

What's New in Summer Learning Research?

Evidence and Insights

Presented by
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October 9, 2010



National Summer Learning Association Vision & Mission

Our vision is to ensure that every child is safe, healthy and engaged in learning during the summer months.

Our mission is to connect and equip schools and community organizations to deliver quality summer learning programs to our nation's youth to help close the achievement gap.



Why Summer Learning?

- Compelling research base
- Laboratory for innovation in teaching & learning
- Support for working families
- Spans transition periods
- Growing importance in the education reform / time and learning debate
- Significant opportunity for partnerships



Hot Topics for Discussion

1. Summer learning loss and the achievement gap
2. Summer reading
3. Health and nutrition
4. Early warning indicators and summer's connection to high school graduation
5. Engagement & motivation
6. Extended learning
7. Demand for summer programming

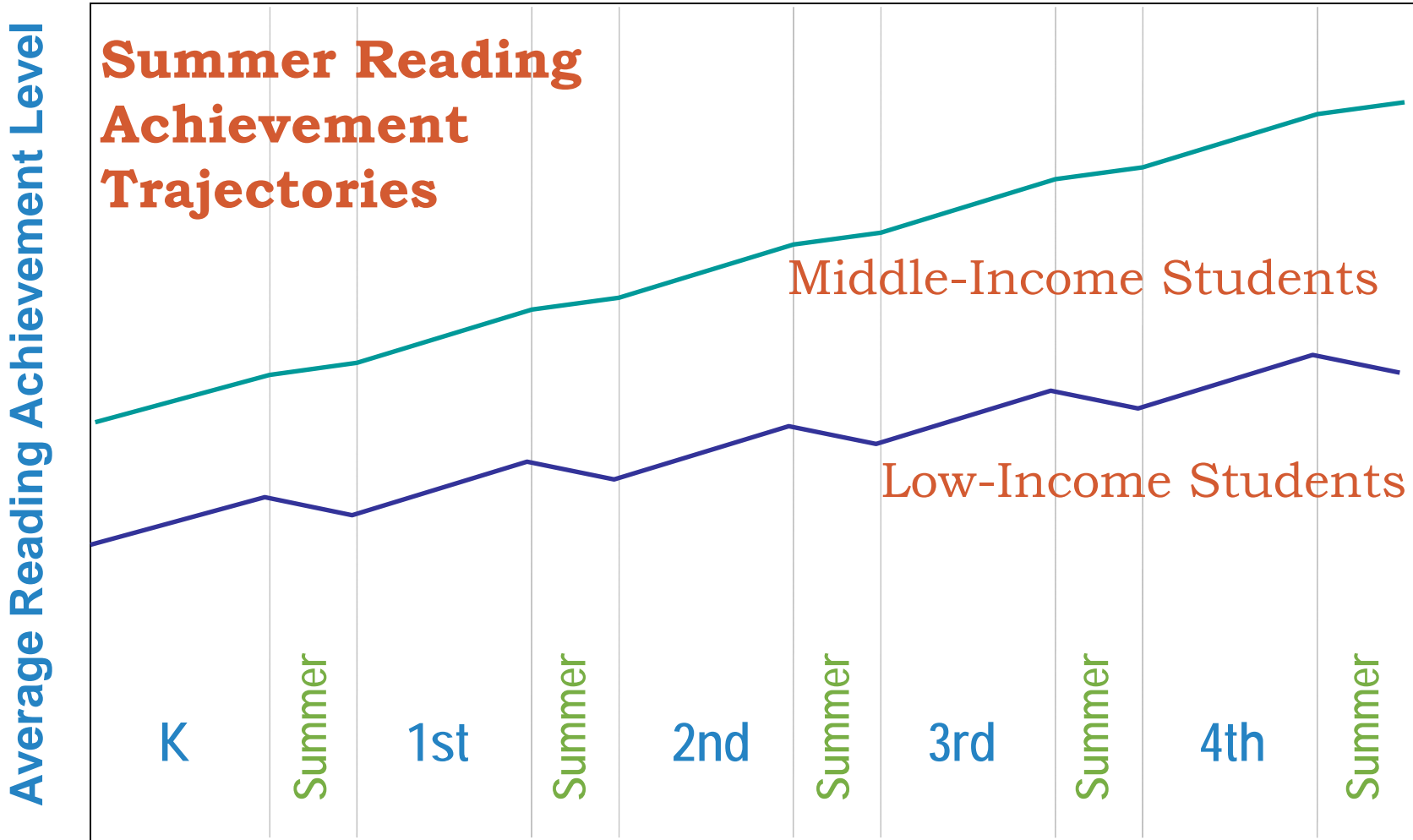


Summer Learning & the Achievement Gap

- Since 1906, numerous studies have confirmed that children experience learning losses in math and reading without continued opportunities for skill building over the summer (White, Heyns, Cooper, Downey, Alexander)
- 2/3 of the ninth grade achievement gap in reading can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities during the elementary school years (Alexander, Entwisle & Olson, 2007)
- Summer learning losses have later life consequences, including high school curriculum placement, high school dropout, and college attendance (ibid.)



Summer Learning & the Achievement Gap



What's New with the Achievement Gap?

Additional analyses from Alexander :

- **What's the reading gap look like in grade 9?**
 - 3.4 grade equivalents difference on average
 - 6.6 grade equivalents difference between low-income youth who eventually drop out vs. higher-income who eventually enter college



What's New with the Achievement Gap?

- **Do some low-SES children defy the odds by registering summer gains? If so, why?**
 - Family Social Capital
 - ✓ Take children to the library and check out books while they are there
 - ✓ Parents read to children for longer periods of time
 - ✓ Parents check child's homework
 - ✓ Parents have higher expectations for child's school conduct
 - ✓ Children attended more kindergarten
 - ✓ Parents report they are most responsible for how their child does in school
 - ✓ Families have lower levels of stress (death of a family member, job loss, illness, divorce, etc.)
 - ✓ Live with 2 parents or two adults in household
 - ✓ Mother was at least 20 years old at the birth of first child

- **Programs should consider**
 - ✓ Increasing parent outreach, engagement, and support strategies
