SUMMER READING SETBACK

by

Emily K. Bent

An Abstract
of a research paper submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Library Science and Information Services
in the Department of Educational Leadership and Human Development
University of Central Missouri

December, 2015
ABSTRACT

by

Emily K. Bent

Students experience reading setback as a result of the three-month summer vacation from reading instruction in school. The problem of summer reading setback affects students’ ability to enter school in the fall reading at grade level. Reviewed literature explores research of the student populations at greatest risk and outside support from various parties that fosters student reading achievement over the summer. Research results show students from economically disadvantaged families fall behind furthest during summer. Factors such as depleted reading resources, scarce adult support at home, and limited access to local libraries play a role in lower socioeconomic students’ achievement gap. With explicit teaching of best-practice decoding and comprehension strategies, providing books for self-select reading, marketing library programs, and promoting family involvement, students from disadvantaged families can close the reading achievement gap known as summer reading setback.
SUMMER READING SETBACK

by

Emily K. Bent

A Research Paper
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Library Science and Information Services
in the Department of Educational Leadership and Human Development
University of Central Missouri

December, 2015
SUMMER READING SETBACK

by

Emily K. Bent

December, 2015

APPROVED:

Advisor: Dr. Jennifer Robins

Committee Member: Dr. Patricia Antrim
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Jennifer Robins and Dr. Patricia Antrim for their expertise, guidance, and countless hours spent working to push me as a professional writer. Without them I would not have a polished piece of writing. I would also like to thank my family and friends for their insight and encouragement.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitation of the Study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying and Assessing Summer Reading Setback</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subgroup Performance and Achievement Gaps</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies to Curb the Summer Reading Setback</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for Schools</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for Teachers</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for Librarians</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for Families</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 3: CONCLUSIONS &amp; RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Summer Loss</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship between Socioeconomic Status &amp; Student Reading</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Libraries Provide Beneficial Services ...........................................22
Best Practices for Students and Families .........................................23
WORKS CITED .................................................................................25
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Students show signs of reading loss over the summer when they do not participate in reading. Summer reading loss affects a student’s ability to retain achieved learning and acquire new knowledge. Reading loss accumulates and can add a three-month decline to learning for some students each year. Students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds experience summer reading loss more often. The problem of summer reading setback takes time to correct once the school year resumes in the fall. Without interventions to catch up, the time lost begins to grow and shadows students throughout their education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this paper is to bring awareness to the growing concern of summer reading loss. This is a well-recognized problem among those in the education field. To address the problem, the first step is to be able to identify if a student experienced summer reading loss and exactly how much was lost. The next step is to address the issue that there are some students who are more likely to experience summer loss than others. The purpose of pinpointing these groups of students is to helps educators closely monitor their reading engagement and strategically plan programs to best serve their needs so they can make gains in closing the reading achievement gap. Also, this study provides the best practices to follow for all parties involved in a student’s success. These practices allow for actions to be implemented
before, during, and after summer vacation. Focusing on best practices fosters a sense of shared responsibility to further student reading achievement.

**Research Questions**

The review of literature provided answers to four guiding questions regarding summer reading setback. The questions helped to determine reading loss and how to curb reading loss in the summer. The answers summarize the direct relationship between summer vacation and summer reading loss.

1. How do educators identify if a student has summer reading loss?
2. Who is more likely to experience summer reading loss?
3. What can librarians and educators do to help support reading?
4. What are the best practices for students and families to implement over summer vacation?

**Limitations of the Study**

There were limitations to this study. The first limitation to this study concerned the subgroups of students. The research took into consideration only the subgroup identified by socioeconomic status. Other student subgroups could have been studied in isolation to determine their summer reading loss. Subgroups that might be studied further include special education students, minority students, and a study by students’ gender. This study did not address subgroups, differences in how they experience summer setback, or differences in how each subgroup might best be served. Another limitation to this study was the amount of information regarding assessment of summer reading loss. There are various formal assessments educators use, which can skew the
amount of loss (either in the numerical or letter range) used to make a clear assessment of students’ ability. The last limitation to the study was the amount of research literature on ways to curb summer reading setback. Research provided ideas, but not many studies tested practices in a large-scale study using a sample of students. The studies used, therefore, cannot be easily generalized to all students.

