Educational Theories and their Importance in Education

A theory is used to denote to “a well-documented explanation for a phenomenon related to teaching and/or learning” and every day through the actions, ideas, beliefs, and understandings of teachers in classrooms, theories are reflected (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 4). Teachers may or may not be aware that such theories influence their practice and way they understand teaching learning, but these theories are, nevertheless, both present in and affecting all that they do. Theories guide the teacher in making intelligent instructional decisions and provide the teacher with an understanding of the impact likely to result from those instructional decisions. They are the driving force behind teachers’ actions in the classroom and, ultimately, “become the lenses through which individuals view the world” (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 3).

Teachers must know their own theories and understand their own lenses because “teachers with a firm grasp of educational and psychological theories have a clear basis for making instructional decisions” (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p.6). Teachers who understand the theories that impact their work in the classroom have the ability to not only choose instructional methods and strategies related to these theories which are the most effective for their individual students, but also to explain why they use a certain method and or strategy in the classroom and back this up with research and other empirical data. When educators understand the myriad of theories, models, and strategies at their disposal for literacy instruction, they can more effectively create superior instruction that will lead their students to new levels of success in the classroom (Tracey & Morrow, 2006) It is clear that it is essential for a teacher to understand the theories that inform his or her teaching, for when a teacher knows his or her own lens for teaching and can articulate the theories that influence his or her pedagogical stance, the final benefit from this can be seen in the growth of the students in the classroom. This growth and the success of the students should, ultimately, be the goal of teaching.

History of Educational Theories

The Beginnings of Reading and Writing

Reading and writing as a form of communication can be dated back to cave paintings circa 20,000 BC and by around 2,000 BC, the Phoenician alphabet had emerged. The emergence of this
alphabet marked the shift from an **iconographic** system of writing where subjects were represented as pictures to a **logographic** system of symbols that were used as a representation of whole words and, finally, to an alphabetic system of letters (Cobb & Kallus, 2011). The Phoenicians produced their own script of twenty-two letters, espoused and used by the Greeks, and this development has been credited as the Phoenicians’ most remarkable contribution to civilization. This ancient script was, additionally, a precursor to the Roman alphabet (Khalaf, 2012).

**Mental Discipline Theory**

As reading continued to develop, theories for the learning and teaching of reading began to emerge. One of the very first prominent influential theories in education is the Mental Discipline Theory. This theory has influenced and continues to influence teachers and students in the classroom today. This theory, developed by Plato and Aristotle and their study of **epistemology**, posits that “the mind is like a muscle – its various parts, or faculties, need to be exercised regularly…in order to become strong and function normally” (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 16). The responsibility of the teacher, as per this early educational theory, would be to help students to engage in meaningful learning and recitation often so that their minds would be strengthened and their breadth of knowledge would increase.

The Mental Discipline Theory can even be seen reflected years later through the early 1800s with the development of Webster’s Speller and the Blue Back Speller. This time period saw a change and advancement in the methods of teaching reading and these advancements included the use of hornbooks with an emphasis on spelling and instruction in phonics (Cobb & Kallus, 2011). This sort of teaching was very compatible with the Mental Discipline theory as “the main focus of the teaching when using Webster’s Speller was the thorough memorization of the syllabary” (40L, n.d.). This sort of memorization is best learned through repetition and this can be reflected through the Mental Discipline Theory and its heavy emphasis on repetitive readings.

Additionally, the **synthetic phonics** approaches which were influential in the early 1900s, advocating for the learning of the parts of the word prior to sounding out the entire word, were also reminiscent of Webster’s Blue Back Speller and the Mental Discipline Theory. These approaches
required students to read letter names, sounds, and then blend syllables together in rapid drill sequences. Even after the initial mastery of these sounds and words, the practice of drilling and repetition as key for learning continued into upper level reading instruction as the students learned grammar, rhetoric, and elocution (Cobb & Kallus, 2011).

**Associationism**

Associationism is another theory that was developed many years ago and is still seen affecting the classroom today. This theory, which developed in the 1600s, was occurring at the time when reading instruction followed the two stage model, focusing on learning the letter sounds first and then gleaning meaning from the reading second (Cobb & Kallus, 2011). This theory, also traced back to Aristotle, concludes that learning is a result of association and the connections that are made in the mind during learning. Aristotle noted three different types of associations – contiguity, which noted the association of things that occur together in time and space; similarity, the association of things with similar features; and contrast, which associates things that are in opposition to each other (Tracey & Morrow, 2006).

Contemporary educators, Fountas and Pinnell, display a theory of associationism in their pedagogy. In one of their texts, they suggest teachers should “...help readers make personal and textual connections at the same time they are learning from and about reading” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001, p. 18). In this way, Fountas and Pinnell are demonstrating the importance of empowering children to make associations between what they have already learned and what they are currently learning. They suggest that this is the best way for children to learn and grow in reading and in knowledge. Many classrooms around the United States today continue to use this approach of activating students’ background knowledge and helping them to make connections between what they know and what they are reading in order to facilitate meaning-making in reading and to increase motivation for reading.

**The Unfoldment Theory**

The Unfoldment Theory was the first theory developed to challenge the two aforementioned theories. This theory, distinct from those that came before, suggested that learning came not as a result
of skill and drill or association and practice, but as a result of natural curiosity and interest on the part of the child (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). Around this time, the idea of free-thinking and personal feeling was readily accepted in reading and reading instruction (Cobb & Kallus, 2011). This psychological shift seems to be mirrored through the Unfoldment Theory which moves toward child-centered pedagogy and also takes into account students’ personal feelings, ideas, desires, and understandings of the text. In this theory, students were no longer merely recipients, but were also co-constructors of knowledge.

This theory can be seen later reflected in the linguistic vision presented by Noam Chomsky in the mid-1900s. Chomsky’s works provided the basis for a view regarding language acquisition and theorized that “humans come to the world ‘wired’ to acquire the language of the community into which they are born,” noting that children acquire language naturally by simply living in an environment where they are exposed to the language of the community prior to being formally taught the language (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 26). Instead of focusing on the teacher and explicit instruction, it seems as if Chomsky would have agreed with Rousseau that adults should merely facilitate and not explicitly direct children and allow their students’ own curiosity to drive them to an understanding of the world around them. Both theories seem to be compatible with Rousseau’s idea that “children’s learning would evolve naturally as a result of their innate curiosity” (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 20).

**Structuralism**

Through Structuralism and the 1900s, reading was studied as a perceptual process and the focus was on this aspect of reading rather than on the comprehension of the text through reading. Instead of focusing upon the understanding of the text and the relation of the meaning of what was read to oneself, the focus was on how reading actually occurred within a person. In the Tracey & Morrow text and a quote from Hiebert and Raphael, this theory was noted as having “little to say about the complex processes of literacy that must be understood to influence the development of literate youngsters through formal education” (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 21-22). Even so, some of the findings from this time period, including outcomes such as the increased speed when reading words connected in sentences as opposed to reading disconnected words and the increased speed when reading letters in
words as opposed to disconnected letters, continued to heavily influence reading instruction even though the 1950s (Tracey & Morrow, 2006).

Later in the 1900s, with the work of Goodman and Smith, the focus turned from the perception of the print on the page to making sense of what was being read using syntactic (grammar), semantic (meaning), and grapho-phonemic (sound) cues. Goodman noted that the simultaneous use of the three aforementioned cueing systems when reading would lead to the effective identification of words and, thus, comprehension. Furthermore, Smith would even argue that of the four sources of information in reading including orthographic, syntactic, semantic, and visual, the visual source of information was the least important for making meaning form the text. He suggested that relying too heavily upon the visual information gleaned from the text could result in readers losing sight of the meaning of the text and the most important purpose of reading. He argued that visual cues had less to do with reading than was initially postulated and that vision in reading was “necessary but not sufficient to achieve understanding” (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 28).

Constructivism

Constructivism is an educational theory that emphasizes “the active construction of knowledge by individuals,” stating that learning “occurs when individuals integrate new knowledge with existing knowledge” which can only occur “when the learner is actively engaged in the learning process” (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 47). While Behaviorists see knowledge as something to be transferred from the teacher to the students, Cognitivists see knowledge as something that is constructed by and within the learner (Building knowledge: Constructivism in learning). In accordance with constructivist thought, children are not blank slates and do not fully learn anything new, but actively make sense of what they are learning as it relates to what they already know.

Every classroom is filled with diversity. No two students are the same and students enter the classroom with different cultures, needs, interests, learning styles, preferences, and often even primary discourses. Another form of diversity with which students enter the classroom is the diversity relating to their reading abilities. Taberski (2000) notes, through a constructivist perspective on reading, that “children learning to read are active agents, initiating and assuming responsibility for their
learning…[and] continually integrate new findings into their framework of knowledge about language and texts, replacing what no longer works with revised theories and fresh information” (p. 3). In this way, it is shown that not only are readers’ reading abilities diverse, but their understandings and attitudes about reading as well as the way that they develop their reading abilities are diverse as well.

**Schema Theory.** Constructivism says that people “never learn anything absolutely from scratch” (*Building knowledge: Constructivism in learning*). **Schema Theory** is a constructivist theory that explains how learners create knowledge using what they already know and what they experience about the world around them. This theory purports that people organize all that they know into **schemas**, or structures within one’s mind for the organizing and storing of knowledge (Cobb & Kallus, 2011).

With regard to reading, **Schema Theory** says that “a reader comprehends a message when he is able to bring to mind a schema that gives a good account of the objects and events described in the message” and this is later modified to include not only the understanding the objects and events, but the relationship between these objects and events (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 97). Schema theory notes that if an individual has a more developed schema for a topic, he or she will learn other information about that topic area with much greater ease and, conversely, if the reader does not have existing schemas for what he or she is attempting to learn, the learning process will be difficult and hindered. Reading is, however, one very important way that students actively build and modify their existing knowledge and schemas (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). Taberski (2000) notes that children expect what they are reading to fit into their schema. She says that “the closer the content is to their own experiences of a subject they know a lot about, the more capable they are at anticipating what will happen next – even which words might be used – and drawing implications for their own lives” (p. 3). One important job of a teacher with regard to Constructivist reading instruction is, therefore, to help students activate, modify, and build upon their existing schemata.

**Schema Theory** has many implications for the classroom that are discussed in the Cobb & Kallus (2011) text. Some of the implications noted in the text are that teachers should help students to activate prior knowledge that will facilitate their reading experience and, where this knowledge is not
present or cannot be assumed to be present, the teacher should help the students to build this essential knowledge. Teachers should also intentionally create lessons that help readers to bring together that which they already know in their interaction with the text at hand and realize that students who have difficulty reading may not have this difficulty as a result of a cognitive deficit, but as a result of a lack of schema that match the dominant discourse and culture of the majority.

When students can activate their existing schema and can make sense of what they are reading through what they already know, this can empower them to learn to love reading and become life-long learners.

**Transactional/Reader Response Theory.** The Transactional/Reader Response Theory, developed by Rosenblatt, is an extension of Schema Theory and a constructivist theory as it relates to reading. As students all have different schema, Rosenblatt “argued that every reading experience is therefore unique to each individual as well” based on his or her background knowledge and experiences (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 54-55). Even the word “text” itself is deictic and can have multiple meanings which change with the context or situation. As readers read and make sense of what they are reading, there are two separate texts – the written text that is already created and the reactive text that is being created by the reader and through the act of reading. The reactive text is created both through intertextual associations made through the connection of previously encountered linguistic and nonlinguistic texts, as well as other prior content knowledge and/or experiences (Cobb & Kallus, 2011).

