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An Effective Small Group Reading Intervention Scope And Sequence For Students In Grades Three To Five

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AN EFFECTIVE SMALL GROUP READING INTERVENTION SCOPE AND

SEQUENCE FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES THREE TO FIVE

by

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Watching students gain confidence in reading is what makes being a reading teacher rewarding. When they light up because they finally sounded out a word correctly or when they can read a paragraph without needing any help, both are times when I feel extremely proud of the work I do with students.

Reading interventions are one way students who struggle with reading can get extra support. In the past year since I have been doing reading interventions with students, some have progressed significantly while others have had slower growth. This made me wonder why some students flourish and other students don't grow as much all while doing and learning the same things. Is there a better way to teach that reaches more students? Is there a curriculum that has a scope and sequence that is based on where kids are at and what they need? It is true that family, community, and financial dynamics make a difference in a child's reading ability, but what more could I do as a teacher to help students increase their reading abilities (Rasinski, 2017)? All of these wonders led me to develop the research question: *What is the most effective scope and sequence for a reading academic support curriculum designed for small groups of students in grades three to five?*

This first chapter outlines my background and how my experiences and passions guided me to the research question. Following that,my journey into teaching is explored, followed by a discussion of my professional experiences as an academic support teacher. Finally, I elaborate on the rationale behind my research topic.

Positionality Statement

As a 29-year-old woman of white ethnicity from the United States, my life has been shaped by a variety of factors. Alongside the roles of wife and new mother, my lifestyle is middle-class and has been enriched by my college education. I am an able-bodied person, yet view the world through the unique lens of ADHD. I acknowledge my privileges and biases and also how these aspects may shape me as a researcher.

My Personal Journey Towards Becoming a Teacher

In my formative years, a clear-cut career path remained uncertain to me. Initially in elementary school, being a spy interested me which led to aspirations of joining the FBI or CIA. This shifted in middle school when I envisioned owning a restaurant as a chef. High school brought the desire to become a paralegal or police officer. It was only through reflection on my past and experiences working in a group home for adults with disabilities that the idea of becoming a teacher emerged. Fortunately, pursuing this path has proven to be immensely fulfilling as I actively contribute to students realizing their full potential.

One inspirational person from my childhood that helped children achieve their full potential was my grandma. After having four children of her own she adopted six, four of whom have disabilities like Down syndrome and cerebral palsy. My childhood home was right next door to my grandma's house, so I spent a lot of time there. Her house was always lively because of the people with special needs she adopted, the foster children she took care of, and the day care children she watched. Going over to my grandma's house before and after school and also during summer vacation gave me special experiences to engage with people with special needs and kids who have been

through trauma. I learned to anticipate the unique needs of many different types of people and learned to be around people who were different from me. These are the building blocks that helped me acquire the necessary skills needed to work with children: a calm and patient demeanor, playfulness, and being a positive role model. After reflecting on these formative experiences, becoming a teacher seemed like a natural stepping stone.

Before transitioning into teaching, I worked at a group home for adults with disabilities while pursuing an individualized bachelor's degree in philosophy and business. Despite holding a degree that seemed versatile for various careers, I remained unsure of my professional path.

Following graduation, my employment at the group home continued, initially as a morning support professional and later as a one-on-one support professional during the day. My responsibilities included assisting residents with morning routines, such as showers, dressing, breakfast preparation, medication dispensing, and ensuring they got on the bus to their day program. Beyond these tasks, I developed a close and positive relationship with one resident. Some called us two peas in a pod. I taught her social and personal skills and she taught me unconditional love. She really blossomed and enjoyed her newfound independence as she learned how to make her lunch, behave more politely in public, and pick out her clothes and get dressed. Everyday was a new adventure because of her quick wit and humor.

Earlier this year she passed away after battling kidney cancer for five years. The experiences and skills learned while working with her are still a part of me as I work with students today. My time working with her was instrumental in developing relationships with students now. Discovering the art of allowing someone to be their authentic self

while nurturing their growth became a significant lesson for me. Handling instances of intense behavior due to her disabilities further honed my skills. My composed and patient approach during these challenging moments notably deepened her trust in me.

Having all of these diverse experiences with people, at my grandma's house and at the group home, didn't click for me becoming a teacher until my boss at the group home mentioned that I should become a teacher. My first thought was that he was crazy because of how severe social anxiety affected me. He kept mentioning it every once in a while and the idea slowly grew on me.

I eventually quit working at the group home to be a paraprofessional at an elementary school. I absolutely loved it! I worked at a great school with great coworkers and students, and felt that becoming a teacher is what I officially wanted to do. After being a paraprofessional for a year and a half it was time to take another step towards being a teacher and work for AmeriCorps. I was a scholar coach that was assigned to one second grade classroom where I provided targeted, early literacy support to students daily in a one-on-one and small group setting using scripted, evidence-based literacy interventions.

My position at this school was my first experience formally teaching literacy to students. I supported the classroom teacher during specified whole group lessons and also had a caseload of nine students who received individual literacy interventions everyday. Due to fantastic training and coworker support, we picked which interventions to do with which child. Each intervention was scripted and followed the same routine each time. Doing interventions this way followed the structured and sequential aspects of

Orton-Gillingham (Stevens et al., 2021). This was great for keeping a routine, but did wish there was some variety for those days when the student wasn't fully engaged.

The intervention most students completed was called duet reading. In duet reading the student reads a four to six sentence passage four times. The first time the student is reading by themself. The second time the teacher and student are alternating words with the teacher starting. The third time the teacher and student are alternating words with the student starting. And the fourth time the student is reading by themself again. This intervention was especially helpful for gaining fluency and confidence while reading.

Most of my students gained remarkable skills from duet reading. I made sure to choose passages that appealed to their interests in order to keep them engaged and motivated to read. This used intrinsic motivation such as curiosity and involvement to motivate my students to read (Schiefele et al., 2018). Seeing children actively learning to read and becoming successful readers sparked an interest in becoming a reading teacher once I got my teaching license.

After my year with AmeriCorps, I took a year off to focus on my graduate classes and to student teach. Then, I began applying for classroom teaching positions which unfortunately did not lead anywhere. Eventually I found a position for an academic support teacher and was hired for my first teaching job!

Professional Teaching Experience

My first year of teaching was filled with many learning opportunities. Some of which I wish I didn't have to learn in my first year, but ultimately made me a stronger teacher. When I began at my position there was little guidance on what to actually teach. This was a stark contrast with my AmeriCorps position.

My role as a reading academic support teacher was to teach whole group lessons and small group lessons, but I didn't know exactly what to teach. There wasn't a curriculum for academic support teachers nor could I use the classroom teachers' curriculum. Crafting my lesson plans relied on insights gathered from discussions with classroom teachers, guidance from my first-year mentor, and input from other staff members in the building. They were incredibly helpful and gave me a jumping off point but it wasn't something that could be sustainable for the whole school year.

It wasn't until October that I found out about the program FastBridge. This program had teachable interventions based on students' assessment scores. It proved itself helpful in some circumstances and a hindrance in others. It was helpful in the sense that it had student data and an intervention plan to get them to grade level scores. It was a hindrance in the sense that the suggested intervention plan didn't always match what the students needed or the intervention was convoluted and needed a lot of preparation on the teacher's part.

This lack of curriculum for the academic support teachers at my school is why I wanted to create a scope and sequence for small groups for my capstone. There is a huge need for curriculum because we teach both whole groups and small groups. We get limited planning time each day to develop those whole group and small group lessons so a curriculum specifically for our academic support role would be a huge help. Small groups is the capstone focus in particular because that is where I can hone in as an individual teacher.

Conclusion

This chapter has told my journey of becoming a teacher in order to relay my background and passion for working with students. It has also told about my experiences as a first year teacher and how the lack of curriculum for my position as an academic support teacher led me to develop my research question: *What is the most effective scope and sequence for a reading academic support curriculum designed for small groups of students in grades three to five?* Chapter Two provides research on reading intervention curriculums, small groups, and scope and sequences among other aspects of reading so I can write a relevant scope and sequence for small reading groups for grades three to five.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This literature review aims to answer the question: *What is the most effective scope and sequence for a reading academic support curriculum designed for small groups of students in grades three to five?* The knowledge gathered in this review collectively contributes to the goal of the scope and sequence being the most effective for the most amount of students. With that goal at the forefront, this chapter addresses the history of reading interventions going all the way back to 1914 until 2014. A whole century of research and findings certainly influences what educators understand about reading interventions and how to create an effective scope and sequence for today's learners. In addition, this chapter talks about elementary students in grades three to five in terms of common core reading standards, attitudes and motivations, and how these students are selected for reading intervention groups. Closely related is the topic of struggling readers. This part of the chapter profiles different types of struggling readers including those diagnosed with dyslexia. This section also includes information on three types of reading problems and effective instruction for each.

Building off of those ideas regarding struggling readers, the next topic delves deeper into two distinguished types of effective approaches for a reading intervention: whole language and systematic phonics. It also includes their strengths and weaknesses as well as their ability to progress students in their reading abilities. Finally, this chapter closes by examining three schools of thought surrounding reading: Fountas and Pinnell, Orton-Gillingham, and the Science of Reading. These all have a set philosophy about reading and implement that philosophy in ways to best teach reading to students who

need extra support. Each of the three schools of thought include an overview on its reading philosophy, its strengths, and its weaknesses.