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms are used within this study. These terms will help a reader outside of the field make meaning from the results of the study. The definitions are not direct terms from the dictionary.

Regression: the decline of student learning.

Scaffold: support given to students to provide individualized instruction to help strengthen learning.

Socioeconomic: a ranking based on an individual's or family's income, education, and career.

Subgroup: a group of students with mutual qualities such as race, gender, economic status, or disabilities.

**Research Design**

This paper began to take shape with a review of existing literature. The literature gathered helped to make generalizations and form a conclusion about the problem of summer reading loss. A review of literature is found in chapter two. Literature was collected from the University of Central Missouri's Library, James C. Kirkpatrick’s ‘Databases and Online Resources’ directory. Library databases included, *Education*
Research Complete, ERIC, Library Literature and Information Science Full Text, JSTOR, and ProQuest Central. Literature was also received electronically and physically using the ILLiad Interlibrary Loan system. Search topics to retrieve literature included 'summer reading loss,' 'summer slide,' 'achievement gap,' 'reading assessments,' 'roles of libraries,' and 'subgroup reading.'

Additional resources were found online in journals and organization’s websites such as Reading Today, The Phi Delta Kappan, Reading Recovery, Scholastic, Reading is Fundamental (RIF), School Library Journal, Heinemann - A division of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, American Association of School Librarians, and Reading Teacher.

Next, essential questions were compiled using the literature review. These questions were themes throughout the research. Questions and answers to summer reading setback are found in chapter three. Lastly, the principles for writing this paper along with a summary of background knowledge was found in this chapter.

Conclusion

The following research details the problem of student reading loss throughout summer vacation. Students lose learning important for beginning the upcoming school year. Once student reading levels are assessed, educators can identify the students whose reading ability declined over the summer. To better prepare for the three-month vacation there are exercises students, families, teachers, and librarians can use to close the student reading achievement gap caused by limited summer learning.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This research explores students’ reading setback during the extended break of summer vacation. Student reading levels assessed in the fall show signs of regression from the progress achieved the previous spring. Students starting school delayed in the cognitive skills needed for reading experience the struggle of keeping up throughout their education, a struggle recognized by many teachers. Instructional time is hampered because of the need to reteach material that was lost over summer.

This chapter is organized into three sections. Research is presented that describes summer reading loss and outlines how it is assessed. The second section addresses how specific populations or subgroups are more likely to experience summer reading loss. This data is presented to illustrate how certain subgroups are more likely to experience such regression. The third section presents ways to best serve students during the extended summer absence from school to curb reading setback.

Identifying and Assessing Summer Reading Setback

Summer reading loss is the decline in students’ reading ability that is apparent when students are absent from the classroom and formal literacy programs. This problem of summer reading loss is also called “summer loss,” “summer setback,” or “summer slide.” Students lose reading ability and consequently find uncovering content area knowledge difficult due to their limited reading ability. Students who do not immerse themselves in some form of literature over summer are more likely to not meet upcoming grade level expectations in content areas (Mraz and Rasinski 784). This in
turn causes a delay in the delivery of new instruction in the next school year when teachers have to work with students on skills that should have been mastered previously. Schools then struggle to meet annual yearly progress projections.

Teachers formally assess students’ reading ability. Reading teachers consider these six areas when looking for evidence of student learning: fluent processing; comprehension; amounts, types, and quality of reading; level of text; attitudes and interest; and responses to literature (Fountas and Pinnell “Guiding” 488). Comprehensive reading assessments are considered quick, cost effective, and repeatable to test age-appropriate skills of all students. Schools typically administer assessments three times a year. These assessments return three important pieces of information; evidence of the functionality of curriculum and instruction, identities of students who are not making adequate progress, and indications of what additional interventions or assessments might aid student growth.

