An illustration of a woman with long black hair, wearing a pink top, reading a book to two children. On the left, a girl with a ponytail and a light blue shirt looks down at the book. On the right, a boy with curly hair and a yellow shirt looks up at the book. The background is a teal gradient.

The Effectiveness of One-on-One Volunteer Tutoring in Elementary Reading

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**Presentation to the Washington Educational Research Association
December 8, 2011**

Research Questions

- Can well implemented volunteer tutoring programs lead to improvement on standardized measures of reading achievement? And if so...
- What are the defining characteristics of successful volunteer reading programs?



Program Characteristics

- Volunteers
 - Training and supervision
 - Tutoring strategies
 - Length and frequency of tutoring
 - Students grade level
 - Location of tutoring sessions
 - Materials
 - Finances
- Are there programs which have shown success despite minimal training/ funding/ resources?



Online Archives

PsycINFO

The screenshot shows the PsycINFO mobile application interface. At the top, it displays the AT&T 3G logo and the time 2:19 PM. The main search area is titled "Searching: PsycINFO" and includes a search bar with the text "PsycINFO" and a "Search" button. Below the search bar, there are several filter options: "Basic Search", "Advanced Search", "Visual Search", and "Search History". A "Search options" section allows users to refine their search, with options like "Find all my search terms" and "Find any of my search terms". A "Limit your results" section provides various filters such as "Publication Year", "Published Date from", "Publication Status", "English", "Publication Group", "Document Type", "Methodology", "Database", "Reference Available", "Publication Year", "Peer Reviewed", "Publisher", "Publication Type", "Language", "Age Group", "Indexed Database", "Book Type", and "Classification Code". At the bottom, there is a navigation bar with icons for back, forward, search, and a document icon with the number 2. The footer includes the text "Sponsored by University of Washington Libraries" and "New! EBSCOhost iPhone and Android Applications".

Google Scholar

The screenshot shows the Google Scholar mobile application interface. At the top, it displays the AT&T 3G logo and the time 2:21 PM. The main search area is titled "Google scholar" and includes a search bar with the text "Volunteer tutoring" and a "Search" button. Below the search bar, there are several filter options: "Scholar", "Books and articles", "Images", "Videos", "Create email alert", and "Print this page". A "Limit your results" section provides various filters such as "Publication Year", "Published Date from", "Publication Status", "English", "Publication Group", "Document Type", "Methodology", "Database", "Reference Available", "Publication Year", "Peer Reviewed", "Publisher", "Publication Type", "Language", "Age Group", "Indexed Database", "Book Type", and "Classification Code". At the bottom, there is a navigation bar with icons for back, forward, search, and a document icon with the number 2. The footer includes the text "Sponsored by University of Washington Libraries" and "New! EBSCOhost iPhone and Android Applications".

Handbook for the Volunteer Tutor.
S.J. Rauch - 1999 - eric.ed.gov
Abstract: This handbook is designed for tutors who will be working with children, adolescents, or adults. In most instances the principles, practices, and materials described are directed to the junior high and senior high school student or dropout who requires ...
Cited by 14 - Related articles - Cited - Library Search - All 5 versions

Volunteer tutoring programs in reading: A review
B Wask - Reading Research Quarterly, 1998 - reading.org
... grade. The primary means of achieving this goal are to place 1 million volunteers in schools to tutor children in reading. This article reviews both the quantitative and qualitative findings of 17 programs/studies in volunteer tutoring. ...
Cited by 132 - Related articles - BL Direct - All 7 versions

Using volunteers as reading tutors: Guidelines for successful practices
BA Wask - The Reading Teacher, 1998 - JSTOR
... However, based on evidence from effective programs, this would greatly reduce the effectiveness of volunteer tutors. Without the supervision of a reading specialist, volunteers are unlikely to have the guidance or skills they need to tutor effectively. ...
Cited by 93 - Related articles - BL Direct - All 2 versions

A community volunteer tutorial that works
M Invernizzi, C Juel... - The Reading Teacher, 1996 - JSTOR
... support the program from the outset. The key triad The heart of the Charlottesville Volunteer Tutorial is a triad composed of the child, the volunteer tutor, and the reading coordinator. The coordinators, each of whom is a current ...
Cited by 85 - Related articles - BL Direct - All 5 versions

Volunteer support in the primary classroom: the long-term impact of one initiative upon children's reading performance
J Elliott, J Arhuns... - British Educational Research ..., 2000 - Taylor & Francis
... ABSTRACT This article reports an evaluation of the effectiveness of a volunteer tutor reading intervention. Volunteers were provided with instruction and supervision in order that they might assist class teachers in the teaching of reading. ...
Cited by 26 - Related articles - BL Direct - All 7 versions

