INCORPORATING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS THROUGH AN UNDERGRADUATE READING COURSE FOCUSED ON CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the

School of Human Service Professions

Widener University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Colleen M. Lelli

Center for Education

February 2010

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my wonderful parents, James and Barbara Gray, who always valued education and instilled within me the love of learning. I would have never finished this journey if it weren't for their support and undying love for me. It looks like we've made it!

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation in memory of my Nana, Anne Davis. She taught me the meaning of determination and perseverance. You are the wind beneath my wings.

ACKNOWLDEGEMENTS

I would first like to thank my husband, Michael and my children Michael and Julianna. Without their understanding, love and patience, I would have never had made it through this process. Thank you for pushing and encouraging me to finish this journey. Your support was invaluable and I would have never finished this program without it. You all mean the world to me.

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Annemarie Jay for her patience in answering my endless emails and questions and for her fabulous suggestions. Very special thanks to my other committee members including: Dr. Marty Waring-Chaffee for her support and knowledgeable assistance and Dr. Mary Strong for her incredible kindness and words of wisdom. I am also thankful to the Center of Education administrative assistants, including Peggy Corey, for their wealth of information.

Thanks to my supportive friends and family. I so appreciate all the times you let me vent and/or cheered me on to the finish. I am so fortunate throughout my life to have had met so many people that have become my lifelong friends. This is for all the special people from Jem Restaurant, Cabrini College, Pottsgrove School District, Widener University and MOMS Club that have touched my life. I am truly very lucky to have met each and every one of you. A special thank you to: my sister, Christine and my friends, Tricia, Lisa and Jessica. You all kept me sane and were my personal cheerleaders.

I would like to acknowledge my mentors; the people who saw my teaching career

begin at Pottsgrove High School, Ann Myers, Melissa Hazlett and Cheryl Overly. Thank you for your patience in my early years. I would not have made it through those early years without your support and guidance.

I want to thank my workplace peers that have watched me lead a double life as full time instructor and student. A special thank you to Dr. Dawn Middleton for taking a chance on me and giving me the support and guidance I needed. You had faith in me even when I had very little faith myself. I want to thank Dr. Beverly Bryde for her patience, guidance, leadership and understanding. I am so fortunate to have a mentor and friend like you. Words can't express how grateful I am for all of your help. My thanks to Maria Small for lending her ear when I needed someone to listen and keeping my life in perspective. I would like to extend many thanks to the rest of my education department friends at Cabrini College for your words of wisdom during my whole doctoral program. Lastly, I would like to thank my students. I love what I do because of all of you and the lessons you have taught me. Thank you!

ABSTRACT

This mixed methods study examined preservice teachers' awareness of domestic violence through an undergraduate reading course which focused on children's literature. Pre and post surveys were administered to preservice teachers to determine whether their knowledge and skills in recognizing signs of domestic violence in behaviors of the elementary students they teach would change. In addition, professional development was provided to the preservice teachers to provide a clearer understanding of recognizing signs of domestic violence.

The population sample consisted of approximately 50 undergraduate students from three classes of a reading methods course which is generally taken during senior year prior to student teaching. The questions which guided this research focused on preservice teachers' awareness and dispositions towards domestic violence, and how their awareness and dispositions changed as a result of using children's literature for instruction and reading professional literature related to domestic violence for their own professional growth.

This study provided information on preservice teachers' awareness of domestic violence prior to and following professional development and the preservice teachers' knowledge of domestic violence as a result of reading professional literature and children's literature pertaining to domestic violence. Lastly, this study examined preservice teachers' perceptions of specific traits of domestic violence via journal entries after reading children's literature.

The results of this study showed an increase in preservice teachers' knowledge and skills pertaining to recognizing signs of domestic violence in behaviors of the students they teach. The data further revealed that the increase was due to the use of children's literature as part of instruction and trade journal articles as a part of teachers' professional development.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES

APPENDIXES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Domestic Violence is a serious and widespread problem that affects all economic, educational, social, geographic, racial, ethnic, and regional groups (Bureau of Justic Statistics Crime Data, 2003; Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003). Studies estimate that between 3.3 million and 10 million children in the United States witness violence in their own homes each year (Straus, 1992; Fantuzzo & Mohr, 1999; Haeseler, 2006; Edelson, 1999a). In addition, child abuse is about 15 times more likely to happen in families where domestic abuse is present (Haeseler, 2006). The effects that domestic violence can have on a child have gained the attention of one state in particular, which has enacted legislation that makes the commission of a domestic assault at least two or more times in the presence of a child chargeable as a misdemeanor (Utah State Statute 76-5-109.1).

With a knowledge of these statistics it is easy to understand why many children come to school frightened, angry, afraid, lonely, confused, ashamed, unprepared to learn, and emotionally unstable because of witnessing family violence in the home. Trauma can undermine children's ability to learn, children will have difficulty forming healthy relationships and they will have difficulty functioning appropriately in the classrooms (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005; Haeseler, 2006; Spath, 2003; Edelson, 1999b; NACVAW, n.d., Fantuzzo & Stevenson, 1997; Barrett-Kruse, Martinez & Carll,

1998; Kearney, 2001; Hughes, Graham-Bermann & Gruber, 2002; Shonk & Cicchetti, 2001; Coster & Cicchetti, 1993). Because of the fact that family violence is frequently undisclosed from school personnel, children are often misdiagnosed with other problems within the classroom (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005). Children in the classroom may suffer from organizational and language problems, diminished concentration, memory problems, inappropriate behavior and other manifestations due to trauma in the home (Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005; Haeseler, 2006; Spath, 2003; Edelson, 1999a; NACVAW, n.d., Fantuzzo & Stevenson, 1997; Barrett-Kruse, Martinez & Carll, 1998; Kearney, 2001; Hughes, Graham-Bermann & Gruber, 2002; Shonk & Cicchetti, 2001; Coster & Cicchetti, 1993).

A community wide effort is needed to create contexts in which children who have witnessed violence in the home can succeed in school and in social situations. Edleson (1999) reports that many times research is reported in journals that caters to only one field of study. Instead, collaboration between disciplines is needed to understand the child in all settings and help with the ramifications that can occur within each different setting. School should be a place where a child can forge supporting, strong relationships with caring adults in a predictable and safe environment. Teachers should not become therapists but instead teachers should have a better understanding of the difficulties that traumatized children endure (Haeseler, 2006). To end the battering cycle, children need to be provided with skills to cope so that they can cultivate healthy relationships (Kearney, 2001). Teachers can help children to develop these coping skills.

Reading can be used to create conversations in the classrooms. In the past, the term bibliotherapy was used to denote guided reading that helps individuals gain understandings of the self and environment, learn from others, or find solutions to problems (Schrank & Engels, 1981). Reading is viewed as an active, constructive, social experience, in which stance influences the act of reading before, during and after a book is opened (Galda & Aimonette-Liang, 2003). Transactional theorists view reading as an activity that combines the energies of the writer and the reader (Galda & Aimonette-Liang, 2003). Theorists such as Rosenblatt (1982, 1991, 2005) believe meaning is an interaction between the text and the reader. Readers bring their own knowledge and experiences to the text as they create meaning in conjunction with the text (Rosenblatt, 1982, 1991, 2005.) The teacher can help the reader understand a plethora of topics linking those topics to the reader's background knowledge or schema by using storybooks in a classroom setting.

Background

I became interested in the connections between children's literature and domestic violence when I was provided the opportunity to work with a woman's shelter in Norristown, Pennsylvania. The Laurel House is a safe haven for women and children. The Laurel House provides a safe place for women to stay once they have made the difficult decision to leave their abuser, also providing services such as counseling, financial seminars, and assistance in attaining a job. Cabrini College began to work with the Laurel House in providing help for the children during counseling sessions. Preservice teachers worked with the children who observed domestic violence and

provided lessons using children's literature to discuss the issues that they faced at home prior to the Laurel House and their current feelings. Although this pilot study was deemed a success, it was decided by the college and the researcher that further research and training should be provided to the preservice teachers to raise their awareness of domestic violence.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to increase preservice teachers' knowledge and awareness of domestic violence given children's literature and professional literature related to domestic violence. This study examined preservice teachers' awareness of domestic violence through an undergraduate reading course focusing on children's literature. With the use of pre and post survey and professional development in the areas of domestic violence and children's literature, the study investigated whether preservice teachers' knowledge and skills pertaining to domestic violence would increase as a result of the use of children's literature and trade journal articles as presented in the course Reading and Language Arts III.

This study was guided by three questions:

1. Based on the domestic violence survey, how did preservice teachers' awareness of and dispositions towards domestic violence change as a result of their professional development?
2. What themes or recurring issues were evident from the preservice teachers' survey responses after reading professional literature on domestic violence?

3. In what ways had previous understandings of domestic violence changed as a result of the preservice teachers' interview responses after reading professional literature and children's literature?

Need for the Study

Teachers most often are the first to notice that a child is having difficulties. Therefore, school professionals must be well versed in identifying warning signs of children of abuse, as these children either witness and/or incur abuse in their environment (Haeseler, 2006). Teachers have many opportunities to observe children's behaviors and socioemotional functioning and are in a position to monitor academic achievement and cognitive development. There may also be neurobiological causes for domestic violence. Areas of the brain which relate specifically to learning and also responding to trauma and violent episodes has been discovered by researchers (Zull, 2002; Shaywitz, 2003; DeBellis, 2005).

It is necessary to educate preservice teachers with the possible signs that a child may be witnessing domestic violence. Also, using literature as an aesthetic experience in the classroom can also help students make connections between their lives and the lives of the characters in the given literature. Preservice teachers also need to be able to guide students to using literature and responding to literature from an aesthetic stance (Rosenblatt, 1982, 1991, 2005).

Little research has explored preservice teacher's knowledge of domestic violence. Due to the fact that there is little research exploring preservice teacher's knowledge of domestic violence, this shows a strong need for this study.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, these terms will have the following specific meanings:

Aesthetic stance – The reader adopts an attitude of readiness to focus attention on what is being lived through the senses, feelings and intuitions during the reading event (Rosenblatt, 1991).

Bibliotherapy- The use of books to help people solve problems (Forgan, 2002).

Child Abuse- Physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child under the age of eighteen by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare (Beezer, 1985; Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003).

Child Maltreatment- Includes the following categories in regards to mistreatment of a child: (a) physical abuse, (b) child neglect, (c) sexual abuse, and (d) emotional abuse (psychological, verbal abuse, or mental injury) (Edleson, 1999b).

Child Neglect- Physical, medical, educational and emotional neglect (De Bellis, 2005; Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003).

Domestic Violence- A pattern of abusive behaviors (physical, verbal, emotional or psychological) carried out with the intention, or perceived intention of causing pain or

injury in order to control or dominate a partner (Edleson, 1999a,b; Jouriles, McDonald, Norwood, & Ezell, 2002; Kearney, 2001).

Educational Neglect- Permitted chronic truancy, failure to enroll a child in mandatory schooling and inattention to a child's special needs (De Bellis, 2005).

Efferent stance – The kind of reading in which attention is centered predominantly on what is to extracted and retained after the reading event (Rosenblatt, 1991).

Emotional Neglect- Refusals or delays in psychological care; inadequate attentions to a child's needs for affection, emotional support, attention, or competence; exposing the child to extreme domestic violence; and permitting a child's maladaptive behavior (De Bellis, 2005; Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003).

Family Violence- Three forms of harm are included in family violence which include witnessing domestic violence, being the direct victim of abuse, and being exposed to neglectful care taking (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005).

Medical Neglect- Failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatments (De Bellis, 2005).

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD, is an anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to a terrifying event or ordeal in which grave physical harm occurred or was threatened (National Institute of Mental Health, n.d.).

Physical Neglect- Abandonment, lack of supervision and failure to provide for a child's basic needs of nutrition, clothing, hygiene, and safety (De Bellis, 2005).

Preservice Teacher/Teacher Candidate: A person seeking certification to teach in a undergraduate program at the college/university level (Public School Code of 1949).

Reading - A dynamic process in which the reader interacts with the text to construct meaning. Inherent in constructing meaning is the reader's ability to activate prior knowledge, use reading strategies and adapt to the reading situation (Botel & Lytel, 1988).

Stance- The way a reader approaches a text and the expectations for reading (Galda & Liang, 2003).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature for this study. Domestic violence, particularly spouse-abuse, male against female is examined. The topics reviewed include: information related to domestic violence, the effects domestic violence can have on children, the prevention and intervention of domestic violence, preservice teachers' awareness of the possibility of domestic violence in their students' households, and using children's literature instructionally to create conversations about issues of domestic violence in the classroom.

Domestic Violence

When family violence occurs, children feel that they do not have a safe haven. In violent homes, it is typical that one parent is the terrifying aggressor and the other parent is the terrified victim; children have no refuge for protection. Domestic violence psychologically robs a child of both parents (Groves, 2002). Children from violent homes come to school with various behaviors and emotions that can make it difficult for them to learn. It is often difficult for educators to discern the reasons behind children's behavioral and learning problems since family violence is frequently kept secret from school personnel (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005).

