Supporting the Development of Silent Reading Fluency: An Evidence-Based Framework for the Intermediate Grades (3-6)

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Abstract

Developing silent fluent reading is an important goal to be achieved in elementary literacy instruction. This article reviews characteristics of effective silent reading fluency instruction and practice. Next, the authors make the case for four components of effective silent reading fluency practice routines. Finally, the authors describe two evidece-based silent reading fluency routines – Scaffolded Silent Reading (ScSR) and R5. Evidence of efficacy along with richly described and illustrated examples provide readers with all the necessary information to implement these effective silent reading fluency routines in elementary classrooms.

Keywords: Silent reading; Reading fluency, Elementary reading instruction, Independent reading

Introduction

Adelina, a third-grade, English learner, settles into a comfortable chair to silently read a new book titled, Karate Katie by Nancy Krulik (2006). Each day in Mrs. Taylor's third-grade classroom time is allocated for independent, silent reading of self selected books. As Adelina begins to silently read her new book, she feels a light tap on her shoulder. She remembers that she should start reading aloud as Mrs. Taylor settles in next to her to listen to her read.

As Adelina reads aloud, Mrs. Taylor uses a digital tablet to record her reading and make notes. After about one minute elapses, Mrs. Taylor asks Adelina to stop reading for a moment. "Adelina, I am glad to spend some time listening to you read today. May I ask a few questions about the book you are reading?" queries Mrs. Taylor.

"Uh, Huh," answers Adelina tentatively.

"Can you tell me where this story takes place and who are the main characters in the story," inquires Mrs. Taylor.

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" Well, it about some kids, Kevin and Katie go to a Karate class together," replies Adelina.

"Can you tell me more," requests Mrs. Taylor.

Adelina nods affirmatively and clears her throat.

"They are both yellow belts. Kevin says he is the best in the class. Katie dreams of winning a Karate match against Kevin."

"That's great, Adelina. I see you are getting the key ideas and details in this book. And, after listening to you read, it seems that you are able to read this book quite accurately and with a reasonable speed for a third grade student. I was also pleased to hear how expressively you were as you read aloud stopping at the punctuation at the end of sentences and raising and lowering your pitch. As you continue to read, remember what you have learned in class about story structure and the parts of the story you should be expecting to encounter and remember. Also, as you read, think about how the voices of the characters should sound and; if you can, imagine in your mind what is going on in the story by making pictures or a movie in your head. All of this will help you enjoy the reading more and comprehend better, okay."

Adeline responds, "Okay, I'll do my best."

"That is all I can ask," replies Mrs. Taylor.

"Before I go, Adelina, we need to set a goal for when you will complete the reading of this book and break that down into daily goal pages. When do you think you can have this book finished?"

"Hum, I think I could finish it in about three weeks. It has, let me see here, 106 pages. If I read about 8 pages a day, I should be able to finish it," responds Adelina. "That's an ambitious goal, Adelina," says Mrs. Taylor as she makes note of Adelina's goal on her digital tablet. "I am proud of you that you set such a high goal for yourself. Next week when I come to listen to you read, we'll review how you are doing in achieving your goal. I also want you to think about our Book Response Menu Options we have previously discussed in class as listed on the closet door and how you'll share your book with others. Next week, I'll ask you to make a choice of a book response option for sharing your book with me and others," comments Mrs. Taylor as she gets up and moves to the next student in the room on her list for individual reading conferences.

After the conference concludes, Adelina thinks to herself about all that transpired in the past five minutes with her teacher, Mrs. Taylor, and realizes how fast the time went. She returns to her book more determined than ever to meet her goals and be prepared for her next week's individual reading conference with Mrs. Taylor.

What is Silent Reading Fluency?

There is a high degree of agreement among researchers about the elements that define fluent reading (Allington, 2006; National Reading Panel, 2000; Rasinski, Blackowicz, & Lems, 2012; Rasinski, Reutzel, Chard, & Linan-Thompson, 2011; Samuels & Farstrup, 2006; Schwanenflugel, Benjamin, Meisinger, Kuhn, Steiner & Groff, 2014). The major elements of fluent reading, whether oral or silent, include: (1) accurate, effortless, and automatic word identification; (2) age- or grade-level-appropriate reading speed or rate; (3) appropriate use of volume, pitch, juncture, and stress to reflect expression; and (4) correct text phrasing, sometimes called "chunking." Most reading experts would also agree that fluent readers simultaneously comprehend what they read (Samuels, 2007; 2012).

