Scaffolded Silent Reading: A Complement to Guided Repeated Oral Reading That Works!

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Scaffolded Silent Reading provides third-grade teachers an alternative for practicing reading that decreases errors and increases students' reading rates and comprehension.

Mrs. Taverski (all names used are pseudonyms) had used Sustained Silent Reading or SSR with her third-grade students as a regular part of a daily reading instructional routine for many years. She and other teachers at Green Valley Elementary School firmly believed that students need daily reading practice to become successful, motivated readers.

The school principal, Mrs. Clapton, informed teachers that because the National Reading Panel (NRP; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000) had not found sufficient evidence to support the continued use of SSR, teachers were to stop using SSR and instead have students practice reading by using guided oral repeated readings with feedback. Mrs. Taverski complied with the instructions she was given by her school principal but harbored concerns about when and how her students would be helped to convert their oral reading skills to silent reading, especially in the third grade where many of her students were more than ready to read silently rather than orally.

Mrs. Taverski and other concerned colleagues informally spoke with a university literacy researcher and teacher educator they knew well and trusted. Together the group began a journey that led to a redesign of traditionally implemented SSR called Scaffolded Silent Reading (ScSR).

Perhaps no other single conclusion drawn by the NRP (NICHD, 2000) has sparked more controversy than the lack of research support for time spent reading and the related, prevalent classroom practice of SSR (Allington, 2002; Coles, 2000; Cunningham, 2001; Edmondson & Shannon, 2002; Krashen, 2002). Traditionally, SSR had been incorporated into the daily reading instructional routines of practically every classroom and school across the United States. Not only was SSR popular with many teachers, but also it was popular with some students (Baumann, Hoffman, Duffy-Hester, & Moon, 2000; Baumann, Hoffman, Moon, & Duffy-Hester, 1998; Manning & Manning, 1984; McCracken, 1971; Pressley, Yokoi, & Rankin, 2000; Robertson, Keating, Shenton, & Roberts, 1996).

Although many correlation studies demonstrate a relationship between encouraging students to read independently and reading achievement (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; NICHD, 2000), the NRP (NICHD, 2000) examined only experimental and quasi-experimental studies of the effects of independent reading on reading achievement and found only 10 such studies. Only 1 of the 10 SSR studies in the NRP analysis involved primary-grade students (Collins, 1980). The remaining 9 SSR studies were focused on the use of SSR in intermediate elementary grades or in secondary school settings. Five studies reported no statistically significant effect for SSR on students' reading achievement. Five studies found effects favoring SSR, but magnitude-of-effect estimates were of a "noneducationally" significant size or the results were mixed in terms of effects on outcome as-

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sessments, such as word reading, vocabulary gains, or comprehension improvements (NICHD, 2000).

In contrast, Krashen (2002) contended that the NRP had misrepresented or underrepresented the research support for SSR (pp. 112–123). A careful review of Krashen's (2002) "expanded set" of SSR studies reveals inclusion of research in which students received reading *instruction* using children's books as well as yet a larger group of poorly designed SSR studies. Advocates of SSR, or similar practices such as Drop Everything and Read (DEAR), suggest that allocating time for students to engage in extended, self-selected, independent, silent reading practice increases students' reading motivation and engagement when compared with other less motivating practices such as round-robin oral reading or the writing of book reports. Despite these claims made for SSR and other similar practices, there has been long-standing concern that some students may fail to make good use of SSR time (Bryan, Fawson, & Reutzel, 2003; Gambrell, 1978; Lee-Daniels & Murray, 2000; Moore, Jones, & Miller, 1980; Robertson et al., 1996; Stahl, 2004).

SSR Concerns and Criticisms

The controversy surrounding traditionally implemented SSR continues unabated to the present time as evidenced by an exchange in *Reading Today* (Krashen, 2006; Shanahan, 2006; Shaw, 2006). Stahl (2004) noted several well-founded concerns and criticisms of traditionally implemented SSR. First, he criticized the conspicuous absence of teacher and student interactions around the reading of texts as a major drawback of SSR. He and others (Worthy & Broadus, 2002) did not recommend the practice where teachers read their own books, presumably as models of reading, during SSR time. He further condemned "the lack of teacher monitoring and accountability for whether or not students are actually reading during SSR time" (Stahl, 2004, p. 206). Recent research by Bryan et al. (2003) demonstrated that when classroom teachers monitored their students' silent reading during SSR using brief interactions and accountability conferences in which they also provided feedback, even the most disengaged students in the class remained on task for up to three weeks without additional monitoring visits.

As students progress through the grades, the texts they read become longer and more complex. As a consequence, the use of repeated reading of longer texts becomes less and less practical as students develop as readers. Recent research findings demonstrate that even for struggling readers in the second grade, oral wide reading of different texts across genre types rather than repeatedly reading the same text is of equal or greater value in promoting fluency and comprehension development (Kuhn, 2005; Schwanenflugel et al., 2006; Stahl, 2004).

