

Eyes on the Page: Understanding Time Spent Reading in Mississippi's Reading First Classrooms

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Examining Opportunity to Read

- **Time spent reading is related to fluency, vocabulary and comprehension achievement (Guthrie, Schaer, & Huang, 2001; Pinnell et. al., 1995)**
- **Fluency—reading with appropriate rate and expression—is related to comprehension and overall reading achievement (Buck & Torgeson, 2003)**

Opportunity to Read

- **Time spent reading builds fluency, it helps students become more automatic readers (Buck & Torgeson, 2003)**
- **Children who read more learn more vocabulary (Critchley, 2006)**
- **Matthew Effect (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998)**

Time Spent Reading

- **Provides one way of looking at the curriculum**
- **Allows us to analyze one aspect of the impact of Reading First**

How Much Reading?

- **Allington (2001) recommends 90 minutes during the school day**
- **Fisher & Ivey (2006) suggest that for struggling readers time spent actively engaged in reading (and writing) “ought to substantially outweigh the amount of time students spend considering skills and strategies . . .” (p. 184)**
- **More than half?**

Reading First

- **Largest, most ambitious initiative for improving K-3 reading achievement**
- **Low achieving, high poverty schools**
- **Scientifically based reading research**
- **Curriculum (SBRR core program)**
- **Assessment**
- **Professional development**
- **Accountability**

Reading First In Mississippi

- **65 schools in 32 districts, 33 schools in year 4, 32 schools in year 2 of implementation**
- **Literacy coaches and regional coordinators**
- **Weekly Peer Coaching Study Teams**
- **Core programs**
- **Systematic assessment process**
- **Professional development**

Mississippi Reading First Demographic Characteristics

	Range	Average
Total Number of Students	N=18,895	286
Percent Male Students	43%-59%	52%
Percent Female Students	41%-57%	48%
Percent American Indian	0%-1%	9%
Percent Asian	0%-2%	0%
Percent Black	12%-100%	83%
Percent Hispanic	0%-15%	1%
Percent White	0%-88%	15%

Mississippi Reading First Demographic Characteristics

Percentages of Disadvantaged Students	
Lowest District Percentage of Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch	56.4%
Highest District Percentage of Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch	93.9%
Average District Percentage of Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch	80.3%

