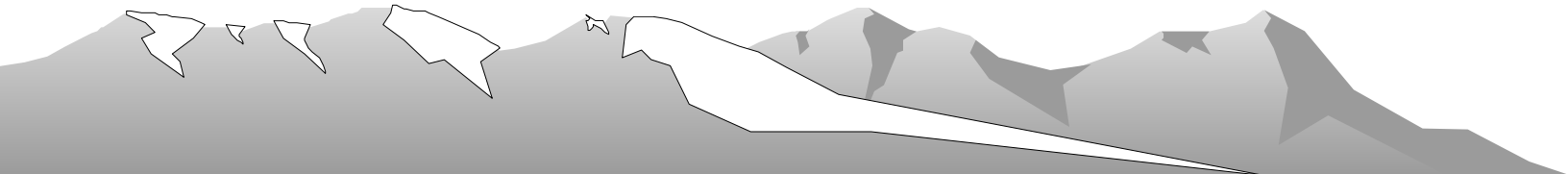


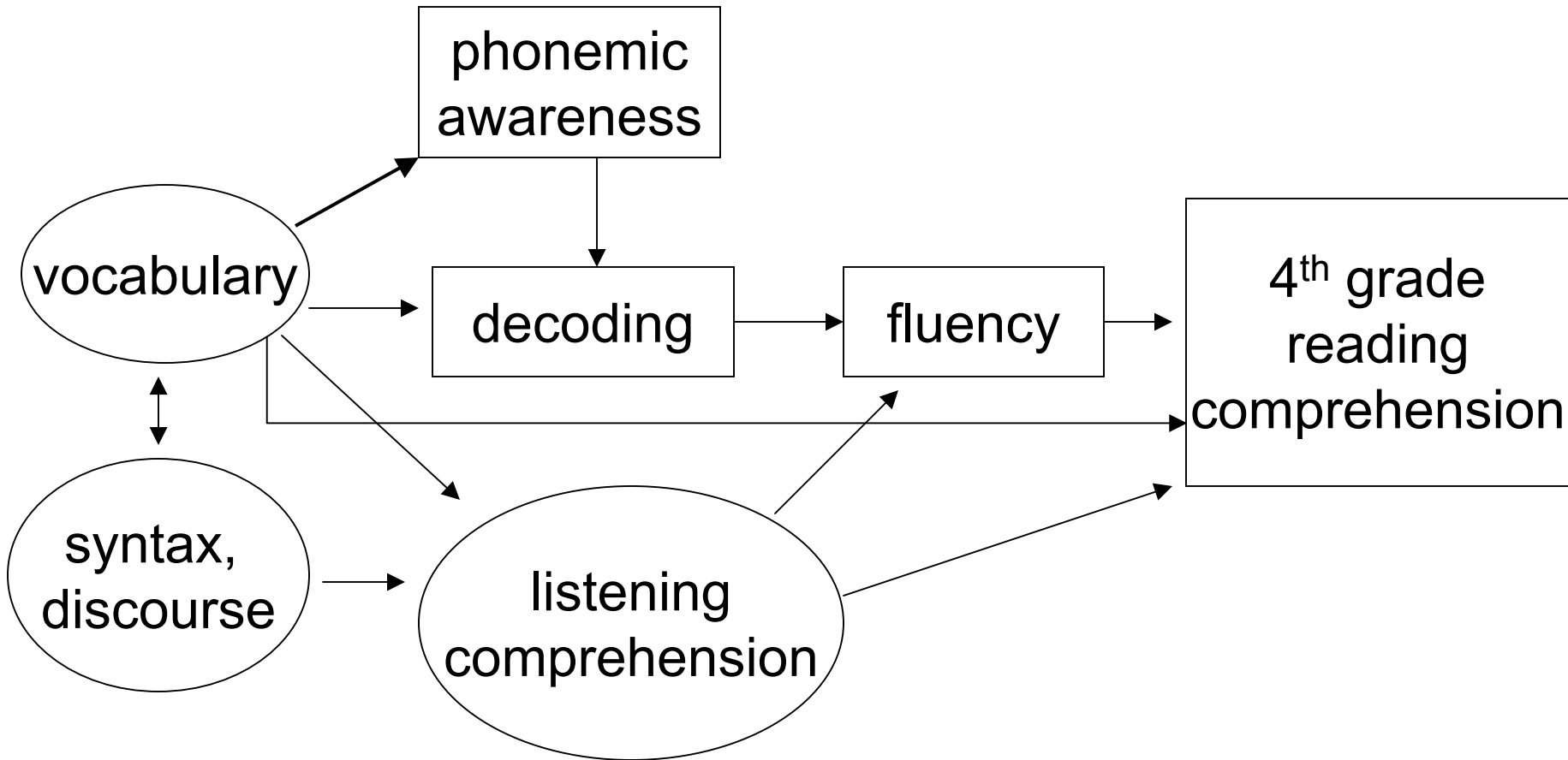
Book Time and Beyond: Effective Practices for Supporting Comprehension in Preschool

David K. Dickinson
Boston College

A Focus on Comprehension Forum



From Oral Language to Reading Comprehension



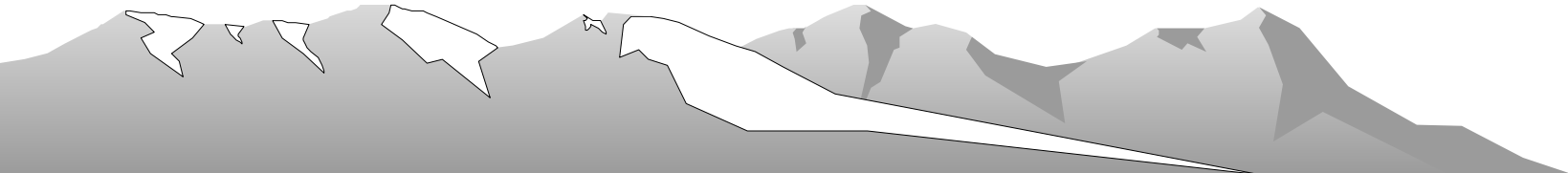
Correlations Between Kindergarten Predictors and Grade Seven Reading & Oral Vocabulary

*from Dickinson & Tabors, Beginning Literacy with Language,
Brookes Publishing*

	Comprehension 7 th Grade (n = 51)	Decoding 7 th Grade (n = 51)
Receptive Voc. (K)	.69	.58
Early Lit. (K)	.62	.54

