

Science of Reading Learning Journeys of Teachers and Speech-Language Pathologists

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Research Questions

- What are the self-guided learning experiences around the “science of reading” (SOR) of classroom teachers and speech-language pathologists (SLPs)?
- What collaboration have teachers experienced with SLPs and how has their self-study impacted this collaboration?

Method

- **Focus groups:** Five teacher focus groups (n=21)

Discussion

- Collaboration between teachers and SLPs varies between districts, schools, and classrooms.
- Teachers reported positive collaborative experiences when SLPs were flexible and engaged in regular back-and-forth conversations.
- Shared vocabulary and common language developed through self-study enhances the quality of collaboration.
- Positive relationships and willingness to collaborate strengthens collaboration. Positive relationships can occur when teachers feel that SLPs value their knowledge and can exchange information with each other.
- A shared common interest in SOR and literacy promotes collaboration.
- Self-study improves teachers’ understanding of the scope of SLPs’ practice and their wealth of knowledge.
- Self-study allows teachers to better understand SLP recommendations and how to implement them.
- Teachers with limited access to SLPs reported that brief conversations through passings were still helpful.

Challenges

- The time constraints and demanding schedules of SLPs pose barriers for collaboration.
- Building relationships can be difficult when SLPs frequently rotate between schools or focus primarily on assessments.

Themes

Shared vocabulary and common language

“As a big component of like learning the science of reading, we’re gaining more vocabulary so that we can actually have more meaningful conversations with the speech pathologist.”

- Lynn, teacher

“I think that’s a really important piece of collaboration... we were using the same vocabulary and we’re understanding the same data.”

- Ana, teacher

“We now share more of the same language... So it’s allowed me to feel more comfortable talking about where I’m noticing some gaps...”

- Louise, teacher

Back-and-forth dialogue

“We’ve been able to share resources back and forth and they’re telling me the courses that they’re taking and I’m saying the ones I’m taking and so... we’re able [to] share a lot of that which is lovely.”

- Marta, teacher

“I think having the [SLP] coming in on a weekly basis and just connecting with her... When I’d have something new [I’d say], ‘have you seen this’ and just having that dialogue.”

- Theodora, teacher

Understanding the scope of SLPs’ practice

“I didn’t really understand what kinds of things that a speech language pathologist would help with as far as reading is concerned. I think that my thought was that it’s articulation.”

- Sidney, teacher

“But when I started to realize [the SLP’s wealth of knowledge], I mean, she and I would get together all the time and just have these fabulous conversations and it was just so exciting to learn.”

- Grace, teacher

SLP time constraints and demanding schedules

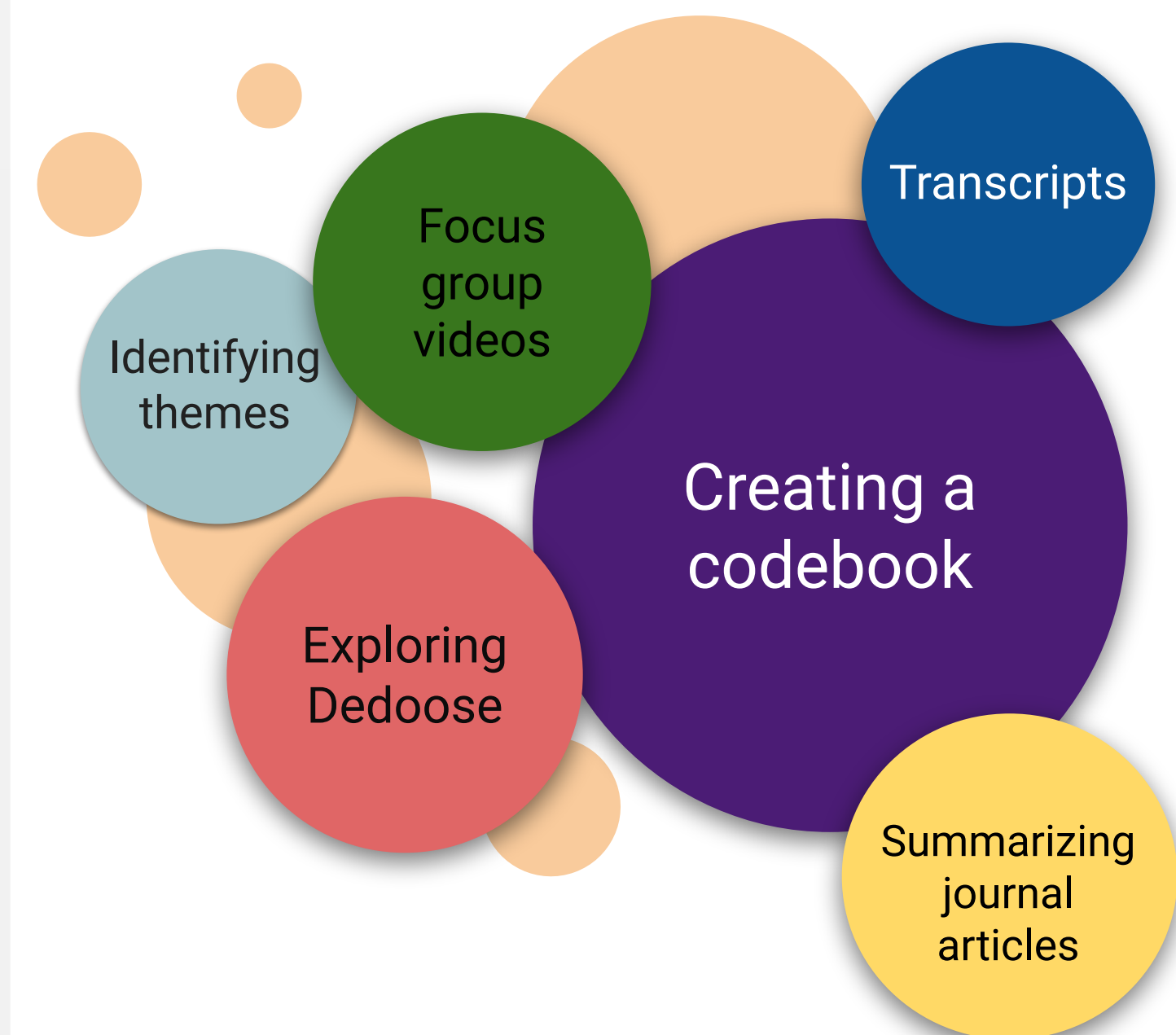
“We do have SLPs in our schools. But their caseloads are so massive, and the demands on them are so huge... It’s not the easiest to work alongside with them, which is unfortunate because they have such a wealth of knowledge.”

- Brooke, teacher

“There’s just no time offered to have any sort of collaboration... [but] brief conversations in the hallway were helpful.”

- Vivian, teacher

My Experiences



My Takeaways

- Focus groups are a research method that allow participants to share experiences and form connections through informal discussions.
- Otter.ai is an effective transcription platform.
- Dedoose is a software used for analyzing qualitative research.
- Qualitative data can be organized into a hierarchy including themes, categories, and codes.
- Researchers use inter-rater reliability during the coding process.
- Pseudonyms in transcripts promote confidentiality.
- It is important for data to remain within a lab.
- Educators can engage in self-study and lifelong learning to stay up-to-date with literacy research.
- As a pre-service teacher, I want to collaborate with interdisciplinary team members such as speech-language pathologists.
- I am eager to learn more about SOR.
- I am interested in pursuing graduate studies and research in the future.

