

88 Generalizations about Free Voluntary Reading

(* = insufficient research available = research opportunity)

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RESEARCH ON SSR

Language Development

1. Overall, SSR is successful: 51/54 studies, readers as good or better than comparisons in reading comprehension. (Krashen)
2. Longer term studies tend to be more successful (Reading Comprehension)
SSR students also do better than comparisons in
3. writing
4. spelling (mostly)
5. vocabulary

Establishing a Reading Habit

6. SSR readers read more at the end of the program (Pilgreen)
7. and even years later (Greeney)

Affect and SSR

8. students prefer SSR to regular instruction (Dupuy, McQuillan)
9. A single SSR session can change attitudes (KS Cho)
10. Fewer discipline problems when SSR is done*

11. more reading > better TOEFL performance (Constantino, SY Lee, KS Cho; Gradman & Hanania)
12. more reading > less writing apprehension (SY Lee)
13. more reading > less writer's block (SY Lee)
14. more reading > less memory loss (Rice)
15. more reading > more hobbies, involvement in the world (NEA)
16. reading helps you sleep (Nell)
17. FVR is pleasant (Csikszentmihalyi, Nell)
18. Eminent people nearly all voracious readers; (Simonton)

ENCOURAGING READING

1. "reluctant readers" = little access (Worthy)
2. more access to books > more reading
3. more access to books > better reading
4. school libraries (Houle and Montmarquette. McQuillan)
5. classroom libraries (Morrow)
6. public libraries (Ramos, Lao)
7. children get many of their books from libraries
8. poverty > very little access (Constantino et al, Neuman)

SSR is Robust

11. SSR works for languages other than English: Japanese (Day), Spanish (Rodrigo) as FL
12. SSR works for L1 and L2
13. SSR works for all ages studied so far
14. SSR "robust" - even if conditions not fully met (SY Lee) (short term, few books)
15. SSR works with graded readers (Mason)

Do they read during SSR?

16. 90% read during SSR (Von Sprecken)
17. more reading takes place if books available (Von Sprecken)
18. more reading takes place if the teacher reads (Von Sprecken, Wheldall and Entwistle)
19. SSR may not work if it is done school-wide at the same time each day (Minton)
20. Don't use the lunch period for SSR (Maynes)

Can SSR be made stronger?

("catalyzed")

21. supplementation with writing doesn't help (Mason)
22. supplementation with correction/grammar doesn't help (Mason)

9. at home (Feitelson et. al.)
10. at school - classroom and school libraries - libraries don't have what children like to read (Worthy)
11. book stores (Neuman and Celano)
12. EFL: little access to reading in English (HK Kim)
13. read alouds > more reading (Trelease; natural partner of SSR)
14. direct encouragement > more reading (Shin; under certain conditions)
15. comfort and quiet > more reading (reading in bed) (Nell)
16. no effect of rewards (McQuillan, Krashen reviews)
17. no evidence supporting the use of lexiles (Krashen)
18. good readers read comics (Ujiie)
19. comics as conduit (Krashen, Power of Reading)
20. one positive experience (home run book) can create a reader (Von Sprecken, Ujiie, J.Kim)
21. home run experiences are different for different readers (Ujiie)
22. home run books not necessarily "quality" books (Ujiie)
23. peers influence reading
24. book displays influence reading
25. TV does not inhibit reading (Neuman)
26. Computers do not inhibit reading

23. supplementation that makes reading more comprehensible, interesting can help (Shin, Manning)

BENEFITS OF READING (from correlational studies)

1. More reading > better reading
2. More reading > better writing
3. More reading > more writing (SY Lee)
4. more reading > read faster (Anderson, Fielding)
5. more reading > know more about literature (Stanovich)
6. more reading > know more social science (Stanovich)
7. more reading > more cultural literacy (Stanovich)
8. more reading > have more practical knowledge (Stanovich)
9. more bible reading > more knowledge of bible than "study" (Filback)
10. more reading > better grades in writing class (SY Lee)
27. Decline in reading not demonstrated (NEA report)
28. Decline in interest in reading with age not demonstrated (Krashen and Von Sprecken)
29. reading tastes broaden over time (LaBrant, 1938)
30. good readers tend to be narrow readers (Lamme)
31. narrow reading > more reading (Cho)

GUIDELINES for SSR

1. each day, not a lot once a week
(distributed, not massed)*
2. less is more; do less than you think
they can handle*
3. make sure lots of books are
available
4. comics ok
5. magazines ok
6. graded readers ok for FL, ESL
7. need not be a "book" (comics,
magazines OK)
8. minimum censorship *
9. "easy" books ok
10. "hard" books ok
11. no lexiles or other leveling
procedures
12. don't have to finish the book *
13. not for advanced or beginners, for
less mature
14. supplements > make reading more
comprehensible and interesting (eg
read alouds, introduce more
possibilities, trips to library,
discuss literature, conferences)
NOT skill-building
15. no rewards, tests, book reports,
minimum accountability, but some
encouragement might work if done
right (Shin)
16. How about some food and drink?*(
Trelease and Krashen)