

In-context Phonics Instruction vs. In-isolation Phonics Instruction on
Development of Early Elementary Students' Literacy Skills

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Chapter 1: Introduction

United States government officials have been trying to find answers to the most daunting questions regarding education, especially answers surrounding literacy and mathematics. Laws have been passed, regulations have been set, and educators have been asked to modify their teaching practices for “latest and greatest” educational breakthroughs announced by the United States Department of Education. A situation of this character arose in 2001 when the United States government introduced the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), in hopes of improving both reading and math scores. Many educators feel NCLB forced tests to be written and teaching methods to succumb to new educational standards students are required to meet. When passed by President George W. Bush, NCLB seemed to be the United States government’s answer to our inferior scores compared to other countries around the globe. However, NCLB is not without its critics. Many government officials, educators, parents, and others feel NCLB forces teachers to adapt their practices in order to meet the needs of students but in actuality, now are required to provide ineffective methods of teaching both reading and math. A large quantity of research has been done to determine if teaching methods prescribed by NCLB are effective. Out of all research done on reading instruction, it is “without a doubt that phonics has been the most researched topic in reading education” (Dzama, 1994, p. 114).

Background

Phonics instruction has been debated by teachers, parents, administrators, and researchers since the 1950’s (Dzama, 1994, p. 114). Although educators disagree on methods used for phonics instruction, school programs in our country incorporate phonics into literacy programs. However, type of phonics instruction used in reading programs differs greatly among educators.

Educators tend to choose between two prominent phonics instruction methods: in-context phonics instruction and in-isolation phonics instruction. Whether an educator chooses in-context phonics instruction or in-isolation phonics instruction, the heart of a literacy program is evident: teaching students how to read and write.

Statement of Problem

This literature review will focus on discrepancies between in-context phonics instruction, in-isolation phonics instruction, and methods within these instructional practices that influence development of early elementary students' literacy skills. Focus will be drawn to development of invented spellings, glottographic theory, and comprehension because in recent decades, controversy has arisen about the best way to teach students these literacy skills. This literature review will provide research findings on in-context phonics instruction and in-isolation phonics instruction to determine which type of phonics instruction is more effective in supporting early elementary students' acquisition of literacy skills.

Research Statements and Hypotheses

Phonics instruction is a method of teaching students graphemes (letters) and matching graphemes with phonemes (sounds), teaching students how words are pieced together, and teaching students how words are used in reading and writing. Two main types of phonics instruction are in-context phonics instruction and in-isolation phonics instruction. Both in-context phonics instruction and in-isolation phonics instruction host multiple methods used to teach students phonics, which will be discussed later in this literature review.

“Phonics has caused heated discussion among teachers, parents, politicians, and researchers since the 1950s” (Dzama, 1994, p. 114). As a Reading Specialist, I need to be aware of both in-context phonics instruction and in-isolation phonics instruction, methods within each,

and effectiveness of each in order to help other educators in their literacy programs to benefit student acquisition of literacy skills.. Research supporting and research against both in-context phonics instruction and in-isolation phonics instruction is not always reliable or valid, and my literature review will cover discrepancies found in each of these methods. In-context versus in-isolation phonics instruction is a controversial topic that has sparked interest amongst many educators. By following research, I will report findings and recommend a plan based on these findings.

Definition of Terms

Throughout the literature review you will find the following terms, which are key to understanding information presented in this paper. They have been defined for easier fluency and comprehension while reading.

Phonics. “Phonics is a method of teaching beginners to read and pronounce words by learning the phonetic value of letters, letter groups, and especially syllables” (“Phonics,” 2010).

In-context phonics instruction. In-context phonics instruction is a type of instruction in which phonics is taught through the whole language approach using shared readings, journal writings, writing demonstrations, and incidental situations throughout the day (Manning & Kamii, 2000).

In-isolation phonics instruction. In-isolation phonics instruction is a type of instruction in which phonics is taught through the skills-based approach using phonics worksheets, oral-sound training, and activities that include sounding out words and sound blending (Manning & Kammii, 2000).

Reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is to “grasp the nature, significance, or meaning of texts” (“Comprehend,” 2010) while actively constructing meaning from readings

as well as performing functions such as activating prior knowledge, predicting, and decoding text, among others.

Glottographic theory. A glottographic theory is “the belief that writing is related to the sounds of speech” (Kamii, Long & Manning, 2001, p. 196). “A glottographic system, as opposed to a semasiographic system, is based on the sounds of speech” (Manning & Kamii, 2000, p. 53). When students construct a glottographic theory, learning the sound of an “H” is easier than if we believe letters to work like pictures. Also, “when young children begin to construct a glottographic theory, they begin to write more letters, unconventionally, for longer words” (Manning & Kamii, 2000, p. 54).

