

SCHOLASTIC

CLASSROOM

LIBRARIES

WORK!

Why



What school administrators should know about the relationship between classroom libraries and reading achievement



*"Wide and frequent reading of trade books
increases students' reading achievement."*

–J. Cipielewski & J. Stanovich, 1992

A proven strategy to increase reading ability and interest



As a professional educator, you're aware that reading proficiency and academic achievement generally go hand in hand. The question is, how can you enhance proficiency at an early age through strategies that have the greatest potential for success?

Educational research has proven that access to quality books beyond basal reading programs can provide the practice opportunities that students need to increase their reading skills and improve reading achievement test scores:

✓ **The National Assessment of Educational Programs (NAEP)** reports that the more reading resources available to fourth grade students, the higher their NAEP reading comprehension scores.

✓ A study conducted by **Dr. Cathy Collins Block**, a Director of the International Reading Association (IRA), demonstrated that an additional 20 minutes of book reading each day beyond the regular school reading program resulted in students achieving significantly higher scores on standardized reading performance tests.

✓ **Fielding, Wilson and Anderson** concluded that children's reading achievement, comprehension and attitude toward reading improve when their classrooms are filled with trade books and their teachers encourage free reading.

✓ Older children also benefit from increased access to books, according to a study by **McQuillan and Au** in which they found that eleventh graders read more often, regardless of their abilities, when exposed to numerous reading materials.

But how can you ensure that the children in your district gain access to the books that improve reading achievement when so much depends on whether they are provided with that access at home? In a study that compared book accessibility in high income and low income neighborhoods, for example, Dr. Susan B. Neuman's study at Temple University concluded that high income children have over 4000 times the number of books available to them as low income students.

For many educators concerned about reading achievement, classroom libraries have become an ideal solution.

What is a good classroom library?

First, let's discuss what it isn't:

It is not a random collection of books compiled over the years by well-intentioned teachers or parents who may or may not have selected their books for diversity of genre, topic, reading level and other criteria.

It is not a compilation of dog-eared volumes with missing pages, tattered covers and a lack of illustrations and other attributes that can capture the attention of young readers.

It is not a robust selection of books in one classroom and a meager selection in another.

In other words, equal access to quality library books for all students can not be left up to individual teachers with varying degrees of experience and financial ability.

An effective classroom library should contain:

A variety of genres, formats and topics with non-fiction comprising 40% of all titles...

...so that your classroom library attracts students, increases their knowledge base and expands their interests. Experts suggest:

- ✓ Traditional stories, legends and myths from various cultures
- ✓ Fantasy and science fiction stories that spark children's imagination
- ✓ Historical fiction that teaches children about the past and accurately reflects the period it portrays
- ✓ Realistic fiction with true-to-life characters, settings and events
- ✓ Mysteries to intrigue and promote problem solving
- ✓ Picture books with vivid illustrations that make the stories come alive
- ✓ Poetry to foster critical thinking and love of language.
- ✓ Biographies and autobiographies of well known people and perhaps those who aren't so well known but have a compelling story to tell.
- ✓ Reference and informational books to support content area learning and help students learn about the world.

You should also consider:



300-600 books...

...according to Dr. Irene Fountas and Dr. Gay Su Pinnell of Ohio State University. The actual number depends on a variety of factors, including grade level, number of copies per title and intended use of the books – i.e., independent reading, guided reading, reading aloud, etc.

Books for every level of reading ability...

...with some books relatively easy for all students and other books challenging but not so much so that they frustrate the readers. To quote R. Allington's *What Really Matters for Struggling Readers: Designing Research-Based Programs*, "Kids can't learn from books they can't read."

Books that reflect the multicultural nature of our society...

...so that students can identify with some characters and learn about others who may come from a different background. Research suggests that a rich classroom collection of multicultural literature bridges the gap between home and school and actually enhances reading engagement.

Books for younger readers...

...that provide them with the opportunity to practice the five critical reading skills identified by the No Child Left Behind Reading First program: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.



What does an effective classroom library look like?

Here's how classroom libraries might be compiled to include quality books that are selected for grade level appropriateness, currency, reader appeal, curriculum connection, reading levels and genres

Kindergarten-Grade 3

Guided Reading (Levels A-N)

Lexiles (Levels 200-800)

Objectives: Support beginning reading skills, build fluency and vocabulary, increase comprehension.