History

Throughout the past century, reading interventions have played a vital role in the success of once struggling readers. The research done since 1914 has informed today's modern teachers on the most effective practices for teaching students reading comprehension, phonics, fluency, and decoding. This section of Chapter Two provides an overview of the history of reading interventions from 1914 until 2014 and a history of reading specialists. By reviewing both, we can better understand the why behind some of today's instructional methods and we also can learn from previous successes and mistakes in order to develop the most effective scope and sequence for a reading intervention for students in grades three to five.

1914-1919

Reading intervention studies began in 1914, yet there were very few done at the beginning of the 1900's because this type of research was so new (Scammacca et al., 2016). In 1915 Frederick James Kelly, from the University of Kansas, created the first standardized reading assessment that tested students' comprehension accuracy and reading speed. It was called the Kansas Silent Reading Tests and was given to students in grades three to five, six to eight, and nine to twelve. These tests gave educators a more objective way to know if their students were reading at grade level or not (Scammacca et al., 2016). W.L. Uhl, from Northwestern University, then used Kelly's test to assess incoming summer school students. Those who qualified for interventions worked with

tutors for 15 minutes daily to work on the skills students lacked as per the Kansas Silent Reading Tests results (Scammacca et al., 2016).

Not only were school age students being studied on their reading skills, but uniquely during this time period of 1914-1919 soldiers in World War One were found to have reading deficits as well. National security thought this was a huge issue because thousands of soldiers were not able to understand simple written directions. Because of this, the 1920's focused more on interventions for older struggling readers (Scammacca et al., 2016).

1920's

During the beginning of this decade, Grace Fernald at the University of California, Los Angeles' University Training School, opened the first clinic setting that focused on reading disabilities. She pioneered the kinesthetic approach to reading intervention and describes it in a publication she co authored with Helen Keller (Scammacca et al., 2016). Her kinesthetic approach can also be referred to as the Fernald method, or a multisensory approach. In a kinesthetic approach, students use physical activity in order to learn as an active participant. This method, for Fernald, is depicted as students learning one word at a time, the students tracing the letters to a word on a chalkboard, students writing the word from memory while saying the syllables out loud and lastly students moving on to recognizing the word in print (Scammacca et al., 2016).

In addition to Fernald's kinesthetic approach, across the country at the University of Chicago the Dean of the College of Education William S. Gray was working on a Response to Instruction (RTI) framework for reading interventions. This framework included a universal reading screening for all students at the beginning of each school

year, the importance of choosing reading material that interests students, and having a complete understanding of what a child struggles with in reading in order to individualize their intervention (Scammacca et al., 2016). Gray's work led to a change of teacher's views on struggling students because they now knew the underlying reason for a student struggling to read and how to help them.

1930's

In the previous two decades, reading intervention research was done primarily in university labs. In the 1930's that research moved into classrooms because teachers were seen as more competent to assist students who struggled to read (Scammacca et al., 2016). There was also more reading intervention materials available in classrooms and schools and this made teachers more willing to help struggling readers. In addition to the new reading materials, a new textbook on remedial reading came out that gave teachers more ideas and tools (Scammacca et al., 2016). The book titled *The Improvement of Reading* was written in 1935 by Arthur Gates. He was a professor of educational psychology at Columbia University. Throughout the rest of the 1930's, it was found that these new approaches towards reading interventions were helping students achieve success in reading. In the following decade there was more focus on behavior/emotional difficulties coupled with reading difficulties (Scammacca et al., 2016).

1940's

Behavior difficulties had been a topic not yet explored in conjunction with reading difficulties before the 1940's. In 1941, Gates announced that three in four students with a reading disability also had behavioral or emotional issues (Scammacca et al., 2016). Gertrude Hildreth was psychologist with the Lincoln School at Teacher's

College, Columbia and concluded that psychologists could provide the most thorough assessment and interventions for struggling readers because psychologists understood how the mind worked (Scammacca et al., 2016). Hildreth made clear that the psychologist would diagnose and specify a reading intervention and a teacher would implement it. There was also thought that psychotherapy, in addition to reading interventions, would help struggling readers with behavior and emotional difficulties. As the 1940's came to an end, reading interventions were being compared against one another in order to analyze their effectiveness. It was encouraged for researchers to continue comparing interventions from studies that posed all positive results to amend any confusion (Scammacca et al., 2016).

1950's

Similar to the fact that soldiers in World War One had reading struggles, after World War Two it was found that many soldiers still struggled with reading and were functionally illiterate. After the war ended, universities could devote more time and money to expand reading clinics and introduce new graduate programs to educate reading specialists with the hope of increasing the success of struggling readers (Scammacca et al., 2016). During this decade Rudolf Flesch, an author, readability expert, and writing consultant, wrote a book titled *Why Can't Johnny Read*. Flesch blamed reading disabilities on teachers and schools who taught a whole-word approach to reading. Flesch believed that phonics instruction was the key to solving reading problems in America (Scammacca et al., 2016).

1960's

The debate of whole-word versus phonics that Flesch began in the 1950's continued to be debated in the 1960's. Furthermore, the 1960's made way for reading intervention research based on behaviorist's theories (Scammacca et al., 2016). Positive reinforcement was a major strategy implemented in reading interventions. An example of this is giving students tokens that could be traded for desirable items (Scammacca et al., 2016). Another outcome in the 1960's was the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. This act provided funding to schools serving children in low-income areas for reading specialists (Scammacca et al., 2016). Even though this act was passed, reading specialists were in short supply. And under these circumstances, reading intervention research continued to be done.

1970's

During this decade many interventions continued to be examined from a behaviorist lens. This included methods to reduce anxiety in struggling readers, which was found to be induced by their teachers and having to read aloud (Scammacca et al., 2016). Equally important in the 1970's was research on improving comprehension. This was a new realm of research that hadn't been studied too much in the previous decades. It was concluded by Joseph Torgesen, Professor and Director of the School Psychology Program at Florida State University, that helping struggling readers develop the metacognitive process for understanding text helped the most (Scammacca et al., 2016). This research of cognitive processes would continue to be investigated in the 1980's and beyond.

1980's

Torgesen applied his cognitive research to designing reading interventions. He came to realize that students who struggled to read approached learning more passively than those who had no reading struggles. Developing cognitive strategies for those who struggle may encourage them to become more active learners (Scammacca et al., 2016). Many researchers took quickly to developing more cognitive strategies. Some of these strategies were self-questioning, self-monitoring, and rehearsal. Other interventions further developed in the 1980's include semantic feature analysis, mnemonics, and the use of graphic organizers (Scammacca et al., 2016). The assessments used to measure the success of these interventions were considered unstandardized, so researchers couldn't tell if students were able to transfer the skills learned to different reading tasks not focused on in the interventions.

1990's

The research of the 1990's took the approach towards reading comprehension all while incorporating some of the metacognitive strategies learned in the previous decades. Some of these strategies included summarizing, creating a cognitive map, identifying themes, and increasing the depth of cognitive processing (Scammacca et al., 2016). In addition, the 1990's was when the first meta-analysis of reading interventions was carried out. Studies completed since the 1930's were included and used to understand how effective different approaches were. In 1996, Dr. Margo A. Mastropieri, who is University Professor Emerita of Education at Arizona State University, synthesized that interventions that taught self-questioning strategies were more effective than interventions that taught more general reading comprehension skills (Scammacca et al.,

2016). Other meta-analyses were conducted during this decade and made conclusions such as both direct instruction and skill instruction in tandem were effective

2000's

Getting into more modern decades, new legislation impacted reading intervention research. In 2002 the Education Sciences Reform Act was passed and in 2004 the Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) was passed. The effect of these acts passing was increased funding and increased standardized tests (Scammacca et al., 2016). Schools could now have a larger population of struggling readers completing reading interventions. And just like in the 1990's, more meta-analyses were done and showed that the type of intervention used had a significant impact on students' reading growth. There was even more evidence regarding older students and their ability to make grand improvements in reading (Scammacca et al., 2016).

2010-2014

As a century of reading intervention comes to a close, research studies and meta-analyses are being done during this time at a higher rate than any other decade since 1914 (Scammacca et al., 2016). IDEIA contributed to the large growth because students without a learning disability label could now get reading interventions. Most of the research done during 2010 to 2014, about 80%, was focused on comprehension strategies. None focused on word study and 7% focused on fluency (Scammacca et al., 2016). This trend of focusing research on comprehension is likely to continue as the next century of reading intervention research begins.

2014-2023

Now in the most modern era of reading interventions, two characteristics define reading instruction: data-based decision making and the COVID-19 pandemic. First, it is best practice to make decisions based on data. According to Filderman et al. (2018), they say that students who do not respond positively to increases of frequency, length, and duration of sessions, the recommended best practice is intervention intensification using student data. One type of data used is curriculum-based measurement (CBM). CBM provides frequent, brief assessments that inform instruction. Teachers who use CBM's are more informed of their students' academic growth (Filderman et al. 2018).

