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Repeated Reading to Improve Oral Reading Fluency

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**REPEATED READING
TO IMPROVE ORAL READING FLUENCY**

**A Project Report
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University**

**In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Of
Master of Education
Reading Specialist**

**By
Loretta Lynn Powers
February 2007**

ABSTRACT

USING REPEATED READING TO IMPROVE ORAL READING FLUENCY

by

Loretta Lynn Powers

February 2007

The focus of this project was to review the available research on repeated reading as a method of improving a student's oral reading fluency (ORF), to determine its contribution to the reading process, and to create an implementation guide for middle school teachers to use in their language arts classroom. The results of the research show that there is a need for effective repeated reading instruction. Including this instruction at the middle school level will provide tremendous benefits for students. Repeated reading is an effective way to expose students to short, interesting, fictional and non-fictional texts. The project includes a teacher's guide with directions for effective repeated reading instruction and a step-by-step process to implement the format.

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CHAPTER ONE

Background of the Project

Introduction

Fluent, oral reading has been recognized in the National Reading Panel (NRP) Report of the Subgroups (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) as an important component of the reading process. Fluency, as defined by LaBerge and Samuels (1974), is the ability of one to read aloud a passage with naturalness and ease, whereby the brain automatically processes words, phrases, and sentences. This automaticity in word recognition allows for one to effectively read with expression, appropriate phrasing, and pacing.

Oral reading fluency (ORF) has been studied since the early 1970's, however the importance of fluency and the role it plays in the reading process has often been misunderstood. First, fluency has generally been seen in a "deficit view, called disfluency, which is considered word-by-word reading" (Allington, 1991, p. 143). The result of this lack of fluency by a reader is interpreted as a need for further instruction in letters, sounds, or words in isolation, or in other words more phonics instruction (Allington, 1983). However, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development found that "phonics instruction failed to exert a significant impact on the reading performance of low-achieving readers in 2nd through 6th grades" (2000, p. 2-133).

Second, many educators see fluency as just a measurement of one's oral reading rate. According to Maryann Manning, in *The Fluency Fallacy* (2004), there is an overemphasis on fluency and how it should be developed. She

believes there is a lot of confusion about what fluency really is. Manning further states that, “many see fluency as reading fast. . . and fluency does not have a causal relationship with comprehension” (p. 88).

LaBerge and Samuels’ study in 1974 found that those who were fluent readers were better comprehenders of what they read. In 1998 it was stated by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) of Washington State that “fluency is essential for comprehension” (p. 7). A current study by Rasinski and Padak (2005) has shown a strong correlation between an older students’ reading fluency rate and his or her ability to comprehend. They found that a student who had a low fluency reading rate, which was below 125 words per minute, also had a low standardized test score on his or her State Assessment for Learning exit test, which is taken for high school graduation.

When fluency is seen in isolation, and not as a component of several processes, then it is perceived as being an insignificant factor in the total area of reading and comprehension. An emphasis needs to be placed on regularly using grade level appropriate repeated reading passages in order for students to become fluent readers to gain fluency and thus comprehend what they read.

With the passing of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001 (NCLB), several reading programs for early elementary grades have been created that incorporate repeated reading passages in order to promote reading success. However, a reading fluency program for middle and high school students is lacking. Rasinski and Padak (2005) note that most models of reading see reading fluency as something mastered in the primary grades. They go on to state that

“Although fluency may be introduced as an instructional focus at the primary grades, it seems reasonable to expect that fluency may continue to be a concern for students beyond that point” (p. 35).

Reading has many sub-skills that are expected to be mastered; however those skills may not be intentionally taught. The lack of intentional teaching can be a cause for poor ORF and therefore, diminished comprehension for some students. If the goal is to create a generation of lifelong learners, educators must help struggling readers gain confidence and success in their ORF scores. Those that read well, do comprehend well, and those that comprehend well, apply and use those skills and abilities well.

Purpose

The author undertook this project because, as a seventh grade language arts teacher, eighty percent of the author’s students read below grade level and were not fluent readers. This was determined by administering an oral reading fluency test for each student by using the sixth grade *Second Shot* repeated reading program, by Bill Roulston. The project was created to provide materials and instruction for each of the author’s middle school students and to examine ways that other teachers can use repeated reading passages to improve a student’s ORF. Research shows the importance of fluency in the reading process. The information contained in this project will provide teachers with an understanding of the importance of ORF, its role in the reading process, and what programs have been found to be successful in helping struggling readers improve their ORF. A

teacher's resource guide is included to help effectively plan and implement repeated reading in the classroom.

Significance of the Project

Implementing a repeated reading program with effective instruction will benefit all students. As found in the study conducted by Faulkner and Levy (1999), fourth grade and undergraduate students benefited from repeatedly reading a passage. Comprehension and ORF skills were attained and those skills also transferred to new passages that had not been previously read.

Short, fictional and non-fictional passages that incorporate comprehension questions provide students of all ages the opportunity to practice reading while in a safe, supportive classroom environment. Educators must adequately prepare students to read and comprehend information. This can be accomplished with easily accessible materials, such as grade leveled short reading passages. This project will provide the materials needed to implement and maintain a seventh through eighth grade repeated reading program.

Limitations

The project has the following limitations:

1. This project is aimed at middle school teachers, primarily at the seventh and eighth grades.
2. This project provides only twelve repeated reading passages at grade seven and twelve repeated reading passages at grade eight. Teachers may need to explore the availability of other seventh and eighth grade reading

passages if they increase the number of practice times over the course of one academic year.

3. This project does not intend to suggest that repeated reading is the only method of providing reading instruction. It is meant as a supplement to a quality reading program and teacher instruction. Repeated reading is intended to be a part of a balanced approach to the teaching of reading.
4. The resource portion of this project is meant to offer strategies for teachers to assist them in the implementation of, but by no means as an absolute way to effectively use repeated reading in the classroom. The resource guide includes suggested materials and those materials may be adapted to accommodate specific students' needs and abilities.
5. The included reading passages are based on the adopted reading curriculum currently available at Union Gap Middle School, *Holt Elements of Literature*, authored by Kyleene Beers. Although teachers from other schools may not have access to this same curriculum, the passages can be used by teachers from any school.
6. The implementation guide provided for repeated reading was trial tested for a limited amount of time.