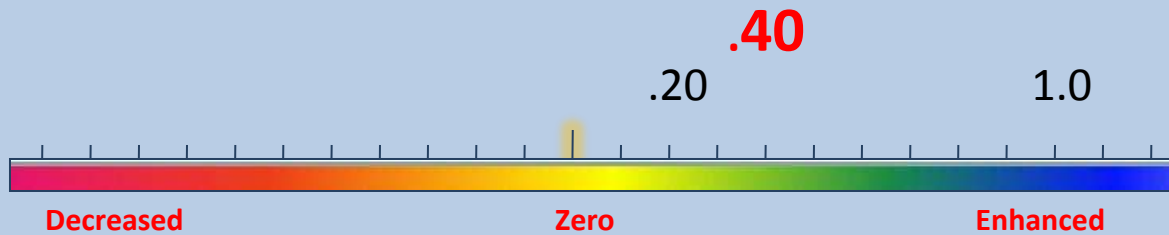
When less may be more: A 2-year longitudinal evaluation of a volunteer tutoring program requiring minimal training
S Baker, R Gersten... - Reading Research Quarterly, 2000 - reading.org
... We suggest that in establishing adult volunteer reading programs it is important to consider how to balance the intensity of training reading volunteers to achieve measurable impact on reading achievement with real world realities of the volunteer tutoring experience and ...
Cited by 112 - Related articles - BL Direct - All 7 versions

Using Meta-Analysis

- A “study of studies.”
- Applies a consistent standard for rigor in selecting studies
- Summarizes findings using a statistical tool to determine the “effect size.”
- In our case the effect size is a measure of the magnitude of the impact on student learning.
- Anything above .40 is pretty good. Think of this as adding 40 points to an SAT score.



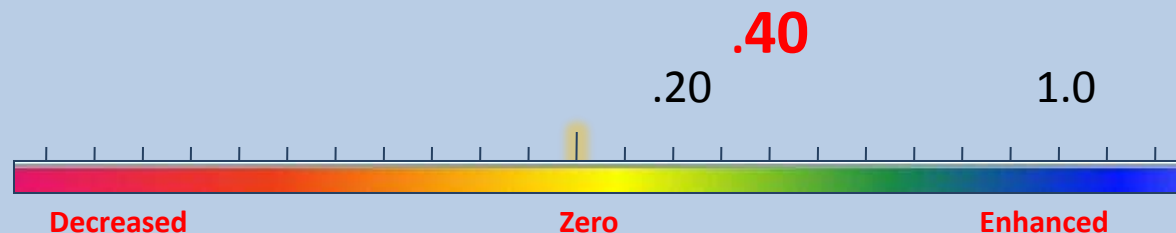
Elbaum et al. (2000)



Elbaum et al. (2000)

Qualifications of Instructors Effect Size

- Community volunteers .26
- Teachers .36
- Paraprofessionals .68
- College students **1.65**



Elbaum et al. (2000)

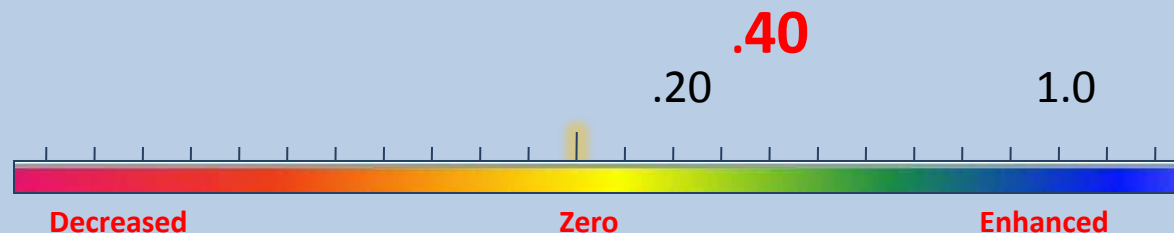
Training

- Volunteer tutors received training
- Training not reported

Effect Size

.59

-.17

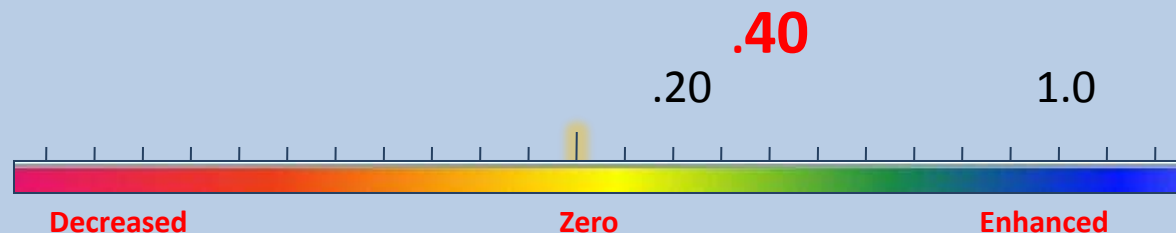


Elbaum et al. (2000)