Why is it Important?

Elementary teachers develop and encourage silent reading fluency as part of an overall literacy instructional program. Some elementary teachers assess only oral reading accuracy and rate (reading speed) when assessing reading fluency and leave out assessment of expression and comprehension. Such assessment practices reduce fluent reading to automatic and accurate word recognition. Still some elementary teachers think that reading fluency can only be measured by listening to students read aloud and consequently do not encourage independent, silent reading fluency development. It is intrusive and inauthentic to require students to read orally when they want and need to read silently Nevertheless, questions loom about how elementary teachers might assess whether students can read fluently when they read silently. Finally, reading fluency instruction and practice is often viewed by elementary teachers as only useful during primary grade reading instruction and should be discontinued as an instructional emphasis in the intermediate grades. Such could not be further from the findings of research. Raskinski (2012) argues that intermediate aged readers continue to struggle with reading fluency.

In this article, we outline how to provide the kind of instructional content and contexts that motivate and develop silent reading fluency among elementary school students in the third grade through sixth grade. We will describe developmental considerations, conditions of reading practice, and instructional practices that encourage and motivate fluent silent reading in its fullest sense – eyes on the page, interest in the books, self regulated strategy use, and volume reading!

Silent Reading Fluency: Theoretical, Empirical, and Practical Background

Time spent reading, including reading silently, has consistently correlated strongly with overall student reading achievement (Anderson, et al., 1985; Cunningham & Stavonich, 1998; Hepler & Hickman, 1982; Krashen, 1993; NICHD, 2000). For many years, elementary teachers allocated a block of classroom time for students to go off on their own and read silently. This block of time allocated to independent, silent reading often was known by various acronyms such as Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), Drop Everything and Read (DEAR), Super Quiet Reading Time (SQUIRT), Wonderful Exciting Books (WEB), Daily Independent Reading Time, (DIRT), (Jarvis, 2003; Jensen & Jensen, 2002; Routman, 1991).

The Report of the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000) found little research evidence to support offering an unqualified endorsement for continuing the practice of independent silent reading routines in elementary classrooms. Consequently, many school administrators and elementary teachers stopped providing time allocations for students to silently or independently read in school.

In the past, there were many problems with silent, independent reading routines that produced somewhat equivocal fluency outcomes for elementary students. In more recent years, scholars have described and decried many of the conditions of practice associated with past independent, silent reading routines (Kamil, 2008; Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2006; Reutzel, Smith, & Fawson, 2008; Stahl, 2004).

The chief characteristics of highly engaged readers are the ability to read from self-selected texts, for extended periods of time, focusing on key ideas, all the while self-regulating attention away from distractions and toward remaining immersed in reading the text. As scholars have reconsidered the characteristics of past independent, silent reading routines such as SSR, analyses converged on five major concerns: (1) How Students Self Select Reading Materials, (2) Student Reading Stamina and Time on Task, (3) Student

Accountability, (4) Lack of Student Talk About Text, and (5) Teacher Engagement. As we address these five concerns, we shed light on possible characteristics of independent, silent reading instructional routines that may be amenable to alterations that lead to improved student and teacher experiences when developing silent reading fluency.

Student Book Selection

Proficient readers choose texts to read that are of interest and of appropriate difficulty. When using silent, independent reading routines in the past like SSR, students were given unlimited free choice to select their reading materials. Guthrie and Humenick (2004) showed that interesting texts produced a very large effect size on students' reading comprehension, over 1.6 standard deviations from the mean performance. Although research has shown that choice can increase student interest and motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Turner and Paris, 1995), students must be able to make correct determinations about whether a book is either too hard or too easy in order to 'sustain' their reading. Teacher-guided selection of appropriately challenging and interesting reading materials can help students develop these important skills.

Struggling readers who need to practice reading the most often select books they cannot read (Donovan, Smolkin, & Lomax, 2000; Fresch, 1995). Unguided choice can become a negative force when students select reading materials from a limited range of genres and topics. Students who select books that are too easy experience little growth in reading ability (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Carver & Leibert, 1995). Conversely, students who frequently select books that are too hard become frustrated and disconnect from reading (Anderson, Higgins, & Wurster, 1985).

