

**Improving Decoding &
Fluency Skills
of Intermediate & Secondary
Students**

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*Why might you want to teach
decoding and fluency skills to
older students?*

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Reason #1
**A major predictor of
academic success is
READING**

3

Reason #2

**Many of our intermediate
and secondary students
are poor readers.**

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Why might you want to teach decoding & fluency skills?

- Approximately 75% of students identified with reading problems in 3rd grade are still reading disabled in 9th grade
Shaywitz, et al., 1993; Francis et al., 1996, Journal of Educational Psychology, cited in National Reading Panel Progress Report, February 22, 1999
- National longitudinal studies show that more than 17.5 % of the nation's children (about 10 million children) will encounter reading problems in the crucial first 3 years of their school.
The National Reading Panel Progress Report, February 22, 1999

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Reason #3

**Many of our students with
behavior problems
are poor readers.**

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Missouri Statistics

- **15.33%** of Missouri students have IEPs
- **137,383** Students with disabilities (ages 3-21+)
 - 66,071 Learning Disabled (48% of disabled)
 - 9,229 Behaviorally Disordered (7% of disabled)
 - **28,469** Speech/Language Impaired (21%)
 - ~**103,769** with mild level of disability

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Missouri Statistics

Students with IEPs (ages 5-21)

- 69,342 Regular Class
- **39,327** Resource / Itinerant
- **108,669** Students receiving majority of education in general education classrooms (80% of students with disabilities)

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Missouri Statistics 2000-2001

3rd grade	7 th grade	11 th grade	Students Tested
9,192	10,124	6,101	Students Tested
0.5%	0.1%	0.00%	Advanced
17.5%	5.6 %	1.2%	Proficient
39.8%	21.5%	15%	Near Prof.
27.2%	33.1%	24.8%	Progressing
15.1%	39.8%	58.9%	Step 1
82.1%	94.4%	98.7%	Below Proficient ⁹

National Reading Panel

- Phonemic Awareness
- **Phonics**
- Vocabulary
- **Fluency**
- Comprehension

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Why might you want to teach decoding & fluency skills?

- Poorly developed word recognition skills are the most pervasive and debilitating source of reading challenges
Adams, 1990; Perfetti, 1985; Share & Stanovich, 1995
- The ability to decode long words increases the qualitative difference between good and poor readers.
Perfetti, 1986
- Low decoders
 - pronounced fewer affixes and vowel sounds correctly,
 - disregarded large portions of letter formations, and are
 - two to 4 times as likely to omit syllables11
Shedfeline & Calloun, 1991

Family Circus



7-11
©2002 Bill Keene, Inc.
Dist. by King Features Synd.
www.familycircus.com

"Look at the tadpoles!"

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Why might you want to teach decoding & fluency skills?

Decoding Instruction often ends with 2nd grade:

- Unfortunately, the number of multisyllabic words begins to dramatically increase in third grade.

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Why might you want to teach decoding & fluency skills?

- From 5th grade on, the average students encounter approximately **10,000** words that they have never previously encountered in print. Nagy & Anderson 1984
- Most of the new words have 2 or more syllables Cunningham, 1998
- The longer words are often content words that carry the meaning of the passage. 14

Why might you want to teach decoding & fluency skills?

- Poor decoders, even those who can decode simple syllable words, have a difficult time with multisyllabic words. Just & Carpenter, 1987
- Students need a flexible strategy for pronouncing long words:
 - No relationship exists between knowledge of syllabication rules and successful reading. Canney & Schreiner, 1977

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“The f_____ s of the c_____ n
f_____ d a d_____ t c_____ t. They
saw the need for a strong n_____ l
g_____ t. At the same time, they did not
want to take away all p_____ r from the
states. Like most A_____ s, they
b_____ d that state g_____ t would
better u_____ d the special needs and
c_____ s of their c_____ s.”

“The framers of the constitution faced a
difficult conflict. They saw the need for a
strong national government. At the same
time, they did not want to take away all
power from the states. Like most
Americans, they believed that state
government would better understand the
special needs and concerns of their
citizens.”

From the American Nation (1994) published by Prentice Hall⁷

“**Many students** who struggle to learn
to read are able, **with appropriate**
instruction to compensate for initial reading
problems by **becoming accurate decoders**
but fail to reach a level of sufficient
fluency to become fast and efficient
readers.”

Hook, Pamela E. & Jones, Sandra D., 2002
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What is Fluency?

Ability to read text

- Accurately
- Quickly
- Prosodic
 - Rhythm
 - Intonation
 - Phrasing

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Brown/
bear brown/
bear what/
do/
you see?