Definition of Terms

Fluency. The ability to read aloud a passage with naturalness and ease, whereby the brain automatically processes words, phrases, and sentences in order to effectively read with expression, appropriate phrasing, and pacing. In other words, fluency is the “ability to read a text quickly, accurately, and with proper

expression” (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000, p. 3-5).

Decoding. Decoding refers to understanding the letter-sound relationship in a word. The term decoding is often used interchangeably with the phrase, word recognition. (Beers, 2003)

Prosody. To read a text aloud with appropriate intonation and expressive phrasing, in other words, oral reading that resembles spoken language. (Stahl and Kuhn, 2002)

Repeated Reading. To repeatedly read a short passage, between fifty and three hundred words, until a ninety-five percent and above level of accuracy for word miscues, prosody and reading rate per minute has been achieved. (Beers, 2003)

Automaticity. The brain automatically processes words, phrases, and sentences which is evident by correct intonation, expression, and pronunciation. The automatic perceptual process or instant recognition is called *automaticity*. (LaBerge and Samuels, 1974)

Comprehension. “The process of constructing meaning from written text” (Honig, Diamond and Gutlohn, 2000, Section VII, p. ii).

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Introduction

The key components in being a successful reader are reading fluency, prosody, and comprehension. Reading fluency and its role in the reading process will be closely examined, as will the need for effective instruction in the middle and secondary classrooms. The word “fluency” originally comes from early studies of fluent readers and the theory of information processing by LaBerge and Samuels in 1974. They state that “fluency has two key components, which are observable and measurable, and can be defined as the accuracy of one’s word recognition and one’s reading speed” (p. 405). Their research is the base for the method of repeated reading, practicing a short text in order to meet a specified criterion of accuracy, in order to improve overall reading fluency.

In 1998, a joint position statement of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) was released titled *Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children*. The IRA and the NAEYC stated that skilled reading is important for a child’s future success. The following are excerpts from their joint statement:

Learning to read and write is critical to a child’s success in school and later in life. One of the best predictors of whether a child will function competently in school and go on to contribute actively in our increasingly

literate society is the level to which the child progresses in reading and writing. Although reading and writing abilities continue to develop throughout the life span, the early childhood years--from birth through age eight--are the most important period for literacy development. (p. 30)

The NAEYC further states that reading aloud to a child and exposing that child to print is vitally important for the building of skills that are essential for future reading success. As a child progresses from kindergarten through the primary grades, instruction should be focused on the enhancement of vocabulary, alphabet letters and sounds, teacher read alouds, written letter and word instruction, along with the reading of connected text. Repeated readings should also be provided in order for children to learn the different ways texts are structured for all genres. The IRA and the NAEYC position statement defined skilled reading as "fluent, accurate word identification" (p. 37).

As LaBerge, Samuels, IRA and the NAEYC all proclaim, reading speed and word recognition accuracy improves with the continual practice of reading. Reading a passage more than once is analogous to an athlete who practices repeatedly the basic skills of the sport in order to better improve his or her skills. Repeated reading of a passage has been studied and shown to improve the basic skills of reading. When less attention is given to the process of decoding a word, then more attending power is available for the brain to focus and *comprehend* the text read. The brain's ability to automatically process the words and phrases seen then allows for more attention to be given to understanding what is read and retain that information in longer term memory.

Review of Research On Repeated Reading

LaBerge and Samuels (1974) studied the necessary subskills that a person needed in order to read. They defined reading subskills as one's perception of letters, letter sound relationships, spelling patterns, words, comprehension of words and word groups. LaBerge and Samuels' assumption was that the "transformation of written stimuli into meanings involves a sequence of stages of information processing" (p. 294). Participants in the study were shown a set of unfamiliar letter patterns. After several days of repeatedly encountering the set of unfamiliar letter patterns, they began to become more and more familiar to the point where the patterns were automatically processed and recognized by the brain. This automatic perceptual process or improvement with practice is called *automaticity*. LaBerge and Samuels also found that the brain's attention is needed to instigate the association between a word heard and its meaning. With continual practice, the brain will automatically know the meaning as the word is heard. Their study captured the "basic principles of automaticity in perceptual and associative processing with simple examples drawn from initial processing stages of reading to more complex stages of reading" (p. 296).

LaBerge and Samuels (1974) then looked at ways reading subskills could become automatic. They found that children start with single word units that become automatically recognizable and with practice they later read in chunks or phrases of words. They believe that in order to encourage this process called *chunking*, the teacher needs to relax the demand for word accuracy. Thus, allowing word pronunciation errors as he or she begins to read words and word

phrases. A fluent reader who has mastered each of the subskills is at the automatic level and no longer sees all of the subskills he or she has used to read well. For the struggling reader, however, it is important to teach the subskills of reading. Then, they must practice these subskills in order to attain accuracy and automaticity. The result will be the comprehension of what one has read.

Classroom activities that might contribute to a student's growth in reading were studied by Leinhardt, Zigmond, and Cooley (1981). They found that how teachers structured their classroom learning environment made a difference and influenced a student's reading proficiency. The study was of eleven self-contained classrooms with 105 learning disabled students. Teachers and students behaviors were observed, and seventeen behavior indicators were noted. The interviews with teachers and students' work products and assignments were monitored. This study took place over a twenty week period, and each classroom was observed for a total of approximately thirty hours. It was found that on average, teachers were providing only fourteen minutes per day of general reading instruction. The amount of time teachers gave to direct, modeled instruction of the correct elements of reading was on average only one minute per day. In conclusion, Leinhardt et al. (1981) found that students need to be taught how to read and the time given for effective, reading instruction needs to be increased greatly.

A repeated reading model was the focus of another study by Samuels (1979). He suggested using a repeated reading model to improve reading fluency and reading comprehension. The model created had students reread a short,

meaningful passage several times until a specified level of fluency was attained. Then, the process was repeated again with a new passage. Samuels (1979) found that as a student's reading speed increased, word recognition errors decreased and with each new reading selection the student's reading speed was faster than the previous reading selection. Giving no attention to decoding words at the fluent stage of reading then allows one to have the mental capability to comprehend what is being read. Three levels of word recognition skills were determined. First, there is the non-accurate stage. At this stage, the student has difficulty recognizing words. The second stage is accuracy. Here, the student is able to recognize printed words, however; the student's attention is still required. Their reading may be slow, halting and expressionless. The third stage is called automatic. At this level, the student is able to recognize printed words without attention and comprehend what is being read. The reading rate is generally faster than a person's speaking rate and one is reading with expression and intonation. Repeated reading is not a method in itself for teaching reading; however it is intended to be an effective supplement to a regular, grade-level appropriate reading program.