These types of poor text self-selection behaviors often result in negative reading attitudes and behaviors for gifted and for struggling readers alike. The net result is time wasted usually through selection avoidance. This happens when students spend much of designated silent, independent reading time milling about to choose something to read. The avoidance of reading can become a habit that spills over to home reading as well (Chua, 2008). Students who are taught and guided to select texts that match their ability level and appeal to their interests are more likely to sustain their silent, independent reading (Stanovich, 1986). Because time spent reading with appropriate texts leads to improvement in word reading and comprehension (Kuhn et al., 2006), selection of text is an important consideration for effective implementation of sustained silent reading time.

Reading Stamina – Eyes On Text

A widely accepted notion that that the more you read the better reader you will become is pervasively accepted in many educational circles (Allington, 1977; Chambliss & McKillop, 2000). However, simply allocating time for reading is insufficient to assure student reading engagement or to promote reading stamina among students. To assure reading engagement and stamina, teachers must combine allocated reading time with motivational practices (Kamil, 2008). It is very difficult to know for sure just how much of the time students are actually reading during silent, independent reading time (Garan & DeVoogd, 2008; Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2006; Stahl, 2004).

Many years ago, Hunt (1965, 1971a; 1971b) recognized the importance of engaged reading time on task and warned that allocated silent, independent reading time could become unproductive. Hunt emphasized the importance of teacher guidance to firmly establish principles of high engagement and reader stamina during allocated time for silent, independent reading. It only makes sense that if we expect readers to build reading stamina, we must expect that their eyes will be on the text most of the time during allocated silent,

independent reading time (Brenner & Hiebert, 2010). To accomplish this aim, teachers must allocate sufficient reading time during the day as well as hold students accountable for reading during reading practice time.

Student Accountability

Accountability is necessary to insure students spend their time silently reading; however, it is an insufficient precondition for building students' reading stamina. Researchers have long noted that students may appear to have their eyes on the text, but when they are not held accountable they may be "reading" the same book day after day, week after week or not reading at all (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2006; Worthy & Broaddus, 2001). Stahl (2004) vehemently argued that teachers should actively monitor student reading activity and progress during silent, independent reading time rather than modeling the act of reading. Practices such as asking students to complete reading logs or reader response notebooks, taking anecdotal and running records of students' reading, and documenting wide reading have been shown to be effective in holding students accountable for time spent reading (Garan & DeVoogd, 2008; Newman, 2000; Reutzel et al., 2008; Trudel, 2007; Worthy, Turner, & Moorman 1998).

Talk About Text

Discussions are another important component of effective oral or silent reading practice in the development of a silent reading fluency. Students who know that they will be expected to discuss text with the teacher or other students have a purpose for reading and for use of effective reading strategies. Social interactions around texts are effective in motivating wide, frequent reading, even for reluctant readers (Gambrell, 1996; Palmer et al., 1994; Parr & Maguiness, 2005; Worthy & Broaddus, 2001).

Hunt (1965, 1971a, 1971b), the father of Silent Sustained Reading, viewed text discussions in teacher-student conferences and book talks as "the heart of silent reading time." This was a time to assess if the student comprehended the text and to provide "on-the-spot" instruction, feedback, and guidance. Providing a time to discuss what one reads also opens up the possibility for students to share what they have been reading with other students.

Social interaction is an important aspect of reading motivation. Students who discuss literature with peers or the teacher are likely to be socially motivated to read (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Social interaction promotes development of high-level literacy skills, reading stamina, and increases students' intrinsic motivations to read (Almasi, 1996; Guthrie, Schafer, Wang & Afflerbach, 1993; Slavin, 1990; Wood 1990). The importance of social interactions with text directly affects the role of the teacher during independent, silent reading time.

The Role of the Teacher

For many years, it has been suggested that teachers model reading by silently reading in their own book during independent, silent reading time (McCracken, 1971). Although there is importance in teacher modeling, passive modeling, where a teacher holds a book and reads silently is unlikely to teach students much about why or how one reads (Gambrell, 1996). A teacher becomes a reading model by enthusiastically "blessing" or promoting books, by reading aloud interesting books, by discussing books, and by explicitly teaching the strategies and dispositions of skilled and joyful reading.

Stahl (2004) questioned passive modeling of reading by teachers because it limited the social interaction between teachers and students. Garan and DeVoogd (2008), similar to Manning and Manning (1984), noted an increased effectiveness of independent, silent

reading time when reading conferences were included. Bryan, Fawson, and Reutzel (2003) found that brief student/teacher conferences during independent, silent reading time would keep even the most disengaged student engaged in reading for up to 3 weeks.