Reading Comprehension in Action

- Second reading of The Cow Who Fell in the Canal, by Phyllis Krasilovsky.
- Seeing comprehension in action:
 - child behaviors that reflect (or do not) reflect it
 - teaching behaviors
- What makes this challenging to understand?
 - text features
 - interaction and instruction



Challenging Vocabulary

Two page spread: 116 total words

42 articles, pronouns, prepositions, names

10 repeated words

64 core words; 10 challenging words

pasture

narrow

canal

market

ribbons

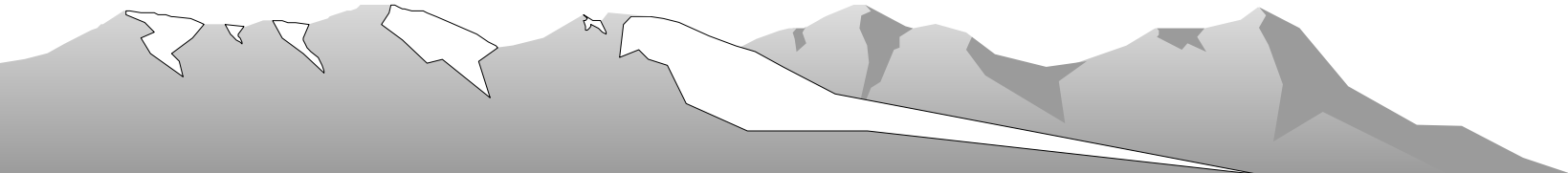
cheese sellers

longed (to see)

windmill

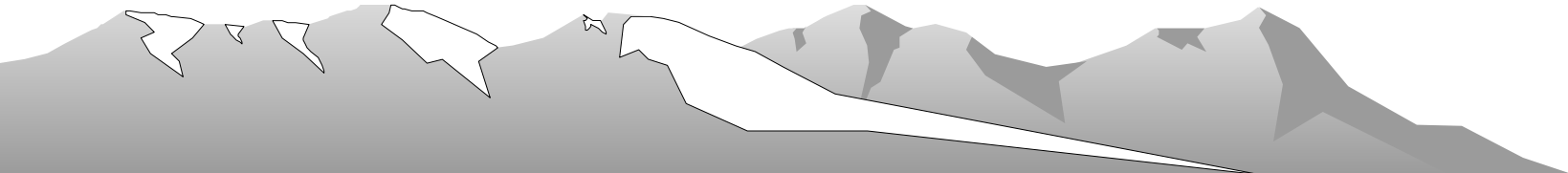
instead

hardly (move/see)



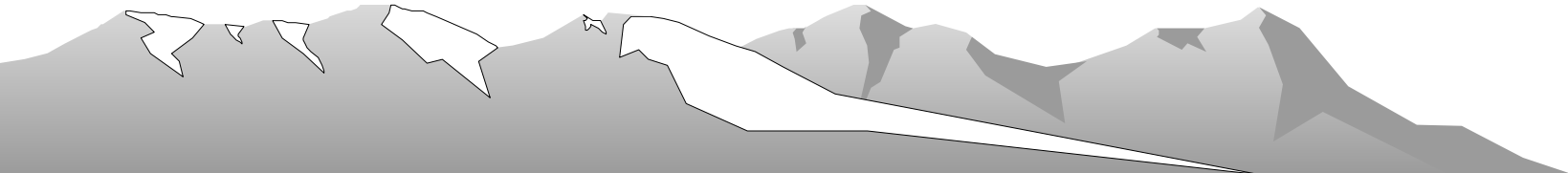
Conceptual Complexities

- Getting cheese to markets
 - Link between cows, milk and cheese
 - Notion of selling goods in cities
 - Boats traveling on canals
- The biology of cows
 - Eating & getting fat; what is food for a cow?
 - Giving milk, where is it stored?
 - Producing milk, eating and having babies...?
- Core motivational issue: Cow Boredom
 - Why is Hendrika unhappy?
 - Implications of her boredom for future actions.



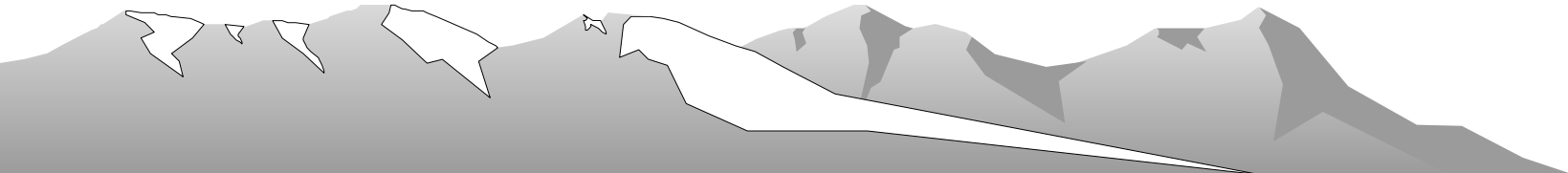
What It Takes for Such Events to Occur

- Teachers who
 - have books and take time to read them
 - listen and respond to questions
 - have high expectations for children
 - are intentional about teaching vocabulary and information about the world
- Children who
 - can focus on a book
 - are interested in books
 - are curious and ask questions