Faulkner and Levy (1999) conducted a study of fourth grade students and undergraduate volunteers in order to determine "transfer to the reading of a normal text from a prior reading of that intact text or from a prior reading of a scrambled word version of the passage" (p. 111). The skill transfer was defined as someone who reads repeatedly the same text, becomes faster with each reading, and no concession in comprehension is detected. Their study found a difference

between transfer when reading is difficult and nonfluent, and transfer when reading is easier and more fluent. Faulkner and Levy (1999) found the following:

The two experiments reported here show that both word- and text-level representations can mediate rereading transfer. . . . Two forms of transfer are related to the fluency of reading. If the reader is reading fluently (quickly and accurately), transfer appears to be mediated largely by text-level processes. However, if the text is difficult for the reader and he/she is unable to read it fluently, transfer at the single-word level occurs. . . .

The main point of this distinction is that repetition effects in reading can be mediated at various levels, but *fluent* rereading is mediated by text representations. When one is interested in the developmental stages that lead to fluency, word-level transfer is important. This may represent an early stage of development when word recognition itself must become automated so that attention is no longer focused at this level. Through practice (repetition), these lexical representations can be accessed automatically, and then attention can be focused on message processing. When reading is developed to this level, or when it is this fluent, the words become integrated into the text representation and that representation mediates transfer. . . . Words without their context cannot recruit a text-level representation. (p. 115)

These different forms of transfer were consistent across all ages according to Faulkner and Levy (1999). Their study confirmed that through the practice of repeated reading, lexical, or visual representations can be retrieved automatically

when the subject is reading fluently. Thus, attention is focused on the message of what has been read. Prosody, or reading with intonation and expression also aids comprehension. The next section explores the role of prosody in the development of oral reading fluency.

Review of Research on Prosody

Prosody is defined as the outward linguistic expression of words combined into phrases and sentences that are automatically read with appropriate phrasing and intonation according to the meaning and structure of the text. Research conducted by Schreiber (1991) found that a “cause of dysfluency can at least in part be traced to the word caller’s failure to recognize the syntactic structure of sentences in the written medium” (p. 158). When children were presented with a stimulus sentence and asked to repeat a certain part of the sentence, these children were especially sensitive to prosodic cues that were given to them. They had little success in identifying phrasal targets when the targets were wrongly marked prosodically in sentences or when they were correctly presented prosodically in normal sentences. Schreiber’s conclusions were:

Children use prosody when processing syntactic phrases and the acquisition of reading skills does not in itself involve the acquisition of new language competence; rather it involves the mastery of a different type of medium. That medium is graphic symbols that are used in a rough form of correspondence with the sound symbols of speech. (p. 162)

Decoding skills have traditionally been the focus of teacher instruction, however, chunking skills have rarely been taught. According to Schreiber,

linguists believe that a significant part of sentence structure consists of the “hierarchical organization of sentences into phrasal units (or chunks). . . . Phrase structure plays an important role in actual language processing” (p. 158). The transfer of skills from decoding to the recognition of printed words as speech processing is not always automatic. Some students have not mastered strategies for organizing written text into the kind of syntactic structures they need for fluent reading. This is evidenced by their “halting, expressionless, and word-by-word oral reading despite a fairly high level of accuracy in word identification” (Schreiber, 1991, p. 158). When readers begin to recognize that they are to assign appropriate intonation and expressive phrasing while reading, then there will be a fairly rapid improvement in overall reading fluency and comprehension that transfers on to other texts. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for the state of Washington states that “fluency is essential for comprehension” (1998, p. 7).

Appropriate intonation and expressive phrasing in a written text can be attained by students listening to and following along with a fluent oral reading model. With a teacher, peer, or other adult model that provides the prosodic cues, students then practice repeatedly reading the text with the correct intonation and expression. This provides the scaffolding to make the transition to fluent reading, where the reader takes the marks on the page and produces something that sounds like spoken language (Stahl and Kuhn, 2002, p. 582).

In review of the past research, Allington (1983) notes that a lack of fluency in oral reading is often noted as a characteristic of low level readers or

readers with difficulties, however it is seldom seen as a reading problem in need of intervention. Inadequate oral reading fluency has been viewed as just a symptom of poor reading, which is believed to be due to the inability to recognize words. Unfortunately, teachers see this surface outcome as a reason for more instruction on isolated letters, sounds, and words. Allington (1983) concurs with previous research that has found that children rely heavily on pitch, stress, and expression in understanding speech. Children also have difficulty reading the written word due to the lack of any kind of prosodic (expressive) markings in the text. Allington concludes that if a student can reproduce words accurately but cannot read with phrasing or expression, then the most helpful instruction would be a teacher modeling fluent reading. He notes that when we help students to improve the techniques of their reading, through the sensitivity to diction, tone, structure, and expression, we are helping them to make more refined responses. Often it is forgotten that oral speaking, oral reading, and comprehension are intricately intertwined in both the primary and secondary classrooms.

“Fluency as a component of reading with expression has been a vague instructional phrase which rarely has been defined explicitly either by the teacher or by the texts on teaching reading” (Dowhower, 1991, p. 165). In reviewing thirteen reading methods textbooks between 1989 and 1990, Dowhower found that only three addressed reading fluency and, reading with expression was only mentioned briefly in those three texts. Yet, Dowhower states that evidence shows repetition through repeated reading helps children to read faster, more accurately, and “helps prosodically” (p. 171). Dowhower (1991) believes that educators need

to provide more instruction on the *melodies* and *rhythms* of a written text in order to help students gain fluency. She proposes a threefold approach of “repeated reading, text segmenting, and auditory modeling” (p. 173).

Fluency Instruction

Fluency instruction has several components which benefit all readers. There are three stages of fluency according to Stahl and Kuhn (2002). First, there is the emergent stage whereby a student relies upon his or her memory to recreate the story, then the accurate decoding stage, and lastly, with repeated reading practice, the student moves to the fluency stage. Effective fluency instruction includes students repeatedly reading texts at their instructional level, the teacher modeling fluent reading, the teacher providing comprehension mini-lessons, and increased opportunities for peer or tutor partner reading.