In summary, the implementation of SSR in elementary classrooms has been sharply criticized for a lack of teacher guidance about how students can select appropriately challenging texts to read; poor control of the time allocated for reading practice; little or no teacher interaction with students around reading texts; no feedback to students about the quality and quantity of their reading; and no student accountability, purposes, or goals for the time spent in reading practice. Recent research with disengaged readers during SSR suggests (Stahl, 2004) that teachers ought to forgo the practice of modeling the reading of their own books during SSR and instead monitor students' reading through brief, interactive reading conferences with individual students. Finally, Hiebert (2006) asserted that fluency practice must, at some point, provide opportunities for transferring students' oral reading skills to silent reading.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Some researchers have suggested that instructional scaffolding might improve the effectiveness of SSR, but there have been no studies of the effects of scaffolded silent reading nor descriptions of how this scaffolding of silent reading might be accomplished (Hiebert, 2006). Manning and Manning (1984) have discussed the concept of scaffolding silent reading by giving students a purpose and a definite period of time in which to accomplish the silent reading of a text. Recently, Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2006) offered a "make over" for SSR called R[5] to include five activities—read, relax, reflect, respond, and rap. The authors described one classroom of third-grade students who made gains in comprehension, wide reading, and engagement from using R[5]. Because the report did not specify the group size or compare performance against a control group or a competing treatment, the claimed results for R[5] cannot be clearly interpreted with confidence.

What Is ScSR?

ScSR redesigns silent reading practice conditions to deal affirmatively with past concerns and criticisms surrounding traditionally implemented SSR and puts into practice recommendations by Worthy and Broadus (2002) about moving oral reading fluency to silent reading practice effectively. This redesign was accomplished by incorporating recent findings describing effective elements of reading practice and simultaneously eliminating past ineffective practices associated with traditionally implemented SSR. ScSR is intended to provide students with the necessary support, guidance, structure, accountability, and monitoring so they can transfer their successful oral reading skills to successful and effective silent reading practice.

In traditionally implemented SSR, teachers modeled silent reading and students were provided unguided access to books from home, the school library, or the classroom library. In SSR, students were allowed to choose any book available to them without consideration of difficulty levels. In contrast, in ScSR teachers explicitly teach students book selection strategies so they can select books to read that are at appropriate difficulty levels. Teachers guide students' choices for ScSR by structuring their reading selections to include a wide variety of literary genres.

Ostensibly, the major objective to be achieved in traditionally implemented SSR was to motivate students to engage in reading. Although similar to SSR in this respect, ScSR adds the specific objectives of increasing students' reading fluency and comprehension as well as their engagement with text. In traditionally implemented SSR, teachers did not provide students with feedback nor did they actively monitor their reading practice. In ScSR, teachers monitor students during practice through individual reading conferences in which students read aloud, discuss the book, answer questions, and set goals for completing the reading of the book within a specific time. In SSR, students were not held accountable for reading during allocated reading practice time. In fact, it was often believed that holding students accountable for their time spent in reading practice would negatively affect students' motivation to read. In contrast, in ScSR students were held accountable for reading widely across selected literary genres, setting personal goals for completing the reading of books within a timeframe, conferring with their teacher, and completing response projects to share the books they read with others. The contrasting characteristics of traditionally implemented SSR and ScSR are summarized in Table 1.

To completely understand how ScSR works, we need to step inside an elementary school classroom. To do this, we will observe how Mrs. Taverski implements ScSR in her third-grade classroom.

Putting ScSR Into Practice

Mrs. Taverski, affectionately known as Mrs. T, carefully arranges her classroom library to support and guide her students' book reading choices toward appropriately challenging books. Because students receive less feedback and support in ScSR than in other forms of reading practice, such as oral repeated readings with feedback, Mrs. T has decided that her third graders should practice reading texts they can process accurately and effortlessly (Stahl & Heubach, 2006). She guides her students' book selection by placing reading materials of differing reading levels on clearly labeled shelves or in plastic bins as shown in Figure 1.

To further assist her students, Mrs. T color-codes the difficulty levels of books within the classroom library collection using cloth tape on the book binding or stickers in the upper right-hand corner of the covers. Mrs. T's students are expected to select and practice reading in books marked by a specific color code representing each student's independent reading level (95% or more accuracy level).

Mrs. T also knows that allowing students the opportunity to choose their reading materials increases their motivation to read (Gambrell, 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997; Turner & Paris, 1995). On the other hand, she also understands that unguided choice can often lead to students selecting inappropriately difficult books for reading practice (Donovan, Smolkin, & Lomax, 2000; Fresch, 1995). Because recent research suggests that wide reading is effective in promoting students' reading choices as well as fluency and comprehension development (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2006; Kuhn, 2005), Mrs. T guides her students to read widely from a variety of literary genres. Students are asked to exercise their right to choose books for reading practice from a reading genre wheel, as shown in Figure 2.