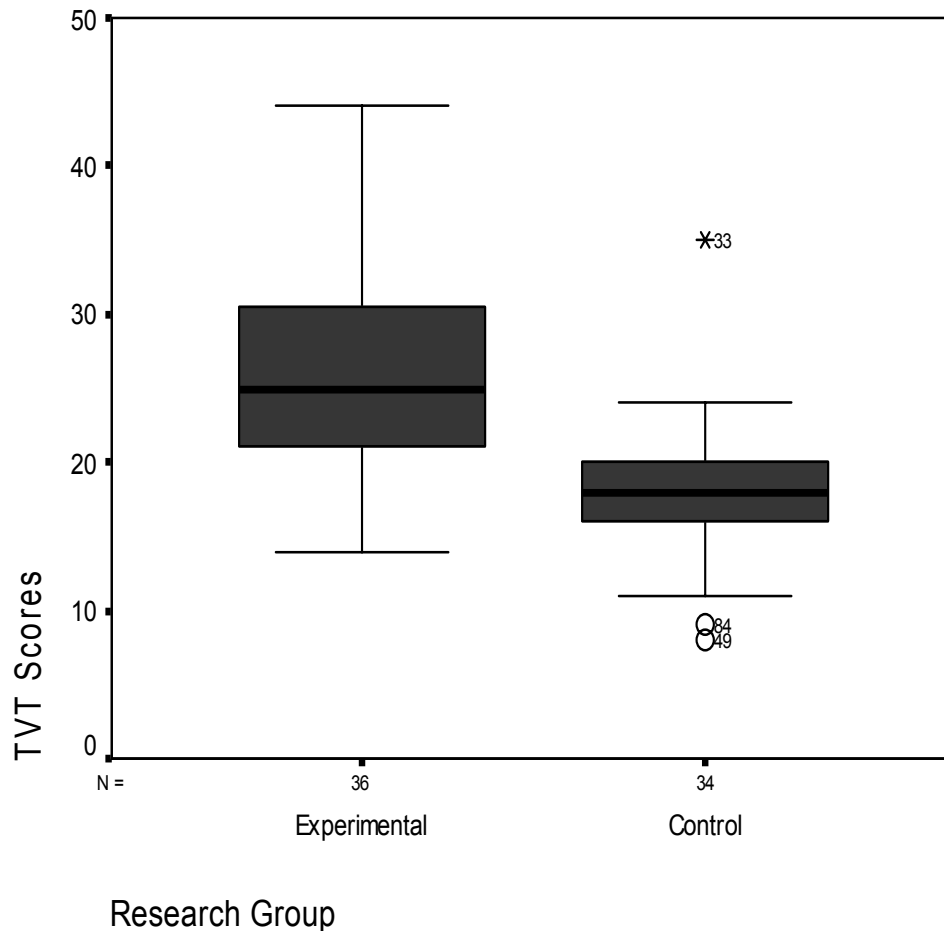
Book Reading Builds Vocabulary

- regular parent-child book reading accounts for significant variance in children's vocabulary development
- book reading in classrooms supports vocabulary and listening comprehension when:
 - there is focused analytic talk about the text
 - books are read multiple times
 - vocabulary words are defined



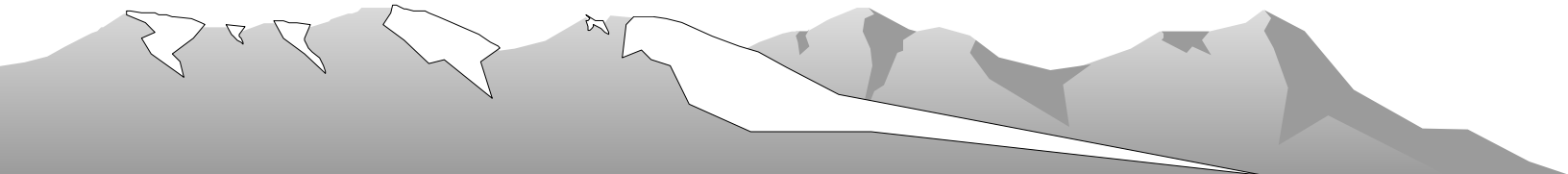
Impact of Rich Explanations of Vocabulary When Presented to ESL preschoolers

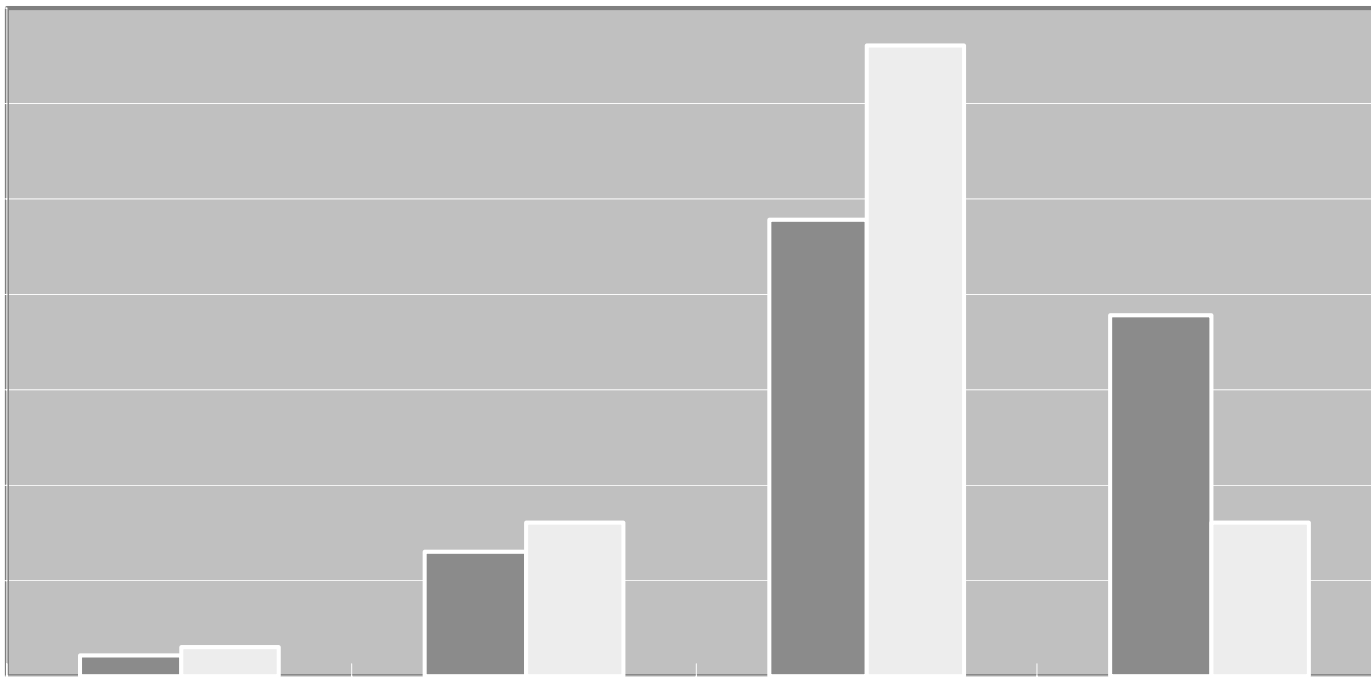
Molly Collins, BU dissertation, Erickson Institute



Children who heard explanations learned more target words than children who did not.
($p < .001$)

