

Fluency-Building Instructional Practices

- **Repeated oral reading** - students read a passage orally several times, with explicit guidance and feedback from a fluent reader; and
- **Independent silent reading**—students read extensively on their own, both in and out of the classroom, with minimal guidance and feedback.

Teacher Modeling

- Model reading for thoughts and expression
- Adjust the length of the passage to the purpose
- Emphasize the number of thoughts in a sentence
- Change the number of thoughts in a sentence and read it that way

EXAMPLE:

A variety of materials can be used for choral reading.

Modeling Prosody

Teacher:

(Reads a line from a story): "The Prince should have been happy, but he wasn't." Did you hear how I grouped the words - "The Prince should have been happy"? That's because the words go together. And then I paused a little before I read the words "but he wasn't." This comma (points to the comma) told me to do that.

(Reads another line): "It's the happiest day of my life!" the Prince laughed. Did you hear how my voice got louder and more excited right here. That's because the author put in this exclamation mark (points to the exclamation mark) to show how the Prince said the words.

Chunking

Help students see how words are combined to form “units of thought” and how thoughts combine to form sentences, passages, and complete text.

Use this on both expository and narrative texts.

Visualization

- Encourage students to visualize the words/the thoughts they “see”.
- Draw separate pictures for individual reading thoughts or ideas in one sentence.
- Write down the thought after drawing the picture.
- Read the entire sentence pausing between thoughts.

Teacher - Student Assisted Readings

- Teacher reads the text first; student follows along (tracks)
- Student reads to the teacher; teacher provides guidance and feedback
- Teacher helps student correct errors
- Student rereads until the reading is fluent
- Three or four readings are usually required

The teacher reads the text as the student follows along. Then the student reads the same text to the teacher, who provides guidance with word identification and expression and, of course, encouragement. If the student makes a mistake, the teacher waits to see if the student self-corrects. If the student is unable to, the teacher provides clues for correcting the error. Once the word is correctly identified, the teacher should ask the student to repeat the word several times (until the response is firm) before asking the student to re-read the sentence containing the word. This helps to assimilate the correction and recover the meaning. Struggling readers should reread the passage many times. Encourage students to "Think Aloud" as they practice.

Fluency Development Lesson

15 minutes 4xs per week

1. Teacher selects short text (100-200 words) and prepares two copies for each child
2. Teacher reads the text aloud several times
3. Class reads the text chorally several times with the teacher
4. Students work in pairs to reread the text 3 times each
5. Several pairs perform for the class
6. Teacher sends text home for work with parents

[Rasinski, Padak, Linek, & Sturtevant (1994). The effects of fluency development on urban second grade readers. *Journal of Educational Research*, 87, 158-164.]

Echo Reading

- A form of teacher-assisted repeated reading
- Teacher reads aloud a section of a text
- Students repeat the section as they point to the words they are reading

Echo reading is a valuable tool to develop fluency as it requires students to listen to and imitate a fluent reader. It is important that the students track as they are listening and, subsequently, read aloud.

Reader's Theater

- Students rehearse or perform a play for peers or others
- Scripts are rich in dialogue and derived from books
- Provides legitimate reasons to re-read text

Reader's Theater scripts are available on the internet. The length of the scripts and the number of characters vary and can easily be adapted to the needs of the students. Some research has shown that, as a result of repeated readings necessary to prepare for readers theater, students make significant gains in fluency (Rasinski, 1999) This strategy has also been particularly effective in motivating students who have difficulty reading (Rinehart, 1999).

Web-based Resources

<http://www.readinglady.com/ReadersTheater/Scripts/scripts.html>

<http://www.aaronshp.com/rt/RTE.html>

<http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/CITE/langrt.htm>

http://www.readinglady.com/Readers_Theater/Scripts/

<http://www.aaronshp.com/rt/RTE.html>

Print-based Resources:

Suzanne Barchers, *Readers theater for beginning readers*

Win Braun and Carl Braun, *A readers theater treasury of stories*

Neill Dixon, Anne Davies, and Colleen Politano, *Learning with readers theater*

Anthony Fredericks, *Frantic frogs and other frankly fractured folktales for readers theater*

Promote Phrased Reading In Class

Fluency involves reading phrases seamlessly, as opposed to word by word. To help students read phrases better, begin with a terrific poem. Two of my students' favorites are "Something Told the Wild Geese" by Rachel Field, and "Noodles" by Janet Wong.