Table 1
Contrasting the Characteristics of Silent Reading Practice in SSR and ScSR

Key characteristics	SSR	ScSR
Teacher instructional role	Model for students silent reading of self-selected books	Teach and scaffold students' appropriate book selection strategies
Classroom library or book collection design	Store and display books in various ways across classroom contexts	Store and display a variety of genres within designated levels of reading difficulty
Characteristics of reading motivation/engagement	Encourage student free choice of reading materials	Circumscribe student choice to encourage wide reading using a genre selection wheel
Level of text difficulty	Allow students to freely choose the level of difficulty of reading materials	Students are assigned by the teacher to read texts at their independent reading levels
Goal of reading practice	Fostering students' motivation to read	Foster students' motivation to read and reading comprehension and fluency development
Teacher monitoring and feedback	None	Brief 5-minute teacher initiated individual student reading conferences
Student accountability	None	Read aloud to the teacher, answer teacher questions, set personal goals for completing the reading of a book within a timeframe, and complete one or more book response projects

Figure 1
Book Storage in Classroom Library by Levels and Genre

Note. Photograph by D. Ray Reutzel.

Students in Mrs. T's classroom are expected to read a minimum of five books each nine weeks of the year, across the genres represented in the genre wheel. Once the students have completed reading books representing all of the genres in the reading genre wheel, they begin another genre wheel. They are expected to read enough books each year to complete two reading genre wheels.

Having planned the organization, display, and storage of her classroom library, Mrs. T begins her implementation of ScSR by planning and teaching a series of explicit book selection strategy lessons (Reutzel & Fawson, 2002). These lessons are based upon several book selection strategies including the following:

- Orienting students to the classroom library
- Book talks and getting students excited about books
- Selecting a book in the classroom library
- Selecting a "just right" or appropriately leveled book from the classroom library
- Checking the reading level of books

During these book selection strategy lessons students are taught the "three finger" rule. This rule, described by Allington (2006), involves students in marking with the fingers of one hand the words they don't recognize on a page. If there are three or more unrecognized words on a page, the text is considered

to be too difficult. Unless students are very interested or motivated by the topic or theme of the book, they should be encouraged to replace the book and select another. An example book selection strategy lesson used in Mrs. T's class is found in Figure 3.

Each day ScSR practice time began with Mrs. T providing a short, 5–8 minute explanation and modeling of an aspect or element of fluent reading or how to use a comprehension strategy using a teacher-selected text. For example, if Mrs. T wanted to focus on helping her students become more expressive through effective phrasing, she provided a lesson on observing the punctuation in the text. She would display a text on the overhead projector. Using marker pens, she color-coded the commas with yellow and the terminal punctuation marks with red. Mrs. T then would model how to use the punctuation marks to phrase the text appropriately. Next, she would also demonstrate how the same text would sound if the punctuation marks were ignored while reading. Finally, she would usually invite the students to join with her in a quick choral reading of the text.

Some days Mrs. T conducts these brief fluency or comprehension lessons on the rug and other days students remain in their seats for these lessons. Following these lessons, students are dismissed to select a new

Figure 3
Example Book Selection Strategy Lesson

Objective: To help students learn the location and organization for leveled books in the classroom library, as well as to demonstrate the use of the three fingers strategy for evaluating the appropriate difficulty of a book.

Needed Supplies:
- Different colored dots on the covers of the books
- Different colored plastic bins or book storage boxes
- A poster showing the names of students and the colors of books that are their individual independent reading levels
- A strategy poster for using the three fingers technique to evaluate the difficulty of a book

Explanation: Tell the students that soon they will be allowed to select books from the classroom library for their own reading, but before doing so they need to learn about how the classroom library is organized to support their book selections. Today they will be learning about the way the different levels of books are arranged and stored in the classroom library.

Modeling: Seat the students in and around the classroom library so they can see the shelves. Show them the poster with their names on the poster and the level of books that represent their independent levels. Each level of book is represented by a different colored dot on the poster that matches with the color of dots on the book storage bins and on the books inside the bins. Demonstrate how if you were one of the students (pick a name) you would look at the poster showing your name and independent reading level colored dot. Next, show where that color of bin(s) is located on the library shelves. Then show them that each book also has a colored dot that is the same as on the outside of the bin. Remind them that they are to choose a book that represents one of the genres in the Genre Wheel (shown in Figure 2). Demonstrate how you might select a book about Babe Ruth in the bin as an example of a biography.

Next, show them the three fingers strategy poster and model reading aloud a single page from the Babe Ruth book. Show them how many words on the page you did not know. If you raised more than three fingers on this page, then you should either choose another book from this level or ask the teacher for another book level color you might select from that would be a bit easier.