The hallmark of a truly fluent reader is the ability to engage in reading appropriately challenging and interesting self-selected texts. Providing students with scaffolds needed to support the development of reading fluency during independent, silent reading time will require major revisions in teacher and student behaviors, roles, and expectations. Several researchers have begun to design and investigate relatively new independent silent reading practice routines that address the weaknesses associated with SSR and other similar routines for providing independent, silent reading practice (Reutzel, Jones, Fawson, & Smith, 2008; Reutzel, Fawson & Smith, 2008; Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2006). We describe major revisions that are necessary to render time spent in independent, silent reading routines effective in supporting the development of silent reading fluency.

Four Evidence-Based Components That Support Silent Reading Fluency Development

A review of the literature on silent reading fluency reveals four core evidence-based components that support the development of silent reading fluency with elementary students. These are: 1) allocated practice time; 2) supportive classroom environment; 3) engaged reading, and 4) teacher scaffolds and instruction. In what follows, we provide an extended description of each of these four core evidence-based components to help teachers and teacher educators more successfully implement a reading instructional program that supports the development of silent reading fluency in the elementary school.

Allocated Practice Time

An intuitively appealing belief held among many educators is that the more you read the better reader you become (Allington, 1977; Chambliss & McKillop, 2000). Another version of this belief is that practice makes perfect. But, of course, we all know that imperfect practice often leads to imperfect outcomes (Lemov, Woolway & Yezzi, 2012). Thus, as Kamil (2008) so aptly pointed out, an allocation of time for reading practice is a necessary but insufficient condition for improving silent reading fluency!

Time allocations within a classroom are often one of the few elements of life that classroom teachers can largely control. The question, however, of how and to what extent teachers ought to allocate time in the classroom should be based upon evidence and not whim or intuition. The evidence supporting an allocation of time for reading practice in classrooms has steadily been expanding over the years, especially when time allocations for practice are coupled with the other four components we discuss in this article.

From the earliest findings of basic and applied research, results have shown that time spent on almost any learning task correlates strongly with the amount and degree of learning achieved (Bugelski, 1962; Brophy, 1988). Reading research has similarly demonstrated strong correlations of time spent reading with reading achievement (Anderson, Wilson & Fielding, 1988; National Reading Panel, 2000). Without time spent on reading, students aren't likely to become proficient readers, whether the mode of reading practice is oral or silent! Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson (1985, p. 76) many years ago lamented the miniscule amount of time students spent actually reading in classrooms daily, about "7 or 8 minutes per day." This finding surely had prompted Allington's (1977) remarks several years previous, "If they don't read much, how they ever gonna' get good?"

Allocating time daily for reading silently is foundational to the process of developing elementary students' silent reading fluency. As Anderson et al. (1985, p. 77) asserted, "Increasing the amount of time read ought to be a priority for both parents and teachers."

Thus, allocating roughly 15-20 minutes daily would more than double the amount of time students spent reading in school from previous estimates (Anderson, et al., 1985). During allocated reading practice time students should spend the bulk of their time reading, rather than browsing for reading materials, or even worse, using a book as a prop to "fake" reading. Thus, time allocated to reading practice alone will surely not ensure that students spend this time during the school day wisely or well. More is needed. Regularly allocated time for reading practice, coupled with the remaining three core evidence-based components that support the development of silent reading fluency with elementary students provide the "more" that is needed. The first of these three core evidence-based components that support the development of silent reading fluency with elementary students is a supportive classroom environment.

Supportive Classroom Environment

To develop silent reading fluency, the physical arrangement or organization of a literacy classroom can be a powerful tool if designed effectively. (Morrow, Reutzel, & Casey, 2006; Reutzel, Jones, & Newman, 2010; Reutzel & Morrow, 2007; Roskos & Neuman, 2012; Wolfersberger, Reutzel, Sudweeks, & Fawson, 2004). The hub of an effective literacy classroom for supporting the literacy development of silent reading fluency is the classroom library (Reutzel & Fawson, 2002; Reutzel & Clark, 2012). An effective classroom library should be located in a quiet, peaceful area of the classroom, and if possible, furnished with comfortable seating for multiple students.