The most common reading grade level comparisons come from formal reading assessments such as the Benchmark, developed by Fountas and Pinnell, or the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) (Sharpe 4). Both the Benchmark and DRA are individually administered assessments of a child’s reading proficiencies. Once levels are identified, an instructor can use this information for instructional planning purposes such as establishing leveled, guided reading groups; invitational small groups; or monitored tiered intervention groups. Reading performance is measured using sequential letters or a numerical order to chart progress. The reading levels can then be aligned to grade levels (Fountas and Pinnell “The F&P” 2).
Teachers also use informal assessments to measure decoding and comprehension skills. Informal assessments may only focus on one to two of the previously noted six evidences of learning. Informal ways to assess reading abilities include having students read word lists where students read a list of words organized from easier to harder words until they reach a point where they are no longer able to recognize or decode words. Informal reading inventories also assist the teacher in determining the decoding skills students use. Miscue analysis is the analysis of reader errors during oral reading to infer the use or absence of reading strategies. Cloze passages, where words are left out of sentences, determine a student’s reading level, use of context clues, and vocabulary. Teachers might also keep a recording of a student’s oral reading as a running record (Fountas and Pinnell “Guiding” 488). Teachers use both formal and informal assessments to measure students’ summer reading setback.

**Subgroup Performance and Achievement Gap**

The single best predictor of reading proficiency and comprehension growth or decline during the summer period is family income (Mraz and Rasinski 785). During summers students miss meaningful learning opportunities and the effects aggregate from year to year. The achievement gap between economically advantaged and disadvantaged students grows. Richard Allington and colleagues found research on the impact of summer vacation has been studied for years. Results from multiple studies, collected from 40,000 students, indicate that students from lower income families had decreased reading proficiency levels during summer. Middle income families saw their
students’ reading proficiency levels slightly increase during summer (Allington and McGill-Franzen “Impact” 70).

Further, Allington et al. identify the amount of reading outside of the school year is a good predictor of reading achievement growth. Students who are at risk are the greatest concern for educators. These students typically face the reality of summer reading loss because they do not have access to books and support from family members (Mraz and Rasinski 788). Low income families often have very few books or other reading materials available for children, which limits their ability to continually enhance reading development (Bridges 59). The “faucet theory,” noted by Harris Cooper, states that when summer begins poor students are shut off from academic resources (“More” 1). Middle-class families do better, providing their students with remediation or enrichment activities when school is out for summer. Harris Cooper’s research found that low-income and disadvantaged students show a loss of as much as three months in grade level equivalency by the time school begins each year (“Effects” 257). The 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessment suggested that by fourth-grade children from low-income families are a bit more than a year behind other children. By eighth-grade this gap has broadened to over two and one-half years, and by twelfth-grade the gap is four years wide. That is, twelfth graders from low-income families read at the same level as the typical non-poor eighth grader (qtd. in Allington and McGill-Franzen “Summer” 9). The scope of the reading gap on the NAEP assessment aligns with the Cooper findings of a three-month difference in reading achievement that accumulates every summer.
In 1978 Barbara Heyns introduced groundbreaking research on summer reading. Heyns found students’ reading progress or loss over the summer break was linked to the number of books they read (qtd. in Smith and Brewer 3). Children who read six or more books during summer break have higher reading success than children who do not, at any income level. Also, public library use increases vocabulary at a higher rate than summer school. Out of all accessible institutions the library is most likely to aid learning during the summer and attract children from diverse communities.

Further, Heyns’ common characteristics correlated with summer reading are the use of a public library, gender, financial means, and distance from library to residence (172).

According to Allington and McGill-Franzen, whether students read during the summer essentially centers on whether or not they own books or have access to a public library. Public libraries across the United States offer summer reading programs, though programs are currently vulnerable due to budget cuts (Kavner). Allington and McGill-Franzen argue public libraries are the classic place for students to turn to for books and resources once schools have shut down for the summer, but the poor who need libraries most may have the most limited access (“Impact” 72). Libraries in low-income neighborhoods are often the most affected by monetary constraints. In addition, low-income students may lack transportation to get to a library, or the neighborhood might be too dangerous to walk to the library. The lack of access to books in libraries and schools exaggerates the disadvantage for poor students who typically come from homes with fewer books than their more affluent peers. Richard Allington was asked about addressing the problem of summer reading. He directs a question back to the
schools, on the days leading up to summer vacation: “Do students have at least 10 books from the library?” He finds it troubling that school libraries are filled with books during the summer. His suggestion is to put the books in the students’ hands straight off the library shelves. Librarians feel uneasy about the possibility of losing too many books. Allington argues,

    Schools must stop worrying more about protecting their books from children than worrying about children having such limited access to books. Yes, cleaning out the library will result in some books not being returned. But our experience suggests this is typically less than 10 percent of the books loaned. In my mind that is a small price to pay for the improved reading achievement that is observed when poor students have books to read over the summer (qtd.in Eames).

