Research and Results
**The Benefits of Classroom Libraries That Include Trade Books**

**Research Foundation**
- A common feature of effective reading programs is student access to a wide variety of appealing trade books and other reading materials. (Cullinan, 2000)
- Highly effective literacy educators create print-rich classroom environments filled with lots of high-quality, diverse reading materials. (Morrow & Gambrell, 2000)
- Access to an abundance of books within the classroom results in increased motivation and increased reading achievement. (Brisk & Harrington, 2000)
- Books are a vital component of a print-rich classroom environment. (Wolbersberger, Reutzel, Sudweeks, & Fawson, 2004)
- Large classroom and school libraries that provide ample collections of instructional-level texts play a key role in literacy learning. (Mosenthal, Lipson, Sortino, Russ, & Makel, 2001)
- When classrooms provide a rich literacy environment, including books that represent a wide range of difficulty and genres, they can compensate for less than ideal home environments. (Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, & Hemphill, 1991)
- Students in classrooms with well-designed classroom libraries 1) interact more with books, 2) spend more time reading, 3) demonstrate more positive attitudes toward reading, and 4) exhibit higher levels of reading achievement. (National Assessment of Educational Progress Report, 2002)

**Research Implications**
- Children learning to read need access to meaningful and personally interesting books. Without real engagement with meaningful books, children will not become readers. Effective teachers of reading understand the critical relationship between access to books and reading achievement. They recognize that the availability of reading material is related to how much children read, and that how much children read is related to how well they read. Because a rich and supportive literacy environment is critical to reading success, they provide their students with a rich and extensive classroom library filled with a diverse selection of interesting trade books.
- Effective teachers of reading incorporate diverse trade books into their reading curriculum, introducing their students to the wide range of genres, authors, and topics. These teachers know that students who read a diverse range of reading materials are more proficient readers than those who read a narrower selection of texts. A well-stocked classroom library ensures that students will have access to a wide selection of diverse trade books.
- Foods are powerful instructional tools for increasing reading achievement. They provide access to books. (Guthrie et al., 1996)
- The volume of independent, silent reading students do in school is significantly related to gains in reading achievement. (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1996)
- Adolescent and young adults’ engagement in reading, including the amount of time they spend on reading and the diversity of materials they read, is closely associated with performance and reading ability. (Krashk, et al., 2002)
- Students who read widely and frequently are higher achievers than students who read rarely and narrowly. (Guthrie et al., 1999)
- Fourth graders in the United States do better academically when they have greater access to books and other reading materials in their environment. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009)
- Reading volume significantly affects general knowledge of the world, overall verbal ability, and academic achievement. (Shelfbiono, 2000)
- Literally hundreds of correlational studies find that the best readers read the most and that poor readers read the least. These correlational studies suggest that the more children read, the better their fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. (National Reading Panel, 2000)
- Teachers who encourage wide reading and provide students with increased opportunity to read in the classroom have more engaged readers, which is significant because the amount of engaged reading predicts reading achievement. (Guthrie, Schaefer, & Humpl, 2001)
- The amount of reading that children do influences their achievement, as long as the children are guided and monitored during that reading... and they read books at an appropriate level of difficulty. (Stahl, 2004)
- It is during successful, independent reading practice that students consolidate their reading skills and strategies, and come to own them. Without extensive practice reading, reading proficiency lags. (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003)
- Good reading programs always provide access to good literature and encourage children to read as much as possible material with which they are comfortable. (Foorman, Fletcher, & Francis, 2002)
- It is known that successful reading development is predicated on practice in reading, and obviously the less a child practices, the less developed the various reading skills will become. (Lyon, 2002)

"Increased frequency, amount, and diversity of reading activity increases reading achievement." – Guthrie, et al., 1996

**The Benefits of Reading Practice With Trade Books**

**Research Foundation**
- It is known that successful reading development is predicated on practice in reading, and obviously the less a child practices, the less developed the various reading skills will become. (Lyon, 2002)
- The amount of time spent reading, reading achievement is also influenced by the frequency, amount, and diversity of reading activities. Effective teachers of reading engage their students in reading for a variety of purposes—for pleasure, for exploration, and for information to perform a task. These teachers recognize that not all students enter reading through the same door, so they provide them with a wide range of meaningful reading activities, including those that promote social interaction with their peers.
- Effective teachers of reading know that diverse readers span a range of reading interests and abilities and need access to a wide variety of engaging books in their immediate environment to meet their reading needs. They stock their classroom library with a large number of trade books, reflecting different genres, topics, authors, and reading levels. By providing access to a rich classroom library, teachers promote greater amounts of reading, increased reading frequency, and more diverse reading experiences among their students, thus helping them to attain greater levels of reading achievement.