**Book Reading Can Support
Learning, but ...
What Is the Status of Book
Reading in Preschool
Classrooms?**

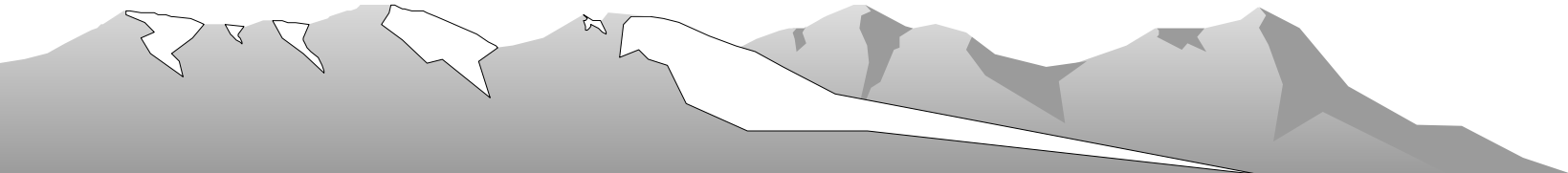




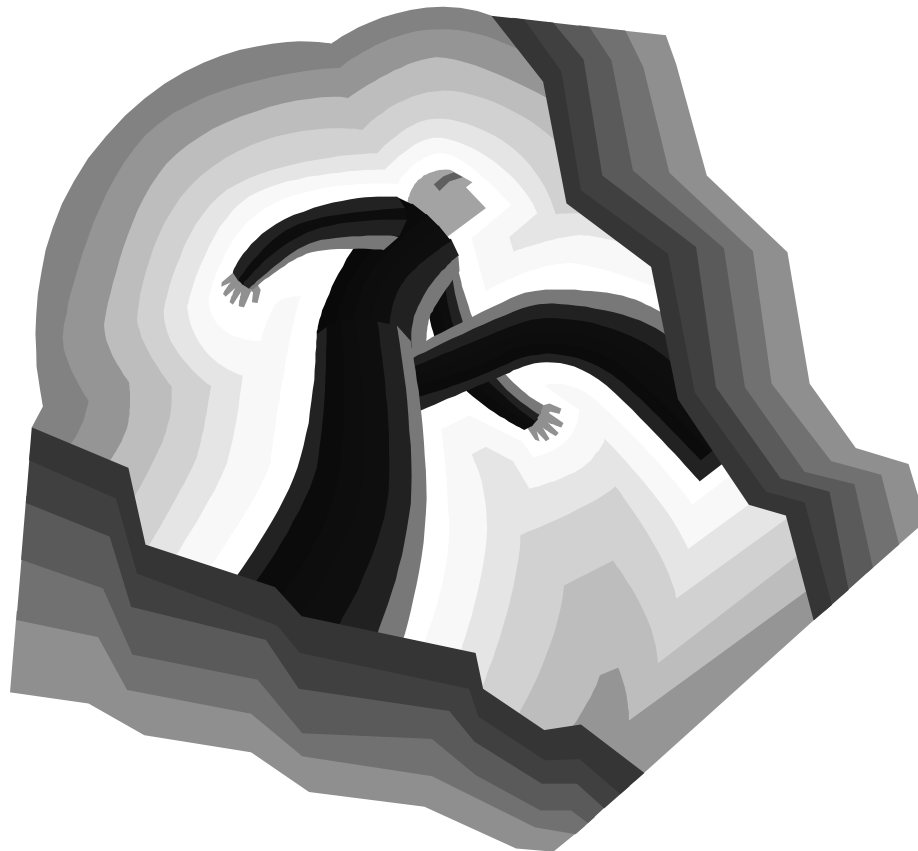
□ 3 Year Olds
■ 4 Year Olds

Book Reading in Preschool Classrooms

- Are books read daily?
 - 166 observations in 99 different classrooms: on 66 occasions no books were read
- How much time is spent reading?
 - 7-8% (5% less than in transitions)
- Challenging topics of conversations?
 - 25% of comments
- Function of book reading
 - key educational experience or
 - transitional managerial technique?

