
EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION IN CORE READING PROGRAMS

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to conduct a content analysis of the types and occurrences of explicit instructional moves recommended for teaching five essentials of effective reading instruction in grades 1, 3, and 5 core reading program teachers' editions in five widely marketed core reading programs. Guided practice was the most frequently recommended explicit instructional move for teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, and vocabulary. Discussion was the dominant explicit instructional move recommended for comprehension. Modeling was the dominant explicit instructional move recommended for fluency. Core reading program lessons were found to provide ample explicit instructional move recommendations for explanations and guided practice, with less attention to modeling or discussing reading concepts, strategies, and skills. The core reading program lessons provided inadequate recommendations for the explicit instructional moves of monitoring student progress, providing students feedback, and moving students gradually toward independence.

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MANY elementary teachers in the United States rely on basal or core reading programs (CRPs) to provide reading instruction in elementary school classrooms. Recent surveys have shown that nationally marketed core reading programs are used in 73.2% of U.S. elementary schools (Dewitz, Jones, & Leahy, 2009). The use of CRPs has been increasing in recent years,

particularly in the primary grades, due to federal legislation requiring that schools provide students with evidence-based reading instruction (Brenner & Hiebert, 2010).

Due to the widespread and long-standing use of CRPs in the United States as a leading resource for providing elementary reading instruction, researchers have for many years investigated the design, content, and components of CRPs. In 1981, Durkin conducted a content analysis of comprehension instruction in CRP teachers' editions. She concluded that CRPs teachers' editions offered application and practice exercises for comprehension, but failed to provide recommendations for how to teach reading comprehension. Over the past several decades, other researchers have examined various aspects of CRPs such as the quality of the reading selections, teaching suggestions, content focus, and curriculum coverage (Al Otaiba, Kosanovich-Grek, Torgesen, Hassler, & Wahl, 2005; Brenner & Hiebert, 2010; Dewitz et al., 2009; Duffy, Roehler, & Putnam, 1987; Hoffman, 1987; Hoffman, Sailors, & Patterson, 2002; Hoffman et al., 1998; McCarthey & Hoffman, 1995; McGill-Franzen, Zmach, Solic, & Zeig, 2006; Reutzel & Larsen, 1995; Simmons & Kame'enui, 2002).

Past national research syntheses, as well as other research reports, have shown that *explicit instruction* is a powerful and effective instruction model for teaching children to read (Chall, 2002; Duffy et al., 1986; Hall, 2002; National Reading Panel, 2000; Pearson & Dole, 1987; Roller, 2001; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). More recent research syntheses continue to recommend the use of explicit instruction as an effective means for teaching a wide variety of reading skills and strategies (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Coyne et al., 2009; Kame'enui & Baumann 2012; Kamil et al., 2008; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; Shanahan et al., 2010; Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004).

Since explicit instruction has been consistently recommended for providing effective elementary reading instruction, and there was no research located in a bibliographic literature search of explicit instruction in CRPs, we decided to investigate to what extent essential elements of explicit instruction or explicit instructional moves are recommended in contemporary CRP publishers' reading lessons. We limited our study of explicit instructional moves recommended in CRPs to five reading essentials of evidence-based reading instruction as described in the report of the National Reading Panel (NRP) (2000): phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. We did so because many CRPs claim to be "evidence-based," meaning that the content of reading instruction provided in these CRPs focuses on the five essentials of evidence-based reading instruction and the associated recommended instructional practices, including the use of explicit instruction, consistent with the findings and recommendations of the NRP (2000) as well as other research and scholarly documents (Kamil et al., 2008; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; Shanahan et al., 2010). Because of widespread use in U.S. elementary school classrooms, CRPs have potential to exert substantial influence upon the use of explicit instructional moves when teaching five essentials of evidence-based reading instruction (Al Otaiba et al., 2005; Brenner & Hiebert, 2010; Dewitz et al., 2009; Durkin, 1981).

The purpose of the present study was to examine the elements of explicit instruction or explicit instructional moves recommended in five major CRPs in grades 1, 3, and 5. Our content-analysis study explored answers to two questions: (1) What types and occurrences of explicit instructional moves are recommended in CRP teachers'

edition lessons for instructing each of the five essential elements of reading instruction? and (2) What types and occurrences of explicit instructional moves are recommended in CRP teachers' editions by grade level?

Being “Explicit” about Explicit Instruction

Torgesen (2004) described explicit instruction as “instruction that does not leave anything to chance and does not make assumptions about skills and knowledge that children will acquire on their own” (p. 363). Explicit instruction descends from a line of two other closely related models of effective instruction: direct instruction and direct explanations (Pearson & Dole, 1987).

In 1986, Gersten and Carnine (1986, p. 71) described direct instruction as involving seven components: (1) explicit step-by-step training in particular strategies; (2) student mastery of each step in the process; (3) corrective feedback about student errors; (4) gradual fading from teacher directed activities toward independent work; (5) adequate, systematic practice for students using a range of examples; (6) cumulative review; and (7) teaching formats that anticipate or “pre-correct” students' potential errors. Research has shown that direct instruction is generally effective for teaching isolated strategies, linear progressions of multiple strategies, or processes with multiple steps (Carnine, Silbert, & Kame'enui, 1987; Gersten, Fuchs, Williams, & Baker, 2001; Pearson & Dole, 1987). On the other hand, direct instruction does not provide opportunities for students to acquire strategic or conditional knowledge about the conditions under which a given strategy or process might be used, nor does it provide opportunities for developing metacognitive awareness of strategy or process use (Pearson & Dole, 1987).

Direct explanation focuses on providing students with elaborate teacher explanations about the mental processes used when applying strategies to process text using teacher verbalization, or think-alouds (Duffy, 2009; Duffy et al., 1986). Direct explanations are situated in accomplishing real reading tasks and showing students how to fill in experiential and knowledge gaps by helping them “think their way through texts” (Duffy, 2009, p. 45).

Explicit instruction also uses direct explanations and teacher modeling with think-alouds of what, how, when, and why a strategy is to be used in processing text (Duke & Pearson, 2002). In addition, teachers scaffold and guide student practice, and release responsibility for strategy use gradually to the students while giving them timely feedback in explicit instruction. Ultimately, students are provided ample opportunities to practice independently to develop self-regulated strategy use (Archer & Hughes, 2011). As such, explicit instruction tends to promote flexible and multiple strategy use replicating what occurs within skilled reading (Pearson & Dole, 1987; Reutzel, Smith, & Fawson, 2005).

Essential Elements of Explicit Instruction

To better understand explicit instruction, we conducted electronic bibliographic searches in the ERIC, Academic Search Premier, EBSCO Host, PsychINFO, and Education Full Text databases using the terms *explicit* and *instruction*. To further limit our search, we used the terms *reading* and *elementary-aged children* (ages 6–12). When our search was complete, we read and coded each bibliographical entry using

the following inclusion/exclusion criteria: (a) peer reviewed, (b) conducted in the United States, (c) published between 2000 and 2010, and (d) descriptive of instructional moves associated with the use of explicit instruction. The final list of 40 articles and research reports meeting these four inclusion/exclusion criteria contained descriptions, definitions, and recommendations for 24 separate instructional moves associated with explicit instruction. Each mention of the 24 explicit instructional moves in the 40 articles and research reports located was frequency counted, compiled into a spreadsheet, and cross-checked by members of the research team.