Domestic violence, also known as partner abuse, spouse-abuse, or battering, is one facet of the larger problem of family violence (Flitcraft, et al, 1992). Family violence

includes persons within a family and encompasses the areas of child abuse and elder abuse as well as domestic violence. Domestic violence, child abuse and neglect frequently occur together (Edleson, 1999). Researchers have recognized that familial alcoholism often occurs along with family violence and the children in homes where there is substance abuse may exhibit symptoms similar to children exposed to family violence (Ritter, Stewart, Bernet & Coe, 2002; Melear, 1997). It is important for teachers who educate students from unsafe homes to have sufficient knowledge about signs of domestic violence to best educate and help these students. Therefore, teachers should be trained to recognize the signs or symptoms of domestic violence.

Physical violence against women is a public health problem that has reached epidemic proportions (Flitcraft, et al, 1992). Mullender, et al. (2002) discusses the fact that domestic violence is an issue that the public needs to understand. Studies have provided some shocking statistics regarding domestic violence. The Massachusetts Advocates for Children (2005) and Edleson (1999a) found that between 3.3 million and 10 million children in the United States witness violence in their own homes each year. In 1998 a study called the Adverse Childhood Experiences study was conducted using standardized questionnaires. The sample included 13,494 adult members of a large HMO. The results of this study found that 44 percent of respondents reported suffering sexual, physical or psychological abuse as children and 12.5 percent reported having a mother who had been treated violently (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005). Still another survey conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Education which was given to 450 students who attended alternative education programs in 11 school districts,

found further indication that domestic violence is prevalent among school aged children. The results indicated that 90 percent of the students reported histories of trauma exposure, with a number of these students reporting exposure to more than one type of trauma (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005). Of the students surveyed, 41 percent reported histories of family violence; 46 percent reported having been physically, emotionally, or sexually abused; and 39 percent reported neglect (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005).

Effects of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence not only adversely affects those being abused but also the children who witness the violence. These children have been called the "silent," "forgotten," and "unintended" victims of adult- to-adult domestic violence (Edleson, 1999a,b). Slightly more than half of female victims of intimate violence live in households with children under age 12 (Greenfield et al., 1998).

More than three million children view incidents of domestic violence every year, in which more than half of male abusers physically harm their children (Hasseler, 2006). Edleson (1999a,b) defines witnessing a violent event as being within visual range and seeing it occur; however, he also noted that while some children may witness the violence, most often children hear the violent event and experience its aftermath. A 1995 Gallop Poll on family violence revealed that 1.5 million to 3.3 million children witness or experience parental domestic violence each year (National Advisory Council on Violence Against Women and the Violence Against Women Office [NACVAW], n.d.).

Research reveals many lasting negative effects of domestic violence. Traumatic experiences change children's expectations of the world and destroy the victim's fundamental assumptions about the safety and expectations of the world (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005). Children's safety and security of interpersonal life is redefined or changed (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005). A second effect is that children may have diminished self worth and feel incapable of having a positive impact on the outside world (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005; Kearney, 2001). Third, children witnessing domestic violence experience developmental delays and have increased behavioral and emotional problems (Spath, 2003; Edelson, 1999a,b; NACVAW, n.d., Fantuzzo & Stevenson, 1997; Barrett-Kruse, Martinez, & Carll 1998; Kearney, 2001). Fourth, children exposed to domestic violence often shown symptoms in the areas of behavioral and emotional functioning, cognitive and school problems, and social relationships (Hughes, Graham-Bermann and Gruber, 2002). Fifth, children may become defiant, or watch out for their siblings and/or pour themselves into activities that they love (Bancroft, 2004). Further research suggests that children witnessing domestic violence may exhibit more aggressive and antisocial behaviors, withdrawal, fearful and inhibited behaviors, anxiety, depression, trauma-related symptoms, temperament problems, possible fear of authority, low tolerance for frustration, perfectionism and lowered social competence than children who do not witness such violence (NACVAW, n.d.; Fantuzzo & Stevenson, 1997; Barrett-Kruse, Martinez, & Carll 1998; Shonk & Cicchetti, 2001; Carlson, Furby, Armstrong & Shales, 1997; Kearney, 2001).

Additionally, many of the symptoms exhibited by children of domestic violence are also some of the same symptoms exhibited by children of substance-abusing parents (Ritter, Stewart, Bernet & Coe, 2002). Unfortunately, school age maltreated children receive more disciplinary interventions, including suspensions for misconduct than do non-maltreated children (Shonk & Cicchetti, 2001). However, suspensions and/or disciplinary actions may not be the appropriate intervention for every child. Each child reacts as an individual. There is neither one pattern of response nor is there a syndrome to sum up the impact of their experiences (Mullender, et al 2002; Kearney, n.d.; Barrett-Kruse, Martinez & Carll, 1998; Kearney, 2001).

As children enter adolescence, they may recreate the abusive behaviors they witnessed as younger children (NACVAW, n.d.; Edelson, 1999a,b, Fantuzzo & Stevenson, 1997). When adolescents begin to enter intimate relationships of their own, they may become abusers themselves. Rosenbaum and O'Leary (1981) reported that the male batterers were much more likely than others to have grown up in homes where adult domestic violence did occur. Adolescents that witnessed domestic violence as children are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, run away from home or commit other delinquent behaviors (NACVAW, n.d.).

Havey and Dodd (1995) examined the relationship between parental alcohol abuse, family conflict and adolescent experimentation with alcohol. They found that family conflict, adverse life events and reduced family cohesion were better predictors of early adolescent experimentation with alcohol than was parental alcohol abuse (Havey & Dodd, 1995; Kearney, 2001). The "silent," or "forgotten," or "unintended" victims are at

greater risk of becoming drug and alcohol abusers or violent abusers because of the domestic violence they witnessed as children and/or because they were abused themselves.

Other researchers have pointed to the fact that different characteristics appear for boys and girls that have witnessed violence (Carlson, 1991; Stagg, Wills & Howell, 1989; Ritter, Stewart, Bernet & Coe 2002). Boys have been known to show more externalized problems like aggression and hostility. On the other hand, girls show more internalized problems such as depression (Carlson, 1991; Stagg, Wills, Howell, 1989; Ritter, Stewart, Bernet & Coe, 2002).

Children Traumatized by Domestic Violence and Succeeding in School

Succeeding in school, including academic achievement and social competence, poses a huge hurdle for children who have witnessed domestic violence. Shonk and Cicchetti (2001) found that maltreated children show more severe academic problems than do comparison children. They also found that maltreated children are more likely to receive special educational services, to have below grade level achievement test scores, to be retained in a grade and to be rated by teachers as showing poor work habits. Elevated academic failure was found to be common for maltreated students which in turn, put them at risk for dropping out of school (Shonk & Cicchetti, 2001).

Children traumatized from domestic violence face obstacles such as the inability to process information, meaningfully distinguishing between threatening and nonthreatening situations, and to form trusting relationships with adults and relationships

with peers, modulating their emotions (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005; Shonk & Cicchetti, 2001). As Masten and Coatsworth (1998) point out, prerequisites for excelling in the classroom include the ability to self-regulate attention, emotions and behavior. Language and communication skills, organizing narrative material, cause-and-effect relationships, attending to classroom tasks, processing verbal information and engaging in the curriculum can all be hampered for a child exposed to domestic violence (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005).

Language and communication skills are one area that children who have been exposed to violence may struggle with in school. Verbal problem solving skills may not have been emphasized in the home for those children traumatized by domestic violence. Thus, children exposed to domestic violence may have difficulty extracting key ideas found in lengthy narratives (Coster & Cicchetti, 1993). Allen and Oliver (1982) found a significant correlation between child neglect and deficits in both receptive and expressive language. Coster and Cicchetti (1993) suggest a language evaluation should be part of the educational assessment of children exposed to domestic violence. These researchers further assert that impaired language development may affect the ability of the child to use words to problem solve and therefore the language evaluation should include linguistic aspects of language as well as pragmatic and narrative functions (Coster & Cicchetti, 1993).

Traumatic experiences can hinder a student's ability to organize material sequentially, leading to problems such as reading, writing and oral communication (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005; De Bellis, 2005). Early in life, children

begin to remember memories and information episodically as a collection of events rather than a narrative (Craig, 2008). When children have consistent environments, children develop the capacity to remember things sequentially. Children then encode new information within the context of prior experience. Children exposed to violence are often deprived of the types of caregiving experiences that nourish the development of sequential memory. Experiences of powerlessness disrupt these children's ability to plan, anticipate and hope (Craig, 2008). Due to the fact that the development of sequential memory is delayed and the ability to sequentially remember new information is impaired, children witnessing domestic violence will have difficulty organizing and processing the content of academic lessons for later retrieval and application (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005; De Bellis, 2005; Craig, 2008). Children who have witnessed domestic violence will benefit from classrooms in which there are orderly transitions and clear rules that help students organize their tasks (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005; Craig, 2008).

Children who have witnessed domestic violence have difficulty regulating emotions, which can lead to the inability to form relationships with peers (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005; Shonk & Cicchetti, 2001). Children who are socially withdrawn have limited problem solving skills and non assertive strategies; peers will often reject these withdrawn children as well as children who are aggressive in nature (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005; Shonk & Cicchetti, 2001). Maltreated children are more likely to (1) respond inappropriately to peer provocations;

(2) have difficulty understanding others' feelings, and (3) demonstrate awareness of the effect of one's own behavior on others (Shonk & Cicchetti, 2001).

Prevention and Intervention of Domestic Violence

Protective factors for youth violence and child abuse are cited in the research (NACVAW, n.d.). The following factors for helping to prevent child abuse and youth violence: economic opportunity, mentors and role models who provide a strong sense of moral development, organized community programs for youth and families, and a school environment that promotes prevention (NACVAW, n.d.). Masten and Coatsworth (1998) in their review of the literature on favorable outcomes for children at risk, found three key factors in the lives of children who manage to develop well even under unfavorable conditions such as domestic violence and maltreatment. The three key factors are: (1) strong parent-child relationships or, when this is not available, a relationship with a surrogate caregiver in a mentoring role; (2) strong cognitive skills; (3) the ability to self-regulate attention, emotions and behavior. Intervention for adult domestic violence also becomes a strategy for preventing youth violence and possible child abuse (Daro, Edleson & Pinderhughes, 2004).

An agency or school may determine that child abuse exists in a family. Further investigation may acknowledge the co-occurrence of domestic violence. When the agency or school knows all pieces of the puzzle, an intervention may include strategies to help a child better understand the complexity of relationships and the importance of valuing the rights of others (Daro, Edleson & Pinderhughes, 2004). In sum, children

enhance their safety resources should they find themselves in an abusive relationship as an adult.

The School's Role in Prevention and Intervention

Teachers need to be aware of the protective factors related to domestic abuse. An important aspect of prevention and intervention is realized when alert teachers collaborate with guidance counselors, social workers and service agencies. Schools should have a plan for helping children and families with domestic violence and part of this plan should involve collaboration. Members of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) are calling for a community-wider effort to create contexts in which children traumatized by violence can succeed (Cook, Earles-Vollrath & Ganz, 2006). NCTSN asks that schools play a key role in this effort. School is a place where it is possible for traumatized children to forge strong relationships with caring adults. With this type of supportive, predictable, and safe environment, children are able to learn (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005; Craig, 2008). Collaboration within the school community should involve school psychologists, counselors, teachers, social workers, secretaries, security officers and nurses.

All school personnel should be trained to respond to disclosure of physical and sexual assaults, teen dating violence, and exposure to domestic violence (NACVAW, n.d.). Researchers have stated that as social workers, psychologists and educators work with families and children that are involved in various aspects of child maltreatment, youth violence and adult domestic violence, each field has its own definitional

framework, conceptual model, and practice standards that in turn generates strategies for each field (Daro, Edleson & Pinderhughes, 2004). Daro, Edleson and Pinderhughes (2004) have suggested that rather than viewing domestic violence, youth violence and maltreatment as individual problems with individual interventions, integration of strategies and interventions should be instituted. Barett-Kruse, Martinez and Carll (1998) also contend that although intervention by social service professionals is designed to prevent further abuse and offer remediation when possible, the classroom teacher has a far greater opportunity to help restore abused children's energy and facilitate continued growth and development. To maximize the development of an integrated process, Daro, Edleson and Pinderhughes (2004) emphasize the need for further research in the collaboration and integrative process of these fields and their intervention strategies.

According to Fantuzzo and Stevenson (1997), the unique access that school professionals have to children dictates a responsibility to further our understanding of the developmental consequences of maltreatment and to design comprehensive, school based interventions to address those negative consequences (Fantuzzo & Stevenson, 1997). With proper school intervention abused children can cultivate healthy relationships (Kearney, n.d.). Teachers and other school personnel can use various strategies to help the child that is suffering in the classroom to help them become successful members of their school community.