The magnitude of the achievement gap is most noticeable by the end of elementary school (Kim and White “Solving” 64). In the early primary grades students make substantial reading gains. But, the summer between first and second grade is a critical time for students who do not participate in reading and other literacy supporting activities. Although low-income students in the study made as much progress in reading during the academic year as middle income students did, the poorer students’ reading skills slipped away during the summer months. Research shows that 67% of ninth grade reading decline can be attributed to summers in elementary school when these students had inadequate access to learning opportunities. There is a correlation between the increased achievement gap and a decrease in students staying in school and pursuing college track programs (Smith “Slowing” 60).
Strategies to Curb the Summer Reading Setback

“Reading is oxygen for a student’s future success,” explains Penny Kittle (63). She quotes Nancie Atwell: “For students of every ability and background, it is the simple miraculous act of reading a good book that turns them into readers. The job of adults who care about reading is to move heaven and Earth to put that book into a child’s hand” (qtd. in Kittle 28). When students receive high quality and explicit reading instruction with materials that match their ability level, they are likely to experience relative success in reading comprehension (Fox 7). Stephen Krashen’s research indicates that when students read more they become better readers and writers (21). Students who participate in summer reading programs make more gains than students who do not attend. Teachers that teach reading strategies and provide books before summer vacation offer students tools to promote reading in the summer. Libraries that encourage reading and provide incentive programs welcome readers with open arms. Families that support reading over the summer prepare their students for the upcoming school year.

Strategies for Schools

Responsibility for the learning that occurs outside of the traditional academic school year has prompted some school district personnel to consider implementing summer programs during the 3-month recess. A recent survey of the majority of large school districts in the United States with established summer programs for students showed that these programs were remedial, addressing only students who did not meet grade level expectations by the end of the year (Borman 135). However, Cooper’s
research revealed that summer programs aimed at corrective, fast-tracked, and enhanced learning had a positive impact on students’ reading skills and comprehension (Cooper “Summer” 4). Although all students benefited, students from middle-class families showed greater positive outcomes than students from disadvantaged families. Remedial programs with greater gains worked best when the program was small and instruction was individualized. Cooper also argued for modifying the school calendar, eliminating a long summer break.

Academic deficiency can occur from failing to read as few as six books in the summer (Heyns 166). This statement is backed up by research by Harvard professor James Kim. With the caution that his research shows "promising yet preliminary findings," Kim states,

Similar to prior research on summer learning… I found that the volume of summer book reading was positively related to fall reading achievement independent of prior reading and writing skills and student background characteristics…. The benefits of reading books during summer vacation were also consistent for all ethnic groups. In particular, reading four to five books had significantly larger effects than reading three or fewer books (Kim “Ethnic” 184). While Kim supported Barbara Heyns’ finding that the number of books children read is a key factor in preventing summer reading loss, subsequent research demonstrates that in order to boost reading performance, students need more support than just having access to books (Allington and McGill-Franzen “Addressing” 424).
There is some debate about the conditions under which voluntary reading interventions improve reading achievement. One central issue is whether voluntary reading should be a purely student-centered instructional strategy, in which children are allowed to self-select books and are encouraged to read on their own with little guidance from teachers (Kim “The Effects” 505).

With books now in students’ hands, giving students a choice when it comes to reading can be a positive enticement. Voluntary reading provides students with chances to select texts that meet their interests and an opportunity to read independently in an environment that is free of directions and feedback. Teachers in the United States incorporate voluntary reading as they believe that it supports advancing student reading skills (White and Kim 116). More reading gains are made when children choose individual book titles and read for pleasure. Fiore and Roman recapped Heyns’ pioneering study. Summer reading program achievement is reflected by student participation and number of books read or minutes read, which positively affect students’ vocabulary (Fiore and Roman 27).

