

Florida Center for Reading Research

100 Book Challenge

What is the 100 Book Challenge?

The *100 Book Challenge*, provided by American Reading Company, is a supplemental independent reading motivation program whose goal is to improve reading scores in grades PreK-12 by helping increase students' self-esteem and confidence in reading and by fostering independent reading. *100 Book Challenge* suggests a minimum of 30 minutes of teacher-supervised independent daily reading practice for all students. While students are reading, teachers are directed to sample student progress using a standards-based assessment framework. By presenting a structure to differentiate guided reading for teachers and students, the *100 Book Challenge* provides extended support for the application and practice of what is learned in core reading instruction to connected text. Integral to the success of the program is an additional minimum 30 minutes per day of parent-supervised home reading.

Currently, approximately 70,000 books are organized into classroom libraries that are designed to circulate weekly among classrooms. Books are separated into fifteen designated levels that correlate to reading ability in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Characteristics of text at each level are delineated in the Color Coding Guidelines and in one-page Independent Reading Level Assessments provided in program materials. Each level also includes characteristics of the reader along with a major learning goal and developmental challenges for the reader. The assessments include benchmark checklists for wide reading and motivation, decoding/word-solving strategies, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. In addition, standards required at each level are outlined on skills cards.

Adapted to the needs of students at each level of reading and color-coded to the leveling system, the *100 Book Challenge* Skills Cards guide teachers, parents, and students to identify skills and strategies that are the main focus for each level. Skills Cards list skills that students must practice in order to move to the next level. In addition to leveled Skills Cards there are also Skills Cards which delineate word attack strategies, the four-point rubric used to score students' written responses on standardized reading tests, comprehension strategies, story map/literature vocabulary, active reading/questioning the author, graphic organizers, and world geography.



A Classroom Library contains 10 baskets of books designed for a group of 30 students with approximately 300 titled books for students reading on grade level, one level above, and four levels below. The color-coded reading level baskets contain a mix of paperback and hardback, fiction and nonfiction, classics and pop culture, and include multicultural titles. Content-area libraries on a variety of science, social studies, and language arts topics are also available in a wide range of reading levels.

An additional Curriculum Integration Project (CIP) is written to specific states' standards and organizes social studies, science, and language arts by topic for the middle school grades to promote content area reading, writing, and research in a systematic way. Included are core texts, guided reading sets composed of single copies of leveled books focusing on a specific theme, a student research library (a 6 basket set containing 150 different titles), a teacher's reference library, a thematic

curriculum guide, skills cards that (a) highlight domain-specific vocabulary, (b) include questions to direct student research, and (c) offer 11 types of graphic organizers, a book publishing pack that includes art and publishing materials, theme folders, and a manual of teacher curriculum materials for a 6-9 week program using a reading and writing workshop model to complete a thematic inquiry unit.

Schools who have participated in the *100 Book Challenge* professional development may purchase Classroom Modules which include 10 baskets of books and 1 Teacher Resource Kit. The kit includes the Teacher Handbook, Step-by-Step Guide to Readers' Workshop, Independent Reading Level Assessment Guide, Color Coding Guidelines, Reading All-Stars Poster, Set of Laminated Skills Cards, and an On-Target Badge. The Teacher handbook provides sample schedules, black-line masters, data collection examples, instructions for implementation of the program, tips for common concerns, the KidPACE book leveling system, and materials to encourage parent participation. Also included are: 250-300 Skills Cards, KidPACE Teacher's Management Tools, 140 Reading Folders, 120 Milestone Awards, and 360 Incentives.

The KidPACE Teacher Management Tool is a software program designed to track data such as: individual reading level, quantity practice targets, and home reading support. Charts and graphs provide visual indicators of reading achievement and track progress at the student, classroom, school, and district levels. For an additional cost, American Reading Company offers a full or half-year subscription to their Online Book Database of 70,000 titles and their corresponding color levels that can be used to assist schools in leveling books.

How is the 100 Book Challenge aligned with Current Research?