To be included in our final conceptualization of explicit instruction, an explicit instructional move must have been mentioned in at least 25% of the 40 bibliographic entries. Unlike what is commonly known as an “instructional routine,” in which a sequence of actions to be implemented by the teacher to instruct a concept, skill, or strategy is described, an explicit instructional move is defined as specific, discrete instructions, elements, or actions provided to the teacher in the CRP teachers’ edition lesson on how to teach a particular reading task, skill, strategy, content, or concept. Invoking this minimal criterion reduced the initial list of 24 to just seven instructional moves associated with the concept of “explicit instruction” as applied to the teaching of elementary reading: (a) direct explanation, (b) modeling, (c) guided practice, (d) independent practice, (e) feedback, (f) discussion, and (g) monitoring. In what follows, we briefly describe and review the literature associated with each of these seven explicit instructional moves.

Direct explanation is when new material is taught in overt and concrete ways (Stevens, Van Meter, Garner, & Warcholak, 2008). It includes a clear description of a skill, strategy, process, or concept using concise and consistent language (Coyne et al., 2009; Duffy, 2009; Pearson & Dole, 1987). The what, how, why, and when of what is to be learned are provided by the teacher in clear, comprehensible language (Clark & Graves, 2004; Duke & Pearson 2002). Direct explanation can also include step-by-step descriptions of a process or definitions of new terms (Blair, Rupley, & Nichols, 2007). Recent research syntheses indicate that direct explanations as described here are consistently associated with providing explicit reading instruction (Allington, 2012; Archer & Hughes, 2011). We hypothesize that direct explanation will remain a prominent focus of instruction throughout grades 1, 3, and 5 but will shift from an initial focus on decoding in grade 1 to a later emphasis on comprehension in grades 3 and 5.

Modeling is when teachers demonstrate for the students how to use a particular strategy, process, skill, or concept (Rasinski, Homan, & Biggs, 2009; Rupley, Blair, & Nichols, 2009; Simpson & Nist, 2000; Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez, 2005). In 10 of the bibliographic entries, think-aloud was included as a part of modeling (Blair et al., 2007; Coyne et al., 2009; Dewitz et al., 2009; Duffy, 2009; Duke & Pearson, 2002; Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau, 2007; Rosenshine, 2001; Rupley et al., 2009; Strickland, 2002). Thinking aloud allows teachers to verbally elaborate on their own thinking processes with students (Duffy, 2009). Thinking aloud “provides novice learners with a way to observe the ‘expert thinking’ that is usually hidden from the student” (Rosenhine, 2001, p. 267). Dewitz et al. (2009) explained modeling with thinking aloud as the teacher making the “covert overt.” Research has shown that modeling is an essential practice in effective interventions for struggling readers and learning-disabled students (Allington, 2012; Archer & Hughes, 2011; Pearson & Dole, 1987; Vaughn, Gersten, & Chard, 2000). We hypothesize that modeling will remain

prominent throughout grades 1, 3, and 5 but will shift from an early focus in grade 1 on developing decoding skills to a stronger focus on developing comprehension skills in grades 3 and 5.

Guided practice makes use of scaffolding, teacher support, and a gradual release of responsibility. For the purposes of this study, these instructional moves have been subsumed into guided practice. Rupley et al. (2009) describe guided practice as providing varying degrees of teacher-student interaction used during meaningful practice. The teacher starts guided practice by assuming major responsibility for using the strategies, processes, skills, or concepts and then gradually releases responsibility to the students (Pearson & Fielding, 1991). The gradual release process is the primary means by which teachers ensure that the students can successfully apply the strategies, processes, skills, or concepts being taught prior to allowing students to move to independent practice (Carnine, Jitendra, & Silbert, 1997; Dewitz et al., 2009). There must be sufficient time and opportunity for students to practice so they can be successful and gradual release can take place (Baker, Gersten, & Lee, 2002; Pearson & Dole, 1987; Simpson & Nist, 2000; Swanson, 2001). We hypothesize that guided practice will remain prominent, if not dominant, throughout grades 1, 3, and 5 but will shift from an early focus on developing decoding skills in grade 1 to a stronger focus on developing comprehension skills in grades 3 and 5.

Independent practice is described as active application of a strategy, skill, process, or concept, where students are on-task and independent of teacher or peer support (Ehlhardt et al., 2008; Rupley et al., 2009; Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez, 2003). Rosenshine (2001) stated that “the most effective teachers made sure that independent practice took place *after* there had been sufficient guided practice, so that students were not practicing errors and misconceptions” (p. 265). Independent practice is a crucial element of explicit instruction to ensure that students can successfully apply newly acquired knowledge, skills, strategies, or concepts on their own (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Ehlhardt et al., 2008; Pearson & Dole, 1987; Rupley, Blair, & Nichols, 2009; Taylor et al., 2003). We hypothesize that independent practice will be recommended less often in grade 1, as younger students need more emphasis on guided reading practice, and will increase in grades 3 and 5 as students become more proficient readers.

Feedback is when teachers provide corrective verbal feedback to students regarding their application of skills, strategies, processes, and concepts (Gersten et al., 2001; Pearson & Dole, 1987; Taylor et al., 2003). Teachers can provide corrective feedback to correct mistakes or affirm correct application of skills, strategies, processes, or concepts (Pressley et al., 2001). Rosenshine (2001) advises that teachers should “provide process feedback when answers are correct but hesitant, sustaining feedback, clues, or re-teaching when answers are incorrect, and re-teach material when necessary” (Table 1, p. 266). Archer and Hughes (2011) assert that appropriately given feedback is a powerful tool used to “close the gap between the student’s current response and the desired response” (p. 175). We hypothesize that feedback will be relatively consistent, yet somewhat occasional, across grades 1, 3, and 5 and across areas of reading instruction as a source of corrective guidance and motivational support for students.