 - ✓ Increasing access to reading materials



Summer Reading

Kim – 2004, 2006, 2008

- 3rd, 4th & 5th grade students
- Scaffolded voluntary summer reading program
- Kids who read more over the summer do better in reading in the Fall

- Three factors must be present in order to improve reading:
 1. Access to books
 2. Books that match readers' ability levels and interests
 3. Comprehension, as monitored and guided by an adult, teacher or parent



Summer Reading

Neuman & Celano – 2008

- Observed children and libraries, both book and technology use
- Children in lower-income areas
 - chose easier books (1069 vs. 618 total words per visit);
 - spent less time with each material (12 minutes vs. 6.6);
 - used computers for entertainment rather than educational activities;
 - spent much less time with an adult mentor
 - Adult mentors expressed being uncomfortable with technology
- For every 1 line of print read by low-income children, middle-income children read 3



What's New in Summer Reading?

■ Allington and McGill-Franzen (forthcoming)

- 3-year study (2001 – 2004)
- Students chose books
- 1st and 2nd graders
- Finding: summer reading produces gains in reading achievement equivalent to summer school; costs are much smaller

■ Kim and Guryan (2010)

- 4th grade Latino youth whose families speak Spanish at home
- 3 conditions: books only, books + family literacy, control
- Very low participation in family literacy events (books only was nearly equal to books + family literacy)
- Finding: Treatment groups read more books, but there was no significant effect on reading achievement
 - Pre-test vocabulary scores and English Language Proficiency at the end of 4th grade explained over 50% of the variability in post-test scores



Summer Health & Nutrition

von Hippel, Powell, Downey & Rowland – 2007

- K and 1st graders gained BMI nearly twice as fast during the summer as during the school year
- Children who were already overweight or minority were most at risk for unhealthy weight gain

FRAC, Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation

- In July 2009, 16.1 children received Summer Nutrition for every 100 low-income students who received free and reduced lunch in the 2008-2009 school year



What's New in Summer Health & Nutrition?

Mahoney (in press)

- Panel Study of Income Dynamics, Child Development Supplement
- Adolescents age 10 – 18
- 32.6% of adolescents participated in organized activities as a part of regular summer care arrangements (Sports 30.3%; Extracurricular activities 3%; Summer programs 1.3%)
- Regular participation in organized activities (sports) showed significantly lower risk for obesity than other youth, particularly in early adolescence
- Parent care = greatest risk for obesity (44% vs. 19% for org. act.)



What's New in Summer Health & Nutrition?