The two aforementioned views on reading reflect a Constructivism, as readers are actively constructing meaning as they read, integrating what they are learning with the schema that they have already developed and, simultaneously, modifying their existing schema to expand upon what they already know. According to Constructivist Theory, learning is not necessarily something observable, as is true with Behaviorism, but is something that can occur internal to the learner where the learner is in control of his or her learning and the teacher is not the giver of knowledge, but the facilitator of learning and the students’ individual constructions of knowledge (Tracey & Morrow, 2006).
Reading and the importance of reading is affected by personal experience and, on the other hand, the ability to read and make meaning from what one is reading impacts almost every area of a student’s life. Students who have had poor and unsuccessful experiences with reading will not expect reading to be important and will, instead, expect their future experiences with reading to mirror those experiences which have affected them in the past. Conversely, students who have had positive and successful experiences with reading will expect further experiences with reading to also mirror those experiences which have affected them in the past and will find reading to be both wonderful and meaningful (Cobb & Kallus, 2011). All that happens in a student’s life seems to, at least in some way, impact and be impacted by reading.

As quoted in the video Building knowledge: Constructivism in learning, John Abbott posits that, “a good teacher is trying to teach the child from where they are now by expanding what they already have.” Students do not come into the classrooms as blank slates, but as learners who are literate in many ways and have a plethora of experiences, knowledge, and resources. In light of the Constructivist Theory, a good teacher will find and validate the resources that each student brings with them to the classroom and empower them to build on what they already know and understand to challenge them to reach new levels of proficiency and independence.

The Theories of Vygotsky

Vygotsky’s learning theories build off of the works of Piaget, though there are some meaningful differences between the theories postulated by the two aforementioned theorists. In contrast to Piaget, Vygotsky places an increased emphasis on the roles of culture, social factors, and language in learning and cognitive development (McLeod, 2007). Vygotsky notes that students learn through activities that are socially meaningful. He additionally suggests that because this is the way in which students best learn, “a valid assessment of a child could only occur when the child was actively engaged in learning in the socially culture environment” (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 168). Social interaction is, therefore, not only beneficial for but essential to learning.

Additionally, Vygotsky set forth the theory of the Zone of Proximal Development and the strategy of scaffolding learners “from their independent level of learning (comfort zone) to their
potential level of learning (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 168). In order for students to learn through their Zones of Proximal Development, they must be presented with “tasks that are just out of reach of [their] present abilities” (Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development, 2012). The teacher must support learning within this zone through social interaction and cooperative learning, flexibly responding to the child and his or her progress during learning, and focusing on giving the exact amount of support needed for each particular student and task” (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 168).

The Parallel Distributed Processing Model

The Parallel Distributed Processing Model suggests that “successful reading is dependent upon a reader’s ability in four areas: automatic letter recognition, accurate phonemic processing, strong vocabulary knowledge, and the ability to construct meaningful messages during reading” (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 168). The Parallel Distributed Processing Model is “representative of a cognitive processing perspective because it explains cognitive structures and systems inherent in reading” (p. 168). Additionally, this model is a Connectionist theory of reading which “highlights the accepted learning practice of connecting new ideas, knowledge, or learning to existing memory in the cognitive stage” (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 169). Finally, this theory also emphasizes the importance of the individual in the knowledge construction process, positing that the individual must be active to make connections to previously learned information and/or experiences. It also holds that learning takes place within the individual and their cognitive processes in ways that are not often observable through external means, ascribing to a Constructivist theory (Tracey & Morrow, 2006).

The Parallel Distributed Processing Model highlights four processes that are essential to the reading process. These processes include the orthographic processor, the meaning processor, the phonological processor and the context processor. All information is said to be stored through the connections made in the cognitive processing system and the connections that are present become stronger and, thus, quicker, each additional time the same connection is made. Not only are these processors connectionist in nature, but they are also compensatory in that if one of the processors is not working well, the other processors can make accommodations for this. If too much emphasis is placed upon the lower level processing and the first three processors, however, this can compromise
the meaning that is made in the context processor and impede overall comprehension (Tracey & Morrow, 2006).

**The orthographic processor.** The first processor through which the reading process begins is the orthographic processor, where the reader registers and begins to make sense of the printed text on the page. “This processor holds knowledge about lines, curves, angles, and space, all associated with the information needed for letter (and number) identification” (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 165). As this theory is one which holds true to **Connectionism**, the connections between the units that make up each letter and, later, between complete letters become stronger each time the connection is made. For example, letters that often occur together have a much stronger connection than letters that are not frequently paired together. This is a process known as the “interletter associational unit system” and “assists readers in gradually building rapid word identification skills” (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 166).

**The meaning processor.** The meaning processor is the next step in the reading sequence and, at this point, the letters which comprised known words in the previous processor now become attached to meaning. In order for this to occur, readers use their individual schema to make connections to previously known knowledge. These schemas comprise the entirety of a person’s knowledge regarding any particular topic. As with the previous processor, the meaning processor also works in accordance with connectionist principles in that the more times specific associations are made between words and the individual’s schema, the stronger and more quickly these associations can be made in subsequent readings (Tracey & Morrow, 2006).

**The phonological processor.** After the words have been identified and meaning subscribed to the words, the words are then connected to sounds. This happens in the phonological processor. Again, sounds occurring more often together have stronger and faster connections than those sounds that do not often occur together. Because of that, the phonological processor will attempt to link phonemes that are likely to follow each other together and, conversely, suppress phonemes that are unlikely to be together as per connectionist principles. For words that the reader has heard but has never seen printed before, the alphabetic backup system becomes activated. It is this system that
allows readers to sound out words and use the individually segmented sounds of the word to then lead to its complete identification. Another benefit of this processor is the **running memory capability** which is the voice that the reader hears inside his or her head. This allows words to be held in the **working memory**, which keeps them accessible for further processing as the reader advances through the text (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 168).

**The context processor.** The last and final processor is the **context processor**. It is in this step of the reading process “where the reader constructs and monitors the meanings of phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and full texts during the reading process” (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, pg. 168). The outcome of this particular processor is a message that makes sense to the reader. This processor works closely with the **meaning processor** as what is processed in the **meaning processor** is translated to the **context processor** for further meaning-making. Subsequently, as the **context processor** makes meaning related to the message of the text, this information is given back to the **meaning processor**. With the information regarding the larger meaning, the **meaning processor** can search for words that are likely to connect to the text, facilitating the reading process. Even though the four aforementioned processors are described as steps, this entire sequence of meaning-making takes place almost simultaneously, and this simultaneous processing can be seen most clearly through the immediate connections and cooperation between the **context** and **meaning processors**.

All of these theories, including others not mentioned in this section that have influenced reading instruction in the past and present can be seen in chronological order with other theories as well that were not mentioned in this section in Artifact A. A comparison of some of the theories can additionally be seen in Artifact B.

**Classroom Application of Three Theories**

While it is clear that teachers do not merely use one theory or model when teaching, but implement ideas and connections from a variety of different models in order to enhance their own personal **pedagogies** to help their students to become successful in school and, more specifically, in reading, some can be seen implemented in present day classrooms. The Theories of Vygotsky, the Parallel Distributed Processing Model, and Constructivism Theories can help teachers to better
understand how students learn and, conversely, can help teachers better understand how to teach. Although these are not the only three theories that inform classroom instruction, both have great implications for the classroom and the creation of effective classroom practices and instruction, as outlined below.

**Classroom Application of the Theories of Vygotsky**

Readers’ and Writers’ Workshops are clear examples of Vygotsky’s theories at work in the classroom today. It has been noted that “every student has a different zone of proximal development” (Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development, 2012). Due to the fact that all of our students are different, teachers must, therefore, know their students as individuals and respond to their individual needs as such. In Readers’ and Writers’ Workshops, Fountas & Pinnell (2001) note, with regard to conferencing with individual readers and writers, that “conferences are not scripted – and can’t be, because the shape of the conversations arises from the sharing that you and your students do with each other. Each child and each book is different” (p. 138). This not only emphasizes the social construction of knowledge between the student and the teacher, but rests on the fact that in order for students to learn and progress, the teacher must realize and meet each student’s individual needs and challenge them appropriately.

Another way in which Vygotsky’s theories can be seen implemented in the classroom is through literature study groups, which typify the social construction of knowledge between students as suggested by his theories. Fountas & Pinnell (2001) note that one reason for including literature study groups where students of differing reading abilities can come together to discuss a text is that “meaning is constructed in a social context” (p. 259). The authors then note that through literature study groups, “students enjoy the opportunity both to create a meaningful response and to share it publicly, and in doing so…refine and elevate this meaning” (p. 259). In literature study groups, students learn with and from each other, challenging each other and growing together.

**Classroom Application of the Parallel Distributed Processing Model**

One way in which this theory can be used to impact reading instruction in the classroom is through implementing instruction based upon the ideas put forward by the model as to how readers
naturally process and connect information in their minds while reading. For example, following the Parallel Distributed Processing Model for reading, Tracey & Morrow (2006) note that “reading is dependent upon automatic letter recognition” (p. 176). It has been shown that “children who can recognize letters of the alphabet have an easier time learning to make connections between the letters and the sounds that they stand for” (Reading-tutors.com, n.d.).

If a teacher knows this, he or she will then make efforts in his or her classroom to enhance his or her students’ automatic letter recognition ability. Four ways in which this can be done are to introduce the most common sounds associated with each letter as a beginning introduction; teach letters that either sound or look very similar to each other separately, so as not to bring forth confusion; begin with teaching the most frequent letters and then move on to teaching the less frequent letters after this; and, finally, teach the lowercase letters prior to introducing the uppercase letters (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). These four guidelines are suggested to be the most effective for bringing forth automaticity which is, according to the Parallel Distributed Processing Model, very important for students to become more independent and proficient readers.

Another way in which the theory of the Parallel Distributed Processing Model can be seen implemented in the classroom is through the introduction of word families as word families are, essentially, frequent letter combinations (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). Thorough background knowledge with regard to word families can lead to fluency in reading and empower students to make “a valuable discovery about our alphabetic writing system” (Reading Rockets, 2012). This discovery can then be generalized throughout one’s reading experience and lead to the understanding of new and/or unfamiliar words and text.

There are thirty-seven most common word families or chunks of words and these chunks of words are then present in approximately five hundred words (Literacy Connections, 2012). Empowering students with the knowledge of merely thirty-seven common chunks of words thus has the potential to help those students to be able to read almost thirteen times as many words. Teaching these combinations that occur frequently will bring about fluency, according to the Connectionist theory, by leading to a more automatic connection and the subsequent recognition of these
combinations when reading. Teaching associations and connections through word families is effective because the strategy is “moving beyond letter by letter decoding” and, therefore, “by learning to read common letter groups at a glance, [the students are] taking a big step toward fluency (TeacherTube.com, 2010).

Both the Theories of Vygotsky and the Parallel Distributed Processing Models, along with other theories and theorists, can be seen in the implementation of a lesson using the book *Are You Ready to Play Outside?*, written by Mo Willems, shown in Artifact C.

**Constructivism Application for Constructivism**

The book *Seeds! Seeds! Seeds!* written and illustrated by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace, is about a bear named Buddy who receives a package from his grandfather that contains seeds. Throughout the book, Buddy finds and collects new seeds, makes observations and comparisons between the seeds, and, finally, plants the seeds to see what will grow.

First, prior reading the book, following a Constructivist theory, the teacher would activate his or her students’ schema. In order to introduce this book to my students, a teacher might first ask them to raise their hands and tell the class what they already know about seeds. If the discussion is going well on its own, the teacher could allow them to lead and continue the discussion. This would be one Constructivist strategy – teaching through the role of a facilitator rather than lecturer or imparter of knowledge (*Building knowledge: Constructivism in learning*). If the discussion is not going as well, the teacher could help lead his or her students through the use of questioning, to recall what they know about seeds, asking them questions such as where they have seen seeds before, how seeds grow, and even prompting them to tell stories that revolve around experiences they may have had planting seeds.