Discussion often involves asking questions, eliciting student responses, asking students to elaborate on a response, and providing opportunities for students to

Table 1. Total Explicit Instructional Moves Recommended by Five Core Reading Program Publishers (A–E) and for each Reading Instruction Essential—Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension

Five Reading Essentials ^a	Core Reading Program Publishers				
	A	B	C	D	E
Phonemic awareness (<i>N</i> = 43 instructional moves):					
Direct explanation (DE)	2	0	0	4	3
Modeling (MOD)	0	0	4	4	0
Guided practice (GP) ^b	7	0	5	5	6
Independent practice (IP)	1	0	0	0	1
Feedback (F) ^c	0	0	0	0	0
Discussion (D)	1	0	0	0	0
Monitoring (MON) ^c	0	0	0	0	0
Phonics (<i>N</i> = 233 instructional moves):					
Direct explanation (DE)	18	2	5	10	11
Modeling (MOD)	9	2	12	5	12
Guided practice (GP) ^b	13	4	18	28	13
Independent practice (IP)	8	4	8	7	6
Feedback (F) ^c	0	0	2	0	0
Discussion (D)	5	0	0	4	1
Monitoring (MON)	10	4	5	3	2
Fluency (<i>N</i> = 189 instructional moves):					
Direct explanation (DE)	18	3	5	10	8
Modeling (MOD) ^b	32	9	11	13	5
Guided practice (GP)	13	9	7	15	8
Independent practice (IP) ^c	0	0	0	3	0
Feedback (F)	2	0	0	6	1
Discussion (D)	8	0	0	4	1
Monitoring (MON)	1	5	4	2	0
Vocabulary (<i>N</i> = 252 instructional moves):					
Direct explanation (DE)	7	18	14	12	10
Modeling (MOD)	1	6	5	5	6
Guided practice (GP) ^b	19	19	10	15	13
Independent practice (IP)	2	9	6	3	5
Feedback (F) ^c	0	0	0	0	0
Discussion (D)	5	21	18	14	2
Monitoring (MON)	5	8	5	3	0
Comprehension (<i>N</i> = 803 instructional moves):					
Direct explanation (DE)	56	24	44	40	26
Modeling (MOD)	78	18	26	24	16
Guided practice (GP)	33	19	22	28	14
Independent practice (IP)	7	26	21	8	13
Feedback (F) ^c	9	0	0	0	0
Discussion (D) ^b	43	25	39	65	50
Monitoring (MON)	6	24	15	4	1

^a *N* = 1,574 total instructional moves recommended.

^b Highest number of explicit instructional moves.

^c Lowest number of explicit instructional moves.

interact with teacher or peers in a group setting (Blair et al., 2007; Gersten & Geva, 2003; Gersten et al., 2001; Simpson & Nist, 2000; Taylor et al., 2003; Wilkinson & Son, 2011). Discussion typically occurs most frequently during guided practice or immediately following direct explanations. When discussion is included as part of explicit instruction, the teacher is often the initiator and facilitator (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Duffy, 2009). We hypothesize that discussion will be less prominent in grade 1 but

will increase as texts become more complex and instruction focuses more intently on developing comprehension skills in grades 3 and 5.

Monitoring is characterized as carefully attending to student responses (Archer & Hughes, 2011), monitoring performance (Rosenshine, 2001), and ongoing or consistent monitoring (Gersten & Geva, 2003; Pressley et al., 2001; Simpson & Nist, 2000). Monitoring can be thought of as “on-the-fly” teacher assessment to determine how students are responding to instruction. Monitoring “check-ins” with students can be formal or informal. Blair et al. (2007) discussed three different types of monitoring: student interviews, teacher observations, and viewing samples of students’ work. Monitoring can also include the use of formal assessments given to students to determine their level of understanding, the effectiveness of instructional practices, status of student outcomes, and selection of future instructional strategies and tasks (Rupley et al., 2009). Monitoring is essential because it is the mechanism that informs teachers about the quality and quantity of student progress to shape and inform their instructional decision making (Archer & Hughes, 2011). We hypothesize that monitoring will remain relatively consistent across grades 1, 3, and 5 as a means for collecting continuous informal data from teacher-student interactions regarding student progress and understanding.

At present, then, the degree to which current CRP teachers’ edition reading lessons recommend the use of *explicit instruction moves* for teaching the five essentials of evidence-based reading instruction is unclear. Given the research recommendations that explicit instruction can be effectively used to teach all five essentials of evidence-based reading instruction and the widespread use of CRPs in elementary classrooms, there exists a compelling need to investigate the types and occurrences of explicit instructional moves recommended to elementary school teachers in grades 1, 3, and 5 when providing instruction in the five essentials of evidence-based reading.

Method

Research Design

A content analysis design was used for this study. Content analysis is described as “the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics” (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 1). In CRPs, teachers’ edition lessons constitute written messages communicating instructional practice recommendations. The use of content analysis involves a nine-step process outlined by Neuendorf (2002): (1) theory and rationale, (2) conceptualization, (3) operationalization (measures), (4) sampling, (5) coding schemes, (6) coding, (7) training and pilot reliability, (8) final reliability, and (9) tabulation and reporting. Having previously discussed the theory, rationale, and conceptualization of this study in the introduction, we begin this section of the report by discussing the operationalization.

Operationalization

The use of content analysis requires researchers to describe or define the unit of analysis to be studied (Neuendorf, 2002). We determined to use an “instructional move” as the unit of analysis in this study. Instructional moves have been used as the unit of analysis in other recent content analyses of CRP reading lessons (Dewitz et al., 2009).

Sampling

CRP lessons for this content-analysis study were selected using stratified random sampling. The first sampling stratum used to select reading lessons was grade level. The sampling unit was 1 week of lessons. Four of the five CRP publishers provided 30 weeks of instruction for each grade level; the fifth CRP program provided 42 weeks of instruction. One intact week of lessons within each of three grade levels (1st, 3rd, 5th) for each of the five CRPs was randomly selected. Modifications/adaptations recommended for special populations such as English language learners, those below level, or those in advanced level instruction within a randomly selected intact week of reading lessons were excluded from the sample, since these lessons are targeted for special populations. The final 15 randomly selected “intact weeks” of instruction were found to include 572 separate reading lessons. Of these 572 separate lessons sampled, 290 lessons (50.6%) were included in the final sample of lessons because, in accordance with the focus of this study, the lessons focused on one or more of the five reading instruction essentials: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, or comprehension. The 282 lessons not retained from the initial sample of 572 lessons were rejected, as these lessons focused on areas of study such as genre study, poetry, study skills, grammar, internet exploration, listening, speaking, viewing, read-aloud, or oral language rather than one or more of the five essentials of reading instruction. There were 65 reading lessons sampled from each of Publishers C and D, 55 lessons from each of Publishers A and B, and 50 lessons from Publisher E. There were 125 first-grade reading lessons sampled, 100 third-grade lessons, and 65 fifth-grade lessons.

Coding Schemes

The goal of a coding scheme is to provide as specific a description of the construct under study as possible so as to avoid investigator bias. In order to meet this goal, coding processes used by investigators must be stable and consistent (reliable). To render the coding process reliable, the creation of a codebook, coding forms, and estimating interrater reliability involving more than one coder are recommended. Using an a priori design, we constructed a codebook that included variables, their measurement, and coding rules before the data collection began (Neuendorf, 2002). The codebook included definitions for specifying an intact week of lessons, the lesson focus on one or more of the five essentials of reading instruction, explicit instructional moves recommended, and the step-by-step process to be used when coding these lessons.