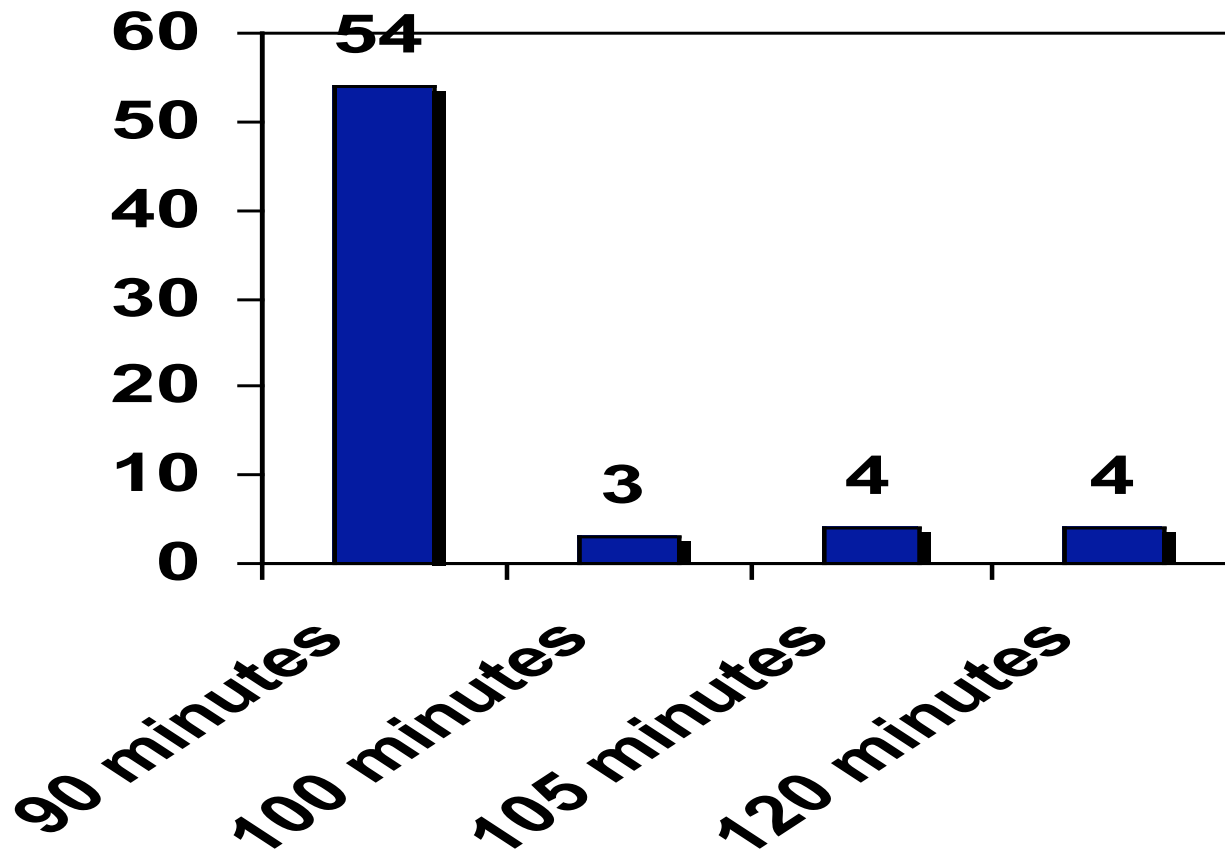
5 Research Questions

- **Time spent reading**
- **Assisted vs. unassisted reading**
- **Sources and genres of texts read**
- **Differences in time reading by achievement (DIBELS)**
- **Differences in opportunity read by length of implementation**

Method

- **Observed in 2 classrooms in randomly selected school from each of 32 districts**
- **Documented students' reading behavior with an observational instrument**
- **6 students, girl and boy at 3 achievement levels**
- **Observed for 30 seconds every 3 minutes**
- **Coded reading behavior and text being read**
- **Field notes**

How many minutes of classroom reading instruction?



How many minutes with eyes on text in the RF classroom?

- **On average**
 - **9.2 minutes during observation**
 - **18.4 minutes during the entire instructional block**

Minutes of Reading

- **Often not sustained**
- **18.4 greater than the national average of 8-12 (Donahue et. al., 2001)**
- **20% of instructional time**
- **Less than the 2/3 of instruction suggested by Fisher and Ivey**
- **Unlikely to lead to 90 minutes/day**

How many minutes of assisted and unassisted reading?

- **Assisted reading—eyes on text while someone else reads aloud, choral, repeated, etc.**
- **4.8 minutes per observation**
- **9.6 minutes during instructional period**
- **Just over half of time spent with eyes on text**

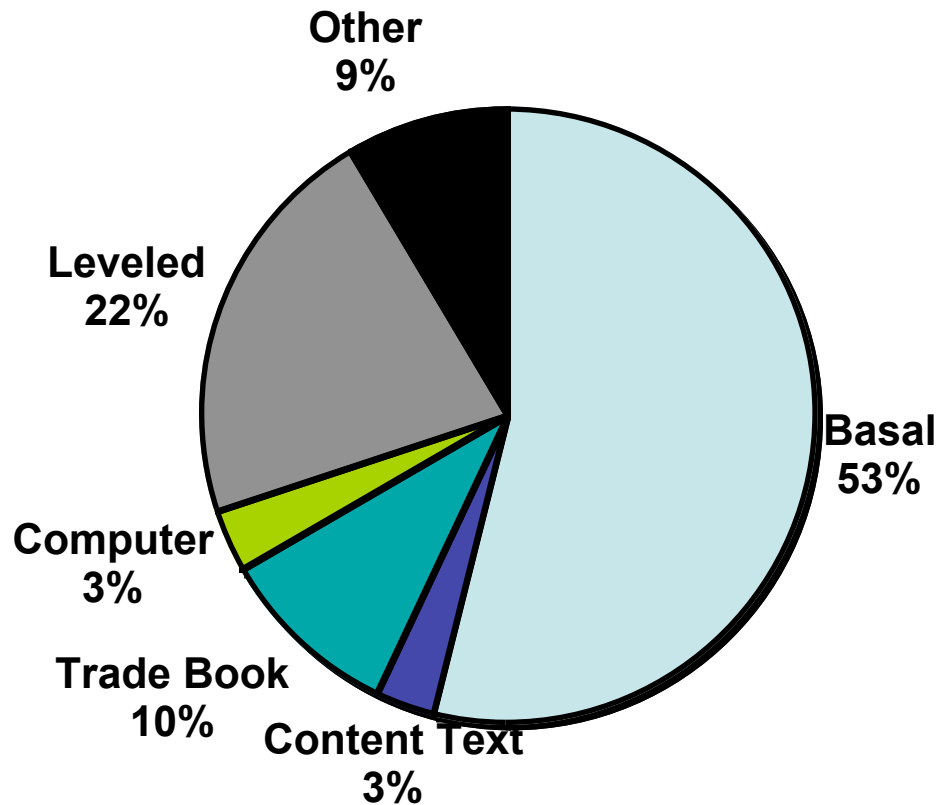
How many minutes of assisted and unassisted reading?

