

Closing the Achievement Gap



Amy Booth
Professor, Psychology

CURRENT RESEARCH

Basic research aims to improve school readiness and literacy for our nation's youth

The number of words within a child's vocabulary is strongly associated with their academic achievement later in life. However, problems with achievement begin early and occur at a higher rate for children from socioeconomically disadvantaged homes. Given how many children are living in "at risk" households in the United States the "vocabulary gap" and its long-term consequences for early literacy and academic achievement are of serious societal concern. Dr. Amy Booth, of The University of Texas at Austin, is dedicated to advancing knowledge of how young children think and learn. In particular, her work is aimed at explaining why the development of young children varies so widely across the areas of language, cognition, and motivation. She and her team are particularly interested in applying their basic research to understanding wide disparities among children in their school readiness and early literacy success. Dr. Booth's ultimate goal is to develop new approaches to early education and intervention that will optimize outcomes for all children, thereby helping to close persistent achievement gaps.

Dr. Booth leads the only lab in the nation that is considering differences in preschooler's word-learning skills, as well their interests in how the world works, as potentially foundational to school readiness, as well as subsequent reading success and scientific literacy. Exploring such differences will allow researchers to evaluate the viability of innovative approaches to intervention that have the potential to help children who enter "at risk" preschoolers to enter kindergarten on equal footing with their peers in respect to their readiness to learn. For example, Dr. Booth argues that boosting children's...

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AFFILIATION



The University of Texas at Austin

EDUCATION

- Sc.B., in Psychology, 1993, Brown University
- M.S.c., in Developmental Psychology, 1995, University of Virginia
- Ph.D., in Developmental Psychology, 1998, University of Pittsburgh

AWARDS

- Specifying the Nature of the Vocabulary Gap, 2014-2017
- Clarence Simon Award for Outstanding Teaching and Mentoring, 2012
- Causal Supports for Early Word Learning, 2009-2013
- Object Function as Facilitator of Categorization in Infancy, 2005-2009
- National Research Service Award, 2000-2003
- and 1 more...

RESEARCH AREAS

Education, Classroom Techniques

FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will support Dr. Booth as she seeks to understand the origins and outcomes of individual differences in skills for children's school readiness. Donations will support the necessary \$45K/year for a project coordinator, \$20K/year to fund each student research assistant, and \$15K required for outreach and subject recruitment. In choosing to donate, you will aid efforts in narrowing socioeconomic disparities and optimizing educational outcomes for all children.