

School Board of Miami-Dade County

Florida Master Teacher Initiative

DOES A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON SCHOOL CULTURE, TEACHER PRACTICES, AND EARLY CHILDHOOD ACHIEVEMENT?

Project Overview

THE PROBLEM: What Challenge Did the Program Try to Address?

The Florida Master Teacher Initiative (FMTI)¹ was a partnership between Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the University of Florida (UF), and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The program was designed to improve early learning instruction for high-needs preschool through 3rd graders.

THE PROJECT: What Strategies Did the Program Employ?

Under the i3-funded development grant awarded from 2010-2014, FMTI was offered for three academic years, starting in 2011. The FMTI consisted of four main program components: 1) a job-embedded graduate degree program with an early childhood specialization (the Early Childhood Teacher Leadership for School Improvement Program, or ECTLSI), 2) a Teacher Fellows program, 3) a Principal Fellows program, and 4) summer leadership institutes. The premise of the program was that improvements to school culture and teacher practices can lead to increased student achievement and engagement, and a stronger emotional and social foundation. Participants in the program learned new instructional practices, had opportunities to share and present findings, and practiced using data to collaboratively build school action plans. To be eligible for the FMTI intervention, schools had to be Title I schools, have a Pre-Kindergarten program, and have a minimum of four teachers interested in the graduate program. The evaluation used both a cluster assignment random control trial (RCT) design with randomization at the school level, and an embedded quasi-experimental design (QED) using propensity score matching and difference-in-differences approaches.

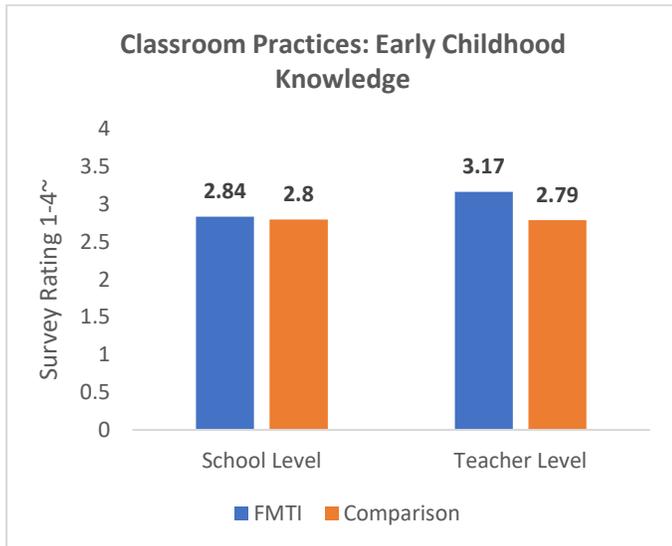
¹ The School Board of Miami-Dade County received an i3 development grant supported by the U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation program through Grant Number U396C101305. Development grants provide funding to support the development or testing of novel or substantially more effective practices that address widely shared education challenges. All i3 grantees are required to conduct rigorous evaluations of their projects. The quality of evidence required to demonstrate a project's effectiveness depends on a project's level of scale or grant type.

THE FLORIDA MASTER TEACHER INITIATIVE MODEL

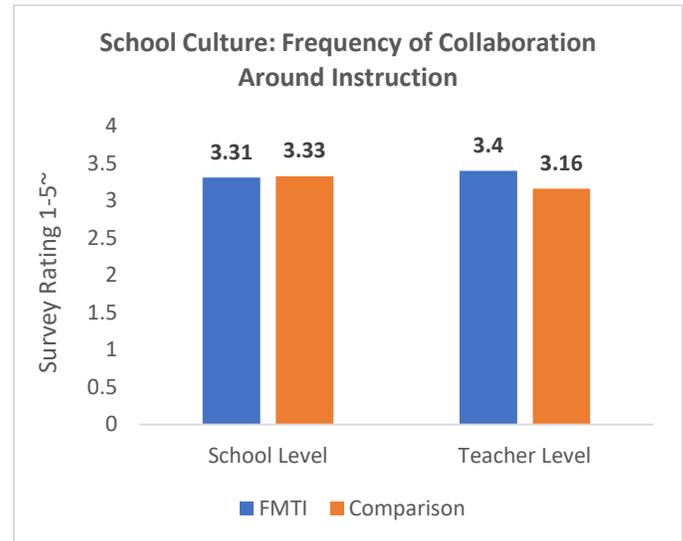
- **ECTLSI Graduate Program.** The program was offered to teachers through online instruction, face-to-face pedagogy, and professors-in-residence who would be available in the schools to work with teachers. This specialized program was offered through the University of Florida.
- **Ongoing training.** Teachers and administrators participated in summer institutes that emphasized shared school leadership, and data-driven decision making, as well as the Teacher Fellows or Principal Fellows program, which consisted of regular professional development sessions, coaching, and opportunities for collaboration. Teachers worked on inquiry projects while principals were engaged in leadership-building activities and dialogues.