Coding

The steps involved in the coding process included tracking reading lessons by recording the week, page number, and section of the lesson, determining the reading essential in the lesson to be coded, and coding each explicit instructional move. A coding form was also constructed to record the coding of variables as described in the codebook (see Fig. 1). Spaces on the coding form correspond with the variables defined in the codebook. The coding form required entering general information about the lesson, the week number, reading selection title, lesson section, grade level, and publisher. Individual CRP reading lessons were coded by the content focus of the lesson (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, or comprehension) ac-

Explicit Element Coding Form

Week #: _____ Main Story Title: _____ Section: _____

Page #'s: _____ Date: _____ Coders: _____ Grade Level: 1st 3rd 5th

Publisher: Scott Foresman Houghton Mifflin Harcourt McGraw-Hill SRA

Lesson Type	Pdf page #	Direct Explanation	Modeling with Teacher Think-aloud	Modeling without Teacher Think-aloud	Guided Practice	Independent Practice	Feedback	Discussion	Formal Skill/Strategy Monitoring	Informal Skill/Strategy Monitoring	Other
Phonemic Awareness											
Phonics											
Fluency											
Vocab.											
Comp.											

Figure 1. Explicit element coding form. 

coding to the label in the CRP teachers’ edition. If the publisher identified the lesson as a phonics lesson, it was coded as a phonics lesson, and so forth. After determining the focus of the reading lesson content, the coders examined the lesson recommendations line by line for inclusion of the seven explicit instructional moves.

If the same explicit instructional move was found repeatedly within a single lesson, each occurrence was coded. For example, “Remind students that good readers ask themselves questions as they read. Encourage students to ask themselves questions as they read. Good readers try to answer their questions as they read. Explain to students that using the cause and effect graphic organizer will help them to answer their questions.” In this lesson, two “direct explanation” explicit instructional moves were coded; one explanation occurrence is coded for asking questions, and another for cause and effect. If the coders had trouble determining the explicit instructional moves or type of lessons being coded during the coding process, the codebook was referenced.

Training and Initial Coding Reliability

To begin the coding of the explicit instructional moves in five CRPs, two experienced coders, one doctoral student in literacy education and a recent graduate with an earned doctorate in literacy education, read through the codebook together. These two coders had worked together on a previous content-analysis study of CRPs prior to engaging in the coding involved in this study. Training took place under the direction of the research team director and consisted of multiple discussions of the

content and structure of the codebook and occasional meetings to discuss problems in coding when they arose.

Initial coding attempts were not sufficiently reliable due to misunderstandings about the way in which a week's lesson could be divided up in the CRP teachers' editions. The codebook and coding form were revised by the research team to clearly define the divisions made across the week of instruction to signal a break in the instruction as a lesson section. Examples of breaks in instruction included days or "before, during, or after reading." The number of lesson sections differed among the three grades and across the publishers sampled in this study. First-grade lessons were divided into sections by day of instruction; some third-grade lessons were divided into sections by days and some into "before, during, and after reading" sections depending on how the CRP teacher's edition labeled the breaks in the lessons. The fifth-grade lessons were either divided by "before, during, and after" reading or by "pre-reading, reading" sections. Once the two coders could independently and reliably divide a week's lesson across grade levels using the CRP lesson headings, coding of recommended explicit instructional moves in the reading lessons resumed. The process continued iteratively until both coders felt confident that the form was sufficiently well defined to use independently. At that point, 73 reading lessons were sampled and coded. A Cohen's kappa of .94 was achieved during this initial independent coding of instructional moves in 73 reading lessons.

Final Coding Reliability

Seven categories of explicit instructional moves (direct explanation, modeling, guided practice, independent practice, feedback, discussion, monitoring) and one "other" category for nonexplicit recommendations drawn from 290 reading lessons focused on teaching the five essentials of effective reading instruction were coded. A total of 3 weeks of lessons (15% of the sample of 290 lessons, $n = 44$ lessons) were given to the same two coders to determine final reliability. The coding was completed independently over a 2-week period. Content-analysis standards for reporting interrater reliability recommend that the initial reliability ratings be checked against a final estimate of interrater reliability (Neuendorf, 2002). The intact weeks selected for the final interrater reliability were sampled from lessons included in the larger study sample—one from each grade (first, third, and fifth). A final Cohen's kappa coefficient of 0.92 was attained in the final rating of the sampled lessons (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 150). According to Banerjee, Capozzoli, McSweeney, and Sinha (1999), achieving a Cohen's kappa of .75+ "indicates excellent agreement beyond chance" (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 143).

Tabulation and Reporting

Reading lessons addressing the five reading essentials—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension—in five CRPs teachers' editions in grades 1, 3, and 5 were read line by line for explicit instructional move recommendations. Explicit move recommendations were coded as frequency counts and were tabulated and analyzed using Microsoft Excel 2011 and SPSS v. 20 for Macintosh.

Results

The results of this content-analysis study are reported in two major sections connected to the study’s two research questions. Section 1 summarizes explicit instructional moves for teaching the five evidence-based essentials of reading instruction by publisher, frequency, and percentages. Section 2 summarizes frequencies and percentages of explicit instruction moves by grade level.

Section 1: Explicit Instructional Moves Recommended by Publishers for Teaching Five Reading Essentials

In total, 290 lessons were sampled and 1,574 total explicit instructional moves coded in five CRPs widely marketed and sold in the United States. The percentage of total explicit instructional moves by type of explicit move is shown in Figure 2. Guided practice and direct explanation were the most recommended instructional moves with 22%, followed by discussion (20%), modeling (19%), independent practice (9%), monitoring (7%), and feedback (1%).

Figure 3 presents the percentages of total explicit instructional moves recommended for five evidence-based essentials of reading instruction. Of the total instructional moves recommended, 52% were related to comprehension, 17% to vocabulary, 15% to phonics, 13% to fluency, and 3% to phonemic awareness.

Figure 4 presents the number of explicit instructional moves by publisher for five essentials of evidence-based reading instruction. The five publishers’ instructional move recommendations were very similar in this figure, with the exceptions that Publisher A provided substantially more modeling instructional move recommendations and Publisher D provided more guided practice and discussion instructional moves than the other five publishers.

CRP Publisher A accounted for 419 (27%), Publisher B for 263 (17%), Publisher C for 314 (19%), Publisher D for 344 (22%), and Publisher E for 235 (15%) of the total 1,574 explicit instructional moves coded across all five publishers’ teachers’ edition lessons.

Frequency counts for explicit instructional moves recommended in each of the five evidence-based essentials of reading instruction by publisher are shown in Table 1. Guided practice was the most frequently recommended instructional move for phonemic awareness, phonics, and vocabulary, with modeling the most frequent for

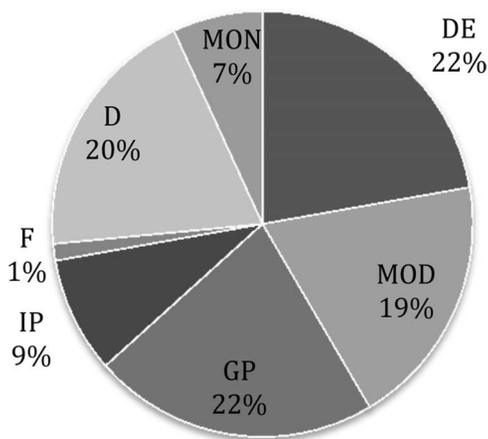


Figure 2. Percent of total instructional moves ($N = 1,574$) by type of explicit instructional move.

