Ticket to Read enhances *TimeWarp*® *Plus* Effectiveness

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This study investigated the program effects of TimeWarp® Plus on the reading achievement of students in first through the fifth grade when Ticket to Read was used to provide additional fluency practice during the summer of 2008. This study used a pretest posttest quasi-experimental design with a matched control group using the Vital Indicators of Progress® Reading Connected Text measure. The study participants included 2,134 students of which 1,067 used Ticket to Read. Students who participated in TimeWarp Plus with Ticket to Read during the summer showed greater growth than TimeWarp Plus alone.

INTRODUCTION

When students are first learning to read and when they are struggling with reading, learning the strategies for decoding and reading with automaticity are areas that must be practiced routinely to be developed and to just be maintained. This also applies to the summer months when students are likely to experience summer learning loss equal to at least one month of instruction (Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, & Greathouse, 1996). To ameliorate summer loss, districts across the United States implemented *TimeWarp Plus* with students who attended summer school.

One of the many benefits of *TimeWarp Plus* is that it provides what is often prescribed as the best instruction for students who are struggling to learn. Students are provided with instruction around exciting and motivating content. The teacher uses clear, explicit language to guide students as they learn and practice skills, and whenever new material is introduced, the teacher models the expected behavior. The pace of the lessons reinforce automaticity and students work in their individual copies of material eliminating the need for copying and maximizing the instructional time to apply new and previously taught skills, and use of skills across many modalities that they can take forward to the school year and apply on their high-stakes assessments.

"Fluency is, in a sense, a bridge between phonics and word decoding on one hand, and vocabulary (word meaning) and comprehension (passage meaning) on the other" (Rasinski, 2006, p. 62). Moats (2005) points out that to be successful in school, students must read with automaticity which involves spending time reading or, as she puts it, "miles on the page" (p. 6). *Ticket to Read* is an interactive, Web-based, student-centered learning component that promotes practice of actual text reading. Starting in the summer of 2008, students who received instruction using the *TimeWarp Plus* curriculum also received access to *Ticket to Read*.

This report evaluates the effectiveness of using explicit instruction provided by the *TimeWarp Plus* curriculum combined with the additional fluency practice provided by *Ticket to Read* for students in first through fifth grade who attended summer school during 2008. From the larger population of all students who received instruction using TimeWarp Plus during the summer of 2008, students were identified as having read 10 or more passages using the Ticket to Read technology component. These students were compared to a group of students who did not use the Ticket to Read component.

METHODS
Participants

During the 2008 summer school session, over 18,500 students in 90 districts and 438 campuses across 26 states participated in the *TimeWarp Plus* curriculum and had the necessary scores to be included in the overall analysis. See Peyton and Macpherson (2009) for details on the overall analysis. In most cases, summer school is not mandatory. Often there is a strong suggestion that students who are struggling with learning to read attend summer school. The decision of attending or not attending summer school is left to parental discretion.

From the overall group of students who attended summer school during the summer of 2008, students were grouped into two groups, students who had read 10 or more passages using Ticket to Read and those who had not read any passages. From these two groups, a matched set of students was formed using a case control methodology, to allow for comparison of gains made in oral reading fluency.

Implementation

Each of the participating teachers received the standard training, which oriented the teachers to the curriculum and assessment materials. Teachers received instruction on VPORT, Voyager's data management system. The way summer school is set up and implemented is as

varies as the districts involved. The number of instructional days in the summer school session during 2008 varied from 5 to 30 days, with an average around 18 to 20 days. The number of hours of instruction each day varied from one hour to six hours per day, with an average of three hours per day. This means students could have received as few as 18 hours of instruction during summer school up to 120 hours. The average was between 54 and 60 hours of instruction during the summer school session.

During the standard training, teachers were also introduced to Ticket to Read and how to obtain student logins from the VPORT®, Voyager's data management system. Ticket to Read was available for student access 24 hours a day, seven days a week with any Internet access. Most of the time, students were using Ticket to Read outside of the summer school instructional time.

