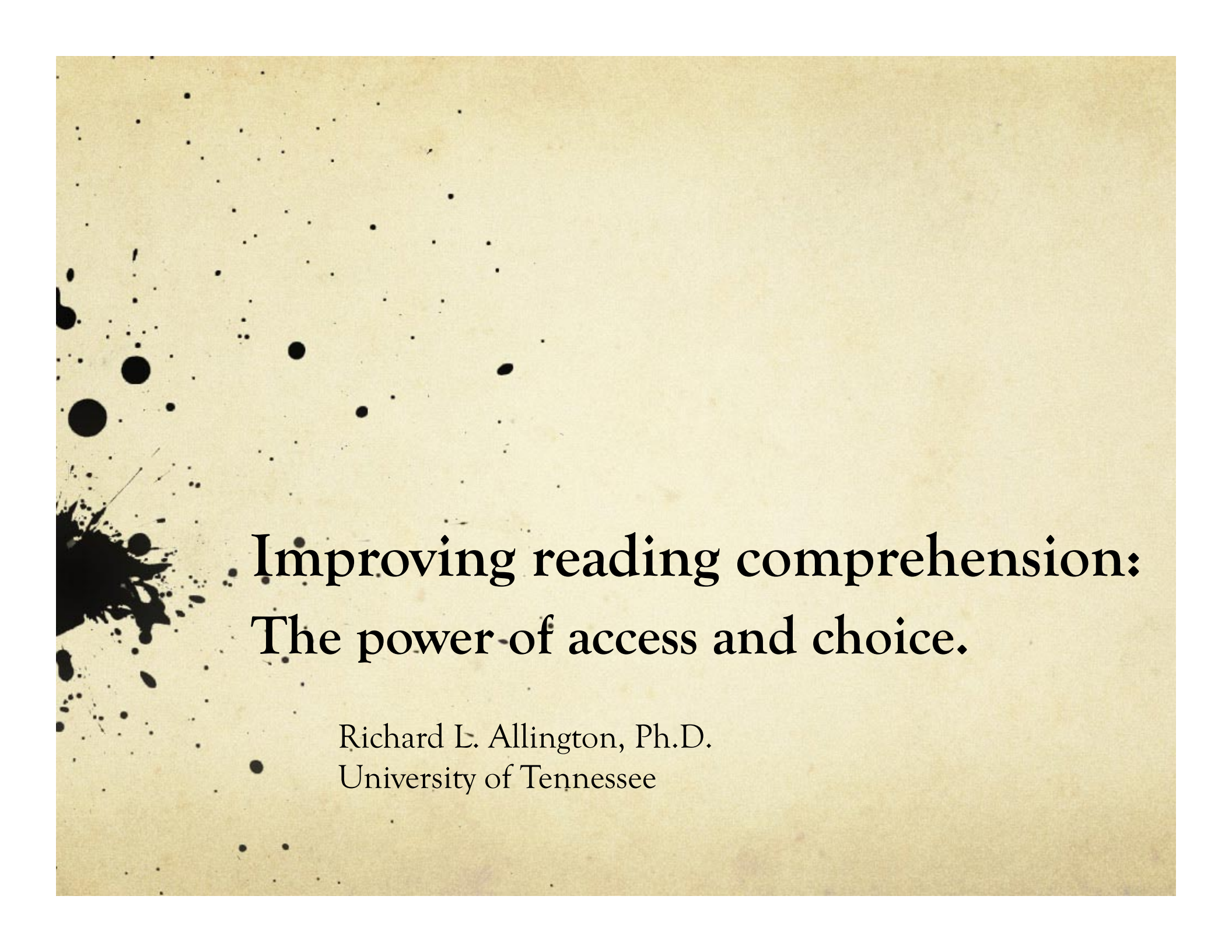




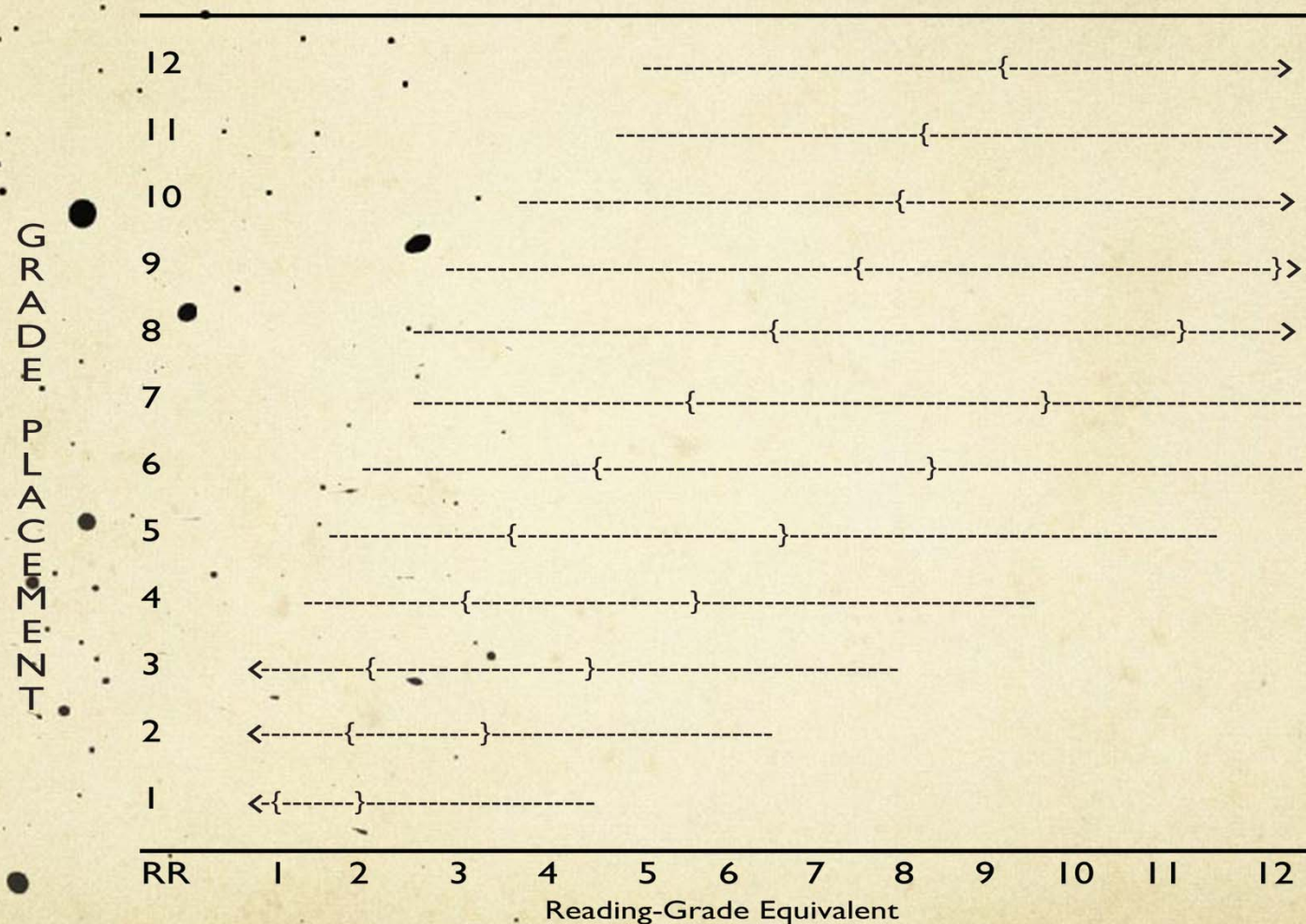
Improving reading comprehension: The power of access and choice.