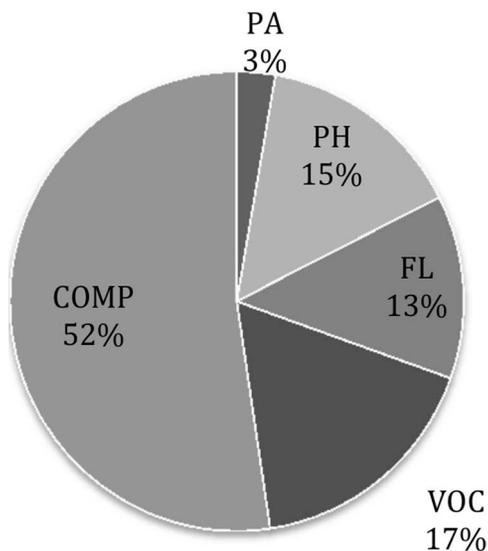


Figure 3. Percent of total ($N = 1,574$) explicit instructional moves recommended for five evidence-based essentials of reading instruction.

vocabulary, and discussion the most frequent for comprehension. By way of comparison, feedback was the least frequently recommended instructional move for phonemic awareness (tied with monitoring), phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension. Independent practice was the least frequently recommended instructional move for fluency.

A summary overview of the seven explicit instructional moves recommended by publisher for each of five reading essentials is shown in Table 2. Publisher A provided the greatest range of instructional move recommendations for phonemic awareness. The five publishers were virtually identical in the range of instructional moves recommended for phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension. Publisher D recommended all seven explicit instructional moves for fluency, and Publisher A did the same for comprehension.

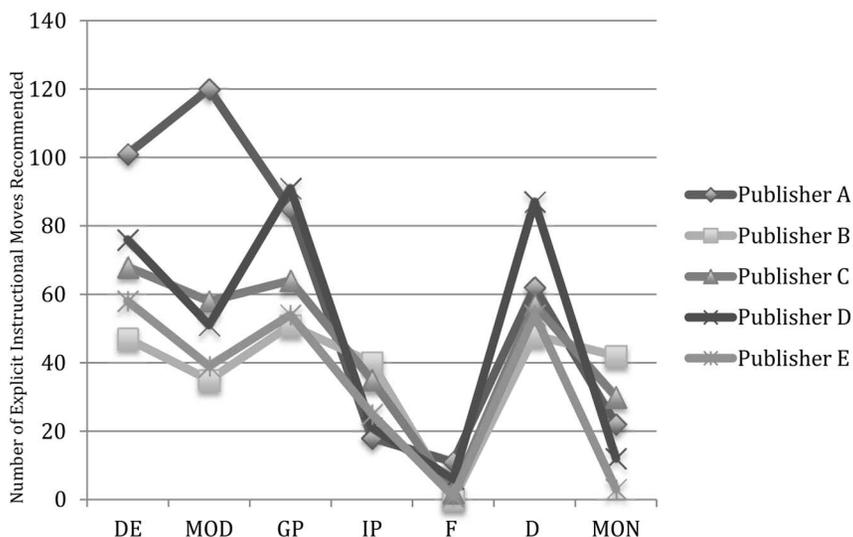


Figure 4. Number of explicit instructional moves ($N = 1,574$) recommended in core reading program teachers' editions for five evidence-based reading essentials by publisher.

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Table 2. Explicit Instructional Move Type Recommended by Publisher for Each Reading Essential^a

	Publishers				
	A	B	C	D	E
Phonemic awareness: ^b					
Explicit instructional moves					
Direct explanation (DE)	✓			✓	✓
Modeling (MOD)			✓	✓	
Guided practice (GP) ^c	✓		✓	✓	✓
Discussion (D)	✓				
Monitoring (MON)					
Feedback (F)					
Phonics:					
Explicit instructional moves					
Direct explanation (DE)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Modeling (MOD)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Guided practice (GP) ^c	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Discussion (D)	✓			✓	✓
Monitoring (MON)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Feedback (F)			✓		
Independent practice (IP)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fluency:					
Explicit instructional moves					
Direct explanation (DE)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Modeling (MOD) ^c	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Guided practice (GP)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Discussion (D)	✓			✓	✓
Monitoring (MON)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Feedback (F)	✓			✓	✓
Independent practice (IP)				✓	
Vocabulary:					
Explicit instructional moves					
Direct explanation (DE)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Modeling (MOD)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Guided practice (GP) ^c	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Discussion (D)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monitoring (MON)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Feedback (F)					
Independent practice (IP)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Comprehension:					
Explicit instructional moves					
Direct explanation (DE)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Modeling (MOD)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Guided practice (GP)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Discussion (D) ^c	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monitoring (MON)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Feedback (F)	✓				
Independent practice (IP)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

^a Recommended.

^b First grade only.

^c Most frequent type of explicit instructional move recommended.

Section 2: Explicit Instructional Moves Recommended in CRP Teachers' Editions by Grade Level

Figure 5 shows the percent of total explicit instructional moves by grade level. Grade 1 evidenced the highest percentage of recommended explicit instructional moves (44%,

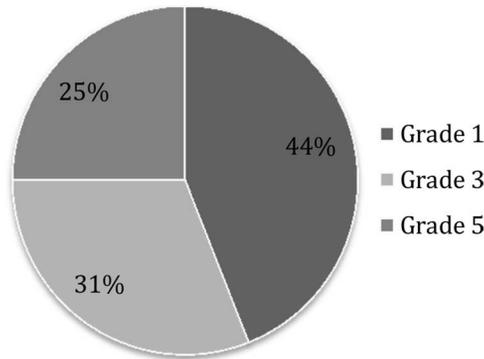


Figure 5. Percent of total explicit instructional moves ($N = 1,574$) by grade level.

$N = 698$), grade 3 had 31% ($N = 483$), and grade 5 had the least (25%, $N = 393$). An inspection of findings by grade level reported in Table 3 shows that guided practice (GP) was the most frequently recommended explicit instructional move in first, third, and fifth grades in three out of the five essentials of reading instruction.

The explicit instructional move of discussion (D)—asking and talking about answers to questions—was the most frequently recommended explicit instructional move in grades 3 and 5, with modeling the most frequently recommended explicit instructional move in grade 1 for teaching fluency and comprehension. The least frequently recommended instructional moves for grades 1, 3, and 5 were feedback, discussion, and monitoring, with the single exception of recommending the instructional move of discussion in vocabulary and comprehension. Independent practice was least frequently recommended for the development of fluency across the three grade levels.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to conduct a content analysis of the types and occurrences of explicit instructional moves recommended to teachers in grades 1, 3, and 5 when teaching five essentials of evidence-based reading instruction in five widely marketed and sold current CRP teachers' edition lessons in the United States (2005–2010 copyright): MacMillan–McGraw–Hill *Treasures*, Houghton Mifflin *Reading*, Scott Foresman *Reading Street*, SRA *Imagine It*, Harcourt *Storytown* (Dewitz et al., 2009; Education Market Research, 2007). Since explicit instruction has been consistently recommended as a model of effective instruction for providing elementary reading instruction (NRP, 2000; Snow et al., 1998) and no research was located on how explicit instruction is used in CRPs, we decided to investigate to what extent explicit instructional moves were recommended in five contemporary CRP publishers' reading lessons. We discuss the results of this study using the five essentials of evidence-based reading instruction as our organizational framework.