Summary of Results

DOES A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON SCHOOL CULTURE, TEACHER PRACTICES, AND EARLY CHILDHOOD ACHIEVEMENT?



~Mean survey results on a scale of 1-5, with 1 indicating no knowledge and 5 indicating almost every day. Results not significant.



~Mean survey results on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating no knowledge and 4 indicating extensive knowledge. *Difference is statistically significant

The impact evaluation had two goals: 1) to assess the school-level impact of the FMTI intervention on student achievement and teacher outcomes, and 2) to assess the impact of FMTI on teachers enrolled in the ECLSI program. The program was not successful in improving student achievement or school culture but had a positive impact on ECLSI teachers' participation and instructional quality.

■ SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLASSROOM PRACTICES.

There were no statistically significant findings in comparisons of teacher reports on school culture and professional learning community in program versus comparison schools; nor were there statistically significant differences in most comparisons of classroom practices. The two exceptions, sub elements of the data in the School Culture graph, were 1) A small negative impact of the program on ECLSI teacher reports of differentiating instruction, and 2) A small positive impact of the program on ECLSI teachers' self-reported early childhood knowledge and general teaching knowledge.

■ STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN MATH AND READING.

Achievement outcomes for students who had been in Pre-K through grade 2 in the spring of the baseline year (2010-11) were analyzed three years later (2013-14) when the students were mostly in 2nd-5th grade. No significant differences were found in math or reading achievement between the program and comparison groups.

- **COLLABORATION AND INVOLVEMENT IN LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES.** FMTI had a positive impact on ECTLSI teachers' participation in leadership activities, but not on the school as a whole. The intervention did not have a significant impact on teacher collaboration; teachers in both the program and comparison schools reported collaborating with colleagues a few times each month. However, ECTLSI teachers significantly more were more likely to engage in governance activities than teachers in the control group.
- **INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY.** After three years of program implementation, there was a positive impact for participating ECTLSI teachers in the instructional quality domain of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) compared to matched comparison teachers. No statistically significant findings were found for other CLASS measures.

Please see Appendices A and B for information about the evaluation's design and the quality of the evidence, respectively.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The study shared some exploratory teacher and student findings of statistical significance from medium and high-fidelity FMTI schools compared to comparison schools in the same regions and voting districts.

- **STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES FOR MEDIUM/HIGH FIDELITY SCHOOLS.** Teachers in program schools that implemented the program with medium or high fidelity reported slightly higher perceptions of trusting, collaborative relationships between teachers in their schools. They also took on leadership roles at a higher rate, reached out to a higher proportion of families than the control group, and used a greater variety of assessments.
- **ECTLSI PROGRAM BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES.** Teachers who participated in the graduate program found that the course content was applicable and relevant to their teaching practice and classroom. They also enjoyed the collaborative nature and noted collaborating both within and across schools. Finally, they valued the support they received from UF faculty. Participants noted that it was challenging to complete their work and had numerous competing priorities.
- **TEACHER FELLOWS BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES.** Nearly all teachers who participated spoke highly of the program and planned to participate again. In particular, they noted the clearly structured process and layers of support. Challenges included the time commitment, and some trainings of mixed quality.

- **ECTLSI PROGRAM TEACHER DIFFERENCES.** Using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), the study found that ECTLSI teachers outperformed their matched comparison teachers on the instructional support domain. They also found that ECTLSI teachers had a slightly higher level of involvement in leadership roles, had higher level of early childhood knowledge and general instructional knowledge. They were also more likely to participate in governance and outreach activities at their schools.
- **SUMMER INSTITUTES.** Teachers were excited about the plans developed during the summer institutes and the opportunity to work with other teachers. Many teachers, however, found that they were not able to fully implement their plans in their classroom due to barriers or the fact that plans were not fully developed, or competing priorities.
- **PRINCIPAL FELLOWS BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES.** Principals noted the benefits of networking with other principals, including developing camaraderie with others and thinking about new strategies. Participation proved a challenge and diminished the experience for those that did participate. The program noted that principals, particularly those at schools designated high needs, had a number of competing priorities.

