

Fluency in Learning to Read for Meaning: Going Beyond Repeated Readings

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The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of fluency development and focus on instructional approaches that are intended to improve fluency that go beyond the most frequently recommended strategy of repeated readings. Repeated reading is the most recognized approach for developing fluency, and although repeated readings have shown successful results in developing students' fluency, continual reliance on repeated readings without appropriate guidance and support can lead to diminished student engagement. Providing students with varied opportunities to practice and acquire fluency will enhance their active participation in fluency instruction and engage them in reading for multiple purposes. This article provides an overview of fluency instructional methods that go beyond unassisted and unguided student reading practice.

Keywords elementary, fluency, comprehension

It can be said that reading programs never rise above the quality of the instruction found within them. Teachers' understanding of students as learners and teachers who view learning to read as a developmental process increases the likelihood that they will be effective in teaching children to read (Blair, Rupley & Nichols, 2007; Brown, 2003). Several reading authorities and researchers have offered considerable support for the developmental view of reading. Jeanne Chall's view of children's stages of reading development (1996) are helpful in identifying the essential instructional components of teaching reading as they are laid out by a developmental scheme.

Chall (1996) proposed comprehensive reading development stages for preschool through grade eight, and her stages illustrated the major qualitative reading abilities, as well as the relationship of reading to listening comprehension. She noted that these stages may overlap and are not fixed. That is, a first grader could be in stage 3 and a sixth grader could be in stage 1, and the stage of reading may also be dependent on the text and the level of the text. The characteristics associated with each stage should be viewed as representative. Still, knowledge of these stages is helpful in planning instruction, and teachers

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who are familiar with these stages are better equipped at providing meaningful instruction, thus providing their students with one of the most crucial skills of their lives—reading (Heilman, Blair, & Rupley, 2002).

The Learning to Read Stages—Language Awareness, Phonological Insights, and Word Recognition

The pre-reading stage 0 represents the developmental processes in which learners grow in their control of language, both the meaning (semantics) and structure (syntax). During this stage, the children are increasing their conceptual knowledge and beginning to develop an understanding of the world around them and how language functions in this world. In order to read at this stage, learners rely heavily on their experiential and contextual knowledge. During this emergent stage of reading development, children use the contextual information provided by the pictures, the predictable language of the text they encounter, and the way that stories mimic spoken language in order to read. Throughout this stage, readers use logographic (e.g., the golden M in McDonalds and the swoosh for Nike) information to make guesses about words. The first printed words that are learned such as their name and other environmental print are read holistically (Ehri, 1994; Gough & Hillinger, 1980; Moustafa & Maldonado-Colon, 1997) and are recognized more easily in context (Moustafa & Maldonado-Colon, 1997; Stanovich, 1994). As learners progress through stage 0, they begin to develop phonological insights into the nature of words. For example, they can often identify and create words that rhyme, are conscious that words are made up of sounds, and understand that some of words have the same beginning and ending sounds.

As they become more aware of the relationships of spoken language to written language, they grow in their knowledge of the broader areas of phonological awareness (Villaume & Brabham, 2003). Such growth shows that they are transitioning into stage 1 of reading where the focus becomes on narrower features of phonological awareness, such as refined understanding of phonemic principles, onsets and rimes in spoken syllables, and phonics. This new understanding of alphabetic principles allow the stage 1 reader to become more proficient at mapping sounds of spoken words onto written words in systematic ways (Villaume & Brabham, 2003). A major focal point of stage 1 is that developing readers begin gluing to print and often attempt to sound out every letter in words. Even words that were easily recognized holistically in stage 0 may now be sounded out by the stage 1 readers. The stage 1 readers are learning to break the code of print and realizing that letters and letter combinations represent sounds of their language. To the stage 1 reader, word recognition is extremely important, and systematic and direct phonics instruction is an essential component of a reading program for these students (Blair, Rupley, & Nichols, 2007). As students gain richer understandings of alphabetic principles they become adept at using letter sound correspondence and develop a foundation for accurate word recognition. This development of alphabetic knowledge is a prerequisite for fluency (Villaume & Brabham, 2003).