Second, the growth that the data showed began to decline due to school closures and online learning (Gray et al., 2023) that the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated in the latter part of the decade. The shift to online learning was abrupt and, therefore, some families could not access remote instruction due to lacking connectivity and/or the required technology. These circumstances, Gray et al. (2018) says, led to many students getting a lower quality and quantity of much needed reading instruction. The COVID-19 pandemic was unprecedented and impacted 1.5 billion students worldwide.

Reading Specialists

Just as it is important to learn about the history of reading interventions, it is equally important to learn about the history of reading specialists who teach those interventions. The role of a reading specialist has been viewed differently by different school personnel. For instance, administrators and classroom teachers view reading specialists as someone who provides support, where reading specialists view their role as much more broad including being a resource for teachers, providing specialized

instruction, communicating with teachers and parents, administering assessments, organizing school reading programs, and being student advocates (Quatroche et al., 2001). Figure 1 depicts just how broad the role of a reading specialist can be. A definition of reading specialist that will carry throughout this section and beyond is defined by Quatroche et al. (2001) as, "[a] reading specialist is defined as a specially prepared professional who has responsibility (e.g., providing instruction, serving as a resource to teachers) for the literacy performance of readers in general or struggling readers in particular" (p. 282). These specialists traditionally pulled students out of their classroom to complete reading interventions. On the contrary, reading specialists are now taught to go into the classroom to enhance student abilities and to work more closely with classroom teachers (Quatroche et al., 2001).

Major changes to the role of reading specialist happened in the 1980's because of the reauthorization of Title 1, a program that was put out by the U.S. government to improve literacy and math at low-income schools (Quatroche et al., 2001). Most reading specialists are funded by Title 1, and therefore have certain responsibilities they must adhere to such as being in the classroom rather than pulling students out for interventions (Quatroche et al., 2001). Some schools choose to use their Title 1 funding for other school staff including more paraprofessionals and aids. Students who get their remedial reading help from these non-certified staff have lower scores on achievement tests than students who received reading help from teachers who were certified and highly knowledgeable about reading regardless if their title was "reading specialist" (Quatroche et al., 2001).

Figure 1

Roles and Responsibilities of a Reading Specialist
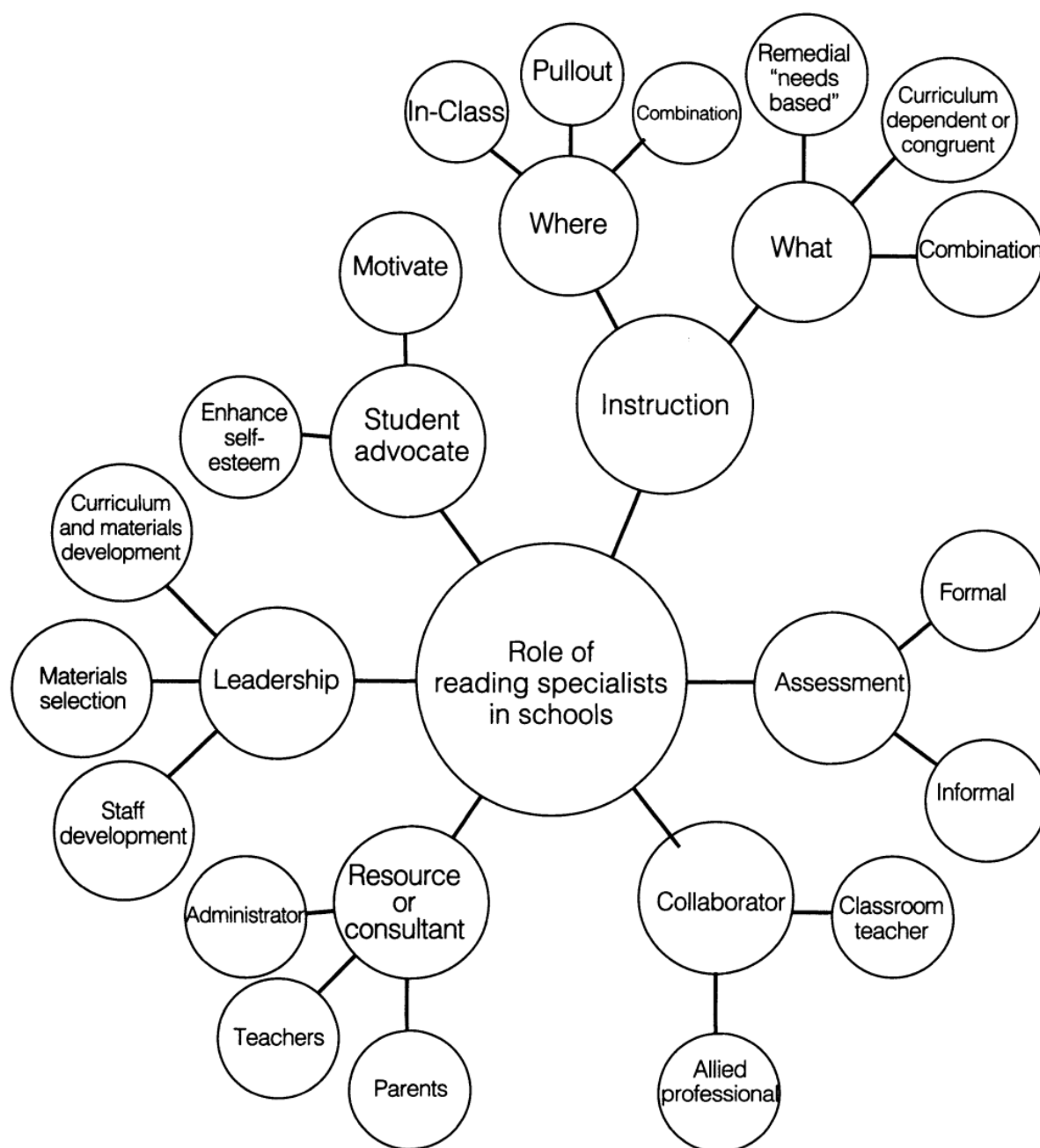
Note. Quatroche et al., 2001, p. 290

To summarize this section, the shift of reading specialists pulling students out of the classroom to reading specialists being included in the classroom made for some substantial discussions about their role and responsibilities. Title 1 was the reason for this shift because of the guidelines it set forth (Quatroche et al., 2001). Once this change took place, research was done surrounding the effectiveness of non-certified staff versus certified staff assisting students in reading and it was found that students who received assistance from certified staff who were highly knowledgeable in reading scored better on achievement tests (Quatroche et al., 2001).

Conclusion

The history of reading interventions and reading specialists in the U.S. is imperative in informing the way educators approach developing an effective reading intervention scope and sequence for students in grades three to five. The research synthesized in this section supports initial assessments for determining reading strengths and weaknesses, using a multi-sensory approach, including phonics-based instruction, using positive reinforcement, teaching meta-cognitive skills, and then shifting to a focus on comprehension as students get older. Incorporating these insights from past research, educators will be able to create an effective scope and sequence that fully supports the individual students they teach.

Elementary Students

The ultimate focus of this capstone is to create a reading intervention scope and sequence for an academic support teacher who works with third to fifth grade students. The role of an academic support teacher is to do reading interventions with these age groups because there are other reading specialists that work with the younger students in

kindergarten to second grade. This section includes information about the Common Core Standards (CCS) that are taught in much of the United States. This section also includes the attitudes and motivations students in third through fifth grade have related to reading. Lastly, this section includes how students are selected for reading interventions. Understanding these aspects of upper elementary students helps to inform what to include in the most effective reading intervention scope and sequence.

Common Core Reading Standards

Much of what teachers teach is dictated by the standards set forth either by each state or the Common Core. CCS are crafted for reading and math in order to have a common set of standards for students to compete globally with the goal to prepare students for college and the workplace (McLaughlin et al., 2012). States were eager to adopt the CCS because it was a requirement for new funding and states could modify them up to 15% (McLaughlin et al., 2012).

As is, the CCS are composed of four English Language Arts strands. These include reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language (McLaughlin et al., 2012). Having all of the standards laid out for each grade helps teachers to know what students have learned in the grade below and what they will be learning in the grade above. Knowing this helps with planning and structuring lessons. Figure 2 lists the anchor standards for kindergarten to fifth grade. As students move through each grade, what they need to do with each anchor standard gets more involved and complex in order to support students in being college and career ready (McLaughlin et al., 2012).

Figure 2

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.*
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Note. MN Department of Education, 2010, p. 13

As much as the CCS are seen as being a positive aspect to education, Strong et al. (2018) views the standards as being a hindrance to students whose reading ability isn't at the same CCS level. Because these standards aren't going away, teachers and reading specialists need to find a way to support students in reading difficult texts. One way to do this is through careful sequencing. This includes selecting a theme or topic and gradually increasing the difficulty of the text (Strong et al., 2018). Another way is to do an interactive read-aloud with a difficult text. An additional way is to place students in small

groups based on the type(s) of support they need. This way teachers can engage all students with a difficult text based on their common needs (Strong et al., 2018).