The children of domestic violence are at dire risk for not being able to cope with threatening and harmful situational issues that may be manifested in the school classroom (Haeseler, 2006). Teachers most often are the first to notice that a child is having

difficulties. Therefore, school professionals must be well versed in identifying warning signs of children of abuse, as these children either witness and/or incur abuse in their home environment (Haeseler, 2006; Craig, 2008). Teachers have many opportunities to observe children's behaviors and socioemotional functioning and are in a position to monitor academic achievement and cognitive development. Teachers may notice some of the following common behaviors for children who are exposed to domestic violence: anger, fear/terror, powerlessness, loneliness, confusion, shame, guilt, and trust issues (Kearney, n.d.). Furthermore, the regular contact that educators have with children and parents render schools an exceptional environment for intervention and prevention (NACVAW, n.d.; Fantuzzo & Stevenson, 1997).

Personnel in the school environment should be familiar with district wide protocols and specific school building procedural guidelines for identifying and reporting domestic violence (Haeseler, 2006). Guidelines should be reviewed frequently so that all staff and faculty are aware of the procedures governing suspected domestic violence. Resources such as community referrals, family seminars, and prevention handbooks should be made available to all faculty and staff.

Within the school community, parents, teachers and administrators must consider seriously the prevalence and severity of violence among children of all ages. Violence within the school climate can include harassment, bullying and assault. Creating a violence-free school climate is an important step in preventing harassment and violence based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability (NACVAW, n.d.).

Families facing domestic violence need help, support and intervention strategies

that work. A more effective, response system is needed. Current research reveals that more research is needed in the area of prevention and intervention strategies (NACVAW, n.d.; The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005). Specifically, studies exploring the causes and prevalence of family violence are needed as well as studies to determine the effectiveness of current laws, investigative procedures and intervention and treatment programs.

Neurobiology and Domestic Violence

Brain research has become increasingly prominent in the past few years. Many researchers (Zull, 2002; Shaywitz, 2003; DeBellis, 2005) have uncovered areas of the brain which relate specifically to learning and also to responding to trauma and violent episodes. For example, studies are beginning to uncover neurobiological evidence that the ability to connect words to experience can be impeded by trauma (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005). Ford (2005), found that some women with abuse-related Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) have impairments in information processing, including the ability to categorize information and access verbal information (National Institute of Mental Health, n.d.).

Another study (Rauch, et. al., 1996) monitored the regional cerebral blood flow of PTSD patients who listened to both traumatic and neutral scripts. Increased cerebral blood flow was detected in the limbic and paralimbic systems (the areas involving anxiety and other intense emotions) when the traumatic scripts were read to the patients. Decreased blood flow was found in the left inferior frontal cortex (Broca's area) and was

found to be less active. These findings suggest that Broca's area, the part of the brain that is responsible for language, is inhibited during traumatic situations. This important information should be shared with teachers so that they may understand the complexity of domestic violence and the effects it can have on abused children's capacity to learn.

Brain maturation continues from birth through adulthood. Sensory experiences early in one's life can change the neuronal network in the brain (Zull, 2002). Neurons can change due to plasticity or remodeling of the brain. Within the neurons, synapses can become stronger through activity and stimulation. The wiring in the brain can change the activity in neurons. These changes can also occur in an "enriched environment" where people have more to do, look at, hear and touch. Sensory input produces complex and extensive branching of neurons (Zull, 2002). In an environment where domestic violence occurs, children may not have opportunities to have "enriched environments" in which case their neuronal network may be "wired" differently. Therefore, it is possible that domestic violence could cause atypical "wiring" that may jeopardize a child's emotional being as well as the child's education (De Bellis, 2005).

Neurobiological research on child exposure to violence has also been explored in the hypothalamic pituitary adrenal (HPA) axis (Bevans, Cerbone, & Overstreet, 2005; De Bellis, 2005). The HPA axis is a complex system containing interrelated structural regions and neuromodulators in the brain designed to mediate the fight-flight response (Bevans, Cerbone, & Overstreet, 2005). Cortisol levels are measured to evaluate how well the HPA system works. Increased cortisol levels are found in most studies of maltreated young children (De Bellis, 2005). A problem can transpire when acute stress

is experienced by abused children and elevated cortisol levels exist for a prolonged period of time. Significant health problems and neurological damage usually occur under these conditions (De Bellis, 2005). Due to this dysregulation, depression and anxiety, cognitive functioning and impaired learning can occur (Bevans, Cerbone, & Overstreet, 2005; De Bellis, 2005; The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005)

Preservice teachers and awareness of domestic violence

Inservice teachers and preservice teachers have the arduous task of providing instruction, which includes strategies for teaching in an environment where all children can learn. Whether preservice teachers in training or inservice teachers, educators need to consider a host of aspects when teaching including the following: (1) the psychological, social, and cultural aspects of students' learning and conduct (2) the logical and substantive aspects of subject matter, (3) the social, moral, intellectual, even aesthetic dimensions of interaction in classrooms and schools (Hansen, 2008). Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) discuss the need for teachers to understand basic research on how people (specifically children) learn, and the influences of different conditions, including strategies on that learning. Furthermore, Darling-Hammond and Bransford's research provides knowledge of learning in different social contexts and contributes to understanding the development and the significance of language for students. Ultimately, the child is more important than the subject matter.

Very little research has been done on preservice teachers' training in recognizing signs of students' abuse related to domestic violence. In discussing interventions and

prevention strategies, researchers need to emphasize collaboration among the school system itself and with outside agencies. However, although this is important, preservice teachers should also be trained to identify the signs of domestic violence. Training should be ongoing while they are preservice candidates in field experience and/or student teaching. Only two researchers, Melear (1997) and Hazzard (1984) have explored preservice teachers' knowledge of domestic violence and child abuse.

A study conducted by Melear (1997) found alarming results. After surveying preservice teachers in an elementary science methods class on their knowledge about incidences of domestic violence, Melear (1997) found that 73.7% of those surveyed had friends or family experience domestic violence. The results of this study indicate that the preservice teachers sampled were affected by domestic violence more than the national average. (Melear,1997). Melear (1997) explained the results of her study emphasize (1) the need for further research regarding preservice teachers knowledge of domestic violence since there is very limited research in this area, and (2) that curriculum about recognizing signs of domestic violence should be developed for preservice teachers due to the likelihood of their contact with children of domestic abuse (Claudia Melear, personal communication, 2008).

Similarly, Hazzard (1984) found teachers generally lack training in child abuse identification and intervention. In her study, Hazzard (1984) surveyed elementary and junior high school teachers regarding their abuse-related experiences, knowledge and attitudes. Through her findings, Hazzard reported 68% of the teachers reported three or fewer hours of education about child abuse and sixty-two percent revealed no prior

experience with abuse cases. Using repeated measure analysis, it was discovered that the treatment group of teachers in a six month follow up were significantly (1) more likely to report talking with individual students to determine if abuse was occurring, (2) more likely to report giving a class presentation on child abuse, (3) more likely to report discussing child abuse with colleagues (Hazzard, 1984).

Both Melear's and Hazzard's studies validate that domestic violence education should be provided to all preservice teachers. Teachers need to understand the background and prior experiences of the learner as portrayed in the constructivist framework (Vygotsky, 1962; Bruner, 1983). Teachers need to be able to provide a safe, learning environment for every student in their classrooms. According to the literature reviewed here, domestic violence education is a critical piece that needs to be included in preservice teachers' training to ensure that students learn and are safe in school and to help them cope with difficulties in their lives outside of school.

Literature-related Classroom Conversations about Domestic Abuse

Literature can be used in all classrooms to help teachers connect with their students and open the doors for discussion on tough, realistic topics. Using books opens the door to conversations the teachers can have with students. The students can talk about the story characters to discuss topics or issues that may otherwise be difficult for them to talk about openly. Reading is an active experience in which students can interpret the story and thus engage with the text. Teachers should model strategies that should be used while reading. Research has shown the importance for strategic reading (National Reading Panel, 2000). Moreover, children who grow up in unpredictable environments, such as

those witnessing domestic violence, often need direct instruction in strategic reading to help them approach text in a purposeful manner (Craig, 2008).

Reader-text Relationship

According to the constructivist approach, a relationship exists between the reader and the text (Rosenblatt, 1982, 1991, 2005; Vygotsky, 1962). Literary discussions should not look like a rote repetition of a script but instead a conversation to discuss the relationship between the reader and the text (Wolf, Carey, & Mieras, 1996; Rosenblatt, 1982, 1991, 2005). New definitions of reading comprehension include the topic of interpretation (Tierney, 1990). Interpretation places high emphasis on children's engagement with written text. Active engagement allows children to construct meaning rather than passively reproducing or following a given script to give a set meaning.

If we view reading as an active, constructive, social experience, then stance influences the act of reading before, during and after a book is opened (Galda & Aimonette-Liang, 2003). Reading researchers now distinguish reading as a constructive process due to work in schema theory and recent work in the comprehension process whereas the reader is actively involved in constructing meaning from text (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Rumelhart, 1980; Graves, Juel & Graves, 2001; Pressley, 2000). Rosenblatt (1982, 1991, 2005) maintains that readers bring their own knowledge and experiences to bear as they create meaning in conjunction with the text. Rosenblatt(1982, 1991, 2005) further asserts that a reader will read various text according to a specific stance or expectation. An aesthetic stance allows the reader to focus on the "lived

through" experience of reading or reading for pleasure (Rosenblatt, 1982, 1991, 2005) An efferent stance is remembering the piece of reading for specific details or to recount sequence of events (Rosenblatt, 1982, 1991, 2005). It is stance that determines how a reader will process any given text, for an aesthetic stance requires a different activity on the part of a reader than does an efferent stance (Galda & Aimonette-Liang, 2003). Most readings are a blending of these two stances or a stance can shift as the reader reads. However, Rosenblatt (1982, 1991 & 2005) maintains that when teachers ask questions such as, "Who is the main character?" they are not allowing students to enjoy the literature from an aesthetic perspective. Instead, teachers may be turning what could be an aesthetic experience into an efferent stance by asking specific questions that the student must find the answer for. Pressley (2000) contends that comprehension instruction is effective when it helps readers learn to process texts as good readers do. Good readers make connections between their own experience and what they read (Pressley, 2000). When readers read fiction from a predominantly aesthetic stance they are more likely to interpret story events, apply their experiences with literature to life, and generalize abstract or create new possibilities as a result of their encounters with literature (Galda & Aimoneete-Liang, 2003).

Bibliotherapy

Many definitions have been developed for bibliotherapy from a variety of authors, researchers, and other experts. The evolution of these definitions is described here.

The very first definition of bibliotherapy occurred in a 1916 issue of *Atlantic Monthly*. Samuel Crothers discussed a technique of prescribing books to patients who

need help understanding their problems, and he labeled the technique *bibliotherapy* (Myracle, 1995). Today, bibliotherapy is simply defined as the use of books to help people solve problems (Forgan, 2002).

Forgan (2002) breaks down bibliotherapy even further to include a term called developmental bibliotherapy. Developmental bibliotherapy is used to help students use books for various developmental needs. Others have stated that developmental bibliotherapy is most appropriate for the school media center or classroom. This type of bibliotherapy will use guided reading as an interaction between readers' personalities and literature (Cook, Earles-Vollrath, & Ganz, 2006). Another type of bibliotherapy, clinical bibliotherapy was defined by Cook, Earles-Vollrath, & Ganz (2006). Clinical bibliotherapy takes place in a structured setting and is facilitated by a counselor, therapist, or psychologist to treat individuals experiencing serious emotional or behavioral problems. Schrank and Engels (1981) have a more detailed definition of bibliotherapy. Their definition of bibliotherapy is guided reading that helps individuals gain understandings of the self and environment, learn from others, or find solutions to problems.

Guidelines for implementing Bibliotherapy

Books may often offer solutions to personal problems. If a teacher knows or suspects that a child is experiencing some type of problem, stress or crisis, an adjustment in instruction can be made by using literature. This form of bibliotherapy can make a difference changing the attitudes for many children suffering personal problems. Books that deal with the same issues that children are facing may help students to gain insight

into their personal problems and may perhaps help to find a remedy for their problems (Forgan, 2002). Reading teachers and classroom teachers have the ability to break many emotional barriers by reading aloud children's literature related to domestic abuse problems and allowing children to respond to the text through teacher-guided conversations. In addition to classroom teachers, reading teachers should be aware of quality children's literature which can be used in the classroom to help children with any emotional issues. In collaboration with a guidance counselor, a teacher can help implement bibliotherapy or use books to create conversations in the classroom about sensitive issues in either full group or small group instruction. Bibliotherapy is most effective when conducted as an interactive process in which guided discussions are used to achieve therapeutic goals (Cook, Earls-Vollrath, & Ganz, 2006). During the process of using bibliotherapy the stages that students go through to solve problems include: identification, catharsis, and resolution. Bibliotherapy is not just story time but is a process that has a plan, an opening, a discussion and a closing.