As these developing readers become more confident and successful in word recognition, they begin to progress forward to the final stage of developmental reading, stage 2. A successful reader is a fluid reader, one who automatically and accurately decodes words, thus freeing up attention for higher levels of comprehension and meaning (Samuels, 2006). As children progress through stage 2, they acquire the ability to connect words with their background knowledge and focus on chunking the ideas represented. They recognize spelling patterns of words (Bear & Templeton, 1998; Gentry, 2000) and reach a level of automaticity (Samuels, 1997; 2006) in word recognition. Chall often referred to this stage as “more of the same.” In other words readers need an opportunity to

hone their skills of reading in comfortable text and reading situations. Reading instruction that encourages fluent reading needs to be a vital part of the stage 2 readers' curriculum. This stage is not for gaining new information, or using reading to learn, but is the stage where children begin to integrate control of their reading and is the juncture at which comprehension begins to be the primary focus. Developing the attributes associated with these developmental stages is critical so that readers can invest their cognitive energies for higher levels of comprehension (Villaume & Brabham, 2003).

Understanding Fluency's Role in the Stages of Reading Development

Stages 0, 1, and 2 are referred to as developmental reading or learning to read stages, and although we firmly believe that students sequentially progress through these stages, we also recognize that readers often share attributes of multiple stages often dependent on the text type, text level, and familiarity with the content of the text. However, ultimately, through continuous assessment and reflection, teachers should be able to recognize the current stage of reading development of their students and thus know which aspect of reading should be emphasized during reading instruction (Brown, 2003). If students are identified as being at stage 0, then phonemic awareness and alphabetic knowledge should be emphasized to assist them in making the successful transition into stage 1. If they are stage 1 readers then instruction should emphasize word recognition to promote the development of phonic knowledge and an automatic sight vocabulary necessary to transition into stage 2. And if the students are in stage 2, fluent expressive reading at their independent and instructional reading levels is essential to complete the developmental reading stages and help them transition successfully into stage 3 and beyond where the focus is reading for meaning and to learn from increasingly more difficult texts.

Stage 3 is primarily associated with content area reading, or "Reading to Learn." During this stage of reading development the reader must use reading as a tool for acquiring new knowledge. Before the learner entered stage 3 of reading, he or she relied on the environment or the spoken word to acquire new knowledge, but as the learner enters stage 3 he or she must use reading to gain novel information. Stage 3 is also characterized by the growing importance of word meaning, prior knowledge, and strategic knowledge and in order for the learner to focus attention on these cognitive aspects the learner must reach a level of fluent reading. Successful reading occurs when the reader is able to bring previous knowledge and experiences as well as fluent decoding of the text to their reading (Chall, 1996).

Developing Fluency

The ability to understand and react to ideas expressed in writing is the essence of reading, and if we accept that the ultimate goal of reading is comprehension and learning from text, it is important for teachers to understand how fluency is the essential component that nurtures and brings about this capability.

What is fluency and what do we mean when we say someone is a fluent reader? Our belief is that fluency involves three components that, when working together, bring about fluency. Those three components are: accuracy of recognition, automaticity of word recognition, and reading orally with appropriate prosodic features such as expression, stress, pitch, and suitable phrasing (Allington, 1983; Chall, 1996; Kuhn, 2004–2005; Kuhn et al., 2006).

According to Chall (1996), once students have established accuracy with print identification they must then become automatic with print recognition in order for higher levels of comprehension to occur. Although word recognition accuracy is important in reading, it is also important to further develop fluency or the ability to decode a word with relative ease and little hesitation. This ability to become fluent is also called automaticity of word recognition. Once learners develop this comfort with print, the act of reading then becomes focused on gaining meaning rather than sounding out words. Fluency is a gateway to comprehension. Many highly intelligent students experience difficulty in reading for meaning because they remain mired in the halting, unproductive stage of word recognition. The essence of fluency is that the reader has the ability to decode and comprehend text at the same time (Samuels, 2006).