Theoretical Framework

In Long Term Projects set forth by Dewey, students are active participants in decisions made in everyday activities. Students are encouraged to discover topics of interest, and educational instruction will then follow. This free inquiry of interest enables students to develop motivation, even in face of obstacles and doubt. By developing a stance toward obstacles and doubt, students learn to problem-solve using tools of importance to them in their lives. Dewey’s Long Term Projects approach teaches students to not only face moments of uncertainty, but to desire them, especially when the habits they rely on are of little use to them. Educators’ roles are to make the problem-solving techniques’ beneficial qualities apparent to students. Motivation for problem-solving is what spring-boards students to not simply be a member of society, but to be an active and integral part of society. Dewey also emphasizes “vital experiences” (Glassman, 2001, p. 8) in the context of effective education because knowledge gained through worthwhile experiences will arm students with tools needed to surmount future problems by developing hypotheses that lead to natural inquiry in later activities. Education is responsible for maintaining

knowledge gained through worthwhile experiences so students are consistently testing new knowledge and restructuring individual hypotheses (Glassman, 2001).

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development encourages scaffolding in educational practices built around social history of students. "Accumulated historical experience" (Glassman, 2001, p. 9) is what drives knowledge and change within one's everyday activities. Change within one's life is dependent on historical experiences of that person, as well as changes with the society in which one lives. In Vygotsky's approach, tools given and information learned is of benefit to a student if they increase the student's chances of serving his/her social purpose. Creating learning environments where students can visualize their own possible masteries through interaction with mentors is a main goal of the Zone of Proximal Development approach. Teachers then develop educational practices based on mentoring students in the correct direction, gradually releasing responsibility, and using students' interests to guide continued activity. Through scaffolding, students are mentored by their teacher to understand and develop concepts. In the scaffolding technique, doubt often arises in students when the student is pushed into a higher zone of learning. The mentor then arms students with problem-solving techniques to work through doubt and reconstruct thinking to reach an outcome. A goal of Vygotsky's approach is to use the social history and environment of students to build activities, such as problem-solving techniques, that will enable students to reach the mastery level of the Zone of Proximal Development. (Glassman, 2001).

Research Questions and Purpose

This literature review will serve to provide information gained from research on the topic of phonics instruction. A comparison of in-context phonics instruction and in-isolation phonics instruction will be guided by two research questions: 1) What are the effects of in-context

phonics instruction and in-isolation phonics instruction on early elementary student development of literacy skills? 2) What are the benefits and limitations of in-context phonics instruction and in-isolation phonics instruction on literary ability and achievement of early elementary students?

Summary

Reading instruction is a highly debatable topic in the United States. This literature review will attempt to provide answers towards which instructional method, in-context phonics instruction or in-isolation phonics instruction, provides better development of early elementary students' literacy skills. In-context phonics instruction and in-isolation phonics instruction will be compared, and results of studies within research will be presented to show differences in effectiveness of each type of instructional method, as well as their compatibility with theories of Dewey and Vygotsky. At its conclusion, this literature review will reflect which instructional practice is more effective in development of elementary students' literacy skills in areas of invented spelling, glottographic theory, and comprehension.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Discrepancies between in-context phonics instruction and in-isolation phonics instruction exist. In-context phonics instruction and in-isolation phonics instruction effects on development of early elementary students' literacy skills are described after the introduction of their instructional formats. To answer the research questions stated in the previous section, outcomes and effects of each instructional type are described.

Instructional Formats

In-context Phonics Instruction

Through in-context phonics instruction teachers use shared readings, journal writings, writing demonstrations, and incidental situations throughout the day to engage students in reading, writing, and talking in order to teach students literacy skills (Manning & Kamii, 2000). Incidental situations studied by Manning and Kamii have been used effectively to provide adequate phonics instruction for children within whole language classroom settings. Incidental situations in whole language classrooms are effective because children write on personally chosen topics, self-select children's literature to read frequently, and work on self-selected activities, as well as teacher assignments, individually, in small groups, and in teacher-led groups (Freppon & McIntyre, 1999). For example, during students' reading and writing time, teachers are able to implement decoding skills within rich literature, focus on letter-sound correspondences noticed during oral reading, and instruct students on blends when it is apparent students are using them in their writing. Each technique used by whole language teachers lends itself to appropriate use of in-context phonics instruction when necessary. Another key feature of whole language, using in-context phonics instruction, is the way it is tailored to meet each student's needs within a classroom. For one child, systematic progress through a long list of

letter-sound correspondence rules may be key, whereas for another child just a few phonics rules are adequate, with abundant and increasingly difficult books to practice self-teaching being more appropriate (Ryder, Tunmer, & Greany, 2008). Whole language classrooms and in-context phonics instruction provide this very type of flexible instruction to meet every child's needs and include activities chosen by students. The amount of focus drawn to a particular aspect of phonics, such as letter-sound correspondence, can be determined during instructional time and is not predetermined by a prescribed, systematic program a teacher is following. In-context phonics instruction allows for adapted instruction based on the particular needs and wants of students depending on their reading and writing history. To provide such flexibility, teachers act a guide for students in choosing literature to read and topics to write about. Teachers of whole language in-context phonics instruction classrooms guide children to in self-selecting meaningful, collaborative, and varied experiences for them to learn to read (Freppon & McIntyre, 1999).