An effective classroom library is organized to support and guide efficient student browsing and book selection. To scaffold students' browsing and selection processes in the classroom library, teachers should label classroom library shelves for contents and use book tubs to group books into conceptually related categories or genres so that students can easily locate interesting books by level of difficulty. For example, book tubs can be labeled by genre with a variety of color-coded reading difficulty levels stored within each genre tub (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. *Exemplary Classroom Library*

Free wooden paint stir sticks obtained from a local home hardware or paint store labeled with students names can be used as placeholders for books they've checked out of the classroom library. Vinyl rain gutter(s) can be mounted on bookshelves or windowsills to display books with the covers out increasing student interest (Reutzel & Gali, 1998). Experts

have recommended about 10 books per student or 250-300 books total as a minimum for an effective elementary classroom library to support silent reading fluency practice (Stoodt, 1989; Reutzel & Fawson, 2002). Books selected by the teacher for inclusion in the classroom library should vary in terms of content, genre, and be leveled by difficulty.

Another way to scaffold students' book browsing and selection processes in the classroom library, is for teachers to code the difficulty level of books within the classroom library collection using colored cloth tape or stickers placed on the binding or the upper right-hand corner of book covers. One of the most widely recognized book leveling approaches is called Lexiles (See www.lexile.com). The Lexile® system levels books from pre-primer levels (-200L to +200L) to graduate school (1400L - 1800L) (Stenner, 1996; Stenner and Burdick, 1997). Students should be taught to select books in the classroom library for silent readng that are marked by a specific color code representing their individual independent reading levels (95% or more accuracy level).

Student Engagement

One way to motivate readers to engage in reading is to allow choice. Even within proscribed limits, offering students some level of choice of reading materials works to ensure higher levels of interest and as a result sustained engagement with text (Marinak, Gambrell, & Mazzoni, 2013).

Recent experimental research also suggests that wide reading across genres with monitoring and feedback produces equivalent or better oral and silent reading fluency gains in second- and third-grade students (Hiebert & Reutzel, 2010; Kuhn, 2005; Kuhn & Schwanenflugel, 2006; Kuhn & Woo, 2008; Pikulski & Chard, 2005; Reutzel, Petscher, & Spichtig, 2012; Reutzel, Fawson, & Smith, 2008; Stahl, 2004). In wide reading, students read different text types (narrative, expository, and poetic) across a range of genres (fantasy, fairy tales, myths, science fiction, historical fiction, series books, autobiographies, diaries, journals, logs, essays, encyclopedia entries, information books) (Kuhn, Ash, & Gregory, 2012). To encourage students to read widely, many teachers find a reading genre wheel useful (Figure 2). Students select a book from one of the genres in the wheel. After reading a book from a genre in the wheel, students color in each section of the genre wheel as they complete the multiple genres shown within it.

Fawson, Reutzel, Read, & Moore (2009) have shown that reading widely using a genre wheel to guide student choice is more motivating than three other approaches often used by teachers for students to earn a reading incentive: 1) number of pages, 2) number of books, and 3) number of minutes.

Research has shown that discussion and social interaction around texts promotes development of higher-level literacy skills and increases students' intrinsic motivation for reading and writing (Almasi, 1996; Guthrie, Schafer, Wang & Afflerbach, 1993; Slavin, 1990; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997; Wood 1990). Discussion and social interactions about text also increase students' appreciation and understanding of text (Atwell, 2007; Cole, 2003; Garan & DeVoogd, 2008; Lee-Daniels & Murray, 2000). Hunt (1965, 1971a, 1971b) viewed text discussions and social interactions around text through teacher conferences and student book talks as "the heart of silent reading time." Manning and Manning (1984) also noted increased silent reading fluency when reading teacher-student discussions and social interactions in regular conferences were a part of independent, silent reading time.

From *Your Classroom Library: New Ways to Give It More Teaching Power*, by D.R. Reutzel & P.C. Fawson,
2002, New York: Scholastic. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 2. *Reading Genre Wheel*

A persistent concern about to silent, independent reading time has and continues to focus on whether or not students are actually reading during this time. Researchers have noted that although students may give off the appearance of engagement in reading, because they are not held accountable, they could be "reading" the same book day after day, week after week or not reading at all (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2006; Worthy & Broaddus, 2001). According to Kelly and Clausen (2010, p 174) disengaged readers, especially 'Fake' and 'Compliant' readers, need a strong sense of purpose beyond "because the teacher told me to." However, this can be controlled when the students are paired to discuss their books or when teachers are engaged with their students through reading conferences.

Asking students to keep records of book titles read in logs, write daily reflections, set goals for completion, share daily readings or talk around their books with peers, or complete book response projects offer additional "built-in" student accountability mechanism known to increase student motivation and achievement (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997; Turner & Paris, 1995). Finally, reaching out to parents and the home encourages and supports their children's reading at school and at home during free time and, as a result. increases students' motivation and achievement in school (Olsen & Fuller, 2003).