- **Unassisted—independent reading (aloud or silent)**
- **4.4 minutes during observations**
- **8.8 minutes during instructional period**
- **Less than half of time spent with eyes on text**

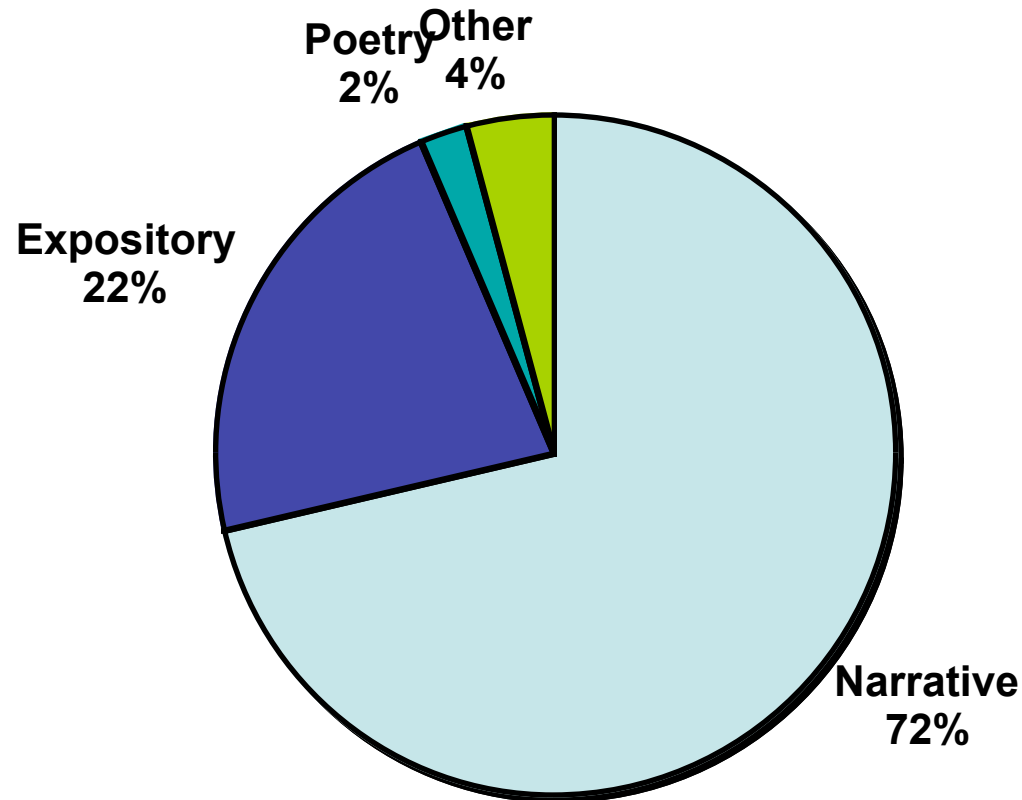
How many minutes of assisted and unassisted reading?

- **Assisted reading often encouraged by the basal program**
- **Assisted reading may provide access to more challenging text (and often times basal passages are challenging for some students) (Stahl & Kuhn 2004)**
- **However, limited time unassisted**
- **Basal texts may contain high percentages of rare words, practicing those may not lead as directly to fluency with future passages as we would like**

What types of texts are students reading? (Sources)



What types of texts are students reading? (Genres)



