

A PILOT EVALUATION OF THE EFFICACY OF HOOT READING

CAN ONLINE READING TUTORING CLOSE THE 4TH GRADE READING SLUMP?

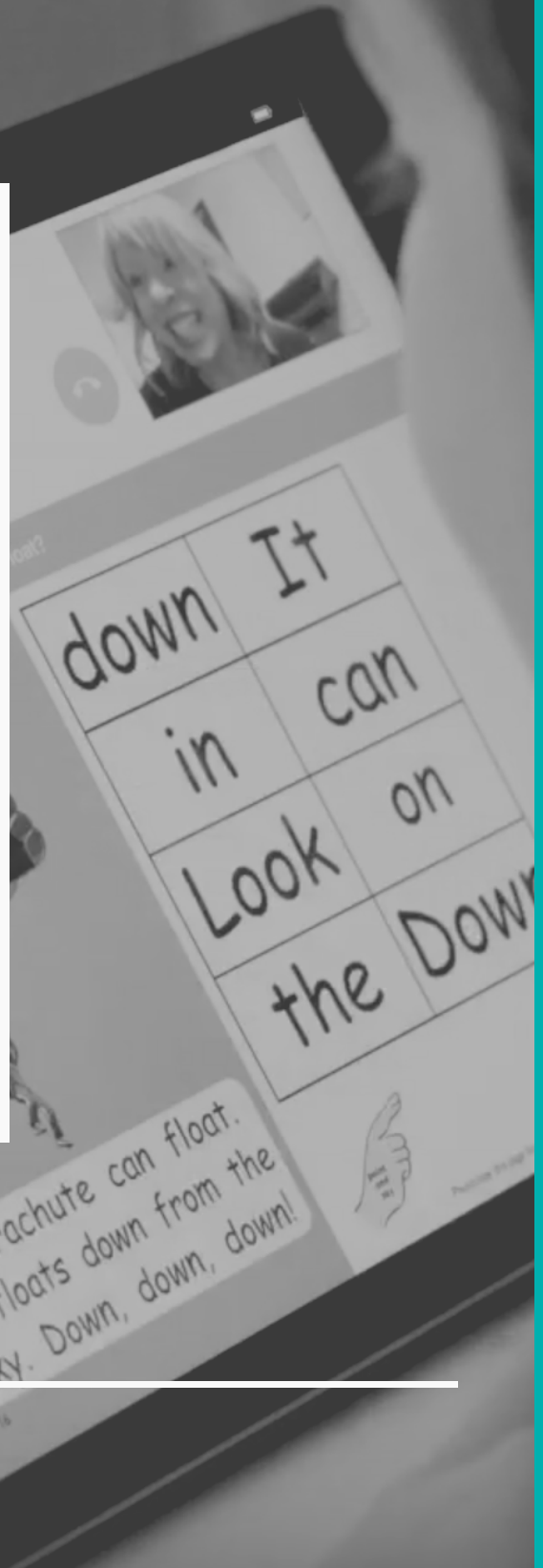
PREPARED BY

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STUDY GOALS

At a moment in time when teachers, parents, policymakers and consumers are questioning how digital media might promote literacy instead of undermining it, this study set out to examine the efficacy of Hoot Reading, a virtual tutoring program designed to promote children's literacy skills. Our goal was to better understand how a carefully targeted application, with an evidence-based instructional design could help to improve children's skills and potentially close the gap, with a particular focus on low-income children.

THE INTENT

The purpose of this evaluation was to examine the effects of Hoot Reading, a virtual tutoring program designed to promote children's oral reading fluency and word reading skills. Conducted in conjunction with the Read Alliance Summer Reading Program, the evaluation focused on the potential added benefit of Hoot Reading for improving low-income children's reading scores. Specifically, our evaluation examined children's gains in word reading, oral language fluency and sight words, over the course of a short-term summer program.

REPORT BACKGROUND



The evaluation was conducted in collaboration with Read Alliance, a non-profit organization that provides one-to-one tutoring by teens to young children who have been shown to experience difficulties in learning to read. Children are screened initially to determine their eligibility for the program; teens are recruited, trained, and paid a stipend to provide one-to-one tutoring using decodable materials.

The Summer School Program is housed in several public schools, and runs Monday through Thursday for 5-weeks, from 9:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.

The study assigned students into two groups: Group 1 received the Read Alliance intervention, and a Hoot Reading tutor; and Group 2, the Read Alliance intervention only. The final sample included 72 children, approximately equally distributed across groups.

