Fade-out, Fading or Catch Up?

PRE-K EFFECTIVENESS
Topics

- “Stop me if you’ve heard this before”: Research on PreK effects
- “Through a glass darkly”: Some possible explanations of the varying results
- “Ready to launch”: Leveraging early gains through the primary grades
Perry IQ and achievement effects over time

- PPVT
- Read
- Math
Cognitive gains from Prek programs for low-income children in the US by rigor of research design
What explains mixed results?

- Program design failure: replicate all of the components of the best programs
- Implementation failure: plan, analyze, and coach for fidelity and continuous improvement
- Research study design failure - imprecise or no measurement of:
  - Components of the prek program – a rose is not a daisy is not a petunia
  - Counter-factual – what are the control children experiencing?
  - K-3 experiences
    - Catch up – time and resources dedicated to lowest functioning children
    - Peer effects– critical mass of prek attendees, concentration of poverty
    - Continuity (DLL, inclusion, coherent curriculum, teaching and assessment)
NJ’s urban PreK transformation

- Part of systemic reform P-12 with P-3 components;
- Teacher with BA & Cert. + asst. in each class;
- Full-day (6 hour educational day), 180-day program, plus extended day/full year;
- Open to all 3 and 4 yr. olds in 31 school systems
- Maximum class size of 15 students; K-3 = 21
- Evidence-based curricula with fidelity;
- Early learning standards and program guidelines;
- Support for potential learning difficulties;
- Professional development for teachers, coaches & leaders;
- Continuous improvement cycle with data at every level from child to classroom to program to district to state
Transformation of Quality in NJ (ECERS-R)

1= Inadequate, 3=Minimal, 5=Good, 7=Excellent

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NJ UPK Effects on Achievement Grades 4 & 5

- LAL 4th: 0.12
- LAL 5th: 0.22
- Math 4th: 0.17
- Math 5th: 0.29
- Science 4th: 0.37

1 year Abbott pre-k vs 2 year Abbott pre-k
NJ Effects on Retention & Special Education at Grade 5

- Retention:
  - Abbott pre-K: 12%
  - No Abbott pre-K: 19%

- Special Education:
  - Abbott pre-K: 12%
  - No Abbott pre-K: 17%
Key lessons for program design

- Initial gains must be large & meaningful
- Structural features (resources) are necessary, but not sufficient
- Program standards should encompass key features of practice
- Cost should be determined based on design not designed to fit an arbitrary budget figure
- Broader policies and practices before, after, and around preschool interact