Materials
TimeWarp Plus
TimeWarp Plus is a comprehensive summer reading intervention program specifically designed to prevent summer learning loss. Developed by a team of reading specialists to accelerate learning for students who have fallen behind, the series is crafted to immerse students in exciting reading adventures, while addressing the critical needs of struggling readers in grades K-8. Grounded in research on summer reading loss validated for over a decade, reading instruction in *TimeWarp Plus* is supported by additional language arts strands: listening and speaking, spelling, and writing, interwoven in the daily adventures.

The *TimeWarp Plus* model includes 3-4 hours of academic learning per day for 3-6 weeks, totaling up to 80 hours of instruction. In addition to summer school, this reading intervention series is flexible enough to serve as an effective model for intersession classes in year-round schools.

Students in *TimeWarp Plus* participate in theme-based adventures that take students back in time and then return them to the present day, culminating in a celebration. The following list presents the theme for each grade level.

- First Grade: Home Town
- Second Grade: Egypt
- Third Grade: Rome
- Fourth Grade: Greece
- Fifth Grade: Africa

While actively engaging in leadership roles and collaborative learning through participation as "Team Leaders" and "Pathfinders," students read a variety of texts and learning resources daily for information and pleasure. Active learning experiences in whole- and small-group settings effect improvement in key reading and language skills students need to become more competent and confident readers within a few short weeks.

Students begin their day with instructional-level text to practice reading fluency. They practice improving their reading rate or pace, reading accuracy, and prosody (reading with expression). Reading instruction continues with teacher-led lessons in word study, including sight words, spelling, passage reading, and strategies for building vocabulary and comprehension, as well as fluency practice.

Activators draw students into the adventure and provide opportunities to apply new skills to a theme-based adventure. Oral language is developed as students' prior knowledge is activated through the instructional focus. Students participate in the reading process and develop skills and strategies used by successful readers. Students engage in paired reading, choral reading, and modeled think-alouds.

Based on reading levels determined by their Vital Indicators of Progress® (VIP) assessment, students are grouped into three learning teams, rotating through two learning stations and one teacher station daily. At each learning station, a student team leader facilitates as students work independently in small-group activities. The teaching station provides the opportunity for teachers to work with small groups of students at two levels of difficulty: Challenge Level A or Challenge Level B. Challenge lessons are composed of four segments:

- Fluency
- Instructional reading
- Phonological awareness (1-3) or decoding and word recognition (4-5)
- Alphabetic principle (1-3) or word analysis and spelling (4-5)

Response and practice activities give students the opportunity to reflect on what they have read as they express themselves creatively in whole-group, small-group and individual activities. Students write to specific prompts and for a variety of audiences and collaborate using the steps of process writing: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. They also create theme related projects to demonstrate real-world connections to reading.

Ticket to Read

During the summer of 2008, a technology component was available for students to use along with the *TimeWarp Plus* curriculum. This technology component was *Ticket to Read*.

Ticket to Read is an interactive, Web-based, student-centered learning component that promotes practice of actual text reading and provides sequential, structured lessons in phonics. *Ticket to Read* is available for student use in school and at home or other location that has an Internet connection. Reporting on students' progress is available to teachers through VPORT.

Ticket to Read contains several parts designed to motivate students while providing appropriately leveled opportunities to build fluency, strengthen vocabulary, and reinforce comprehension skills. Students log into the Clubhouse which is customizable and can be filled with furnishings students buy with the tickets earned by reading passages. Passage reading is the heart of *Ticket to Read*. Students can also play games that combine reading skills with electronic gaming. Together, the three parts of *Ticket to Read*, the Clubhouse, electronic games, and passage reading, provide a computer-mediated learning environment that keeps students engaged and coming back.

Ticket to Read is available to students seven days a week. It was designed to allow students to read as many passages as they want to and to spend as much time as they would like in the Clubhouse. The key to spending time in the Clubhouse and playing the electronic games is having tickets to spend. Students accrue tickets by reading passages. Therefore, the parts of *Ticket to Read* are linked and dependent upon each other.