ABOUT OUR METHODS

OUR GOAL WAS TO DETERMINE WHETHER HOOT READING HAD AN IMPACT ON STUDENTS' READING IMPROVEMENT. SEVERAL MEASURES FROM THE DIBELS SUITE OF MEASURES WERE SENSITIVE ENOUGH TO POTENTIALLY RECORD GAINS IN THESE SKILLS. THESE INCLUDED:

NONSENSE WORD FLUENCY:

The DIBELS Nonsense Word Fluency measure is a standardized, individually administered test of the alphabetic principle, including letter-sound correspondence in which letters represent their most common sounds and the ability to blend letters into words in which letters represent their most common sounds. The assessment takes two minutes and has strong predictive validity on such measures as Woodcock-Johnson, and other well-known measures. Assessors examine two aspects of these measures: Children's ability to identify correct letter sounds (CLS) and the ability to blend letters into words (WRF).

ORAL READING FLUENCY (ORF):

The DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency is a standardized individually administered test of accuracy and fluency with connected text. The passages are calibrated for each grade level. Children's performance is measured by having the child read a passage aloud for one minute. Words omitted, substituted or hesitated for more than 3 seconds are scored as errors. The number of correct words per minute is the oral reading fluency score. Correlations of ORF and standardized measures of reading comprehension commonly range from 0.50 to 0.90, with most falling around 0.70 for early grade readers.

DOLCH WORDS:

Dolch Basic Sight Vocabulary is a list of 220 words, pre-school through Grade 3 that represent from 50-75% of all words used in school books, library books, newspapers and magazines. The Dolch word list is made

DOLCH WORDS CONTINUED:

up of 'service words' (pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and verbs), and has been used commonly in schools to develop sight vocabulary. Lists are developed by grade level. For this analysis, we used grades 1 and 2, sampling twenty words in each. The assessment was administered individually using flashcards with one word shown at a time. Children received either a plus or minus if they correctly identified a word in 3-seconds. Total possible score was 20.

THE ELEMENTARY READING ATTITUDE SURVEY:

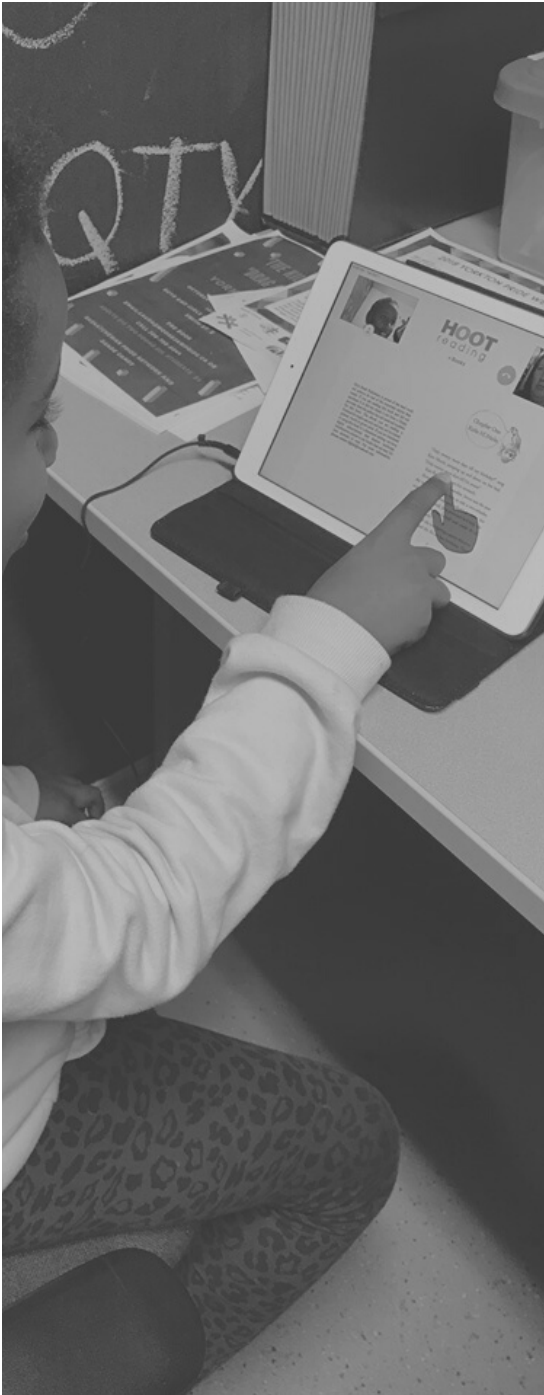
Commonly called the "Garfield Survey", the measure provides a quick indication of student attitudes towards reading. In its original form, it consisted of 20 items, some of which were dated and not relevant to this project. In its adapted version, seven of the key items were individually administered to the child. Each item presents a brief, simply worded statement about reading, followed by four pictures of Garfield. Each pose is designed to depict a different emotional state, ranging from very positive to very negative. The measure took approximately five minutes to administer.