Rasinski, Linek, and Sturtevant (1994) tested fluency instruction that could be integrated into the regular reading program of a second grade classroom. Their fluency instruction and development model included:

Modeling fluent reading for students, direct instruction and feedback in fluency, providing support for the reader while reading (e.g., choral reading and reading-while-listening), repeated readings of one text, cueing phrase boundaries in texts, and providing students with easy materials for reading. . . . A fluency development lesson (FDL) was a 10-15 minute instructional activity that incorporated several key principles of effective fluency instruction. (p. 159)

Rasinski et al. found that students in the experimental group nearly doubled their reading rate, and their reading rate was higher than the minimal acceptable reading rate of seventy words per minute (wpm). Previously, reading rate increases had been ten to twenty wpm per year. The students in the experimental group study improved their reading rate from forty-two to sixty wpm in less than one year. Rasinski et al. (1994) concluded that students receiving the FDL made considerable gains with a small amount of time given to the model daily. Additionally, those teachers who participated in the study responded positively to the FDL model.

In 2000, Stahl and Heuback published the results of a two-year study that had reorganized a second grade basal reading instructional program. The reading program had five goals. First, all lessons would be comprehension oriented, even when fluent oral reading was being stressed. Secondly, reading materials would be at the children's instructional level. Thirdly, through repeated readings, all children would be supported in their reading. The fourth goal was to engage students in partner reading. And finally, the amount of reading for all students would be increased at home and at school as well.

Overall, the redesigned basal reading program stressed fluent reading and automatic word recognition. Stahl and Heuback (2000) believed that each literacy stage builds upon the concepts and skills developed in previous stages. Yet, to keep a child at a literacy stage too long could be detrimental to their growth. For example, "holding children to a standard of word-perfect oral reading, which might be appropriate for a child in the decoding stage, may retard their use of

context cues typical of the next stage” (p. 27). If students are continually corrected for every word error in a text, they may begin to feel that they must say each word perfectly. The result then is the loss of an overall meaning or the loss of the construction of meaning.

The intended outcome for their fluency-based reading program was to move children from the accuracy-driven decoding stage to the fluency and automaticity stage needed in order to read-to-learn. The strategy used for moving these children through this decoding stage was practicing reading in connected texts, in other words, challenging meaningful curriculum across all content areas. The first year results showed that students made an average gain of 1.88 grade levels and this gain was consistent across all four classes that participated in the study. Generally, a regular basal reading instructional program has the presumed assumption that students will average about one year’s reading growth in one year’s time. In contrast, the average child entering second grade that read below the primer level made an average of two years progress during the course of the first year. Finally, out of the eighty-five students from the four classes who participated in the study, only three students were still unable to read the second-grade passage by the end of the first year.

In reviewing the data at the end of the second year, it was found that all children entering at their reading levels made gains very similar to the gains made in the first year of the study. Twenty students at the beginning of the second year could not read a primer passage; yet, nine of those twenty at the end of the second year were reading at a second-grade level or higher. This suggests that the

reorganized second grade basal reading instructional program was successful for children who generally had a great deal of difficulty learning to read and who usually continue to fall further and further behind their peers. Stahl and Heuback (2000) found that teachers and children perceived the program and its various components positively and that the program led to significant gains in overall reading achievement.

In April of 2000, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development issued their report of the subgroup research findings. A short excerpt from their findings on fluency is as follows:

Fluent readers can read text with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. Fluency depends upon well developed word recognition skills, but such skills do not inevitably lead to fluency. It is generally acknowledged that fluency is a critical component of skilled reading. Nevertheless, it is often neglected in classroom instruction. (p. 3-1)

A nationally representative group of fourth graders were sampled in order to assess their oral reading fluency. Forty-four percent that read at grade-level text were disfluent. The study also found a correlation between one's fluency rate and their ability to comprehend what they had read. Students that were low in their oral fluency rate according to their current grade level may also have difficulty understanding what they have read.

With the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's spotlight on fluency and its role in reading, numerous programs have begun to incorporate fluency and repeated readings into their basal, grade-level

instructional programs (e.g. Open Court, Harcourt Brace, Houghton Mifflin). The University of Oregon Center on Teaching and Learning (2002-2004) developed the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) measures for Phonemic Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, Accuracy and Fluency, Vocabulary and Comprehension. They define fluency as the automatic reading of words with no noticeable cognitive or mental effort. Word recognition skills have been mastered to the point of them being over learned and the foundational skills are so automatic that they do not require any attention.

The DIBELS measure for Accuracy and Fluency has connected texts that students read and practice up to grade six. Comprehension is also a key component to their reading grade-level passages. Each passage, from grade four through grades six, has a Retell Fluency comprehension check. The Retell Fluency assesses the ability of the student to extract meaning from the short text that has been read. The University of Oregon Center on Teaching and Learning (2002-2004) has most recently added comprehension passages to their first through third grade Oral Reading Fluency connected texts. As stated on their website, Retell Fluency has been included to prevent a student from learning or practicing a miscue, to identify a child whose comprehension is not consistent with their fluency, and to provide alignment with the core components in the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development report.

Review of Suggested Practices

Regie Routman, *Reading Essentials* (2003), discusses how important rereading is for those who struggle to read and for the improvement of reading

comprehension. Teachers need to reevaluate how much time is spent teaching students successful reading strategies. As Routman (2003) states, “we need to teach rereading as the single most useful strategy” (p. 122). However, she cautions that educators need to keep fluency in perspective. Fluency without comprehension is not reading, it is just reading words in isolation.

There are several ways that teachers can promote fluency (reading rate, prosody, and accurate, rapid word recognition) in their classroom without overstressing weekly timed tests. Teachers can provide opportunities for shared partner reading of short informational or fictional texts. This has been found to aid both the reader and the listener. Stories can be made available on tape or CD in order for students to hear a fluent, smooth model of reading that demonstrates proper intonation and expression. Readers Theatre, such as short plays or monologues, can be another medium used to reinforce rereading, comprehension, and appropriate intonation and expression. In this technique, teachers can also provide daily class time for students to self select a book, magazine, or newspaper article to read aloud or to practice reading aloud with a partner.