Richard L. Allington, Ph.D.
University of Tennessee

- As kids spend more time in school the array of reading abilities broadens.
- This is the primary reason why a “one size fits all” curriculum plan is always a bad idea.
- “Bad” because it is always an ineffective plan.

Reading Range, Grades 1-12

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Note: Students were tested between December and February. The space between braces at each grade indicates the reading level of the middle half of the class. At the first, second, and third grades, the range extends below the level of beginning reading into reading readiness levels. At the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades, more than a quarter of all students reached the test's ceiling of 12-9. The range in each grade extends from the first to the 99th percentile, so the range includes 98 percent of the students in each grade.

“A long-awaited review by the federal What Works Clearinghouse found few comprehensive or supplemental programs that have evidence of effectiveness in raising student achievement...

None of the most popular commercial core reading programs on the market had sufficiently rigorous studies to be included in the review by the clearinghouse.”

Education Week, August 15, 2007

“Reading Curricula Don’t Make Cut for Federal Review”

Find the reviews at www.wwc.org

- The only evidence-based solutions for improving reading achievement involve developing the expertise of classroom teachers and expanding the options available for kids.
- Is your school focused on either?

- It isn't programs that teach kids to read.
- People, as in teachers, teach kids to read.
- Our best teachers teach *every child* to read.

Reading Volume...

- Reading volume is critical to reading success.
- Free voluntary reading (FVR) activity best predictor.
- But few schools have active programs fostering FVR.
- Some classroom teachers foster FVR but only some.

Adults read a lot...

- Recent analysis by White, Chen & Forsyth (2010) of the daily reading activities of 400 employed adults (age 20 or older) found:
- An average of 4.5 hours of daily reading
- More reading on work days than weekends
- More time reading prose than documents tasks
- Most reading self-selected, not assigned

Unlike most adults, teens...

- Spend large blocks of time in school sitting and listening
- Small blocks of time completing low-level literal recall tasks
- Rarely design, create, *compose*, or *read* anything.

Schools seem not to value reading...

- Teens report reading less than any other age group and teens today report less reading than teens historically reported doing.

Why so little reading in and for school?

Few classroom libraries

- Little use of school libraries
- No time in school day set aside for FVR
- Few teachers read aloud to students after 2nd grade
- Fewer teachers bless books every day

As Steven Wolk (2010) writes:

- "The status quo will only continue to teach kids to hate reading... When seen cumulatively, the reading students do in school appears designed to make reading painful, tedious, and irrelevant." (p. 10)

This is Readicide...

"Read-i-cide: noun, the systematic killing of the love of reading, often exacerbated by the inane, mind-numbing practices found in schools." (Gallagher, 2009, p. 2)

Three factors contributing to *readicide* in schools:

- the dearth of interesting reading materials in schools.
- Limited opportunities to self-select.
- Little reading or writing expected during the school day.

Adults made these decisions...

“Any activity that substantially replaces extensive reading, writing, and discourse in the classroom needs to be better than the activity it replaces, and *nothing*, not even test prep, is better for students' reading ability than just plain reading, day after day.” (Miller, 2009, p. 134)

Expectations for reading...

- How many books, *excluding textbooks*, must students read to graduate from 2nd grade?
- To successfully complete the course of study in your elementary school?
- Unfortunately, in the typical elementary the answer is 0.

Expected volume of reading.

- "The only way you will know that your students read every day is to watch them read right in front of you." (Miller, 2009, p. 144)
- How many minutes (hours) each school day do you expect students to be reading?
- How many minutes of reading outside of school are expected?

Whatever...

- Whatever you said you expected as the volume of reading the NEA survey indicates that HS kids read roughly 30 minutes each day, in and out of school.
- Elementary age kids read a bit more but rarely more than 30 minutes during the school day.
- That leaves 330 minutes every day for something else. Something less powerful than engaged reading at developing reading skills.

Options for self-selection.