20

Brown bear/
Brown bear/
What do you see?

44% of all 4th graders tested in the United States are not fluent readers.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

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The “Matthew Effect”

- Students with low word recognition and fluency skills will read less.
- The rich get richer.
The poor get poorer.



Stanovich, 1986

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Difference in the Amount of Independent Reading

Reading Level	Min/Day	Words/Year
98 %	65.0	4,358,000
70 %	9.6	622,000
40 %	3.2	200,000
20 %	0.7	21,000
10 %	0.1	8,000

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Why might you want to teach decoding & fluency skills?

- Necessary for comprehension
 - Word recognition is a necessary, though not sufficient, skill to allow comprehension.
 - You can decode without being fluent but you can't be fluent without being able to decode and both are needed for comprehension

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Fluent vs. Non-Fluent Readers

More Fluent	Less Fluent
Focus on connecting ideas in the text and with their background knowledge	Must focus on decoding each word
Able to focus on comprehension	Can't concentrate on comprehending the text
Read more	Read Less

Put Reading First: The Research Blocks for Teaching Children to Read, National Institute for Literacy, US Department of Education, 2001

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Who needs fluency instruction & practice?

Students who- have acquired **some proficiency in decoding**
but
whose level of **decoding skills** is **lower**
than their **oral language ability**.

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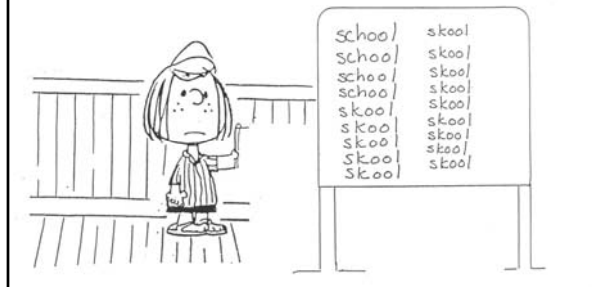
How do you increase fluency?

Read, Read, Read, Read, Read

READ

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PRACTICE DOES NOT MAKE PERFECT.
PERFECT PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT



How do you increase fluency?

- Selecting appropriate instruction tasks
 - i.e. letter-sounds, words students can produce accurately
- Schedule appropriate sufficient practice
 - multiple brief opportunities per day
- Increase the rate of response systematically.

University of Oregon

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Before teaching for fluency

Assess student needs by formal or informal tests:

Informal Measures

- San Diego Quick – Word Recognition
- Informal Fluency Assessment

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How to Determine Appropriate Level Text

$\frac{\# \text{ words read correctly}}{\text{Total words read}} = \% \text{ accuracy}$

- Independent Level 95%
- Instructional Level 90%
- Frustration Level Below 90%

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What are good fluency rates?

grade	correct word/minute
1 st	60 – 80
2 nd	80 – 100
3 rd	100 – 120
4 th – 5 th	120 – 150
6 th – 8 th	150 – 180
9 th – 12 th	180 – 200

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Repeated Reading

- The students read a passage for a minute, read it again for a minute, and once more for a minute so they build up their automaticity in reading.
- Students read a short passage again and again (minimum of 3 times).
- Students should be able to read text accurately (no more than 5% error rate).

Cowhower, 1987; Samuels, 1979

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Research on Repeated & Monitored Oral Reading

Increase:

- Word recognition
- Speed
- Accuracy
- Comprehension

Put Reading First: The Research Blocks for Teaching Children to Read. National Institute for Literacy. US Department of Education, 2001

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Silent Sustained Reading

- There is not evidence currently available to show that it improved fluency or overall reading.
- This doesn't mean that we don't encourage and provide opportunities for students to read books at their instructional level.

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Increasing reading fluency

- Letter-sounds in isolation
- Words in isolation
- Phrases or sentences
- Passages

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What are the answers?

Here's a couple of approaches

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Why might you want to teach decoding and fluency skills?

- Research show that **Teaching** Helps
- Other Research
 - 4th and 6th graders having difficulty reading longer words had significant gains when taught to use affixes and vowels to pronounce long words. (Shefelbine, 1990)
 - 7th, 8th, and 9th graders who were taught a decoding strategy for reading long words had fewer oral reading errors and increased reading comprehension. (Lenz & Hughes, 1990)

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Overt Strategy for Reading Long Words

1. Circle the word parts (prefixes) at the beginning of the word.
2. Circle the word parts (suffixes) at the end of the word.
3. Underline the letters representing vowel sounds in the rest of the word.
4. Say the parts of the word
5. Say the parts fast
6. Make it into a real word.