To sum up, CCS are how a majority of the schools in the U.S. decide what and how to teach English Language Arts to their students. The purpose of these standards is to produce globally competitive people who are college and career ready. Students in elementary school are given the opportunity to develop these Common Core skills in a sequential way as they progress through school. If a student is struggling with the level of texts the Common Core says is right for their grade, then there are ways teachers and reading specialists can accommodate, scaffold, and support.

Attitude and Motivation

No matter how much work a reading specialist puts in to help a struggling reader, if the student has a negative attitude and isn't motivated to read then reading proficiencies will not progress as much as if the student did have a positive attitude and were motivated (Ortileb, 2015). A student's attitude towards reading affects their motivation to read. This section synthesizes both the attitudes and motivations of elementary students towards reading. The attitudes are described in groups as to the type of motivation those students respond best to.

According to Ortileb (2015), an attitude is how a student approaches or avoids reading activities. On the other hand, Schiefele et al. (2018) says that motivation is a stimulus that activates reading behavior. Ortileb (2015) articulated six different attitudes elementary students may have towards reading and concluded that those attitudes affect long-term academic and career success. Those attitudes are overconfidence, confident façade, timid, defeatist, indifferent, and avoidance (Ortileb, 2015). Schiefele et al. (2018)

articulated that motivation can be broken down into being either extrinsic or intrinsic and concluded that while extrinsic motivation may work initially, intrinsic motivation is found to have more positive outcomes in reading fluency and comprehension. Extrinsic includes recognition and competition as motivators, whereas intrinsic includes involvement and curiosity as motivators (Schiefele et al., 2018).

Two attitudes that need extrinsic motivation are overconfidence and a confident façade. Overconfidence is described as a student assuming they will always do well. Ortileb (2015) says this attitude becomes problematic when a student's confidence doesn't match their reading abilities. Some extrinsic motivators that help students with this attitude are specific behavioural praise, modeling confidence levels, reviewing past performance, assigning self-tests, and peer evaluation. Additionally, a confident façade is described as displaying a fake confidence while completing reading tasks in order to retain a positive public image (Ortileb, 2015). The extrinsic motivators for this attitude include careful and sensitive teacher feedback and at the same time delivering tactful lessons (Ortileb, 2015). This can mean stopping to have conversations to check for genuine understanding.

The other four attitudes that Ortileb (2015) says respond more to intrinsic motivation are timid, defeatist, indifferent, and avoidance. Having a timid attitude means that the student is scared to fail and needs an environment with minimal risk in order to experience success. Sometimes all these students need is to be intrinsically motivated by reading just for fun in order to build confidence levels (Ortileb, 2015). The next attitude is defeatist. These students have had repeated failures and overall negative experiences with reading that leads to negative self-talk. Intrinsic motivators that help these students

are learning how to self-praise, thinking positively, and learning how to be more resilient (Ortileb, 2015). Another attitude is being indifferent. Some consider this the most challenging to address because these students don't have motivation or excitement towards reading or school in general. A couple ways to introduce motivation to these students are to talk about purposes for reading and make connections to their lives outside of school. The last attitude Ortileb (2015) describes is avoidance. When students see reading as something scary they will avoid it at all costs. Ways to intrinsically motivate students who have an avoidant attitude are to give them reading material that highly interests them, let them read with technology or in other non-traditional ways, and value the knowledge they already have (Ortileb, 2015).

This section makes clear that a student's attitude towards reading affects their motivation to read. Students can have six different attitudes: overconfidence, confident façade, timid, defeatist, indifferent, and avoidance. These attitudes affect how a student approaches reading. While creating a scope and sequence for upper elementary reading interventions, a reading specialist would benefit from understanding their students' attitudes in order to include the best motivators. Those motivators can either be extrinsic or intrinsic based on the individual student and the attitude they present. And, as students are selected for intervention, they could be grouped based on their attitudes and motivation.

Reading Intervention Selection Process

Students who receive academic interventions are selected in a specific way. Many schools have an Academic Intervention Services (AIS) team that goes through the process of selection and monitoring. This section provides an overview of the selection

process, describes three groups students can be categorized in, and tells how students are monitored once they are receiving reading interventions.

To begin, schools develop an AIS team that identifies students for services at the beginning of the school year. This team recommends specific, appropriate services for these students and also monitors their progress during the school year (McCombs et al., 2009). After the team assesses each student, they place them into one of three tiers. Tier one students are identified as needing services but differentiation within their classroom setting is enough to address their academic needs (McCombs et al., 2009). Tier two students have specific areas in which they struggle and, therefore, would benefit from extra interventions outside of their regular classroom (McCombs et al., 2009). Tier three students have the highest academic needs that would not be addressed effectively through differentiation or being pulled out of the classroom for interventions. These students are often referred to and evaluated for special education in order to get their specific needs met (McCombs et al., 2009).

Once students are assessed and placed into a tier that meets their needs, academic interventions can begin. AIS teams meet regularly, anywhere between weekly to monthly, to discuss students and their progress (McCombs et al., 2009). Data is a major way an AIS team monitors student progress. This data includes intermittent assessments, tests created by teachers, student work, and progress reports (McCombs et al., 2009). All of these data pieces inform teachers and reading specialists about student learning and progress. And while creating an effective intervention scope and sequence, understanding what tier a student is at and referring to the data collected by the AIS team can help students make the most progress in their reading abilities.

Conclusion

Understanding more about third to fifth grade elementary students in terms of CCS, attitudes and motivations, as well as how students are selected for academic interventions will help inform in creating the most effective reading intervention scope and sequence. The CCS inform what teachers and specialists need to teach. Attitudes and motivations inform how teachers and specialists approach teaching with students. The intervention selection process informs why teachers and specialists are doing interventions with their students. All three of these put together are necessary for creating an effective reading intervention scope and sequence because it gives the what, how, and why behind academic reading interventions.

Struggling Readers

This section gives information about the most common type of diagnosed reading disorder: dyslexia. This section also includes information on three other types of struggles readers have: Specific Word Reading Difficulties (SWRD), Mixed Reading Difficulties (MRD), and Specific Reading Comprehension Difficulties (SRCD) (Spear-Swerling, 2016). In addition to defining each type of reading difficulty, this section talks about effective instruction for each and the intervention needs of a student who falls into one or more of these reading difficulties.

Dyslexia

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a specific learning disability is "a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell … including

conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia" (Sec. 300.8, 2018). For the purposes of this chapter, only dyslexia will be discussed because it is the most diagnosed and most prevalent in schools. It is estimated that about 80% of people with reading difficulties have dyslexia and 20% of the general population has dyslexia (The Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity, 2022). So, reading specialists and teachers need to be aware of what dyslexia is and how to best teach reading to students with this diagnosis.

It is first important to relay that having dyslexia doesn't affect a person's intelligence (The Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity, 2022). People with dyslexia have trouble connecting letters and their sounds and putting them in the correct order because of differences in neurological connections. This can cause readers with dyslexia to read more slowly than their peers without dyslexia. In addition to reading slowly, students with dyslexia may have trouble with learning the alphabet, identifying the letters in their name, pronouncing words, and sounding out words (The Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity, 2022). Teachers, specialists, and parents can look for these warning signs of dyslexia to hopefully get early interventions started and get the necessary accommodations.

Other Types of Struggling Readers

Besides dyslexia, struggling readers face other significant challenges that reading interventions can help them overcome. Some of these difficulties include making inferences, locating relevant information, identifying details that support a conclusion, and overall comprehension of a text (Rasinski, 2017). Furthermore, one out of three fourth grade students struggles to read, and it is more likely that these students live in

poverty-stricken situations (Rasinski, 2017). So, now that a picture of a struggling reader has been established, they can fall into one of three ways they may struggle with reading: Specific Word-Reading Difficulties (SWRD), Specific Reading Comprehension Difficulties (SRCD), and Mixed Reading Difficulties (MRD) (Spear-Swerling, 2016).

Struggling readers with SWRD have problems with reading words. This includes decoding, spelling, and fluency. Specialists may employ more phonics-based instruction and opportunities to apply decoding skills in order to best serve these students (Spear-Swerling, 2016). Struggling readers with SRCD have problems with reading comprehension and, therefore, may have weaker vocabularies. Ways specialists can help are through explicit comprehension and vocabulary instruction (Spear-Swerling, 2016). Struggling readers with MRD have problems with decoding, comprehension, and fluency. Specialists who work with this type of struggling reader should use a combination of strategies from SWRD and SCRD, as well as do multicomponent interventions (Spear-Swerling, 2016) Figure 3 displays a summative graphic organizer of these three types of reading struggles.