In-isolation Phonics Instruction

In-isolation phonics instruction is taught by using phonics worksheets, oral-sound training, sounding out words, and word blending through the skills-based approach (Manning & Kammii, 2000). This type of skills-based phonics instruction is predetermined by a structured basal reading program, follows systematic, hierarchically ordered skills-instruction to teach children to read, and is taught through a bottom-up, transmission approach (Freppon & McIntyre, 1999). Within this method, teachers instill rote memorization skills such as initial consonant sounds, letters-to-sounds relationships, and word recognition of sight words. Teachers of in-isolation phonics instruction teach children letter-sound correspondences and sight words before they teach them to read. Children taught through in-isolation phonics can be found working alone at their desks, completing routine assignments, and reading their basal texts as an entire

class or in small groups. Children in in-isolation phonics instruction classrooms would not be found using children's literature regularly, except perhaps when attendance is taken or after daily work is completed (Freppon & McIntyre, 1999). In in-isolation phonics instruction, children's specific needs are not taken into account when planning each day's lesson. In-isolation phonics instruction is tailored only to a rigid literacy series often purchased by a school district.

Outcomes

In-context Phonics Instruction

Results of a longitudinal in-context phonics study showed 73% of whole language group members achieved higher levels in both reading and writing versus 32% of the phonics group who were taught through isolated phonics instruction. The large difference between the two groups can be attributed to the fact that students in the whole language group developed a general glottographic theory. Students in the whole language group showed their development of a glottographic theory through their use of more letters to represent longer words, as well as use of syntax cues (Manning & Kamii, 2000). When young children cannot make the connection between writing and the sound of speech, and therefore have not yet developed a glottographic theory, how can we expect them to understand that reading serves a purpose (Kamii, Long, & Manning, 2001)? We can easily see why difficulties arise when trying to break children's predetermined assumptions that letters are merely pictures, and do not match spoken language, when students do not make a connection to alphabetic principle. However, students who have a firm understanding of alphabetic principle will have more successful attempts and will begin using letter-sound information more effectively to identify unfamiliar words (Ryder, Tunmer, & Greaney, 2007). Development of a glottographic theory helps students make meaning out of text after they form a strong writing-to-speech relationship.

When children are able to make meaning out of text, they develop a purpose for writing. When children have a purpose for writing, they are able to create their own spelling for words in which they do not know the correct spelling (Korkeamaki & Dreher, 1993). Students in whole language classrooms, learning through in-context phonics instruction, study the technique of creating their own spelling. This is called invented spelling. Reaching Level 3, or the level of effectively using invented spelling, is an important step in the development of a glottographic theory and becoming efficient in literacy (Kamii, Long, & Manning, 1993). Students using invented spelling write longer stories, are better readers, and are more accurate in spelling tests than students who use traditional spelling (Korkeamaki & Dreher, 1993). Children who receive instruction in invented spelling, and are able to practice it, have been shown to maintain word reading and spelling skills and have story writing advantages, over students taught through a spelling-based approach (Roberts & Meiring, 2006). When viewing data in Figure 1 below (Pasa,2001), one can see the comparison of students in a whole language classroom given in-context phonics instruction, versus students in a skills-based classroom given in-isolation phonics instruction. Students in the whole language classroom began the year making fewer errors than students in the phonics group in legal misspellings, then made more errors in legal misspellings than the phonics group, and ended the year making fewer legal misspellings than the phonics group. The progress can be attributed to experience with print words instead of systematic instruction (Pasa, 2001). Students in the whole language group began using invented spelling, and therefore began to make more legal misspelling errors. However, more legal misspelling errors eventually led to greater knowledge of correct spellings than the phonics group and enabled the whole language students to finish the year making fewer legal misspelling errors than the phonics group.