- How much of this reading is self-selected by the students themselves?
- How many classes provide multiple text options for acquiring core curricular knowledge?
- How many expect Ss to read a single textbook?

Choice

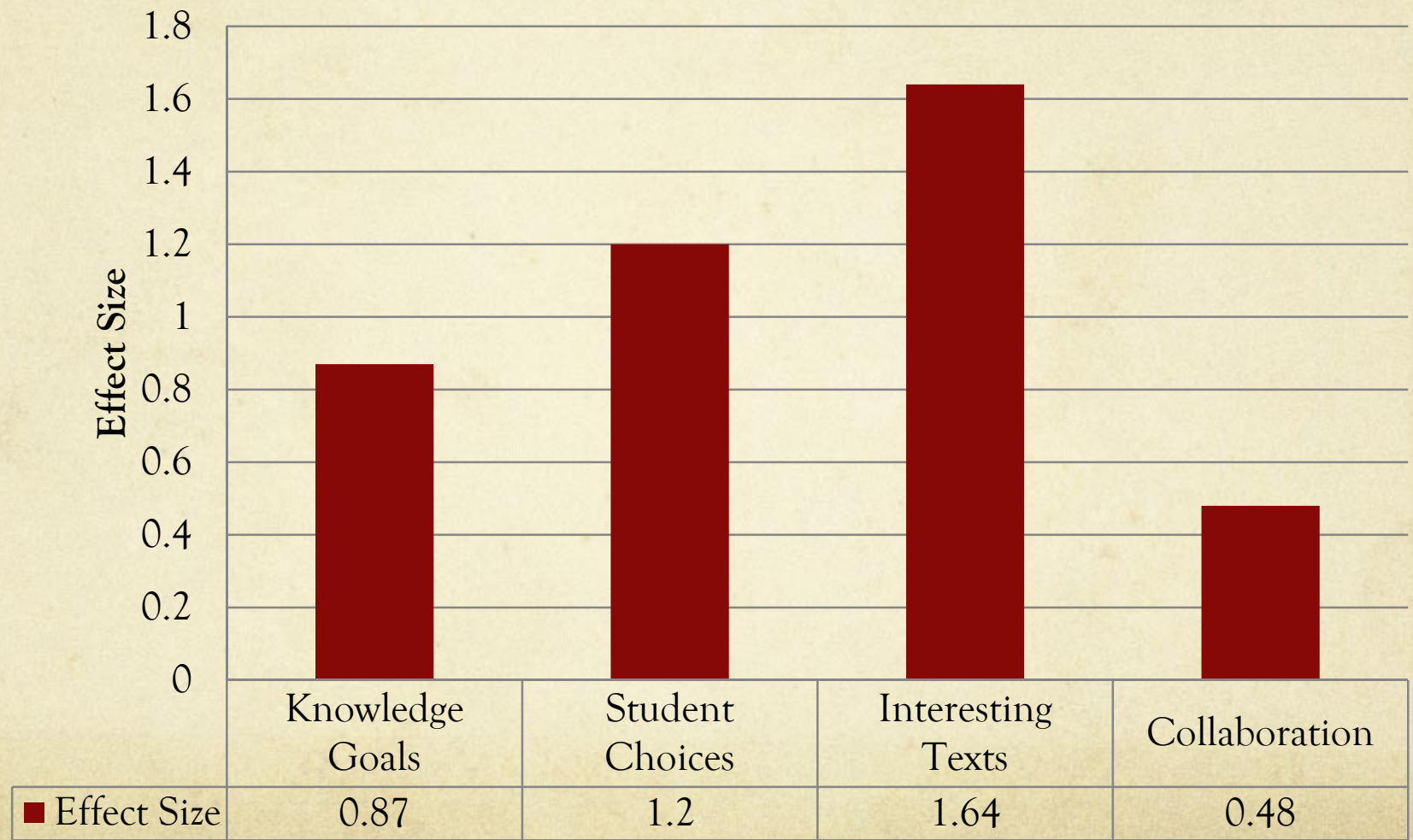
- Adults typically read texts they choose, not texts that they were assigned.
- When will kids learn how to choose books if we offer only teacher-selected texts?