**Research Implications**
- Teachers who encourage wide reading and provide students with increased opportunity to read in the classroom have more engaged readers, which is significant because the amount of engaged reading predicts reading achievement. (Guthrie, Schaefer, & Humpl, 2001)
- The amount of reading that children do influences their achievement, as long as the children are guided and monitored during that reading... and they read books at an appropriate level of difficulty. (Stahl, 2004)
- It is during successful, independent reading practice that students consolidate their reading skills and strategies, and come to own them. Without extensive practice reading, reading proficiency lags. (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003)
- Good reading programs always provide access to good literature and encourage children to read as much as possible material with which they are comfortable. (Foorman, Fletcher, & Francis, 2002)
- It is known that successful reading development is predicated on practice in reading, and obviously the less a child practices, the less developed the various reading skills will become. (Lyon, 2002)

"Increased frequency, amount, and diversity of reading activity increases reading achievement." – Guthrie, et al., 1996
The Benefits of Trade Books in Relation to Reading Comprehension

**Research Foundation**
- Students who read actively and frequently improve their comprehension of text as a consequence. (Cipielewski & Stanovich, 1992)
- The amount of reading is a strong predictor of reading comprehension, outweighing intelligence, economic background, and gender. (Reutzel & Gickgusbworth, 1991)
- An abundance of interesting books in the classroom promotes the use of comprehension strategies. (Guthrie et al, 2000)
- Students who are exposed to real texts—books and stories rather than short passages in basal readers—and who respond to what they read perform better on standardized tests of reading achievement. (Wenglinsky, 2003)
- Extensive reading of developmentally appropriate material of many kinds, both in and out of school, results in substantial growth in vocabulary and comprehension abilities and in the information base of students. (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998)
- Reading a lot serves to develop vocabulary, background knowledge, familiarity with complex syntactic structures, and word recognition. (Cunningham, & Stanovich, 1997)

**Research Implications**
- Because effective teachers of reading recognize that teaching skills and strategies in the context of real reading assists their students in polishing and integrating their newly acquired reading skills, they give their students extended reading practice with books of their own choosing. These teachers understand that to improve reading skills, students need direct instruction followed by meaningful practice with appropriate text. Thus they allocate a substantial amount of time each day for free voluntary reading. To facilitate their students’ independent reading, they stock their classroom with engaging trade books, representing a wide variety of genres, topics, authors, and reading levels to accommodate individual reading needs. The more children read, the more they build their background knowledge, which in turn strengthens their ability to comprehend. Effective teachers of reading facilitate the expansion of background knowledge by providing frequent and varied opportunities for their students to interact with a variety of trade books.
- Effective teachers of reading know that comprehension is enhanced by reflection and social interaction. Therefore, they provide their students with multiple opportunities to respond to their reading and interact with their peers through a variety of activities such as book clubs and discussions. Student interaction in discussions promotes their ability to think critically and promotes a deeper understanding of what they have read.

The Benefits of Reading Trade Books Aloud

**Research Foundation**
- Independent reading is a major source of vocabulary growth. (Nagy & Anderson, 1984)
- Reading out loud to children is a proven way to develop vocabulary growth and language expansion and plays a causal role in developing both receptive and expressive language capabilities. Reading out loud can also enhance children’s background knowledge of new concepts that may appear in both oral and written language. (Lyon, 2002)
- Children who are read aloud to daily score significantly better on measures of vocabulary, comprehension, and decoding ability. (Bus, van Ijzendoorn, & Pelligrini, 1995)
- You can help your students become more fluent readers by providing them with models of fluent reading. (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001)