The Mission of the *100 Book Challenge* is that every child in America will read on or above grade level. Because the purpose of the *100 Book Challenge* is not to provide reading instruction, it cannot be evaluated in light of the five components of reading instruction. Rather, its purpose is to help motivate students to read more books at their independent reading level by providing the resources, the teacher knowledge of text leveling and assessment-driven student reading levels, and encouraging independent reading practice time both in school and at home. The instructional support provides students extended practice of their original reading instruction.

The American Reading Company offers eight to ten hours of professional development to provide teachers with training for start-up implementation of the *100 Book Challenge* as well as the rationale behind the program. The price of professional development varies by module or workshop and is in addition to the cost of materials. The American Reading Company works with partnership schools/districts to create customized implementations that suit both their financial and curriculum requirements. Each teacher receives one-on-one, in-class coaching three times per year with a *100 Book Challenge* master teacher who models appropriate teacher behaviors, answers questions, and offers support. Following this on-site visit, a detailed report is sent to the school. This report is then used as the focus of staff discussion and improvement plans designed by the *100 Book Challenge* staff when they prepare follow-up workshops. Fish Bowl Teacher Coaching Visits combine one-on-one, in-class coaching with small group workshops or demonstration lessons. All teacher coaching visits include meetings with the principal and site-coordinator. In addition, the American Reading Company can provide a school-based consultant who will work on-site for up to 25 days to teach demonstration lessons, provide classroom coaching, coordinate

and support curriculum committees, facilitate the use of diverse teaching resources and instructional materials, and consult with building administrators.

American Reading Company also conducts KidPACE site visits, during which they coach individual teachers on their teacher management software tool. Additional workshops offered are Strategies for Success, Reading for Comprehension, Conference Notebook, Research Labs, Leadership Training for Principals and *100 Book Challenge* Site Coordinators, Family Workshops for Parents and Their Children, and KidPACE Data Collection Analysis Support Workshops.

Research Support for the 100 Book Challenge

First begun as a reading challenge from Jane Hileman, a reading specialist in a Philadelphia school district, to second graders who had kindergarten-level reading abilities, the *100 Book Challenge* evolved into a business in 1998. Based on research about the importance of reading practice and the value of giving students choice to read books leveled to their abilities, the program builds on the premise that when students experience success with reading, they are encouraged to read more. Though many studies find that the best readers read the most and that poor readers read the least, these studies provide correlational, not causal evidence. This means that if you read more, you could become a better reader, but it could also be true that better readers choose to read more. The National Reading Panel's (2000) analysis of programs that encourage students to read more could find no gains in reading as a result of such programs; however, they also acknowledged that there were very few appropriate studies to evaluate in this area. One important issue that schools need to consider about programs like this is whether the time it takes to implement during school hours might be better spent providing more direct instruction to students, particularly struggling readers. However, the *100 Book Challenge* does provide direction for a variety of types of teacher support and guidance during reading, so it is not simply a program in which students read without teacher guidance and support.

The *100 Book Challenge* began with the purpose that all children learn the habits of independent reading. Since its inception, several informal studies have been conducted which focused on process evaluation and implementation issues. Three studies were conducted to evaluate the reading achievement of participating students.

In 1999, Ducette reported on data collected from approximately 2,000 first, second, and third grade students in 12 elementary schools in Philadelphia that were participating in the *100 Book Challenge Program*. In a quasi-experimental design, classrooms volunteered to participate and were compared to a control group of classrooms within each school that did not volunteer. Students were not matched and no pretest was given. Data provided were derived from the end of the year administration of the reading achievement section of the SAT-9. Though students in the treatment group achieved a higher score on the open-ended section of the SAT-9, these results are ambiguous with regard to the effectiveness of the program. When groups are not matched on a number of variables or on a pretest, there is a risk that the two seemingly equivalent groups may have some notable dimension that is significantly different and that may have influenced the experimental results. In addition, there is at least a reasonable possibility that teachers who volunteer to try a new program are different in systematic and important ways from those who do not.

