**Professional Development Reflection**

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For the professional development hours, I listened to two Melissa and Lori Love Literacy podcasts, *The Relationship Between Phonics and Language Comprehension with Tiffany Hogan* and *Systems to Get Better Reading Results with Stephanie Stollar*, and watched the presentation by Dr. Holly Lane, *Science or snake oil: How to tell the difference*. Each of the three discussions had overlapping themes, both with EDUC 397 and each other.

Looking first at *The Relationship Between Phonics and Language Comprehension with Tiffany Hogan,* the main idea discussed in the podcast is explicit instruction of language comprehension. As explained by Hogan, traditional instruction of language comprehension was mainly the testing of it without explicit instruction. Hogan quotes Jeanne Chall, a former psychologist, writer, and literacy researcher, who said “we’re not really teaching language comprehension, we’re just testing it” (Loftus & Sappington, 2023, 19:56) back in the 60s and that many of the techniques she was referring to are still in use. Hogan states that asking students questions about the text being read is just testing comprehension and “qualitatively different than teaching comprehension” (Loftus & Sappington, 2023, 20:09). The importance of language comprehension is expressed in both Scarbrough’s Reading Rope (Moats, 2020, pg. 15) and The Simple View of Reading (Moats, 2020, pg. 2). Both theories consider language comprehension and word recognition to be equally important for skilled reading or reading comprehension. As explained by Hogan, a struggle for assessing comprehension in younger grades is that the words they can read do not reflect the complexity of language that they should be able to comprehend, so decodable books used to teach phonics skills “should not be your comprehension books” (Loftus & Sappington, 2023, 35:29).

The decoupling and weaving together of language comprehension and word recognition is also considered by Stephanie Stollar as she discusses Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) in episode 193 of the *Melissa and Lori Love Literacy* podcast. Stollar discusses how language comprehension is still a focus for students that need the second dose of word recognition through the MTSS approach, so it is done through read aloud and purposeful conversations (Loftus & Sappington, 2024, 33:35). With the two aspects of reading being taught separately, students can be caught up or maintained in each aspect accordingly until the two come together as fluent reading.

The concepts explored by Tiffany Hogan and Stephanie Stollar are founded upon The Simple View of Reading and Scarborough’s Reading Rope, both of which are under the umbrella term of “The Science of Reading.” With the Science of Reading becoming the focus of literacy experts, the term has become a buzz word. As Dr. Holly Lane explains in *Science or Snake Oil: How to tell the difference*, it has become increasing important to be able to differentiate good, solid research-based literacy resources from sales gimmicks (Lane, 2022, 5:48). Although the knowledge of how to tell if a piece of literature is reliable information is invaluable, one of my biggest takeaways from the presentation is the Hattie’s “Barometer of Influence” (Lane, 2022, 25:05). It’s a scale for categorizing effect size for research and teaching approaches. It shows that an effect size of 0.0 to 0.2 is simply the effects of children’s development and should naturally happen without teacher intervention. This means that studies reporting an effect size within those parameters have essentially no positive effect. This knowledge will assist me throughout my teaching career as new teaching approaches come up and are encouraged without proper consideration.

References

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