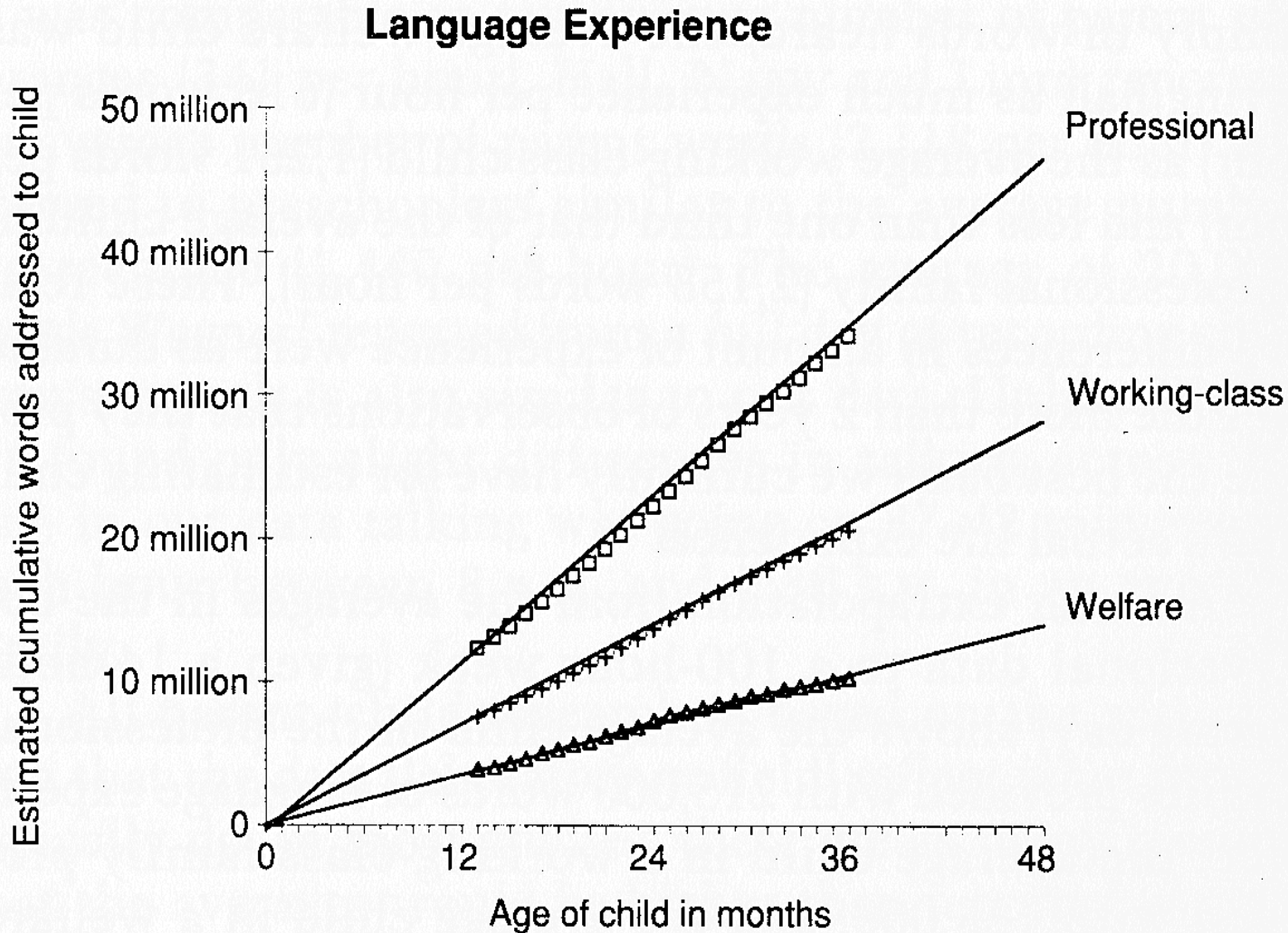


Challenges We Face: The Achievement Gap Begins Before Kindergarten



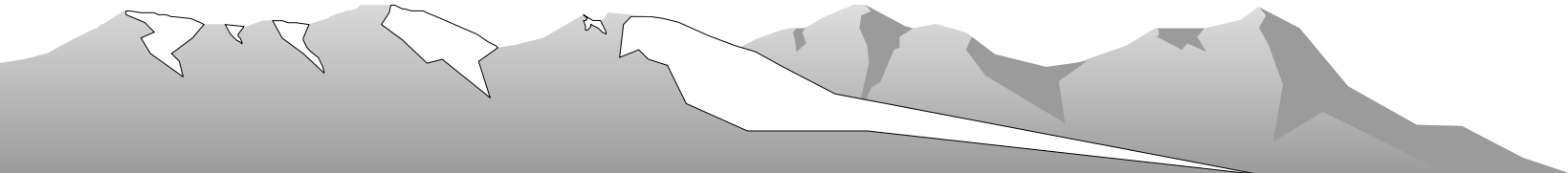
Vocabulary Experience Varies

Hart & Risley, Meaningful Differences, Brookes Publishing



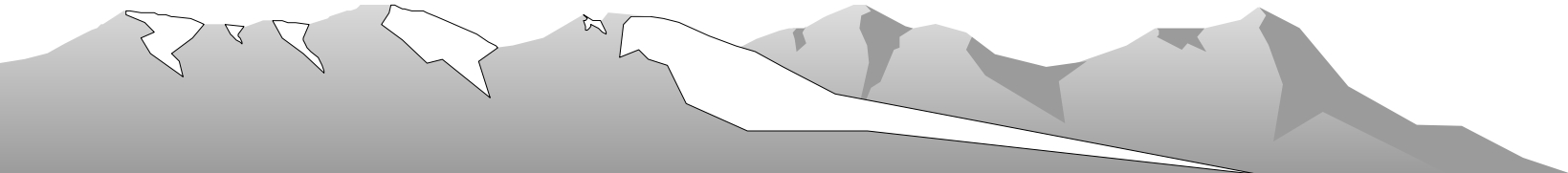
Major differences in Achievement Are Seen Upon Entry to Kindergarten

- Vocabulary
- Phonemic awareness
- Print knowledge: naming letters, writing one's name, understanding uses of print
- Experiences hearing books & familiarity with story structure, characters
- Knowledge of the world



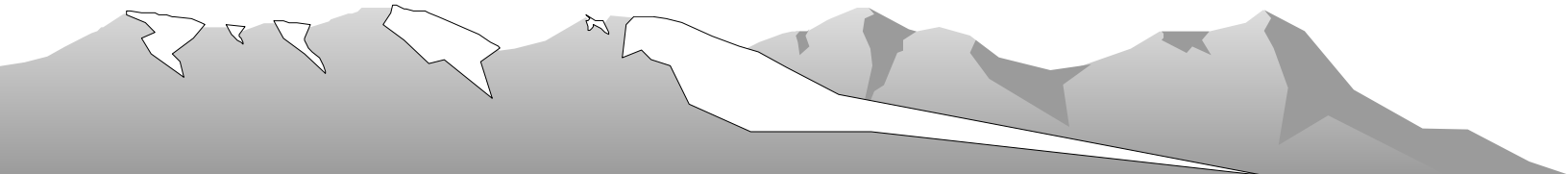
Starting Points Predict Latter Success

- Vocabulary
 - preschool - grade 3
 - between end-of-kindergarten status and middle school performance
 - Impact of kindergarten, grades one and two school experience on vocabulary: No growth beyond what is accounted for by age.
- Phonemic awareness
 - significant stability in elementary grades
- End-of-grade one reading is highly related to grade 12 reading level



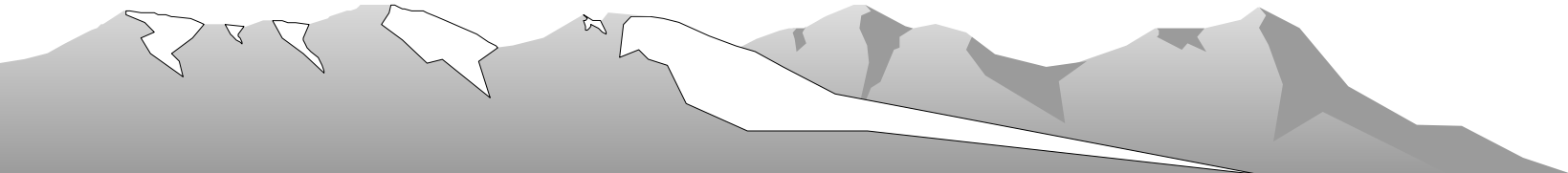
Preschool Classrooms

Can Make a Difference!



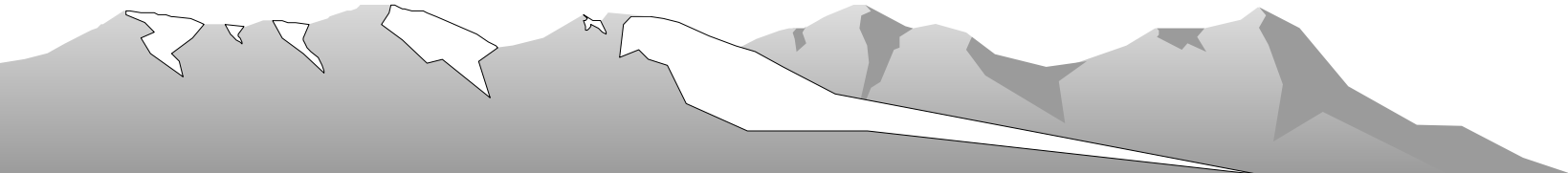
It Takes More Than Book Reading

- Parent-child mealtime conversations predict end-of-fourth grade vocabulary.
- Teacher-child conversations in preschool classrooms are related to vocabulary at the end of kindergarten:
 - meal time conversations
 - choice time
 - large groups