To implement bibliotherapy, Cook, Earls-Vollrath, and Ganz (2006), identify four steps: (1) identify the problem, situation, behavior, or skill to be acquired, (2) select an appropriate work of literature, (3) present the literature, (4) follow up the reading with a discussion. The literature that is presented should provide accurate information and should not provide a student with unrealistic expectations or false sense of hope. The developmental level and reading level of the child must be considered when choosing appropriate literature and presentation of the literature.

Forgan (2002) suggests using the following four elements for the framework of bibliotherapy: (1) prereading, (2) guided reading, (3) postreading discussion and (4) a problem-solving/reinforcement activity.

During prereading, selection of materials is made and activating students' background knowledge to help them link their past experiences to the present book content. Many sound reading strategies can be used at this point such as KWL charts, Venn Diagrams and prediction questions.

During guided reading, books are read aloud. At this point, the entire story should be read without asking too many questions. Discussions of students own experiences should be left up to the counselor/teachers discretion. After the reading of the story, students could write their reactions in a journal.

During postreading discussion, some researchers have suggested first having students retell the plot and evaluate character feelings and any situations that occurred (Forgan, 2002; Cook, Earls-Vollrath & Ganz, 2006). Students will discuss the story and possibly will be able to relate it to their situation during this phase. The facilitator must plan for a follow-up discussion beginning with simple questions and leading to more critical ones. The facilitator must allow for interpretation, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of the characters, problems and solutions or coping strategies from the story line (Cook, Earls-Vollrath, & Ganz, 2006). Rosenblatt (1982, 1991 & 2005) suggested using open ended questions and remarks in discussions that help guide students' attention back toward the reading event and keep the experiential elements in mind. Reading logs

and double entry notebooks with journal starters can help to connect the text with the reader's prior knowledge (Galda & Aimonette-Liang, 2003). Other activities that can encourage an aesthetic stance include dramatizing, illustrating, writing in dialogue journals, webbing, and imaging (Galda & Aimonette-Liang, 2003).

During the problem solving stage, Forgan (2002) suggests to implementing a strategy called I SOLVE. I SOLVE stands for *Identify the problem, Solutions to the problem, Obstacles to the Solutions, Look at the Solutions Again (choose one), Very Good; try it!, Evaluate the Outcome.* Using this strategy is good teaching practice. Having teachers collaborate with other staff members to present effective strategies, such as I SOLVE is beneficial to staff and students.

Both the presentation and audience for bibliotherapy have changed over the years. However, the fact still remains that bibliotherapy is using books to help someone with a specific problem or area of concern. Bibliotherapy should be used in every school setting (Forgan, 2002). Teachers need to collaborate with counselors, social workers, librarians and other staff members to use bibliotherapy effectively inside and outside the classroom. In today's society, teachers need to have a plethora of skills to reach and teach every child. To understand the importance of bibliotherapy, a teacher could be compared to a carpenter. A carpenter needs many tools to accomplish a task. A teacher also needs a variety of tools to help all children succeed. Bibliotherapy is another tool that a teacher can use to effectively reach and teach every child.

Conclusion

Schools are the central community for most children (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005). Children traumatized from domestic violence need the help of educators in their school communities to master educational tasks and flourish in the educational environment. All of the school environment must collaborate together to recognize and respond to the trauma symptoms from domestic violence and the effects that can occur on children's learning and behavior. Reading to children and creating conversations in the classroom is one way to help students respond to difficulties that may occur in their lives. The lack of research on teachers' training about signs of domestic violence is a major indication for the need for further research in this area. The literature reviewed in this chapter provides support for the need for further research about teachers' awareness of signs of domestic abuse involvement of their students.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the methods used in this study. The following sections are included: the research questions, pilot study information, descriptions of the setting and participants, intervention design, instruments for collecting and analyzing data. Assumptions of the study are also discussed in this chapter.

The purpose of the study was to increase preservice teachers' knowledge and awareness of domestic violence given children's literature, professional literature and professional development related to domestic violence. This study examined preservice teachers' awareness of domestic violence through an undergraduate reading course focusing on children's literature. With the use of pre and post surveys as well as providing professional development in the areas of domestic violence and children's literature, the study investigated whether preservice teachers' knowledge and skills pertaining to recognizing signs of domestic violence in behaviors of the students they teach, will increase as a result of the use of children's literature and trade journal articles as presented in their reading/language arts course.

This research design included both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The integration of the two designs provided a more comprehensive research study (Creswell, 2008)**.** The quantitative piece allowed the researcher to validate the effects of the intervention whereas the qualitative piece allowed the story to be told and revealed the successful aspects of the professional development. The story in this

research project was the knowledge and understanding of domestic violence that the preservice teachers gained through this professional development. Also, the preservice teachers were enhancing their knowledge of the types of literature that could be used in the classroom and how the literature could be used to teach difficult concepts. The combination of both designs further substantiates the results of the study, (Creswell, 2008).

Research Questions

This study collected and interpreted data to find answers to the following questions:

1. Based on the domestic violence survey, how did preservice teachers' awareness of and dispositions towards domestic violence change as a result of their professional development?
2. What themes or recurring issues were evident from the preservice teachers' survey responses after reading professional literature on domestic violence?
3. In what ways had previous understandings of domestic violence changed as a result of the preservice teachers' interview responses after reading professional literature and children's literature?

The first question addressed preservice teachers' awareness of domestic violence prior to and following professional development. The second question and the third question refer to the professional development that the preservice teachers received on domestic violence. More specifically, the second question addressed themes or issues that are evident from the preservice teachers' journal responses as a result of the professional literature on domestic violence. The third question measured the preservice teachers'

knowledge of domestic violence as a result of the professional literature and children's literature pertaining to domestic violence.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in the Spring of 2008. During this time, three preservice teachers worked with three children affected by domestic violence. The children were involved in the 'bridge program' that was connected to a particular shelter. The 'bridge program' was for the mothers and children that had already stayed at the shelter. This program provided the women that were abused with help in finding housing, jobs, set up banking accounts, and counseling. The preservice teachers met with the children for approximately two to three times a month during one of their counseling sessions. The researcher and a counselor employed by the shelter supervised every meeting. The purpose of the pilot study was to increase preservice teachers' knowledge of domestic violence while using children's literature to discuss the affects of domestic violence with children that have been in homes where domestic violence occurred.

The preservice teachers attended two to three sessions to get to know the children. During these sessions the teachers and students worked together on arts and crafts projects. The sole purpose of these sessions were for the children to build a relationship with the preservice teachers. After the first three sessions, preservice teachers read books that discussed feelings. The children then completed small activities to reinforce the book's theme and overall gist of the book. Following the sessions using the books based on feelings, children's literature with the theme of domestic violence was used to discuss the topic of domestic violence.

During this study, the first realization was the lack of knowledge on the part of the preservice teachers, of not necessarily domestic violence, but how to handle situations in which the children started to discuss their own stories. The preservice teachers felt that they needed more training in understanding the feelings of these children that were affected by domestic violence and more knowledge of what a teacher should do to help children affected by domestic violence. The counselor and researcher observed the preservice teachers did in fact seem uncomfortable when the children began to discuss their own stories or how they could relate to the characters in the books that were being read.

The second realization occurred with our group of children involved in the study. The children of this program had all come through the shelter with their mothers. After living in the shelter for a time, the mothers and children then move on to the 'bridge program.' This program is meant to help the mothers in finding housing, jobs, counseling and help with any other needs that the families may have. Because these families are limited to the bridge program for approximately three months, it became difficulty to work with these children on a consistent basis for a longer period of time.

Due to these two realizations, it became apparent that the study needed a different approach.

Need for Study

Teachers most often are the first to notice a child is having emotional, academic and physical difficulties. Therefore, school professionals must be well versed in identifying warning signs of children of abuse, as these children either witness and/or

incur abuse in their environment (Haeseler, 2006). Teachers have many opportunities to observe children's behaviors and socioemotional functioning and are in a position to monitor academic achievement and cognitive development.

It is necessary to educate preservice teachers with the possible signs that a child may be witnessing domestic violence. Also, using literature as an aesthetic experience in the classroom can also help students make connections between their lives and the lives of the characters in the given literature. Preservice teachers also need to be able to guide students to using literature and responding to literature from an aesthetic stance (Rosenblatt, 1982, 1991, 2005).

Little research has explored preservice teachers' knowledge of domestic violence. Due to the fact that there is little research exploring preservice teachers' knowledge of domestic violence, a strong need for this study was realized.

Research Methods

Quantitative and qualitative designs were both used in this study. This type of study is called a *mixed methods design* and involves collecting, analyzing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. The core argument for a mixed methods design is the combination of both forms of data provides a better understanding of a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative data by itself, (Creswell, 2008).

Description of the Setting and Participants

Setting

The research conducted for this course occurred in a college classroom. The college is a small, Catholic liberal arts college in southeastern Pennsylvania, west of Philadelphia with a population of 1,700 students in the undergraduate program. The sample was taken from three classes with approximately 14 students per class. Class size for this class is typically capped at 24.

Participants/Population sample

The population sample was taken from three classes, approximately six hours, of an undergraduate reading methods course, which is generally taken during senior year prior to student teaching. Progressing from the nursery levels through sixth grade, this course depicted techniques of teaching including: listening, oral expression, written expression, spontaneous drama, spelling and handwriting. Creative expression, vocabulary development, bibliotherapy, readiness activities, language acquisition, language experience approach and literature were also emphasized. Each class had approximately 14 students and the classes were predominately female. All 42 students will be participants in the study.

Instruments

Surveys, journal responses, and interviews were the instruments used to collect and analyze data for this study. The use of each of the instruments is explained here:

Surveys

Pre and post surveys were administered to the preservice teachers and data from the survey was quantified. A cross-sectional survey design was used. The researcher collects data at a certain point in time and examines current attitudes, beliefs, or opinions, (Creswell, 2008). In this study, a survey regarding domestic violence and children's literature was administered to the sample before the professional development was delivered. After the professional development was completed, the preservice teachers took the survey again to determine if their attitudes or awareness of identifying domestic violence in the classroom was changed. The survey was administered electronically using Surveymonkey (www.surveymonkey.com). The survey may be found in Appendix A and example of the consent form that each student completed can be found in Appendix B. The children's literature list can be found in Appendix C. As a data source, the pre and post survey responses were analyzed and coded to determine if preservice teachers' attitudes and views about identifying signs of domestic violence changed after the professional development and readings of the given literature.

Journal entries/responses

The journal responses data collected for this study was analyzed and coded to determine if preservice teachers' attitudes, views and dispositions were impacted or changed regarding identifying those children affected by domestic violence. This language analysis was validated by the triangulation of the survey and journal responses. The participating preservice teacher were required to answer questions given after each group of assigned journal articles are read and after each lecture. The requirements for each entry were to answer questions given and then discuss their responses in literature

groups in the classrooms. Each article had different questions related to the content of the given articles. Responses to the questions made during the discussion group were given to the researcher. These responses will be anonymous. The responses were coded to determine the usefulness of the information on domestic violence, their overall feelings on using children's literature to discuss sensitive issues in the classroom, and to determine their thoughts on the issues surrounding domestic violence they may encounter in the classroom. The questions asked after each set of readings can be found in Appendix D.

Responses following an exploration of children's literature were also collected during class. Students participated in two jigsaw group activities. The first jigsaw activity explored children's books related to feelings and the second jigsaw activity investigated children's literature related to domestic violence. Students were asked to develop activities that could be completed in coordination with the given books. An example of the jigsaw activities can be found in Appendix E and F.

Interviews

At the conclusion of the study, a representative group of the preservice teachers were interviewed. Interviews were conducted with the researcher and one preservice teacher at a time. The interview questions focused on preservice teachers' awareness and dispositions towards domestic violence, and how their awareness and dispositions changed as a result of using children's literature for instruction and reading professional literature related to domestic violence for their own professional growth. These questions were also coded and used as qualitative data. The researcher taped the interviews and

then later completed a language analysis of the taped data. Questions can be found in Appendix G.

Assumptions

The researcher assumed that the preservice teachers completed the surveys via surveymonkey and that they were truthful in their responses. The researcher assumed the preservice teachers completed the responses from the journal articles. In instances whereas the questions on the survey could be ambiguous, the researcher provided definitions and/or clarification on the survey.

