



What's the BIG Idea?™ Training-of-Trainers Evaluation Highlights RMC Research Corporation, 2009

What's the BIG Idea? is an initiative created by the Vermont Center for the Book (VCB) to enhance the mathematics and science readiness of young children, aged 4 to 7. Evaluation of the project showed that librarians changed their practices in statistically significant ways. The original cohort of librarians acquired specific knowledge and skills and confidence in their abilities to provide children with activities and vocabulary related to mathematics and science. Demand for training increased with success, and VCB recognized that its small staff could not deliver the training to all of the librarians that requested it. A training-of-trainers approach was then developed and piloted in seven states. Librarians in the pilot received professional development to deliver programs to young children and to train other librarians on the program. Level One cohort trainers went back to their states and delivered the training to the Level Two cohort. After that, trainers from each cohort trained a group of librarians who subsequently delivered the programming. Outcomes from project participation include the following:

- **Results clearly showed that the *What's the BIG Idea?*™ programming attained the same strong impacts no matter who provided the training.** Participants in the various cohorts had nearly the same results as those librarians who participated in the original *What's the BIG Idea?*™ program.

I was impressed with how practical the ideas are. I learned ideas on how to incorporate mathematics and science into my story time.

- **Statistically significant impacts occurred in librarians' knowledge acquisition, confidence and comfort levels in training others, and in implementing mathematics and science activities.** The only area measured that did not show a significant positive change was in the area of

designing programs for young children to learn literacy concepts, an area where most librarians already felt competent.

The manual is fantastic, and I love how it's tied to NSF and standards. The key concepts are great and lay the foundation.

- **Librarians who received the training changed their resource acquisition practices.** After receiving the training, librarians were more likely to order nonfiction books and books related to mathematics and science for young children.

- **Impacts endured over time.** Follow-up surveys showed that the impacts on the librarians endured and sometimes increased over time.
- **Librarians noted that children responded very positively to the *What's the BIG Idea?*™ programming.** Both immediate and longer term estimations of impacts on children revealed that librarians thought children were more likely to use mathematics and science vocabulary, became more interested in nonfiction books, more often checked out both the books read during story hours and the family kits, were more engaged in story hour than usual, interacted with other children more than usual, and engaged their parents in more activities than usual.

For more information about *What's the BIG Idea?* and its impacts, contact:

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