For More Information

Evaluation Reports

[Final Evaluation Report \(2015\) \(PDF\)](#) (SRI International, June 2015)²

Additional Reports

[Florida Master Teacher Initiative Project Overview](#)

² The information and data for this result summary was collected from the final evaluation report as of 02/10/2020: SRI (2015, June). *Evaluation of the Florida Master Teacher Initiative. Final Evaluation Findings.* Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED562565.pdf>

Appendix A: Students Served by the Project³

GRADE(S)													
PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

GENDER

RACE/ETHNICITY

COMMUNITY

Not Reported

Not Reported

Not Reported

HIGH-NEED STUDENTSⁱ

Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	English Learner	Students with Disabilities
Not Reported	Not Reported	Not Reported

³These data reflect the entire student population served by the intervention, not just the evaluation sample used in the impact study.

Appendix B: Impact Evaluation Methodology⁴

RESEARCH DESIGN:

Design:	Randomized Control Trial (school-wide impacts) with embedded Quasi-Experimental Design (teacher outcomes)
Approach:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Outcome scores were standardized by student baseline. Z-scores were calculated by taking the difference between the students' pre-tests and the mean score for his/her cohort in the whole district, then dividing by the standard deviation of the score for his/her cohort.
Study Length:	Three years –2011-12 school year through 2014-15 school year

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Study Setting:	Elementary schools in Miami-Dade County
Final Sample Sizes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Intervention:</i> 6,672 students<i>Comparison:</i> 6,575 students
Intervention Group Characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Intervention:</i> Not reported.
Comparison Group Characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Comparison:</i> Not reported.
Data Sources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Standardized test scoresTeacher surveysTeacher classroom observations
Key Measures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Stanford Achievement Test-Tenth Edition (SAT-10) (Kindergarten-2nd grade)Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) (3rd-5th grades)Teacher survey measuresClassroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) (teacher observations)

⁴ These data reflect only the evaluation sample in the impact study, not the entire population served.

Appendix C: Quality of the Evidence

Although an evaluation may not have been reviewed by the time of publication for this summary, it is possible that the study will be reviewed at a later date. Please visit the websites found in the footnotes on this page to check for updates.

WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW⁵

STUDY	RATING
Florida Master Teacher Initiative: Final Evaluation Findings https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Study/84095	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Meets WWC Standards Without ReservationsNo Statistically Significant Positive Findings

EVIDENCE FOR ESSA REVIEW⁶

STUDY	RATING
Not reviewed as of 02/10/2020	N/A

NATIONAL CENTER ON INTENSIVE INTERVENTIONS REVIEW⁷

STUDY	RATING
Not reviewed as of 02/10/2020	N/A

⁵ <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/FWW>

⁶ <https://www.evidenceforessa.org/>

⁷ <https://intensiveintervention.org/>

Investing in Innovation (i3) Grantee Results Summary

Development, 2010-2015

The [*Investing in Innovation Fund \(i3\)*](#), established under section 14007 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, is a Federal discretionary grant program at the U.S. Department of Education within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE). i3 grants help schools and local education agencies work in partnership with the private sector and the philanthropic community to develop and expand innovative practices that improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, and/or increase college enrollment and completion rates for high-need students.

This summary was prepared by the Education Innovation and Research (EIR) Program Dissemination Project. The project is conducted by the [*Manhattan Strategy Group*](#), in partnership with [*Westat*](#) and [*EdScale*](#), with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, [*Office of Elementary and Secondary Education*](#), under Contract No. ED-ESE-15-A-0012/0004. The evaluation results presented herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

ⁱ “High-need student” refers to a student at risk of academic failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, such as students who are living in poverty, attend high-minority schools, are far below grade level, who have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time, who are homeless, in foster care, have been incarcerated, have disabilities, or who are English learners. For more information see: [*Applications for New Awards; Investing in Innovation Fund-Development Grants, 81 FR 24070 \(April 25, 2016\)*](#).