Summary

This study examined preservice teachers' awareness of domestic violence through an undergraduate reading course while using children's literature. The mixed method design described here explains how pre and post surveys were used to investigate whether preservice teachers' knowledge and skills pertaining to recognizing signs of domestic violence increased as a result of the use of children's literature and trade journal articles as presented in the course. In addition to the surveys, data was collected and analyzed from preservice teachers' journal responses.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter provides the findings and analysis of the data pertinent to this study. The purpose of this study was to increase preservice teachers' knowledge and awareness of domestic violence given children's literature, trade journal articles and professional development related to domestic violence. This study examined preservice teachers' awareness of domestic violence through an undergraduate reading course focused on children's literature. With the use of pre and post surveys as well as providing professional development in the areas of domestic violence and children's literature, the study investigated whether preservice teachers' knowledge and skills pertaining to recognizing signs of domestic violence in behaviors of the students they teach, will increase as a result of the use of children's literature and trade journal articles as presented in their reading/language arts course. The forty-one preservice teachers participated in approximately six hours of professional development. Additionally, fifteen students participated in individual interview sessions regarding the professional development they received.

Research Questions

This study collected and interpreted data to find answers to the following questions:

1. Based on the domestic violence survey, how did preservice teachers' awareness of and dispositions towards domestic violence change as a result of their professional development?

2. What themes or recurring issues were evident from the preservice teachers' survey responses after reading professional literature on domestic violence?
3. In what ways had previous understandings of domestic violence changed as a result of the preservice teachers' interview responses after reading professional literature and children's literature?

The first question addressed preservice teachers' awareness of domestic violence prior to and following professional development. The second question and the third question refer to the professional development that the preservice teachers received on domestic violence. More specifically, the second question addressed themes or issues that are evident from the preservice teachers' journal responses as a result of the professional literature on domestic violence. The third question measured the preservice teachers' knowledge of domestic violence as a result of the professional literature and children's literature pertaining to domestic violence.

Results for Question One

Question One asked: *Based on the domestic violence survey, how did preservice teachers' awareness of and dispositions towards domestic violence change as a result of their professional development?*

Prior to the professional development on domestic violence, the survey (Appendix A) results show that 92.3% of the students surveyed were familiar with the term domestic violence. After the professional development on domestic violence, the survey results show that 100% of the students surveyed were

familiar with the term domestic violence. When asked to define the term domestic violence, many of the respondents reported domestic violence included physical, verbal, or emotional abuse towards a spouse, partner or someone in the family within the same household. Prior to the professional development 16 of 40 respondents reported that domestic abuse included physical, emotional, verbal and/or sexual abuse. After the professional development 20 of the 29 respondents reported domestic abuse included physical, emotional, verbal, psychological and/or sexual abuse. An analysis of the data shows after the professional development, a higher percentage of the preservice teachers indicated they felt more prepared to recognize signs that a child is witnessing domestic violence in their home (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1

Comparison of preservice teachers prepared to recognize a child witnessing domestic violence

	Pre-survey (n=40)	Post survey (n=29)
Very well prepared	0%	31.0%
Fairly well prepared	62.5%	69.0%
Poorly prepared	37.5%	6.9%
Not at all prepared	2.5%	0%

In the pre-survey, the data also shows some students had personal knowledge of domestic violence. The results indicate that 32.5% of the respondents reported a family member was abused, 30% indicated a friend was abused, 10% indicated they themselves were abused and 52.5% reported none of the above (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

Personal knowledge of domestic violence

	Pre-survey (n=40)
A family member was abused	32.5%
A friend was abused	30.0%
I was personally abused	10.0%
None of the above	52.5%

Another pre-survey question asked the pre-service teachers what types of domestic violence they had either witnessed or personally experienced. The pre-survey results are specified in Table 4.3. The respondents answered 27.5% were abused, 37.5% were emotionally abused, 20% were intimidated, 5% were affected by economic abuse, 15% were affected by male privilege, 12.5% were affected by isolation, 15% were affected by coercion and threats and 57.5% responded none of the above. This question was not repeated for the post survey.

One question on the survey asked: what could elementary teachers do regarding domestic violence? Pre-survey responses yielded six themes; post survey responses yielded eight themes. Four common themes were evident in both pre and post survey responses: reporting the abuse, providing a safe environment for the child who has witnessed, documenting and observing the behaviors of the child and asking for assistance from school leaders. This data is represented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.3

Types of domestic violence witnessed or personally experienced

	Pre-survey (n=40)
Physical abuse	27.5%
Emotional abuse	37.5%
Intimidation	20.0%
Using economic abuse	5.0%
Using male privilege	15%
Using isolation/removal of privilege	12.5%
Using coercion and threats	15%
None of the above	57.5%

During the pre-survey and post-survey, preservice teachers were asked if books about particular social topics could help students with their problems and

why or why not. All respondents agreed that books were helpful in addressing specific social topics and helping students with their problems. Thirty-six (36) preservice teachers responded to the pre-survey and 27 responded to the post-survey. One finding clearly indicated respondents believed using literature helped students because they were able to relate to the story characters (22% on pre-survey and 44% on post-survey).

Table 4.4
What elementary teachers could do regarding domestic violence

	Frequency of times noted	
Themes	Pre-survey (n=40)	Post survey (n=29)
A Report	20	12
B Teachers provide safe environment, discuss teach Domestic Violence topic	17	13
C Document and observe	9	7
D Ask for assistance from principal, guidance counselor, etc.	6	3
E Follow school Domestic Violence Plan	1	3
F Discuss/teach with parents	3	0
G Use books and literature to discuss domestic violence	0	16
H Teachers identify and know signs of children witnessing domestic violence	0	4

The preservice teachers were asked about their disposition toward domestic violence and how these dispositions have changed over time. Prior to the professional development, 5 of the 33 responding preservice teachers' (15%) discussed the effects domestic violence can have on children. After the professional development, 15 of 27 respondents (55%) discussed the effects domestic violence can have on children. This increase between pre- and post responses seem to be caused by the professional development and training that was provided in the reading/language arts course. The preservice teachers' post responses indicated that they had learned the importance of recognizing signs or behaviors of their students who may have witnessed domestic violence in their home. They reported they feel more informed as to what procedures to follow if they are faced with this type of situation in the classroom.

Results for Question Two

The second research question posed for this study was: *What themes or recurring issues were evident from the preservice teachers' survey responses after reading professional literature on domestic violence?*

During the course of the professional development, preservice teachers were given three sets of articles to read that were selected by the course instructor. After reading, questions about the articles were assigned to be answered in written form. The first set of articles discussed domestic violence and the signs that a child may be witnessing domestic violence, while the second set of articles discussed how teachers should respond to a student's witnessing of domestic

violence in the home. Appendix G contains the questions to which the preservice teachers responded. Questions addressed items presented in the articles which preservice teachers felt were important and sentences or phrases they felt were important information to remember. An analysis of the data revealed five themes related to the first set of readings, four themes for the second set, and eight themes for the third set. Tables 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 show the data related to research question number 2 including themes and the frequency each theme occurred in preservice teachers' responses.

Table 4.5

Themes evident from pre-service teachers' responses to professional literature

Articles' Focus	Number of Themes	Frequency of theme(s)
Set 1 Signs of Domestic Violence	5	63
Set 2 Preservice Teachers' appropriate responses to students regarding domestic violence	4	70
Set 3 Books leading to conversations	6	28

Table 4.6

Themes and frequency of responses from first set of readings

Themes	Frequency of times noted
A Responsiveness of teachers to children affected by DV	14
B Support for the teacher	4
C Strategies for teachers to help children affected by DV	11
D Signs that students are affected by DV	23
E School is a safe, secure place for children affected by DV	12

When responding to the first set of articles regarding detecting signs of domestic violence, the following five themes emerged from the pre-service teachers' responses: (1) responsiveness of teachers to children affected by DV; (2) support for the teacher; (3) strategies for teachers to help children affected by DV; (4) signs that students are affected by DV, and (5) school is a safe, secure place for children affected by DV. The most frequently occurring response was signs that students are affected by DV. This concern appeared 23 times among responses. The second most frequent response (14 times) was responsiveness of teachers to children affected by DV. There seems to be a strong link between

these two responses since the pre-service teachers incorporated these themes most frequently in their written responses.

Table 4.7

Themes and frequency of responses from second set of readings

Themes	Frequency of times noted
A Strategies for teachers to help children affected by DV	15
B School's plan for reporting or helping children affected by DV	19
C Teacher's role in keeping child safe	25
D The affects of DV on children	11

The third set of readings detailed how to use books to create conversations with children. The term bibliotherapy was discussed in class and in the articles given to the preservice teachers. The articles detailed specific ways to use children's literature to discuss sensitive topics. The preservice teachers answered a variety of questions following the readings. As a result, seven themes were found. Table 4.8 presents the themes and the frequency of times each theme occurred in a preservice teacher's response.

Table 4.8

Themes and frequency of responses from third set of readings

Themes	Frequency of times noted
A Using children's literature to discuss sensitive issues is beneficial	8
B Children can relate to the characters in the books	11
C Role playing can be used	1
D Appropriate age level to use children's literature detailing sensitive issues	4
E Concern about upsetting students or parents	7
F Literature circles can be used	1
G Journaling can be used	3
H Safety of child needs to be considered when discussing sensitive topics	1

Results for Question Three

Question three asked: *In what ways had previous understandings of domestic violence changed as a result of the preservice teachers' interview responses after reading professional literature and children's literature?*

In response to the third question, preservice teachers were interviewed at the end of the professional development. Interview questions referred to three areas: signs that a child may be witnessing domestic violence, using children's literature to

discuss sensitive issues and how their participation in this research would change their practice and dispositions toward domestic violence. Appendix G shows all interview questions that were asked of the preservice teachers. Table 4.9 presents the most frequently occurring theme for each question. These themes are listed because they occurred at least twice in the responses by the interviewees.

In the first three interview questions, preservice teachers stated the importance of recognizing the signs and behaviors for which a student may witness domestic violence in the home. They recognized the importance of talking to administrators, the importance of anecdotal records and the importance of talking to children about the behaviors the teachers are noticing. In questions four through eight, the use of children's literature to discuss sensitive issues was discussed. Common themes among all five questions were the understanding that books help students make connections by relating to the characters and their life. The preservice teachers also felt it was important to use literature to discuss issues that may be uncomfortable to broach. Questions nine through eleven discussed ways in which their participation changed their concerns and dispositions towards domestic violence.

The most frequent response reported preservice teachers' increased awareness of domestic violence and the effects witnessing can have on children. The last question asked the preservice teachers if they had anything else to add. The most frequent responses were that the presentation was helpful and that the preservice teachers felt it was important for all educators to know how witnessing domestic violence can affect children.

Table 4.9

Themes of responses from interview questions

Interview Question	Most frequently occurring themes
1 Signs or behaviors child may be witnessing DV	physical, aggressive, isolated, protective of siblings
2 What to do as a teacher if a child shows signs of witnessing DV	talk to administrator, question child, anecdotal records
3 If a student confided in you that there is DV what would you do	talk to administrator, reassure child of safety in school
4 How to use children's literature to create conversations in classroom	books help make connections, journal, use literature circles
5 Overall feelings on using literature to discuss sensitive issues	gives solutions, helpful to discuss issues and feelings
6 Why or why not is children's literature helpful to discuss sensitive issues	relate to characters and their life, helpful to discuss sensitive issues
7 Would you present literature that may discuss sensitive issues	would present literature that may discuss sensitive issues
8 Concerns using literature to discuss sensitive issues	concern about parent's reactions, concern about making students uncomfortable
9 Concerns changing as result of professional development	greater awareness of DV and better prepared, use of books help with awareness of sensitive topics
10 Changes in practice as a result of professional development	more aware of DV, will use literature to discuss sensitive issues
11 Changes in disposition towards DV	aware of DV affecting all levels of society, aware of how students may be affected by DV
12 Anything to add	presentation helpful, important for all educators to know how children can be affected by DV, using books to discuss issues is helpful

Summary of Results

The impact of professional development regarding children witnessing domestic violence was significant. The collection of qualitative data verified preservice teachers became more aware of the impact that witnessing domestic violence can have on children. Data verification was made through the triangulation of interview responses, post-survey results and the teachers' written responses to the required readings. The importance of using children's literature to discuss sensitive issues with students as well as helping teachers gain more awareness of the signs and behaviors children might exhibit if they were witnessing domestic violence in their home was evident from the analysis of data. This study showed an increase in preservice teachers' knowledge and skills pertaining to recognizing signs of domestic violence in behaviors of the students they teach. The data further revealed that the increase was due to the use of children's literature and trade journal articles as a part of their professional development.

CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Chapter 5 provides a discussion about the data analysis and procedures used during this research process. The discussion is framed by the data that addressed each of the three research questions for this study. Conclusions and implications related to this study are also included here.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the study was to increase preservice teachers' knowledge and awareness of domestic violence given children's literature, professional literature and professional development related to domestic violence. This study examined preservice teachers' awareness of domestic violence through an undergraduate reading course focusing on children's literature. With the use of pre and post surveys as well as providing professional development in the areas of domestic violence and children's literature, the study investigated whether preservice teachers' knowledge and skills pertaining to recognizing signs of domestic violence in behaviors of the students they teach, will increase as a result of the use of children's literature and trade journal articles as presented in their reading/language arts course.