Regie Routman (2003) suggests taking running records or informal reading inventories (IRI) of each student in order to assess their reading. Then, review them with the student, and together set fluency goals. Students can be very motivated when given the opportunity to work toward achievable goals and then monitor and graph their individual progress. Finally, she suggests using daily educational time with students to teach/assess and that evaluating students' Learning should be part of every literacy activity. Routman (2003) believes this

can be accomplished through individual reading conferences.

Kylene Beers (2003) contends that it is important to improve one's reading rate because, for the middle to secondary level student, if a student reads at 60 wpm and has several pages of homework to read (about 500 words per page), then that student will spend approximately one hour and thirty minutes just reading *one* part of his or her homework, not including writing the assignment, etc. A slow reading rate does affect a student's attitude toward reading. Beers (2003) suggestion for improving oral reading fluency is that teachers can:

- Have students reread an instructional level text. (Students should read a text at least twice and then record their improved reading rate.)
- Improve student's knowledge of basic sight words by using the Dolch Basic Sight Vocabulary List which contains 220 words. The Dolch Basic Sight Vocabulary accounts for over fifty percent of words found in written text today.
- Have students listen to good, fluent reading from strong reading models. For example, when the teacher reads aloud a few pages of a text, the students can be instructed to follow along.
- Teach phrasing and intonation directly. Teachers can show students how changing the stress of certain words or phrases in a sentence can make a difference in the meaning.
- Provide a safe classroom environment where reading aloud is not continually corrected.
- Encourage wait time for self-correction and gentle prompting.

Beers (2003) believes that the above suggestions can help struggling readers learn confidence and independence in their reading. She finds that over correcting unfortunately, can produce the opposite desired effect, which is dependence on outside acknowledgement of correct reading. Beers also contends that nonfluent readers are nonfluent because of the lack of reading practice. Even though teaching reading provides excellent reading strategies, it is not reading. She asserts that struggling readers need to read, read a lot, and to read many types of texts that are at their instructional or independent reading level.

Therrien (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of past research in order to determine the key components in repeated readings and specifically the components that increase reading fluency and reading comprehension. He separated the analysis reviews into nontransfer measures and transfer measures. Nontransfer results from his analysis indicated that the model of repeated reading is very effective in improving oral reading fluency and comprehension of that passage. "Across all nontransfer studies, the mean fluency increase was large and the mean comprehension effect size was moderate" (p. 262).

Therrien's (2004) transfer results, which were the measure of a student's ability to fluently read or comprehend a new passage after rereading other materials, indicate that repeated reading also improves fluency and comprehension from new passages read. "Students across all transfer studies obtained a moderate mean fluency increase and a smaller, but still significant, mean comprehension increase" (p. 262). In conclusion, Therrien found that

repeated reading does improve overall reading fluency and comprehension when reading new material.

Summary

Fluency has been found to be an important piece in the total collection of reading stages and strategies. Fluency has been defined as the “ability to read a text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression” (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000, p. 3-5). The key components to reading fluency are practicing a short text at one’s independent or instructional reading level two or more times until a specified criterion of accuracy has been met. This is called repeated readings. Having an adult model fluent reading of a text is also important for prosodic cues, vocabulary, and word accuracy.

Fluency has been defined, studied, and reviewed for some time. Unfortunately, the successful strategies of repeated readings at one’s independent or instructional reading level have not been fully utilized by all educational professionals. Reading fluency has been either misunderstood and/or has been an unknown reading process. Many educators may also be concerned that stressing speed and word accuracy does not promote or help what real reading is about, which is to comprehend or gather meaning from a written text. However, as the reviewed research has shown, fluency does have great value to the struggling reader of any age *if* that reader is allowed to practice reading. Educators must make it a priority to stay abreast of and fully understand the research that shows the importance of incorporating repeated readings as a supplement to the adopted reading curricula.

Chapter Three

Design of the Project

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to construct an implementation guide and grade level appropriate repeated reading passages for middle school teachers to utilize as they begin to incorporate oral reading fluency instruction in their classroom. The guide is intended to provide an overview of the research in this field and the materials needed in order for teachers to effectively implement the program. The implementation guide was designed for teachers with no previous background knowledge of oral reading fluency; however this guide can also be beneficial to those teachers who have knowledge of oral reading fluency and the benefits it can provide to improve students' reading skills.

Development of the Project

As a middle school teacher, the author recognized a lack of accessible short, interesting, fiction and non-fiction reading passages, which could be used for fluency practice. The author also found a lack of practice reading passages that provided multiple levels of comprehension questions. The majority of practice oral reading passage programs provided materials through the end of grade six. There was one short passage reading set that was found for grades seven and eight; however it was expensive and was expected to be used as an adopted reading curriculum.

After reviewing published literature and studies on fluency, the need for grade seven and eight reading practice passages with comprehension questions

was found to be vitally important. The benefit of practicing reading to improve one's reading skills does not end at grade six. For students to be prepared for the volume of work that will be assigned, both at the high school and college level, they must have fluent reading skills. The reviewed research suggested a way to integrate repeated reading passages into the regular reading program. The author felt that teachers would be more likely to incorporate repeated reading into the regular reading program if they were provided with step-by-step instructions and easily accessible grade level materials.

Procedures

It was hypothesized that repeated reading to gain oral reading fluency would be an effective instructional tool for middle school teachers. Research was gathered from several sources to explore the effectiveness of incorporating this into a regular reading curriculum and to aid in the development of the implementation guide. Searches were conducted via the Internet and via professional journals by using the databases available through Central Washington University. ProQuest, Education Journals, and Reading Journals were primarily used. Once the information was located, it was copied or printed. Books on the topic of strategies for struggling readers were also borrowed from the Central Washington University Library or purchased from Central Washington University Bookstore. All of the information located was read, evaluated, re-read, sorted and reviewed. The information was then organized and compiled into the review of literature presented in Chapter Two. The literature review offers clarification and substantiation that using repeated reading to gain

fluency in oral reading is an effective strategy that can be added to any regular reading program. The literature review also shows that with consistent implementation, students will gain the confidence and skills needed to be fluent readers.