Teacher Scaffolds and Instruction

Finally, we come to component four for supporting silent reading fluency - teacher scaffolds and instruction. The National Reading Panel (2000) examined the claim that reading practice time independent of instruction had a positive effect on the development of reading fluency among students. The Panel's conclusion was that there was no evidence that reading practice, by itself, improved reading fluency or reading achievement. The Panel did not conclude that reading practice did not improve reading. To provide a strong test of reading practice time independent of instruction, Kamil (2008) conducted a quasi-experimental study in a school population with a very high proportion of English Language Learners (61%). Even with logging the titles read and an incentive program offering a certificate, t-

shirts, and a faux gold medal, the results of reading practice time independent of teacher instruction showed no significant difference when compared with a control group population of the matching demographic.

In a second follow up study, Kamil (2008) coupled professional development for teachers to support students' reading of information texts with reading practice time. Results indicated that "coupled with instruction, recreational (reading practice time) reading had significant effects on fluency and comprehension" (Kamil, 2008, p. 38). These findings, according to Kamil, argue that the effect of reading practice is dramatically enhanced by scaffolding and instruction that supports students. Without scaffolding and instruction, reading practice time alone has no effect on reading achievement, fluency or comprehension development.

What kinds of teacher scaffolds and instruction have been found useful in promoting enhanced effects of silent, independent reading practice? Explicit instruction has been found effective in helping students spend their reading practice time wisely.

For example, teachers could teach a series of explicit book selection strategy lessons, as suggested by Reutzel & Fawson (2002), since time spent silently reading appropriately challenging and interesting texts has been shown to improve word reading and comprehension (Kuhn et al., 2006). Furthermore, the ability to determine if a book is either too hard or too easy to read is essential in order to 'sustain' or build stamina for reading (Brenner & Hiebert, 2010). One such book selection strategy lesson may focus around the organization and use of the classroom library. Teachers could provide a explicit lesson modeling how to effectively enter, browse, select, check out, and exit the classroom library in a series of short, five to ten minute lessons.

Another possible book selection strategy lesson (Reutzel & Fawson, 2002) may involve teaching students about the "three" or "five" finger rule (3 fingers in primary grades and 5 fingers in intermediate/secondary grades). The 3 or 5 finger rule, as described by Allington (2006) and others, involves students counting with the fingers of one hand the words they don't recognize on a page of a book they have selected to read. If there are three or five unrecognized words on a page, the text is probably too difficult for silent, independent reading unless the student is exceptionally interested in the content.

Yet another possible book selection strategy lesson (Reutzel & Fawson, 2002) may involve explaining the expectations, setting limits, stating rules, and modeling procedures before allowing students to use the classroom library. It is critical to set up clear routines and expectations to ensure the success of silent reading practice time as well as the general use and orderliness of the classroom library. With clear rules, expectations and procedures modeled and taught, you may prevent many common disruptions and inappropriate behaviors that could take place in the classroom library.

Finally, teachers could pave the way for silent reading practice time with short, 5–8 minute lessons that include explanations and modeling of elements of fluent reading or use of comprehension strategies. Following these brief explicit lessons, students are dismissed to engage in 20 minutes of independent, silent reading practice time each day during which time the teacher circulates about the room conducting conferences with individual students to teach, guide, monitor progress, set goals, and assess appropriateness of the student's book choice.

Two evidence-based silent reading fluency interventions have combined these four core evidence-based components of effective silent reading fluency instruction into two different but complementary instructional interventions - one called Scaffolded Silent Reading (ScSR)

and the other, R5. Research has demonstrated positive effects for both ScSR and R5 on silent reading fluency development. We begin with a description of the protocol and research support for ScSR and follow up with a similar description of the protocol and research support for R5.

Scaffolded Silent Reading (ScSR): Four Silent Reading Fluency Components Put into Practice

ScSR begins with carefully arranging the classroom library to support and guide students' book reading choices toward appropriately challenging and interesting books (Reutzel, Jones, Fawson, & Smith, 2008; Reutzel, Fawson & Smith, 2008). Since students will receive less feedback and support from the teacher in ScSR than in other forms of reading practice, students are directed to read texts they can process accurately and effortlessly, what some call the independent reading level of 95% or above reading accuracy (Stahl & Heubach, 2006). Student book selection is guided by placing reading materials into clearly labeled shelves or plastic bins representing different genres.

