Powering Achievement

The Impact of School Libraries &

Librarians on Academic Achievement

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Outline

- ❏ Background
  - ■ States involved, Info Power context
- ❏ Results
  - ■ Library predictors of academic achievement
  - ■ Controlling for school & community conditions
- ❏ Implications
  - ■ Recommended actions
  - ■ Other research questions
  - ■ What you can do

Previous Research

1950s-1980's: largely experimental research

- ❑ Librarian as teacher, co-teacher, tutor
- ❑ Collections, technology, interlibrary cooperation
- ❑ Library staff, budgets, teacher & principal support

1992/3: 1st Colorado study: statistical analysis

- ❑ School Match episode
- ❑ "School Match Revisited" aftermath
- ❑ The Big Question ... and the answer

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Information Power Model

Successor to earlier IP & Library Power

Themes
- Collaboration
- Leadership
- Technology

Roles
- Learning & Teaching
- Information Access & Delivery
- Program Administration

Standards-Based Education

Standardized, norm-referenced tests

- ❑ Reading tests
- ❑ Library/study skills tests
- ❑ Percentile rankings (grading "on the curve")

Standards-based tests

- ❑ Content standards
- ❑ Information literacy standards
- ❑ Percent who meet or exceed standards

Technology

- ❑ Rapid growth in availability of computers, Internet access, World Wide Web capabilities in schools

- ❑ Changing nature of teacher-librarian & technology specialist jobs

- ❑ Common ground: "information literacy"

Challenge to Recent Studies

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Take into account
- ❑ Info Power/Library Power movements
- ❑ Standards-based education
- ❑ Technology developments

Get message out beyond "the choir"
- ❑ Principals, teachers
- ❑ Technology specialists
- ❑ Parents, students

Schools & Libraries Studied

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- ❑ Since 2000, 14 states
    - ■ AK, CO, FL, IA, IL, MA, MI, MN, MO, NC, NM, OR, PA, TX
- ❑ Over 8,700 schools
- ❑ Elementary, middle and high school libraries serving an estimated 2.6 million students

Library Predictors of Academic Achievement

Library staffing

Professional staff (teacher-librarians)

- ❑ Master's/bachelor's degrees
- ❑ Teacher certification & experience
- ❑ Library endorsement

Support staff

- ❑ Library aides, technology aides

Library Predictors of Academic Achievement

❑ Staff Activities
  ■ Learning & Teaching
  ■ Information Access & Delivery
  ■ Program Administration

Library Predictors of Academic Achievement

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Staff Activities

Learning & Teaching

- ❑ Planning with classroom teachers
- ❑ Teaching students with classroom teachers
- ❑ Teaching information literacy skills to students (without classroom teachers)
- ❑ Providing in-service training to classroom teachers

Library Predictors of Academic Achievement

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Staff Activities

Information Access & Delivery

- ❑ Developing collections
- ❑ Identifying print & electronic resources for classroom teachers
- ❑ Motivating students to read

Library Predictors of Academic Achievement

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Staff Activities

Program Administration

- ❑ Meeting regularly with principal
- ❑ Attending faculty meetings
- ❑ Serving on key committees
- ❑ Meeting with other school librarians

Library Predictors of Academic Achievement

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- ❑ School library hours of operation
  - ■ Before, during & after school
  - ■ In summer
  - ■ Flexible access/scheduling
- ❑ School library usage
  - ■ Group visits
  - ■ Individual visits
  - ■ Both for information literacy skills instruction

Library Predictors of Academic Achievement

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Technology

Numbers of computers

- ❏ In library
- ❏ Elsewhere in school

Providing access to

- ■ Library catalogs
- ■ Licensed databases
- ■ State-specific packages of databases
  Internet/World Wide Web

The Latest Results: sample Illinois findings

- ❑ Test scores higher at schools with more:
  - Flexible scheduling (+10-11% elem.)
  - Library staffing (+17-18% elem., middle)
  - Librarian/teacher collaboration (+8% elem.)
  - Current collections (+13-14% middle)
  - Library & other connected computers/100 (+8-11% middle)
  - Library spending (+5% elem., +9% middle, +12% high)
  - Circ (+11%, elem.), group visits (+9-10%, middle)

Controlling for Other School & Community Conditions

- ❑ School library development factor
  - ■ Staffing, collections, expenditures
- ❑ Other school conditions
  - ■ Per pupil spending
  - ■ Teacher-pupil ratio
- ❑ Community conditions
  - ■ Poverty (NSLP eligibility)
  - ■ Minority enrollment
  - ■ Adult educational attainment (age 25+ graduated from high school)

Academic Achievement Predictors Ranked

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Ranked by percent of test score variation explained:

- **Poverty** (NSLP eligibility): 50-65%

- **School library development**: up to 8%, typically 3%

Variables that don't explain any test score variation consistently:

- Adult educational attainment

- Minority enrollment

- Per pupil spending

- Teacher-pupil ratio

Recommended Actions

- ❑ Staff school libraries with professional & support staff
- ❑ Stock them with current books & licensed databases as well as Internet computers
- ❑ Fund them to support school's curriculum and state's standards
- ❑ Adopt flexible scheduling
- ❑ Utilize school computer network to extend library program's reach into every classroom

Other Research Questions

- ❑ How best can leadership and collaboration skills of teacher-librarians be developed?

- ❑ What do teachers and administrators know—and need to learn—about the role of school libraries?

- ❑ How can information literacy and technology dovetail to maximize library's impact?

What You Can Do

❑ Collect and share meaningful numbers annually

❑ Record and share success stories

❑ Respond to appeals from researchers

❑ Pursue "action research" projects yourselves

For more information…

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