Ticket to Read contains 16 levels with three to four books per level and ten high-interest passages per book. Topics for the passages include: cool people, fantastic places, amazing animals, exciting events, interesting things, and engaging stories. Reading difficulty of the passages ranges from 1.5 to 7.0. Passages are specifically written to incorporate key comprehension skills and strategies as well as high-utility and content-specific vocabulary words. The passages include a healthy mix of expository and narrative text, starting with a 30 to 70 percent mix in Level 1 to a 90 to 10 percent mix in later levels.

Ticket to Read is based on the research relating to the repeated reading procedure, originally developed by Samuels (1979), which emerged as a means for developing automatic decoding with unskilled readers (Homan, Klesius, & Hite, 1993). Samuels found that the number of repetitions needed to achieve fluency decreased over time as rereading continued and that repeated reading of one passage transferred to the reading of new material. Eldredge (1990) studied repeated reading where the teacher read the selection while students followed along was incorporated into the process. After an 8 week instructional period, a significant main effect for comprehension was found on the Gates-MacGinitie. Rasinski (1990) found that reading text while simultaneously listening to a fluent rendition of the same text was equally effective to repeated reading and may add considerable importance to the notion of fluent reading within the context of reading instruction.

Based the research noted above, the process in Ticket to Read for passage reading includes the following steps:

1. First Read: This is a cold read which is used to establish the passage goal for each student. The student clicks to start a timer and clicks again, after reading the passage, to stop the timer. The words per minute are calculated based on the length of time it took for the student to read the passage and the number of words in the passage.

2. Words to Know: Students are introduced to key vocabulary terms found in the passage. The student will hear a definition of the term, hear it used in the context of a sentence, and see a picture for each word.

3. Think About: Students are introduced to a targeted comprehension skill or strategy specifically tied to the passage.

4. Read Along: The passage is read to the student at a model fluency rate, and then the student reads along with the practice reading at a slightly slower rate.

5. Practice: During Practice, students read the passage independently without audio support while being timed. Words can be clicked for pronunciation and bold words can be clicked to hear the pronunciation, definition, and text usage. After completing the read, students are shown their words per minute score. If students meet the passage goal, they move onto the Record step. If students do not meet the passage goal, they are given another opportunity to reach the passage goal.

6. Record: After students read the passage at or above the passage goal, they are given an opportunity to record themselves reading the passage. This step is optional and requires a microphone. Students can listen to the recorded passage and re-record the passage.

7. Quiz: After successfully reading the passage at or above the goal rate, students take the quiz, which consists of six to ten comprehension and vocabulary questions. Students are given the opportunity to

correct each incorrect response. When correcting quiz questions, the question appears next to the passage text so students can search for the correct answer.

8. Performance Summary: Students receive a summary of the passage performance, including the rate at which the passage was read, the percent correct on the quiz, and the number of tickets earned. When students click OK, they are returned to the Clubhouse where a new ribbon is displayed for the passage read and students can select another passage, play one of the games, or spend tickets they have earned.

If students successfully read at or above the goal for that level during the First Read, they are moved directly to the Quiz step to measure comprehension. If students successfully pass the quiz, they are able to move to the next passage and are not required to go through all of the steps. This is known as fast tracking. If students are not successful in passing the quiz, then they are able to return to the Words to Know step in the passage reading process for additional support and will be directed through the normal process. Differentiating the passage reading process in this way enables the students who are reading and comprehending passages at the lower levels to move on to more difficult and challenging passages quickly, while supporting those students who need additional fluency practice as well as vocabulary and comprehension support.

Feedback plays an important role for students who struggle learning to read (Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler, 2002; Homan, et al., 1993; National Reading Panel, 2000). When a student reads with a partner or teacher, feedback is readily available to the student regarding words that might be unknown or have been mispronounced. Being able to hear one's own reading, by way of a recording, provides the unique opportunity to evaluate the prosody with which one reads. Ticket to Read includes the option to record students reading the passages aloud. Even with students working at their own pace, teachers can still monitor progress by more than just the number of tickets that have been earned by students using this record feature.

