices. This study also explored whether elementary schools that implement RTI demonstrated greater gains in student reading achievement, as measured by the PSSA Reading Assessment, than non-RTI schools. The following factors were identified as core components of RTI: use of evidence-based core reading curriculum, universal screening in reading, progress monitoring in reading, tiered instruction and intervention in reading, and the use of fidelity measures related to core reading instruction and intervention.

This study followed a quantitative, non-experimental research design that utilized a survey method to collect information on the implementation of RTI practices in elementary schools across Pennsylvania. An electronic survey developed by the researcher was distributed to 1455 elementary school principals working in Pennsylvania. There was a 19% return rate, and the return rate for city elementary schools was particularly low. The majority of principals who completed the survey worked in k-5 and k-6 buildings located in various regions across

Pennsylvania. Furthermore, over three-fourths of the schools included in this study fell within the high and medium socio-economic status categories.

The main premise of this study was to determine how well the implementation of the core characteristics of RTI predicted proficient student reading achievement. This analysis yielded insignificant findings. Another goal of the study was to evaluate whether elementary schools in which principals endorsed implementing RTI demonstrated higher levels of reading achievement as compared to non-RTI schools. This analysis similarly yielded insignificant findings.

Several explanations for non-significant findings are provided in the discussion of the results. Implications for practice and implications for future research are also discussed.