

'The Science of Reading from a College Graduate Perspective'

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Walsh University 2024
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I am commonly asked why I chose Walsh University to receive my bachelors degree from. The answer is quite simple. Walsh University, located in North Canton, Ohio, is one of the leaders when it comes to education.

Knowing I had wanted to teach since the young age of four years old, I knew I needed a school that matched my passion for education, and Walsh was that school.

With that said, I graduated in May from Walsh University with a Bachelors in Education P-5 Elementary Education, K-12 Intervention Specialist Mild to Moderate, and K-12 Intervention Specialist Moderate to Intensive with a minor in Psychology. I was quite busy, but I wouldn't have traded it for anything because I was learning how to be the best educator I can be.

From day one, their teacher candidates are taught about the Science of Reading (SOR), something I quickly fell in love learning about. I found it so fascinating what goes into learning how to read and how if one part is off, the chances of becoming a skilled reader become slim. Having been taught this research so early on in my collegiate career led me to complete my Honors thesis on the topic where I evaluated what parents and educators know about SOR and how we can take that information to implement programs so this information is more readily available to all. Additionally, it provided me the opportunity to present on the All Ohio Literacy Modules at a conference in Columbus. I had completed these in one of my sophomore year courses. I was able to present what I had learned by completing these modules and why they are so important, which leads me to where I am today, writing this article for you.

Throughout my time at Walsh, we are to take a series of three literacy courses, all focused on assessment, reading the data, interpreting the data, and creating interventions that will best help the student. We do this with real life students in real life classrooms to gain that hands-on experience. We get to see this research applied; which I have to admit is really cool to see those lightbulb moments occur.

One moment that stands out in my mind where a so-called lightbulb moment happened was when I was working with a student in the North Canton City School district and I was pulling them out for about an hour of tutoring. I had previously completed a diagnostic assessment to determine this student's needs. After reviewing their data, I gathered something intervention activities and saw the magic happen. This student went from not having any decoding skills to having a toolkit of skills and knowing how to apply them to work on their reading. My teacher, Mrs. Samantha Giammarco, approached me after witnessing this interaction and told me how I am meant to be a teacher. She was just as amazed as I was in seeing how when scientifically proven research is applied correctly, it can change lives. It was experiences like this that confirmed how badly I wanted to teach.

I urge you that if you have not yet already, to review the research and apply it to your students whether they are three years old or 20 years old. I found when completing research of my own that knowledge is truly key to make sure that our students are successful. I was able to make a difference in not just one student's life, but over 30 students when it came to reading because I had this knowledge. When reading is succeeding, other subjects will soon follow.

I will leave you with a quote from my favorite author, Dr. Seuss. He said, "The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."