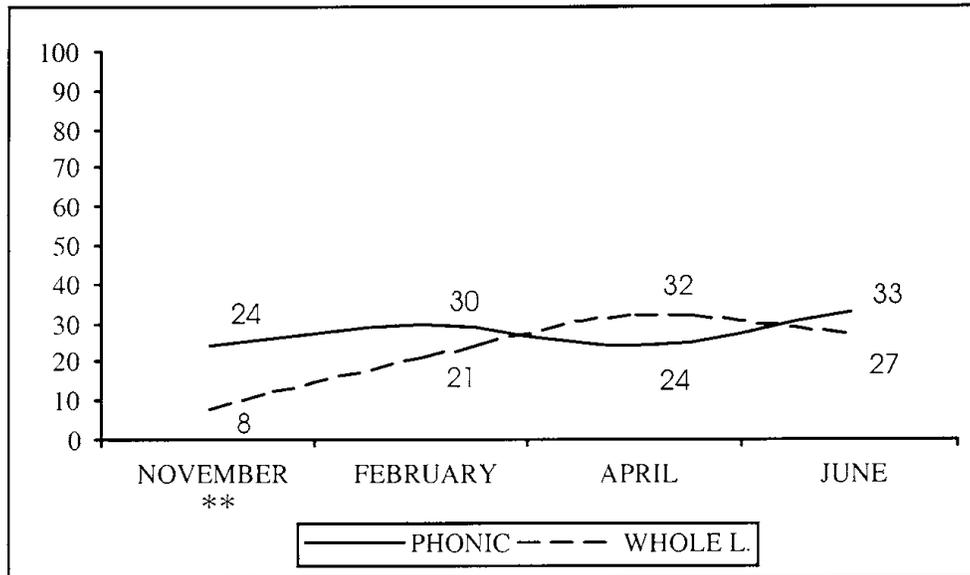


Figure 1. Percentages of legal misspellings from all possible responses (***t* statistically significant, $P < 0.05$).

It is believed that when word reading instruction occurs in the course of reading connected text, the holistic nature of skilled reading—in which comprehension and word-level decoding skills are orchestrated together for the purpose of obtaining meaning—is preserved. In contrast, when this integrated, holistic process is broken down and subcomponents such as phonics become the object of instruction removed from the text, the authentic purpose of decoding is lost and comprehension is disrupted (Roberts and Meiring, 2006).

“The Comprehension Hypothesis claims that we learn to read by understanding the message on the page” (Krashen, 2002). The Comprehension Hypothesis describes the teacher’s role as helping children read interesting texts and helping to make texts comprehensible. Teaching direct skills is helpful only when making texts more comprehensible (Krashen, 2002). Learning to read by not just pronouncing words, but instead understanding the message on the page as the Comprehension Hypothesis claims, is done through instructional practices using literature-based, in-context phonics instruction. Learning the ultimate purpose of reading is to

acquire meaning is also done through instructional practices using literature-based, in-context phonics instruction. Knowing how to read and the purpose of reading can be taught through meaning-seeking strategies. Through in-context phonics instruction, students are taught to use multiple strategies, such as decoding skills within rich literature and focusing on letter-sound correspondences during reading, for clarifying ambiguous or unclear understandings of what they read and to comprehend the text. Students use their own writing, as well as age-appropriate children's literature, to demonstrate comprehension strategies effectively (Ryder, Tunmer, & Greany, 2008; Baumann & Ivey, 1997).

In-isolation Phonics Instruction

Explicit phonics instruction, such as that through a skills-based approach, is helpful for all children, harmful to no children, and crucial for some children (Ryder, Tunmer & Greany, 2008). With that being said, members of a group of kindergarteners taught through in-isolation phonics instruction in a longitudinal study did not construct a level needed to develop a glottographic theory. Inadequate knowledge of a glottographic theory caused fifteen of the seventeen regressions in the reading portion of the study to occur in the in-isolation phonics group, and eight of the nineteen children of the in-isolation phonics group to regress or stay at the same level for the writing portion of the study. These regressions may be because students in the phonics group were unable to displace their original theory that all words consist of a fixed number of letters (Manning & Kamii, 2000). Having a theory that all words consist of a fixed number of letters, and therefore not developing a glottographic theory, can be caused by having instruction only in word analysis skills, which teach methods such as spelling-sound correspondences. Spelling-sound relations are necessary for learning to read, and children may rely on induction to acquire these spelling-sound relations. However, amount of explicit phonics

instruction (i.e. teaching of spelling-sound relations) required to get the process of self-teaching started may vary considerably among children (Ryder, Tunmer, & Greaney, 2008). Systematic, explicit instruction in sound-symbol relationships through in-isolation phonics instruction is thought by some researchers nonnegotiable for those students within the lowest 25% of their class. Some researchers also think explicit instruction in sound-symbol relationships is key to teaching students to read what comprises the English language in order to glean meaning from text (Palmaffy, 1997). Although, when reviewing research, one can often find use of systematic, explicit instruction techniques and focus on sound-symbol relationships in in-isolation phonics instruction, to be deemed as rigid for children, which makes it difficult for them to learn to be flexible, like competent and proactive readers usually are. Use of systematic, explicit instruction techniques also makes it difficult for children to adapt to text they are reading (Freppon & McIntyre, 1999).