Success in reading comprehension ability is likely to be followed by enhancement of self-efficacy beliefs about reading competence (Fox iv). Fox suggested if one person has low self-efficacy in an area, then he or she tends to avoid that area. Students who demonstrate success in reading comprehension are likely to believe that they are good readers and to express strong positive self-efficacy for reading. They are less likely to avoid reading than are students who are not successful. They experience higher reading comprehension achievement, and that is related to intrinsic motivation to
engage in reading voluntarily (Krashen 26). Students who have strong positive self-efficacy beliefs about their reading ability and are intrinsically motivated to read are more likely to voluntarily engage in reading outside of school than are students with low self-efficacy and weak intrinsic motivation. Summer programs that give students access to reading materials not only support more reading in the summer but also lead to higher self efficacy, comprehension, and reading motivation.

**Strategies for Teachers**

One way to get reading material into students’ hands to promote summer reading is through book drives and fairs. Teachers are often armed with the help of community programs and outreach to provide donations of books to their students. Allington et al. explored summer reading activities in an experimental study of students in 17 high-poverty elementary schools located in two Florida school districts. In three successive years, Allington and his researchers operated a book fair in which the students were free to choose books for summer reading ("Addressing" 411). Each student selected 15 titles, 12 of which they could keep. The control group students did not receive books. To measure reading level growth, a state assessment test was used to gauge students’ reading performance. Students who received a supply of books to keep read more in the summer than students who did not receive books. According to Allington et al., students who read more as a result of having books at hand had superior reading achievement. The students who received the books reported reading independently more often over the summer than the control group students.
Although Allington and McGill-Franzen supported Barbara Heyns’ finding that the number of books children read is a key factor in preventing summer reading loss, subsequent research demonstrates that in order to boost reading performance, students need more support than just having access to books. To enhance voluntary reading in the summer, students need to develop skill at silent reading. Teacher scaffolding involves providing the students with a series of lessons at the end of the spring semester. Teachers scaffold silent reading activities by teaching students to check for understanding and comprehension strategies when they read and work independently (Allington and McGill-Franzen “Summer” 4). During these lessons the teachers model fluent oral reading and comprehension techniques for silent reading. The students then practice the oral reading strategies in pairs and practiced using silent reading techniques on their own.

Kim and White looked at providing reading material for voluntary reading as well as teaching scaffolding (66). Teaching scaffolding occurred before students received the first of eight books they were given over the course of the summer. Students were randomly assigned to one of four groups that were managed differently: (1) books only; (2) books with oral reading scaffolding; (3) books with oral reading and comprehension scaffolding; (4) and the control group. Teachers, assigned to the groups getting scaffolding, received two hours of training on appropriate and explicit scaffolding practices. To support teacher scaffolding, all four of the student groups’ parents were encouraged to listen to the child talk about a book, listen to the child read aloud, and provide the child with feedback. The results of this study exposed no reading
performance differences between the students in Group 4 (the control group) and the students in Group 1 (those who received books without scaffolding), as measured by a standardized assessment. On the other hand, the performance of students in Group 3 (those who received books with oral reading and comprehension scaffolding) far surpassed that of the students in Group 4, and slightly outperformed those in Group 2 (those who received books with oral reading scaffolding). Reading with scaffolding proved more powerful than reading with no scaffolding (66).

Allington and McGill-Franzen and Kim and White are advocates for getting books in student’s hands. A supplement to scaffolding, the books provided to students also match student interest and reading level. Kim and White’s research additionally shows supplying students with books was important for promoting independent reading, but books alone were not enough to improve reading performance in areas such as decoding, fluency, and comprehension among elementary school students. They name the missing links, which must be included in effective programming, as scaffolding from adults and supplies of appropriate books (67).

