



EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

Topic: Fluency/Automaticity with Text

The ability to read fluently and develop automaticity with text permits the reader to focus on comprehending what is read – the real goal of reading. This bulletin examines three articles that focus on the area of reading fluency. The evidence presented in each article concurs that students need to develop automaticity with text to comprehend what is read and to read with enjoyment. Classroom implications and strategy interventions are noted next to each review.

Literature Reviews

National Reading Panel. (2000). Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching children to read. Reports of the subgroups. Chapter 3: Fluency. [Online]. Available: <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/ch3.pdf>

This report reviewed the changing concepts of fluency and examined the effectiveness and efficacy of two major instructional techniques. Fluent readers automatically recognize words, thus allowing the reader to focus on understanding and interpreting text. Yet, in a sampling of fourth graders, 44% were found disfluent even when reading materials at their instructional level. Teachers can easily measure fluency via informal inventories, miscue analysis, running records, and reading speed calculations. Teachers should rely on techniques that require students to orally read and reread the same text until a level of proficiency is reached. Tutors, audiotapes, peer guidance, and one-on-one instruction combined with set ways to provide feedback are effective interventions to use in oral readings. Results of the panel's studies found repeated oral reading procedures have a consistent and positive impact on fluency, word recognition, and comprehension especially through grade five. They found little evidence of any impact of programs encouraging children to read on their own or silently.

Kuhn, M. R. & Stahl, S. A. (2000). Fluency: A review of developmental and remedial practices. [Online]. Available: <http://www.ciera.org/ciera/publications/report-series/inquiry-2/2-008.pdf>

In this literature review, the authors examined both the theoretical and empirical studies of how children go from reading word-by-word to fluent reading of text. Fluency normally occurs between the first and third grades. Instruction focusing on fluency appears to be necessary for readers at this stage of reading development and for older readers in need of remediation. Without the ability to automatically process and decode print, students use more mental resources on the task of decoding words, leaving fewer resources for comprehending text. Assisted approaches that provide models of fluency for students, such as reading-while-listening, seemed to be more effective than non-assisted practice. Since assisted approaches are primarily useful in one-on-one instruction, the author reviewed a variety of teacher adaptations that either used whole-class instruction, paired reading, or cross-age tutoring techniques that are more practical in day-to-day teaching. Anecdotal evidence reported success with many of these lessons.

Classroom Implications

- Teachers need to collect and use data on individual children's reading fluency in order to ensure that students are automatic readers.
- Provide frequent opportunities for students to read and reread orally as part of reading instruction until fluency and proficiency are attained.
- Provide instruction in fluency using oral reading techniques as part of reading programs through grade five. Use techniques such as chunking, echo reading, paired reading, neurological impress and teaching intonation, inflection and expression in fluency instruction. Guidance and feedback must always accompany these techniques.
- Opportunities for oral reading should be increased while silent reading opportunities decrease.
- Provide instruction that incorporates repeated reading strategies including choral readings, reading while listening to taped text, read-alongs and independent re-reading in the primary grades to help increase fluency.
- Use echo reading, partner reading, and cross-age reading "mentor" programs as effective approaches to fluency instruction in the classroom.
- Since fluency is so important to comprehension, attention and instruction that lead to fluency are needed components of both early and remedial reading programs.

Vaughn, S., et al. (2000). Fluency and comprehension interventions for third-grade students. *Remedial and Special Education, 21(6)*, 325-335.

This study considered the differential effects of fluency and comprehension instruction on fluency and comprehension student outcomes. Two intervention strategies, one designed to improve fluency and one designed to improve comprehension, were implemented in targeted regular education classrooms with 111 students, some of whom had significant reading difficulties, over a 12-week period. Teachers of eight third-grade classrooms were provided with training and on-going support to implement one of the two intervention strategies with their students. The students in each classroom ranged in reading abilities, from those with significant reading difficulties to those who were low to average readers. Partner reading, an intervention purported to enhance fluency, and collaborative strategic reading, an intervention purported to enhance comprehension, were the focused models of instruction for this study. Partner reading consisted of student partners (stronger partner paired with a less strong partner) taking turns reading. The stronger partner read first, modeling fluent reading. The less strong partner read the same selection and was assisted in decoding unknown words through a specific correction paradigm taught to the students. Collaborative strategic reading consisted of teaching students to learn and apply four reading strategies that occur before, during, and after the reading process to enhance understanding of text materials. Students worked in pairs to implement the strategies. Results of this study provided further evidence of the close relationship between fluency and comprehension instruction. All students, including those with reading difficulties regardless of the intervention strategy taught, made significant gains in rate of reading and the correct number of words read per minute. However, neither the partner reading groups nor the collaborative strategic reading groups made major gains in reading accuracy or comprehension. Although this article did not compare the relative approaches of effective fluency interventions, it did identify two effective means to increase fluency.

• Partner reading interventions are effective in:

- Providing student partners with a model for fluent reading.
- Helping students to be involved in classroom activities that concentrate on reading text accurately, yet rapidly.
- Helping students to learn procedures for decoding unknown words.

• To improve the rate of reading, teachers should use collaborative strategic reading interventions that teach before, during, and after reading strategies such as:

- Using prior knowledge to preview the text.
- Using strategies to figure out the meanings of unknown words.
- Summarizing key information and identifying the main idea.
- Generating questions related to important ideas and vocabulary.

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania - Mark S. Schweiker, Governor; Department of Education - Charles B. Zogby, Secretary; Thomas P. Carey, Deputy Secretary, Office for Elementary & Secondary Education; Fran James Warkomski, Director, Bureau of Special Education; John J. Tommasini, Assistant Director, Bureau of Special Education.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) does not discriminate in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices, based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ancestry, union membership, or any other legally protected category. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with State law including the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and with Federal law, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Complaints regarding discrimination in schools: Human Relations Representative, Intake Division, Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, Harrisburg Regional Office (717) 787-9784; Pittsburgh Regional Office (412) 565-5395; Philadelphia Regional Office (215) 560-2496.

Complaints against a Pennsylvania Department of Education employee: Pennsylvania Department of Education Equal Employment Opportunity Representative, Bureau of Personnel, 11th Floor, 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333; Voice Telephone (717) 787-4417; Fax (717) 783-9348; Text Telephone TTY (717) 783-8445.

Information on accommodations within the Department of Education for persons with disabilities: Pennsylvania Department of Education, Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator, Bureau of Management Services, 15th Floor, 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333; Voice Telephone (717) 783-9791; Fax (717) 772-2317; Text Telephone TTY (717) 783-8445.

General questions regarding educational law or issues: Pennsylvania Department of Education, School Services Unit, Director, 5th Floor, 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333; Voice Telephone (717) 783-3750; Fax (717) 783-6802; Text Telephone TTY (717) 783-8445.

For additional copies of this publication, contact PaTTAN, 200 Anderson Road, King of Prussia, PA 19406; Voice Telephone (800) 441-3215; Fax (610) 265-5737; Text Telephone TTY (610) 768-9723.

PaTTAN
200 Anderson Road
King of Prussia PA 19406-1904

Non-Profit
US Postage
P A I D
Permit No. 6541
Southeastern PA