Incidental mini-lessons, not often found in in-isolation phonics instruction, are the only way word analysis skills and strategies should be taught. Mini-lessons should be given in response to errors in children's oral reading of text because, when isolated, alphabetic coding skills are not versatile (Ryder, Tunmer, & Greaney, 2008). In a study of Finnish-language phonics instruction, students learning Finnish through strong in-isolation phonics were not able to make the connection to actual reading because they lacked the development of a glottographic theory. Even though the Finnish language has regular letter-sound correspondence, and therefore isolated phonics instruction seems appropriate, students were not able to connect these individual letter-sound correspondences they recognized into syllables or words in order to blend a string of letters and sound them out. Students in in-isolation phonics groups often spell words using only the initial consonant sound they hear, a trait heavily focused on during in-isolation phonics

instruction, representing the lack of a glottographic theory present. Reading does not make sense when practicing only separate syllables because the syllables do not carry any meaning. Therefore, children are often confused about the purpose of reading (Korkeamaki & Dreher, 1993). Students taught through in-isolation phonics instruction are unable to develop a glottographic theory because they focus on aspects such as initial consonants and single spelling-sound correspondences, due to the extensive amount of time spent on explicit phonics instruction.

In-isolation phonics instruction typically lends itself to instruction with traditional spelling methods. However, invented-spelling instructional approaches were found to be more beneficial than traditional spelling methods for first graders who possessed the least skill in spelling (Clarke, 1988; Sacks & Mergendoller, 1997). The National Reading Panel found students above first grade did not benefit from spelling instruction taught through in-isolation phonics instruction. The lack of benefits of in-isolation phonics instructional techniques to teach spelling to students above first grade can be attributed to the fact that knowledge of higher level regularities is required. This knowledge of higher level regularities is not covered in in-isolation phonics programs (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). In the past, students taught to use invented spelling over traditional spelling were better at spelling words they could recall how to print, but students taught traditional spelling methods were better at word recognition in flash card conditions (Clarke, 1988). However, systematic phonics instruction does not need to be a school day filled with recital of letters and syllables in order to develop word recognition skills. Twenty to 30 minutes of systematic phonics instruction is adequate to get effective results from phonics instruction (Palmaffy, 1997). Instruction

utilizing a traditional spelling-based method for teaching grapheme-phoneme correspondence, blending, and segmenting has been found to have greater positive influence on both reading and spelling than teaching phonics in the context of literature. However, the study findings showed a positive correspondence between isolated phonics and reading and writing, that certain letter-sound correspondences were left out and not properly represented, and teachers must be knowledgeable and prepared to invest necessary amounts of time and effort in order to find literature capable of providing systematic instruction for a number of words containing these hard-to-find letter-sound correspondences.

As stated earlier, the Finnish language has regular letter-sound correspondence and, therefore, isolated phonics instruction seems appropriate. However, even in this syllabically simplistic language, decoding skills alone are not sufficient to become a reader who receives meaning from the text and reads independently (Korkeamaki & Dreher, 1993). In-isolation phonics instruction needs to be coupled with other forms of reading instruction in order to achieve the highest impact and outcomes (Ehri, Nunes, Stahl, & Willows, 2001). Initial benefits in spelling and reading words developed through phonics instruction utilizing a spelling-based approach heavily dependent on isolated phonics instruction, have been linked to comprehension four years later. However, due to the indirect nature of the evidence, these advantaged spelling-group children may have benefited from both third and fourth grade teachers and instruction. Therefore, results showing a connection to comprehension four years later should be interpreted cautiously (Roberts and Meiring, 2006).

Effects

In-context Phonics Instruction

Effects of in-context phonics instruction are evident in development of a glottographic theory, invented spelling, and comprehension. Beginning readers benefit from development of a glottographic theory because they make correspondences between spatial order of written words and temporal order of spoken language. Correspondences between spatial order of written words and temporal order of spoken language enable beginning readers to more easily recall specific grapho-phonetic (grapheme (letter) to phoneme (sound) relationship) information through meaningful texts (Manning & Kamii, 2000). Beginning readers who experience reoccurring difficulties in understanding phonemic sequences in text will be unable to fully grasp the alphabetic principle, develop a glottographic theory, and discover how spellings and sounds are related (Ryder, Tunmer, & Greaney, 2008). Understanding alphabetic principle can provide motivation and understanding of the function and value of learning to decode or find meaning from text. Also, in-context phonics instruction may deepen children's understanding that alphabetic principle helps in discovering the meaning of printed language (Roberts & Meiring, 2006). For children to be able to use knowledge they possess of spoken and written language, they must understand and effectively use alphabetic principle that corresponds graphemes (letters) and phonemes (sounds) in order to link spellings to pronunciations (Ehri et al., 2001).