After selecting a poem, write its lines onto sentence strips, which serve as cue cards, to show students how good readers cluster portions of text rather than saying each word separately. Hold up strips one at a time and have students read the phrases together. Reinforce phrased reading by using the same poem in guided reading and pointing to passages you read as a class.

From: *5 Surefire Strategies for Developing Reading Fluency* by Lisa Blau, an adjunct professor at Seattle Pacific University.

Paired Reading

- Fluent reader reads with a struggling reader
- Fluent reader reads a passage
- Both read the passage in unison
- If students errs, the adult corrects the error
- Child repeats the sentence in which the error occurred
- Both continue reading in unison
- Child may give a signal when he or she wishes to take over the reading in order to read alone

Drop-Word Reading

- Teacher assigns a partner
- Partners sit side-by-side facing opposite directions
- Students use six-inch voices to read alternating paragraphs of text
- One reader distinctly pauses allowing the partner to supply the next word. He/she reads until the end of the paragraph.
- This continues until the passage is completed

Tape-Assisted Reading

- First reading - students follow along and track the words
- Students listen to the entire selection
- Students choose one passage to practice
- Students read aloud *with the tape* until fluent
- Student reads to the teacher

Students read along in their books while they listen to an audio-taped fluent reader. The last stage of this procedure is the most important. To be effective, this must be monitored and students must be held responsible for what they hear and read.

Choral Reading

- Teacher first models the reading
- Students read as a group with other fluent readers.
- Students follow the text with the adult
- Materials include big books, multiple texts, or passages on paper or overheads
- Text is generally short and at the independent level of most students
- Patterned, repetitious, and predictable text are useful
- Students can practice in large group, in small group, or alone after the initial instructional practice

The teacher must monitor students as they read to ensure that everyone is participating and tracking the text. Dramas, plays, music, and poetry are particularly effective for small and large groups.

Partner (or Buddy) Reading

- First, the teacher models a passage from text
- Students track the words in books
- Paired students take turns reading aloud
- Fluent reader reads first, following teacher model
- Struggling reader reads aloud with guidance from the partner
- Struggling reader re-reads until fluent and independent
- Teacher closely monitors this activity in the classroom

Note that more able readers are paired with struggling readers. The passage is usually a story from the basal reader. The more fluent reader provides the guidance, feedback and encouragement. This is again similar to the teacher-assisted readings, but the more fluent reader is playing the role of the adult. Notice that the struggling reader re-reads until fluent and independent.

The re-readings usually number four. Perhaps the most important point is the teacher monitoring. The teacher must walk around the room to listen to each set of partners while buddy reading is in progress to ensure accountability.

Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)

*3 x 35 minutes each week, high-low pairs
Text is appropriate for weaker reader*

5 minutes: strong reader reads aloud

5 minutes: weaker reader rereads

2 minutes: weaker reader retells

5 minutes: strong reader reads paragraph by paragraph, stopping at each to tell the main idea

5 minutes: weak reader uses same summarization procedure

5 minutes: strong reader predicts content of next half page, reads it aloud, and revisits prediction

5 minutes: weak reader uses same summarization procedure

This procedure has been used with students in grades 2-6

[Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes, & Simmons (1996). *Peer-assisted learning strategies in reading: A manual*. (Box 328 Peabody, Vanderbilt Univ. Nashville, TN 37203)]

Cross-Age Tutoring: A Variation of Partner Reading

- A struggling older student is paired with a struggling younger student
- Older student reads to the younger student
- Older student reads with the younger student
- Younger student reads the passage aloud as older student offers support and guidance

(**Advantages:** students like to help each other, the older student gets practice as well as the younger student, the older student has a purpose for reading easier material on his/her level; **Disadvantages:** the older student may not become fluent "enough" to be a model, scheduling and monitoring can be a problem)

Student Feedback Technique

- Student 1 (reading): "Is that what you *brought* with your birthday money?" Jimmy's mom asked.
- Student 2 (pointing to a word): Stop. This word isn't *brought*. It's *bought*. *Brought, bought*. Hear the difference? Now, what's the word?
- Student 1: It's *bought*.
- Student 2: Good. Now read the sentence again.
- Student 1 (reading): "Is that what you bought with your birthday money?" Jimmy's mom asked.

Effective repeated readings have three features in common:

1. the teacher models the technique or strategy,
2. there are many opportunities to practice the technique, and
3. the teacher provides guidance and feedback to help students become aware of and correct mistakes.

Repeated oral reading practice helps developing readers through the fifth grade and struggling readers at even higher grade levels. The teacher modeling the technique before the practice begins is, however, of paramount importance.

How can teachers encourage independent reading?

- Set aside time to discuss what students have read
- Have students recommend books to each other
- Help students select books at appropriate levels and related to interests
- Involve parents and family members by giving them tips on how to read with their children

What is important in this information? The levels of the passages used to develop fluency through silent reading, the motivation to read based on student interest, the accountability for the student, and the involvement of parents and family.

Integrated Fluency Instruction

- Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI)
- Combines repeated, assisted reading with independent silent reading within a three-part program
- 3 components: reading lesson, free reading period at school, and home reading

FORI

- Teacher models the story, discusses key points, reviews key vocabulary, provides comprehension activities for the students based on the passage
- Students read the story at home to an adult
- Student re-reads the story to a partner the second day while the partner monitors
- Partners switch roles until story is read
- Students engage in extension activities related to the story
- Later in the day students read easy books for enjoyment independently or with partners
- Students read independently at home for at least 15 minutes four days a week and record information in reading logs to monitor progress

Obviously this intervention requires monitoring and involvement on the part of the parent as well as the teacher and the student.

Accountability is found in the reading log and the partner reading on the second day as well as in the extension activity. It is noted that struggling readers may need to re-read the story more than one night. Students who experience less difficulty may have other independent reading rather than the text.

Alternate Oral Reading

MY TURN

Leader (parent, teacher, peer partner) reads a paragraph or page. Student follows along by pointing to words as they are read.

YOUR TURN

Follower (student) reads either the same material or the next block of text.

Before completing exercise, establish pairings possibly by these steps:

1. Rank the "class" according to reading ability.
2. Divide the class list in half.
3. Assign pairs by matching the top reader of the top half of the class with the top reader of the bottom half of the class and so forth.
4. Check the pairings and change any that might not be acceptable.
5. Be careful about peer assignments for children with exceptional needs.
6. Use a text or story that the class has practiced or that is familiar. Tell students to read a section when it is their turn to read.
7. Reader # 1 is the stronger reader and should read first while reader # 2 listens and follows the text.
8. Reader # 2 then picks up when reader # 1 stops reading.
9. Emphasize the importance of comfortable speed, reading with expressions, and understanding what is read.
10. Direct children to go back and question each other about what they read after the reading is finished.
11. Reinforce appropriate behavior by keeping lists of books read, and giving points for following and listening well.

Simultaneous Oral Reading

- With a tape recorder or with a live partner, student reads the text together with the model.
- This is also called the “neurological impress” technique.

When simultaneously reading together, the fluent reader reads along with the weaker reader; the weaker reader hears better phrasing and experiences the sense of fluency that the model provides.

Repeated Readings of Words

- Research shows that in addition to reading continuous text, many students improve with repeated readings of words and phrases as well.
- *Read Naturally, Great Leaps, Concept Phonics, Language!* and other programs provide word, phrase, and text practice.

Scaffolding the Task

- During instruction, practice words before reading connected text.
- Preview the content of the reading by talking about the main ideas.
- Read parts to the student that are too difficult.
- Ask student to scan text and read it to himself before reading aloud.