In reviewing the literature, areas of need were identified in the adopted reading curriculum at Union Gap Middle School. The key components of a repeated reading to gain fluency program was utilized as a structure for the implementation guide. The guide was designed to provide step-by-step instructions for the implementation of repeated reading. When the guide was completed, a presentation of the program was presented to the Special Education Director and Vice Principal by the author and the program was implemented by the author in all Language Arts classes.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Project

Using Repeated Reading to Improve Oral Reading Fluency

by

Loretta Lynn Powers

February 2007

Introduction

The following chapter contains an implementation guide for teachers who are interested in using grade level appropriate materials in a repeated reading supplement program to improve students' oral reading fluency. The guide provides all of the directions and outlines for the repeated reading process in a step-by-step format. It was created with teachers in mind, specifically those teachers currently teaching seventh and eighth grade at Union Gap Middle School in Union Gap, Washington. Their needs, reading curriculum, and preferences were taken into consideration when formatting the guide. This implementation guide was also specifically designed to be distributed at a presentation outlining and describing repeated reading to improve oral reading fluency. Section One of the guide outlines the research supporting the need for including repeated reading in a regular reading curriculum and the effectiveness of repeated reading on a consistent, regular basis. Section Two describes the overall process of repeated reading and helps teachers begin thinking about getting started. Section Three provides teachers with short, interesting fiction and non-fiction texts with comprehension questions. These texts are from the adopted reading curriculum, *Holt Elements of Literature* by Kylene Beers, at Union Gap Middle School. Section Three also highlights the component of graphing in order to track individual progress and increase student accountability. Section Four provides an overview of introducing repeated reading and provides step-by-step outline for effective direct instruction. A final section provides a list of references.

All of the information and materials provided are included to help the teacher effectively use repeated reading to improve oral fluency rates of all students. As a compilation of available research, the author believes this guide, along with practical reading materials, provides teachers with what is needed in order to effectively implement repeated reading in the middle school classroom. It is assumed that teachers will use the guide as a starting point and then modify or adapt their implementation to meet the diverse needs of their students.

Using Repeated Reading
to
Improve Oral Reading Fluency



A Guide for Implementation

By

Loretta L. Powers

Union Gap School District

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Foreward

Oral reading fluency is one of the key components to being a successful reader. Research shows that, unfortunately, there has not been an emphasis placed on improving students' oral reading fluency. Instead, decoding skills have traditionally been the focus of teacher instruction. In order to fully prepare our students for the future and to promote lifelong learners, educators need to adequately prepare students to read and understand information. Using the method of repeated reading of grade level appropriate texts as a supplement to a school's adopted reading curriculum can provide the practice in the reading subskills that a student needs in order to be a successful and confident reader.

This implementation guide provided is designed for middle school teachers, primarily at the seventh and eighth grade level. It is aimed at assisting teachers to plan for and implement repeated reading as a supplement to the adopted reading curriculum. The information and materials provided will show teachers how repeated reading can be used to increase students' oral reading fluency with a final outcome of increased reading skills and comprehension. With the enclosed materials, teachers will feel competent and confident to utilize repeated reading as an effective approach to increasing all students' oral reading fluency.

Loretta L. Powers



Section I: Research Behind the Method

Fluent readers can read text with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. Fluency depends upon well-developed word recognition skills, but such skills do not inevitably lead to fluency. It is generally acknowledged that fluency is a critical component of skilled reading. Nevertheless, it is often neglected in classroom instruction. . . . There is a growing concern that children are not achieving fluency in reading. The National Reading Panel's (NRP) review of research found that out of a nationally representative sample of fourth graders, 44 percent were found to be dysfluent when reading grade level texts. Furthermore, the study found a close relationship between fluency and reading comprehension. Students who are low in fluency may have difficulty understanding the meaning of what they read (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000, p. 3-1).

Need for Effective Repeated Reading

Instruction

- Research suggests that those who automatically process words as they read are more likely to comprehend what they read (LaBerge and Samuels, 1974).
- Research reviewed by Allington (1983) notes that a lack of fluency in oral reading is often noted as a characteristic of poor readers; however it is seldom seen as a reading problem in need of intervention. Oral fluency has been viewed as just a symptom of poor reading, which is believed to be due to the inability to recognize words. Teachers unfortunately see this surface outcome as a reason for more instruction on isolated letters, sounds and words.
- Decoding skills have traditionally been the focus of teacher instruction, however, chunking skills have rarely been taught. The transfer of skills from decoding to the recognition of printed words as speech processing is not always automatic.
- According to a study conducted by Faulkner and Levy (1999), it was found that through practice (repetition), these lexical representations can be accessed automatically, and then attention can be focused on message processing.
- Routman (2000) states that rereading should be taught as the single most useful reading strategy.

- The NRP (2000) statement said that fluent readers can read text with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. Fluency is a critical component of skilled reading. However, it is often neglected in classroom instruction and there is a growing concern that children are not achieving fluency in reading. Students who are low in fluency may have difficulty getting the meaning of what they read. (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, p. 3-1)

Reasons for Including Repeated Reading At the Middle School Level

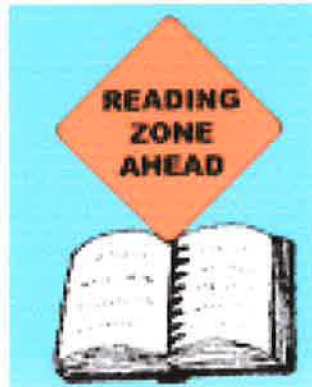
- Beers (2003) contends that for the middle school or secondary level student that is reading at 60 words per minute and has several pages of homework to read; that student will spend approximately one hour and thirty minutes just to read *one* page.
- Beers (2003) also states that a slow reading rate does have a negative affect on a student's attitude toward reading.
- Beers (2003) also contends that nonfluent readers are nonfluent because of the lack of reading practice. Even though teaching reading provides excellent reading strategies, it is not reading. Struggling readers need to read, read a lot, and to read many types of texts that are at their instructional or independent reading level.
- Research conducted by Rasinski and Padak (2005) found a strong correlation between a student's fluency rate and his or her score on the State Assessment for Learning exit test in high school. Those students who had an oral reading fluency score below 125 words per minute, had a low correct score and did not pass their State Assessment for Learning exam.