After a student has completed the passage reading process, the VPORT data management system records what passage was read, along with information about the completion of the passage. This information allows teachers to monitor the progress students are making. It also allows for the examination of progress made by students who participate in one or other of the Voyager instructional programs and Ticket to Read.

Assessments

In addition to explicit, systematic instruction in each of the reading components, effective instruction for struggling readers must be responsive to students' ongoing needs and must include a variety of continuous assessment to guide additional instruction (Deshler, Shumaker, & Woodruff, 2004). *TimeWarp Plus* includes two embedded assessments, the pretest and posttest Reading Assessment and the VIP RCT measure. For this study, the VIP RCT measure will be examined since it shows fluency growth, which is what Ticket to Read is designed to build.

TimeWarp Plus provides Vital Indicators of Progress (VIP) measures which are one-minute individually-administered fluency indicators to monitor growth. The cutoffs and goals are based on finding a point where the odds would be in favor (at least 80%) of the student achieving subsequent literacy outcomes as developed by the DIBELS™ Benchmarks (Good, Simmons, Kame'enui, Kaminski, & Wallin, 2002). Results for the VIP benchmarks identify if a student is a struggling, an emerging, or an on-track reader. During the summer, the end of year goals for each grade level are used.

The RCT (Reading Connected Text) measure, equivalent to the DIBELS ORF (Oral Reading Fluency) measure, is a standardized, individually administered test of reading fluency with connected text for students in grades 1 through 5 and above. RCT is a set of equivalent passages and administration procedures designed to identify students who may need additional instructional support and to monitor progress toward instructional goals.

Student performance is measured by having students read a passage aloud for one minute. Words omitted, substituted, and hesitations of more than three seconds are scored as errors. Words self-corrected within three seconds are scored as accurate. The number of correct words per minute from the passages is the oral reading fluency rate which is reported as the "RCT score." The tool provides information on student performance in English.

Typically the DIBELS goals are used with the VIP fluency measures based on time of year (Good, et al., 2002). The Hasbrouck and Tindal Oral Reading Fluency Norms (2006) are mentioned as a point of reference for oral reading fluency where appropriate. The DIBELS/VIP passages however are standardized passages based on end of grade level reading targets and calibrated across nine readability formulas. Hasbrouck and Tindal Norms were developed using data collected from real teachers across the nation using the text they selected individually perceived as grade level text. In both cases the samples for the norms are quite substantial and provide valuable and reliable reference points for oral reading fluency.

Tracking of passages read by students using Ticket to Read is done automatically in VPORT, Voyager's data management system. When students complete the sequence for reading a passage, either through the fast track process or the traditional process described above, the completion is recorded in VPORT and is available along with assessment scores from the TimeWarp Plus curriculum.

Data Gathering and Analysis
Each teacher was responsible for the administration and recording of student scores into the VPORT system at the beginning and end of the summer school session. The number of passages read by students using Ticket to Read was automatically stored in VPORT according to student login. Students who had both RCT scores were included in the population from which the sample groups were chosen. Treatment and control groups were chosen from this population. Effect size and gain in oral reading fluency were calculated for the RCT measure by grade.

RESULTS
Participation Level
To be included in this analysis, students had to have two RCT scores. In the 2008 summer data, there were 18,931 students with two RCT scores. Students were then divided into two groups, the control group had not used Ticket to Read at all as evidenced by having no passage information recorded in VPORT and the treatment group, students who had read ten or more passages in Ticket to Read. Reading ten or more passages in Ticket to Read indicated students spent approximately two to two and a half hours reading text beyond any instruction during the summer school session.

