REL Pacific Ask A REL Response

Literacy

February 2020

Question:

What does the research say about the effect of school or summer reading challenges on students' motivation to read and self-perception as readers?

Response:

Following an established REL Pacific research protocol, we conducted a web-based search for resources related to the impact of reading challenges on students' motivation to read and self-perception as readers (see Methods section for search terms and resource selection criteria).

References are listed in alphabetical order, not necessarily in order of relevance. Descriptions of the resources are quoted directly from the publication abstracts. We have not evaluated the quality of references and the resources provided in this response. We offer them only for your reference. Also, our search included the most commonly used research resources, but they are not comprehensive and other relevant references and resources may exist.

Research References

Arnone, M. P., Small, R. V., & Weng, S. (2016). Are self-perception measures used in school library research transferable to the context of public library summer reading programs? *School Library Research, 19.* Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1093961.

From the abstract: "Several instruments previously validated for use in school library research were tested for their appropriateness in the context of public libraries' summer reading programs for youth. The researchers were also interested in whether the connection between perceived competence in one's own information skills and perceived competence in one's own reading skills, as found in school library research, might also exist for participants in public library summer reading programs. In addition, a separate research question explored whether youth participants connected the summer reading program to increased confidence and improvement in their reading abilities. Findings suggest that reliable measures that can be used in the context of both school and public libraries may be beneficial for future

collaboration and coordination in youth programming both in and out of school. Findings also suggest that summer reading programs foster self-perceptions of improved reading ability."

Boorman, G. D., Yang, H., & Xie, X. (2019). *The Kids Read Now summer reading program: A quasi-experimental impact study.* Retrieved from https://kidsreadnow.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/BormanReport.pdf

From the abstract: "Drawing on administrative data and reading achievement data provided by two Midwestern school districts for three participating Kids Read Now schools, the current study provides the first opportunity to study the reading outcomes of Kids Read Now students. Relying on data from the three schools, we contrast the reading outcomes for KRN student participants and a matched control group of non-participants."

Gustafson, C. (2008). Reading motivation through competition: Boys as readers. *Library Media Connection, 26*(5), 16–17. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ784865.

From the abstract: "The authors review research on children's reading motivation and its relation to their reading comprehension. They begin by discussing work on the development of school motivation in general and reading motivation in particular, reviewing work showing that many children's reading motivation declines over the school years. Girls tend to have more positive motivation for reading than do boys, and there are ethnic differences in children's reading motivation. Over the last 15 years researchers have identified in both laboratory and classroom-based research instructional practices that positively impact students' reading motivation and ultimately their reading comprehension. There is a strong need for researchers to build on this work and develop and study in different age groups of children effective classroom-based reading motivation instructional programs for a variety of narrative and informational materials."

Kim, J. S. (2006). Effects of a voluntary summer reading intervention on reading achievement: Results from a randomized field trial. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 28*(4), 335–355. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ759814.

From the abstract: "The effects of a voluntary summer reading intervention were assessed in a randomized field trial involving 552 students in 10 schools. In this study, fourth-grade children received eight books to read during their summer vacation and were encouraged by their teachers to practice oral reading at home with a family member and to use comprehension strategies during independent, silent reading. Reading lessons occurred during the last month of school in June, and eight books were mailed to students biweekly during July and August. The estimated treatment effects on a standardized test of reading achievement (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) were largest for Black students (ES = .22), Latino students (ES = .14), less fluent readers (ES = .17), and students who reported owning fewer than 50 children's books (ES = .13). The main findings suggest that a voluntary summer reading intervention may represent a scalable policy for improving reading achievement among lower performing students."

Retelsdorf, J., Koller, O., & Moller, J. (2011). On the effects of motivation on reading performance growth in secondary school. *Learning and Instruction, 21*(4), 550–559. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ924144.

From the abstract: "This research aimed at identifying unique effects of reading motivation on reading performance when controlling for cognitive skills, familial, and demographic background. We drew upon a longitudinal sample of *N* = 1508 secondary school students from 5th to 8th grade. Two types of intrinsic reading motivation (reading enjoyment, reading for interest), one type of extrinsic reading motivation (competition), and reading self-concept were measured by self-report questionnaires. Cognitive skills (reasoning, decoding speed) and reading performance were assessed using standardized tests and background variables were collected using student and parent questionnaires. Applying latent growth curve modeling, positive unique effects of reading enjoyment and reading self-concept and a negative unique effect of competition on the initial level of reading performance were recorded. Moreover, a positive unique effect of reading for interest on reading performance growth was recorded. One may conclude that enhancing students' interest might be fruitful in terms of nurturing reading performance."

Summer Library Journal. (2019). *Public library summer programming survey: Spring 2019.* Retrieved from https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=research.