Application: Continue modeling with the help of one to two students role-playing the selection of an appropriately leveled book with decreasing amounts of guidance from you. Tell the students you will be allowing them the opportunity to go to the classroom library to select an appropriately leveled reading book one at a time. This will be their chance to show that they have listened and understand what you have taught them before they can actually go to the classroom library on their own in the future.

Monitoring for Success: Monitor each child's book selection levels and ability to use the "three fingers" technique for selecting a book.

book or retrieve a previously selected book from the plastic colored bins that contain specific levels of reading materials in Mrs. T's room. Some leveled books are also stored in crates distributed strategically around the room to disperse student traffic flow evenly throughout the room. Students are then free to select a spot in the classroom library, on the carpet, or at their seats for ScSR practice time. During ScSR, the students in Mrs. T's classroom engage in 20 minutes of reading practice time each day.

As students read, Mrs. T retrieves a clipboard from her wall whereon she keeps a listing of students' names for tracking her weekly monitoring teacher–student reading conferences. During each individual conference, Mrs. T asks students to read aloud from their book while she makes a running record analysis of their reading. Recent research has established that an average of three running record analyses within the same level of text difficulty provide a reliable assessment of students' reading progress (Fawson, Ludlow, Reutzel, Sudweeks, & Smith, 2006).

After the student reads aloud for 1–2 minutes, Mrs. T initiates a discussion about the book. To monitor comprehension, Mrs. T usually prompts, "Please tell me about what you just read." Mrs. T usually follows up with general story structure questions if the book is narrative. If the books are about information, Mrs. T asks students to explain the information or answer questions about facts related to the topics. This is a brief discussion of about 2 minutes. Finally, Mrs. T asks her students to set a goal date to finish the book. She also asks the students to think about how they will share what the book is about from a displayed menu of book response projects such as drawing and labeling a "character wanted" poster, making a story map, or filling in a blank graphic organizer.

After each individual reading conference, Mrs. T writes up the student's running record, notes the student's comprehension of the book, records the goal date for book completion, and marks the selected book response project. The form Mrs. T uses to keep student information during these ScSR individual conferences is shown in Figure 4. (A downloadable reproducible of this figure is available at www .reading.org/publications/journals/rt/v62/i3.)

During the allocated 20-minute ScSR session Mrs. T continues individual conferences, meeting with four or five students per day, allowing her to monitor individual students' reading progress weekly. In this way Mrs. T ensures that her students are engaged and accountable for the time spent reading silently, addressing a major criticism of traditionally implemented SSR (Stahl, 2004). At the end of the 20-minute daily ScSR time, students quietly return their books and reading folders containing their genre wheel and personal response projects to their leveled bins in the classroom library or to the storage crates around the room and transition to the next part of the daily routine.

Mrs. T has found that not all of her students are ready to transfer their oral reading skills to silent reading with ScSR. For those students who are not yet ready to be responsible for independent practice, oral repeated reading with a partner continues until behavior indicates an ability to work independently. At this point, Mrs. T starts students on ScSR for continuing their reading practice and transferring their oral reading skill to silent reading practice. But for Mrs. T and other teachers, the question to be answered in the current context is whether or not ScSR is as effective as the type of reading practice recommended by the NRP (NICHD, 2000) called Guided Repeated Oral Reading with feedback (GROR).

How Was ScSR Evaluated?

To determine the effectiveness of ScSR, we conducted a yearlong controlled experiment. The study involved 4 classrooms, 4 third-grade teachers, and 72 third-grade students. Students were randomly assigned to one of two treatment conditions: ScSR with monitoring and wide reading of different genres at students' independent reading levels or GROR of grade-level texts with feedback from teachers and peers. We decided to compare ScSR with GROR rather than SSR for two reasons. First, GROR is the most well-established evidence-based practice to promote reading fluency to which ScSR could be compared (NICHD, 2000). Second, we wanted to explore if ScSR would be an effective means for moving fluent oral reading to silent reading.

To control for teacher effects, all teachers taught both conditions on a rotating basis throughout the year. The schools in which the study was conducted were designated high poverty, low performing schools with approximately 35%–50% African American, Asian, and Latino students, and with over half of the students in the schools qualifying for free or reduced lunch.

Figure 4
Tracking Form for Individual Student Reading Conferences

Student Name _____   Date of Reading Conference _____

Title of Book Student Is Reading _____

Part A: Fluency
Teacher Running Record of Student One-Minute Reading Sample

Number of Words Read _____

Number of Errors _____

Words Read Correctly Per Minute _____

Part B: Comprehension
Student Oral Retelling
Narrative Text:
☐ Setting   ☐ Characters   ☐ Problem   ☐ Goals   ☐ Episode(s)   ☐ Resolution
Expository Text:
☐ Main Idea   ☐ Supporting Detail(s)   ☐ Use of Vocabulary Terms
Questions to Discuss
Narrative: Ask story structure questions about setting, problem, characters, etc.
Expository: Ask about the topic, main idea, supporting details, procedures, explanations, etc.