Phonemic Awareness

The NRP (2000) and the National Early Literacy Panel (NELP, 2008) found that phonemic awareness (PA) was one of the largest contributors to and a “causal” factor in students' early reading success. Because of this, we expected that any CRPs claiming to be evidence based would provide early and explicit instruction of PA. Results

Table 3. Total Explicit Instructional Moves Recommended in Five Core Reading Program Teachers' Editions by Grade Level

Five Reading Essentials ^a	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 5
Phonemic awareness (<i>N</i> = 43 instructional moves):			
Direct explanation (DE)	10	—	—
Modeling (MOD)	9	—	—
Guided practice (GP)	25 ^b	—	—
Independent practice (IP)	2	—	—
Feedback (F)	0	—	—
Discussion (D)	1 ^c	—	—
Monitoring (MON)	0	—	—
Phonics (<i>N</i> = 233 instructional moves):			
Direct explanation (DE)	26	14	5
Modeling (MOD)	22	10	5
Guided practice (GP)	64 ^b	18 ^b	8 ^b
Independent practice (IP)	17	7	2 ^c
Feedback (F)	3 ^c	0	0
Discussion (D)	4	3 ^c	3
Monitoring (MON)	14	8	0
Fluency (<i>N</i> = 203 instructional moves):			
Direct explanation (DE)	26	11	7
Modeling (MOD)	38 ^b	19 ^b	11
Guided practice (GP)	20	19 ^b	13 ^b
Independent practice (IP)	2 ^c	1 ^c	2
Feedback (F)	5	4	1 ^c
Discussion (D)	9	2	2
Monitoring (MON)	3	4	4
Vocabulary (<i>N</i> = 271 instructional moves):			
Direct explanation (DE)	19	23	17
Modeling (MOD)	7	9	7 ^c
Guided practice (GP)	23 ^b	30 ^b	25 ^b
Independent practice (IP)	3 ^c	14	7 ^c
Feedback (F)	0	0	0
Discussion (D)	14	26	24
Monitoring (MON)	8	7 ^c	8
Comprehension (<i>N</i> = 824 instructional moves):			
Direct explanation (DE)	84	58	51
Modeling (MOD)	96 ^b	37	33
Guided practice (GP)	39	30	38
Independent practice (IP)	20	27	30
Feedback (F)	9	0	0
Discussion (D)	72	77 ^b	75 ^b
Monitoring (MON)	8 ^c	25 ^c	15 ^c

^a *N* = 1,574 total instructional moves recommended.

^b Highest number of recommended explicit instructional moves.

^c Lowest number of recommended explicit instructional moves

showed that all five CRP publishers recommended teaching PA in grade 1. No publisher recommended teaching PA in later grades. These findings harmonize well with current evidence-based recommendations that teaching PA much beyond the first grade is often too little, too late (Ehri & Nunes, 2002; NELP, 2008; NRP, 2000).

A total of 3% or 43 explicit instructional moves were recommended in the five CRPs focused for teaching PA out of a total 1,574. The recommendation of research that PA instruction occur early and be taught within a constrained amount of total time—just 18 total hours of instruction—is reflected well in the comparatively few

total explicit instructional moves recommended for PA in grade 1. PA instruction ceased after grade 1 as hypothesized.

An analysis of the specific PA explicit instructional moves recommended revealed a preponderant emphasis on guided practice, followed in frequency by direct explanation and modeling. From previous research describing practices associated with effective explicit instruction for PA, it is clear that these three explicit instructional moves—guided practice, direct explanation, and modeling—figure prominently as critical features of effective explicit PA instruction in early reading (Al Otaiba et al., 2005; Ehri & Nunes, 2002; NELP, 2008; NRP, 2000; Simmons & Kame'enui, 2002). On the other hand, in order to appropriately plan future PA instruction and use the research-based recommended constrained total time of 18 hours of PA instruction efficiently, one would have also entirely expected that CRP publishers would recommend that teachers carefully monitor student progress in PA (Ehri & Nunes, 2002; NELP, 2008; NRP, 2000). Furthermore, young students would also benefit from feedback on and a discussion of their PA development to clarify what and how they could improve in the future. The relative lack of recommended monitoring, feedback, and discussion explicit instructional moves needs to be carefully reexamined by publishers if the design and purpose of PA explicit instructional moves in reading lessons in teachers' editions are intended to adequately support teachers, especially new teachers, in providing young students with optimally effective PA instruction (Adams, Foorman, Lundberg, & Beeler, 1998; NRP, 2000).

Phonics

Systematic, explicit teaching of phonics in the early grades is perhaps one of the most contentious, and yet well-documented, recommendations of the National Reading Panel (2000) and a more recent research synthesis (NELP, 2008). Even after reanalyzing an expanded set of studies on phonics to those used in the NRP, Camilli Vargas, and Yurecko (2003) found that young students get off to a better start in early reading when they are systematically and explicitly taught phonics.

A total of 15% or 233 explicit instructional moves out of a total of 1,574 were recommended in the phonics lessons analyzed in this study. Since phonics is recommended to be taught early, kept simple, and concluded in the primary grades (except in cases of diagnosed need), one would not expect that phonics would be taught as a part of core reading instruction at the fifth-grade level (Al Otaiba et al., 2005; Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985). Thus, the fact that the recommended number of explicit instructional moves for teaching phonics decreased from grade 1 to grade 5 aligned well with findings of research on the teaching of phonics (Al Otaiba et al., 2005; Cunningham & Cunningham, 2002). In fact, the National Reading Panel (2000) and the National Early Literacy Panel (2008) noted that phonics instruction was far more powerful in preventing early reading problems than in curing them once they occurred. Thus, effective phonics instruction seems to be somewhat time sensitive, needing to occur earlier, rather than later.

In some cases, we noted that the CRP structural analysis lessons found in these five CRPs were mislabeled as phonics lessons. We say this because the lessons often confused the teaching of word meanings and meaningful word parts with the teaching of phonological and orthographic patterns that could be employed in the process of decoding unfamiliar words. Thus, when students were to practice decoding larger

words using spelling patterns that also constituted morphemes, these were often taught as units of meaning in CRP structural analysis lessons rather than as orthographic patterns to be used to figure out unfamiliar word pronunciations.

The findings further revealed a preponderant emphasis on guided practice, followed in frequency by direct explanation and then modeling when teaching phonics. One might wonder why so many explicit instructional moves in phonics are devoted to guided practice. An overreliance on guided practice in CRP phonics lessons may fail to show teachers how to gradually release responsibility to students for using phonics strategies and knowledge independently (Pearson & Dole, 1987). Also, a heavy emphasis on guided practice with isolated word recognition might need to be carefully reexamined by publishers in order to assure an appropriate balance between guided practice for the purpose of decoding isolated words and guided practice in text-level applications of phonics associated within reading fluency practice.