In addition...

- Self-selection of reading material is powerfully related to the development of reading proficiencies.
- Meanwhile, current reading programs are failing to develop the literacy capacities of large numbers of students.

- Self-selection of books to read had a large effect size in the Guthrie and Humenick meta-analysis of research on improving comprehension.
- So did easing access to books readers found interesting.
- As well as collaborating with peers.

Improved Reading Comprehension



Source: John Guthrie and Nicole Humenick (2004). *Motivating Students to Read*

Access and Choice...

- Access and choice also fostered reading motivation.
- In other words, one-size-fits-all curriculum may be the single greatest deterrent to developing reading proficiency.
- But one-size-fits-all curriculum are easier to create and deliver. So that what schools provide.

Krashen (2011)

- Summarizes the research demonstrating that *students who read more*:
 - have better vocabularies
 - read faster
 - write better
 - greater grammatical competence
 - know more about science and social studies topics

Krashen (2011) cont.

- Average effect size of 8 longer-term studies of SSR was 0.70.
- The number of titles available to students was a significant predictor of reading comprehension improvement ($R^2 = .91$).

- Lang & Torgeson (2009) found reading volume a powerful factor in reading interventions with adolescents.
- Fisher (2004) reports that 20 minutes of daily reading added 6 months growth in HS students.
- McQuillan & Au (2001) found that ease of access that 11th graders had to texts they wanted to read influenced the likelihood of engaging in voluntary reading.

Why do students do so little FVR?

- Limited access to books the want to read.
- Limited guidance from literate adults they see every day.
- Limited time due assigned work.
- FVR not valued in their school contexts.

What do kids read?

Worthy, Moorman & Turner (1999)
reported that:

- "The majority of [middle-school] students obtained their preferred reading materials from home and stores rather than from schools and libraries. Classrooms ranked a distant last for availability of interesting books or magazines, even among low-income students." (p. 24)

We could...