Focus of Instruction

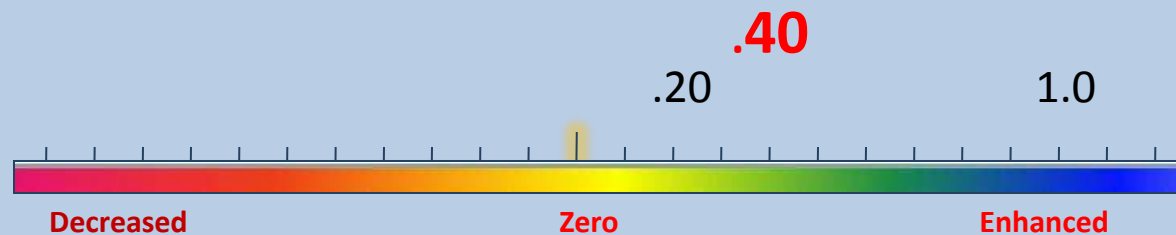
Effect Size

- Mixed .50
- Reading comprehension **2.41**
- Phonemic awareness-phonics .44
- Visual-perceptual skills **.03**



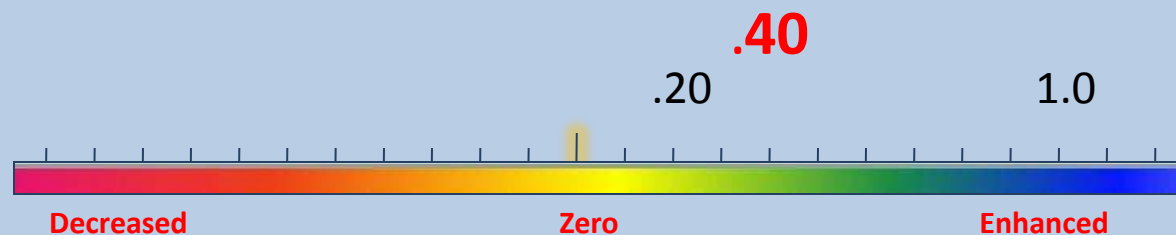
Elbaum et al. (2000)

Students' Grade Level	Effect Size
– Grade 1	.46
– Grades 2-3	.37
– Grades 4-6	.06



Elbaum et al. (2000)

Type of Outcome Measure	Effect Size
– All measurement types	.43
– Oral reading of words	.54
– Oral reading of passages	.49
– Decoding	.41
– Composite reading	.48
– Writing vocabulary	.94
– Listening comprehension	.68



This is hard work...

There are many uncontrolled variables to consider in any educational research

- Individual variance
- School variance
- Focus of the school's curriculum
- Tutor fidelity to program
- Match of tutoring program to student needs
- Variability in actual contact time



Characteristics of Effective Reading Tutoring Programs

- Volunteers
 - No difference by age or background of tutor
 - All types of tutors have been show to be successful given:
 - Ongoing training and close supervision
 - On site coordinator providing continuous feedback
 - Provision of strategies both for instruction and building relationships with students



Characteristics of Effective Reading Tutoring Programs

- Tutoring Strategies
 - Structured programs more successful than unstructured
 - Reinforcing student progress
 - Move student into increasing independence
 - Reading aloud, emphasize making reading fun
 - Emphasis on reading for meaning
 - Model fluency



Characteristics of Effective Reading Tutoring Programs

- Grade Level
 - No evidence that tutoring is more effective any any particular elementary grade, but . . .
 - Reading on grade level by 3rd grade is critical
- Length and Frequency of Tutoring
 - Longer is not necessarily better per session
 - More time overall with tutor is related to student progress



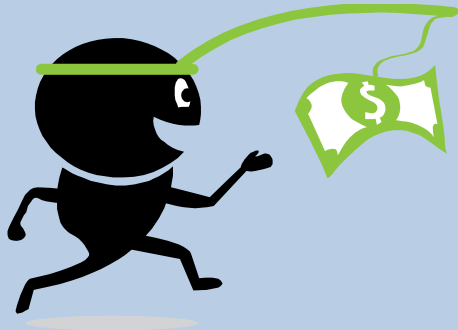
Characteristics of Effective Reading Tutoring Programs

- Location
 - No strong evidence as to whether in-school is better than some other location, but . . .
 - The stronger the school–tutoring connection the better
- Materials
 - Engaging, personalized, varied
 - Connected to the school curriculum



Characteristics of Effective Reading Tutoring Programs

- Finance\$
 - Not enough data in studies reviewed to correlate amount spent with outcomes
 - Basic costs for most programs
 - Stipend or salary for on-site coordinator
 - Books (unless provided by school)
 - Instructional materials (worksheets, pencils, etc.)



Keep in Touch!

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