Using children's literature to teach beginning phonics promotes use of phonics knowledge during reading. When using children's literature to teach beginning phonics, decoding is thoroughly embedded in the context being used, and this promotes usefulness of taught knowledge. In-context phonics instruction's use of literature could be beneficial in fostering children's ability to read words in connected text and also to increase comprehension by improving understanding of the importance of word decoding skills for comprehension (Roberts & Meiring, 2006).

Not only does in-context phonics instruction teach students the effectiveness of a glottographic theory and the usefulness of decoding in comprehension, it also enables students to feel success in writing through invented spelling. Students who use invented spelling are equipped with tools needed to deduce problems that arise when writing.

In-context phonics instruction is often criticized for lacking dimension, but research in this review does not support thoughts of unidimensional methods within in-context phonics instruction (Ryder, Tunmer, & Greaney). In-context phonics instruction is saturated with free inquiry methods, highlighted by Dewey, that allow students to participate in decisions made for everyday activities. In-context phonics instruction also arms students with tools needed to surmount future problems, just as Dewey stated beneficial. Vygotsky's approach is also apparent in in-context phonics instruction. Social history of students, used in the scaffolding effort by teachers, equips students with problem-solving techniques to work through doubt they may acquire. With techniques learned through in-context phonics instruction, students can effectively reconstruct thinking to reach an outcome. Phonics instruction taught in-context of rich literature may be more time consuming than in-isolation phonics instruction, but has advantages more important than this disadvantage.

In-isolation Phonics Instruction

The effects of in-isolation phonics instruction can be understood through research found in this literature review. Effects of in-isolation phonics instruction are shown to be more negative than positive. Although instructing children in word analysis skills separate from meaningful contexts may allow them to pay more attention to the letter-sound correspondences taught, students taught in this manner do not construct a needed glottographic theory (Ryder, Tunmer, &

Greaney, 2008). Without a glottographic theory, students are very unlikely to develop meaning of text.

In order to comprehend text, students must be able to find meaning. Comprehension is one of the most important parts of every literacy program. As stated earlier in this literature review, students taught through isolated phonics instruction are often unable to construct meaning from text, and therefore in-isolation phonics instruction does not meet the goal of comprehension as described in this literature review.

Writing is also a very integral part of every literacy program. Students who learn through an instructional method based on in-isolation phonics instruction are taught traditional spelling, rather than invented-spelling. Invented-spelling instructional approaches were found to be more beneficial than traditional spelling methods for first graders who possessed the least skill in spelling (Clarke, 1988; Sacks & Mergendoller, 1997) Limitations of isolated phonics instruction's spelling techniques cause its students to write less than students who use invented spelling techniques.

People who should be most familiar with the research that supports phonics instruction, such as educational professors, teachers, and school administrators, have routinely adopted instructional methods and curricula heavily influenced by whole language in spite of the research evidence supporting phonics, like that taught through in-isolation instruction (Palmaffy, 1997). However, research deduced during this literature review does not support the method of heavy reliance on in-isolation phonics instruction.

“To support a claim, one would have to show substantial numbers of children who learned to read without extensive phonics training (this is easy to find), and also substantial numbers of children who cannot “learn to read by reading,” who require extensive phonics instruction. The existence of this second group has never been demonstrated. To do so, one must find large numbers of children who have been read to,

who have substantial exposure to comprehensible and interesting texts, and who nevertheless fail to learn to read” (Krashen, 2002).

In-isolation phonics instruction does not allow for free inquiry methods proposed by Dewey, nor does it allow students to actively participate in decision-making. In-isolation phonics instruction does not focus on worthwhile experiences and does not include personal history of students. Instead, in-isolation phonics instruction radiates rigid and structured practices that are ineffective in helping students develop tools needed to attack future problems. Problem-solving techniques highlighted by Vygotsky, also cannot be found in in-isolation phonics instruction. In-isolation phonics instruction may be easier because teachers are given instructional materials in a set (often a basal series), but is lacking in ways more important than ease of planning.