In order to build schema upon the background knowledge that the students already possess, the teacher could then have students sort different seeds, noting different colors, sizes, shapes, textures, and other similarities and differences, through collaborative work instead of having the students work in competition with one another (another Constructivist strategy). The teacher could then have them continue their work in pairs to collaboratively hypothesize into which plant, fruit, or vegetable the seeds that they have already sorted grow when given a list of the some plants, fruits, and vegetables.
This is a Constructivist strategy as well, offering students stimulating experiences to promote curiosity and a subsequent desire to identify, investigate, and solve problems that they encounter on their own (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). For students who may not be familiar with seeds, this really is a great book as it defines each vocabulary word used in the book in a way that children could easily understand, but I could always preview important vocabulary such as “seed coat,” “root,” “stem,” and other words essential to understanding this story, especially considering students who may not have any schema regarding seeds because of cultural differences.

A teacher, operating through a Constructivist Theory might then read the story to his or her students and, after the story is over offer them time to discuss what they have learned and how they learned it, additionally noting whether or not their predictions about the seeds and where they came from were correct and offer suggestions as to why this might have been the case. The teacher could then offer them time to suggest ways in which they might learn more about seeds and, later, would connect this to a time when students can grow their own seeds. It might even be interesting to turn this into a lesson where students could use their skills of problem-solving to see where plants grow the best, choosing different locations for their seeds and noting the outcomes of each plant again, in a problem-solving way and through social collaboration (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). In this way, the students can decide upon their own problems instead of merely choosing from the answers that the teacher presents to them and can be assessed through an authentic task where they can construct their own responses to the proposed question and solve challenges that they may find in the real world (Mueller, 2011).

**New Multiliteracies**

“Literacy is embedded in and develops out of the social practices of a culture” (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 338). Literacy is not stagnant, but is deictic, and constantly changing with the changes in the culture. Being “literate” might have meant something very different in the past as it does today. Today’s teacher may no longer be the single source of knowledge or the most literate person in the classroom as new literacies emerge and existing literacies change and grow. These changes do not replace the foundational literacies, but expand and build upon these literacies. As these changes occur,
for teachers to be effective, they must “keep up with these changes and…prepare students for a vastly different conception of what it means to become literate” (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 340).

Even though teachers may not have all of the answers with regard to literacy instruction, the appearance of new literacies will increase teachers’ roles in the classrooms as they will be “challenged to thoughtfully guide students’ learning within information environments that are richer and more complex learning opportunities for both themselves and their students” (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 347). Teachers must now be aware of the new technologies that are available for both the retrieval of information and communication, capable of identifying those new literacies which are most vital for their students to learn and master, and become adept in knowing how to support students as they learn and interact with the new literacies in the classroom environment (Cobb & Kallus, 2011).

Since literacy is always changing, teachers also must not only understand the current literacy practices, but realize the “value of multiple lenses for viewing literacy learning” (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 205). There is not just one strategy for teaching literacy that will always work and stand the test of time for all students without needing to be altered, as change occurs continuously with new literacies. The teacher must therefore understand the value of multiple perspectives and theories with regard to improving literacy education (Tracey & Morrow, 2006).

Therefore, the teacher’s role changes and becomes more prominent as teachers move from being the single source of literacy information to becoming “orchestrators of literacy learning environments” (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 247). As this change happens, the teacher must take on the role of learner as well as teacher and change his or her teaching strategies to meet the needs of the students, empowering them to take advantage of the new literacies available by “constructing learning contexts in which students can freely exchange ideas and participate in social learning opportunities” (Larson, 2009, p. 640). Cobb & Kallus (2011) note that “students with teachers who make thoughtful decisions about what needs to be learned and how it should be learned in new literacies will be privileged” (p. 347). It will be these proficient teachers who will rise to the challenge of the new literacies at hand to provide their students with the literacy futures they both need and deserve.
Factors Impacting Readers

Researchers have noted that there is not merely one answer or factor that can be recognized as “the sole cause for a reading problem” (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 82). Some of the factors that researchers have identified as contributing to reading difficulties are cognitive/intellectual, linguistic, and affective factors (Cobb & Kallus, 2011). The latter three factors are immensely important and greatly impact readers in many ways.

Cognitive/Intellectual Factors

First, there are many cognitive and intellectual factors which influence the reader. Some of the cognitive knowledge necessary for success in reading can be acquired through real-life experiences and an environment that stimulates the child in a positive and intellectual way (Cobb & Kallus, 2011). A quote by Hymes in the Cobb & Kallus (2011) text says, “When a child has the chance to hear one good story after another…when he creates with blocks, when he communicates with pains, when he uses his body freely as a means of expressions…when a child stares…at the life in his aquarium, he’s being taught to read” (p. 83). Readiness for reading begins at an early age and this knowledge is necessary for readers to later make sense of text. Children can even learn comprehension strategies early on if they are taught appropriate concepts about the world from the time when they are young.

Some of the more specific cognitive and intellectual factors that impact the reader and his or her reading process and achievement are perception, imagery, retention, recall, problem solving, and thinking. These factors are not a complete list, as experts still do not have an expansive list of all of the specific components that impact reading instruction, but this list is a beginning. Additionally, attention and concentration and thinking (including critical thinking processes) are associated with and influence reading ability and achievement (Cobb & Kallus, 2011). Clearly, as shown by the myriad of cognitive factors mentioned above, a student must know more than letters and sounds to read. Reading is an extremely complex process, calling upon many different cognitive processes which must work together to help the reader to make meaning from what he or she is reading.
Linguistic Factors

Second, research also calls attention to the linguistic factors which impact the reader. Learning and actively using the spoken language is the groundwork for later learning and successfully using reading and writing. As children learn to read, in accordance with Constructivist thought, they integrate what they have previously learned from their oral language development with their written language development to make sense of what they are learning (Cobb & Kallus, 2011). In this way, oral language is foundational for written language. As with the cognitive factors, there are also linguistic factors that affect readers’ success in the classroom.

First, children enter the classroom with a primary discourse that may or may not be the dominant discourse (the discourse that is directly related to obtaining social goods in a certain society) of the school. Students whose primary discourse matches the dominant discourse are privileged and at an advantage as they have the least conflicts between the languages that they use to communicate inside and outside of school (Gee, 1987). Purcell-Gates (2007) even notes that the privilege given in United States schools to standard English above other students’ diverse primary discourses can lead to students who enter school with a primary discourse different from the dominant discourse having unpleasant experiences in school. This can happen as teachers may consciously or unconsciously judge students based upon their lack of proficiency with standard English. This disparity between the two discourses has even been termed a “cultural collision,” referring to the time when students “encounter rigid standards and expectations and do not understand the purposes behind learning the new and different version of English” (Cobb & Kallus, 2011). The way a student’s primary language or discourse is or is not valued in the classroom has strong implications for reading success. For example, the disconnect between cultures and discourses leading to a less than positive attitude toward the student on the part of the teacher can then contribute to the students’ disinterest in reading in general.

Next, four other linguistic factors also impact the reader to varying degrees, including: phonological knowledge and decoding, metalinguistic awareness, syntactic knowledge, and lexical and semantic knowledge. Phonological knowledge (encompassing both phonological awareness and phonemic awareness) has been defined as “one of the most highly predictive components for success
in beginning reading” (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 87). **Phonological awareness**, referring to the ability to hear and distinguish individual speech sounds in language (phonemes) is very important for initial success in reading. Additionally, **phonemic awareness**, or the ability to manipulate and segment the phonemes that make up larger words, is also an important skill for students to learn and a strong predictor of reading success throughout life.

Another linguistic factor impacting reading is **metalinguistic awareness**, which posits children must first be able to understand the abstract concepts about language prior to effectively engaging in reading (Cobb & Kallus, 2011). Syntax is the grammatical knowledge or rules of a language which aids the reader in “knowing the type and function of an unknown word when it is encountered in print” (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 87). The development of written language likely develops in a way similar to that of spoken language, with the reader forming and testing hypotheses of language to develop a system with rules that helps them to make sense of what they encounter. Finally, there has been a direct connection between the spoken vocabulary of a student and reading success. The more expansive the child’s oral vocabulary is, the better the child often becomes at reading (Cobb & Kallus, 2011).

**Affective Factors**

Finally, there are also affective factors which impact the reader, including interest and rewards, value and beliefs, and the attitude. Of the three sub-headings of factors impacting reading, the role of the affective domain in reading has seen the least amount of research and investigation (Cobb & Kallus, 2011).

Children often begin school with an intrinsic interest in reading which often diminishes as they continue through the elementary grades. One contributor to this disinterest in reading may be the result of external rewards given for reading. It has even been noted that “subjects who receive rewards subsequently tend to choose easier tasks” (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 90). This would then limit the potential for growth that students have as they are learning to read and formulating their early opinions about reading.
Readers also have attitudes that they have built about reading. Beliefs, feelings, and behaviors all impact student attitudes toward reading and their desires to read when they are not required to do so. Five important factors have been suggested as having the strong potential to improve students’ attitudes toward reading. These factors include the time that a student spends engaged in the act of reading, the accessibility of books that are written in a student’s first language, the interactions that students have with their peers regarding reading for non-instructional purposes, the methods used by the teacher that draw the reader into the lesson and help to get him or her excited about reading, and the literacy environments that the students experience at home (Cobb & Kallus, 2011). All of these factors work together and help students to form views on and create attitudes toward reading that will not only likely remain with them for life, but impact other areas of their life as well as reading impacts so many other areas of life and learning.

**Current Research and Connection to Theories**

**Literacy and the Family**

Janes & Kermani, teachers at California State University and the University of North Carolina, respectively, recount the results of a three-year action research project aimed at finding ways in which caregivers from immigrant populations from Mexico and Central America participate in literacy techniques of the dominant school culture. At the program’s inception, caregivers were taught how to read books with their preschool children and ask identification, description, and closed- and open-ended questions. Caregivers were video- and audiotaped, participated in surveys and interviews, and were observed by researchers at home when reading to their children. Eventually, this study moved to a comparison between imposing a specific form of literacy instruction upon the families and appreciating the literacy already present in their homes. This research was analyzed in an effort to discuss the implications of imposing reading instruction and curriculum upon immigrant families in contrast to accepting and appreciating alternate and more nontraditional forms of literacy that the immigrant families already possess.

Initially, the findings after one year of the study indicated that many of the participants dropped out of the study, some feeling that their own literacies were rejected. Reading was seen as punishment
for many caregivers, resulting in a lack of enjoyment for both the caregivers and students. At this point, the researchers decided to actively pursue the literacy practices present in their students’ home cultures, and allowed the caregivers to collaboratively write and illustrate their own books. When using these books, the caregivers improved their reading performance, had pride in the text, and shared positive-affect values when reading. When the text was not their own, the immigrant caregivers often viewed reading negatively, but when the caregivers’ ways of passing on literacy were valued and included, literacy became a joyful and collaborative experience.

This particular article and research can be connected to many different theories including the Family Literacy Theory and Theory of Literacy Development, as both theories place emphasis upon the readers’ home experiences with literacy and how this affects the students’ progress within the classroom.

Social Aspects of Literacy

Larson, a researcher and professor at Kansas State University, engaged in an action research study conducted to determine how effectively students would interact with the text and with each other if their literature circles were moved to online, asynchronous message boards. This research occurred in a fifth grade classroom in the Midwestern United States and data was gathered both qualitatively (regarding the types of prompts and quality of posts generated by the students) and quantitatively (regarding the number of prompts, responses, and average number of words per post for each student). The research centered around ten participants (five reading the text, *Bud, Not Buddy*, and five reading the text, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*) representing diverse backgrounds and differing levels of ability with regard to reading and technological prowess. On the online message boards, the students were permitted to use emoticons, abbreviations, acronyms, capitalization and punctuation marks for increased emphasis, and number and letter substitutions.

Larson shared in her findings that the student generated prompts fell into five categories: experiential, aesthetic, cognitive, interpretive, and clarification prompts. The first two prompts noted generated an average of eight replies per thread, with the cognitive prompts generating an average of seven replies. Interpretive prompts were responded by an average of six students and clarification
prompts generated an average of three replies per thread. The findings of the research indicate that using online message board discussions allowed for students to think before responding and form meaningful responses. The engagement in asynchronous online literature discussion boards encouraged the readers to respond deeply to the text, share their ideas with their peers, consider multiple perspectives, and engage in authentic, socially constructed learning.