All measures were administered as pretests and posttests. Administration of the pretests occurred in the first few days of the program. Posttests were administered during the final week of the summer session.



OUR PROCEDURE

READ ALLIANCE PROGRAM



Read Alliance's Summer Reading Program is a one-to-one tutoring program that uses an explicit curriculum (e.g. Read For All Learners) to support decoding skills and reading fluency. Teen tutors work daily with students in two, 45-minute blocks, engaging them in skill building activities, read alouds and progress-monitoring tasks, to enhance reading accuracy and fluency. The program is four days a week for five weeks, with a total of 20 sessions.

In addition to the Read Alliance program, children in Group 1 received a twice-weekly virtual tutoring session through Hoot Reading. Using an iPad and earphones, children engaged one-on-one with the virtual tutor for ½ hour sessions. During the session, the tutor would engage the child in a levelled reading activity, supporting the decoding and fluent reading, followed by brief comprehension questions and a review of selected Dolch words. Each session ended with a brief satisfaction survey that engaged the child in determining his/her progress in reading.

THE RESULTS

	HR & RA	RA ONLY	# DIFFERENCE IN GAINS
Correct Letter Sounds	9.41	7.69	22%
Word Reading Fluency	2.21	1.19	86%
Oral Reading Fluency	3.48	1.38	152%
Dolch Words	0.96	0.92	4%

GAIN SCORES IN SUMMER READING - TABLE A

All children made statistically significant gains in reading throughout the summer. Scores on Correct Letter Sounds, Word Fluency, Oral Reading Fluency, and Dolch Words were all statistically significant ($p < .001$, $.001$, $.018$, $.001$, respectively).

Children who received Hoot Reading in addition to Read Alliance made greater gains than those receiving Read Alliance alone. The gains were quite substantial given the brief intervention (13-15 sessions).

As shown in Table A, children who participated in Hoot Reading in addition to their teen tutoring program showed greater gains in Correct Letter Sounds, Word Reading Fluency, Oral Reading Fluency, and to a lesser extent Dolch words. These results suggest that the addition of this program to the summer program showed benefits for children's reading development.

Finally, we conducted session evaluations following each Hoot Reading experience. Higher scores represented more frustration and lower scores indicated more reading enjoyment. Table B shows evidence that throughout the sessions, children began to enjoy reading more, and experienced less frustration.

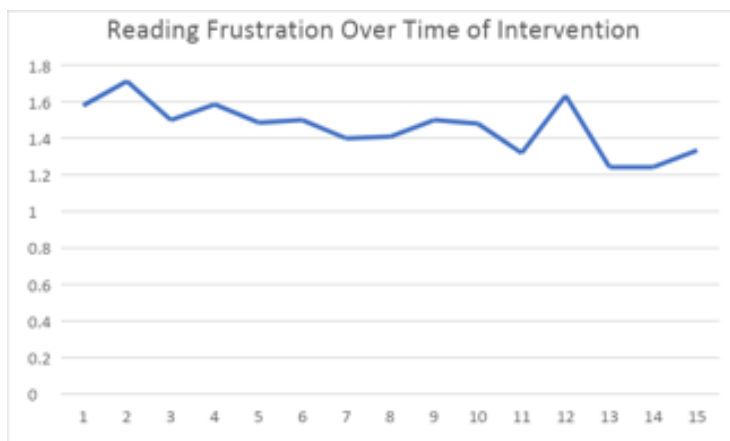


TABLE B

The findings of our evaluation suggest that the summer reading program was highly effective for children who struggle with reading. Children made substantial progress in reading in a brief, but effective, five week session. All individual assessments showed statistically significant gains in children's reading performance.

The addition of Hoot Reading was clearly an advantage. Children who received Hoot Reading showed greater gains throughout the summer.

On a qualitative note, children looked forward to the Hoot Reading sessions, and seemed pleased to be working with an individual tutor through a technology-based program. Children were attentive and highly engaged throughout the sessions. Session evaluation indicated less frustration and more enjoyment in reading over the summer.

These results provide promising evidence that Hoot Reading can make a significant difference in children's reading achievement.