Research (Adams, 1990; LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Samuels, 1979, Stanovich, 1984) associated with the automaticity theory maintains that automaticity is developed through repeated practice over time and exposure to wide varieties of print. In other words, students need to be provided multiple opportunities to read text at their independent/instructional level (Rasinski & Padak, 1996; Reutzel, 1996) or even their instructional/challenge level when provided with instructional scaffolding (Stahl & Heubach, 2005; Stahl & Kuhn, 2002; Kuhn et al., 2006). It is recommended that this exposure to print comes in the form of teacher modeling and abundant reading. Through a model, the student is exposed to fluent expressive reading that helps ensure comprehension and through scaffolded repeated exposures to text, students begin to recognize orthographic patterns in words, experience various components of language, enhance their sight vocabulary, develop a quick and effortless ability to recognize words, and free up attention for higher levels of comprehension (Kuhn et al., 2006; Samuels, 2006).

A student demonstrates fluency by recognizing words accurately and automatically while at the same time reading orally with appropriate expression and phrasing. The direct implication for reading teachers is twofold: (1) accuracy and automaticity in word recognition or word identification are achieved by directly or explicitly teaching skills and strategies to students and (2) interesting and varied practice in a variety of contexts must be provided to develop fluent, expressive reading.

Although it could be inferred that in order for stage 2 readers to develop fluency, they should be provided with an abundance of opportunities to practice reading, we feel that in order for this practice to be successful it should come under the guidance and scaffolding of a teacher (Dowhower, 1989; Kuhn, 2004–2005). Fluency development is often compared to skill development in sports or music development, which suggests that repeated practice leads to fluent reading in the same way that repeated practice or rehearsal leads to improved performance in athletic or musical performance. The repeated practice frees the reader from focusing on a decoding skill and allows the reader to more critically examine the text for meaning. For many beginning teachers this translates into simply providing time for students to read (e.g., Sustained Silent Reading [SSR], Drop Everything and Read [DEAR], and Accelerated Reader [AR]), but as many athletic coaches and musical directors will tell you, it is not practice that makes perfect, it is perfect practice that makes perfect performance. In other words, having a coach directly working with you, modeling the desired outcome and providing scaffolded practice is better than just practicing on your own (Blair, Rupley, & Nichols, 2007; Villaume & Brabham, 2003).

We believe that in order for students to develop fluency they need to be provided with opportunities to read. The teacher's responsibility is to model expressive readings that demonstrate both automaticity and prosody (reading with expression) as well as provide a scaffold for students who continue to need additional support in developing fluency.

Fluency Instruction

This section focuses on instructional approaches that are intended to improve fluency that go beyond the most frequently recommended strategy of repeated readings. Repeated reading is the most recognized approach for developing fluency (National Reading Panel, 2000; Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Rasinski & Padak, 1996). Although often successful in its most used form, it simply requires a student to orally reread a section of text several times, often over many days, until a high degree of fluency is achieved and does not really provide additional instructional components that lead to higher levels of comprehension. The text can be part of a story, a content-area book, a magazine excerpt, or a newspaper article.