**Strategies for Librarians**

“Public libraries are helping to close the ‘book gap’ by providing children of all backgrounds access to high-quality reading materials and rich language experiences... The public library is important to the reading achievement of many children, particularly those children who lack other reading resources” (Celano 10). Karen Pundsack writes that a well-designed library summer reading program serves multiple audiences, incorporates themes, and provides incentives. McCombs reviewed the support for
library-sponsored summer programs to enrich students' learning. McCombs found compelling verification that a well-designed summer program has the power to boost students' reading performance (27). School librarians partner with public librarians to host workshops for families in the weeks before the start of summer vacation in order to promote summer reading and make suggestions for keeping children engaged in literacy over the summer. Through these partnerships, public librarians promote their summer reading program and offer a chance to sign up for library cards.

The McCombs study indicates more benefits come from a summer reading program that is academically challenging, stimulating, and makes reading enjoyable and fun. Library-sponsored summer academic reading programs enable students to work on concepts they failed to master during the school year. Enrichment programs provide opportunities for students to focus on concepts that will be introduced in the next school year. Public and school librarians can work together to provide these programs. Student participation may be voluntary or required. Voluntary programs in both library settings invite students, while required programs, generally enforced by the school librarian, are provided for students who are at risk of falling behind due to various academic factors (McCombs 3).

Librarians provide ideas to promote natural and enjoyable interactions around reading. As opposed to the traditional school year, when instruction is focused on academic achievement, summer programs in public and school libraries provide a more relaxed environment where students can explore and build strong relationships with both adults and peers (Blazer 6). This is because children do not use the public library
by themselves. They go with parents and other adults. Library summer reading programs that tailor marketing to entice adults to take children to the library and supply resources for children to use with adults show parents the importance summer reading programs provide for their children.

**Strategies for Families**

Lundstorm writes about the reality of the summer slide, students who read will succeed with practice, if they have books and role models (22). With the encouragement of librarians and teachers, families deliver and model valuable support for summer reading. At-risk families need resources and concrete guidelines on how to support students. Factors both within the school and influences beyond the school both affect the track of young students’ reading development. Mraz and Rasinski found six ways families impact reading participation. First they suggest that teachers provide a variety of literacy activity ideas families can use as a starting point for reading activities at home. Next they remind teachers that each member of a family reading community has something to contribute. Third families and teachers should share a mutual respect for all involved in the success of the child. Fourth as teachers recruit family participation, communication between parents and the teacher is key for reading success. Fifth, teachers provide activities for students and families to use at home, but families accomplish those activities. Sixth, in all circumstances families should request or be offered support and resources to help their students’ reading (787). When adults read around their children an example is set, teaching children that reading literature is important and fun, especially during summer days (Colker).
Kim and White emphasize that parents’ encouragement for home reading activities has a positive impact on the students’ attitudes toward pleasure reading. Kim and White recommend teachers provide more resources to parents, such as questioning strategies, leveled books, or interactive books or programs to support teachings from the classroom. This develops children’s interest and enjoyment for reading (65). Fostering self selected reading while actively engaging in comprehension building conversations and activities increases students’ summer reading success.

This review of the research found, when looking for ways to curb the summer reading setback, the continual commitment of teachers, librarians, and families can do much to assist childrens’ literacy over the summer. Summer reading programs provide a popular option for reducing the reading achievement gap. The research indicates that summer reading programs help students maintain or even increase their academic skills over the summer months (McCombs xiii).

Summary

Various assessments identify and assess summer reading loss. Teachers discover from these assessments the amount of comprehension, fluency, and motivation a student loses over the summer. Economically disadvantaged students are impacted by their lack of summer reading, and this contributes to an achievement gap that limits future opportunities and experiences for these students. Summer reading loss is cumulative. With several years of inattention to summer reading loss, students experience multiple years of reading setbacks. As students continue to struggle and lose reading skills over summer, by fifth grade they will be three years behind their
peers (Smith and Brewer 2). They continue to experience the struggle of reading on grade level through the rest of their time in public school.