In 2001, Ducette conducted a second evaluation with second and third graders using 10 schools participating in the *100 Book Challenge Program* in a Philadelphia school district. Twenty schools chosen as the comparison group were matched on four

variables: Achievement Accountability Index Scores, grade range serviced in the school, poverty level of the students, and racial distribution of the students. Each treatment school was matched with two comparison schools, one immediately above the treatment school in rank order on the Achievement Accountability Index Score, and one immediately below. No pretest data was collected on student achievement for students in the experimental and control schools. Results showed second grade students in treatment classrooms scored higher on the open-ended portion of the SAT-9, while third grade differences were not significant. The weaknesses in this study included lack of random assignment to the instructional and control condition and uncertainties about comparability of the experimental and control students at the beginning of the year. However, this study is an improvement over the first study conducted, and the results, at least for second grade students, provide a beginning level of support for the effectiveness of the *100 Book Challenge* in improving students' ability to respond to the open ended portion of the SAT9. The fact that results were inconsistent between second and third grade students raises questions about the way the program may have been implemented at these two grade levels.

A third study conducted in 2004 by Offenbergh compared 89 different Philadelphia schools; fourteen schools that provided the *100 Book Challenge* Program to all first through third grade students, and seventy-five comparison schools that did not offer the program. Depending on their grade in 2004, students in the fourteen treatment schools may have participated in the program for one to three consecutive years. Analysis of student outcome data showed that pupils attending schools that used the *100 Book Challenge Program* had significantly higher test scores on the TerraNova reading test than comparison school students. However, there is at least one important weakness in this study. Although attempts were made to match the treatment and control groups based on student demographic variables and first grade reading scores, comparison-group designs of this type may produce inaccurate estimates of an intervention's effect. This is because of unobservable differences between the members of the two groups that differentially affect their outcomes. For example, if participants volunteer for the intervention, as these *100 Book Challenge* participants did, they may be more motivated to succeed than their control-group counterparts. Their motivation, rather than the intervention, may then lead to their superior outcomes. Many comparison-group designs in education and other areas produce inaccurate estimates of an intervention's effect.

In conclusion, there is at least a beginning level of research support for the effectiveness of the *100 Book Challenge* in helping students to increase their reading ability. Future studies that employ control groups and include random assignment to groups are desirable to further establish the evidence base for this program.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths of *100 Book Challenge*:

- An extensive collection of leveled books makes it easy for students, teachers, schools, and districts to select appropriate text for reading practice.
- The program provides methods for the organization and circulation of books within a school to ensure a continuous supply of fresh titles for all students, at all reading levels.
- An emphasis on reading for pleasure encourages motivation and engagement in reading for all students.

- The focus on scheduled daily reading times both at school and at home encourages and supports reading practice.
- The Spanish Collections for English-Spanish bilingual and dual-language classrooms in grades K-8 contain more than 3,000 titles.

Weaknesses of *100 Book Challenge*:

- None were noted.

Which Florida districts have schools that implement the 100 Book Challenge?

Brevard	321-631-1911	Okeechobee	863-462-5000
Charlotte	941-255-0808	Orange	407-317-3202
Collier	239-377-0212	Palm Beach	561-434-8200
Desoto	863-494-4222	Pinellas	727-588-6011
Duval	904-390-2115	St. Johns	904-819-7502
Hillsborough	813-272-4050	St. Lucie	772-429-3925
Lee	239-337-8301	Volusia	386-734-7190
Martin	772-219-1200	Florida School for the Deaf and Blind	904-827-2200

For More Information

<http://www.americanreading.com>

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Important Note: FCRR Reports are prepared in response to requests from Florida school districts for review of specific reading programs. The reports are intended to be

a source of information about programs that will help teachers, principals, and district personnel in their choice of materials that can be used by skilled teachers to provide effective instruction. Whether or not a program has been reviewed does **not** constitute endorsement or lack of endorsement by the FCRR.

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