Figure 3

Common Patterns of Reading Problems

Pattern	Description	Strengths	Intervention Needs
Specific word reading difficulties (SWRD)	■ Decoding (and sometimes PA) below average ■ Spelling below average ■ Oral vocabulary and listening comprehension at least average ■ Fluency often below average due to decoding problems ■ Reading comprehension often below average due to decoding problems	■ Good ability to learn orally (e.g., through class discussions and teacher read-alouds) ■ Reading comprehension strong when children read texts they can decode	■ Explicit, systematic phonics intervention ■ PA and fluency intervention if needed ■ Ample opportunities to apply decoding skills in oral text reading, with teacher feedback
Specific reading comprehension difficulties (SRCD)	■ Decoding at least average ■ Reading comprehension below average ■ Oral vocabulary and listening comprehension may be weak ■ Fluency may be weak due to language limitations (not poor decoding)	■ Good foundational reading skills ■ Spelling often strong	■ Explicit, systematic intervention targeting specific comprehension weaknesses (e.g., vocabulary, inferencing) ■ Include oral vocabulary and language in intervention
Mixed reading difficulties (MRD)	■ Decoding below average ■ Reading comprehension below average, even in texts children can decode ■ Reading fluency often weak due to limitations in both decoding and language	■ Individual children usually have strengths in specific areas of language or reading (e.g., their knowledge base about specific interests)	■ Combination of intervention needs for first two patterns ■ Multicomponent interventions may be especially useful

Note. Spear-Swerling, 2016, p. 517

Moreover, these interventions need to be given by reading experts and not paraprofessionals (Allington, 2013). Students are at a disadvantage when an intervention is given by a paraprofessional because they are usually the lowest authority on reading in

a school (Allington, 2013). In the end, interventions with struggling readers should be authentic, intentional and intensive, consistent, and synergistic (Rasinski, 2017). When SWRD, SCRD, and MRD interventions have these qualities, Rasinski (2017) says students can enjoy much more success in reading and a higher amount of self-confidence.

Conclusion

To conclude this section on struggling readers, it is important that teachers and reading specialists are aware of what's underneath a students' struggle. May that be a diagnosed disorder such as dyslexia, an issue related to specific word reading difficulties, specific reading comprehension difficulties, or a combination. Knowing strategies to help these specific types of difficulties covers a majority of the struggling readers at any given school. And that knowledge helps to create the most effective reading intervention scope and sequence for students in grades three to five.

Types of Approaches to Teaching Reading

This section talks about general approaches to teaching reading. While there is a diverse landscape of approaches, two have been widely debated in the world of education: whole language and systematic phonics. These two approaches are defined as well as their strengths and weaknesses examined. Significant research has been done on these two approaches and this section highlights that research to shed light on the effectiveness of each approach. The ultimate goal is to create a reading intervention scope and sequence for third to fifth grade students. Being aware of the long-held debate between whole language and systematic phonics approaches helps to inform the most effective way to write that scope and sequence.

Whole Language Approach

The first of two approaches that is discussed is the whole language approach. A whole-language approach is one where students acquire language through integrated, child-centered methods. Children are actively using the language instead of passive listening (Brooks et al., 2005). Classrooms are set up in such a way to encourage children to engage with text in ways such as questioning, responding verbally, reading, drawing, writing, etc. One purpose of setting up a classroom this way is so students can explore on their own at their own pace (Brooks et al., 2005).

Some strengths of this method are that it is authentic/intuitive and flexible. What makes it authentic/intuitive is that it centers around meaning (Fox, 1986) and the real use of language (Harman et al., 1989). This involves using language to play, inform, persuade, organize, and imagine. It also involves creating authentic texts with language like letters, labels, notes, tickets, maps, poems, books, etc. (Harman et al., 1989). In fact, there is not just one way to interpret and create these authentic texts. Children arrive at school with many different language norms and those norms are accepted in a whole-language classroom. Because of this, language repertoires are emphasized (Harman et al., 1989). This demonstrates the bridge between being authentic/intuitive and flexible.

This second strength of flexibility empowers teachers to create a curriculum that meets the needs of their particular students (Rayner et al., 2002). The classroom environment is particularly important because the children are free to learn in a supportive environment that doesn't impose strict strategies and attitudes and allows them to be successful on their own (Fox, 1986). Teachers can make reading as fun as they

wish in order to keep students motivated to continue reading and learning (Rayner et al., 2002).

On the contrary, the most significant weakness of a whole language approach is that it is implicit. One argument by Foorman (1995) is that students do not learn to be literate automatically. Language may be automatic, but literacy is not. The acquisition of the technical aspects of language including spelling, vocabulary, and grammar are questioned because they aren't being taught on their own. They are taught within the context of holistic learning events, which do not have a predetermined schedule (Brooks et al., 2005). It is also important to note that what may be understood by one student in a whole language classroom may not be understood by another. The student who does not automatically understand may need explicit instruction. Whole language classrooms may let these students fall behind because they have different needs than a whole language classroom supplies (Foorman, 1995).

Systematic Phonics Approach

The second of the two approaches is the systematic phonics approach. A systematic phonics approach is one where it explicitly teaches that there is a relationship between individual sounds and letters (Brooks et al., 2005). This approach assumes that students learn best in a sequential and ordered process. One way this is done is beginning with phonemic awareness. This is defined as the capability to distinguish letters and their corresponding sounds. The next part is teaching phonological awareness. This is defined as the capability to rhyme, identify beginning sounds, and recognize syllables (Brooks et al., 2005). Classrooms that take on a systematic phonics approach have been researched

and heavily debated. The next paragraph summarizes some of the strengths and weaknesses of this type of approach.

The major strength of this method is it is explicit. Explicit instruction is a strength because Rayner et al. (2002) says that most students are not able to infer reading skills on their own. And it has been concluded through research that children who learn phonics at an earlier age are better readers (Fox, 1986). Another conclusion from Fox (1986) is that children who are explicitly taught phonics are better able to infer and pronounce irregular words than those who aren't explicitly taught phonics. Besides the studies with younger students, one study with college age English-speaking students who were being taught Arabic had much more success when they were taught Arabic with a phonics approach rather than being taught with a whole language approach (Rayner et al., 2002). The group who learned the individual phonemes of Arabic were able to read more new words (Rayner et al., 2002). This proves that explicitly teaching phonics to adults or children is a successful way to teach reading.

Despite the success many educators have when taking a systematic phonics approach, two weaknesses that have been argued are that it is inadequate and threatening. Fox (1986) believes that a systematic phonics approach alone is not enough to develop successful readers. Furthermore, Fox (1986) says phonics is only one tool in the larger toolbox of reading. In addition to being inadequate on its own, systematic phonics instruction can be threatening to those who use the English language in a way that deviates from mainstream English (Harman et al., 1989). A quote that depicts this best is, "To become really literate one must 'join the club' and decide that reading and writing are things that 'people like me' do. But who am I like: my Chicano (or black, or Navajo,

or Thai, or Israeli, or working-class) parents or spouse, or my mainstream teacher?" (Harman et al., 1989, p. 398). In a phonics-based classroom, children are taught Standard English, and this means that some students may see that as a threat to who they are because the way they speak English outside of school or at home doesn't fall into the standard category (Harman et al., 1989).

Conclusion

To conclude this section on approaches, both whole language and systematic phonics have been discussed. Each has its own set of strengths and weaknesses when it comes to teaching reading to students. Whole language is authentic/intuitive and flexible, yet its issue is the implicit nature of the approach. Systematic phonics is explicit yet it is inadequate on its own and can make some students feel threatened by its standard nature. When developing a reading intervention scope and sequence for third to fifth graders, it is important to keep this debate on approaches in mind in order to help readers be the most successful.

Schools of Thought about Reading

In contrast to the previous section about general approaches, this section talks about three specific reading schools of thought. What makes a school of thought different from an approach is that it gives much more specific guidelines in the way reading should be taught. This section discusses three popular reading schools of thought: Fountas and Pinnell, Orton-Gillingham, and the Science of Reading (SOR). Each includes background knowledge on its reading philosophy, its strengths, and its weaknesses.

Fountas and Pinnell

Fountas and Pinnell is one of the most popular literacy curriculums in the U.S. Its goal is to help students gain more reading power by building a toolbox of strategies for processing what they read (Fountas et al., 2012). What this looks like in a classroom is a small group of students actively engaged in an intervention lesson with the teacher, while the other students in the class have other literacy tasks to complete independently. A Fountas and Pinnell small group lesson begins with students thinking about the text before they even begin reading. Next, they work on comprehending the text while reading. At this time they are encouraged to share their own thoughts. Last, students deepen their understanding through conversation (Fountas et al., 2012). Another aspect of the Fountas and Pinnell curriculum is the leveled books that are included. These books are leveled A to Z with A being for the most beginning readers (most likely kindergarteners) and Z being for the most advanced readers (most likely fifth graders). Fountas and Pinnell (2012) do acknowledge that this reading curriculum is only one part of successful literacy instruction. It also needs to include interactive read-alouds, mini-lessons, individual reading, and teacher conferences.

The curriculum designed by Fountas and Pinnell has its own strengths and weaknesses that are important to include. The strengths include its ability to easily differentiate and the inclusion of leveled texts. The weakness includes the portrayal of whites and people of color in their leveled texts. To start with its strengths, differentiation is easier because of the small group teaching. Teaching in small groups can effectively teach a wide range of learners with different needs and abilities (Fountas et al., 2012). Also, keeping running records that include students' reading behaviors and levels allows

teachers to make decisions about appropriate reading levels to place students (Fountas et al., 2012). Another strength is its leveled texts. As mentioned previously, the Fountas and Pinnell leveled text encompass a whole gradient of readers. Starting with the most emergent and ending with the most advanced. Fountas goes on to state that teachers love the leveled books because they can be read in one sitting and then they can apply what they learned to the longer texts they read independently.

