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Robinson, M. F., Meisinger, E. B., & Joyner, R. E. (2018). The Influence of Oral Versus Silent Reading on Reading Comprehension in Students With Reading Disabilities. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 42(2), 105–116. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0731948718806665>

In this article, authors Melissa Robinson, Rachel Joyner and Elizabeth Meisinger(2018), conducted a study to determine the influence of reading modality(oral vs. silent) on reading comprehension in students with specific learning disabilities. A sample of students with SLD in reading were each given two AIMSweb benchmark passages, one to be read aloud and the other silently.This study concluded that, “Oral reading was found to facilitate higher reading comprehension scores than silent reading for early elementary students (i.e., second and third graders), whereas equivalent comprehension was found across these modalities for late elementary students, fourth and fifth graders” (Robinson et. al., 2018, p7). Oral reading also enhances the phonological memory code, allowing students to slow the pace of reading as needed to ensure proper understanding as the message of the text unfolds (Schwanenflugel & Knapp as cited in Robinson et al., 2018).

The authors touched on some points that I found very interesting. For example, it was mentioned that “Once students have internalized the cognitive process involved in reading, they can transition to silent reading with good comprehension”(Robenson et al., 2018 p. 2). This makes sense because the student is now proficient, where they no longer have to pronounce words, and can rearrange and manipulate stored information. They are at a point where they

can omit words and still get the overall meaning of the text. As the study showed, this usually comes with age and experience.

The authors drew attention to the fact that students are expected to read text silently as they enter the upper grades in elementary school, and in middle school. However, teachers rarely provide academic support to students regarding how to develop silent reading skills or how to extract information independently (Hiebert, Samuels, & Rasinski, 2012 as cited in Robinson et al., 2018). This resonated with me because I don't recall ever being taught how to read silently in my early school years. To me it came naturally over time. I was taught how to find the main ideas in text, and other strategies to facilitate comprehension but nothing about silent reading.

In my opinion, there were no new or startling revelations in this article. The authors' findings were in fact what was to be expected. It's not surprising that younger students who are still in the early stages of reading development, and have yet to fully develop phonemic awareness skills, comprehended better in oral reading. That, coupled with the students' disability, made these findings almost predictable. Also, reading comprehension outcomes can vary for students with SLD, depending on the disability. Dyslexia, hyperlexia, which has links to autism, dysgraphia and language processing disorder are all SLD. It would have been helpful knowing what the students' disabilities were, in the sample studied.