

Enough Already!

Blazing New Trails for School Library Research

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Questions

- What have we done so far?
 - What difference has it made?
 - Why is it time to move on to something new?
 - What questions need answers?
 - How can those answers make a difference?
 - What increases/decreases our chances of making a difference?
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What have we done so far?

- ❑ Big questions: do school libraries/librarians make a difference? If so, how much and how?
 - ❑ Gaver study and its predecessors
 - ❑ "Colorado" studies
 - ❑ Krashen studies
 - ❑ "Ohio" studies
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What difference has it made?

- ❑ LRS survey of outcomes of using studies
 - ❑ Sample findings (N=466, 4/26/05):
 - 81% shared w/principals; 66% w/teachers
 - 68% improved relationships w/principals; 65% w/teachers
 - Librarians spend more time
 - ❑ Planning collaboratively – 63%
 - ❑ Teaching info literacy – 62%
 - ❑ Identifying materials for teachers – 60%
 - ❑ Teaching collaboratively – 48%
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What difference has it made?

- Strengthened school library programs by:
 - Improving access to e-info – 48%
 - Increasing collection size – 45%
 - Increasing class/group visits to library – 40%
 - Achieving more flexible scheduling – 39%
 - Increasing individual visits to library – 37%
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Why is it time to move on to something new?

- “Colorado” studies in 14 states
 - Consistency of findings
 - Limitations of available data
 - Separating effects (especially economics)
 - Need for stronger causal evidence
 - Scientifically Based Research (SBR)
 - U.S. Department of Education
 - Controlled randomized trials
 - National Research Council
 - Requirement to rule out competing causes
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What questions need answers?

- What difference is made by specific library “interventions?”
 - “programs, products, practices, policies”
 - How are negative decisions hurting students?
 - Consequences of removing librarians or library aides, downgrading from librarian to aide
 - How can educators be motivated to help develop, & support, libraries that help their students—and them—succeed?
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What questions need answers?

- How much, and how, are achievement & learning *improved* when ...
 - librarians collaborate more fully with other educators?
 - libraries are more flexibly scheduled?
 - administrators choose to support stronger library programs (in a specific way)?
 - library spending (for something specific) increases?
 - **Note: need evidence of “improvement” for individual schools over time—not more comparisons of haves and have nots**
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How can those answers make a difference?

- Reach teachers, administrators & public officials
 - Their literature, press, conferences
 - Infiltrate NCLB movement via What Works Clearinghouse
 - Ratings: meets evidence standards, meets with reservations, does not meet
 - ... but caution advised!
 - Infiltrate schools & colleges of education
 - Required course about school libraries
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What increases—and decreases—our chances of making a difference?

□ **“Against”**

- Age demographic of librarians
- Lack of institutionalization of librarianship in K-12 schools
- Lack of support from educators due to lack of education/training & good experiences

□ **“For”**

- Regional accreditation requirements
 - Age demographic of educators
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The Challenge

- It's time to ...
 - Re-assess the focus and strategies of our research—and our professional “politics”
 - Stop talking to ourselves and start talking to other educators and policy makers on their terms
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