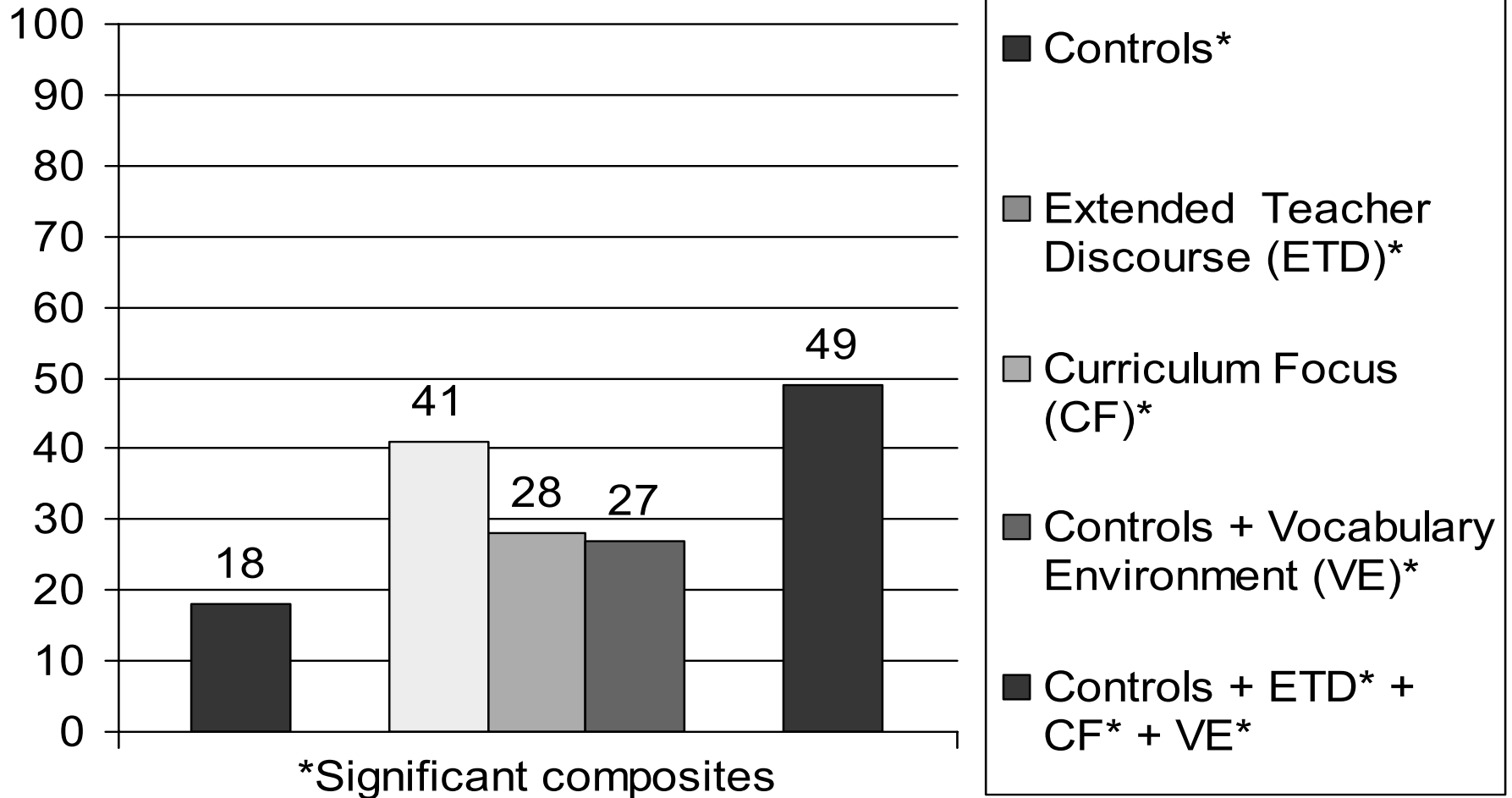
Teacher-Child Conversations in Preschool Can Have Long-term Effects

- Reading Comprehension (California Achievement Test) in 4th grade relates to Preschool teacher's:
 - use of vocabulary in free play
 - group discussion strategies
- Regression analysis accounts for 42% of variance ($p < .001$) (controls for income, maternal education & age 3 language skills)



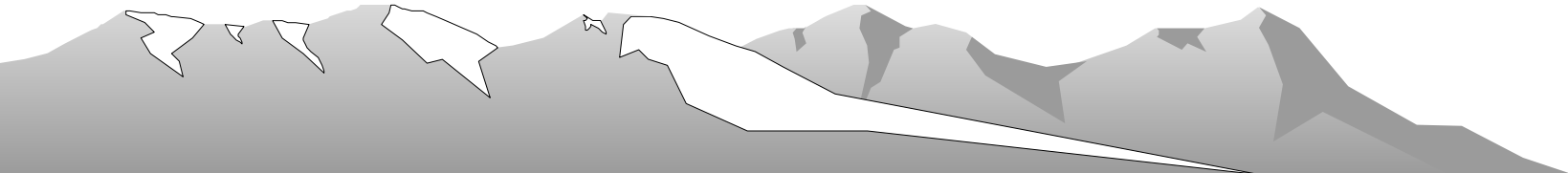
Predicting Children's Kindergarten Receptive Vocabulary Scores Using Home Control and Classroom Variables

from Dickinson & Tabors, Beginning Literacy with Language, Brookes Publishing



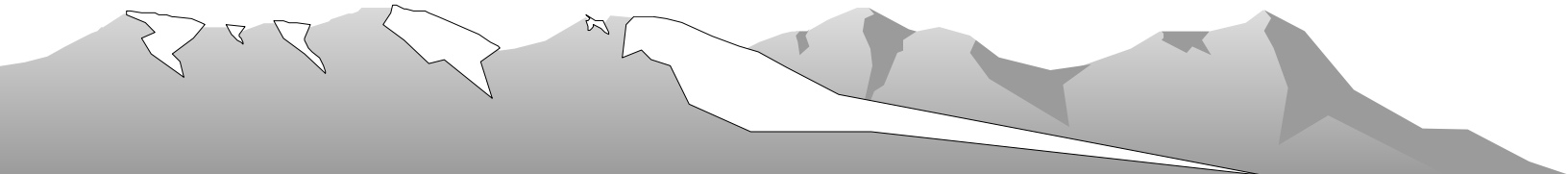
Key Features of Classrooms

- Frequent teacher-child conversations
 - Frequent 1-1 or small group conversations that are:
 - extended but not “lectures”
 - stay on one topic
 - teacher listens, child talks
 - In groups:
 - instructionally rich: information & analysis
 - focused attention
 - Everywhere: varied vocabulary
- Reading (rereading) and discussing books
- Strong curriculum
- Children encouraged to write

