

*What We Are
Learning About
Summer
Reading?*



ARCTalks
ideas worth sharing

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**MAKE THE MOST OF SUMMER
READING:
ACCESS, CHOICE, AND SUPPORT**

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Mitigating summer reading loss

- Annual Book Fairs
- Summer Reading Club
- RIF (ongoing)
- READS (Kim, White, & colleagues)
- REL (Wilkins, Gersten, Decker, et al., 2012)

Related studies- Privileging choice

- Successful dyslexic adults (Fink, 1995/6; 2006)
- Ethnography of committed readers (Ross, et al., 2003)
- Meta-analysis of book distribution programs (Lindsay, 2013)

Mitigating summer reading loss

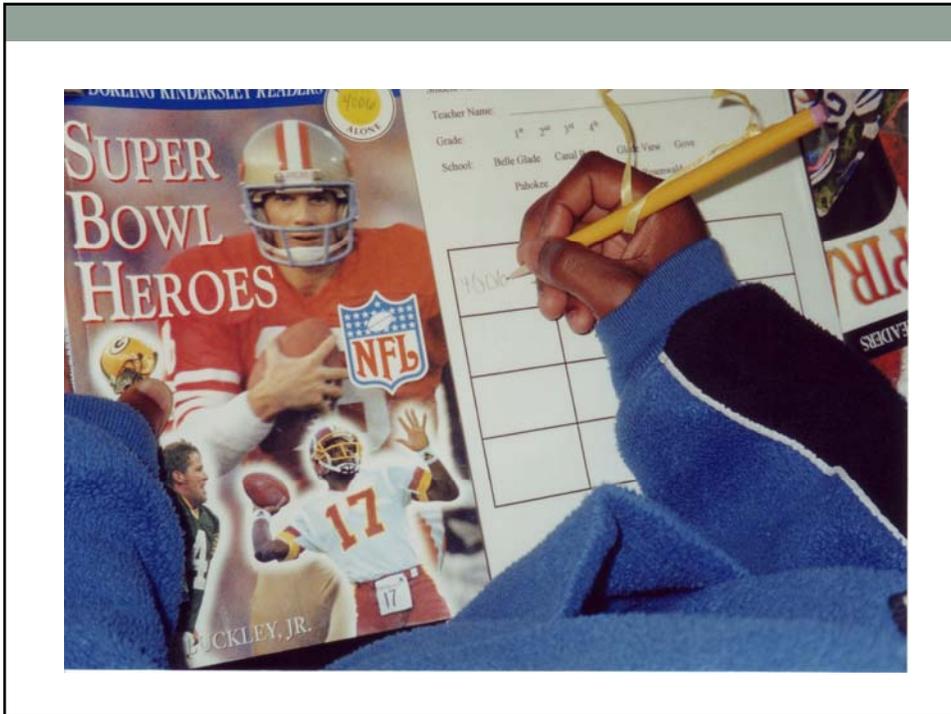
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Annual Book Fairs

- The Annual Book Fair study looked at the effects of providing children from low-income homes with 10-12 free books, self-selected by the children over 3 summers.
- Students selected books about topics that are familiar to them from TV, movies and their teachers' readalouds.

Participants

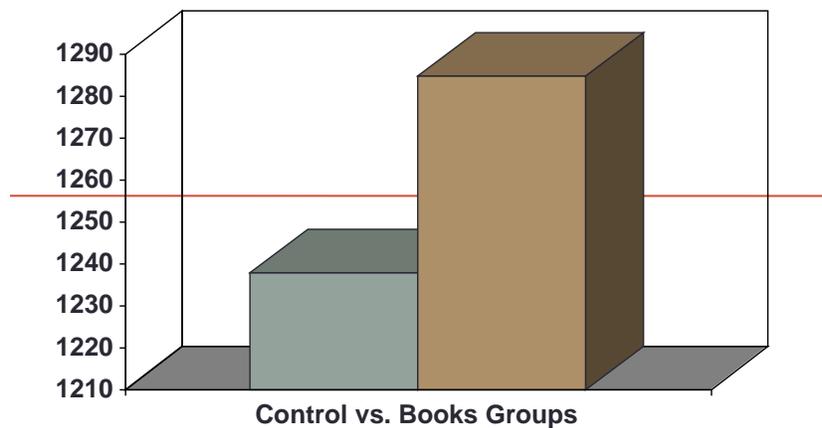
- 852 children from 17 schools in 2 districts self-selected at least 10 books to read each summer for 3 years
- 478 children from the same schools served as controls
- Over 90% minority and over 90% free and reduced lunch
- Evenly divided between urban region, rural region of Florida



Evaluation

- Student performance on FCAT in 3rd, 4th grades
- District lexiles
- WCPM on target students (N=40)
- Interview with target students (N=40)
- Summer logs

FCAT DSS PERFORMANCE



$p = .015$

$d = .14$

Putting effect size into context

- Small effect size (.14) but identical to the Cooper, et al. (2000) meta-analysis of effects of summer school participation
- Effect size larger than that reported by Borman, et al. (2003) for adoption of comprehensive school reform model

Why was the intervention successful?