Conclusion

After reviewing research, it is evident in-context phonics instruction is more effective than in-isolation phonics instruction in development of early elementary students’ literacy skills of glottographic theory, use of spelling, and effective comprehension of text. In-context phonics instruction enables students to possess a glottographic theory, use invented spelling, gain meaning from and, therefore, comprehend text. In contrast, in-isolation phonics instruction deters students from developing a glottographic theory because of its heavy reliance on letter-sound correspondences, deters students from writing more because of its focus on traditional spelling techniques, and deters comprehension because of its dependence on isolated skills over grasping meaning from text. Often found in research studied for this literature review were either reliable articles supporting whole-language approaches or unreliable articles supporting isolated, systematic phonics instruction. Research articles supporting in-context phonics instruction hosted more valid, mostly qualitative studies, whereas research articles supporting in-isolation phonics instruction hosted mostly quantitative studies that often had statements questioning the validity

of the study and, therefore, the information within the article. Also, research articles supporting in-isolation phonics instruction often did not accurately portray in-context phonics instruction or compared in-isolation phonics instruction to no phonics instruction altogether, both of which would inevitably make in-isolation phonics instruction seem more effective. Although some positive effects were found through in-isolation phonics instruction, such as students' sight word recognition and ease of planning, in-context phonics instruction's effects were deemed more important. The benefits of in-context phonics instruction were discovered to be more prominent in the development of elementary students' literacy skills than benefits of in-isolation phonics instruction.

Implications for Teachers

Given below is a scope and sequence for educators looking to implement in-context phonics instruction into their classrooms. Appropriate resources, such as those whole language teachers use in developing lessons to guide their students, are incorporated into this scope and sequence. This scope and sequence is not a "cure-all, solve-all" guide to configuring an in-context phonics instructional format, but instead is a guide to help educators begin the process.

The first step is to consider the phonics instructional method currently used in your classroom. Does your instructional method veer toward in-isolation phonics instruction or in-isolation phonics instruction as described in this literature review? As you review your phonics instructional method, collect data of which aspects are provide positive results for your students and which are providing negative results for your students. Positive results can be described as development of a glottographic theory, using more letters for longer words, and grasping meaning from text read.

The next step to take is designing and deciding what your goals are for your students in phonics instruction. Students should be included in this process, as it is ultimately they who will benefit from a more productive phonics instructional method. When designing your goals, conduct research on how to meet those goals. This leads to step three of this scope and sequence: effective methods.

As stated earlier, this is not a “cure-all, solve-all,” but instead is a guide for educators who want to help their students learn to read and write effectively. It is because of their success, that Regie Routman and Georgia Heard should be two authors viewed to find effective methods for in-context phonics instruction.

Developing a glottographic theory, using invented spelling, and making meaning of text are the goals of in-context phonics instruction. Designing a classroom environment that promotes these is the final step in this scope and sequence. With that being said, as an educator who uses in-context phonics instruction, one must incorporate the need to change and redesign instructional method to meet the needs of students.

Chapter 3: Results and Analysis Relative to the Problem

This literature review examined studies in order to conclude whether in-context phonics instruction or in-isolation phonics instruction deemed a better type of instruction in order to effectively teach early elementary students literacy skills. This literature review highlighted skills of development of a glottographic theory, use of invented spelling, and effective comprehension of text in relationship with theoretical frameworks of Dewey and Vygotsky. Information obtained and deduced within this literature review make evident in-context phonics instruction is more effective than in-isolation phonics instruction in the development of early elementary students' literacy skills. Researchers noted in this literature review have identified acquisition of literacy skills by early elementary students is dependent on development of a glottographic theory in order to make meaning out of text and develop a purpose for writing (Korkeamaki & Dreher, 1993), use of invented spelling to develop a firm understanding of alphabetic principle and begin using letter-sound information more effectively to identify unfamiliar words (Ryder, Tunmer, & Greany, 2007), and ability to comprehend text to obtain the ultimate purpose of reading: to acquire meaning (Baumann & Ivey, 1997).

Development of a glottographic theory allows students to develop a required connection between words in text and their purpose. Students taught in a whole language classroom setting, with the use of in-context phonics instruction, see the text as an object upon which they can reflect and act (Freppon & McIntyre, 1999). Whereas, through in-isolation phonics instruction in a skills-based classroom setting, research noted in this literature review shows students become unable to rid their minds of a theory that all words consist of fixed numbers. Lack of development of a glottographic theory has caused regression of students in reading (Manning & Kammii, 2000).

Research noted in this literature review in connection to use of invented spelling by early elementary students have shown students using invented spelling surmount students who use traditional spelling methods in both reading and writing. Students write longer stories, are better readers, and are more accurate in spelling tests (Korkeamaki & Dreher, 1993). Students who are able to practice invented spelling maintain word reading and spelling skills and have story writing advantages (Roberts & Meiring, 2006).