This research can be connected to the Theories of Vygotsky as the students engaged in learning through social interactions with other peers and the teacher. The teacher provided a scaffold for the students when necessary, but then allowed the students to drive their own learning through their conversations and interactions with each other. Rosenblatt’s Transactional/Reader Response Model can also be seen through this research as the different types of prompts showed both efferent and aesthetic responses to the text in an authentic way through the use of the asynchronous message board.

Conclusion

Some students enter the classroom ready and excited to read while others do not have the same attitude or ability with regard to reading. It has been noted that by the time a student is eleven years old, they will have formed attitudes toward reading that will remain with them for life and, in the United States of America, approximately twenty-three percent of adult Americans are illiterate when the definition of literacy is the ability to read printed words (Cobb & Kallus, 2011). These incredibly important and influential ideas about reading are formed through both home and school experiences and influenced by a variety other factors pertinent to reading.

Even though many theories began to be influential in the field of reading hundreds and even thousands of years ago, many can still be seen reflected in classrooms today and all have impacted current literacy instruction in some way. For example, when teachers advocate for repeated reading of a specific text in the classroom, this decision is informed in part by the Mental Discipline Theory. Teachers who discuss prior knowledge and personal connections with their students prior to reading a text in the classroom are making a decision compatible with the theory of Associationism. When a teacher steps back and allows the students to be in control of their own learning and allows their natural curiosity to drive a lesson, that teacher is acting, in a way that can be understood by the
Unfoldment Theory. Finally, when a teacher makes accommodations that enhance children’s visual perception of a text, they are acting in accordance with the theory of Structuralism.

Knowing the foundational theories of learning is immensely important in teaching. “Theory is at the heart of what drive our behaviors and practices” (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 161). Our instructional practices are formed through what we believe about children, learning, and reading, and a thorough understanding of the above will, therefore, help teachers to be the best teachers that they can be for the students in their classrooms. Another very important reason for teachers to know and be able to defend the theological keystones of the methods that they use in their classroom is outlined by Cobb & Kallus (2011) where they note that with the increased focus on reading improvement and teacher accountability in public schools today, “it is essential that teachers be informed about the theories that provide the foundational underpinnings for their instructional decisions and be articulate about defending their beliefs” (p. 161).

Cobb and Kallus (2011) note that, “in order to know where you are going, you need to know where you have been” (p. 1). Theories are ever-present in classrooms today as they have been throughout the centuries of schooling, from the first charity schools in the early 1800s, which allowed for large numbers of children to attend school regardless of socioeconomic status, to public schools of the twenty-first century today (Cobb & Kallus, 2011). These theories, though, may not be initially obvious to the teacher or to the students. This does not, however, mean that these theories are not present. The theories that teachers ascribe to, whether consciously or otherwise, affect all that happens in the classroom including the classroom teacher’s pedagogy, the way students are treated, the independence given to the students, the authority of the teacher, and even the ways in which progress in reading is presumed to occur within the individual students.

The most effective teachers, however, are intentionally aware of the theories that influence their teaching methods and strategies. These teachers understand not only what instructional practices they are using in the classroom but can, additionally, articulate why they are making these decisions with a clear understanding of the implications of such theoretical and instructional decisions (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). From these theories, present-day teachers can learn that knowing oneself and one’s
own lenses, knowing one’s pedagogy, and knowing one’s students as individuals are three prerequisites necessary for being a qualified and influential teacher in the classroom today.

Personal Addendum

Personal Pedagogy

After participating in this course, I have added to my personal repertoire of theories that I can use to inform the instruction that I present in my classroom and also connect to my current practice. As far as my own personal pedagogy is concerned, I am a Constructivist. I cannot think of a lesson that I have ever presented in a classroom where a Constructivist theory did not underlie most if not all of the lesson. I actively use the Theories of Vygotsky, scaffolding, and the Zone of Proximal Development in my lessons. Connected to Vygotsky and the idea of Constructivism, I also very much subscribe to Schema Theory and Rosenblatt’s Transactional/Reader Response model as I believe that the learning that students do in the classroom is a combination of what they already know, the resources that they already have, and the new information which is being presented to them by the teacher and learned through social interaction in the classroom. Additionally, many other theories in addition to those stated above inform my instruction in the classroom and these can be seen in more detail through Artifact C and the lesson plan that I created which was informed by the Psycholinguistic Theory, Theory of Literacy Development, Verbal Efficiency Theory, Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive Development, and the Parallel Distributed Processing Model. As a result of this course, I now know of those theories for use in the classroom and also can match these theories with what I already am doing in the classroom to validate and enhance the lessons that I implement each and every day.

What I Hope to Accomplish as a Teacher

A foundational belief that is central to my philosophy of education and indicative of all I wish to accomplish as a teacher is that I believe that students come into the classroom with resources and that it is my job as the teacher to find, value, and help my students to expand upon those resources. I do not believe that students come into the classroom as blank slates on which we, as teachers, must write. Rather, as the Tracey & Morrow (2006) text says in one of the anecdotes, I agree with William Butler Yeats in that “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire” (p. 63). As I continue on
in this Literacy program and in my teaching career, I desire to take what I have learned to be the best teacher that I can be for my students – knowledgeable and confident with regard to my own personal pedagogy and ready to challenge my students to achieve more than they would have known was possible. I want my students to know they are important and valued and grow in both reading knowledge as they learn a variety of strategies that they can use to make meaning while they are reading and know which strategies are appropriate for which situations. I also want my students to learn to enjoy reading. As a teacher, my primary goal is to empower my students, challenging them to take responsibility for their own learning and to become independent, self-determined, life-long readers and learners.
Works Cited


Artifact A

Timeline of Influencing Foundational Reading Movements

1. (Mid-19th century–1914) Synthetic Phonics
2. (1900–1935) Analytic Phonics
3. (Starting in the 1920s–1930s) Child-Centered Pedagogy
4. (1914–2nd World War) Scientific Movement/Testing
5. (1930–1970) Words to Reading
6-8. (1950s–1960s) Linguistic Movement, Psycholinguistics, Sociolinguistics
9. (1960s) Mastery Learning Movement
11. (1980s) Reader Response Theory
12. (1950s) Whole Language
13. (Present and Future) Ecologically Balanced Reading Instruction

These movements are explained in greater detail on the following pages and the numbered explanations match with the numbers given to the movements on the timeline above.

*Unless otherwise listed with the title and author of another book or article, all of the page numbers reference the Cobb and Kallus reading assigned for the week.

1. Synthetic Phonics

Mid 19th Century – 1914

Definition: The synthetic phonics approach was prevalent from the mid-19th century through the First World War. This approach has the students learning the parts before the whole, beginning with letter names, moving to letter sounds, and then, finally, to activities where the syllables are blended together in drill and practice sequences. Through this movement, after the students learned the alphabet and how this code worked, they were immediately thrust into the works of literature written for adults. The learner’s role in synthetic phonics was to receive the information from the teacher and practice the code until they mastered what they were taught (p. 14).

Why it was incorporated into the Education World: This movement was a remnant of the nineteenth century alphabetic approaches to reading. Following the approaches that had been used for many years after the transition was made from logographic to alphabetic systems, this system continued by studying the part to then understand the whole. This was a very logical sequence—first learning the smaller parts and then using those smaller parts to understand the larger whole.

Today: There is a bit of part-to-whole learning that still occurs in the schools today, especially in the earlier grades. Many classrooms that I have observed move from learning the individual letter names, sounds, and then move to blending together syllables. Some classrooms even use the drill and skill practice sequence. One major difference regarding how this is in place today would be that once the students learn the letter names, sounds, and can blend syllables together, they are not thrust into the world of adult literature, but have a plethora of children’s books and some schools even rely upon decodable readers at this stage of learning to scaffold the students’ growth from the learning of the letters and sounds to children’s, young adult, and, finally, adult literature. I think that one reason this movement is still present in the schools today is that this is especially useful when working with students with disabilities. Often students with disabilities need more explicit direct instruction regarding the letters and sounds in order to make sense of the words on the page and this movement’s success with even this population of students could prove that in some areas of learning and with certain populations of students, this can be a beneficial approach.

2. Analytic Phonics

1900–1935
Definition: The analytic phonics approach was prevalent from 1900-1935. This approach was the opposite of the synthetic phonics approach and moved the students from the whole word to the individual letter parts instead of from the part to the whole. After each word was introduced, the students were then immediately asked to break this word down into its component letters. This was similar to the synthetic phonics approach in that it ensured that the students eventually learn the letter-sound correspondences, but moved toward this understanding only after first learning the whole word (p. 15).

Why it was incorporated into the Education World: This movement was incorporated into the world of education to combat the “mindless drill and practice of the alphabetic approach to beginning reading instruction” (p.15). Instead of drilling letters and sounds, allowing the students to learn the whole words prior to the understanding of the letters and sounds provided more engagement and authenticity in learning rather than just drilling letters and sounds in repetitive practice sessions.

Today: There are some classrooms where I have witnessed some analytic phonics and whole-to-part phonics, but, for the most part, these classrooms use analytic phonics or whole-to-part teaching in conjunction with other types of teaching which may even include part to whole teaching in some areas of learning, with some specific lessons, and/or to aid in the development of decoding skills for some of the students who may be struggling in this area of reading. I think that this approach is not present in the schools only as whole-to-part teaching because teachers today realize that while there is a benefit to teaching some students in some situations whole-to-part reading, there are other situations and students where this would not be the most appropriate learning strategy. Teachers today have a variety of strategies at their disposal and I believe that because of this, it would be rare to see this approach being used without being used in conjunction with another approach.

3. Child-Centered Pedagogy

Definition: The child-centered views of pedagogy emerged in the 1920s and 1930s along with the emergence of developmental psychology, but have continued on well beyond these beginning years. Child-centered pedagogy with regard to the realm of reading focused on matching the text with the student by taking into account each student’s interests and developmental level. The movement grew in conjunction with readability formulas which were created to gauge the grade-level placement for texts which were present from 1920 to the late 1950s. These formulas then aided in the finding and labeling of reading materials appropriate for students of all levels. The use of these formulas to select appropriate texts were actively in use from around the 1920s through the 1980s and even began to reemerge in the 1990s (p. 17).

Why it was incorporated into the Education World: This movement was incorporated into the world of education as a result of research that was done regarding text difficulty or readability in the first half of the twentieth century. This research led to this movement and made it clear that it was necessary to match the students with the texts in order to help them to have the greatest benefit in the classroom (p. 17).

Today: There are many classrooms where I have seen child-centered pedagogy actively used to design lessons and instructional methods in the classroom. I, personally, believe that the most successful teachers create lessons that meet their students where they are, taking into account the diversity (both cultural and academic), learning styles, interests, needs, and preferences of each individual student in the classroom. I believe that this movement is very present in the schools today because in order to engage learners and help each learner to grow in the way that he or she needs on an individual basis, teachers should know their students individually as learners and I think that this idea can be very clearly traced back to child-centered pedagogical ideas.

4. Scientific Movement/Testing

1st-2nd World Wars

Definition: The scientific movement and testing came into play during the time period of the First and Second World Wars. During this movement, reading performance became subject to examination and has really continued to be subject to examination since. The first assessments included silent reading and the assessment of silent reading comprehension and rate (p. 16).

Why it was incorporated into the Education World: This movement came into play first as the scientific era demanded some type of quantification and assessment of the reading progress in the schools. The realization of this movement was also facilitated by the new ideas of silent reading for, with silent reading, comprehension and the rate of reading could be tested as a whole class or group instead of individually. This allowed the testing to become both proficient and objective and so, with the development of silent reading and assessments that could be used in conjunction with silent reading, the scientific movement and testing could be effectively incorporated into the education world (p. 16).