Discussion of the Findings

The discussion begins by addressing findings related to the three targeted questions for this research. Information from preservice teachers' interviews follows.

Research Question One: Discussion

Based on the domestic violence survey, how did preservice teachers' awareness of and dispositions towards domestic violence change as a result of their professional development?

Teachers most often are the first to notice that a child is having difficulties. Therefore, school professionals must be well versed in identifying warning signs of children of abuse, as these children either witness and/or incur abuse in their environment (Haeseler, 2006; Craig, 2008). Teachers have many opportunities to observe children's behaviors and socioemotional functions and are in a position to monitor academic achievement and cognitive development. Before the professional development 15% of the preservice teachers responding to the survey discussed the effects domestic violence can have on children. After the professional development 55% of the preservice teacher respondents clarified during their interviews and in their post-surveys their understanding of the effects domestic violence can have on children. This increase between pre- and post responses seem to be caused by the professional development training provided in the reading/language arts course. The preservice teachers' post responses indicated they learned the importance of recognizing signs or behaviors of their students who may have witnessed domestic violence in their home. For example, one preservice teacher responded she learned more about appropriately facilitating the topic of domestic violence with students when the topic is related to children's literature. Another preservice teacher reported they understand the effects witnessing domestic violence can have on children. The comments made by respondents for the survey are supported by

research (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005; Kearney, 2001; Spath, 2003; Edelson, 1999a,b; NACVAW, n.d.; Fantuzzo & Stevenson, 1997; Barrett-Kruse, Martinez, & Carll, 1998; Hughes, Graham-Bermann and Gruber, 2002; Shonk & Cicchetti, 2001; Carlson, Furby, Armstrong & Shales, 1997; De Bellis, 2005; Daro, Edleson & Pinderhughes, 2004). Kearney (2001) has reported that the most meaningful assistance teachers can offer children of domestic abuse is a comforting place to unload their burden and to listen to their story without judgment.

The results indicated 10% of the respondents reported they themselves were abused. Although the reporting was completed on Surveymonkey and was anonymous, the instructor discussed the counseling services which were available at the collge if the preservice teachers felt they need to discuss their own relationships.

Overall, preservice teachers reported they felt more informed about procedures to follow if faced with this type of situation in the classroom and about the kind of support to offer children who are suffering from domestic violence. After the professional development, the respondents reported they were more comfortable with helping the children in the classroom as an initial intervention and after the intervention reporting the information to the appropriate administrator. Although they saw the importance of reporting the suspected domestic violence to the administrator, the respondents felt they had a greater understanding of how to reach the children emotionally and academically in the classroom. One preservice teacher commented, “The teacher needs to know what he or she can do within the walls of the classroom to promote healing and understanding

without offending the student's sensibilities. The teacher should be able to use literature privately or with the whole group to aid the child in the healing process."

Research Question Two: Discussion

What themes or recurring issues were evident from the preservice teachers' survey responses after reading professional literature on domestic violence?

During the course of the professional development, preservice teachers were required to read three sets of articles selected by the course instructor. After reading, questions about the articles were assigned to be answered in written form. The first set of articles discussed domestic violence and the signs that a child may be witnessing domestic violence. Preservice teachers were asked to identify what they felt were the most important part of the articles. The most frequently occurring response was the information on the signs or behaviors students are showing to indicate that they may be witnessing domestic violence. It is important for teachers who educate students from unsafe homes to have sufficient knowledge to best educate and help these students. Therefore, teachers should be trained to recognize the signs or symptoms of domestic violence. It was evident from the questions answered that the preservice teachers understood the importance for a teacher to know and evaluate signs that a child may be witnessing domestic violence.

For example, one student stated the importance for the teacher to support a student who makes a disclosure. Also, the preservice teacher stated, "when a student is dealing with a serious issue he or she may drop hints and it's important for teacher to pick up on this and be able to deal with it." Another student stated that the most important

task for a teacher who may see signs of domestic violence in a particular student would be to properly respond to that child's needs and emotions in the classroom. These aforementioned thoughts provided by the preservice teachers are supported by research (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005; Kearney, 2001; Spath, 2003; Edelson, 1999a,b; NACVAW, n.d.; Fantuzzo & Stevenson, 1997; Barrett-Kruse, Martinez, & Carll, 1998; Hughes, Graham-Bermann and Gruber, 2002; Shonk & Cicchetti, 2001; Carlson, Furby, Armstrong, & Shales, 1997; De Bellis, 2005; Daro, Edleson & Pinderhughes, 2004).

A few respondents (67%) mentioned the need for intervention and prevention initiatives within the school community. One respondent noted, "Teachers may be the caring adults who make a difference in the lives of students who may be in distress in their home." Acknowledging the need for these interventions demonstrates preservice teachers recognized the importance of (1) teachers understanding the warning signs presented by a child who is witnessing domestic violence and (2) responding accordingly to help the child emotionally and academically so that the child is able to succeed in the classroom.

Research Question Three: Discussion

In what ways had previous understandings of domestic violence changed as a result of the preservice teachers' interview responses after reading professional literature and children's literature?

In response to the third question, preservice teachers were interviewed at the end of the professional development. Interview questions referred to three areas: signs a child

may be witnessing domestic violence, using children's literature to discuss sensitive issues and how their participation in this research would change their practice and dispositions toward domestic violence.

The eleven interview questions posed to preservice teacher participants can be found in Appendix G. The following discussion is related to the specific interview questions.

In the first three interview questions, preservice teachers stated the importance of recognizing the signs for which a student may witness domestic violence in the home. Interviewees recognized the importance of talking to administrators, the importance of anecdotal records and the importance of talking to children about the behaviors the teachers are noticing. When asked, "What would you do if you felt a child had witnessed domestic violence in the home?"one preservice teacher replied, "I think it's important to start recording your observations of the child and contact other school personnel if you feel like it's becoming an issue." This particular response shows the preservice teacher understands the need for a domestic violence school safety plan (Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005; Kearney, 2001). In a domestic violence school safety plan the school faculty and staff are involved in helping children who may be witnessing domestic violence in the home. Another preservice teacher responded by saying, "the first thing you want to do is reassure the student by creating a safe environment in the school. Also, the behaviors you see at school you want to monitor and keep track of them. You want to consult with a principal or social worker within the school for advice and ask them what steps to take next." The comments made by the preservice teachers are similar

to comments which appear in the research literature (The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2005; Craig, 2008; Fantuzzo & Stevenson, 1997; Haeseler, 2006; NACVAW, n.d).

The next five questions of the interview covered the use of children's literature to discuss sensitive issues. A common theme among all five questions was the realization that books help students make connections by relating to the characters and their life. When asked about their overall feelings on using children's literature to discuss sensitive issues in the classroom, one preservice teacher responded by stating, "I think it's a good idea because they will be able to see it's not just them going through it and they can relate to the characters in the story."

Forgan (2002) showed using books which deal with the same issues children are facing may help students to gain insight into their personal problems and may perhaps help to find a remedy for their problems. The preservice teachers surveyed also felt it was important to use literature to discuss issues that may be uncomfortable to broach. Preservice teachers were asked, "Do you think using children's literature to present sensitive issues to children would be helpful to students? Why or why not?" One preservice teacher responded saying, "Children's literature opens up connections to text and you can ask students' questions about what they find in the text and it provides good communication in the classroom. It helps them to develop their expressive language and also they can talk about their feelings. You can use strategies such as reading logs, literature circles, and readers' theatre to get them to express their feelings." The response given by this preservice teacher shows her understanding of children who grow up in

unpredictable environments, such as those witnessing domestic violence, often need direct instruction in strategic reading to help them approach text in a purposeful manner (Craig, 2008).

The last three questions discussed ways in which the preservice teachers' participation changed their personal concerns and dispositions towards domestic violence. In response to the question how are your concerns changing as a result of the professional development one preservice teacher replied, "I think I have a greater awareness of domestic violence and it effects so many more kids and people than I thought. As a professional you need to be aware of domestic violence and know what the signs are since you are working with kids every day." Another student replied to the same question, "I learned that we as teachers need to discuss these issues in the classroom and we can use literature to do." It is difficult to link their statements to research because little research has explored preservice teachers' knowledge of domestic violence and because of this fact this study was needed. Melear (1997) surveyed preservice teachers in an elementary science methods class on their knowledge about incidences of domestic violence and found that 73.7% of those surveyed had friends or family experience domestic violence. This finding was above the national average. Melear (1997) explained the results of her study emphasize (1) the need for further research regarding preservice teachers knowledge of domestic violence since there is very limited research in this area, and (2) that curriculum about recognizing signs of domestic violence should be developed for preservice teachers due to the likelihood of their contact with children of domestic abuse (Claudia Melear, personal communication, 2008).

Preservice teachers were also asked during the interview, how participation in this research changed their practice. One preservice teacher replied, “I had no idea there were so many books that discussed sensitive topics like domestic violence. As a result, I will explore more books with sensitive topics for my own classroom.” As stated previously, this student now has an understanding of how books can create conversations with students. Good readers make connections between their own experience and what they read (Pressley, 2000). When readers read fiction from a predominantly aesthetic stance they are more likely to interpret story events, apply their experiences with literature to life, and generalize abstract or create new possibilities as a result of their encounters with literature (Galda & Aimoneete-Liang, 2003). Overall, the preservice teachers understand how using books can help children who are witnessing domestic violence.

Suggestions for Further Research

The study was conducted to determine if there was an increase in preservice teachers’ knowledge and awareness of domestic violence given children’s literature, professional literature and professional development related to domestic violence. This study made a contribution to the field because it researched a topic that currently has scant documentation in the literature. Four solid suggestions are made for future research. First, similar studies on this topic could survey broader audiences of preservice teachers at other higher education institutions. Additional surveys from a variety of private and public universities that prepare teachers will help to reveal both awareness of domestic violence among school aged children and future teachers’ attitudes and opinions about the topic. Information garnered from survey data may be useful in more adequately

preparing preservice teachers to handle suspected and actual cases of children exposed to domestic violence.

Second, surveying inservice teachers in the field, both novices and veterans, could also be completed to evaluate their awareness of domestic violence and the harm involved when children witness domestic violence in the home. With proper school intervention abused children can cultivate healthy relationships (Keraney, n.d.). Teachers and other school personnel can use various strategies to help the child that is suffering in the classroom to become successful members of their school community.

Third, a follow up study using the children's literature in the elementary classroom would be worthwhile. It would be interesting to observe and analyze children's reactions to some of the children's literature (Appendix C) that was used in this study at the undergraduate level with the preservice teachers. The books devoted to teaching about feelings could be used in any instructional situation involving literacy, whereas the books discussing witnessing domestic violence in the home could be used in counseling type sessions.

Fourth, replicating this type of study in middle and high schools using adolescent literature would also be a worthwhile contribution to the field. Older students may also witness or be a part of domestic violence. Helping teachers gain awareness and sensitivity to the plight of older students in abusive situations could certainly be achieved through research similar to that implemented in this study.

Suggestions for Other Extensions of This Research

The research provided in this dissertation supports a need for an integrative process. Teachers need to be able to identify if a child may be witnessing domestic violence and know appropriate interventions and strategies to help these children. Faculty development should be provided for all members of the school community. Resources such as community referrals, family seminars, and prevention handbooks should be made available to all faculty and staff. Also other community members such as social workers, police officers, shelter staff and hospital staff should participate in these professional development opportunities. By involving these various social service groups within the community, all members will have a better sense of what each field encounters when helping children who have witnessed domestic. With proper school intervention abused children can cultivate healthy relationships (Kearney, n.d.). Teachers and other school personnel can use various strategies to help the child that is suffering in the classroom to help them become successful members of their school community.

There are published curricula for teaching about domestic violence. Liz Claiborne, Inc. has a curriculum for helping to tackle teen dating violence called *Love is Not Abuse*. Although this curriculum is important it does not specifically tackle the subject of what a teacher should do to help younger children in their classroom. Specific domestic violence curriculum needs to be developed. The curriculum could be used at colleges and universities to help train preservice teachers as well as school psychologists, guidance counselors, principals and social workers. The curriculum could also be used at

universities or within school districts during professional development for inservice teachers.

Prior to beginning professional development, a handbook with the following information should be given to the participants: definitions of domestic violence, the impact on children, potential impacts at different ages, signs a student is having difficulties and teaching strategies and ways to develop a school safety plan. A school safety plan should include the role of the principal, social worker, counselor, nurse, teacher, safety officer, and secretary during the intervention process. This handbook would serve as a resource for teachers and staff to use within the school.