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Needed Preskills

- Vowel combinations
- Vowel conversion
- Underline vowel sounds in words
- Correcting close approximations using context
- Pronouncing word parts
- Identify & circling words parts

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Word Parts at the Beginning & End of Words

dis	discover	s	birds
mis	mistaken	ing	running
ab	abdomen	ed	landed
ad	advertise	ness	kindness
		less	useless
		able	notable
		tion	action

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Vowel Combinations

ay (say)	ai (rain)	au (sauce)
er (her)	ir (bird)	ur (turn)

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Correction Close Approximation Using Context

hotel When we were on vacation, we
 stayed in a hotel.

cradle The baby is sleeping the cradle.

44

Overt Strategy for Reading Long Words

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Example

reconstruction

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Overt Strategy

1. **expansion**
2. **fraction**
3. **confederate**

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Covert Strategy for Reading Long Words

1. Look for word parts at the beginning and end of the word, and vowel sounds in the rest of the word.
2. Say the parts of the word.
3. Say the parts fast.
4. Make it a real word.

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ACTIVITY J: **Passage Reading** (*REWARDS Student Book*, pages 55 & 56.)

"The Emerald Isle"

12 If you could fly over Ireland on a summer day, you would
13 see lush green meadows and tree-covered hills. Surrounded on
22 three sides by the Atlantic Ocean, Ireland's green color is so
33 striking that it was named the Emerald Isle. (#1)

The Landscape

43 At Ireland's center lies a wide, rolling plain dotted with low
54 hills. Forests and farmland cover this central lowland. Much of
64 the area is rich in peat, or wet ground with decaying plants that
77 can be used for fuel. Peat is dug from bogs, or swampy lands. (#2)

90 Along the Irish coast, the land rises in rocky highlands. In
101 some places, however, the central plain spreads all the way to the
113 sea. Dublin, Ireland's capital, is on an eastern stretch of the plain.

The Climate

125 Whether plain or highland, no part of Ireland is more than
138 70 miles from the sea. This nearness to the sea gives Ireland a
151 uniform climate. Like the United Kingdom, Ireland is warmed by
161 moist winds blowing over the North Atlantic Current. The mild
171 weather, along with frequent rain and mist, makes Ireland's
180 landscape green year-round. (#3)

Why might you want to teach decoding and fluency skills?



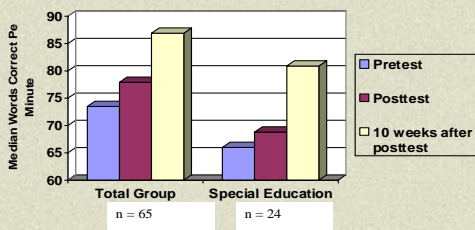
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Why might you want to teach decoding and fluency skills?



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Why might you want to teach decoding and fluency skills?



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A Repeated Reading Technique

- Takes only Six-Minutes of the instructional period once students are taught the process.
 - Partners read a passage to each other
 - Get peer feedback from each other
 - Record timings

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Record Timings

- Graph or chart
 - Correct Words per Minute (cwpm)
 - Graph each timing if done once a day or the average of 2 or more timings for that day.
 - If students first and last timing when reading the same passage doesn't increase by 10-25 % consider moving back to an easier passage, teaching the problem words in isolation or check the effectiveness of the pairing.

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The Right to Read

14 Reading is important. It is a useful skill. People who can read have an
30 easier time in life. They can read traffic signs, menus and maps. They can pass a
46 test to get a driver's license. They can apply for a job. Reading is also powerful.
57 People who can read can learn about all kinds of things.

68 However, not everyone can read. Some experts study reading. They say
82 that one out of every sixth person in the world can't read. There are many reasons
98 for this problem. Some countries do not let girls go to school. In those countries,
110 many women cannot read. Other people live in very poor countries. No one can
126 afford to learn to read in these countries. They are busy trying to find food to eat.
141 Many countries are at war. Their people are fighting to stay alive. They do not
151 have time to learn to read.

165 In the US, there are many people who do not speak English. They came
182 from other countries. It is hard to come to a new country. It takes time to learn
194 the language well enough to read it. Sometimes people have learning problems. It
203 is harder for them to learn to read.

216 The good news is that everyone can learn how to read. There are special
231 programs to teach people to read. One of the best ways to become better at
245 reading is to read every day. Countries want to show their citizens how important
258 it is to learn to read. Every September 8th, we celebrate International Literacy
270 Day. Literacy is a word that means being able to read
275 write and speak.

_____ Total Words Read
- _____ Errors
= _____ Correct Words per Minute

Taken from *The Six Minute Solution* by Gail Adams & Sheron Brown 54