Research studies indicate how to best reach students during the extended absence from school to control reading setback. With the use of modeling and scaffolding, teachers and parents offer robust support to their students in the efforts to reduce summer reading regression. Students need tools such as scaffolding, appropriate selection of books and the encouragement and support of their families to increase their interest in reading during summer. By combining access to books, scaffolding, and motivation, students will be better prepared for the upcoming school semester and lower the reading achievement gap. High-quality summer learning programs with characteristics such as individualized or scaffolded instruction, family involvement, and library classes not only curb summer learning loss, but even help boost student achievement (McCombs). Transforming summer reading programs and embracing new instruction and resources brings together the best of learning to eliminate summer learning loss, help close the achievement gap, and engage students for a better future. Participating in summer reading programs that immerse children in books while employing family support in applying reading strategies decreases the summer reading setback.
CHAPTER 3
CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This research addresses the correlation between summer vacation and student reading loss after the break. Without literacy involvement or intervention, students likely fall behind, creating an achievement gap. This chapter is arranged into four main sections. The first section explores how to know if a student has summer reading loss. The second section of this chapter explains, who is more likely to experience summer reading loss. The third section presents answers to the question of what libraries and educators can do to help support reading. Lastly, this section presents the best practice for students and families to implement over summer vacation.

Evaluation of Summer Loss

Summer loss is defined as reading regression during the summer recess. Formal assessments are administered to students in the fall, winter, and spring. Assessments gauge an individuals’ reading level identifying their fluency and comprehension. A student’s spring reading level is the level he or she is expected to maintain into the fall. When an assessment is returned with a level(s) below the expected fall reading level, a student displayed regression over the summer vacation.

With summer loss now identified from individual student assessments, teachers spend an ample amount of time in the fall reteaching skills taught in the previous school year. Students and teachers fall behind in the current year instruction and standards.

The next step for teachers, in terms of facing regression, is to consider areas to begin building up student learning and reading levels. Assessing reading levels in early
fall, allows for setback to be quickly identified leading to implementing interventions for these students.

**Relationship between Socioeconomic Status & Student Reading**

Family socioeconomic status is the number one factor contributing to summer reading loss. Students from lower income families see their reading proficiency levels drop during the summer months. Students from middle income families see a moderate reading growth over summer. The loss of reading in the summer leads to an accumulated achievement gap of three months per year for poor students.

Low income families have limited access to resources needed to promote literacy enrichment. The most notable resource missing in lower income homes is reading material. There is also a lack of adult supervision and influence during the summer days. Another factor for reading loss is student proximity to a public library. Prior to summer and even at the beginning of the year, specific attention is paid to students of diverse economic backgrounds helps decrease the summer slide in reading skills.

**Libraries Provide Beneficial Services**

Summer loss can be limited when students visit the public library and utilize their resources and services during the summer. Librarians market resources and services to all community patrons, but specifically to those patrons who lack them. It is key to not only draw the attention of student patrons, but also the attention of adults responsible for getting students to the library in the summer. Public librarians promote reading programs with incentives and themes for readers and activities for them to participate in
literacy development. The environment a public library creates for those students is relaxed, welcoming, and enjoyable.

Public libraries and school libraries partner to foster summer reading. Book suggestions for self-selected reading, project themes, and book fairs are ways both libraries work together to promote each other's services. School librarians highlight the public library when the school library is closed for the summer. School librarians can rethink closing for the summer, instead allowing students to take books with them over the summer. Both public and school libraries strive to provide services to promote resources and strategies to engage in literacy activities over summer recess.

**Best Practices for Students and Families**

Summer loss can be prevented when students and families build good reading habits and practices. One habit students need to build into their day during summer vacation is reading books. This habit of voluntary reading gives students a choice and holds them responsible for their education. Even reading as few as six books in the summer helps students build reading skills and prevents them from falling behind in the upcoming school year. Along with reading books, when students practice comprehension strategies (predict, question, and make inferences), they are strengthening their own self-efficacy and esteem.

Having good role models is important for readers. Families that work together are creating a sense of community and holding everyone accountable for reading growth. Student interest is nurtured at home when parents talk to their student about books, encourage new reading material, and make activities and readings interesting. Materials
that school teachers and librarians make available to families provide a way to work together for the common interest of the student. These are practices that are fun and useful at anytime. Applying comprehension and decoding strategies, reading books, and working together with family members are all activities that benefit a student’s effort to help stop summer loss.
WORKS CITED


http://readingrecovery.org/images/pdfs/Conferences/TLI15/Handouts/Summer_reading_loss_ch.pdf


http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/11/16/can-the-american-library-n_1096484.html