Today: Testing is very much a part of the schools in the United States today. Although testing surely looks different than it would have looked during the time of the First and Second World Wars, there is still a push in America today to assess students and teachers based upon their reading comprehension, fluency, and reading rate. One major difference between the testing that seems to have been in effect during the former time period and the current time period is that, today, testing has become high-stakes and a great deal rides upon the achievement of the students in the classrooms. Now, this sort of testing has encouraged some teachers to “teach to the test,” which we see in later movements, though there is no indication from this reading that such weighty consequences rested upon the outcomes of these initially created
assessments. I think that this movement is still a part of our schools today because we, as a society, place great importance upon being able to quantify what we are doing in the world and, therefore, want to assess everything – including the progress of our children in reading in the schools today.

5. Words to Reading

1930-1970

Definition: This movement was a reform that developed from 1930-1970 and was also known as the look-say or whole word method with regard to teaching students to read. In this movement, different from analytic phonics, the students are not required to analyze words into the component letters and sounds until approximately 100 initial sight words are learned. Often, this approach leads to teaching in ways that resemble analytic phonics teaching, but does to only after the large numbers of sight words have been mutually learned. This combination between words to reading and the analytic phonics approach became “conventional wisdom” with regard to teaching reading during this time period (p. 15-16).

Why it was incorporated into the Education World: This movement was incorporated into the world of education because it was thought that students would be able to more quickly and more easily learn to read if they first learned sight words and phonics generalizations and then applied those generalizations to the letter-sound correspondences present in the words that they already knew and carried this over to words that were new to them.

Today: I have not had much experience with this movement in the classrooms today. There are times when teachers will teach whole-to-part, but I have never seen a teacher teach many sight words and, only after the mastery of those sight words, introduce the letter-sound correspondences within the words. I think that this is no longer in place because teachers can see that while there might be benefits in some areas of teaching for the use of this method, that they realize that the sole use of this method would be doing a disservice to their students when there are many strategies present in our world today for teaching reading. While this may work for some students, it will not work for all students and that this is one major reason why this movement is not present in our schools today.

6. Linguistic Movement

1950s-1960s

Definition: The linguistic movement occurred in the 1950s and 1960s. This movement noted that there are some things that need not be taught but should, rather, be learned by acquisition and through the natural oral language of the society. Instead of teaching rules for language and possibly confusing the students, proponents of this movement argued for teachers to step back and allow oral language to help the students learn the rules of the language. Noam Chomsky came out with a nativist view of language during this movement and time period which held the view that children come into the world “wired” to learn language. This view stemmed from the fact that language is very complex, but acquired so easily by children when they are in an environment where they are exposed to language on a daily basis in authentic ways (p. 26).

Why it was incorporated into the Education World: This movement was incorporated into the world of education after the book published by Charles Fries outlining the teaching of reading through a linguistic perspective and other books and articles that emerged during this time period all pointing to the fact that if teaching reading were viewed through the perspective of the modern linguistic science, this would lead to different methods and models for teaching reading. The method and models grew out of this research and turned into the linguistic movement (p. 26).

Today: Many classrooms today seem to have fallen away from teaching the complex rules of language to allowing oral language to empower students to learn these rules on their own and so I would say that this movement is still influencing reading instruction today. I think that as teachers see that students acquire language and learn the rules of language not from complex rules, but from authentic use and oral language, that this consequently influences their approaches to reading instruction in the classroom and is a reason why this movement is still influencing reading instruction today.

7. Psycho linguistics

1950s-1960s

Definition: The development of the psycholinguistics movement took place at the same time that the United States saw the influence of the sociolinguistics movement, which took place between the 1950s and 1960s. This movement showed that students did not merely imitate language that they heard, but were active constructors of language as individuals as they made educated guesses as to what the rules of the language were and tested out their hypotheses in authentic speech and writing. In this way, the oral language that children used could then be used to understand how they were inventing the language and rules for themselves. Through this movement, psycholinguistics focused on meaning making and valuing texts for beginning readers, understanding the process and appreciating the efforts of children, and the use of misuse analysis to help the teacher understand what the student is doing when they are reading. Just as one learned to talk through talking, the proponents of this movement posited that “one learned to read from reading” (p. 26-28).
Why it was incorporated into the Education World: This movement was incorporated into the world of education to determine whether the views that had been set forth by Chomsky and others who conducted similar research could be used to serve as “psychological models of language performance.” The research of Chomsky led to the field of psycholinguistics and this movement (p. 26-27).

Today: This movement is influencing reading instruction today, to a degree. I have learned through my own teacher education program the works of Chomsky and learned that students do not merely imitate language, but make hypotheses of how language works and test these out in authentic scenarios. I have seen classrooms where teachers use this to inform their reading instruction. Additionally, I have seen many teachers use miscue analysis as a form of assessment used to inform their instruction, looking at the syntactic, semantic, and grapho-phonemic cues that the students use when reading. I have seen teachers who additionally see errors not as something to be corrected, but as insights into the children’s minds and understandings of the text.

8. Sociolinguistics 1950s-1960s

Definition: As stated above, the development of the sociolinguistics movement took place at the same time that the United States saw the influence of the psycholinguistics movement, which took place between the 1950s and 1960s. The sociolinguistics movement focused on the dialects present in the schools as well as the difference between linguistic differences and deficits. This movement saw the value of allowing students to use their own dialect in the classroom and accommodate this in the reading and writing instruction present in the classroom. This movement had three distinct approaches, the most successful of which was the more understanding that a student who translated an English text in the dominant discourse to their primary discourse and/or dialect was performing translation in his or her reading and was not making errors when reading. This focused on valuing the language that all students brought into the classroom and made teachers aware that language was and is a social and cultural creation (p. 31-32).

Why it was incorporated into the Education World: This movement was incorporated into the world of education as students came into the classroom with diverse dialects, following the works of William Labov, Joan Barts, and Roger Shuy, who noted that dialects were not deficits, but resources and that each dialect “constituted a well-developed linguistic system in its own right, complete with rules for variations from standard English and a path of language development for its speakers” (p. 31).

Today: I think that this movement is currently influencing the world of reading instruction today as many teachers are learning to view their students’ primary discourses as different but not less than the dominant discourse in the world today. Gallacher Gersten (2007) wrote an article wherein she discussed the development of oral language from a sociocultural perspective and then discussed the way language practices are evolving in the schools today with the diversity present in those schools. As she is a very contemporary writer, I believe that this shows that this movement is still influencing reading instruction today because it is very pertinent to a time period when students are entering school with various dialects and languages that are different from the dominant discourse of primary English.

9. Mastery Learning Movement 1960s

Definition: This movement began to arise during the late 1960s. This movement grew from the idea that if something very complex could be broken down into smaller, manageable subcomponents taught and learned to a degree of mastery, then most or all students should be able to learn how to read if reading instruction is approached in this manner. During this time, criterion-referenced tests also came into play and curriculum-embedded assessment developed, making students responsible for the information taught through a specific curriculum and nothing beyond that curriculum (p. 23-4).

Why it was incorporated into the Education World: This was incorporated into the education world through the contributions of Benjamin Bloom and John Carroll who brought this theory and, therefore, the movement into the spotlight. This seemed like a very logical understanding of teaching reading, paralleled to how we learn other complex ideas and/or processes throughout our lives (p. 23).

Today: I have definitely seen criterion-referenced tests in play in areas all around the United States and have even seen assessments akin to curriculum-embedded assessments. I think that these two parts of the movement are very much in use and influencing the world of education today because they give us, as teachers, ways to assess our students in objective ways that can be compared to other students in other areas of the state/country who are learning similar content. I also do think that many teachers teach in such a way that the complex concepts are broken down into manageable sub-components which are mastered prior to moving on to more complex sub-components. I think that this is influencing education today because it is an effective way for students to master specific concepts. I would argue that, in some cases, this could lead to the students having difficulty generalizing skills from one application to another, but think that this still influences educational thought and practice today, to a degree.

10. Schema Theory 1970s-1980s
Definition: Schema theory “is a theory about the structure of human knowledge as it is represented in memory.” This theory notes that we make sense of what we see by comparing this with our own prior experiences and understandings of something similar (our schema) and, at the same time, alter what we already know and understand (our existing schema) with our new findings. This shows both assimilation and accommodation as we assimilate new information into what we already know and then accommodate our old information with the modifications necessitated by the newly acquired information (p. 30).

Why it was incorporated into the Education World: This movement was incorporated into the world of education in part through the works of Piaget and his theories of development and two types of learning. This movement also came to fruition through the works of Frederic Bartlett who used the idea of schema to explain how people of different cultures understood and interpreted texts in different ways and was seen as a way of understanding how people and students learn and make sense of what they read (p. 30).

Today: I think that this movement is currently influencing the world of reading instruction today as this is very similar to Rosenblatt’s Reader Response Theory which is very much a part of classrooms today (p. 33). This reminds me of the idea that reading is not a passive activity where meaning is found in the text and transmitted to the reader, but that meaning is a result of the transaction between the reader and the text. I think that this movement is, therefore, still very present in the world of education and reading instruction today because it can help us to understand how our students read and make sense of the texts to which they are exposed and can help teachers to understand the importance of providing background information for a text for which a reader has weak schema.

11. Reader Response Theory

Definition: As stated above, this theory comes from Louise Rosenblatt and concludes that gleaning meaning from a text is not something that happens completely in the reader’s head or in the written text, but is the result of a transaction between the two. This movement allowed for alternate interpretations to a text and empowered the reader to interact with the text using his or her own schema (p. 33).

Why it was incorporated into the Education World: This movement was incorporated into the world of education through the works of Louise Rosenblatt and was also incorporated into the world of education because it empowered the reader and the author of the text, giving both a part in the creation of meaning from the written word.

Today: I think that this movement is currently influencing the world of reading instruction today as most teachers that I have observed read and model for their students taking some meaning from the text and making connections to the text with their own schema, background, and personal understandings to finally come up with a meaning for the text. I think that this movement is still influencing the world today because it can explain how many people can read the same text and interpret this in ways that are both similar to and different from others who read the same text – it shows us that meaning does come, in part, from the written text and, in part, from the reader himself.

12. Whole Language

Definition: This movement was stated in this chapter as being the “most significant movement in reading curriculum in the last thirty years.” This movement revolves around child-centered pedagogy and includes comprehension, literature-based reading, integrated instruction, and process writing. This movement is made up of aspects of many of the movement illustrated above. Whole language opposes the basal reader and moves toward more authentic texts and literature-based reading, abandoning vocabulary control and phonics skills, to a degree, to bring more authentic literature into the classroom (p. 37-38).

Why it was incorporated into the Education World: This movement was incorporated into the world of education through teachers who brought this into their classrooms and to national attention. This movement was also, ironically, brought to center stage through the basal reader which it staunchly opposed (p. 37).

Today: The way that I see this movement present in the world of reading instruction today is in moderation and in conjunction with other methods, movements, and teaching strategies. There are classrooms that do focus, in part, on whole language, but also focus on vocabulary and phonics instruction. I think that this whole language approach is not the only approach seen in the classrooms today because we can now see the benefit of learning about phonics and vocabulary, but doing so through authentic texts and in context. I also think that this movement is not as strong in schools today because the implementation of whole language approaches caused content area reading to suffer and this is an essential skill for students to have for their education in the upper-elementary years and beyond and that it is also difficult to produce measurable and quantifiable assessment results when using whole language instruction (p. 41-47-48).

13. Ecologically Balanced Reading Instruction Present and Future

Definition: This movement was introduced in the last part of the reading for this week and was something that the author was very much in favor of for the present and the future. This approach to reading instruction combines some of the principles of the whole language movement with other previous approaches to reading instruction.
Why it was incorporated into the Education World: This movement might have been and continue to be incorporated into the field of education because through the implementation of this particular movement to our classrooms and reading instruction today, the field of education will not have to undergo very dramatic shifts (p. 49). Additionally, this might be incorporated into the world of education because balanced approaches such as this one seem to take the best of each movement and/or idea and combine them in order to create the best possible learning environment for the individual students in the classroom. I think that this sort of a movement puts the students first and that this is one reason why it might be incorporated into the world of reading instruction both in the present and in the near future.