Part C: Goal Setting
Book Completion Goal Date _____

Goal Pages to Be Read at the Next Reading Conference _____

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

_____

Two pre- and two posttest passages (a total of four passages) were drawn from the third-grade Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS) oral reading fluency (ORF) test: "Pots" and "The Field Trip" (pretest passages), and "My Parents" and "Planting a Garden" (posttest passages). Although there are those who challenge the use of DIBELS for measuring reading fluency (Goodman, 2006), we selected the DIBELS ORF test for two reasons. First, this is a test that is being used in many elementary schools across the United States to assess fluency. Second, the DIBELS ORF test has demonstrated technical adequacy in predictive validity and reliability for measuring students' oral reading fluency (Good & Kaminski, 2002; Rathvon, 2004). One-minute reading samples were scored for accuracy and reading rate (words correct per minute, WCPM). Reading expression in the one-minute samples was evaluated with the Multidimensional Fluency Scale (MFS) using 4 four-point rating subscales: (1) phrasing, (2) smoothness, (3) pacing, and (4) volume. Zutell and Rasinski (1991) report a 0.99 interrater reliability coefficient for the MFS.

Student oral retellings of the 4 third-grade passages were used to assess comprehension and were scored using an idea unit scoring protocol modeled after the Developmental Reading Assessment (Beaver, 1999). Using randomly selected student audiotapes of the oral retellings, two raters used the idea unit oral retelling scoring protocol independently to judge 10 students' oral retellings, yielding a high interrater correlation ($r = 0.94$). The idea units students recalled in oral retellings were proportionally adjusted for the number of words read correctly per minute. A comparison of students' pretest passage mean scores on accuracy, rate, expression, and comprehension confirmed no significant initial differences between the two treatment groups, $F (1,70)$ two passage range F statistics: 0.00–2.80, p range: 0.10–0.99.

Each teacher's fluency instructional time was observed weekly by the school-based literacy coach using a five-item observation rating scale. A random sample of five monthly ratings using the observation scales completed by the district language arts coordinator and a member of the research team revealed a 97% agreement on the ratings of treatment quality and fidelity. All students responded to structured interview questions at the beginning and end of the study. Teachers responded weekly in a Teacher Response Journal (TRJ) and answered a set of structured interview questions at the beginning and end of the study.

How Well Did ScSR Work?

Data were analyzed using analysis of gain scores from the pretest passage to the posttest passage for accuracy, rate, expression, and oral retelling. These analyses demonstrated no significant differences in the pre- to posttest gain scores made between the ScSR or GROR groups at the end of the yearlong experiment on any of the outcome measures of accuracy, rate, or comprehension. The one exception was the ScSR group's gains in expression for the "My Parents" passage, $F (1, 70) = 8.0$, $p = 0.006$, which were significantly greater than the GROR group's expression ratings on a single posttest passage.

Figures 5–8 show the average gains made by the ScSR and GROR fluency treatments from the beginning-of-year to end-of-year growth in accuracy, rate, expression and comprehension from the fall to spring of the third-grade year. ScSR and GROR reading practice approaches resulted in a 21% average reduction in the number of reading errors over the course of the yearlong study (see Figure 5), a 27% average increase in the mean number of words read correctly per minute over the course of the study (see Figure 6), and a 20% average increase in expressive reading qualities including phrasing, volume, smoothness, and pacing (see Figure 7).

ScSR and GROR approaches also resulted in a 43% average increase in the proportion of idea units recalled divided by the number of words read correctly per minute over the course of the yearlong study (see Figure 8). Consequently, for all intents and purposes, students in the ScSR experimental group made progress equivalent to students in the scientifically validated comparison reading practice condition of GROR as recommended by the NRP (NICHD, 2000) in reading accuracy, rate, expression, and comprehension. In summary, these findings can be interpreted to indicate that ScSR represents an equivalent, complementary practice to GROR for improving third-grade students' fluency and comprehension.

All students responded to the structured interview questions. Student responses across both comparison groups to structured interview question 1, How do you think your reading aloud sounds?, in the fall were quite brief. Responses ranged from "Not very good" to "OK" to "Kind of good." In the spring of the year, student responses in both comparison groups were also brief but had shifted to "Good" and other similarly positive comments. ScSR student "good"