When comparing students who have learned to read and write through in-context phonics instruction to those of in-isolation phonics instruction-based classrooms, researchers in this literature review have noted students who have learned through in-context phonics instruction to comprehend text better than students who have learned through in-isolation phonics instruction. Learning the ultimate purpose of reading is to acquire meaning, is done through practices using literature-based, in-context phonics instruction (Baumann & Ivey, 1997). In order to achieve the highest impact and outcomes, in-isolation phonics instruction needs to be joined with other forms of reading instruction (Ehri, Nunes, Stahl, & Willows, 2001). Gaining meaning from text and comprehending what is read are two of these outcomes.

Research from this literature review can be connected to theoretical frameworks of Dewey and Vygotsky. Students in Dewey's Long Term Projects are active participants who are encouraged to discover topics of interest and develop skills needed in order to face obstacles they encounter. With use of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, students can visualize their own mastery of concepts and skills in learning environments that give students tools and information needed in order to gradually release responsibility of teachers and place responsibility in hands of prepared students. Early elementary students who learn in a whole language classroom that provides in-context phonics instruction develop literacy skills, such as

glottographic theory, invented spelling, and comprehension, needed to meet standards presented by Dewey and Vygotsky and prosper as effective readers in later grades.

Chapter 4: Recommendations and Conclusions

Recommendations

Twenty-first century educators, administrators, and researchers have debated and studied phonics instruction repeatedly. Each has conducted scientific experiments to test effects of different forms of phonics instruction, concluded their findings, and made recommendations to the world of education. Through research studied and noted in this literature review, those educators who find themselves with daunting tasks of meeting government expectations, parental expectations, and personal expectations as an educator, it is recommended that in-context phonics instruction be used in classrooms of early elementary students. Literature-rich classrooms support students' needs of becoming active, independent readers. This literature review supports and recommends others to develop lessons that help early elementary students develop a glottographic theory. Invented spelling techniques are also recommended in order to help these students become better readers and writers. Using a literature-based program that involves in-context phonics instruction is recommended in order to assure early elementary students acquire the skills needed in order to make meaning of text and comprehend what they read.

Areas for Further Research

For further research on early elementary students' acquisition of literacy skills, and for thorough and comprehensive answers to research questions posed in this literature review, a research study using the following characteristics could be completed. This research study would include the following:

- Four classrooms of first grade students. Two of these classrooms implement an in-context phonics instruction approach and two implement an in-isolation phonics instruction

approach. Students in each classroom should be selected at random, but with equal numbers of students in each classroom. The following characteristics of students should be done at random:

- Reading and writing ability and level
 - Socioeconomic status
 - Gender
 - Ethnicity
- The methods of study in this research study should be visual studies of each classroom. Visual studies should be done an equal amount of times in each classroom. Selection of day of study should also be done equally in each classroom. Visual study of classrooms should be done on the same days of the week. For example, studies should be done on Tuesdays and Fridays, by rotating weeks among the four classrooms.
 - Data collected during visual studies should include students' development of reading and writing skills. For reading, skills documented should be correct grapheme-phoneme connections, comprehension of text read, and ability to deduce problems, such as sounding out words, without help from the teacher when they occur. Writing skills documented should be ability to create written words for words students hear, ability and want to write pieces of length, and ability to problem-solve without help from the teacher when they encounter words they do not know how to spell.
 - Instruments used in this research study include data collecting instruments such as paper and pen or portable laptop computer and a video camera to capture students and to be viewed at later times.

- Data in this research study should be analyzed through careful interpretation of literacy skills possessed by each student. Data should be connected to phonics instruction approach of each classroom. Data should remain unbiased toward either type of phonics instruction.

Summary and Conclusion

The goal of this literature review was to answer research questions involving phonics instruction in early elementary classrooms and deduce which type of instructional method provided its students with needed literacy skills of reading and writing. In-context phonics instruction was compared to in-isolation phonics instruction, research gathered was displayed, results were determined, and recommendations were made. This literature review was connected to theoretical frameworks of Dewey and Vygotsky, as well. Most importantly, this literature review served to provide information to educators, administrators, parents, and others who feel education of children in the United States is important. This literature review provides research-based information to help those who struggle with a similar question: How do we teach our children to read and write effectively? By examining this literature review, one can see the effects of in-context phonics instruction and in-isolation phonics instruction on the development of early elementary students' literacy skills. In-context phonics instruction is highlighted to be more effective than in-isolation phonics instruction in teaching these students literacy skills. Students taught through in-context phonics instruction have been shown through this literature review to become better readers and writers than students who have been taught through in-isolation phonics instruction. Therefore, as a recommendation based off of research done through this literature review, educators, administrators, parents, and others looking for the most effective

way to teach early elementary students in this country should turn toward a literature-rich program that incorporates in-context phonics instruction versus a skills-based program that uses in-isolation phonics instructional methods.

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