Strategies Supported: Read aloud, small group reading, independent reading.

Content: Leveled, beginning chapter and picture books; award-winning literature; non-fiction and informational texts; folk and fairy tales; themes and topics that support science and social studies learning.

Grades 3-5

Guided Reading (Levels J-W)

Lexiles (Levels 500-1000)

Objectives: Increase fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

Strategies Supported: Reinforce standards, curriculum, literature circles and independent reading.

Content: Leveled books; chapter books; series titles; award-winning literature; mysteries; biographies; folk tales; historical, realistic and science fiction; adventure and fantasy; themes and topics that support science and social studies learning.

Grades 6-9

Guided Reading (Levels T-Z)

Lexiles (Levels 800-1100)

Objectives: Improve fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

Strategies Supported: Reinforce standards, curriculum, literature circles and independent reading.

Content: Leveled books; series titles; award-winning literature; mysteries; biographies and memoirs; historical, realistic and science fiction; adventure and fantasy; short stories and essays; themes and topics that support science and social studies learning.

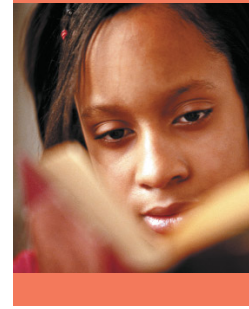
How does your district measure up?

Take this quick quiz to determine whether your district is truly offering students the opportunity to read independently, practice their reading skills and reach their full reading achievement potential:

1. Does every student in each of your schools have access to a quality classroom library in every classroom?
Yes ___ **No** ___
2. Do your classroom libraries have a minimum of seven books per student with two books per student added each year?
Yes ___ **No** ___
3. Do your classroom libraries represent a wide range of reading levels, genres, topics and authors?
Yes ___ **No** ___
4. Do nonfiction titles constitute at least 40% of each classroom library?
Yes ___ **No** ___
5. Do students have access to their classroom libraries for independent reading at least 20 minute per day?
Yes ___ **No** ___

If you answered "No" to four or more of these questions, call your Scholastic representative. He or she will show you how your district can provide every classroom in your schools with a cost-effective library that could promote independent reading, stimulate intellectual curiosity and increase students' reading skills.

Solutions for Every District



Scholastic offers several convenient ways to structure meaningful classroom libraries for every grade level.

Our professionally-selected Ready-To-Go libraries offer a simple, cost effective way to create libraries that meet No Child Left Behind Reading First standards. Each library features a wide variety of topics, genres, titles and authors for every reading level.

Our customized approach enables you to choose from more than 120 publishers and 10,000 titles to structure libraries that meet specific district needs. Scholastic is the #1 provider of children's books and classroom libraries in the world. We have helped dozens of major school districts create customized libraries that:

- ✓ correlate to specific reading and content standards
- ✓ supplement district basal reading programs with ample practice opportunities
- ✓ support curriculum themes
- ✓ provide multicultural students with strong role models and books with which they can identify
- ✓ offer reference sources for students who want to learn more about topics discussed in the classroom
- ✓ include take-home packages for extra reading practice

You Can Make A Difference

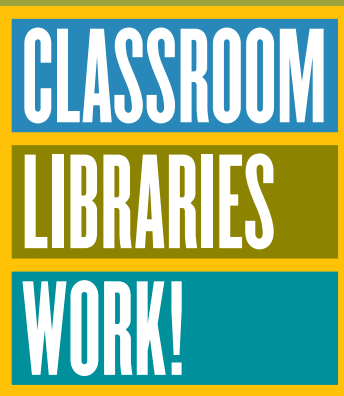
As a professional educator, you are called upon to make choices that affect the futures of thousands of students. Few choices you make are more important than those that lead to increased reading proficiency.

Research has shown that classroom libraries help increase reading achievement by providing access to quality books that can be read independently. That's why some of your teachers actually spend their own money to develop classroom libraries for their students.

You have the ability to level the playing field by providing libraries for all your classrooms, not just those fortunate enough to have teachers and parents with the financial ability and experience to make the commitment.

Call your Scholastic representative and ask him or her how you can best structure a classroom library program for your district. The cost may be surprisingly affordable and the results will be tangible for generations to come.

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