Figure 5
Mean Pretest to Posttest Error Reductions for ScSR and GROR (Accuracy)
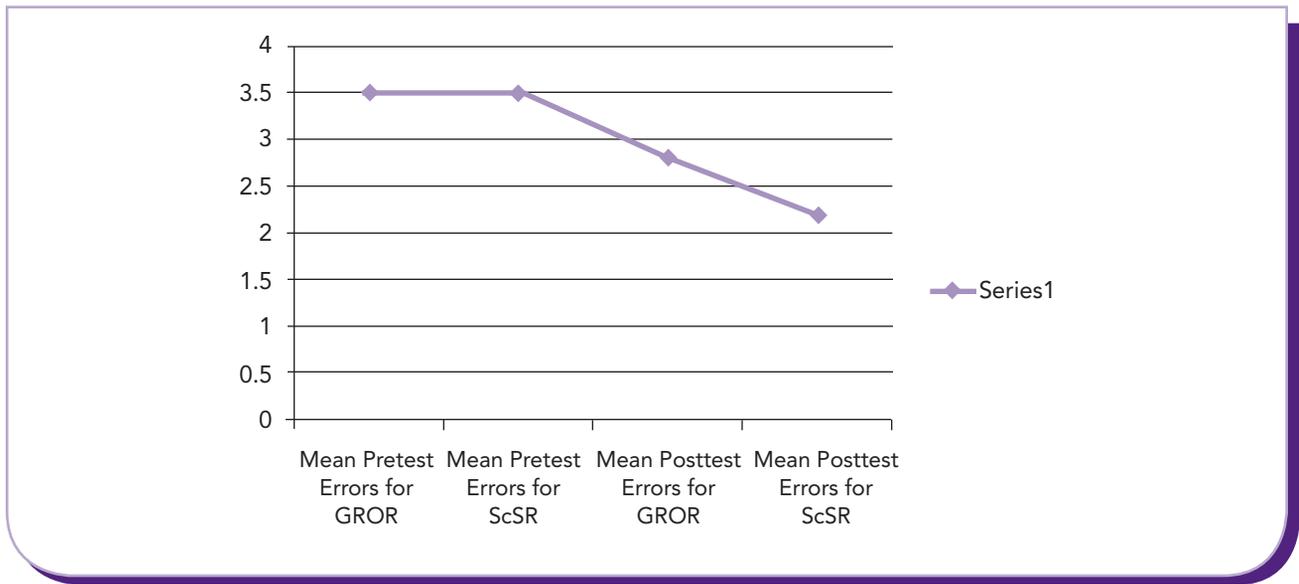
Figure 6
**Increase in WCPM Reading Rates for ScSR and GROR (Rate)**
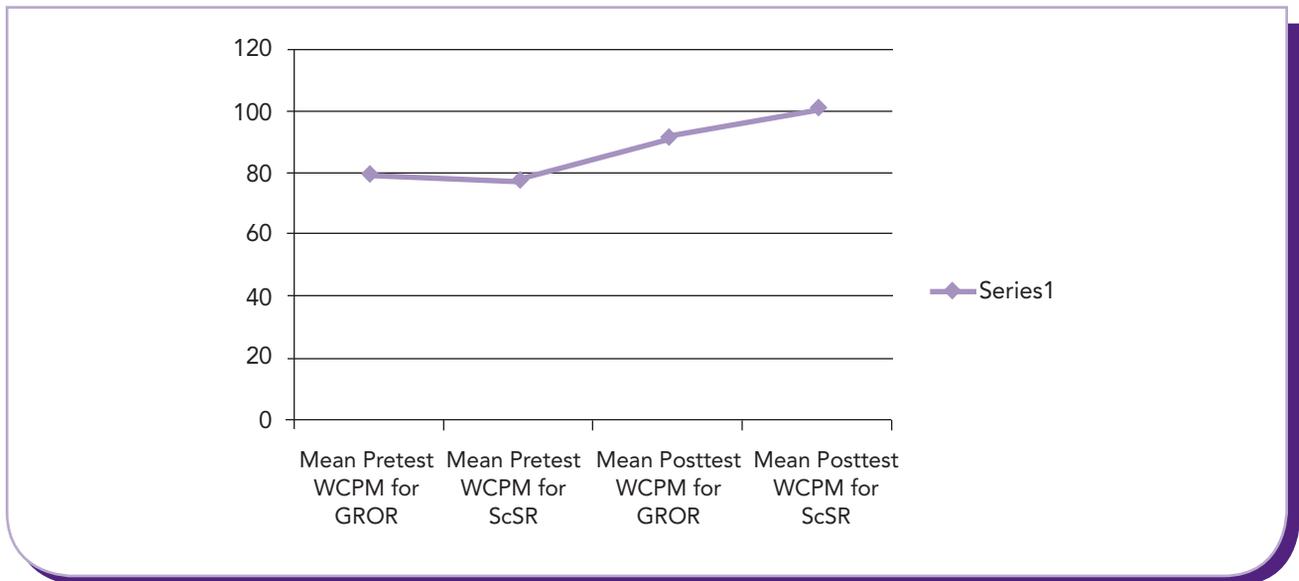
responses had moved from 30% in the fall to 71% in the spring. GROR student "good" responses had moved from 38% in the fall to 59% in the spring.

