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Summary of Lessons for Practice

PIE uses an integrated services, four-component model, and ensures that its programs are barrier-free and open to participants of all literacy levels. Creating Communities of Learning is central to the PIE program. PIE is embedded in schools, creates partnerships on many levels, and welcomes practicum students and volunteers. Our participants have shared important lessons for practice through this research project.

Integrating Services:

- ⇒ Ensures that every component is delivered by an expert.
- ⇒ Maximizes on human, financial, and knowledge resources.
- ⇒ Establishes connections between families, the school, the broader community, and new resources.

The Four Components:

- ⇒ Provide multiple entry points for adults based on their interest and need.
- ⇒ Can be adjusted in terms of their weight in the overall program as needs change.

- ⇒ Encourage intergenerational learning and mutual support in learning, strengthening family bonds.
- ⇒ Impact families in multiple aspects of their lives. PIE connects literacy to 'real life' and adult literacy to child literacy development, for global rather than isolated effects.

Barrier-Free Programming:

- ⇒ Is essential in enabling all families to participate.

Universal Access:

- ⇒ Ensures a mix of literacy levels, ethnicities, and socio-economic status among participating, enriching the program. Higher-level literacy participants act as resources for the program and role models for other parents.

Communities of Learning:

- ⇒ Are critical for recruitment and retention of families.
- ⇒ Are important to staff and partnering organizations.
- ⇒ Are important for parent ownership of the program, in creating a space in which they can take responsibility and see the results of their actions.



Summary of Lessons for Practice *continued...*

- ⇒ Are important for the socialization of children.
- ⇒ Can be fostered by eating and celebrating together.

Parents:

- ⇒ Come to PIE for different reasons. They stay for the community, and the benefits they experience.
- ⇒ Tell us that the program must be *accessible* (barrier-free, with a convenient location and time), *inviting* (a comfortable space that does not resemble a classroom, with welcoming staff and fellow parents), and *safe* (in which to share and to risk without being judged, where mutual respect is practiced, and in which they know their children are safe).
- ⇒ Need us to operate on “learner time” rather than attaching our expectations to funding and reporting cycles, if deep changes are to be made in their lives.
- ⇒ Need sustained support – if the learner wavers, we do not.

Children:

- ⇒ Need support through transitions into school and in learning to read.
- ⇒ Enjoy learning when they see their parents enjoying it.
- ⇒ Value the time they spend with their parents and the PIE community.
- ⇒ Can provide valuable support for their parents’ learning endeavours, when they themselves are supported.

Schools:

- ⇒ Enable PIE to access families.
- ⇒ Are a nexus of resources for PIE, including infrastructure, infrastructure, and the wealth of knowledge that its staff at all levels can impart about the neighbourhood and local population.
- ⇒ Need PIE to act as an addition to rather than a strain on their human resources. PIE must ask what PIE can do for the school rather than the other way around.
- ⇒ Need informal as well as formal opportunities to understand the four-component model, the ways in which it addresses intergenerational cycles, and the roles they can play.
- ⇒ Need to be able to perceive parent progress and understand how it positively impacts the school and its students. Visits, updates, and reports are critical.

Partners:

- ⇒ Recognize the importance of spending time setting out the parameters, protocols, and processes of the relationship.
- ⇒ Emphasize that meeting face-to face, visiting each other’s spaces, reporting to each other on successes and lessons learned, and sharing opportunities for professional development and publicity are the keys to making partnerships work.

Volunteers and Practicum Students:

- ⇒ Value the four-component model because it provides opportunities for volunteers to work in an area of special interest; being placed in an appropriate component is critical to a successful practicum or volunteer placement.

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