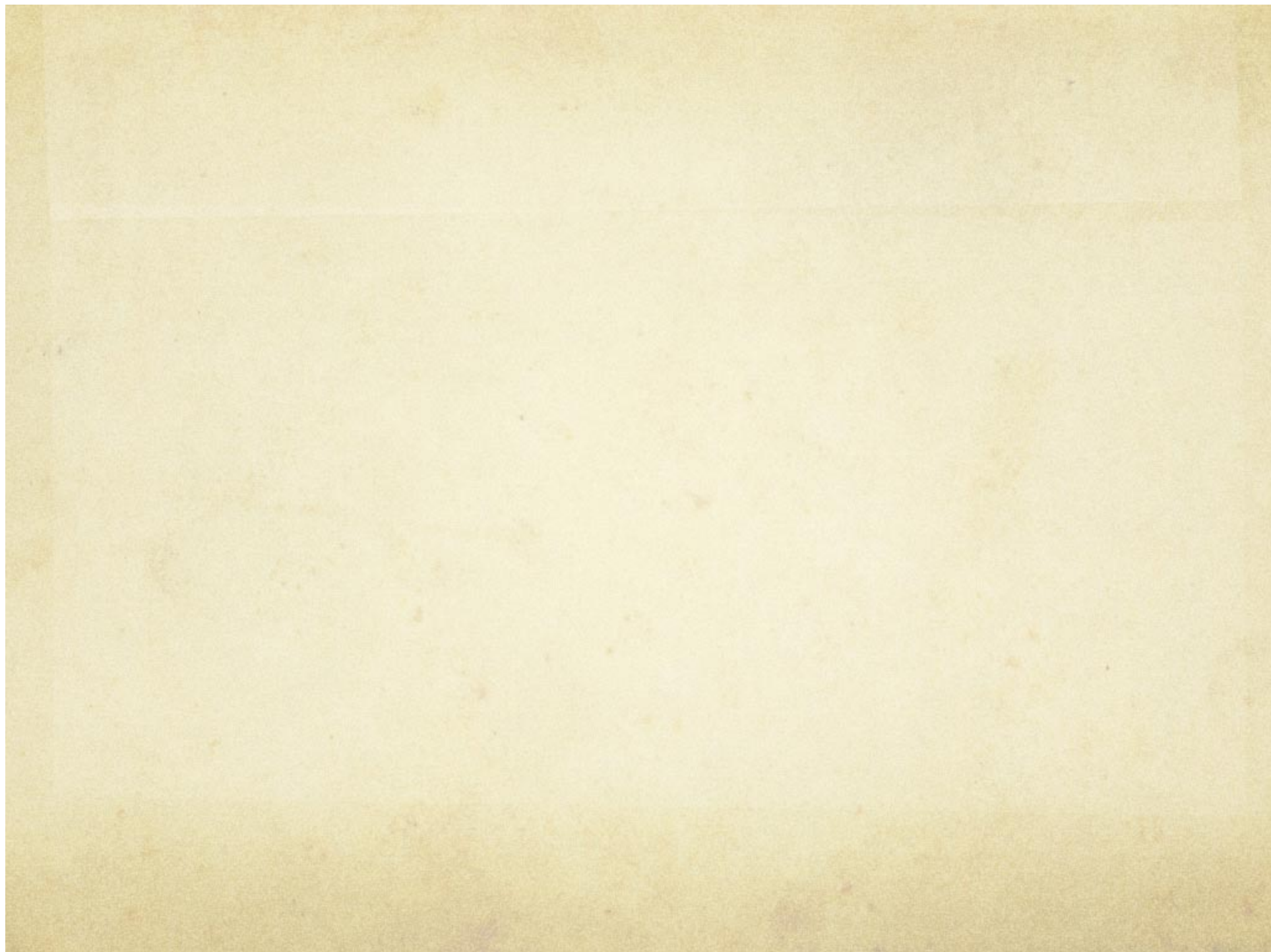
- Create multi-level, multi-sourced text sets that cover the curriculum.
- Allow students to self-select the reading they do for virtually every unit of every curriculum area.
- Enrich learning and reading activity in schools (K-12).
- Enhance Ss proficiency as readers, writers, and learners.