Demographic data from each district was gathered to help in matching the treatment and control group members. Since demographic data was not available most of the time for each individual student within a district, an overall picture of the district was used, including type of district (urban, rural, charter, or suburban) and general ethnic composition. For example, a district would be referred to as High Black where the population of Black students is above 70%. A district would be referred to as Even: Hispanic and White where the largest groups within the district are Hispanic and White students respectively. Two other factors were used in matching treatment and control students, grade at the end of the school year and the RCT score at the first benchmark (B1) for the summers.

The matching process between the treatment and control groups was accomplished using SPSS and a procedure called Casectrl. The four characteristics that were used in the matching procedure were grade, district type, general ethnic composition of the student's district, and the RCT

score at the beginning of the summer session. For each student in the treatment group, a student from the control group who exactly matched with the student in the treatment group was picked. If more than one student from the control group matched the treatment student, then a random selection was made among the students with the same characteristics in the control group for the match. A control student was removed from consideration once matched with a treatment student.

The matching process resulted in 1,067 students in the treatment group and 1,067 students in the control group. The students in the groups came from 64 different districts and 264 different campuses across the US. Since the students included in the analysis were from across so many different districts, regional differences and fidelity of implementation issues should be minimized. The following table, Table 1, shows information about the sample of students used for this analysis.

Table 1. Demographic and District Information for Sample Students

Grade	Number of Students	% of Total
1st	296	13.9
2nd	672	31.5
3rd	642	30.1
4th	344	16.1
5th	180	8.4
Total	2134	100
Type of District	**Number of Students**	**% of Total**
Charter	8	0.4
Rural	94	4.4
Suburban	486	22.8
Urban	1546	72.4
Total	2134	100
Ethnic Composition	**Number of Students**	**% of Total**
Even: Black and Hispanic	310	14.5
Even: Black and White	16	0.7
Even: Hispanic and Black	256	12.0
Even: Hispanic and White	38	1.8
Even: White and Black	92	4.3
Even: White and Hispanic	990	46.4
High Black	208	9.7
High Hispanic	8	0.4
High White	216	10.1
Total	2134	100

Assessment Results
Instruction during the summer should prevent the loss of at least one month of instruction, while providing opportunities to practice and learn reading skills. Figure

1 shows the gain in oral reading fluency, as measured by VIP RCT passages for the summer of 2008. For each grade, students who experienced additional fluency building opportunities by using Ticket to Read, showed greater oral reading fluency gains than did students who did not use Ticket to Read.
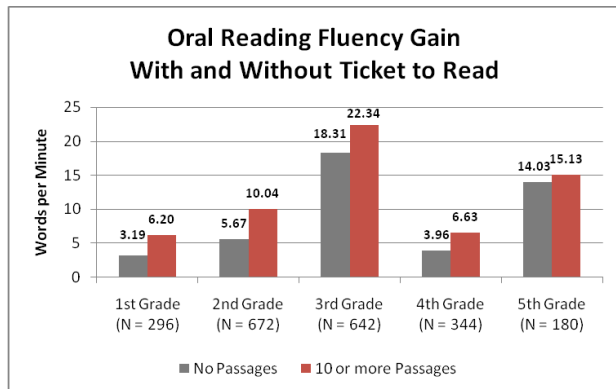

Figure 1. Oral Reading Fluency Growth by Grade for TimeWarp Plus Students with and without Ticket to Read, Summer 2008.

Effect size is a way of determining if an intervention made a difference or had the intended result of improving student performance. The effect size indicates how much the mean or average of the group is moved as the result of the intervention or treatment, as measured by the assessments. In this analysis, effect sizes are based on unadjusted initial, or B1, and final, or B2, RCT means. Effect sizes are calculated by dividing the difference between the B1 and B2 means by the pooled standard deviation of the two scores. An effect size of 1.0 indicates the mean of the group moved a full standard deviation between assessments. An effect size of 0 indicates the group made no improvement between assessments. Generally, an effect size of .2 is considered a small effect, .5 is moderate, and .8 is large (Cohen, 1988). An effect size of .3 is considered educationally meaningful.