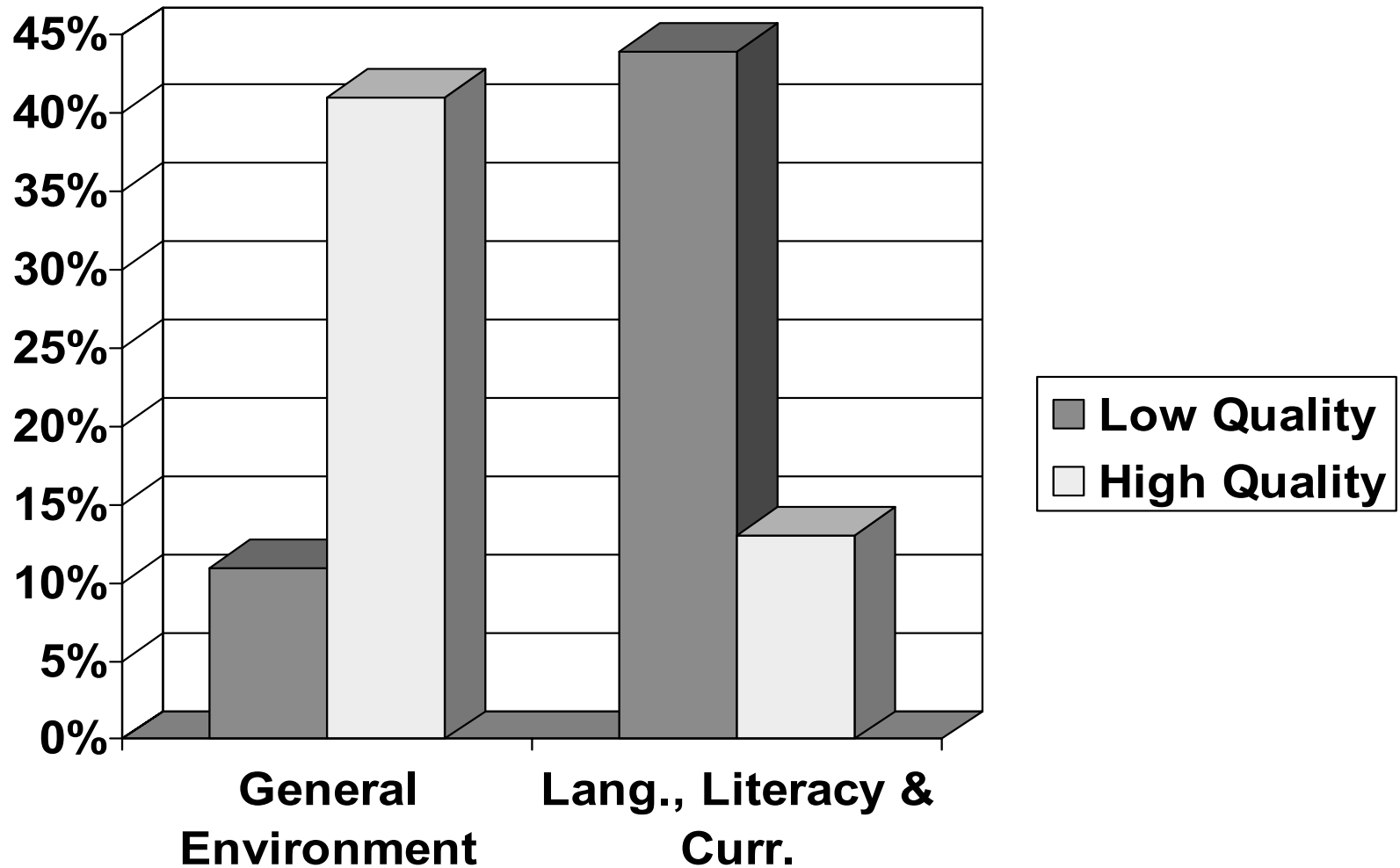


But Many Classrooms

Fall Short

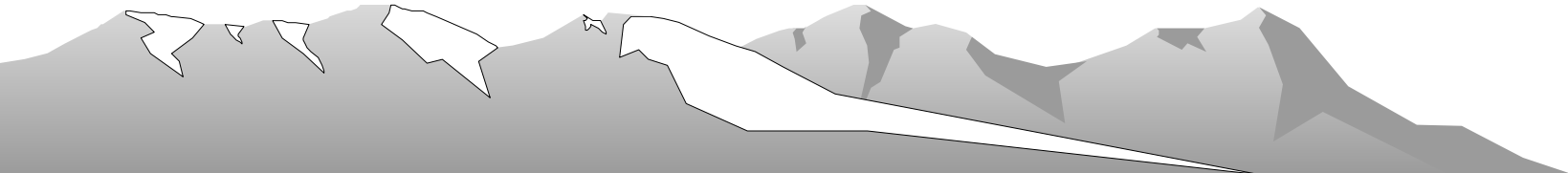


ELLCO Ratings of Dimensions of Classroom Quality



Many Missed Opportunities

- Children less than 3 feet away: 81% of the time teachers did not talk to children.
- 20% of 119 classrooms: 50% + children had no interaction with teachers all day.
- Active verbal engagement, Free Play
 - top quartile of teachers 80%
 - bottom quartile of teachers 55%