Even though teachers have voiced that they love the leveled texts, there is one significant weakness that can't be ignored: The leveled texts are full of racial disparities (Thomas et al., 2019). Many of the nonfiction books center around white people, where many of the fiction books center around people of color. This leads Thomas et al. to the conclusion that White people have real stories worth sharing and people of color need to have their stories imagined. Some themes that Thomas and team noticed throughout the leveled texts were that people of color were portrayed as inferior, deviant, and in need of saving. Contrary, white people were portrayed as heroic, determined, innovative, and successful. An example from the leveled texts that shows this racial disparity is in the books *Saving Private Rex* and *Giraffes on the Lawn*. *Saving Private Rex* is about an African-American teen boy who wants to save his blind and deaf dog from being euthanized (Thomas et al., 2019). The boy justifies his action of taking the dog, without permission, from the vet by saying "Of course, I should have asked Dr. Bentley if I could take Rex, but I couldn't risk him saying no. I might lose my job, a job I loved, but couldn't lose Rex now" (Fisher, 2015, p. 15). Now, the same thing happens in the book *Giraffes on the Lawn* but with white main characters. A white couple is praised for taking giraffes to their personal property in Kenya. Both books describe people taking an animal

in order to save them, yet the black teen is alluded to doing something wrong and the white characters are alluded to doing something right.

In conclusion, the Fountas and Pinnell curriculum includes a wide variety of strategies to enhance reading abilities such as small-group engagement, pre-reading reflection, active comprehension, and meaningful conversation. Its strengths lie in its ability to differentiate for students and the inclusion of leveled texts. Its major weakness lies in the racial biases that are present in the leveled texts. It is important to keep these strengths and weaknesses in mind when creating a scope and sequence for reading interventions because there can be unintended consequences for the students. But, there are other curriculums to explore when creating the reading intervention scope and sequence for third to fifth graders.

Orton-Gillingham

Orton-Gillingham is a widely used philosophy of reading instruction that has informed many reading programs world-wide (Sheffield, 1991) since the early 1900's (Stevens et al., 2021). Sheffield (1991) says that students are directly taught components of literacy as one body of knowledge and ties writing directly into that process. This philosophy comes from two researchers named Samuel Orton and Anna Gillingham. Orton was a neuropsychiatrist and pathologist and Gillingham was an educator and psychologist. Together, they came up with a way to teach reading that included five pillars of instruction: direct and explicit, structured and sequential, diagnostic, prescriptive, and multisensory.

The Orton-Gillingham philosophy is direct and explicit because it teaches students the what, why, and how about their learning tasks (Stevens et al., 2021). It is

structured and sequential because it presents simple information first then moves to more complex information. Stevens et al. says the approach is also diagnostic in that it continuously monitors student progress and responses in order to analyze student progress. The prescriptive pillar includes instructional elements that build upon one another as a student shows mastery in previous lessons. And lastly, it is multisensory because it uses seeing, hearing, feeling, and awareness of motion in each lesson.

Here is an example of what this might look like in an intervention setting. First, the student hears the teacher say a sound, word, or sentence. Second, the student repeats that sound, word, or sentence all while concentrating on the mouth movements and writing the sound, word, or sentence (Sheffield, 1991). This process integrates the 5 pillars and, even more, integrates visual, auditory, and kinesthetic types of learning.

Now that an overview of the Orton-Gillingham philosophy has been described, it does come with its own set of strengths and weaknesses. The major strength Sheffield believes is that many dyslexic students have found success with Orton-Gillingham. Many students with dyslexia have trouble with the structure of English. Sheffield (1991) states that teaching them that there is a logical structure helps them to use logical reasoning in order to master literacy. In addition, students with dyslexia learn to distinguish consonant sounds by where the sounds are produced in the mouth. For example, some students may mix up "t" and "d" because the tongue touches the gum ridge behind the teeth in both sounds. An Orton-Gillingham curriculum would use that knowledge to explicitly explain to the student why that mix up occurs. The hope, for Sheffield (1991), is that the student begins to recognize the mistake and avoid it in the future.

Despite its strong success for students with dyslexia, the major weakness of Orton-Gillingham is that it is not standardized (Sayeski et al., 2019). There are many curriculums written with the Orton-Gillingham philosophy at the center, but they are all presented differently. This includes a difference in intervention focus, intensity, and duration. Teachers have the ability to choose a wide variety of interventions, but when there are a myriad of students with different abilities and needs that can be a sizable challenge (Sayeski et al., 2019). To expand on this weakness, Orton-Gillingham aims to use an integrative approach that is visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (Sheffield, 1991). Some of the visual components could be charts, flashcards, lists, visual cues, and pictures. Some of the auditory activities could be hearing sounds and directions aloud, rhymes, songs, and mnemonics. And, some of the kinesthetic activities could be finger tapping, use of hands to manipulate objects, writing graphemes in sand, finger tracing, and whole-body movements (Stevens et al., 2021). So, according to Orton-Gillingham, these need to be integrated into cohesive lessons. Without the proper training to be an Orton-Gillingham classroom educator, which takes a minimum of 30 hours, teachers are left to their own knowledge and research in implementing Orton-Gillingham (Sayeski et al., 2019).

To summarize Orton-Gillingham, it uses a wide variety of modes to engage and teach students. The five pillars that encompass this philosophy are direct and explicit, structured and sequential, diagnostic, prescriptive, and multisensory. Interventions include an integrative approach using visual, auditory, and kinesthetic activities. Orton-Gillingham is especially successful for students with dyslexia, yet it being

non-standardized is seen as a major weakness. When creating a reading intervention scope and sequence, it is important to keep ideas of Orton-Gillingham in mind.

Science of Reading

The SOR, just like Orton-Gillingham, informs many reading curriculums. At its core, the SOR conveys how students learn to read and how to best teach reading (Thomas, 2022). It was first used as a pedagogy in the 1830's to help explain to students how to sound out words properly (Shanahan, 2020). It has since seen a resurgence in popularity and is a part of pop culture and many reading debates. What has been presented in both the media and research has influenced state-level reading policies and practices such as: new legislation focusing on reading proficiency by 3rd grade, specific reading programs have been banned at the state level and been re-evaluated at the district and school levels, reading policy and practices addressing dyslexia among students now include universal screening and prescribed systematic phonics instruction, policies have mandated systematic phonics instruction for all students, and emphasis on phonics has been added to teacher professional development and teacher education (Thomas, 2022).

This section now delves deeper into what the SOR research actually entails. It begins with providing guidance on five literary aspects: phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, fluency, vocabulary and oral language comprehension, and text comprehension (Jiban, 2023). The SOR goes further and recognizes the neurobiological component these five aspects have. The frontal lobe of the brain houses grammatical and speech processing. The temporal lobe houses the sorting and processing of speech sounds. The occipital lobe houses the processing of visual information.

Another aspect of the SOR that is important to include is the Simple View of Reading (SVR). This can be broken down into an equation that explains how reading comprehension is attained. That equation is reading comprehension (RC) is the product of decoding (D) and language comprehension (LC), or RC = D x LC (Jiban, 2023). This means that if a student can decode words successfully but doesn't know what those words mean, then that student won't fully comprehend the text. The same is true in the vice versa scenario (Jenner, 2021).

In a similar fashion to the SVR, the SOR embraces the visual graphic of Scarborough's reading rope (Jenner, 2021). As seen in Figure 4, the reading rope consists of the multiple elements that make up language comprehension and word recognition. Those all get intertwined to create skilled reading. To extend Scarborough's reading rope to an example, if a student can decode automatically it frees up space in the mind to focus on comprehension skills like vocabulary or verbal reasoning.

Figure 4

Scarborough's Reading Rope
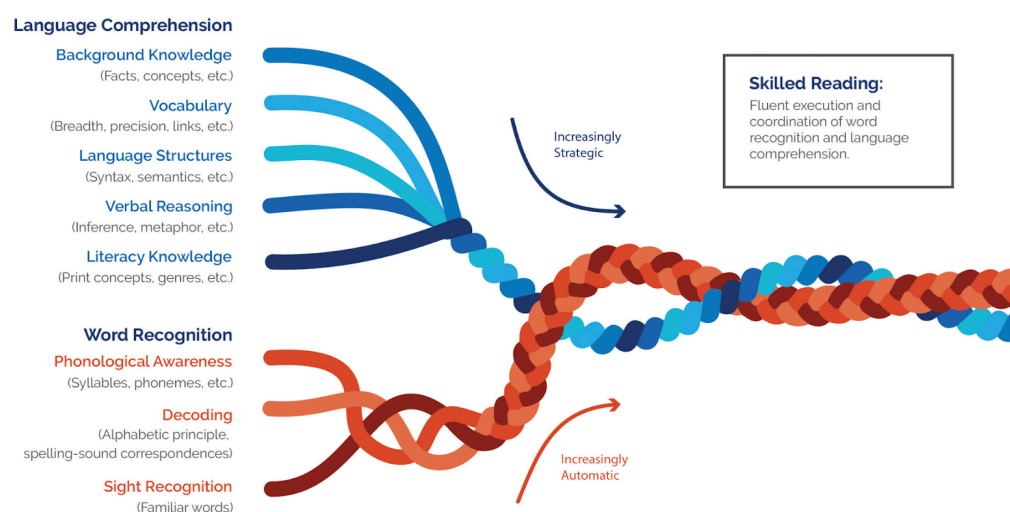
Note. Ally, 2022, para. 3

All of the research that has gone into the SOR is a strength that many value. The five aspects of literacy, the SVR, Scarborough's reading rope, and its longevity since the 1830's is more than enough evidence that this type of literacy instruction works. All of the research has led to the views that decoding skills should be taught systematically, reading interventions are engaging for students, complex texts should be used, students should be working with one another, and high-quality conversations about texts should be had. When the research and practice components of the SOR converge, then students can find success (Jiban, 2023).