Independent practice was recommended by only three of five CRP publishers as an explicit instructional move for phonics. This finding seemed to be at odds with a gradual release-of-responsibility model in which teachers move their students consciously toward the independent use of phonics as applied initially in easier decodable texts and then onto application in more complex texts (Al Otaiba et al., 2005; Archer & Hughes, 2011; Hiebert & Martin, 2009; McGill-Franzen et al., 2006).

Similarly, two of five CRP publishers recommended only 3% or fewer of the total phonics explicit instructional moves be used to monitor students' application of phonics during reading lessons. This seems at odds with current curriculum-based measurement, progress monitoring, and RTI models in which independent use of phonics skills in automatic word decoding is the end goal of phonics instruction (Dougherty-Stahl & McKenna, 2013). For young students to make adequate progress in applying phonics knowledge to reading unfamiliar words in isolation or in text, they need to be monitored regularly and receive feedback from their teachers (Beck, 2006; Dougherty-Stahl & McKenna, 2013; Strickland, 2011).

Fluency

Reading fluency is defined as accurate, appropriately paced, and expressive reading that enhances students' potential to construct meaning from text (NRP, 2000; Rasinski, 2010). A total of 12% or 189 explicit instructional moves were recommended for teaching fluency in the five publishers' CRP lessons analyzed in this study. Because reading fluency is thought by many researchers to be an indicator of available cognitive capacity for use in comprehending text, reading fluency instruction and practice should commence early, typically mid-year in first grade, in order to expedite the acquisition of decoding automaticity (NRP, 2000; Rasinski, 2012). The allocation of 12% total fluency explicit instructional moves out of 1,574 across the elementary school years did not seem to be excessive, especially when viewed from the perspective of volume reading practice (Allington, 2002).

Our analyses of specific recommended explicit fluency instructional moves revealed a preponderant emphasis, 33%, on modeling, followed by guided practice and direct explanation. The strong emphasis on modeling of fluency, along with a 25% allocation of time to be spent in guided reading practice, seems clearly warranted if fluency is going to be achieved (Rasinski, 2010).

Independent practice, and recommended instructional moves that would ensure effective practice conditions, were infrequently recommended for teaching fluency in the five CRPs analyzed. This finding was particularly troubling since past research has shown a strong and consistent link between accurate independent practice of decoding and oral reading and the development of the automaticity that aids in later comprehension development (Cepeda, Pashler, Vul, Wixted, & Rohrer, 2006; Meltzoff, Kulh, Movellan, & Sejnowski, 2009; Swanson & O'Connor, 2009). The infrequent recommendation of independent practice for developing fluency may also be due to a persistent and inaccurate interpretation of recommendations made by the National Reading Panel (2000) in which silent independent reading was to be eschewed in elementary classrooms in favor of oral guided reading with feedback (Hiebert & Reutzel, 2010). If the ultimate purpose of fluency instruction and guided practice is to move students from oral guided reading toward silent independent reading for comprehension, then the number of recommended independent practice explicit instructional moves in these five CRPs was clearly lacking, especially in grades 3 and 5 (Brenner & Hiebert, 2010; Hiebert, Wilson & Trainen, 2010).

Disturbingly, only two CRP publishers recommended monitoring students' fluency as an explicit instructional move. This finding is clearly at odds with current reading fluency assessment practices as a means for increasing students' reading fluency and decoding automaticity (Murray, Munger, & Clonan, 2012). Effective fluency instruction and guided practice require that students receive feedback from a listener (NRP, 2000). This finding, a lack of feedback recommendations, seemed almost incomprehensible given the need for teachers and other listeners to monitor student fluency in order to give feedback to help students improve their reading fluency (Deeney, 2010).

Vocabulary

The National Reading Panel Report (2000) as well as other researchers have recommended that vocabulary instruction, the teaching of word meanings, be taught both explicitly and indirectly (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2008; Kame'enui & Baumann, 2012). The five CRP publishers analyzed in this study recommended a total of 16% or 252 explicit vocabulary instructional moves out of the total 1,574. Vocabulary should be taught in every grade from early to intermediate (Farstrup & Samuels, 2008).

The most frequently recommended explicit vocabulary instructional moves included guided practice (30%), followed in frequency by direct explanation and discussion. Interestingly, the distribution between direct explanation and discussion explicit instructional moves was fairly even at 24%. This finding seems to align well with research recommendations that word meanings be taught explicitly through direct explanation and also as used in oral and written language (Al Otaiba et al., 2005; Gersten & Geva, 2003; Hiebert & Lubliner, 2008; NRP, 2000). The preponderant use of guided practice in these vocabulary lessons also reflected well the research recommendations that students experience repeated exposures to newly taught word meanings in a variety of tasks and settings (Beck et al., 2008; Kame'enui & Baumann, 2012). Monitoring the use of newly taught vocabulary word meanings was recommended infrequently (8% of total instructional moves). Failure to monitor vocabulary use in classrooms will inevitably lead to fewer intentional and repetitious expo-

tures to word meanings, helping students to effectively assimilate new word meanings into their world knowledge (Kamil & Hiebert, 2005).

Comprehension

The National Reading Panel Report (2000) and the Institute of Education Sciences's *Improving Reading Comprehension in K-3* (Shanahan et al., 2010) and *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices: A Practice Guide* (Kamil et al., 2008) recommended that reading comprehension strategies be taught explicitly and coupled with discussion. A total of 51% or 803 explicit comprehension instructional moves out of the total of 1,574 were recommended in the five publishers' CRP comprehension lessons. Research supports the teaching of reading comprehension in every grade from early to intermediate (NELP, 2008; NRP, 2000). As a result, the preeminent emphasis placed on explicitly teaching comprehension across the elementary grades was clearly both appropriate and necessary (NELP, 2008; NRP, 2000). This study, however, did not examine the time allocated to and the nature, number, and range of comprehension skills to be taught, as in previous studies of core reading program comprehension instruction (Dewitz et al., 2009; Dewitz, Leahy, Jones, & Sullivan, 2010).

Unlike the previous four essentials of evidence-based reading instruction in which guided practice or modeling were the most frequently recommended explicit instructional moves, discussion was 28% of the recommended instructional moves for teaching reading comprehension. Direct explanation was 24% of the recommended explicit comprehension instructional moves in these five CRP lessons. Both discussion and direct explanation play pivotal roles in helping students gain insights into the strategic thinking associated with reading comprehension (Duffy, 2009; Pearson & Dole, 1987; Shanahan et al., 2010).