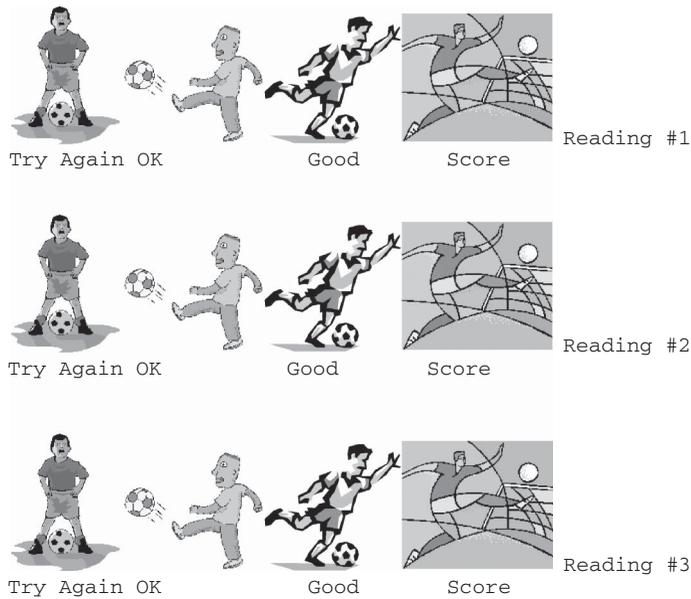
Practice without question is essential for acquisition of fluency; however, varied instructional activities have been shown to maintain students' active engagement in learning tasks and provide stronger connections to reading comprehension. Continual reliance on repeated readings without appropriate guidance and support can lead to diminished student engagement and may not help students recognize that increased fluency provides for more focus on meaning. Providing students with varied opportunities to practice and acquire fluency will enhance their active participation in the instruction and engage them in reading for multiple purposes. In the following sections we describe fluency instructional methods that go beyond unassisted and unguided student reading practice.

Paired Repeated Reading

To become a more fluent reader, students must be provided with texts that are at a comfortable reading level and allotted time each day to practice reading fluently (Rasinski & Padak, 1996). One strategy designed to help students develop fluency, gain confidence, and free up capacity for higher order text processing is Paired Repeated Readings (Koskinen & Blum, 1986; Topping, 2006; Wood & Nichols, 2000). The steps for Paired Repeated Readings are as follows:

1. Preassign readers to pairs, making certain that the students are similar in their reading ability and can mutually benefit from instruction. Emphasize that the purpose of this instruction is to help them become better, more fluent readers and that through repeated readings and continued practice this will be accomplished thus allowing them to focus their attention on comprehension.
2. Provide the students passages that are at their independent/instructional level that can be read with a minimal amount of assistance. As with repeated readings, these text excerpts can come from multiple sources and should be relatively short (50–100 words).
3. Students first read their passages silently and then decide who will practice reading first. Students alternate the roles of reader and listener throughout the practice session.
4. The reader's responsibility is to read the passage aloud to the listener three different times. The listener can assist with pronunciation and meaning when necessary. Upon completion of each reading the reader and the listener evaluate the reading by completing the fluency evaluation form (Figure 1). This form emphasizes the positive by asking the reader how well they read and asking the listener to note how the reader improved with practice.
5. After the third reading, the students switch roles and follow steps 3 and 4 again. Teachers circulate among the dyads to provide encouragement, assistance, conduct informal assessments, and to model effective fluent reading for the students.

How well did you read?



Reading # 3

How did your partner's reading improve?

Read more smoothly _____

Knew more words _____

Read with more expression _____

Tell your partner one thing that was better about his or her reading.

FIGURE 1 Fluency Partner Reading Assessment.

Source: Adapted from "Paired repeated reading: A classroom strategy for developing fluent reading" by P. S. Koskinen & I. H. Blum, 1986, *The Reading Teacher*, 40 (1), pp. 70–75 and "Helping struggling learners read and write" by K. D. Wood & W. D. Nichols, 2000, *Promoting Literacy in Grades 4–9*, pp. 233–249.

Assisted Reading

Another simple yet effective intervention strategy that can be used during guided reading with the teacher or during paired reading with a peer is assisted reading practice (Shany & Biemler, 1995). In this instructional routine, the student reads aloud while a more experienced or accomplished reader follows along silently. If the student commits a reading error or pauses at an unknown word for about three seconds the helping reader corrects the student error.

Many teachers, when working with stage 2 readers working on fluency development, tell the reader to sound out the unknown word. If the reader was a stage 1 reader who was

trying to develop stronger phonetic analysis skills then this would be an appropriate suggestion (Brown, 2003). However, for the stage 2 reader who is working on developing fluency, it is more appropriate for the teacher, parent, or partner to simply provide the word for the struggling reader.