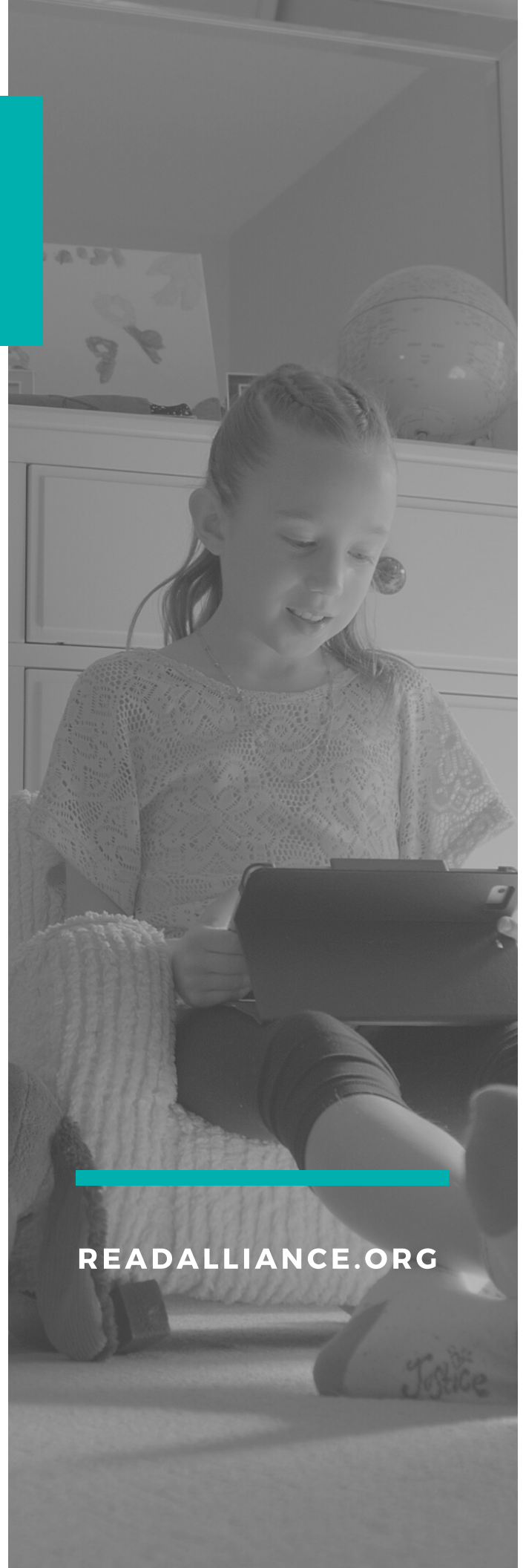
ABOUT

READ ALLIANCE

Read Alliance works to accelerate the educational trajectory of early elementary students, through the power of teens who provide one-to-one literacy tutoring, in under-resourced communities. They provide early literacy intervention to K-2nd graders in public and charter schools, and community based organizations in all five boroughs in NYC, through their School Year and Summer Reading Programs.

Since 2000, Read Alliance has served over 15,000 students and employed over 11,750 tutors.

Learn more by visiting www.readalliance.org.



READALLIANCE.ORG

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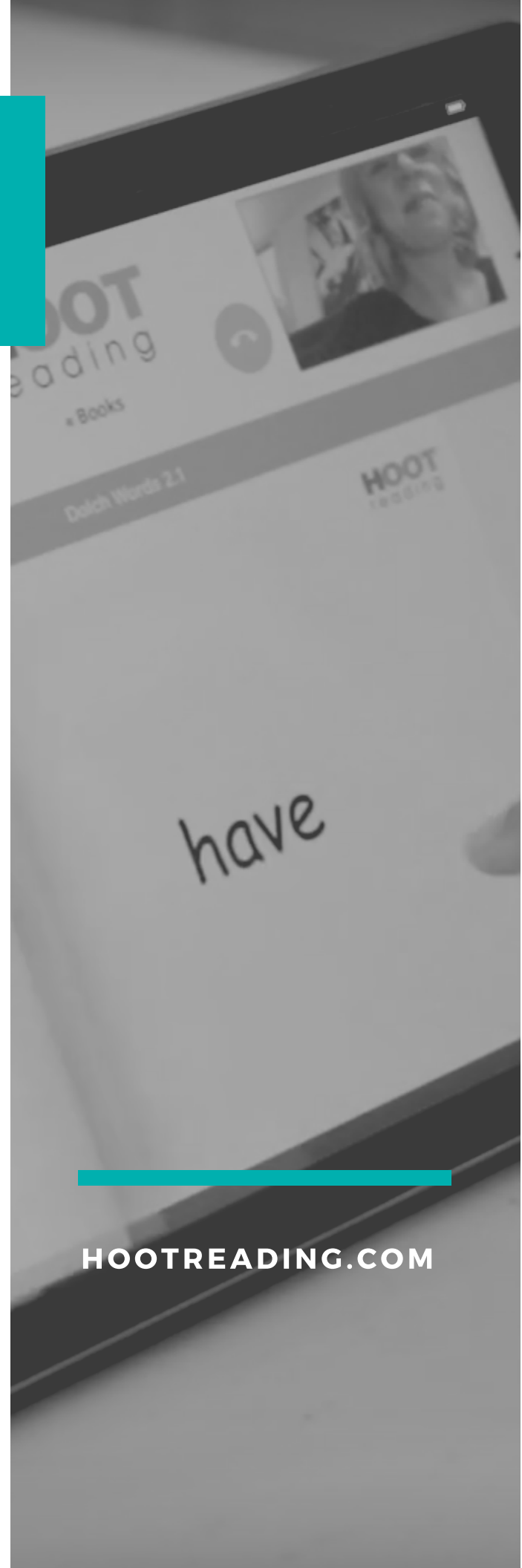
HOOT READING