To further assist students in their book selection, books are color coded according to levels of difficulty levels within the classroom library genre tubs by using different colors of stickers placed on the upper right hand corner of the book covers. Students are taught explicit lessons on how to enter the classroom library and select books marked by a specific color code representing each assigned child's independent reading level (95%+ accuracy level).

Because the opportunity to choose reading materials increases student motivation to read, students read widely from a variety of literary genres guided by the use of a genre wheel (Gambrell, 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997; Turner & Paris, 1995). Students are expected to read a minimum of 5 books each nine-week period of the school year. Once students finish reading books from each genre in the genre wheel, they begin a new genre wheel. They are expected to read enough books each year to complete at least two reading genre wheels.

Having planned the organization, display, and storage of the reading materials in the classroom library, a series of explicit book selection strategy lessons are taught (Reutzel & Fawson, 2002). These lessons address several book selection strategies including: 1) orienting students to the classroom library, 2) book talks and getting children excited about books, 3) selecting a book in the classroom library, 4) selecting a "just right" or appropriately leveled book from the classroom library, and 5) checking the reading level of books. During one explicit book strategy selection lesson, students are taught the "three finger" rule for book selection.

Each day ScSR practice time begins with a short, usually about 5-8 minute, explanation and modeling of a teacher selected text: 1) an aspect or element of fluent reading or 2) how to use a comprehension strategy. Following these brief lessons, students are dismissed to select a new book or retrieve a previously selected book. Other leveled books are stored in crates distributed strategically around the room to disperse student traffic flow evenly throughout the room. Children are then free to select a spot in the classroom library, on the carpet, or at their seats for ScSR practice time. During ScSR, the students engage in 20 minutes of silent reading practice time each day.

As students read, the teacher uses a clipboard or digital tablet device to track weekly individual teacher-student reading conferences. During each individual reading conference, students read aloud from their book while the teacher records a running record analysis of their reading. After reading aloud for 1-2 minutes, the teacher initiates a discussion with the

student about the book. To monitor comprehension, teachers ask students to, "Please tell me about what you just read." After the free recall by the student, the teacher may often follow up with general story structure questions if the book read aloud is narrative. If the book read aloud was about information, teachers might ask students to talk about unfamiliar vocabulary concepts or answer questions about facts related to the book's topic. This brief discussion around the book takes about 2 minutes. Finally, at the end of each individual reading conference, ScSR teachers ask students to set a goal for a date to finish the book they are reading. They are also asked to think about how to share with classmates what their book was about from a displayed menu of "book response projects" such as drawing a wanted poster for a book character, drawing a story map or filling in a graphic organizer.

After each individual reading conference, ScSR teachers record student running record results including accuracy, rate, and expression. Teachers record the student's comprehension of the book as indicated in the free recall and answers to teacher questions. Teachers also record the student's goal for book completion, and the student's selected book response project that is to be completed after finishing the book. A form for recording the results of individual teacher-student conferences is shown in Figure 4.

During a 20 minute ScSR session, teachers meet with 4-5 students per day in teacher-student conferences to monitor individual's reading progress weekly. In this way, ScSR teachers ensure that students are engaged and accountable for the time spent reading silently. At the end of the 20 minute daily ScSR time, we have recently added a 2-3 minute share your book with a buddy time. Students either tell about what they read that day or read a small part of the book to a classroom peer during this time. After the share time is complete, students quietly return their reading folders to the storage crates around the room and quickly transition to the next part of the daily routine.

Results of research on ScSR have demonstrated efficacy of this approach for developing students' silent reading fluency in a year-long true experiment in the third-grade (Reutzel, Jones, Fawson, & Smith, 2008; Reutzel, Fawson & Smith, 2008). Students in ScSR performed as well as students receiving a comparison treatment of the National Reading Panel's (2000) recommended guided oral repeated reading with feedback on fluency and comprehension measures. Thus, ScSR represents a complementary practice of equivalent efficacy to the recommended practice of guided oral repeated reading with feedback.

R5

R5 is another way of organizing independent, silent reading to support silent reading fluency development originally conceived by Kelley & Clausen-Grace (2006). R5 consists of five essential elements that align with the four evidence-based components discussed earlier: 1) teachers assist with book selection, 2) students keep track of their reading in a reading log, 3) students complete a response project about their reading, 4) teachers and students engage in discussion, and 5) the teacher monitors student engagement during the independent, silent reading time. To help students more productively engage during R5, three simple rules are implemented (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2006; 2007):

1. Students must have reading materials selected prior to the beginning of R5.

2. Students cannot get up for any reason during R5. Restroom and water

breaks are provided prior to R5 time.