Student responses in the ScSR and GROR groups in the fall to structured interview question 2, If you don't think your reading aloud sounds good, what do you do to fix it?, evoked responses such as "read more often," "practice," "read louder," "read it again over and over," "read the words correctly," or "read it over until it sounds right." In the spring, students in both groups had more elaborated responses to this question. Students in the ScSR group responded with "Read more, practice," "Practice silently, then read out loud every day," "Read more, read slower to

Figure 7
Increase in Total Expression Scores for ScSR and GROR

Figure 7
Increase in Total Expression Scores for ScSR and GROR
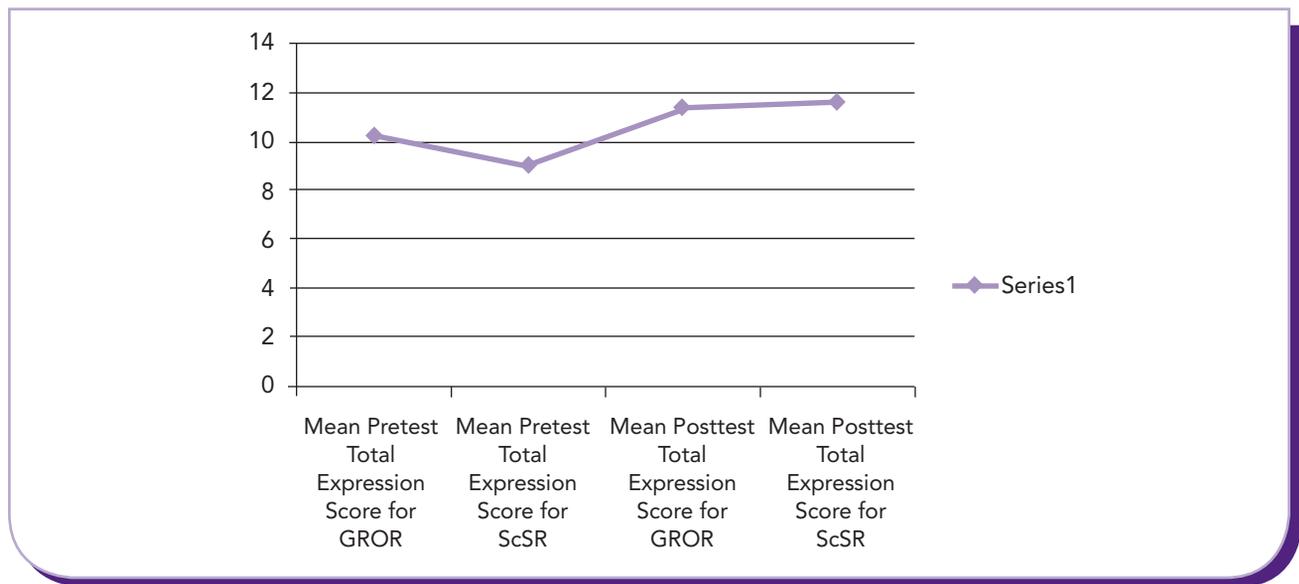
Figure 8
Mean Proportion of Idea Units Recalled Adjusted for WCPM (Comprehension) for ScSR and GROR
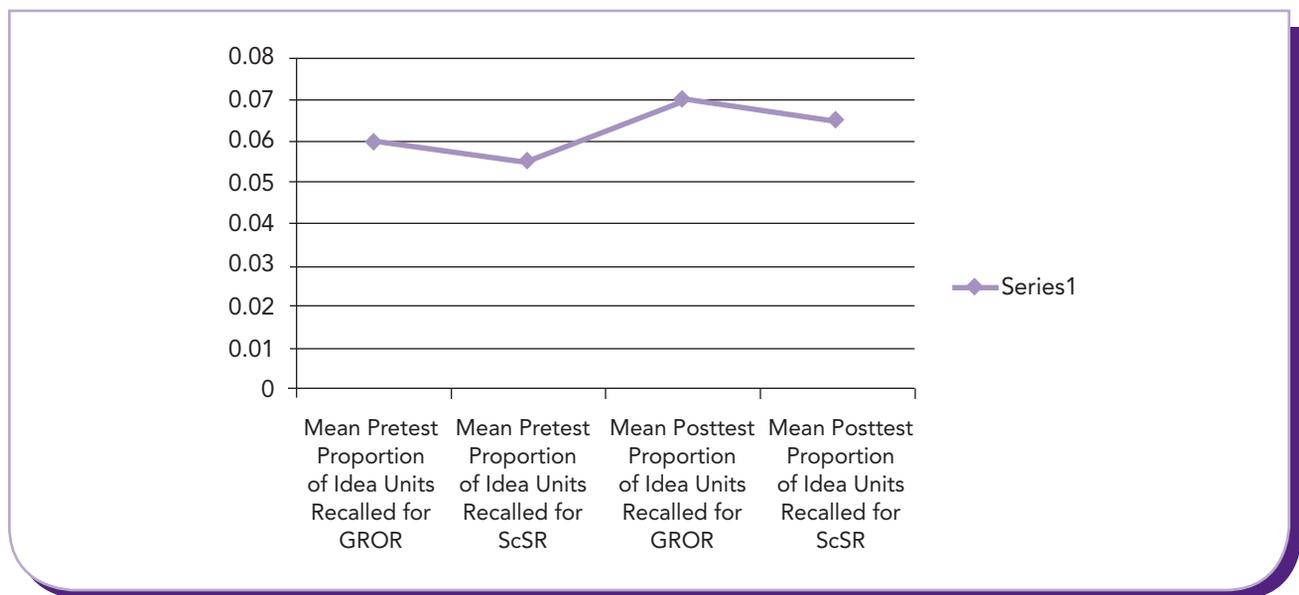
understand the words, not just go through it quickly," or "Slow reading down, think more, and take a big breath and read to the comma or end punctuation." Students in the GROR group responded with "Read slowly so the person I was reading to could understand," "Take your time with your reading so you get it right," or "Read aloud every day, adjust your reading speed to go slower when the text is hard or new; use expression."