Modeling and guided practice followed in frequency among the top explicit instructional moves recommended for comprehension instruction in these five CRP reading lessons. This finding was somewhat disturbing, since students require substantial modeling and guided practice, coupled with a gradual release of responsibility over time, in order to learn to consciously apply comprehension strategies in reading (Pearson & Dole, 1987; Shanahan et al., 2010). Although discussion is clearly an important contributor to reading comprehension, the ability to apply cognitive comprehension strategies places a premium on teacher modeling, guided student practice, monitoring, feedback, and a gradual release of responsibility for independent student use over time (Dewitz et al., 2009, 2010). Consequently, the infrequency of the explicit instructional moves of modeling and guided practice as recommended in these CRP comprehension lessons does not seem to be entirely consistent with current research recommendations (Kamil et al., 2008; Shanahan et al., 2010). Future CRP comprehension lessons should provide a better balance of recommendations among all of the elements of explicit instruction, but particularly in regard to monitoring and guided practice to independence, to reflect what is currently known about effective comprehension strategy instruction (Dewitz et al., 2009, 2010).

Another unfortunate casualty of the preponderant emphasis on discussion in these comprehension lessons was the infrequent recommendation of the explicit instructional moves of independent practice and monitoring. Two CRP publish-

ers recommended independent practice and monitoring in 6% or fewer of the total comprehension explicit instructional moves. Only one CRP publisher (Publisher A) recommended the explicit instructional move of feedback a grand total of nine times across all grade levels for teaching reading comprehension. If teachers use these five CRPs' reading lessons as a guide for explicit instructional moves associated with effectively teaching the evidence-based components of comprehension instruction, they will likely never be prompted to provide students with feedback regarding their use of comprehension strategies. Furthermore, these CRP comprehension lessons provided classroom teachers with little guidance for "releasing responsibility for strategy use gradually" to students for them to become independent and strategic in their selection and use of comprehension strategies (Dewitz et al., 2009, 2010).

Implications

In conclusion, our results showed in the aggregate that guided practice was the most frequently recommended explicit instructional move in current CRP teachers' editions. Two exceptions to this general finding were noted. Modeling was the most frequently recommended explicit instructional move in fluency, and discussion in comprehension. An overreliance on guided practice may initially assist students to follow the lead of their teachers without ultimately ever learning how to apply these skills independently. Pearson and Dole (1987) assert that independent application of reading skills in the context of authentic reading is one of the most important features of explicit instruction.

This study revealed highly variant and often insufficient attention to the explicit instructional moves of independent practice, feedback, and monitoring. This finding was disconcerting because teachers, especially less experienced teachers, often rely on CRP teachers' editions as a principal resource to guide and inform their reading instructional decisions (Al Otaiba et al., 2005). If teachers fail to sufficiently monitor students' learning of reading concepts, skills, processes, and strategies, then they will likely also provide little or no useful feedback to students that could aid them in improving their application of these in reading. When teachers aren't consistently reminded that they need to gradually release responsibility to their students for using explicitly taught reading concepts, skills, and strategies, they may also fail to consciously work toward the ultimate goal of student independence in reading (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Duke & Pearson, 2002; Fielding & Pearson, 1994; Pearson & Dole, 1987).

The findings revealed few quantitative differences among the five publishers in the quantity of explicit instructional moves recommended. Thus, three of the five CRPs evaluated in this study would be considered relatively equal (B, C, and D). On the other hand, Publisher A (419) recommended considerably more explicit instructional moves than did publisher E (234). All of the CRPs failed rather consistently to recommend the explicit instructional move of feedback in their reading lessons. As a result, educators will need to conscientiously compensate for the paucity of recommended feedback explicit instructional moves.

Finally, educators teaching in the intermediate grades should note that these five CRPs reduced the overall amount of recommended explicit instructional moves from the primary to the intermediate grade reading lessons. For some essentials of

evidence-based reading, a reduction in explicit instructional moves makes good sense. On the other hand, a reduction of explicit instructional moves in relation to teaching comprehension strategies in grades 3 and 5 runs counter to current recommendations and research evidence (Dole, Nokes, & Drits, 2009; NRP, 2000; Shanahan et al., 2010).

CRP publishers limited the majority of their recommendations for explicit instructional moves to only four out of the seven total elements of explicit instruction: direct explanation, modeling, guided practice, and discussion. The other three explicit instructional moves—monitoring, feedback and independent practice—often tended to be overlooked in these five contemporary CRPs. Consequently, CRP publishers ought to reconsider carefully how infrequent and inconsistent attention given to these three explicit instructional moves—monitoring, feedback, and independent practice—may function to diminish rather than to enhance the overall quality of reading instruction generally and explicit instruction in reading specifically in elementary classrooms.

Anecdotally, we also noted that the CRP “intact week” of reading lessons analyzed often focused on teaching single skills, concepts, or strategies that seemed disconnected from other lesson elements within the same week or day’s lesson. Reutzel and Daines (1987) noted a lack of intra-lesson cohesion years earlier in a content-analysis study of CRP lessons. Finally, we also noted that CRP reading publishers seldom recommended the use of explicit instructional moves in a typical sequence in their reading lessons, that is, beginning with (*a*) direct explanation, (*b*) modeling, (*c*) practice, (*d*) guided practice and monitoring, (*e*) feedback, and followed by (*f*) independent practice (Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991; Pearson & Dole, 1987; Rupley et al., 2009).

Limitations and Delimitations

This study was limited to grades 1, 3, and 5 and the five top-selling CRPs nationally. The study was also limited to the five pillars or essentials of effective reading instruction. The total number of “intact weeks of lessons” available in the five CRPs equaled roughly 486, with approximately 30 lessons in each week (equaling more than 14,000 lessons). For obvious reasons of time and resource constraints, the study sample size had to be limited. Results reported were limited to frequency counting and percentages of recommended explicit instructional moves. No information was reported about the quality or design of the lessons or the flow of lessons within and across grade levels. Only lessons intended for the general population were coded in this study. Instruction designed for small differentiated (on, below, or above level) or targeted focus groups (English language learners or students with special needs) was omitted from the sample.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research is needed to examine the quality, balance, and sequence of explicit instruction elements recommended in CRP lessons. For example, such studies might examine the intra-lesson coherence of CRP reading lessons. Often lesson objectives within the same CRP reading lesson were not related to each other. For example, in one lesson, teacher explanation was focused on one skill or strategy and then the

modeling focused on using yet another unrelated skill or strategy. Other research might investigate the effects of decreasing the number of explicit instructional moves recommended as grade levels progress on students' growth in reading performance, particularly in reading comprehension. Still other research might specifically analyze CRP reading lessons using models of effective instruction other than explicit instruction. Research might also investigate the additive and sequential effects of each of the seven elements of explicit instruction on students' reading growth and achievement. Such studies would help to illuminate which of the seven elements of explicit instruction may be more effective and which may contribute little to overall instructional effectiveness. Finally, failure to sequence the essential elements of explicit instruction as is typical into a coherent instructional routine may diminish the effectiveness of explicit instruction in elementary classroom reading programs and should be investigated.

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AUTHOR QUERIES

AUTHOR PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUERIES

1

AQ1—The coding form would have been very difficult to typeset as an appendix. We believe it is better to shoot it as a figure, and place it in the text as figure 1. This is also better for the reader, who won't have to flip to the end of the article to see it. The rest of the figures have been renumbered accordingly.