Hoot Reading is a leader in reading education, offering personalized lessons that can be completed online on an iPad, from the comfort of home. Hoot connects kids with experienced classroom teachers, to practice reading over a proprietary video chat App, which was designed based on a research project at Sesame Workshop (the creators of Sesame Street). Their customized reading programs - Hoot Enrich, Hoot Tutor, and Hoot Junior - are designed to ensure that all readers (of any age or level) receive the attention and help they deserve. Their mission is to close the gap on the 4th grade reading slump and help ALL kids learn to read.

Visit www.hootreading.com to learn more.

HOOT
reading

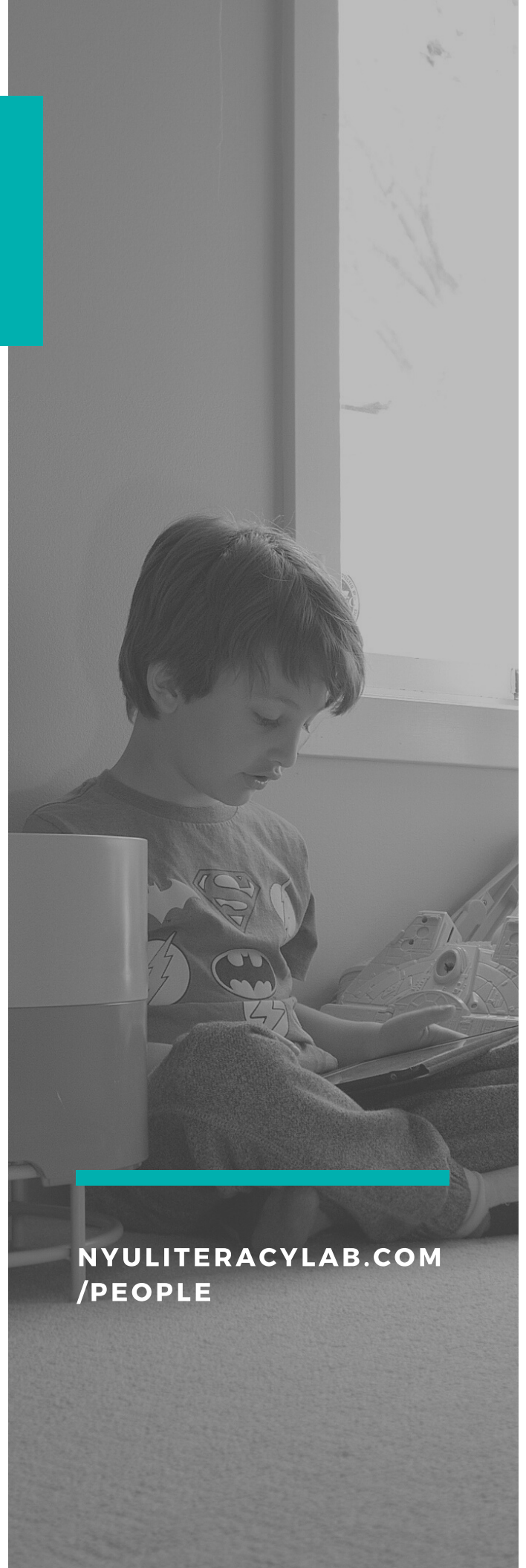
HOOTREADING.COM



ABOUT

DR. SUSAN B. NEUMAN

Susan B. Neuman is a specialist in early literacy development; whose research and teaching interests include early childhood policy, curriculum, and early reading instruction for children who live in poverty. In her role as the U.S. Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, Neuman established the Early Reading First program, developed the Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Program, and was responsible for all activities in Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Act. She has written more than 100 articles and authored and edited eleven books.



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ANY QUESTIONS?

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