Steps in implementing Assisted Reading are as follows:

1. Find a quiet location where both the student and the helping reader can both view a copy of the text.
2. Instruct the student to begin reading orally using his or her best “reading voice.”
3. Reading helper (teacher, parent, or partner) should follow along silently in the text as the student reads.
4. If the student mispronounces a word or pauses for longer than five seconds provide the word for the student. The student should repeat the word correctly and then continue reading the passage aloud.
5. The reading helper should recognize when the reader is reading fluently by praising when the student reads with expression and in a smooth conversational manner.

Phrase Reading

Phrase reading is an excellent strategy for promoting students’ ability to read in syntactically appropriate and meaningful idea units or phrases, in order to understand what they read, and to increase automaticity in word recognition and enhanced comprehension (Henk, 1986). Furthermore, phrase reading is helpful in reducing word-by-word reading, which is a major roadblock to successful fluent reading and freeing capacity for higher level comprehension. The basic steps in using phrase reading are:

1. Select reading material that is on the student’s easy or independent reading level.
2. On a one-to-one basis, ask the student to read one paragraph or page aloud and tape-record this reading.
3. Model for the student reading the paragraph or page in a word-by-word fashion and in meaningful phrases.
4. Using a pencil (you may want to reproduce the text for ease of marking), divide the first two sentences into meaningful phrases; another method is to reproduce the reading material by typing it in phrases in a vertical column.
5. Divide the rest of the sentences into meaningful phrases with both you and the student explaining how a sentence should be divided.
6. Have the student read the text aloud in meaningful phrases two or three times; you may want to read the phrases aloud together with the student.
7. Tape the last oral reading and compare the tape with the initial reading of the text.
8. Discuss with the student the benefits of reading sentences in meaningful phrases as opposed to word-by-word reading.

The Oral Recitation Lesson (ORL)

The Oral Recitation Lesson (ORL) was designed to provide a framework for effectively increasing fluency while implementing a basal reading program over the course of a week (Hoffman, 1987). This approach to developing fluency combines teacher modeling, echo reading, and student mastery and is similar to using repeated reading as a part of direct instruction. According to Richards (2000) ORL can conclude with a form of readers theater. When using this approach, students are introduced to the text with an emphasis on

comprehension. When beginning the ORL the teacher should select a text that lends itself to performance (Richards, 2000). Texts for fluency should be at the student's independent or instructional level. Additionally, the selected texts should contain natural language patterns. Passages that contain dialogue are especially beneficial. Richards (2000) suggests the following steps for using the Oral Recitation Lesson:

1. The teacher selects a text and models fluent oral reading. At the conclusion of the reading, the teacher selects a comprehension strategy (often a story map) that facilitates discussion and comprehension of the story. In addition to comprehension discussion, the teacher also guides a discussion of the prosodic elements found within the specific text.
2. Next, the students are allowed to practice reading the text on their own, or with a partner. The emphasis of this reading is focused on the dialogue and the prosodic features of the dialogue. The students should be encouraged to read the text aloud as if they were the person speaking, paying close attention to the punctuation, understanding the character's expressed emotion, and reading longer phrases with appropriate pausing.
3. The final step of the ORL is the performance of the text. Expressive readings that include dramatization are to be encouraged.

Fluency Development Lesson (FDL)

The FDL (Rasinski, Padak, Linek, & Sturtevant, 1994) finds its origin from the Oral Recitation Lesson, but employs relatively short reading passages (poems, rhymes, songs, story segments, or other texts) that students read and reread over a short period of time. The format for lesson follows a routine of the teacher taking responsibility for reading the daily passage and gradually shifting responsibility for the reading to the students:

1. The teacher introduces a new short text and reads it to the students two or three times while the students follow along silently. The text can be a poem, segment from a basal passage, trade book selection, and so on.
2. The teacher and students discuss the nature and content of the passage as well as the quality of teacher's reading of the passage and how the reading of the passage demonstrated comprehension of the text.
3. Teacher and students read the passage chorally several times. Antiphonal reading and other variations are used to create variety and maintain engagement.
4. The teacher organizes student into pairs or trios. Each student practices the passage three times while his or her partner listens and provides support and encouragement.
5. Individuals and groups of students perform their reading for the class or other audience such as another class, a parent visitor, the school principal, or another teacher.
6. The students and their teacher then choose four to five interesting words from the text to add to the individual students' word banks and/or the classroom word wall.
7. Students engage in 5–10 minutes of word study activities (e.g., word sorts with word bank words, word walls, flash card practice, defining words, word games).
8. The students take a copy of the passage home to practice with parents and other family members.
9. The following day, students read the passage from the previous day to the teacher or a fellow student for accuracy and fluency. Words from the previous day are also read, reread, grouped, and sorted by students and groups of students. Students may also read the passage to the teacher or a partner who checks for fluency and accuracy.

The instructional routine then begins again with step #1 using a new passage.

Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI)

Still another approach that builds on the Oral Recitation Lesson is Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI) (Kuhn et al. 2006; Stahl & Heubach, 2005). FORI was developed to work with basal readers and whole class reading programs. The procedure consists of three components including redesigned basal reading lessons, a home reading program, and a daily free choice reading period. FORI, while a fluency approach, places an initial emphasis on comprehension of the text. The procedures are:

1. **Redesigned Basal Reading Lesson.** Because this approach involves whole class grade level basal reading instruction, the redesign is intended to make adjustments for students who are not reading on grade level. The redesign focuses primarily on making accommodations for students who are reading below grade level. The accommodations could include a longer modeling period, more echo reading, and more repeated readings. Because each story in the basal anthology is different, modifications are made accordingly.
2. **Story Introduction:** During this step the teacher shares the story aloud and discusses the story using a variety of procedures including story maps, questioning, student generated questions, and other graphic organizers. At the completion of the shared reading and discussion, echo reading could be used to provide additional support to the learners.
3. **Partner Reading:** This step places students with a partner so they can practice reading in pairs. The length of the passage read is determined by the partners, and the students alternate roles between reader and monitor.
4. **Additional Instruction:** During this phase of the lesson, the teacher may use many of the approaches suggested in the basal series, can provide individual conferencing, conduct journal assignments, or encourage students to interpret the story for themselves through developing scripts for performance.
5. **Home Reading:** An important aspect of FORI is the home/school connection. Stories read in class are sent home at the onset of the lesson, and students are instructed to read the story at home with a parent or other person in the household. In addition to the basal story, students are also expected to read at least one other story a week at home.
6. **Free-Choice Reading:** To make sure that students have wide reading experiences students are also encouraged to read a variety of books on their own. Twenty minutes a day is set aside for independent, self-selected reading.

Radio Reading

Radio Reading (Greene, 1979) provides teachers with an alternative to common round-robin practices of reading and moves away from word-attack reading sessions, instead focusing instruction on the goal of comprehending and effectively communicating the message of the author. Radio Reading is analogous to a radio announcer talking to a listening audience and the purpose of oral reading. During this instructional approach to developing fluency and comprehension, the reader transforms into a radio news announcer complete with a script while the listeners serve as the audience listening to the radio. The reader's job is to communicate accurately and with a smooth fluid reading while the listener's job is to discuss, respond, and evaluate the reader's message and performance (Tierney & Readence, 2000). The steps of Radio Reading are as follows:

1. The teacher should assign an appropriate text to the reader (content area text works well, especially historical texts). The reader should be provided with time to examine and edit the text as necessary. Because the goal is for the audience to comprehend the

message, the reader should provide all relevant information. Because the audience will not have a copy of the text the reader must do a sufficient job of relaying the information to the audience in an accurate manner. Because the job of the reader is to convey a clear and expressive message, the reader is permitted to edit the text. He or she may delete words or sections, change words, and insert words as needed as long as it maintains the clarity of the author's ideas. For young readers texts should be limited to about 50–100 words.