Today: I think that this movement is currently gaining ground today and influencing current reading instruction. Most of the reading instruction that I have seen take place in the schools today is not the product of one of these movements, but a combination of all of them and, in this way, feel that this movement might gain ground quickly and have a great influence — taking the best of many movements in order to create ways of teaching that are most effective for all students of all levels of diversity in the classroom.

Artifact B

*Unless otherwise noted, all page numbers following in the matrix reference the Tracey & Morrow (2006) text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory of Cognitive Development</th>
<th>Maturation Theory</th>
<th>Theory of Literacy Development</th>
<th>Stage Models of Reading</th>
<th>Emergent Literacy Theory</th>
<th>Family Literacy Theory</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
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<td>This theory is a description</td>
<td>Morpeth and</td>
<td>This theory has three</td>
<td>Stage model theorists</td>
<td>This theory explains</td>
<td>Family literacy theory is the study of the relationships between families and the development of literacy (p. 87). This term is not a single theory in and of itself, but a series of ideas proposed by many researchers who share ideas relating to &quot;the literacy development of family members, the relationships between literacy use in families and students, academic achievement, and the ways in which literacy is naturally used within the context of the home (p. 87-88). The theories that have contributed to this theory have found that &quot;literacy-rich home environments contribute more powerfully to children's early successfull literacy development than do excellent preschool and kindergarten classrooms&quot; and additionally point that the partnership of the families in a student's reading development greatly increases the likelihood that that particular child will have success in reading.</td>
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<td>of ways in which children's</td>
<td>Washburne saw</td>
<td>dimensions, as it explains</td>
<td>post that &quot;as children's reading skills develop they increase both the number and type of strategies that they can use during reading experiences&quot; but that children can also use skills from earlier stages of development as they continue to progress in their reading development for all of these models, word recognition development goes through three stages including visual cue reading, phonetic cue reading, and phonological decoding. Growth, according to this theory, is believed to be best ignored until the child has begun to focus on word identification. Stage 1 — (Visual Cue Reading, or the Logographic Stage) — children use visual cues and memory words by their shape when reading. In an alphabetic language, such as the English language, this is not a very efficient way to read. Stage 2 — (Phonetic Cue Reading, or the Alphabetic Stage) — children use some letter and sound cues to identify words, and the child will often use either</td>
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<td>thinking is modified over time</td>
<td>maturation as</td>
<td>the developmental nature of</td>
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<td>Piaget identified four factors that affect the quality of a child's thinking as he or she grows and matures. These four factors are biological (physical) maturation, activity, social experiences, and equilibrium. Biological maturation - refers to the individual's genetic readiness that is present at birth and will ultimately affect his or her growth (p. 77). Activity - physical experiences a child has that will aid them in their construction of knowledge. Social Experiences - the interactions that a child has with other children and adults which will affect his or her growth. Equilibrium - the child's search for cognitive balance when cognitive imbalance, or dissonance, occurs (p. 78). In addition to these four factors which affect the child's cognitive development, Piaget notes four stages of thinking through which all children pass as their thinking processes mature. These are known as Piaget's Stages of</td>
<td>literacy learning, four processes that are central to literacy learning, and an explanation of the teaching methods that will best promote developmental literacy learning. As per this theory, a child's reading development is natural and very much mimics children's natural development of oral language skills (p. 82). Hoddaway identifies four characteristics of literacy instruction that would facilitate this natural literacy development and these are a rich home literacy environment with modeling and reinforcement through parent and child interaction, a similarly rich classroom literacy environment, the</td>
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<td>important factor in learning</td>
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<td>guidance to promote early</td>
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<td>to read and did research to</td>
<td>read and</td>
<td>literacy growth (p. 88). The</td>
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<td>determine when the optimal</td>
<td>achieve reading</td>
<td>term &quot;emergent literacy&quot;</td>
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<td>age would be for students to</td>
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<td>refers to a stage into which</td>
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<td>have matured enough to begin</td>
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<td>also use skills</td>
<td>at about third grade, but</td>
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<td>this term is related to a</td>
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<td>a mental age of six years and</td>
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<td>six months did better on a test</td>
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<td>or reading achievement than</td>
<td>or three stages</td>
<td>chronological age&quot; (p. 88).</td>
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<td>did younger children&quot; and,</td>
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<td>First, this theory suggests</td>
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<td>through those findings,</td>
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<td>instruction should not be</td>
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<td>and writing and that</td>
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<td>have reached this age (p. 79).</td>
<td>decoding, or</td>
<td>students who have</td>
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<td>In fact, they postulated that</td>
<td>the (Logographic)</td>
<td>growth in one of these four</td>
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<td>a parent or educator who</td>
<td>Stage 1 — (Visual</td>
<td>areas will inevitably see</td>
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<td>attempted to teach reading</td>
<td>Cue Reading, or</td>
<td>growth in the other three</td>
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<td>prior to this age would not</td>
<td>the Alphabetic</td>
<td>areas as well. A second</td>
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<td>only fail, but actually</td>
<td>Stage 2 — (Phonetic</td>
<td>tenant of this theory is that</td>
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<td>damage the child's reading</td>
<td>Cue Reading, or</td>
<td>literacy development begins</td>
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<td>ability potential.</td>
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<td>Stage) — children</td>
<td>researchers of the</td>
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<td>use some letter and sound</td>
<td>Maturational Theory) and it is continuous from that point on. Therefore, this theory notes the</td>
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<td>cues to identify words,</td>
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<td>Cognitive Development and Age as follows:</td>
<td>Use of a classroom management system fostering independence and self-regulation, and immersing children in meaningful language experiences through the use of high-quality and authentic children’s literature. Additionally, teachers encouraged collaborative learning and peer interaction in the classroom.</td>
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<td>Stage 1 – Sensorimotor Period (birth – 2 years)</td>
<td>The beginning or ending letters to generate some sounds that must be present in the word and narrow their ideas for guessing about the written word.</td>
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<td>Stage 2 – Preoperational Period (3–7 years) – Language development occurs and the child begins to categorize the world around him/her based upon this language. Stage 3 – Concrete Operational Period (7–11 years) – The child uses concrete objects to move into more abstract concepts and theories. Stage 4 – Formal Operational Period (11 years and up) – The child can now use language in an unordered way and have fully understood the concrete use of language.</td>
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<td>Whole Language – As with the Theory of Literacy Development, this theory also agrees with the idea that “reading, like oral language, is a natural process that children will acquire if immersed in high-quality literacy environments and exposed to meaningful, authentic, literary experiences and high-quality literature” (p. 59–60).</td>
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<td>Early 1900s</td>
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<td>Early 1920s, in the 1950s, this theory was challenged by behaviorism and constructivism</td>
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<td>Late 1970s</td>
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Some Brief Classroom Implications (not to be confused with the "Classroom Applications" section that follows)

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<th>Notes</th>
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<td>Piaget’s findings are vital for helping teachers to understand the ways in which children develop from a cognitive standpoint so that they can create lessons and activities that are cognitively and developmentally appropriate for their students. This theory provides teachers with an idea of how children of certain ages are most likely to learn and think about objects and events as they learn in school.</td>
<td>Past classroom implications were that from the 1930s to the 1950s, children were not taught formal reading instruction at all until they may have reached the age of six years and six months and this impacted the literacy instruction of millions of American children. A more current classroom implication (see application section) would be that teachers may encourage children to experiment with invented spelling (see classroom application section) until they were developmentally ready to be required to spell all words correctly.</td>
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Classroom Application (How each of these theories can be applied to a contemporary classroom):

Theory of Cognitive Development

When I thought of Piaget and his Stages of Cognitive Development and how this can be seen in the classroom, I thought about an interaction I had with my cooperating teacher when I was in sixth grade for my practicum placement. One of the students was really struggling to understand abstract language and metaphor analogies and their use in literature and my teacher said of that student, “He’s just not there yet!” This type of thinking about children and how they learn really seems to me to reflect Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive Development. My teacher was showing how she believed students needed to pass through developmental stages as they progress in reading and would probably have labeled this student as being in the Concrete Operational Period where he or she begins to understand more abstract concepts and thinking, but not yet in the Formal Operational Period where he or she can move beyond the concrete to the abstract. In this way, Piaget’s theory was being used to explain a student’s reading achievement and inability to comprehend abstract language and concepts.
Maturation Theory

An interesting connection that I saw between my own personal pedagogy and what I had learned in my undergraduate classes was regarding the Maturation Theory. Since this theory is no longer used to explain children’s literacy development, I was surprised that it would still be relevant and, in part, impact my teaching. In a anecdote in the Tracey & Morrow (2006) text, the teacher discusses her students’ use of “invented spelling” (p. 80). This is certainly something that I will use in my classroom, especially in the lower elementary grades and connects to Maturation Theory as teachers decide not to push students to spell words correctly from the time they start writing, but invent spellings until they are developmentally ready to spell the words that they want to use in their own writings. Finnell & Fournas wrote a great deal on the implementation of Readers’ and Writers’ Workshop in the classroom and this is something that we focused heavily upon in my undergraduate classes. Finnell and Fournas (1993), note that students can “produce may other words as approximated spellings that come increasingly close to conventional spelling and demonstrate their growing knowledge of letter-sound correspondence” (p. 92). I often went into one of my professors at a first grade class where I helped the teacher implement Writer’s Workshop and the one time I was there, one of the students raised her hand to ask me how to spell a word. When she did this, the student next to her looked at her almost in shock and said, “It’s okay if you don’t spell it right. Just spell it your best and use your own voice.” I thought this was a beautiful example of students allowing their own voices to come through in their writing. I think that often, students’ ideas are bigger than the compilation of words that they are able to spell and correct spelling may hold children back from saying that they really want to say and letting their voices shine through their writing. Additionally, as hinted at in the quote from Finnell & Fournas (2008), invented spellings are also very good indicators of how students are developing with regard to reading and writing. For assessment purposes, we used a lot of the student’s incorrect spellings to help us see what they were using but confusing in spelling and to help us form mini-lessons based upon what the students needed as individual writers.

Theory of Literacy Development

When I thought of the Theory of Literacy Development and an application that this can have in contemporary classrooms, I initially thought of Halliday’s Model of Language Acquisition and, specifically, the “Learning about Language” component. Flint (2003) notes that “learning how the language works in a systematic and functional ways greatly increases students’ abilities to be effective and productive readers and writers,” but additionally notes that this must be done through authentic and high-quality literature (p. 46). The same book quotes Harris and Graham (2008) where they say, “Despite their popularity, activities that concentrate on grammar, punctuation, or usage are not embedded in actual writing experiences and do not improve students’ writing” (p. 46). The text goes on to note that Halliday suggests that students learn about language when they are engaged in authenticly using language and say, “authentic experiences with language provide students with opportunities to examine language conventions and rules in the context of their own ideas and thoughts” (p. 47). This connection applies to the Theory of Literacy Development because, just like the Theory of Literacy Development, Halliday’s Model of Language Acquisition posits that for readers to learn how to read (and writers to learn how to write) this must be done with high-quality literature and through authentic reading and writing. Teachers that follow Halliday’s model and use authentic and high-quality literature to teach their students reading and writing are, in part, teaching through the lens of the Theory of Literacy Development in their classroom.

Stage Models of Reading

One contemporary application of the Stage Models of Reading Theory can be seen through an example that Taberski (2000) notes when she writes about children’s knowledge of letter-sound relationships. She tells a story of a boy named Jeffrey who was a second grader and shared how he figured out how to read the word “heart.” He said that he knew that it started with an “h” and ended with a “t” and read the sentence, using the context clues, to decide that the word was “heart” (p. 4). This is a good example of the second stage of Phonemic Cue Reading, or the Alphabetic Stage where children use letter and sound cues to identify words, most often looking at the beginning and ending letters to generate some sounds that they can then use to guess about the written word (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). Taberski (2000) then goes on to state that she thinks it is “important for children to learn letter-sound relationships and use them to figure out new words” and that she observes when her children are in reading in order to move them to new levels of proficiency in reading (p. 5). This is a great connection to the application of the Stage Models of Reading as Taberski shows how Jeffrey was in the second stage of Phonemic Cue Reading, or the Alphabetic Stage, and rudimentarily explains how she used this information and the knowledge that students move from one stage of reading to another, to know he was with regard to his reading development and then challenged him to achieve beyond this (Taberski, 2000).