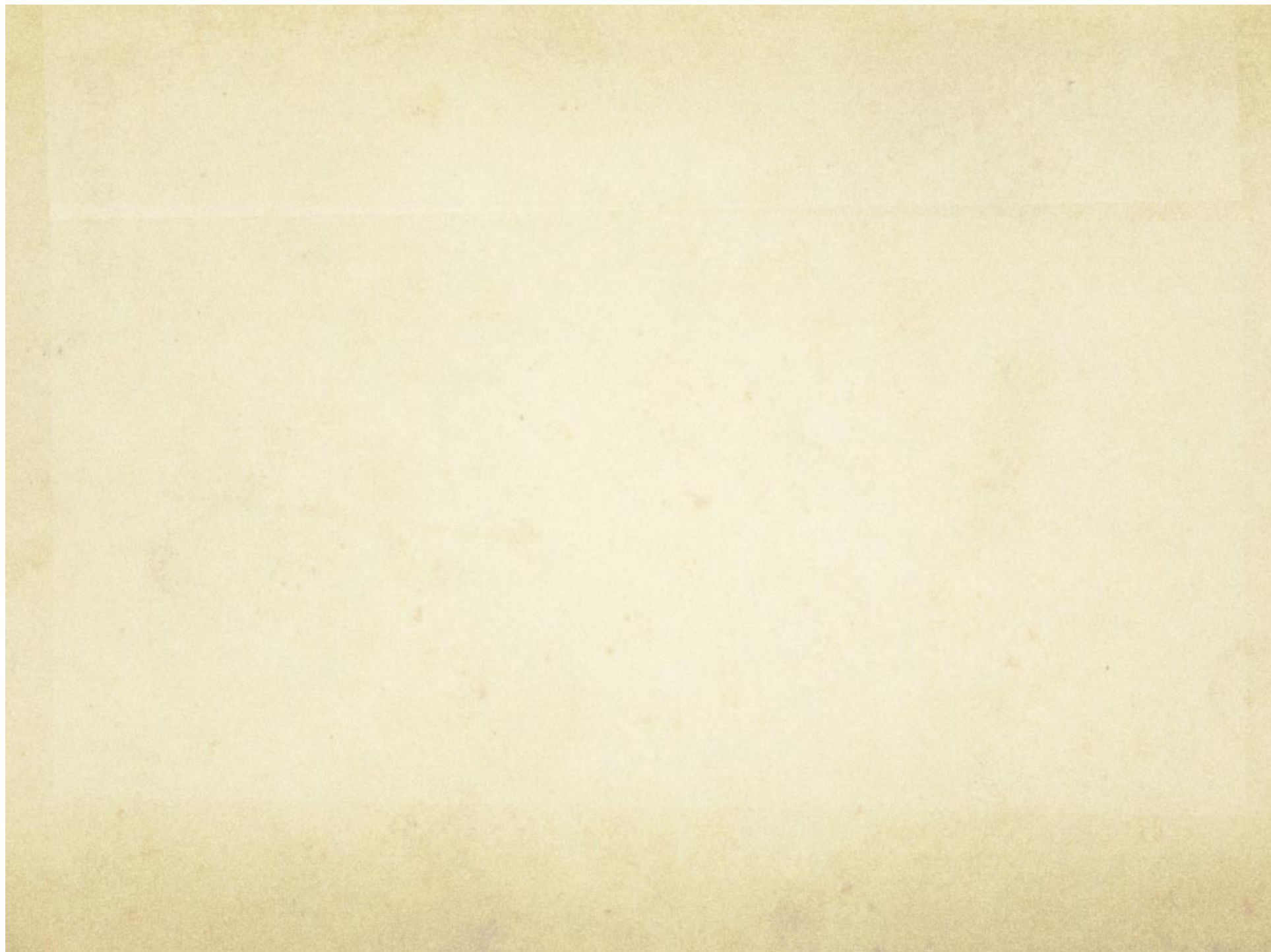
But will we?

- It is the adults who are in charge of all this.
- The kids are just waiting.

www.teachersread.net

- My website for powerful and skinny professional books.





- How many books does your school expect kids to read over the summer months?
- By grade 6 reading at least 6 books during the summer stemmed summer reading loss.
- In grades 1 thru 3 kids need to read 15 or more books each summer.

Why one textbook?

- Too many teachers rely heavily on a single textbook.
- Often that textbook is too difficult for many students.
- Often that textbook offers *textbookese* rather than good writing.

Why any textbook?

- "Our first order of business is to become more expert on the texts that resonate with the students we teach." (Ivey, 2011, p. 25)
- How many teachers have expertise with books to recommend titles to kids?

Summer reading also matters

- 80% of the rich/poor reading achievement gap at 9th grade accumulates during the summer months, when school is out.
- White & Kim (2011) note that 4th grade students who read 5-8 books over the summer gained 80 lexiles while students who read 1 book or no books lost 50 lexiles.
- Allington & McGill-Franzen (2010) found that simply supplying self-selected books for summer reading produce growth equivalent to attending summer school.

Where will they get these books

- Schools can best provide the access to books that kids will read during the summer.
- Empty out the school library. Books sitting on shelves do no one any good.
- Run a book fair and provide each student with the opportunity to select from 6 to 25 books for summer reading.
- In the fall if kids return the books you have many more for all kids to select.

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