Rosewater (2009)

- Youth who participate in organized sports are higher achievers (grades, dropout rates, homework completion, educational aspirations)
- Sports help youth feel more connected to school, attend school regularly, and connect with a positive peer network
- The effects on academics are more pronounced for low-income youth
- More affluent youth are more likely to participate
- Opportunities dwindle as kids move from elem to middle, then middle to high, with boys having more opportunities than girls



Summer & Early Warning Indicators

Summer

- a. By the end of fifth grade, lower-SES youth are nearly 3 years behind their higher-SES peers in reading
 - Opportunity during at least 2 out of 3 consecutive summers can increase impact on achievement
- a. Differences in summer learning experiences during the elementary school years account for 2/3 of the ninth grade achievement gap

Alexander, Borman, Balfanz

Middle School

- a. Kids falling off track in the sixth grade tend to have only 1 or 2 off-track indicators; 1) failing either English or Math; 2) having either attendance or behavior issues
- b. 2 out of 3 years of being in a classroom where accelerated learning was the norm increased the likelihood of closing achievement gap
- c. The earlier students develop off-track indicators, the lower their graduation odds appear to be



Summer & College Enrollment

Arnold, Fleming, DeAnda, Castleman, and Wartman (2009)

- Big Picture Longitudinal Study (BPLS)
 - Significant support during high school for college application, financial aid, admissions and selection process (95-100% college acceptance rate)

- Education pipeline breaks down the summer between HS graduation and college entrance for low-income youth (70% actually enroll in any college)
 - Relationships (parental ambivalence or hostility, peer pressure, thin college social networks)
 - Resources (financial to supplement the aid package)
 - Lack of knowledge (how to follow up with college, having the correct information about the college)



Summer & College Enrollment

During the summer before college, low-income youth need:

- ✓ Continuing availability of expert guidance and support re: college admissions from both the HS and the college
- ✓ Continuing assistance for students in finding the best possible pathway for their skills, interests, and postsecondary goals
- ✓ Ongoing social and emotional supports for students and their families
- ✓ Intensive and consistent financial guidance to interpret documents and make decisions among alternatives



Engagement & Motivation

Shernoff (2010)

- 196 middle school youth, Experience Sampling Method
- Perceptions of engagement, challenge and importance when in after-school programs compared to elsewhere after school predicted higher English and math grades
- Quality of experience may be more important than quantity (dosage) in predicting positive academic outcomes

Engagement = concentration + interest + enjoyment

“Flow”

1. High level of challenge
2. High skills to meet that challenge
3. Activity is regarded as relevant or important



Extended Learning

Patall, Cooper and Allen (2010)

- Review of research on Extended School Day and Extended School Year
 - Relationship between ESD and ESY and academic achievement
 - Role of length of school day and year on non-achievement outcomes
 - Attitudes of students, parents and educators toward extending the school day or year

Definition of key terms:

- Allocated school time
- Allocated class time
- Instructional time / non-instructional time
- Engaged time (time on task)
- Academic learning time



Extended Learning

Patall, Cooper and Allen (2010)

Evidence is mixed

- Neutral to small positive effect of extending school time on achievement
- Extended school time may be more beneficial for low-SES and low-achieving students

Research literature is weak

- Better designed studies produced more consistent and positive results
- Few students examined the effect on non-achievement measures
- Studies do not address whether and how school time may affect student outcomes in the long term



Demand for Summer Programming

Afterschool Alliance – America After 3 PM

1. What % of America's children participate in summer learning programs?
2. What % would likely participate based on parental interest?
3. What % of parents support public funding for summer learning programs?



Demand for Summer Programming

Afterschool Alliance – America After 3 PM

- 25% of school-age children participate
 - 43% of participants qualify for FaRMs
 - Children who participate in afterschool programs participate in summer programs at much higher levels (55%)
- 56% of all non-participating children would likely enroll, based on parent interest
- Ethnic minority and low-income children are more likely than others to participate in summer programs
 - 35% African American
 - 29% Hispanic
 - 27% Low-Income
- 8 in 10 parents (83%) support public funding for summer learning programs



Additional Questions to Consider

1. How are patterns of summer learning loss the same or different for youth as they progress through middle school and high school? What other losses might be occurring?
2. What length of programming is sufficient to support growth in youth academic performance? Improved healthy habits? Social / emotional development? Improved 21st Century skills?
3. What are appropriate measures of success for the diverse field of summer learning programs?
4. How can we encourage longitudinal tracking of impact, as opposed to 1-summer pre/post testing?
5. What level of funding is necessary to achieve scale?



Contact Us!

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