Even though the SOR is backed by considerable research, there are two weaknesses worth noting. The first is that the SOR has gotten to be a term that media and noneducators use (Shanahan, 2020). The term has been trending upward since 2018. And, these journalists and noneducators are not scholars of reading and literacy which leads to many different definitions, interpretations, and analyses (Shanahan, 2020). The second weakness is the SOR does not benefit black and brown children (Terry, 2021). Oftentimes the SOR is portrayed as a cure-all for students with reading difficulties. Terry (2021) argues that the SOR does not have any culturally relevant components for black and brown students living in poverty. Additionally, Terry (2021) says that the SOR will not prosper in places where general learning isn't prospering. So, in order to combat this issue for black and brown students, educators need to understand the conditions in which black and brown students prosper. Five necessary conditions for black and brown students to prosper are: strong instructional leadership, high expectations for every student, a safe and orderly climate, prioritization of mastery of basic skills in classroom instruction, and effective monitoring of student performance and progress. Once those

minimal conditions are met for Terry (2021), the SOR can help black and brown students thrive in reading.

In conclusion of the SOR, there is considerable research that spans back to the 1830's. Policies and legislation have been changed because of the SOR. Three of the significant bodies of research that have been done pertaining to the SOR are the five aspects of reading, the SVR, and Scarborough's reading rope. The plethora of research can be seen as a strength because it is based in science. But, there are weaknesses just like any other school of thought. The two discussed were the SOR is a term commonly used by the media and noneducators and its lack of cultural relevance for black and brown students. With all of that said, the SOR informs ways to create a reading intervention scope and sequence for third to fifth graders

Conclusion

In this chapter, five research fields that will inform the creation of a reading intervention scope and sequence for third to fifth graders were presented. They were history, elementary students, struggling readers, types of approaches to teaching reading, and schools of thought about reading. Each has their own place in the development of a reading intervention scope and sequence. Knowing about the history of reading interventions is important because it informs about what has been done before and what should be done in the future. Understanding elementary students in terms of the common core standards they need to know, their attitudes and motivations, and how they are selected for reading interventions is necessary because different ages of students are in different stages of development and learning. Recognizing qualities of a struggling reader, including those with dyslexia, is imperative because a reading specialist's whole

career is about helping readers who struggle. Learning about the types of approaches to teaching reading is worth studying because each student is different and will have different needs. Lastly, grasping concepts from three significant reading schools of thought is valuable because the scope and sequence has a plethora of research to back it up. In summary, these five research fields collectively contribute in creating a reading intervention scope and sequence for third through fifth graders with the goal of being the most effective for the most amount of students. In Chapter Three this research is the basis for describing the scope and sequence project. A timeline of completing the project is given as well as a description of the project setting and audience. Lastly, assessments are described in order to determine if the reading intervention scope and sequence project is successful.

CHAPTER THREE

Project Description

Introduction

The research presented in Chapter Two helped to inform the research question: *What is the most effective scope and sequence for a reading academic support curriculum designed for small groups of students in grades three to five?* Chapter Three takes that learned research and applies it to create an effective scope and sequence for six-week reading interventions for an academic support teacher. In this chapter, the terms reading specialist and academic support teacher are used interchangeably.

The role of an academic support teacher in the school district of St. Paul, Minnesota is to provide whole group and small group reading instruction to elementary students. Whole group reading instruction is given to students in grades Pre-K to grade five and is done in the classroom while the teacher is in their weekly Professional Learning Committee (PLC) meeting with other grade level teachers and colleagues. Small group reading instruction is given to students in grades three to five and is done using a pull-out method. This means that students leave their classrooms and complete the reading interventions in a different space.

Academic support teachers at one particular school in St. Paul do not have an established curriculum to teach their small groups. Guidance as to what to teach is given from classroom teachers, learning leads, other academic support staff, and administration. This project came about because of the lack of a formal curriculum for academic support teachers. As someone who was personally in that position, it was difficult to come up with thorough and effective lesson plans for those small groups intervention and also

create lesson plans for whole group instruction. Having a scope and sequence to work off of will save time and help academic support teachers be more effective.

A scope and sequence of this type needs to be thoroughly vetted by up to date research on the most effective teaching approaches and schools of thought regarding reading instruction. These were described in Chapter Two, as well as how to work with the different attitudes and motivations elementary students may have and how to best help different kinds of struggling readers. This chapter gives a detailed description of the project. It also tells about the setting and the audience. In addition, a proposed timeline is outlined. Lastly, this chapter tells how the assessment data collected helps to evaluate the effectiveness of the project.

Project Overview

This project aims to create a scope and sequence for reading interventions for students in grades three to five. Each grade will receive a six-week rotation. The reason for this is to be able to give each classroom equitable time with a reading specialist. During the six weeks, students meet with the reading specialist three times per week and have a 30 minute session each time. Groups are no larger than six students. These students are pulled out of the classroom and work with the academic support teacher in a designated small group space where other teachers (including academic support in reading and math, English Language Learner teachers, and paraprofessionals) will be teaching small groups as well.

In this space, the academic support teacher will teach lessons backed by various schools of thought regarding reading instruction. The schools of thought include Fountas and Pinnell, Orton-Gillingham, and the Science of Reading (SOR). In order to create the

most effective scope and sequence, the aspects of Fountas and Pinnell that will be used are the use of leveled texts and the overall routine (Fountas et al., 2012). The Fountas and Pinnell leveled texts are not used because of racial bias, so the academic support teacher has control in choosing more racially equitable readings from websites such as ReadWorks or Raz-Kids. Interventions given will follow the routine of students thinking about the text before they even begin reading, work on comprehending the text while reading, sharing their own thoughts, and deepening their understanding through conversation (Fountas et al., 2012).

While the main framework of the intervention is Fountas and Pinnell, the activities within the intervention are influenced by Orton-Gillingham. This includes multisensory reading experiences, direct and explicit instruction on certain phonics/comprehension topics, teaching content sequentially, and explicitly pointing out and explaining mistakes (Sheffield, 1991).

Within the Orton-Gillingham activities, the topics and sequence of content are informed by the SOR. Five literary aspects that can be chosen for topics based on student need include phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, fluency, vocabulary and oral language comprehension, and text comprehension (Jiban, 2023). The order of teaching is important for the SOR too because students need to be able to decode and comprehend language in order to comprehend a text (Jenner, 2021). For example, if a student can decode words successfully but doesn't know what those words mean, then that student won't fully comprehend the text. To go one step further, if a student can decode automatically it frees up space in the mind to focus on comprehension skills like vocabulary or verbal reasoning. As students get into the upper elementary grades,

decoding automatically is a skill students need to have since the reading standards and assignments get increasingly more complex.

Timeline

Reading interventions at this school do not begin until students have taken their initial assessments. These include the aReading test from FastBridge. Students typically take the aReading test sometime in October once students have had some time to learn the school and classroom rituals/routines. Once the tests have been taken, classroom teachers use that data to form their own small groups and the academic support teachers use that data to create intervention groups with students who are at "high risk" or "some risk". These intervention groups usually include students from a single classroom at a time, lasting for six weeks, then the academic support teacher moves on to another classroom in the same grade for another six-week rotation. This type of system keeps going until all of the teachers in a particular grade have had a six-week session with an academic support teacher, then the rotation begins again. Doing six-week rotations this way was how teachers at a specific school in St. Paul felt it was the most equitable way for each classroom to be serviced by an academic support teacher.

Setting and Audience

The setting for this project is an urban school in St. Paul, Minnesota. The school is located in the northernmost part of St. Paul. A recreation center is next door which many students attend after school. This school contains students in grades Pre-K to fifth grade and, as per the National Center for Education Statistics, had 527 students in the 2021-2022 school year. Out of those students, 259 were Asian, 100 were Black, 73 were

Hispanic, 49 were White, 47 were two or more races, and one student was American Indian/Alaska Native.

One unique aspect of this school is that it's an arts school. Each student receives four arts specialists classes per week including dance, drama, music, and visual arts. Students also receive science as a specialist once per week. Students have opportunities to participate in regular talent shows during lunch, monthly stage performances, and various ways to display their personal artwork. The arts are definitely at the core of this school.

The audience of this project are students in grades three to five. Students in these grades were chosen in particular because WINN (What I Need Now) teachers are responsible for doing small group reading interventions with students in Kindergarten, first, and second grade. That leaves third, fourth, and fifth grades for the academic support teachers. The students chosen to be in an intervention group will have FastBridge aReading scores in the "high risk" or "some risk" categories. In addition, FastBridge gives individual scores for phonemic awareness, phonics, and overall reading. These individual scores are how students are put into groups with students who have comparable scores. That way the reading specialist can curate need-based lessons that pertain to all students in a group.