Emergent Literacy Theory

I think that one of the ways in which a foundational principle can be seen in the classroom today is through the application of the New York State Standards into lesson plans and the classroom. The standards have four strands: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing— that students must achieve at each level of schooling and they are all connected under the broader heading of ELA. I know that in my own teaching and lesson planning, I tried to integrate the four as much as possible in my lessons—especially when I was working with younger students, though this is beneficial for older students as well — and I think that any teacher who connects these four areas of learning in their lessons is applying the Emergent Literacy Theory to their classroom and realizing the interrelationship between those four areas and the idea that growth in one will lead to growth in all (Tracey & Moore, 2006).

Family Literacy Theory

One application of the Family Literacy Theory can be seen through an article written by Cook regarding home literacies and students’ reading progress in school. Cook (2005) certainly believes that students literacy growth in school is directly connected to the literacy environment that they have at home, as shown through the Family Literacy Theory, but takes this one step further to include new literacies beyond merely reading aloud from books. Cook (2005) gives an example from her home life where her son, Addison, used writing on a sticky note to suggest to his mother that he wanted her to purchase a HoverDisk for him. She said that, “he was making connections between my literacy practices and his own,” showing how children really do learn literacy in non-formal ways from their parents and families at home (p. 422). At the end of her article, she notes that “simply telling a parent to read is not the answer, nor is asking parents to replicate what we do in
学校。作为教师，我们必须相互尊重和发现如何在学生中的教学方法可以影响我们的教学实践”（p. 428）。因此，教师必须欣赏和实现学生在课堂上的成功，相信这些技能对学生的成功和学习生活的影响。他们也更进一步地认识到，家中的学情环境对学生的成长和发展至关重要。

### Artifact C

**Lesson Plan (Brechtel)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT:</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guided Reading Lesson</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**TOPIC:** Initial Consonant Blends Beginning with the letter “S”

**READ 501**

**Essential Question(s):** How can the identification of smaller parts of words be used to help the reader (or writer) decide upon the correct pronunciation and identification (or spelling) of longer or more difficult words?

**OBJECTIVE OF THE LESSON**

A statement or statements of what students will be able to do AS A RESULT of rather than AS PART OF the lesson. The objective should be observable, behavioral, and measurable.

**SWBAT:**

- After listening to the demonstration of the teacher and working together as a group to discover initial consonant blends beginning with “S” through a word sort, poem activity, and reading a text with a partner, students will be able to independently use this strategy to correctly pronounce larger and more difficult words that they may encounter during their reading.
- Students will demonstrate their mastery of this strategy as they read with their guided reading group and use half-inch Post-It flags to identify the words which contain an initial consonant blend with “S” to show how identifying the blend at the beginning of the word can help them to sound out the remainder of the unfamiliar word.

**ASSESSMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES**

Describe how you will collect evidence that **individual** students have indeed met the lesson objectives.

- After working together as a guided reading group to sort and find words with initial consonant blends beginning with an “S” that will be used in a poem and reading through the text, “Are You Ready to Play Outside?” with a partner, students will be able to find and identify at least three different words with an initial consonant blend beginning with an “S” scattered throughout the text using half-inch Post-It flags.
- Each student will also have a “Word Detectives” sheet to fill out where he or she will find three words that have an initial consonant blend beginning with the letter “S” from an independent reading book and write these down to be turned in at the end of the independent reading time for the day after the teacher has finished working with all of the other guided reading groups.

**TICK THE BOXES TO THE LEFT FOR THE TEACHER’S ROLE (T)**

**TICK THE BOXES TO THE RIGHT FOR THE STUDENTS’ FOCUS (S)**
## DO THIS FOR EACH B/ D/ A SECTION.

### BEFORE READING, VIEWING, or LISTENING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PURPOSE SETTING</th>
<th>MODELING</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEACHER</strong></td>
<td><strong>STUDENTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focusing attention, laying groundwork, creating interest, sparking curiosity…think of it as setting the stage/setting them up for success: in the lines below, state what exactly you would say and/or use. If an artifact, either include a picture of it in the appendix OR include the artifact itself.</td>
<td>strategies to get STUDENTS thinking about what they already know: tell what strategies will be used. Include a model and/or a blank template in an appendix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• make sure students “get” the purpose (not just agenda) of today; what will result in or lead to; the “why” of what they’ll be doing</td>
<td>• cause STUDENTS to bring to mind similar ways of thinking, an analogous idea, or previously-learned content or concepts</td>
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<td>The teacher will begin by asking the students if they can identify a consonant. Depending upon the group, if they are unable to tell the teacher this piece of information, the teacher will then ask them to recall the vowels that they have discussed previously in class. The teacher will then tell them that every other letter that is not a vowel is called a consonant. (Teacher: Purpose Setting; Student: Discussion)</td>
<td>• STUDENTS are caused to think about that element of today’s learning that is most close to or familiar to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher will then ask the students if they know what it means to blend something, prompting them to think about a blender and what that does in the kitchen, if necessary. The teacher will then take a bit of the salt and a bit of the pepper and blend them together, showing the students that to blend something is to put something together, but that when you do that you can still see the separate parts, showing them that even though the salt and pepper have been blended, if you look very closely, you can still see what is the salt and what is the pepper. (Teacher: Purpose Setting)</td>
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<td>The teacher will then tell the students that they will be learning about initial consonant blends today that begin with the letter “S” and just like with the salt and pepper, the consonants will be blended together, but you will still be able to hear each letter if you listen very closely. The teacher will then prompt the students to say some initial consonant blends beginning with “S” first individually as blends (“st-,” “sp-,” “sk-,” and “sl-，“) and then within words, such as “start” and “speak.” (Teacher: Modeling)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The teacher will then tell the students that they are going to be word detectives to find the words that have initial consonant blends beginning with “S” in them and the teacher will give each pair of students a packet of words containing words with initial consonant blends beginning with “S” and words that are non-examples of the blends. The students will then be asked to sort the words with their partner until they have a group of words that have an initial consonant blend beginning with the letter “S” and group of non-examples. For an additional challenge, the students can separate the consonant blends further into groups of “st-,” “sp-,” “sk-,” and “sl-.” These four initial consonant blends beginning with “S” are not the only consonant blends that begin with “S,” but this will provide a start for the lesson. Students will be encouraged to think of and find more initial consonant blends that begin with “S” at this point in the lesson and beyond. (Student: Organizing)</td>
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<td>The teacher will then read the poem she has written on the SmartBoard entitled “Blend Hunt.” In the empty spaces of this poem already will be the “st-” blend and three of the “st-” words and pictures. The teacher will read through the poem and then have the students choral read the poem as she reads it through a second time. The teacher will then change the blend at the top of the poem to “sp-” and the students will find, out of their pile of words and pictures on the table, words with the “sp-” blend to change the poem. Each student will have a chance to fill in the poem with at least one initial consonant blend beginning with the letter “S” by using the pen on the SmartBoard. Upon each completion of the poem, the group will choral read the poem, reciting the initial consonant blend words beginning with “S” and drawing out the blend a bit for each of the three inserted words to draw attention to the blend. (Student: Vocabulary)</td>
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### DURING READING, VIEWING, or LISTENING

- During the activity, students will be actively engaged in identifying and sorting words with initial consonant blends beginning with “S.” This will help them to develop their vocabulary and auditory discrimination skills.

- The teacher will provide guidance and support as needed, ensuring that all students are able to participate and succeed.

- The activity will be extended by encouraging students to find and write additional words with initial consonant blends, promoting continued engagement and learning.

- The teacher will assess students’ understanding by observing their participation and asking questions related to the activity.

- Feedback will be provided to reinforce correct responses and correct any misconceptions.

- The activity will be concluded with a whole-class discussion, summarizing the key points and encouraging students to share their learning experiences and achievements.

- The teacher will provide feedback and suggestions for future activities, ensuring that students are engaged and motivated to continue learning.

- The activity will be extended by encouraging students to find and write additional words with initial consonant blends, promoting continued engagement and learning.
**PURPOSE SETTING**
- What strategy(ies) will be utilized for active engagement with the content?
- What will you do as the teacher?
- What are students doing WHILE reading, viewing, or listening?

The teacher will then invite the students to look at the book they are going to be reading today entitled, *Are You Ready to Play Outside?* by Mo Willems. The teacher will ask the students to predict what the book is going to be about from the title (which the teacher will ask one of the students to read) and the picture on the cover – what they see and what the elephant is doing on the cover page. The teacher will then have the students share examples of activities that they like to do when they play outside. (Teacher: Purpose Setting)

The teacher will then model partner reading with one of the students in the guided reading group, showing how the students will sit next to each other on the floor so that both students can see the text and listen intently to the others’ reading, asking clarifying questions when necessary and gently assisting in the reading if one partner is particularly stuck on a word. (Teacher: Modeling)

The teacher will then have the students pair up with a partner and read the remainder of the book together, looking specifically for words that have initial consonant blends beginning with the letter “S” and using what they know about these consonant blends to figure out the entirety of the word. (Teacher: Modeling)

As the students are reading, the teacher will go from pair to pair taking running records of a few of the students to assess their ability to use the initial consonant blends beginning with “S” to read the words in the books. Additionally, the teacher will look at the running record as a whole for miscue analysis and further guided reading group/strategy learning placement. (Student: Organizing)

After the book has been read in totality, the teacher will allow the students to share stories of times when they felt like the characters in the book – either wishing for a rainy day or wishing for a sunny day. (Student: Discussion)

Then, the teacher will have the students independently use their magnifying glasses to go through the text one more time, this time searching like detectives for words that have an initial consonant blend in them beginning with the letter “S.” Students will be instructed to use the half-inch Post-It flags in the center of the table to mark any words that have this initial consonant blend beginning with the letter “S.” (Student: Organizing)

The teacher will then have the students share some of the words that they found in the text that have an initial consonant blend beginning with the letter “S” and, as they share these words, the student who shared a word will be invited to write this words on the SmartBoard projection of the page and all of the students will write these words on the sheets that they have in front of them entitled “Initial Consonant Blends with the Letter “S.”” (Student: Organizing, Vocabulary)

**AFTER READING, VIEWING, or LISTENING**
- how will students apply new knowledge?
- how will students check to see if their understanding is correct?
- how will students be prompted to reflect on what they learned?
- Or how will students be prompted to reflect on how they learned it?

(*Also, Please Note: The Assessment Occurs in the After Phase: What will you use to assess? This does not have to be a test! A simple ticket out the door could be useful.*)

The teacher will tell the students that they have done a great job of being word detectives and figuring out how to locate words with initial consonant blends beginning with “S” in the book *Are You Ready to Play Outside?*. (*Teacher: After*)
Then, she will tell the students that they also can use this strategy to figure out how to read words as they read other books independently. The teacher will show the students that, just as they have practiced, if they come across a word with an initial consonant blend beginning with “S,” they can use what they now know about the consonant blends to help them to figure out what the word is. For a few examples, the teacher will show the students how they can read the words “street,” “spit,” and “skip” by using what they know about the initial consonant blends beginning with “S.” To demonstrate this, the teacher will use cards that have the consonant blend on one card and then the remaining portion of the word on another card which the students will read separately and then put together to form a new word. The teacher will tell the students that this is not a strategy that they need to stop and be using with every blend that they come across in their reading, but with every word with a blend that they do not know how to read or pronounce very well within their book. (Teacher: Purpose Setting, Modeling)

The teacher will then present a challenge to the students and have them turn to the cover page of the book, Are You Ready to Play Outside? On the page, there is a word that has an initial consonant blend beginning with “P” and the teacher will have the students use their magnifying glass to see if they can find another consonant blend (two consonants together at the beginning of the word) that does not begin with the letter “S” to help them generalize this strategy across other words and letters. (Student: Vocabulary)

The teacher will then have a few students summarize what they have learned about the initial consonant blends beginning with “S” and how this can help them to become better and more independent readers. (Student: Vocabulary)

The teacher will then show the students the “Word Detective” sheets that they will use to find three words with initial consonant blends beginning with the letter “S” as they read independently after the group lesson. (Student: Organizing, Vocabulary)

**ASSESSMENT:** Assessment for some students will take place in the “During Reading” stage through the running records. Additionally, all of the students will then be given “Word Detective” sheets on which they will write three words that have an initial consonant blend beginning with “S” that they have discovered in their independent reading books. These will be handed in after the independent reading time. (Teacher: Purpose Setting)

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**RATIONALE**

- Why teach the lesson THIS WAY?
- Why, given this lesson’s objectives, are THESE the best strategies to choose and use? Be specific!
- Explain why this sequence of activities best leads to cultivating the behaviors or performing the skills or displaying the knowledge called for by the objectives.