Effectiveness of Repeated Reading

- Rasinski, Linek, and Sturtevant (1994) tested fluency instruction that could be integrated into the regular reading program, called a fluency development lesson (FDL). The lesson was a 10-15 min instructional activity that incorporated several key principles of effective fluency instruction. (p. 159) The results were that students in the experimental group nearly doubled their reading rate and their reading rate was higher than the minimal acceptable reading rate of 70 words per minute (wpm). Rasinski et al. (1994) concluded that students receiving the FDL made considerable gains with a small amount of time given to the model daily. Additionally, those teachers who participated in the study responded positively to the FDL model.
- In 2000, Stahl and Heuback published a two-year study that had reorganized a second grade basal reading instructional program. The intended outcome for their fluency-based reading program was to move children from the accuracy-driven decoding stage to the fluency and automaticity stage needed in order to read-to-learn. The strategy used for moving these children through this decoding stage was practicing reading in connected texts. The first year results showed that students made an average gain of 1.88 grade levels over the course of the first year and this gain was consistent across all four classes that participated in the study.
- University of Oregon Center on Teaching and Learning developed the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) measures for Phonemic Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, Accuracy and Fluency, Vocabulary and Comprehension. The University of Oregon Center on Teaching and Learning defines fluency as the automatic reading of words

with no noticeable cognitive or mental effort. Word recognition skills have been mastered to the point of them being over learned and the foundational skills are so automatic that they do not require any attention. The DIBELS measure for Accuracy and Fluency has connected texts that students read and practice up to grade six.

- Therrien (2004) reviewed previous literature in order to determine the key components in repeated readings and specifically the components that increase reading fluency and reading comprehension. Therrien's analysis indicates that repeated reading is an effective strategy for improving reading fluency and comprehension on a passage that is read repeatedly. It also appears that repeated reading has the potential to improve students' overall reading fluency and comprehension abilities in regard to new material. (p. 262)



Section II: Getting Started

Now that you know the research supporting the implementation of repeated reading to improve oral reading fluency, you are ready to get started. Review and use the following suggested materials or adapt them as needed to reflect your students' needs and abilities.

Overview of Repeated Reading in the

Classroom

- Repeated reading is daily, two or three times a week for ten minutes. It is generally incorporated with daily entry tasks.
- After initial screening for reading level, students know which passages they are to practice and will have a reading partner who is also reading the same passage.
- Teacher models each day the expected oral reading (appropriate pacing, intonation, and expression). The teacher also discusses one specific attribute.
- Individual practice for one minute. Students are reading aloud in a quiet voice, while the teacher circles the room listening to students as they read aloud. (This gives valuable information for future student/teacher conference)
- Partner practice for one minute each (these partners are working on the same reading passage). Teacher prompts all to remember their roles.
- After one minute Listener is to mark the passage identifying where they were. Readers are to continue to the end of the passage. Listeners are to say a positive (what they did well) and then to give a correction (word or intonation) or what could be improved upon.
- Listener is to ask the Reader a comprehension question (or two questions if repeated reading is two or three times a week).

- Now, the Listener is the Reader. The process is repeated again with the teacher prompting to remember their roles.
- At the end of one minute, the Listener marks the passage and the Reader continues to the end of the passage. At the end of the reading, the Listener is to give a positive comment and then a correction or a suggested improvement in intonation, pacing or expression.
- Each student is to now identify on their bar graph how many words they had read in one minute (this is done by using the words counted on the far left column of the reading passage).
- Two times a month during student testing of a unit or basal story, the teacher calls back students to hear them read from the passage they are working on. At this time a mini conference takes place whereby the teacher can prompt, coach, and praise the student on a job well done.

Prerequisites

- In order for repeated reading in the classroom to be successful there are a few social and thinking skills that students need to have acquired. Students need to have developed a sense of community with each other. Students also need to have been given many opportunities to work together in collaborative groups to develop the skills of taking turns, respecting differences, responding positively to others, and giving suggestions to others in a positive respectful manner.
- In addition to being able to work together, students need to know about and be able to talk about correct pacing, intonation, and expression when reading aloud.
- If a sense of positive community has not been established then mini-lessons can be taught to develop these skills.
- Teacher led lessons can focus on collaborative learning, working together in both large and small groups, and proper etiquette in giving both praise and or suggestions for change. Class guidelines can be established through group discussions and class meetings.
- Students generally are not familiar with how to read aloud with appropriate pacing, intonation, and expression, so several mini-lessons should be taught in order for students to be able to identify and also develop these skills.

- **Teacher led mini-lessons can focus on best reading by using the skills of pacing, intonation, and expression. Lessons can also focus on not just reading for speed, but reading-to-learn.**
- **To develop students' ability to read aloud, also include the teacher modeling passages read aloud.**

Scheduling

- There are a multitude of ways that teachers can schedule repeated reading into the classroom framework. Depending on the curriculum and the needs of the students, teachers need to decide how much time can be devoted to repeated reading.
- Repeated reading is generally started middle to late September or the first part of October. This gives the teacher time to initially evaluate each student's oral reading fluency. Also, students are given the opportunity to work collaboratively together and build a positive classroom environment.
- Some teachers schedule time for repeated reading daily, while other teachers schedule repeated reading two or three times a week. Other teachers may plan repeated readings around a cycle of basal stories from their adopted curriculum and unit testing.
- Once a decision has been made regarding how many times a week repeated reading will be practiced in the classroom, a teacher is ready then to structure the repeated reading time. There are numerous ways that the repeated reading time can be structured depending on the students' abilities and the amount of instructional time that is available.
- Generally, when structuring a segment of time for repeated reading, teacher directions, mini-lessons, and reading practice need to be allotted for in the time frame. The usual amount of time given to a repeated reading session is usually ten to fifteen minutes.

- Some teachers schedule time for independent reading practice at a time other than during the whole class repeated reading time. It is suggested, however, that initially it will be most successful if all repeated reading activities take place as a whole group in-class activity. This then provides students with the opportunity to receive support and direction from the teacher as needed.
- To regularly monitor students' progress, teachers conduct a one-minute oral reading fluency test for each student either once or twice a month depending on their adopted curriculum's cycle of basal testing.
- Once the best time for regular monitoring of students has been determined, then teachers conduct a one-minute fluency test on the current passage a student has been practicing. At this mini-conference, teachers are able to praise, positively correct, and coach students for best oral reading fluency. If a student has met the ninety-five percent word accuracy, the oral reading rubric at a three or above, and the targeted words-per-minute goal, then the next reading passage is determined for the student.



Section III: Introducing Repeated Reading in the Classroom

“Students need to hear fluent reading in order to become fluent readers...Smith (1979) reminds us that when students listen to a teacher read aloud from a text they are about to read on their own, and follow along as the teacher reads, these students then complete the story with better fluency and accuracy” (Beers, 2003, p. 215).