From the report: "A survey invite was emailed to youth services librarians in U.S. public libraries on February 8, 2019…Librarians estimate that 54% of their summer programming in 2018 was reading-based, with a book and foundational literacy focus. Their other summer programs were learning-based (46%), without a strict connection to reading. The children most commonly participating in summer library programs are early elementary (grades K–2), late elementary (grades 3–5), and preschoolers. Summer reading programs almost always (97%) provide reading incentives. The most common incentives are books (84%), coupons for local businesses (72%), and bookmarks (55%). Eighty-two percent of respondents feel that prizes are an effective motivator to get kids to read. Books, coupons for local businesses, and small toys/stuffed animals are considered the most effective giveaways."

Small, R. V. (2009). Reading incentives that work: No-cost strategies to motivate kids to read and love it! *School Library Media Activities Monthly, 25*(9), 27–31. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ837444

From the abstract: "In education, it is possible to find dozens of examples of 'forced' reading incentive programs that categorize student reading levels, provide limited reading lists coordinated with those reading levels, assess student reading through computer-based tests, and award tangible prizes when they pass the test. Those who perform best get the most rewards while those who perform less well get fewer (or no) rewards. The problems with such reading incentive programs is that they require students to select books from a pre-established list only, test them on facts presented in the books, and award points to those who pass the test, allowing students to cash in the points for tangible prizes. If students were industrial workers trying to increase the number of widgets being produced, this might be appropriate behavior modification. But, students are learners who, it is hoped, will develop a

sustained love of reading. Reading is not a simple mechanical skill to be repeated. Instead, it is a personal act that should result in aesthetic pleasure, a gain of knowledge, or both. This article reviews some of the research on the use of extrinsic rewards in schools, includes some real-life examples, addresses five characteristics of reading incentive programs, and shares some effective, tried-and-true, no-cost alternative strategies that can be used to motivate long-term student reading behaviors."

Wigfield, A., Gladstone, J., & Turci, L. (2016). Beyond cognition: Reading motivation and reading comprehension. *Child Development Perspectives, 10*(3), 190–195. Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5014370/.

From the abstract: "The authors review research on children's reading motivation and its relation to their reading comprehension. They begin by discussing work on the development of school motivation in general and reading motivation in particular, reviewing work showing that many children's reading motivation declines over the school years. Girls tend to have more positive motivation for reading than do boys, and there are ethnic differences in children's reading motivation. Over the last 15 years researchers have identified in both laboratory and classroom-based research instructional practices that positively impact students' reading motivation and ultimately their reading comprehension. There is a strong need for researchers to build on this work and develop and study in different age groups of children effective classroom-based reading motivation instructional programs for a variety of narrative and informational materials."

Additional Organizations to Consult

American Library Association: http://www.ala.org/

From the website: "The American Library Association (ALA) is the oldest and largest library association in the world. Founded on October 6, 1876 during the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, the mission of ALA is 'to provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.'"

National Summer Learning Association: https://www.summerlearning.org/

From the website: "The National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) is a national, non-profit organization focused on the powerful impact of one achievable goal: investing in summer learning to help close the achievement gap. NSLA uses the power of research, advocacy, training, and policy to transform America's neighborhoods and communities, one child at a time."

Methods

Keywords and Search Strings

The following keywords and search strings were used to search the reference databases and other sources:

- "reading motivation" and "reading competition"
- "reading" and "motivation" and "competition"
- "reading competition" and "self-perception"
- "reading" and "incentives" and "motivation"
- "reading programs" and "self-perception"
- "reading competitions"
- "reading contests"

Databases and Resources

We searched ERIC, a free online library of more than 1.6 million citations of education research sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences, for relevant resources, as well as the databases Google Scholar, EBSCOhost, and JSTOR.

Reference Search and Selection Criteria

REL Pacific searched ERIC and other academic journal databases for studies that were published in English-language peer-reviewed research journals within the last 15 years. REL Pacific prioritized documents that are accessible online and publicly available, and prioritized references that provide practical information based on peer-reviewed research for the education stakeholders who requested this Ask A REL. Sources included in this document were last accessed in January 2020. Methodological priorities and considerations were given in the review and selection of the references to the following:

- Study types: randomized control trials, quasi experiments, surveys, descriptive data analyses, and literature reviews.
- Target population, sample size, and study duration.
- Limitations and generalizability of the findings and conclusions.

This memorandum is one in a series of quick-turnaround responses to specific questions posed by educational stakeholders in the Pacific Region (American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Hawai'i, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau), which is served by the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL Pacific) at McREL International. This memorandum was prepared by REL Pacific under a contract with the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES), Contract ED-IES-17-C-0010, administered by McREL International. Its content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.