This lesson gives students the opportunity to learn about initial consonant blends beginning with “S” and how these blends can help them to decode unfamiliar words when reading independently. Students will have the opportunity to participate in a picture and word sort, partner reading of the text Are You Ready to Play Outside? by Mo Willems, and will learn how to generalize this strategy so that they can use this with their own independent reading books as well. Students will work in collaboration with peers and independently for a portion of the lesson and, at the culmination of the lesson, will be able to accurately identify initial consonant blends beginning with the letter “S” in an authentic text that is provided as well as on their own with any text that they choose to read. This will empower the students with another reading strategy that they can use to help them develop into more independent and proficient readers.

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**REFLECTION [WHAT THEORIES HAVE YOU APPLIED]**

For each section (B D A) of your lesson, what theory(s) have you applied? Explain.
Cognitive Processing Models – Cognitive Processing models posit that learning is “the result of our attempts to make sense of the world” and see “people as active learners who initiate experience, seek out information to solve new problems, and reorganize what they already know to achieve new insights” (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 126). First, this entire lesson is a guided reading lesson, something compatible with the Cognitive Processing Model as the use of guided reading “allows teachers to monitor many of the components of reading identified as central by the cognitive processing models” (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 143). This is true of my lesson because my reading instruction lesson is to be implemented with a small group of students who are at similar reading ability levels, which can be seen through the text choice which is the same for all of the students in the group because it is appropriate for all of the students included in this lesson. The lesson also has assessment as informing the instruction of this lesson, in particular through the use of running records by the teacher in the “During Reading” stage of the lesson, which is another component of guided reading (Tracey & Morrow, 2006).

Before Reading

Schema Theory – Schema Theory posits that “people organize everything they know into schemas, or knowledge structures” and that these schemas are individualized, the differences greatly influencing students’ learning. The theory further suggests that “without existing schemas it is very hard to learn new information on a topic” (Tracey & Morrow, 200, p. 51). In lieu of this, before the teacher even discusses the idea of initial consonant blends with the students, she connects this to what her students already know – consonants and the word “blend” – so that they have some background knowledge on what an initial consonant blend might be. Additionally, before reading the text, the teacher has the students read the title, Are You Ready to Play Outside? and discuss what they like to do when they play outside. The teacher in this lesson clearly guides the students through the activation of background knowledge and then uses that to “extend their already exciting background knowledge on the topic” (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 66).

Rosenblatt’s Transactional/Reader Response Model can also be seen here in that the readers are making “text to self” and possibly even “text to world” connections prior to reading and after the reading as well (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 68).

Parallel Distributed Processing Model – This mode of learning states that “successful reading is dependent upon a readers’ ability in four areas: automatic letter recognition, accurate phonemic processing, strong vocabulary knowledge, and the ability to construct meaningful messages during reading (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 168). The lesson introduced by the teacher prior to reading is a lesson about initial consonant blends – letters that frequently appear together – and is taught so that students will become familiar with these consonant blends and be able to use these blends as a strategy to decode words that they do not know when reading. This is compatible with the Parallel Distributed Processing Model in that this lesson “reinforces connections between letters that frequently occur together” (Tracey & Morrow, p. 176). Additionally, with the use of schema activation before, during, and after reading, the student is able to more easily construct messages that are meaningful when reading as they can relate what they are learning to themselves and what they already know (Tracey & Morrow, 2006).

Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive Development – A central idea to Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive development “is the encapsulating idea that children’s minds are not empty vessels in which to pour knowledge, but that children are actively constructing knowledge about their world and its surroundings” (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 167). As the teacher begins this lesson, as she uses the students’ schema in order to set the foundation of the lesson, she is clearly demonstrating that “children’s minds are not empty vessels in which to pour knowledge” as she builds off of the knowledge that they have, with regard to consonants and blending as well as ideas of playing outside to relate to the text, validating what they bring to the classroom and this particular lesson (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 167).

Verbal Efficiency Theory (see the “During Reading” stage for a complete explanation of how this theory also relates to the “Before Reading” stage, as it is present in both)

Theories of Vygotsky (see the “During Reading” stage for a complete explanation of how this theory also relates to the “Before Reading” stage, as it is present in both)

New Literacies – The term “New Literacies” refers to the fact that literacy is not stagnant, but is deictic, and constantly changing with the changes in the culture. One of the newer additions to many classrooms today is the SmartBoard. Although this lesson is done primarily with a written text and group discussion, the students have the opportunity to use the SmartBoard throughout the lesson. The SmartBoard provides the enlargement of the poem for the word sort as well as an enlargement of the worksheets that the students have in front of them. This can help students to more easily follow along with the teacher and their own worksheets, and writing on the SmartBoard can be a wonderful way for students to get engaged with the material and stay focused as it is an incentive to work hard to sort the words in their envelopes and find those blends in their texts!
During Reading

**Verbal Efficiency Theory** – The Verbal Efficiency Theory “emphasizes the central role of language ability in the reading experience” and uses lessons and activities that reinforce the connection between oral language and reading (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 158). In this lesson, students have a link between oral language development and reading. Students practice vocalizing the consonant blends and storytelling about different activities that they like to do when they play outside in the “Before Reading” stage and then, in the “During Reading” stage, the students engage in buddy reading and also in storytelling as they connect their own lives to the text that they have just read (Tracey & Morrow, 2006).

**Theories of Vygotsky** – Vygotsky notes that students learn through activities that are socially meaningful. He additionally suggests that because this is the way in which students best learn, “a valid assessment of a child could only occur when the child was actively engaged in learning in the socially cultural environment” (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 168). The format of this particular lesson encourages students to learn collaboratively. This is seen in the “Before Reading” stage when students sort the word cards in partner groups and then collaboratively fill in the poem on the SmartBoard, but is also seen in the “During Reading” stage as well. In this stage, students read the text in partner groups and then come together as a small group to discuss how their lives related to the story that they had read with their partner. Additionally, the students then will work together to compile a list of words that have an initial consonant blend that begins with the letter “S” on the SmartBoard, each contributing at least one word to the group’s worksheet page.

**Theory of Literacy Development** – The Theory of Literacy Development notes that children’s reading development “is natural and very much mimics children’s natural development of oral language skills” (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 81). Holdaway identifies four characteristics of literacy instruction that would facilitate this natural literacy development and these are a rich home literacy environment with modeling and reinforcement through parent and child interactions, a similarly rich classroom literacy environment, the use of a classroom management system fostering independence and self-regulation, and immersing children in meaningful language experiences through the use of high-quality and authentic children’s literature (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). This lesson does just that as it immerses “children in meaningful language experiences through the use of high-quality and authentic children’s literature” (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 81). The text chosen for this lesson was actually one that my little cousin introduced me to and since it has been one of her favorites that she asks me to read over and over again, it has, by default, become one of my favorites as well.

After Reading

**Psycholinguistic Theory** – Psycholinguistic Theory states that “readers rely on cueing systems to help them read” and these cueing systems include the semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic information systems (Cobb & Kallus, 2011, p. 189). After the teacher has listened to the students read and has taken running records on a few of the students in the guided reading group in the “During Reading” stage, she will then look at these running records in the “After Reading” stage to see how effectively the students were able to apply the strategies that they learned in the lesson (using initial consonant blends beginning with “S” as a starting point to segment and sound out unfamiliar words) as well as for the analysis of miscues for further assessment. This running record will inform the instruction that the teacher presents in the classroom. This use of running records as the assessment used to drive instruction is compatible with the Psycholinguistic Theory because the teacher will examine the miscues “so see which cueing systems [the student] is and is not effectively using during reading” (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 189).

**Required Materials and Equipment:**

- A small bit of salt and pepper and a little bowl in which to mix it for the teacher demonstration
- Examples of the words “street,” “spit,” and “skip” with the consonant blend on one card and the remaining part of the word on a different card (Appendix A)
- A SmartBoard on which the poem will be projected and the students will write their words that have an initial consonant blend beginning with “S” (Appendix B)
- Words and pictures of words that begin with an initial consonant blend beginning with the letter “S” and words that begin with the letter “S” but do not have a consonant blend that the students will use to sort in pairs and then write in the poem to make it complete (Appendix C)
- One copy of Are You Ready to Play Outside? by Mo Willems for each student in the guided reading group
- A few half-inch Post-It flags for each student
- A “Initial Consonant Blends with the Letter “S” Worksheet projected on the SmartBoard (Appendix D)
- An “Initial Consonant Blends with the Letter “S”” Worksheet for each student (this is the same as the worksheet shown in Appendix D)
- A pencil and highlighter for each student
- A “Word Detectives” sheet for each student to use to write down three additional words with initial consonant blends beginning with “S” that they find in their independent reading books (Appendix E)
Appendix A

The teacher will cut the following three words out, separating the consonant blend from the remaining part of the word.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>st</th>
<th>air</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sp</td>
<td>it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sk</td>
<td>ip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix B

This is the full poem that will be projected on the SmartBoard with blanks:

**Word Hunt**

We’re going on a word hunt

To find where the “___” words are

We found ________, ________, and ________.

We don’t have to travel far!

Here is the example that will be projected on the board for the students initially with “st-“ words filled in:

**Word Hunt**

We’re going on a word hunt

To find where the “st-” words are

We found strip, stop, and sting.

We don’t have to travel far!
Appendix C

These word cards would be cut up and placed into envelopes that the students would receive and then sort with their partner.

stairs  stool  steam  stone  star
slug  slipper  sloth  sleigh  sleep
skateboard  ski  skunk  sky  skirt
spaghetti  sport  spoon  spider  speak
sink  sing  soup  seed  sun
Appendix D

Below is the worksheet as it would be projected on the SmartBoard or handed out to the students prior to the completion of the worksheet

Name: ___________________________________

Initial Consonant Blends Beginning with the Letter “S”

Word List: A picture to help me remember:

sk + _ip_ = ______skip_______

s__ + ____________ = ____________________

s__ + ____________ = ____________________

s__ + ____________ = ____________________

s__ + ____________ = ____________________

s__ + ____________ = ____________________

s__ + ____________ = ____________________
Below is an example of a completed worksheet (with the exception of the far column as the picture component will be optional for students to complete if this strategy will aid them in their understanding/remembering of the word and concept).

Name: Lauren Brechtel

Initial Consonant Blends Beginning with the Letter “S”

Word List:

- sk + __ip__ = ____skip_____
- st + __op__ = ____stop_____
- st + __arting__ = ___starting____
- st + __ill__ = ___still_____
- sp + __lash__ = ___splash____
- sp + __lish__ = ___splish_____
Appendix E

Name: _______________________

Word Detectives

Initial Consonant Blends Beginning with the Letter “S”

Word List:  

s__ + ___________ = ______________________

s__ + ___________ = ______________________

s__ + ___________ = ______________________

s__ + ___________ = ______________________

A picture to help me remember: