

Supporting Fluency Instruction in Your Classroom

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What is Fluency?

- It is not enough to read the words accurately.
- The student should be able to read smoothly and effortlessly with appropriate rate and phrasing
- Automaticity

Automaticity

- Is quick, accurate recognition of letters and words
- Frees cognitive resources to process meaning
- When automaticity is achieved it allows the student to spend more time focusing on the meaning of the text

Recommended Reading Rates

- Recommended reading rates (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2000: Good et al., 2001)

Grade	Average Rate	Danger Rate
Grade 1, May	60	40
Grade 2, Dec	75	50
Grade 2, May	100	60
Grade 3, Dec	120	70
Grade 3, May	135	80

More on Reading Rates

- There is a point of diminishing returns
- Currently, research studies have not supported reasons for pushing students to read much faster than 130 words per minute aloud.
 - Many good 4th and 5th readers begin reading faster than that, there does not seem to be higher benefit (O'Connor, 2006)
 - Good comprehension rates have been shown in 4th and 5th grade students reading 100 words per minute

Fluency and Comprehension

- Students who can read words accurately in context have good comprehension
- Students who can read words accurately *and quickly* have even better comprehension (Rupley, Willson, & Nichols, 1998)
- There is a correlation in the range of .6 to .9

Fluency and Vocabulary

- Good readers are exposed to anywhere from two to ten times as many words as poor readers (Adams, 1990)
- Less exposure is negatively correlated with vocabulary development (Nagy, Anderson, Henderson, 1985)

Fluency Acquisition

- Decoding practice is not enough (Torgesen, Rashotte, & Wagner, 1997)
- Students who learn words *out of context* do not show consistent improvements in fluency or comprehension (Fleischer, Jenkins, and Pany, 1979)
 - The only time students consistently generalized instruction to actual reading was when they were taught words in context (Levy, Abello, & Lysynchuk, 1997)

Measuring Fluency

Mrs. Mooney was a butcher's daughter. She was a woman who was quite able to keep things to herself: a determined woman. She had married her father's foreman and opened a butcher's shop near Spring Gardens. But as soon as his father-in-law was dead Mr. Mooney began to go to the devil. He drank, plundered the till, ran headlong into debt. It was no use making him take the pledge: he was sure to break out again a few days after. By fighting his wife in the presence of customers and by buying bad meat he ruined his business.

One night he went for his wife with the cleaver and she had to sleep in a neighbor's house. After that they lived apart. She went to the priest and got a separation from him with care of the children. She would give him neither money or food nor house-room; and so he was obliged to enlist himself as a sheriff's man.

8
19
27
35
44
54
64
74
84
93
99
109
119
129
139
148
157
161

Calculating WPM

**Total
Number
of
Words
Read**

-

**Number
of
Errors**

=

**Words
Correct
Per
Minute
(wpm)**

Calculating WPM

- Have the student read 3 passages, each for one minute
- Use the median score

Selecting Passages

- The 3 passages need to have the same text level
- They cannot be text the student has already read before
- If you do not have access to standardized passages, try and pick ones that do not have complicated names

Instructional Level

INDEPENDENT-LEVEL

**≤1 in 20 words is
difficult**

**95%–100%
accuracy**

INSTRUCTIONAL-LEVEL

**≤1 in 10 words is
difficult**

**90%–94%
accuracy**

FRUSTRATIONAL-LEVEL

**Difficulty with >1 in 10
words**

**< 90%
accuracy**

Calculating Accuracy

Correct number of words read

÷

Total number of words read

Percent accuracy

At Which Level do you Assess

- When determining which materials to use with the student, use instructional level
- When determining their fluency rate (as indicated by the benchmarks), use grade level material

What About Errors?

- There are those students who can read fast, but make many errors
- Those students are considered to still be in the *acquisition phase*
- Students who have slower reading rates, but make few errors (independent or instructional level) are considered to be in the *fluent phase*

Acquisition Phase

- These students still need more direct decoding and comprehension instruction
- They are still at the skill deficit phase and need the more explicit instruction in order to reach the fluent stage

Fluent Phase

- These students have the fundamentals, but need more practice
- The more text they are exposed to the better

How to Determine

- If the student makes more than 8-10 errors during one minute of reading he/she is probably in the acquisition phase
- The student also needs to be not too far into the danger range (recommended reading rates), in order to be in the fluent phase
 - No more than about 10 words under the upper limit

Activities to Increase Fluency

- Repeated Reading
 - Repeated Reading is an effective strategy to increase fluency as long as corrective feedback is given
- Teacher Moderated Partner Reading
 - This model of peer tutoring requires that teachers monitor and scaffold based on the students' needs
 - It also includes a retell portion so that comprehension can be checked

Repeated Reading

- The teacher has the student read aloud from a book at his/her instructional level
- When the student has read the page through once, he/she returns to the top of the page and reads the page 2 more times
- Students are provided with corrective feedback on any errors made
- The student is provided with any definition or word clarification that he/she requests
 - The teacher should also periodically check
- This is very beneficial if done 3 times per week for 15 minutes (takes most of the school year - 20 weeks)

Repeated Reading

- Repeated Reading is more effective for those students in the acquisition phase
 - Those students need more practice and reading the same page 3 times give that practice
 - Continuous reading aloud to a teacher for the same amount of time is more beneficial for students in the fluent stage

Repeated Reading

- This is a beneficial instructional technique for improving reading; however, it is labor intensive
- Partner Reading allows the same opportunities for reading

What is Partner Reading

- A classwide peer tutoring activity to increase fluency
- All students work in pairs several times each week for fluency practice

Purpose of Partner Reading

- To develop important beginning reading skills for young children
- To provide teachers with a practical and effective means of meeting early literacy needs in general education classrooms

Important Features of Partner Reading

- Reciprocal roles (Coaches and Readers)
- Structured activities
- Individualized
- More time engaged on task
- Includes all students
- Opportunities for success for all students
- Encourages positive peer interactions
- Practical AND effective
- Opportunities to monitor student progress

Overall Structure of Partner Reading

- Teacher-led practice
- Partner activities conducted in pairs
- Teacher monitoring
- Teams and reward system

Teacher-Led Practice

- When beginning partner reading, the teacher models with students how it should be done, until all the students understand the roles of each partner

Teacher Monitoring

- Teacher keeps time and gives directions to students for moving from activity to activity.
- During activities, teacher walks around room, assists students, listens to students read, listens for fluency, gives feedback, and awards points for correct implementation and positive behaviors/cooperation.

Pairs: Coaches and Readers

- Higher performing readers are paired with lower performing readers
- Coach
 - Provides prompts and helps Reader; takes turn reading
- Reader
 - Reads and accepts help from Coach; takes turn helping
- Partners remain the same for 4 weeks

Assigning Pairs

- Rank students according to reading performance (initial fluency level)
- Split class in half. Pair top performer of upper half with top performer of lower half. Pair next-to-top student from upper half with next-to-top performer of lower half.
- Adjust pairs according to social skills and individual needs.

Sample Pairing Scheme

Higher Performers (HP)	Lower Performers (LP)	Pairs
Top HP	Top LP	Pair A
Second-ranked HP	Second-ranked LP	Pair B
Third-ranked HP	Third-ranked LP	Pair C
Fourth-ranked HP	Fourth-ranked LP	Pair D
Fifth-ranked HP	Fifth-ranked LP	Pair E
Sixth-ranked HP	Sixth-ranked LP	Pair F

Handling Absentees

- When two students are absent, their partners may be paired with the stronger student serving as Coach.
- Form a triad, but avoid using very low performers or students with disabilities. The two higher performers take turns and each paragraph is still read twice before continuing

PALS Seating/Moving Arrangement

- Assign partners to adjacent seats for the 4 weeks they are paired.
- If partners do not sit next to each other, assign a “mover” and a “stayer” for each pair for the weeks they are partners.

PALS Rules

1. Talk only to your partner and talk only about PALS.
2. Keep your voice low.
3. Cooperate with your partner.
4. Try your best.

Error Correction

(“Read the words.”--error)

- “Stop. That word is _____. What word?”
- “Start the line again.”

Error Correction

- Error is made. Just tell partner the right word. Partner repeats word and keeps reading.
- 3-second rule: When partner gets stuck on a word, count silently to three before telling partner the right word. Partner repeats words and keeps reading.

Partner Reading

- Children's literature is used for Partner Reading.
- Partner reading is conducted for 10 minutes
- Coach always models reading first (paragraph by paragraph) with Partner Reading. Reader reads first on the second time through.
- Each book is read twice

Partner Reading Steps

- Coach reads title/page first.
- Reader follows along, then reads same title/page.
- Coach and reader continue taking turns until they finish the book.
- Switch roles. Reader reads title/page first, and Coach reads second. Reader marks 5 points when finished.
- Coaches/readers listen, correct mistakes, and praise for four readings of book. Then tell teacher.

Teacher Role During Partner Reading

- The teacher walks around the room listening for errors or non book related conversation
- At the end of the 10 minutes, the teacher instructs the students to stop and has the students discuss the story and provide each other with main points
- The students provide a brief description of the story in their partner reading journal
- They also are asked to write down any unfamiliar vocabulary on post-it notes and the teacher later provides definitions and examples for the unfamiliar vocabulary

Selecting Text of Appropriate Difficulty

- Each pair may read from DIFFERENT books.
- Select book that higher performing student can read independently (95% accuracy).
- Identify appropriate books and place in students' folders (at least one book).
- Books should be brief enough that they can be read twice during Partner Reading (10 min.)
- Rotate books at least once weekly between pairs, so they are exposed to a variety of books.

Scheduling Tips

- Once up and running, try to devote about 30 minutes to partner reading three times weekly
- Schedule partner reading during regular reading periods at the same time and days each week
- Do not sacrifice recess, lunch, or other fun activities for partner reading