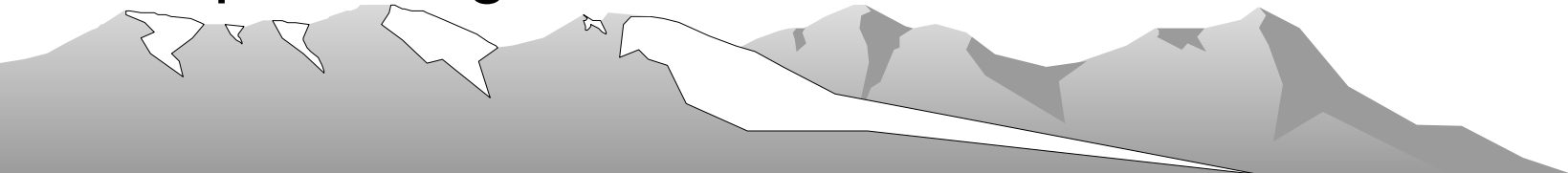


Promising Directions



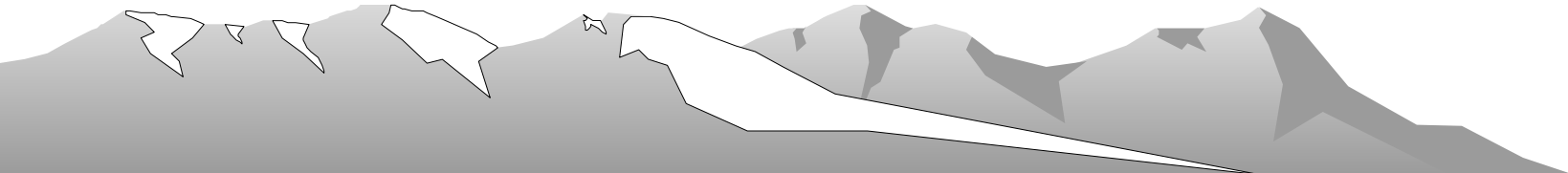
High Quality Professional Development

- LEEP: Literacy Environment Enrichment Project (and in Connecticut as STARS)
 - face-to-face to preschool teaching teams
 - 3 credit course
 - very strong effects on classrooms
 - modest impact on children
- Technology-enhanced delivery of LEEP
 - video conference connections to small groups
 - strong effects on vocabulary, modest impact on phonological awareness



Key Features of Effective Professional Development

- Sustained and focused
- Intellectually rigorous; fosters reflection
- Builds knowledge of language and literacy development
- Teaches effective classroom strategies.
- Provides examples of effective practice.
- Provides on-site support for implementation.
- Has systems for holding teachers accountable for adoption of new practices.

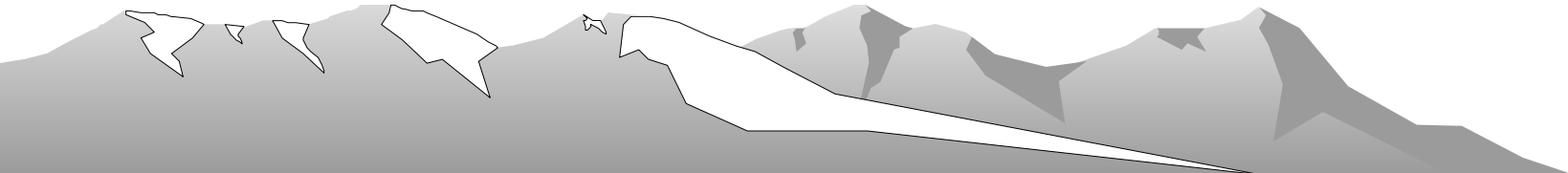


Preschool Curricula That ...

- Are comprehensive (math, literacy, science, social sciences, socio-emotional development)
- Help teachers use books effectively
- Guide teachers to provide intensive support for vocabulary and phonological awareness
- Provide hands on experiences that are used to support learning in a thoughtful manner
- Teach content seriously
- One such curriculum:

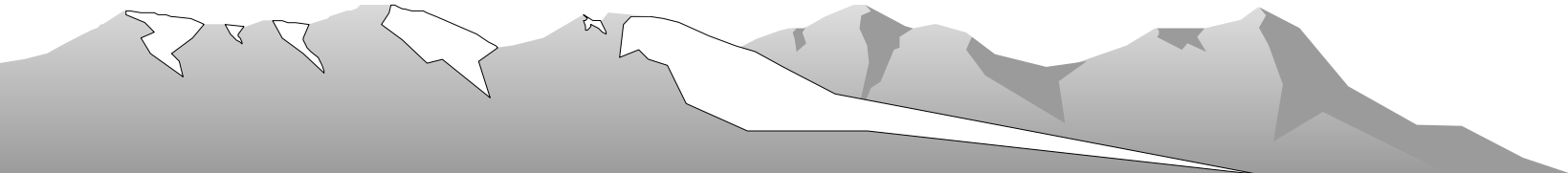
Opening the World of Learning (OWL)

Schickedanz & Dickinson, Pearson Early Learning, Jan. 2005



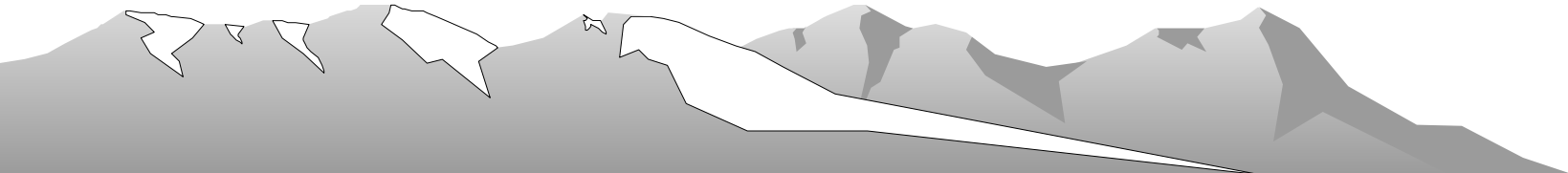
Suggested Policy Directions

- Provide high quality preschool to all low-income children.
- Adopt systems that help create high quality programs:
 - Adopt and implement a high quality curriculum
 - Provide coherent, sustained professional development that is linked to some form of accountability
 - Provide well-qualified literacy mentors/coaches to ensure adoption of effective practices
 - link community colleges and universities to the preschool community



Suggested Policy Directions

- Adopt accountability measures that help ensure classrooms are of high quality:
 - NAEYC new accreditation standards
 - Good teacher-child ratios; stable staff
 - Well qualified leadership: directors, curriculum coordinators
 - Teachers with reasonable levels of education
 - Observational data on classroom quality
 - Measures of child progress that can be used to inform classroom instruction



Additional Resources

- Schickedanz, J. & Dickinson, D.K. (2005). Opening the World of Learning. Pearson Early Learning.
- Dickinson & Tabors, (2001) Beginning Literacy with Language. Brookes Publishing.
- Dickinson D.K. & Neuman, S.B. (2005) Handbook of Early Literacy Research Vol. II.
- Neuman, S.B. & Dickinson, D.K. (2001), Handbook of Early Literacy Research, Guilford Publishing (Guilford.com)
- Smith, M.W., Dickinson, D.K., Sangeorge & Anatasopoulos (2002), Early Language and Literacy (ELLCO) Toolkit. Brookes Publishing.