Triple R Teaching

Well, hello! If you are watching with me on Facebook, you are seeing the video recording of Episode 34 of the Triple R Teaching podcast, where we help educators reflect, refine, and recharge so they're excited for the next day in the classroom. My name is Anna Geiger and I am your host. You may know me from my website, Reach All Readers, as well as my online courses, and my membership site.

Today, I want to start the podcast by telling you a little bit of a story. A few months ago, I had joined a Facebook group to learn more about teaching reading. It was actually a science of reading Facebook group. After spending a half an hour in the group, reading through comments, reading discussions, checking out resources, I was starting to feel not so good. I was getting sort of a tightness in my chest. I was starting to feel scared, my stomach hurt, and I had to get out of that group because it was starting to bring up a whole bunch of feelings in me that just didn't feel good. I actually opened Slack, which is a communication tool I use for my team, and this is what I wrote, "I just need to talk to someone. I am so scared. I've been doing a lot of research about the science of reading and it's completely overwhelming. It feels like everything I believed in is wrong, but it worked for so many kids and it worked for my own kids. Can't be 100% wrong, right? Now I feel like I have to completely rethink everything. I'm so confused. Please. I'm really worried and upset inside. I know this sounds over the top, but I feel so much responsibility to get this right!"

The fact is that what I had read in the group was concerning to me. There was a lot of heated discussion back and forth. There was a lot of judgment. There were a lot of big discussions, a lot of black and white thinking, it HAS to be THIS way! It scared me, and so I had to be careful about how often I was in the group so that it wasn't causing this visceral reaction inside of me. I needed to slowly get used to the group.

Now it's a couple of months later and I actually go there multiple times a day and love the things that I'm learning. But when we first hear something that feels different than what we've thought in the past, it can feel scary! It's true that a lot of what I was reading in there did not align with the things I learned in undergrad, graduate school, and the things that I've taught teachers to do.

Here's the good news though! What I've learned over the last few months- everything I believed and taught is NOT wrong! Even if you're in a shift in your teaching, the same is true for you. It's not completely black and white, but there are so many exciting things

that we have to learn these days about how kids learn to read. Making shifts in the way that we teach can reach even more students, which at the end of the day is what we're all excited to do.

It has kind of felt like Christmas around here lately because I have been getting new professional books about teaching reading every day. So, if you can see, here's just one stack of books that I've gotten in the past few weeks. Then I'll move my chair, and now you can see behind me a whole stack of books and all that paper. The first couple inches of that are papers that I've printed from online journals so I can study more about how our brains learn to read and what implications that has for how we teach reading in the classroom. I'm looking particularly at kindergarten, first, and second grade.

So yes, I was really scared at first and really doubting myself. But the more I studied, the more I realized that there are so many wonderful things we were doing and so many more wonderful things we can do as we make shifts in our thinking and our practice!

This episode is actually launching a series on the podcast all about the science of reading, in particular, how it relates to how we teach reading in kindergarten, first, and second grade. I am so excited to be doing this series with you!

I recently sent an email out to my newsletter list and I told my people that in college I had an all nighter once. I stayed up all night so I could study for a really hard test, and I had two papers the next day. It was a failure. I did not get a happy grade in the test, even though I thought I was well prepared, because I needed a lot more sleep. Ever since then, I don't do all nighters, but I still love studying and researching.

This is just such a great time to be learning about teaching reading because lots and lots of stuff is becoming available to us. Just in the last couple of years a lot of new books have been written about the science of reading and the implications that it has for our classrooms. I cannot wait to start sharing that information with you.

Here's a little bit of a glimpse of what's coming. We're going to be starting next week, talking about The Reading Wars in America, how those started in the 1800s and where we're at today and what that means for us. We're going to talk about some of the basics when it comes to the science of reading. If you've done any study in that at all, you've probably heard of things like the simple view of reading, orthographic mapping, and Scarborough's Reading Rope. We're going to talk about all those things, but in a really simple, easy to access way. We're going to talk about phonics and the primary role, the BIG role this has, and why it's always the front seat of all of these discussions.

It's certainly not all that the science of reading is about, but it's a big deal! We're going to talk about how to teach phonics, ideas for making it interesting in your classroom, and what kind of books our students should be using as we teach them to read. We'll review phonological and phonemic awareness a little bit, but as you know, we've already been doing that on the podcast for the last few weeks. We're going to talk also about comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, and we're going to get really practical about what all of this means for how you teach every day.

So not only have I been reading a lot of books and papers, but I've also had a lot of conversations. In the evenings after my kids went to bed, I've talked to a reading psychologist, a school principal, a few reading specialists, some classroom teachers, and I have more conversations scheduled. This has been a really exciting time for me to learn more about how we can improve how we teach to reach even more kids, and I hope that you're going to join me for the ride!

Starting next week, we'll be here again with the first episode in our series, "All About the Science of Reading".

I want to let you know one more thing before I go. And that is, I've got a survey that I would love to invite you to take. Particularly if you teach any kids in kindergarten, first, or second grade. You can find the survey at reachallreaders.com/readingsurvey. You

you're facing right now as you teach reading so we can address some of those things in this series. Thanks again for joining me and I look forward to seeing you next week here on Triple R Teaching.