- Guthrie & Humenick found a huge effect size (1.64) for access to interesting and appropriate texts and student choice (1.2)
- Share (1995) hypothesized a self-teaching mechanism -- that reading itself improves reading

Interesting Texts, Student Choices

- Topics of interest
- Moderately challenging work
- Appealing layout and graphics
- Students determine goals, select strategies, evaluate outcomes
- Open tasks—under student's control, likely to take responsibility, try another strategy

Knowledge Goals

- Conceptual themes
- Accumulated expertise
- Platform for understanding new content and new material

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Summer Book Clubs

- A smaller scale FL substudy
- Professional development focused on fluency, comprehension & self-selected books
- Text sets based on students' interests, local knowledge, & learning profiles (failed FCAT & 3rd)
- Pedagogical strategies- instructional read-alouds, cognitive think-alouds, peer collaboration/ discussion, drawing to learn

Exploratory findings on multiple assessments

- Factor analysis identified 3 components-- accuracy, fluency, comprehension
- Participating students significantly improved in accuracy ($d=.31$) over comparisons, but not fluency or comprehension
- Participating students modestly improved level of text that they were able to read with teachers' support (slightly over one GR level)

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Successful dyslexic adults (Fink, 1995/1996; 2006)

- Fink studied 66 adults who struggled with reading as children but became highly skilled over time, reading nearly as accurate as proficient readers
- Fink asked “How did they become accurate?”
- Answer: To a person they had a “burning desire to learn more about a topic of passionate personal interest”

A Nobel laureate:

- “I read a lot especially about the lives of famous scientists. I had a special dictionary with pictures, and it told about the lives of famous people. Famous scientists and artists, too. I spent many, many hours reading this book as a child”(p. 275).
- “Even today, when I can’t figure out a word, I guess from context. Yes, I guess what makes sense!”

“By reading avidly about a topic of passionate, personal interest ... they develop[ed] deep background knowledge, schema familiarity, and contextual understanding.”

“Familiarity with domain-specific vocabulary, themes, and typical text structures provided the scaffolds that supported their development of increasingly sophisticated literacy skills” (p.38).

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Meta-analysis of free book distribution programs (Lindsay, 2013)

“The meta-analytic findings show that interventions that lend print materials (e.g., books and magazines) to children or give print materials to children cause improved attitudes towards reading, increased reading behavior, improved emergent literacy skills, and improved reading achievement.”

Choice gives more power to access!

- Lindsay (2013) found that giving students free books improves reading performance over lending books
- But allowing students to choose those books doubled the power of free book distribution programs



Matched books: An issue of choice?

- White, et al. found more control students reported that their books were “just right”
- RIF treatment students who were higher achieving at baseline in lexile level lost ground relative to expected NCE scores at the end of the first year
- REL study found no effect of providing 8 matched books to 1700 rising FRL 3rd graders below 50thile in 112 TX schools

Epistemic motivation= driven to learn

- “...the most powerful way to improve learning [is] to engage students in topics that they naturally want to learn about, and use those topics to help them learn what they need to know more broadly” (p.66)

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Why these books? Ethnography of committed readers (Ross, et al., 2005)

- Ross, et al. conducted an ethnography of “committed readers” –those for whom reading for pleasure is a very important part of their lives
- These readers reported that they moved from one series to another as taste matured and skills became more proficient
- They gained confidence and competence (“reassurance of the familiar”) and identified socially with other readers of the books

Readers identify not only with the characters but also other readers of the series

“Series book reading is a social activity embedded in the social relations of childhood. Series books have the cachet of something precious, to be collected, hoarded, discussed, and ‘traded like baseball cards’. As one reader put it, ‘I read them just because everybody else was!’”

Source: Ross, Mckechnie, & Rothbauer (2005)

How to support summer reading?

- Provide a recreational framework—not like school, not strategy-building or homework (Jesson, et al., 2014)
- Ask students to monitor for reading pleasure:
 - “What kind of reading do I enjoy?”
 - “How can I find these books?”
- Teachers can assist students in locating print and digital resources for summer reading

What books do students want to read?

- Scholastic survey of students in 25 major cities: “The ones they choose themselves.”

What books should students read?

- Author of *My Weird School* series Dan Gutman:
“Whatever they want”.