Assessment

With the groups formed, a scope and sequence in place, and interventions underway, assessments need to be done in order to gauge the effectiveness of the project. First, the academic support teacher gives a baseline test through FastBridge. The initial assessment gives the teacher information about how many words per minute the student

can read and, if applicable based on the type of reading interventions needed, how well the student can comprehend parts of a story. After the initial assessment, the teacher implements the scope and sequence as written. During the six-week intervention, progress monitoring data is collected bi-weekly at the end of week two, four, and six. This consists of the same test used to collect the initial student data. In addition to the quantitative data collected, qualitative data is collected consisting of observations, student work samples, and student feedback. This type of data gives insight into student engagement, attitudes, and application of learned skills. Furthermore, the data gathered during the 2023-2024 school year using the new scope and sequence can be compared with the 2022-2023 data. Analyzing the two data sets can help determine whether the new scope and sequence enabled students to attain higher scores on the progress monitoring tests, or if there was limited or reduced student progress.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the description of the capstone project in order to answer the research question: *What is the most effective scope and sequence for a reading academic support curriculum designed for small groups of students in grades three to five?* An overview of the project was given as well as a timeline for completing the project. Its setting and audience were also described. Lastly, a plan for assessing the effectiveness of the project was laid out.

In the final chapter of this capstone, Chapter Four, the reading intervention scope and sequence for grades three, four, and five is presented. Each grade has a scope and sequence that spans six weeks with interventions happening three days per week for 30 mins each. In addition, Chapter Four contains reflection on major learnings as a

researcher, writer, and learner. It also contains conversation about limitations of the

project and future research related to the project.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

Introduction

My journey as a first year reading academic support teacher created many learning opportunities. I was able to collaborate with wonderful teachers and connect with eager students. Another learning opportunity was teaching without a curriculum. Part of my role was to teach whole group reading lessons and another part was to teach small group reading interventions to students in grades three, four, and five. I decided to focus my capstone project on creating a scope and sequence for small group reading interventions because that is where I can best concentrate as an individual teacher. This led me to develop the research question: *What is the most effective scope and sequence for a reading academic support curriculum designed for small groups of students in grades three to five?*

The scope and sequence was created using what I learned from the literature review in Chapter Two. I needed to inquire about the history of reading interventions, attitudes and motivations of elementary students, common qualities of struggling readers, whole language and systematic phonics approaches to teaching reading, and the schools of thought of Fountas and Pinnell, Orton-Gillingham, and the Science of Reading in order to develop the most effective scope and sequence.

This chapter begins by describing my professional growth throughout the course of this project. Next, the literature review is revisited and discusses the aspects that most influenced my work. Then, implications and limitations are talked about. Finally, future research that could be done on this topic is discussed.

Professional Growth

Looking back on everything that I read, wrote, and reflected on during this project, I can't help but acknowledge the growth I have gone through as a teacher. The research helped me grow in three different ways: First, gaining confidence in my ability to teach reading because of the routine I created using aspects of Fountas and Pinnell, Orton-Gillingham, and the Science of Reading (SOR). Second, learning many new strategies for teaching reading. Third, increasing my foundation of knowledge to help students become better readers. These three areas of growth have collectively shaped me into a more effective and knowledgeable educator, influencing not just my teaching approach but also deepening my understanding of literacy development.

Literature Review

The literature review completed in Chapter Two was imperative to developing an effective small group reading intervention scope and sequence for students in grades three to five. Specifically, learning about the history, whole-language approach and systematic phonics approach, and the three schools of thought of Fountas and Pinnell, Orton-Gillingham, and the SOR impacted my project the most.

Reading about the history of reading interventions was enlightening. I was able to learn about the major studies and findings of the past century. The article written by Scammacca et al. (2016) was extremely comprehensive regarding the history of reading interventions. It gave me the knowledge base I needed in order to understand what should and should not be included in my modern scope and sequence project. In addition to the history of reading interventions, learning about the history of reading specialists and

finding Figure 1 by Quatroche et al. (2001) was validating. It validated just how broad the role of a reading specialist is. I definitely can relate to the wide spectrum of tasks a reading specialist is expected to fulfill.

Moving away from the history section of Chapter Two, the whole-language versus systematic phonics approach was fundamental for me in creating the reading intervention scope and sequence. I gravitated towards using a systematic phonics approach because the students I work with are struggling readers. They need more explicit instruction and, from my research, a whole-language approach is more appropriate for a whole class setting.

The last aspect of the literature review that significantly impacted how I designed the scope and sequence was the three schools of thought surrounding literacy: Fountas and Pinnell, Orton-Gillingham, and the SOR. For Fountas and Pinnell, I used their ideas as the reading routine outline for the intervention scope and sequence (Fountas et al., 2012). For Orton-Gillingham, I used their ideas for the activities, such as sequential phonics instruction within the Fountas and Pinnell routine (Stevens et al., 2021). For the SOR, I used ideas from Scarborough's reading rope to make sure I teach a wide breadth of reading skills that fosters the ultimate goal of skilled reading (Jenner, 2021). In the end, researching these three schools of thought allowed me to create a comprehensive scope and sequence that incorporated the best aspects of each.

Implications

My reason for creating this project was because it was a critical element that I lacked during my initial year teaching. As an academic support teacher, my role is to teach both whole group reading lessons and small group reading interventions. Having a

scope and sequence already laid out for small reading groups leaves more planning, preparation, and collaboration time for whole group lessons. It also will help me be a more effective teacher because I know this scope and sequence is based on the best aspects of the research put forth in Chapter Two.

Not only will this scope and sequence help me be a more effective teacher, but my hope is that my coworkers will find it helpful and useful in their teaching as well. The school I work at has one other reading academic support teacher who shared in my struggles of not having a proper scope and sequence. Not having to come up with what to teach everyday is one less stress that we can take away.

In addition to knowing what and when to teach, this scope and sequence has initial assessments and progress monitoring every other week built in. An initial assessment is completed for each student at the beginning of the six week session and progress monitoring is completed every other week. Exit tickets are completed at the end of each lesson so student progress can be monitored every session. Sometimes it can get overwhelming to come up with when and how to formally monitor student progress, but having it built into the scope and sequence will hopefully eliminate that issue.

Overall, the implication for this project is for me and any reading academic support coworkers to have a scope and sequence to follow. Effective assessment and monitoring tools are included as well. The hope is it will not only enhance the quality of our teaching, but also contribute to a more stress-free learning environment.

Limitations

With these promising expectations in mind, it's important to acknowledge that there are a couple limitations. The first is individual variability and the second is time

constraints. Individual variability is a limitation because students may vary in their reading abilities and learning styles. A standardized scope and sequence may not be able to account for the unique requirements of each student, potentially leaving some students without the literacy support they need. Individual variability also extends to English language proficiency, background knowledge, and personal interests. Reading intervention teachers keep all of these variabilities in mind while creating lesson plans, yet because of the wide scope of human experiences, not everything can be accounted for and planned for.

Time constraints are a second limitation because students only receive reading interventions three days per week for 30 minute sessions. This is not much time to teach as deeply or provide enough support that some students may need. In addition, there could be student absences, field trips, classroom events, school-wide events, assemblies, or any other number of reasons students may miss an intervention session.

Both of these limitations, individual variability and time constraints, include elements that are out of a teacher's control. Teachers cannot control who the students in the intervention group are in terms of personality and learning needs, nor can they control events that may cause a student to be absent or an intervention session not to take place. These limitations emphasize the importance of future research to refine teaching methods and empower educators to navigate these challenges more effectively.

Future Research

Recognizing these limitations for an elementary literacy intervention scope and sequence, it becomes necessary to plan future research that tackles these challenges and improves how we understand and use effective strategies for better reading results in

diverse students. A digression from developing a literacy intervention scope and sequence could be a project on creating the best small group dynamics. Topics of future research in this area could include the following: differentiation in small groups, dynamics influencing effective small group interactions, cultural responsiveness, parental involvement, and assessment validity and reliability. By delving into these topics, researchers can provide educators with practical takeaways to create more individualized, engaging, and inclusive small group environments. The goal, ultimately, being improved literacy skills for a diverse range of students.

Closing

This chapter focused on a reflection of my capstone- *What is the most effective scope and sequence for a reading academic support curriculum designed for small groups of students in grades three to five?*. First, my professional growth was discussed and talked about influencing not just my teaching approach but also deepening my understanding of literacy development. Second, the literature review was revisited and relayed the aspects that most influenced my project. These learnings were crucial in developing a scope and sequence that was balanced and incorporated intentional learning. Third, implications and limitations were talked about. Finally an idea for future research adjacent to my topic of developing a reading intervention scope and sequence for students in grades three to five was put forth.

This journey in developing a reading intervention for grades three to five has deepened my understanding and reinforced a commitment to evolving instructional practices. It is my hope that this project can give reading academic support teachers at an urban elementary school a research-based scope and sequence in lieu of having no

established curriculum to teach from, with the ultimate goal of increasing students'

reading abilities.

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