After ensuring that the text is at the right level of difficulty, the teacher should preview the vocabulary, the main ideas, and the "hard parts" with the students. Students will then get ready to read the text orally as the teacher times. After one minute has passed, the students should mark the last word read and then graph the number of words read correctly in one minute. The following day or two, the students should practice reading the text with an adult or tape recorder, timing for a one minute reading and then graphing their progress. If the student gains 10 percent or better in words read correctly per minute, the text can be changed. Memorizing the text or reading it more than four times is not productive.

Phrase-Cued Reading

- Reading phrases with good expression can be taught directly.
- Put the text on an overhead transparency.
- Have student slide the eraser of his pencil under phrases. The teacher models this “scooping” process first, then asks students to follow the model.
- Text can be written—and read—in phrases.

The phrasing that characterizes good readers can be modeled and taught directly. The teacher may put the text on a transparency and model reading the phrases. Using a pointer, the teacher scoops under the phrases as they are read, and the student follows the model.

Phrases can be practiced out of and within the context of a sentence.

up the tree

why we are going

when he asked

in back of the house

more and more

if you can

all around town

could have been

away from everyone

not on your life

Effective Oral Reading Techniques

The Neurological-Impress Method

Dyad Reading

Group-Assisted Reading

Echo Reading or Imitative Reading

Repeated Readings

Paired Repeated Reading

Precision Reading

Reader's Theater

Shared Book Experience



Other Oral Reading Techniques

Taking Turns

Preread, Review and Reread

Choral Reading

Plays

Relaxed Paired Reading

Puppet Plays

Cross-Age or Buddy Reading

Audio Tape



What is Reading Fluency?

Fluency is often defined as the *rate* (words per minute) and *accuracy* (number of words correctly identified) with which students perform reading tasks.

An additional dimension to fluency is known as *prosody*, or the rhythms and tones of spoken language. Where text is being read silently or aloud, much of its meaning comes from the way it sounds. Students who read with expression are able to segment text into meaningful units, marking phrase and sentence boundaries with pauses, vowel lengthening and changes in pitch and emphasis.

When students have learned to decode and automatically recognize many words by sight, they begin to read simple text aloud in a way that sounds like natural speech. By second grade, fluent reading is generally expected, yet a great deal of foundation building must occur in order to make it happen. Students in the upper grades who read aloud word by word or with little attention to commas or periods require intervention.



Why Reading Fluency? What does research say?

A fluent reader decodes text automatically, and therefore can devote his /her attention to comprehending what is read.

Laberge & Samuels

Achieving fluency is recognized as an important aspect of proficient reading, but it remains a neglected goal of reading instruction

Richard Allington

With greater fluency, readers can concentrate on comprehending what they read, develop greater self-confidence, and enjoy reading more.

Gillet & Temple

If we provide diverse learners with the tools and strategies for achieving automatic and fluent word recognition, we increase their chances for successful reading experiences.

Chard, Simmons, & Kameenui

When children are allowed to reread familiar material, they are being allowed to learn to be readers, to read in ways which draw on all their language resources and knowledge of the world, to put this very complex recall and sequencing behavior into a fluent rendering of the text. The orchestration of these complex behaviors cannot be achieved on a hard book.

Clay, M. (1991)
Becoming Literate: The construction of inner control (p. 184)

Fluency Rubric

1

- Very little fluency
- All word-by-word reading with some long pauses between words
- Almost no recognition of syntax or phrasing (expressive interpretation)
- Very little evidence of awareness of punctuation
- Perhaps a couple of two-word phrases, but generally disfluent
- Some word groupings awkward

2

- Mostly word-by-word reading, but some two-word phrasing and even a couple of three or four-word phrases (expressive interpretation)
- Evidence of syntactic awareness of syntax and punctuation, although not consistently so
- Rereading for problem solving may be present

3

- A mixture of word-by-word reading and fluent, phrased reading (expressive interpretation)
- Evidence of attention to punctuation and syntax
- Rereading for problem solving may be present

4

- Reads primarily in larger, meaningful phrases
- Fluent, phrased reading with a few word-by-word slow downs for problem solving
- Expressive interpretation is evident at places throughout the reading
- Attention to punctuation and syntax
- Rereading for problem solving may be present, but is generally fluent

Adapted from Fountas & Pinnell: *Guided Reading*