A framework for the professional development sessions should consist of an overview of domestic violence and the effects of domestic violence on children. Prior to the second day of professional development, carefully selected articles discussing the teacher's role in helping children of domestic violence should be read by the participants. During the second day of professional development, topics should include the impact of trauma on learning as well as information regarding starting a school safety plan. The third and fourth day might consist of discussing ways to use children's literature to create conversations. During these last two days, children's books should be used. The books used during the professional development would be the same books, if not similar, to the children's books used in this study. One set of books will be used to teach teachers how to facilitate discussion with children about their feelings. The second set of books would specifically focus on children witnessing domestic violence. The books' main characters are children who tell fictional stories about witnessing domestic violence.

A website would also be helpful to provide a cross disciplinary approach. The goals of the website would be:

1. To help make elementary school teachers aware of the signs of a child who may be witnessing Domestic Violence in the home;
2. To present ways to approach children about the topic;
3. To discuss steps teachers can take in the classroom to help their students;
4. To educate teachers about services available to children;
5. To provide a safety plan for schools to use for students involved in domestic violence situations.

The website would provide strategies to help teachers in the classroom. A list of recommended children's literature would be available as a resource. Strategies for law enforcement, health professionals and counselors could also be provided. An understanding of the supportive roles involved of all community helpers would be helpful. A clear understanding of the jobs and roles of each discipline is an important part of the integrative process. Providing links to research on the website will provide knowledge for all community workers helping children who witness domestic violence.

According to the research provided here, domestic violence education is a critical piece that needs to be included in preservice teachers' training. Embedding domestic violence education into teacher training programs can help to ensure that students stressed by domestic violence learn to the best of their ability in a safe and caring school

environment. It also has the promise of helping these students cope with difficulties in their lives outside of school.

References

Allen, R. E. & Oliver, J. M. (1982). The effects of child maltreatment on language development. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 6,* 299-305.

Anderson, R. C., & Pearson, P. D. (1984). A schema-theoretic view of basic processes in reading. In P.D. Pearson, R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, & P. B. Mosenthal (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 1, pp. 255-291). White Plains, NY: Longman.

Bancroft, L. (2004). *Helping Your Children Heal the Wounds of Witnessing Abuse.* New York: Berkley Books.

Barrett-Kruse, C., Martinez, E., & Carll, N. (1998). Beyond reporting suspected abuse: positively influencing the development of the student within the classroom. *Professional School Counseling, 1,* 57-62.

Berson, I. R., Berson, M. J., & Wolper, M.A. (2001). Educators' Intervention Practices and Training Needs on Child Maltreatment. Tampa, FL: The University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute (FMHI), Department of Child and Family Studies.

Beezer, B. (1985). Reporting child abuse and neglect: Your responsibility and your protections. *Phi Delta Kappan, 6,* 434-436.

Bevans, K., Cerbone, A.B., Overstreet, S. (2005). Advances and Future Directions in the Study of Children's Neurobiological Responses to Trauma and Violence Exposure. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 20,* 418-425.

Botel, Morton & Lytle, Susan. (1988). *Reading Writing and Talking Across the Curriculum*: *PCRP II.* Retrieved on September 21, 2008 from http://smasd.k12.pa.us/pssa/html/writing/pcrpii/pcrpii.htm.

Bruner, J. (1983). *Child's Talk: Learning to Use Language*. New York: Norton.

Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data Brief, Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001, February 2003. Retrieved on September 12, 2008 from www.ndvh.org/get-educated/abuse-in-america.

Carlson, E. B., Furby, L., Armstrong, J., & Shales, J. (1997). A conceptual framework for the long-term psychological effects of traumatic childhood abuse. *Child Maltreatment, 2,* 272-295.

Cook, K., Earles-Vollrath, T. & Ganz, J. (2006). Bibliotherapy. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 42,* 91-100.

Coster, W. & Cicchetti, D. (1993). Research on the communicative development of maltreated children: Clinical implications. *Topics in Language Disorders, 13,* 25-38.

Craig, S. E. (2008). *Reaching and teaching children who hurt: Strategies for your classroom.* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Darling-Hammond, L. & Bransford, J. (2005). *Preparing Teachers For a Changing World.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Daro, D., Edleson., J., & Pinderhughes, H. (2004). Finding common ground in the study of maltreatment, youth violence, and adult domestic violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 19,* 282-298.

De Bellis, M. D. (2005). The psychobiology of neglect. *Child Maltreatment, 10,* 150-172.

De Groot, J. (2007). Preservice teachers and children's literature: Implications for teacher-librarians. *Teacher Librarian,35,* 18-22.

Domestic Violence Policy Statement Adopted by the Governing Council of the American Public Health Association, November 16, 1992. (1993, March). *American Journal of Public Health,* Retrieved June 24, 2008, from Academic Search Premier Database.

Edelson, J. L. (1999a). Children's witnessing of adult domestic violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 14,* 839-870.

Edelson, J. L. (1999b). The overlap between child maltreatment and woman battering. *Violence Against Women, 5,* 134-154.

ERIC Document *Bibliotherapy* Prepared by Nola Kortner Alex Retrieved September 5, 2007.

Fantuzzo, J. W. & Mohr, W. K. (1999). Prevalence and effects of child exposure to domestic violence. *The Future of Children, 9,* 21-32.

Fantuzzo, J. W. & Stevenson, H. C. (1997) A partnership-directed school-based intervention for child physical abuse and neglect: Beyond mandatory reporting. *School Psychology Review, 26,* 298-314.

Flitcraft, A. H., Hadley, S. M., Hendricks-Matthews, M. K., et al. (1992). Diagnostic and treatment guidelines on domestic violence. Chicago: American Medical Association.

Ford, J. (2005). Treatment implications of altered affect regulations and information processing following child maltreatment. *Psychiatric Annals, 35,* 412-419.

Forgan, J. (2002). Using bibliotherapy to teach problem solving. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 38,* 75-82.

Galda, L. & Aimonette-Liang, L. (2003). Literature as experience of looking for facts: Stance in the classroom. *Reading Research Quarterly, 38,* 268-275.

Graves, M. F., Juel, C., & Graves, B. B. (2001). *Teaching Reading in the 21st Century* (2nd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Greenfield, L. A., Rand, M. R., Craven, D., Klaus, P. A., Perkins, C. A., Ringel, C., Warchol, G., Maston, C., & Fox, J.A. (1998). Violence by intimates. *US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.*

Groves, B.M. (2002). *Children Who See Too Much: Lessons from the Child Witness to Violence Project.* Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Haeseler, L. (2006). Children of abuse and school discourse: Implications for teachers and administration. *Education, 126,* 534-540.

Haeseler, L. (2006). Promoting literacy learning for children of abuse: Strategies for Elementary School Teachers. *Reading Improvement, 4,* 136-142.

Hansen, D. T. (2008). Values and Purpose in Teacher Education. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, D. J. McIntyre, & K. E. Demers (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education,* (pp. 10-26). New York: Routledge.

Havey, J. M. & Dodd, D. K. (1995). Children of alcoholics, negative life events, and early experimentation with drugs. *Journal of School Psychology, 33,* 305-317.

Hazzard, A. (1984). Training teachers to identify and intervene with abused children. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 13,* 288-293.

Hughes, H. M., Graham-Bermann, S. & Gruber, G. (2002). Resilience in children exposed to domestic violence. In S.A. Graham-Bermann & J. L. Edleson (Eds.), *Domestic Violence in the Lives of Children.* (pp. 67-90). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Iverson, T. J., & Segal, M. (1990). *Child Abuse and Neglect: An Information and Reference Guide.* New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.

Jouriles, E. N., McDonald, R., Norwood, W. D., & Ezell, E. (2002). Issues and controversies in documenting the prevalence of children's exposure to domestic violence. . In S.A. Graham-Bermann & J. L. Edleson (Eds.), *Domestic Violence in the Lives of Children.* (pp. 13-31). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Kearney, M. (2001). The role of teachers in helping children of domestic violence. In Teachers' Resource: Child Abuse and Domestic Violence. (pp. 17-22). Olney, MD: Association for Childhood Education International.

Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003, 108th Cong. (2003). Retrieved September 12, 2008, from Lexis/Nexis Congressional database.

Massachusetts Advocates for Children, The Hale and Dorr Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School, & Task Force on Children Affected by Domestic Violence. (2005). *Helping Traumatized Children Learn.* Retrieved July 9, 2008, from http://www.massadvocates.org/helping_traumatized_children_learn.

Masten, A. & Coatsworth, J. (1998). The development of competence in favorable and unfavorable environments. *American Psychologist, 53,* 205-220.

Melear, C. (1997). *Knowledge and Incidence of Domestic Violence Among Elementary Science Methods Students.* Paper presented at the AETS Conference. Retrieved June 6, 2008, from http://www.ed.psu.edu/ci/Journals/97apa35.htm

Mullender, A., Hague, G., Imam, U., Kelly, L., Malos, E., & Regan, L. (2002). *Children's Perspectives on Domestic Violence.* California: SAGE Publications.

Myracle, L. (1995). Molding the minds of the young: The history of bibliotherapy as applied to children and adolescents. The Alan Review, 22.

National Advisory Council on Violence Against Women and the Violence Against Women Office. (n.d.). Intervention and Prevention for Children and Youth. In *Toolkit to End Violence Against Women* (chap. 9). Retrieved June 8, 2008, from http://toolkit.ncjrs.org/vawo_9.html

National Institute of Mental Health. (n.d.). *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).* Retrieved September 12, 2008 from http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/index.shtml.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction* (NIH Publication No. 00-4769). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Nelson, C. A. & Carver, L. J. (1998). The effects of stress and trauma on brain and memory: A view from developmental cognitive neuroscience. *Development and Pscyhopathology, 10,* 793-809.

Ouzts, D. (1991). The emergence of bibliotherapy as a discipline. *Reading Horizons, 31,* 199-206.

Ouzts, D. (1994). Bibliotherapeutic literature: A key facet of whole language instruction for the at-risk student. *Reading Horizons, 35,* 161-175.

Prater, M., Johnstun, M., Dyches, T., & Johnston, M. (2006). Using children's books as bibliotherapy for at-risk students: A guide for teachers. *Preventing School Failure,50* 5-13.

Pressley, M. (2000). What should comprehension instruction be the instruction on? In M.L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P.D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research*. (Vol. 3, pp. 545-562). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Public School Code of 1949, 22 U.S.C. § 49.1 (1972)

Rausch, S. L., van der Kolk, B. A., Fisler, R. E., Alpert, N. M., Orr, S. P., Savage, C. R., Fischman, A.J., Jenike, M.A., and Pitman, R. K. (1996). A symptom provocation study of posttraumatic stress disorder using positron emission tomography and script driven imagery. *Archives of General Psychiatry, 53*, 380-387.

Ritter, J., Stewart, M., Bernet, C., and Coe, M. (2002). Effects of childhood exposure to familial alcoholism and family violence on adolescent substance use, conduct problems, and self esteem. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 15*, 113-122.

Rosenbaum, A. & O'Leary, D. K. (1981). Children: The unintended victims of marital violence. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 51*, 692-699.

Rosenblatt, L.M. (1982). The literary transacation: Evocationand response. *Theory into Practice, 21*, 268-277.

Rosenblatt, L.M. (1991) Literature-S.O. S.! *Language Arts, 68*, 444-448.

Rosenblatt, L.M. (2005). Making Meaning with Texts: Selected Essays. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Rumelhart, D. E. (1980). Schemata: The building blocks of cognition. In R. J. Sprio, B.C. Bruce, & W. F. Brewer (Eds.), *Theoretical Issues in reading comprehension* (pp. 33-58). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Schrank, F. & Engels, D. (1981). Bibliotherapy as a counseling adjunct: research findings. *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, p. 143-147.

Shaywitz, S. (2003). *Overcoming Dyslexia.* New York, New York: Random House Publishing.

Shonk, S.M., & Cicchetti, D. (2001). Maltreatment, competency deficits, and risk for academic and behavioral maladjustment. *Developmental Psychology, 37,* 3-17.

Spath, R. (2003). Child protection professionals identifying domestic violence indicators: Implications for social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education,39,* 497-518.

Stagg, V., Wills, G. D., & Howell, M. (1989). Psychopathology in early childhood witnesses of family violence. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 9,* 73-87.

Straus, M. A. (1992). Children as Witness to Marital Violence: A risk factor for lifelong problems among a nationally representative sample of American men and women. *Report of the 23rd Ross Roundtable.* Columbus, OH.

Tierney, R. (1990). Redefining reading comprehension. *Educational Leadership, 47,* 37-42.

Toth, S. L. & Cicchetti, D. (1998). Remembering, forgetting, and the effects of trauma on memory: A developmental psychopathology perspective. *Development and Pscychopathology, 10,* 589-605.

Utah criminal code 76-5-109.1. Commission of domestic violence in the presence of a child.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1962). *Thought and language.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Warner, L. (1980). The Myth of Bibliotherapy. *School Library Journal.*

Wolf, S. A., Carey, A. A., & Mieras, E. L. (1996). “What is this literachurch stuff anyway?”: Preservice teachers’ growth in understanding children’s literary response. *Reading Research Quarterly, 31,* 130-157.