Student responses in the spring to structured interview question 3, What does a good reader sound like to you?, showed similar patterns of elaborated

understanding of the concept of good reading. The ScSR and GROR student responses were similar, with students saying that a good reader is "Someone who goes back and fixes mistakes," "Someone who reads smooth, clearly, and loud enough that others can hear," "Someone who read lots of books," "Someone who watches commas and exclamation points," and so on.

Teacher reflections recorded in weekly journal entries about the ScSR practice condition included narrative comments such as "The students who love to read are enjoying this time." "More students are reading chapter books and seem to be really enjoying them." "Kids are really enjoying and getting more expressive in their oral reading." "Some students who did not enjoy reading are now completing their books." One teacher wrote, "I appreciate the quiet time of ScSR. What is wrong with letting students read? I think it is beneficial." Another remarked, "Some students who did not enjoy reading before are completing their books!" In the GROR practice condition one teacher wrote, "The students are reading, practicing, and performing. Rereading has become automatic to some students. I heard one child ask her partner if what they [sic] read made sense. Her partner read the sentence again and they continued." Another teacher stated, "I have noticed the expression of my students is improving. They are stopping and rereading with greater expression."

Finally, ScSR teacher responses to the structured interview question, What effects, if any, are you noticing on your students with each fluency practice condition?, included initial complaints about student participation during silent reading. One teacher wrote, "I notice now that some students just do not read during the 20 minutes of practice." Another wrote, "Students who really want me to hear them practice are developing good skills. I notice that some students do not like to be heard or perform." Still another teacher reported, "They like to read. I enjoy hearing the students tell me about their reading. The excitement and energy is contagious when they read a book they enjoy!"

What Can We Conclude About the Effectiveness of ScSR?

In this study, the effects of the ScSR treatment were compared with the NRP scientifically validated reading practice approach of GROR. The ScSR reading practice approach was systematically designed to address acknowledged concerns surrounding past implementations of traditional SSR reading practice. Some of these weaknesses included: (a) no teacher guidance about how students can select appropriately challenging texts to read; (b) poor control of the time allocated for reading practice; (c) little or no teacher interaction with students around reading texts; (d) no feedback to students about the quality and quantity of their reading; and (e) no student accountability, purposes, or goals for the time spent in reading practice.

The finding of no significant differences between the two contrasting ScSR and GROR reading practice treatment conditions for improving third-grade students' accuracy, reading rates, expression (with the exception of a single passage favoring ScSR), and comprehension retelling scores, at first seemed disappointing. However, when properly viewed, these findings indicate that the ScSR practice approach was found to be, for all intents and purposes, equal to the effects of the evidence-based approach of GROR—at least with regard to improvements in accuracy, reading rate, expression, and comprehension for this sample of third-grade students.

Our qualitative findings showed that any single reading practice approach used exclusively over long periods of time tends toward tedium for both teachers and students. Thus, ScSR provides third-grade teachers access to an alternative for practicing reading that decreases errors and increases students' reading rates, use of expression, and comprehension.

These findings effectively argue that ScSR—in which teachers guide the selection of texts, encourage wide reading, monitor student progress, discuss books briefly, provide students with feedback, and require accountability for time spent reading silently—represents a viable, complementary, and motivating approach that is comparable to the NRP-recommended reading practice of GROR for this sample of third-grade students.

Mrs. Taverski's third-grade classroom now uses both GROR and ScSR to read, re-read, perform, discuss, and share the joy of becoming increasingly fluent readers. No longer are Mrs. Taverski and her students confined to a single approach for facilitating reading fluency practice. Rather Mrs. Taverski alternates using two effective reading fluency practice approaches with her students that lead to

increased motivation, reading fluency, and reading comprehension.

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