**Research Implications**
- There are three potential stumbling blocks that are known to throw children off course on the journey to skilled reading. The third obstacle ... [is] the absence or loss of an initial motivation to read or failure to develop a mature appreciation of the rewards of reading. (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998)
- Access to books through classroom and school libraries ... motivates students to read. (Gambrell, Codling, & Palmer, 1996)
- Motivation and reading development are fostered when children are immersed in a book-rich environment, engaged in interactions with others about books, and given the responsibility for making decisions about what, when, and how they read. (Gambrell, 1996)
- Student ownership of literacy is increased when students have access to a diverse range of interesting and appealing books representing a variety of genres. (Au & Aasam, 1996)
- The availability of quality, young adult literature that is relevant, interesting, and challenging to young adolescents, increases the likelihood that students will become actively engaged as readers. (Straus & Irwin, 2000)

The Role of Motivation in Trade Books

**Research Foundation**
- The most important activity for building the knowledge and skills ... required for reading aloud to children. (Adams, 1990)
- Reading to children ... increases their knowledge of the world, their vocabulary, their familiarity with written language ... and their interest in reading. (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001)
- Reading out loud to children is a proven way to develop vocabulary growth and language expansion and plays a causal role in developing both receptive and expressive language capabilities. Reading out loud can also enhance children’s background knowledge of new concepts that may appear in both oral and written language. (Lyon, 2002)
- Children who are read aloud to daily score significantly better on measures of vocabulary, comprehension, and decoding ability. (Bus, van Ijzendoorn, & Pelligrini, 1995)
- You can help your students become more fluent readers by providing them with models of fluent reading. (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001)

**Research Implications**
- Research shows that the opportunity for students to listen to books read aloud also benefits their oral and written language and is strongly correlated to successful literacy development. Effective teachers of reading know that reading aloud encourages reading engagement, builds comprehension and vocabulary, and promotes fluency development. Thus they read aloud frequently in classroom settings, reflectively from a variety of reading levels supports teachers in reading aloud books that promote reading growth.
- Effective teachers of reading know that reading aloud books that are more difficult than their students are able to read independently bridges the gap for those students with limited language experiences in their background. Thus, a rich and varied classroom library filled with diverse trade books representing a variety of different reading levels, genres, topics, and cultures can be an equalizer for students of diverse backgrounds and limited language experiences.
- Reading aloud to students allows teachers to model reading strategies. Effective teachers of reading understand that the modeling of reading strategies through reading aloud supports readers in learning how to make meaning from diverse types of text, such as informational and narrative texts. To this end, these teachers read aloud from a varied array of trade books that introduce students to the different genres and types of text. A well-stocked classroom library filled with a wide variety of trade books provides depth and breadth in terms of the number and type of books for modeling strategies by reading aloud.
Effective teachers understand that when reading to develop fluency, students need to read books that are neither too hard nor too easy for them. Text that is too hard impedes comprehension, and text that is too easy does not promote vocabulary growth. Effective teachers know the reading levels of their students and the reading levels of the trade books in their classroom, so that they can match their students to texts that can be read with success, thus assisting their students to grow as readers. Matching students to text is critical to establishing an optimal learning environment for reading.

Effective teachers of reading recognize that fluency varies with the type and readability of the text. These teachers strive to provide their students with a wide range of reading experiences with books representing a variety of genres, topics, authors, and reading levels, thus ensuring each student the opportunity to experience reading success.

The Benefits of Trade Books in Relation to Fluency—Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001

Research implies that the independent reading of trade books is essential to increasing fluency. Effective teachers of reading know that fluency develops from an abundance of reading practice with books the reader can read with success. Through the process of reading an abundance of books at their independent reading level, students become more fluent at reading, thus gaining competence and confidence as readers. To encourage reading practice, effective teachers of reading initiate an independent reading program and provide their students with access to enjoyable trade books at their independent reading level. A well-stocked classroom library provides students access to trade books representing a variety of genres, topics, authors, and reading levels, thus ensuring each student the opportunity to experience reading success.

Text that is too hard impedes comprehension, and text that is too easy does not promote vocabulary growth. Effective teachers know the reading levels of their students and the reading levels of the trade books in their classroom, so that they can match their students to texts that can be read with success, thus assisting their students to grow as readers. Matching students to text is critical to establishing an optimal learning environment for reading.

Effective teachers of reading recognize that fluency varies with the type and readability of the text. These teachers strive to provide their students with a wide range of reading experiences with books representing a variety of genres and writing styles. A large and varied classroom library supports student interaction with diverse books.