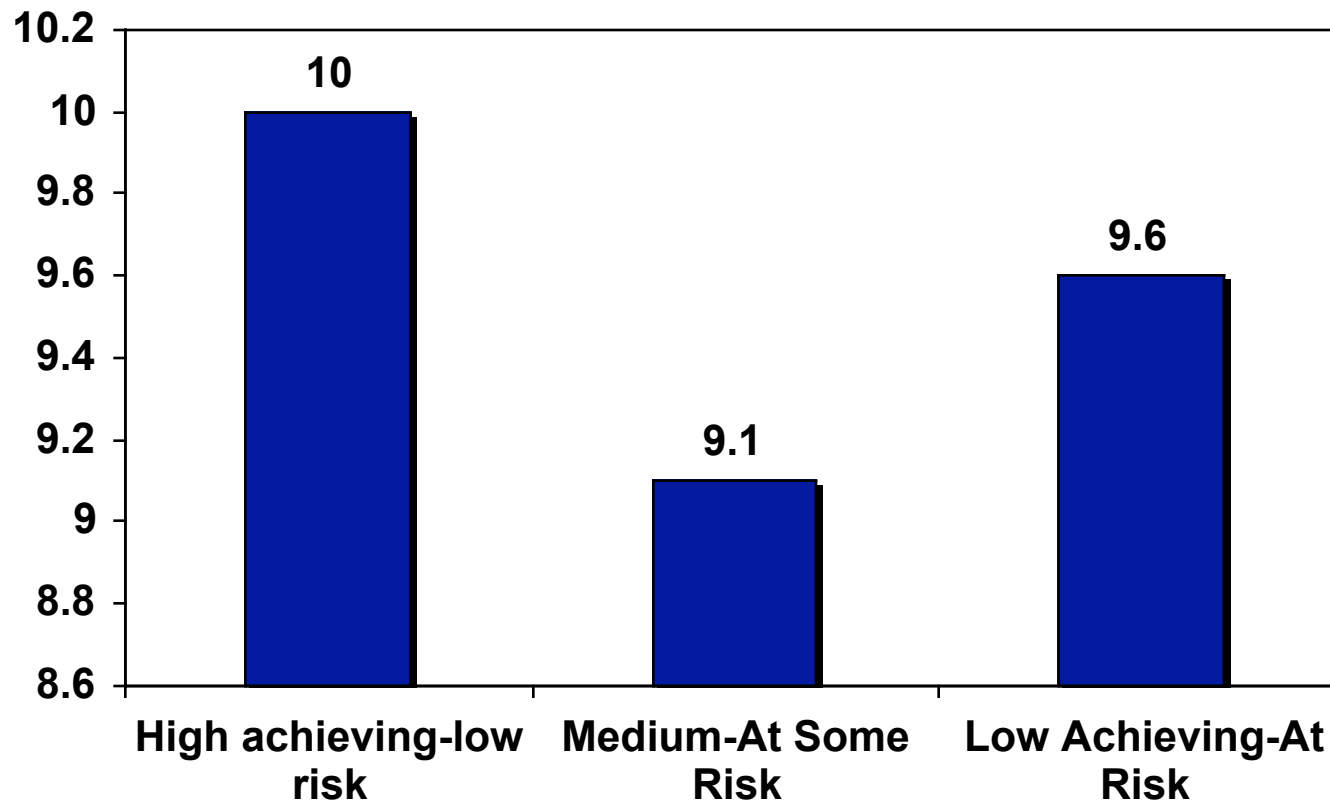
Types of Texts

- **Mostly basal and leveled readers**
- **Mostly narrative**
- **Consistent with wide implementation of core programs**

Reading-Rich vs. Reading-Poor

- **Reading-rich and reading-poor activities**
- **Basals and the menu of options**
- **Basals tend to suggest more reading-poor than reading-rich**
- **Teachers often choose not to select the reading-rich**

Do achievement levels lead to different amounts of reading?



Do achievement levels lead to different amounts of reading?

- **No significant difference in achievement between high, medium and low achieving students**
- **Contrary to what might be expected (Cunningham and Stanovich, 1998)**
- **Similar curriculum for all students**
- **Same text for all students (lack of differentiation)**

Do students read more in schools that have been implementing RF longer?

Cohort 1	Cohort 2
19.2 mins/day	15.8 mins/day
8.6 mins unassisted	8.0 mins unassisted
10.6 mins assisted	7.8 mins assisted

Length of Implementation

- **Differences were not significant**
- **Two more years of implementation did not lead to significantly increased time spent reading**
- **High turnover**
- **Emphasis on core program**

Conclusion

- **A picture of instruction in Reading First schools in Mississippi**
- **Students spend 80% of instructional time in activities other than reading**
- **May be better than what was there before**
- **We'd like to see more time spent with eyes on text**

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