3. Students cannot talk to others, unless in a teacher conference or during

the Rap part of R5.

R5 consists of five "Rs" divided into three phases: 1) Read and Relax, 2) Reflect and Respond, and 3) Rap.

Student Name _____

Date of Reading Conference _____

Title of Book Student Is Reading _____

_____

Part A: Fluency
Teacher's Running Record of Student's One- to Two-Minute Reading Sample

Number of Words Read _____

Number of Errors _____

Word Read Correctly Per Minute _____

Part B: Comprehension
Oral Retelling
Narrative Text:
☐ Setting   ☐ Characters   ☐ Problem   ☐ Goals   ☐ Episode(s)   ☐ Resolution

Expository Text:
☐ Topic   ☐ Main Idea   ☐ Supporting Detail(s)   ☐ Use of Vocabulary Terms

Discussion Questions
Narrative: Ask story structure questions about setting, characters, problem, and so forth.

Expository: Ask about the topic, main idea, supporting details, and so forth.

Part C: Goal Setting
Book Completion Goal Date _____

Goal Pages to Be Read by the Next Reading Conference _____

Part D: Book Sharing
Book Response Project Selected and Approved by Teacher _____

_____

_____

Figure 3. *Individual Student Reading Conferences Tracking Form*

Read and Relax

During the Read and Relax phase, students choose a comfortable location in the classroom to read. Teachers complete a brief status-of-the-class (Atwell, 1990) chart to monitor student book selection, reading progress, provide feedback and maintain a simple record of conferences (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2006; 2007; 2008a). Typically, in R5 one-on-one conferences take about 10 minutes and occur on a monthly basis. During one-on-one conferences, the teacher records information on a form. Students bring their book in a reading folder to the conference. The reading folder contains a running log of books read, daily strategy reflections, and a copy of the current strategy goal-setting plan. Students share something about the book being read, including the title, a brief summary, and knowledge about the book's genre. During the conference, the teacher asks the student to describe how they have used their reading strategies taught during whole class instruction. After a strategy discussion is concluded, teachers ask students to set a student goal to work on until the next conference. Throughout the conference, the teacher provides positive feedback based on the student's growth.

Reflect and Respond

After the 10-20 minutes of allocated time for reading and relaxing, students reflect and respond. They often reflect and respond by writing a brief response in a reading log including the title, author and genre and something about what they have read.

Rap

The Rap phase of R5 is divided into two parts. In Rap phase 1, students discuss their books and reflections in pairs. For Rap phase 2, the teacher pulls the class together into a whole class share. In pairs, students take turns telling the class what their partner shared with them. The teacher then asks the other students to identify the reading strategies mentioned in the whole class share. Rap time in R5 is usually 10-15 minutes. R5 time averages between 30-40 minutes in length. Authors of R5 caution that the time taken for each R5 phase varies from the beginning of the year to the end of the year; as students take on more responsibility for their reading, and build increasing reading stamina.

Research findings have shown that students in R5 read more widely and increased reading proficiency over the duration of the study (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2006; 2007; 2008a; 2008b). Unfortunately, the R5 study was not designed using a control or comparison group to determine relative effects of the R5 intervention on reading fluency or comprehension. Having offered this caution, results did show statistically significant gains in reading proficiency for R5 students from pre to post testing occasions.

Conclusion

Research findings in the past decade have illuminated the conditions and contexts for effective silent reading fluency development in elementary classrooms. Many questions remain as to which of the four evidence-based silent reading fluency development components contribute the greatest amount of variance to student growth. It is possible that only two or three of these evidence-based components may be necessary to achieve similar results. How often do teachers need to conference with students to maintain motivation and provide adequate progress monitoring? In what ways could silent reading time include more time for students to discuss strategy use, self-evaluations with a peer, or talk more productively around text? In other words, could the structure of this time be more carefully structured to yield the greatest results for student motivation and achievement? Finally, we need more and better research that describes when fluency practice should transition from oral to silent reading practice and how this transition can be done successfully with all

students. But for now, the results of current research strongly support four evidence-based components for supporting the development of silent reading fluency as described in this article: 1) allocated practice time; 2) supportive classroom environment; 3) engaged reading, and 4) teacher scaffolds and instruction. Research has also provided two evidence-based routines: 1) Scaffolded Silent Reading (ScSR), and 2) R5 to enhance intermediate grade (3-6) students' silent reading fluency development.

• • •

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