Figure 2 shows the effect sizes for the RCT scores across first to fifth grade for students using the *TimeWarp Plus* curriculum with and without using Ticket to Read during the summer of 2008. The effect sizes for students who did not use Ticket to Read along with TimeWarp Plus range from 0.15 for fourth grade to 0.64 for third grade. For students who used Ticket to Read along with TimeWarp Plus, effect sizes were larger across all grades, from .06 to .18 points larger. All of the effect sizes are statistically significant ($p < .001$) for all grades.
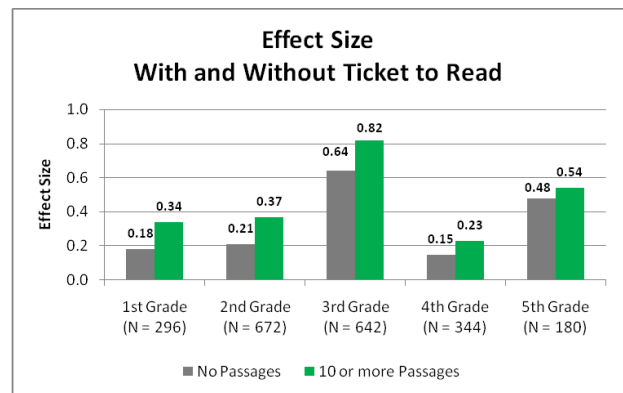

Figure 2. Effect Sizes by Grade for TimeWarp Plus Students with and without Ticket to Read, Summer 2008.

Categorical change is another way of looking at the progress student make. For the summer of 2008, examination of the struggling students, who make up the majority of the sample, shows progress for all struggling students included in this analysis. The students who read 10 or more passages using Ticket to Read moved out of the struggling category at a higher rate at all grades, except fourth, than did students who did not read additional passages on Ticket to Read. See Table 2 for details.

Table 2. Percent of Students Struggling at B1 and B2, Summer 2008

No Passages Read			
Grade	N	Struggling at B1	Struggling at B2
1st Grade	45	100%	84.4%
2nd Grade	200	100%	78.5%
3rd Grade	211	100%	58.8%
4th Grade	112	100%	75.0%
5th Grade	58	100%	63.8%
10 or More Passages Read			
Grade	N	Struggling at B1	Struggling at B2
1st Grade	45	100%	68.9%
2nd Grade	200	100%	74.0%
3rd Grade	211	100%	50.7%
4th Grade	112	100%	79.5%
5th Grade	58	100%	55.2%

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

A research sysnthesis conducted by Cooper, et al. (1996) indicated that summer learning loss equaled at least one month of instruction. Using the yearly gain in oral reading fluency based on the 50th percentile student norms (Hasbrock & Tindal, 2006) divided by 32 weeks in the school year, yields a weekly gain in oral reading fluency. Using the weekly gain and the summer learning loss of one month, a potential loss in oral reading fluency can be calculated. Table 3 shows the potential word per minute loss for students who do not participate in summer learning activities.

Table 3. Potential Summer Loss by Grade in Words per Minute

Grade	Weekly Gain	Potential Summer Loss
1st Grade	1.9	-7.6
2nd Grade	1.2	- 4.8
3rd Grade	1.1	-4.4
4th Grade	0.9	-3.6
5th Grade	0.9	-3.6

The oral reading fluency growth for students attending summer school in 2008 shows that other than students in first grade, students gained at least a month or more during the summer school session rather than losing a month. Since students were not attending school while receiving summer school instruction, it seems likely the growth is the result of the *TimeWarp Plus* curriculum. In the case of the students who used Ticket to Read for supplemental fluency practice by completing 10 or more passages, even more growth during the summer was realized. Additionally, it also seems unlikely that maturation is the cause of the gain in oral reading fluency since the summer school session was relatively short.

Ticket to Read is gaining in popularity with students across the United States. It matches students to text that they can read independently for practice. To date students have read more than 12 million passages on Ticket to Read. Ticket to Read provides a vehicle for students to go, as Moats (2005) suggests, "miles on the page" (p. 6).

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