Zull, J. (2002). *The Art of the Changing Brain*. Sterling, Virginia: Stylus Publishing.

APPENDIX A

Preservice Teacher Survey-Domestic Violence

Thank you for participating in this study that is being conducted for completion of a dissertation at Widener University. The survey asks questions about you and about interventions and training regarding children suspected of being abused and/or of witnessing domestic violence situations. Your answers will be combined with other respondents to help identify factors that influence decision-making in cases of child abuse and/or domestic violence events. Your answers are confidential and no one but the researcher will review your survey form. The survey will take about 20-30 minutes to complete.
Please check the appropriate box.

Background Information

1. What is your gender?

   □female
   □male

2. What is your race or ethnic group?
   □American Indian
   □Asian or Pacific Islander
   □Black
   □Hispanic
   □White
   □Other (specify)_____
   □ Prefer not to answer

3. What is your current educational level?
   □Undergraduate
      □Freshman
      □Sophomore
      □Junior
      □Senior
   □ Graduate

4. In which certification program are you enrolled?

- □ Elementary Education
- □ Early Childhood/Elementary
- □ Special Education
- □ Special Education/Elementary
- □ Educational Studies
- □ Other (specify)_____

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

5. Are you aware of the educators' role and responsibility in reporting suspected child abuse?

- □ Yes
- □ No

6. Based on the Child Protective Services Law in Pennsylvania, is it enough for an educator who suspects abuse or neglect to report only to the school administrator who may then determine the best course of action?

- □ Yes
- □ No
- □ Don't Know

7. What procedures are used at your college to inform preservice teachers about state law and their responsibilities under the law for identifying and handling suspected cases of child abuse? (Check all that apply).

- □ Integrated into content of courses
- □ Guest Speaker (s)
- □ Case Studies
- □ Field trips to community agencies
- □ Handouts
- □ Textbook content
- □ Other (Please identify)_____
- □ none

8. While at field experience, have you ever reported suspected child abuse domestic violence?

- □ Yes
- □ No

9. While at field experience, has there ever been a time when you considered reporting a case to Children and Youth Services or the police, but did not do so?

- □ Yes
- □ No

10. How well prepared do you feel that you are able to recognize and report child abuse?

- □ Very well prepared
- □ Fairly well prepared
- □ Poorly prepared
- □ Not at all prepared

Domestic Violence

11. Are you familiar with the term domestic violence?

- □ Yes
- □ No

12. Please define the term *domestic violence* as you understand it: _____

_____

_____

13. Your own personal knowledge of domestic violence involves the following (Check all that apply).

- □ A family member was abused.
- □ A friend was abused.
- □ I was personally abused.
- □ None of the above.

14. What types of domestic violence have you witnessed or were you personally involved in? (Check all the apply).

- □ Physical abuse
- □ Emotional abuse/verbal abuse
- □ Intimidation
- □ Using economic abuse
- □ Using male privilege
- □ Using isolation/removal of privilege
- □ Using coercion and threats

15. Where have you gained your knowledge (other than personal), about domestic violence?

- □ Media
- □ Education
- □ Other _____
- □ None

16. What procedures are used at your college to inform preservice teachers about state law and their responsibilities under the law for identifying and handling suspected cases of children witnessing domestic violence? (Check all the apply).

- □ Integrated into content of courses
- □ Guest Speaker (s)
- □ Case Studies
- □ Field trips to community agencies
- □ Handouts
- □ Textbook content
- □ Other (Please identify)_____
- □ none

17. How well prepared do you feel you are able to recognize a child who may have witnessed domestic violence in their home?

- □ Very well prepared
- □ Fairly well prepared
- □ Poorly prepared
- □ Not at all prepared

18. What can elementary teachers do regarding domestic violence? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Using children's literature

19. Do you consider yourself a reader? □ Yes □No Explain why or why not.

_____

_____

_____

_____

20. Name some children's picture books.

21. Name some children's chapter books.

22. Reflect on the advantages of using children's books in the classroom.

23. How should teachers use book conferences to converse with students about various topics?

24. What pedagogies are appropriate for when sharing literature addressing sensitive topics?

25. Do you think teachers should choose books about particular social topics to help students with problems? Why or why not?

27.What type of social issues can be examined in the classroom using children's literature?

28. How have your dispositions toward domestic violence changed across time?

29. Would you be comfortable using children's literature in the classroom to discuss social issues like domestic violence? Why or why not?

Adapted from Berson, I.R., Berson, M. J., & Wolper, M. A. (2001). Educators' Intervention Practices and Training Needs on Child Maltreatment. Tampa, FL: The University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute (FMHI), Department of Child and Family Studies.

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

Widener University IRB Protocol Number 99-09

INVESTIGATOR(S) NAME: Colleen Lelli

Dear Student,

You have been chosen to be a participant in a study. The study entitled "Incorporating domestic violence awareness through an undergraduate reading course focused on children's literature," will assess your beliefs as a preservice teacher regarding domestic violence. A survey will be completed and then children's books and research literature will be used to further your understanding regarding domestic violence. During class time, we will discuss the children's literature and research articles in literature circles and class discussions. There will be no risks to you during this project.

A benefit to participating in this study would be the information learned regarding domestic violence and helping children affected by domestic violence in your classroom. The alternative for this study would be to not participate in the study.

All documents and information pertaining to this research study will be kept confidential in accordance with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations. The data generated by the study may be reviewed by Widener University's Institutional Review Board and Cabrini College's Institutional Review Board, which is the committee responsible for ensuring your welfare and rights as a research participant, to assure proper conduct of the study and compliance with university regulations. If any presentations or publications result from this research, you will not be identified by name. Attention will be paid to the ethical treatment of you as the participant and the study materials due to the fact that the researcher is also the course instructor. The surveys and consent forms will be kept by the coordinator of the program until the course is complete to guarantee that your course grade would not be influenced in any way by your participation in the study. Completion of the surveys would be voluntary and anonymous.

You may choose to withdraw from this study at any time. You will not receive payment for this study. Participation is strictly voluntary.

If you have any further questions regarding this study, contact, Colleen Lelli, at (610) 902 8466 or CL724@cabrini.edu . If you have any questions about the rights of research participants you can call the Chairperson of the Widener University's Institutional Review Board at 610 499 4110.

All of my questions were answered to my satisfaction before I consented to participate in this study, but if I have any further questions about the study I may call Colleen Lelli at (610) 902 8466. If I have any questions about the rights of research participants I may call the Chairperson of Widener University's Institutional Review Board at (610) 499 4110.

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and that refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to me. I am free to withdraw or refuse consent, or to discontinue my participation in this study at anytime without penalty or consequence.

I voluntarily give my consent to participate in this research study. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form.

Signatures:

_____

Participant's Name (Print)

_____ _____

Participant's Signature Date

I, the undersigned, certify that to the best of my knowledge, the subject signing this consent form has had the study fully and carefully explained by me and has been given an opportunity to ask any questions regarding the nature, risks, and benefits of participation in this research study.

Colleen Lelli, Principal Investigator

_____ _____

Investigator's Signature

Widener University's IRB has approved the solicitation of participants for the study until April 6, 2010.

APPENDIX C

List of Children's Picture Books for Domestic Violence Training

Books to Discuss Feelings

Agassi, M. (2000). *Hands are not for hitting.* Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing, Inc.

Aliki. (1984). *Feelings.* China, Greenwillow Books.

Bang, M. (1999). *When Sophie gets angry-really, really angry.* New York, NY: Scholastic, Inc.

Curtis, J. (1998). *Today I feel silly and other moods that make my day.* New York, NY: Scholastic, Inc.

Henkes, K. (2005). *Wemberly worried.* New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishing, Inc.

McCloud, C. (2006). *Have you filled a bucket today?* Northville, MI: Ferne Press.

Verdick, E. (2004). *Words are not for hurting.* Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing, Inc.

Books to Discuss Domestic Violence

Bernstein, S. (1991). *A family that fights.* Morton Grove, Illinois: Albert Whitman and Company.

Coman, C. (1995). *What Jamie saw.* Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press, Inc.

Deaton, W. & Johnson, K. (1991). *Living with my family: A child's workbook about violence in the home*. Alameda, CA: Hunter House Inc.

Deaton, W. & Johnson, K. (1998). *I saw it happen: A child's workbook about witnessing violence.* Alameda, CA: Hunter House Inc.

Holmes, M. (2000). *A terrible thing happened.* Washington, DC: Magination Press.

Loftis, C. (1995). *The words hurt.* Hong Kong: New Horizons Press.

Rogers, F. (1992). *I do, and I don't.* Family Communications, Inc.

Schor, H. (2002). *A place for Starr.* Canada: JIST Publishing, Inc.

APPENDIX D

The following are questions given to preservice teachers after first and second collection of readings. Preservice teachers gave written responses.

1. Consider how you would rate the articles on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high). Explain.
2. Write down something you found important.
3. Write down any questions you are still considering related to the text.
4. Write at least one question you want to collect for future reference.

The following are questions given to preservice teachers after third collection of readings. Preservice teachers gave written responses.

1. How would you use children's literature to create conversations in the classroom?
2. What are your overall feelings on using children's literature to discuss sensitive issues in the classroom?
3. As a teacher, what do you see as the benefits of using children's to discuss sensitive issues in the classroom?
4. Do you think using children's literature would be helpful for students presented with sensitive issues? Why or why not?
5. As a teacher, would you present literature that may discuss sensitive subjects?
6. Do you have concerns regarding using children's literature to discuss sensitive issues in the classroom? If so, what are your concerns?

APPENDIX E

Using Children's Literature

Books to Discuss Feelings

In today's activity, we will be completing a jigsaw activity. You will be first divided into lettered groups. Then, within your lettered groups each member will pick a number from 1-6. Numbered groups will meet to read their given book and then develop three activities that could be completed with their book in a classroom with students. When creating your activities pull from all of your coursework and you may use your textbook as a reference. Lastly, you will go back to your lettered group to explain the content of the book and the activities that your numbered group created.

My Lettered Group is: _____ My Numbered group is:_____

_____

The book my group is using: _____

Books to discuss feelings:

Agassi, M. (2000). *Hands Are Not For Hitting.* Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing, Inc.

Aliki. (1984). *Feelings.* China, Greenwillow Books.

Bang, M. (1999). *When Sophie Gets Angry-Really, Really Angry.* New York, NY: Scholastic, Inc.

Curtis, J. (1998). *Today I Feel Silly and Other Moods that Make My Day.* New York, NY: Scholastic, Inc.

McCloud, C. (2006). *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* Northville, MI: Ferne Press.

Verdick, E. (2004). *Words Are Not For Hurting.* Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing, Inc.

APPENDIX F

Using Children's Literature

Books to Discuss Domestic Violence

In today's activity, we will be completing a jigsaw activity. You will be first divided into lettered groups. Then, within your lettered groups each member will pick a number from 1-6. Numbered groups will meet to read their given book and then develop three activities that could be completed with their book in a classroom with students. When creating your activities pull from all of your coursework and you may use your textbook as a reference. Lastly, you will go back to your lettered group to explain the content of the book and the activities that your numbered group created.

My Lettered Group is: _____ My Numbered group is:_____

The book my group is using: _____

Books to discuss domestic violence:

Bernstein, S. (1991). *A Family That Fights.* Morton Grove, Illinois: Albert Whitman and Company.

Holmes, M. (2000). *A Terrible Thing Happened.* Washington, DC: Magination Press.

Loftis, C. (1995). *The Words Hurt.* Hong Kong: New Horizons Press.

Rogers, F. (1992). *I Do, and I Don't.* Family Communications, Inc.

Schor, H. (2002). *A Place for Starr.* Canada: JIST Publishing, Inc.

APPENDIX G

Interview Questions

1. Some children witness domestic violence in the home. As a teacher, what signs/behaviors might you see (or, would you expect to see) in a child who has witnessed this type of violence?

2. What would you do if you felt a child had witnessed domestic violence in the home?

3. If a student confided in you that there is domestic violence in the home, what would you do?

4. How would you use children's literature to create conversations or dialogue in the classroom?

5. What are your overall feelings on using children's literature to discuss sensitive issues in the classroom?

6. Do you think using children's literature to present sensitive issues to children would be helpful for students? Why or why not?

7. As a teacher, would you present literature that may discuss sensitive issues?

8. Do you have concerns regarding using children's literature to discuss sensitive issues in the classroom? If so, what are your concerns?

9. How are your concerns changing as a result of the professional development?

10. How has participation in this research changed your practice?

11. In what ways have your disposition towards domestic violence changed?

12. Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX H

CABRINI COLLEGE

To: **IRB**

From: **Dr. Dawn Middleton**

Date: **March16, 2009**

I support the research Colleen Lelli is completing in her Reading and Language Arts III classes. This research will lead her to the completion of her doctorate at Widener University.