2. Students then practice their revised passages until they feel they are ready to perform it for an audience.
3. During the performance, if a reader is unsure of a word while reading, he or she may ask the teacher for assistance. As with the other strategies previously noted, the teacher simply provides the word to the reader in order to minimize interruptions so that the listeners have an opportunity to process meaning.
4. The listening audience has control over the reader's performance and may ask the reader to re-read a section or sections that were confusing or unclear. If an accurate message has been clearly expressed and read by the reader, then the check for comprehension will be brief. Once again the goal is on clarity of understanding. If the reader clearly conveys the ideas of the author, and the listeners understand the message then Radio Reading was a success. If the listeners are confused, provide conflicting information, or are able to detect errors during the discussion, then the reader has not communicated a clear message. Ultimately, it is the reader's job to achieve clarity in the passage, and he or she may return to the passage in order to re-read portions of concern or confusion.

Fast Start

Parental involvement in a child's learning development is critical. When parents are involved in the education of their children and if this involvement is utilized effectively, the need for remedial programs in the school could be lessened dramatically (Crimm, 1992). In addition, Christenson (1995) suggested that when parents were involved in education that teachers are viewed to have better interpersonal and teaching skills, receive higher evaluations by the principal, and manifest greater satisfaction with their job. However, in order to utilize parents as effective tutors in teaching fluency, clear specification of objectives and communication between the teacher and the parents are essential. Fast Start (Rasinski, 1995) is a parental involvement reading program designed to get children off to a successful start in word recognition and fluency. The Fast Start Program (Padak & Rasinski, 2005), which has shown positive results with first- grade populations, involves a 10–15 minute daily lesson that involves parents in reading a brief text to and with their children repeatedly. The steps for Fast Start are as follows:

1. Parent and child sit together. The parent draws the child's attention to the text by pointing to the appropriate lines and words.
2. Parent reads the text to the child several times until the child is familiar with the passage. Parent and child discuss the content of the passage.
3. Parent and child simultaneously read the passage together. The passage is read several times until the child feels comfortable with reading the passage alone.
4. The child reads the text alone with the parent providing backup or shadow reading support. The text is again read several times.
5. The parent engages in the word study activities, requiring the parent and child to choose words from the text that are of interest, or choose words from the word lists in

their packets. The words are printed on cards and added to word cards from previous days. This word bank is used for word practice, sentence building, word sorts, and other informal word games and activities.

Summary

Fluency is a gateway to comprehension that enables students to move from being word decoders to passage comprehenders. Several factors can be associated with the successful development of fluency in reading. First, fluent readers are exposed to fluent reading patterns modeled both at school and at home. Second, they are the learners who are provided with varied opportunities to apply fluent reading behaviors in connected text as opposed to just working on isolated skills. Third, they are given more time to focus on and practice reading-appropriate texts with expression through guided and repeated reading activities aimed at expressive reading that enhances the meaning of the passage. Fourth, in addition to receiving direct instruction on fluency, these learners are also provided with the time to engage in fluent reading in a variety of texts at both their independent and instructional levels. Finally, and most importantly, fluent readers know that reading is more than just identifying words correctly, but it is also about reading with expression and understanding the meaning of the text (Richards, 2000).

Fluency is reading written text with accuracy, automaticity, and prosody that ultimately leads to comprehension. Research is providing us with clearer conceptions of fluency and the factors that contribute to fluency. But perhaps more importantly, the research is providing us with effective strategies to use for developing fluent readers. It is clear that modeling is essential for helping students develop fluency. Exposure to fluent reading behaviors both inside and outside of the classroom environment is critical in helping students develop fluency. Teachers and other fluent readers need to model uninterrupted, positive examples of rate, expression, and meaning while reading a variety of texts (Richards, 2000). In addition, students need to have opportunities to read a wealth of texts and have opportunities to reread texts under the guidance of a supportive teacher until a appropriate level of fluency (and comprehension) is achieved (Rasinski, 2000).

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