Introducing Repeated Reading

- The teacher will present to students the concept of repeated reading and briefly share the research that supports repeated reading to improve oral reading fluency. Most importantly, the teacher will provide convincing reasons why reading fluently and comprehending what you read is so important. For example, how it will help your future success in high school and beyond.
- The importance of accountability is now discussed and the system that will be used to record one's personal fluency, goal setting, and biweekly reflection on individual progress.
- The expectations of student response through echo or choral reading and in biweekly self reflections will be presented to students. Teacher model, teacher student practice, and then lastly, student practice. Mini-lessons will be conducted that demonstrate the differences in intonation and expression.

Teacher Modeling and Direct Instruction

- The teacher reads aloud a short passage and models strong phrasing, intonation, and expression. After reading aloud, the teacher asks students how were questions read differently, how were statements read differently than questions? Suggested questions to be identified in the teacher's reading:
 - How was expression shown?
 - How was excitement added?
 - How was the character's emotions shown?
 - What did you notice about phrasing and pacing?
- Students then repeat the same passage aloud while mimicking the teacher's reading. This can be echo or choral reading dependent on the needs and abilities of the students.
- The teacher places short sentences on the overhead projector or document camera. The teacher reads aloud the sentences, showing how the meaning of the sentence changes as you stress a specific word.
- Discuss with students that *how* the text was read makes a difference in the *meaning* of what was said.
- Students now echo or choral read the sentence(s).
- The teacher now changes the ending punctuation of each sentence. The teacher models the appropriate expression for the end punctuation mark. Students echo or choral read, mimicking the teacher's expression.
- Discuss with students, what is the difference between the first and second sentences and how did your voice change as you read the sentence?
- Teacher short passage read alouds and directly teaching intonation/expression are conducted multiple times as mini-lessons for understanding and reinforcement. Lessons are adapted to accommodate the abilities of your students.



Section IV: Student Accountability

Students who are given the opportunity to account for their learning “are proud of their ability, aware of their progress, and are involved in setting new learning goals for themselves” (Routman, 2003, p. 47).

Individual Goals and Monitoring Progress

- The teacher will provide each student with a two pocket portfolio, reading passages at the student's current grade level, and a reading fluency bar graph. When the portfolio is open, on the left side, the student will maintain and keep current, their reading fluency bar graph.
- Each student's goal for fluency improvement will be determined by the teacher's analysis of their oral reading. Intonation, expression, word accuracy, and rate of reading will determine what would be an appropriate goal for the student.
- The teacher and student will discuss the initial goal and future goals at the mini-conference. These mini-conferences are conducted when the teacher listens to the student and evaluates their progress every two weeks or as determined by the teacher and the adopted reading curriculum.
- The ending target goal, 155 words per minute, is marked on the student's bar graph. A mini-goal(s) is marked in a different color. This will be the current fluency target goal.
- Each student brings their pocket portfolio to the mini-conference. After the oral reading to the teacher, the student counts the number of words correct in one minute less any missed words. The teacher documents the information on his or her reading passage copy and the student documents their words per minute (less word errors) on their bar graph.
- Every two weeks, the student writes a reflection of their progress and states specific action(s) that will be taken in the areas needed (intonation, expression, word accuracy, increased reading practice, comprehension, etc.) to achieve their new goal.

Level of Accuracy

- Washington State Grade Level Expectation (GLE) 1.4 states that students are to “apply fluency to enhance comprehension.” GLE 1.4.2 states that students at grade 7 and 8 are to “apply word recognition skills and strategies to read fluently at a rate of 145 to 155 or more words per minute.”
- Students are to achieve a standard of 95 percent word accuracy, in other words six or less incorrect words per passage, before they are able to move on to the next grade level passage.
- Students are to achieve a level three, 11 to 16 points, or higher on the “Reading Aloud” rubric (Illinois State Board of Education, 1997, Illinois Learning Standard ELA Stage 3) before they are able to move on to the next grade level passage.
- Students are to comprehend 90 percent or more of the passage read without any assistance from the teacher.
- All three components of fluency must be accomplished before a student moves to the next grade level passage. The student must have 95 percent in word accuracy, level three in expression, phrasing, intonation, and 90 percent comprehension of the passage read.

Oral Reading Fluency

.....

Record of Progress

Name _____ Examiner _____

	Date: _____ Passage: _____	Date: _____ Passage: _____	Date: _____ Passage: _____
Total Words Read per Minute			
Number of Errors			
Words Correct per Minute (WCPM)			
Quartile			
Observations			
Comments			

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READING ALOUD

NAME _____ DATE _____

- Exceeds standard (must receive 15 - 16 total points)
- Meets standard (must receive 11 - 14 total points)
- Approaches standard (must receive 7 - 10 total points)
- Begins standard or absent (must receive 4 - 6 total points)

	Speed, Rate or Pace	Voice Quality (Volume, Pitch, Tone)	Phrasing	Unfamiliar Words
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pace is consistently and appropriately conversational. • Meaning is enhanced by pace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice quality distinguishes all characters and accentuates feelings appropriate for the passage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading is well-phrased mostly in clause and sentence units, which augment clarity of meaning and expression. • Punctuation is used effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-corrects with minor interruption of flow and no interference with meaning. <li style="text-align: center;">or • Encounters NO unfamiliar words.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pace is somewhat uneven with a mixture of conversational and slowed rate. • Meaning is not affected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice quality distinguishes most characters and conveys some feelings appropriate for the passage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading contains little choppiness with some pauses in the middle of clauses or sentence units; clarity of meaning and expression generally not affected. • Some attention is paid to punctuation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encounters some unfamiliar words and can usually self-correct with minor interruption of flow and little interference with meaning.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pace is consistently too slow to be conversational. • Meaning is impeded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice quality sometimes distinguishes characters, but conveys little feeling appropriate for the passage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading contains noticeable choppiness with pauses and breaks at unexpected times; meaning and expression are affected. • Little attention is paid to punctuation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encounters some unfamiliar words and can sometimes self-correct.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pace is slow and laborious. Little meaning is conveyed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice quality makes little or no distinction for various characters and has noticeable monotone features. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading is done word-by-word with little sense of punctuation or phrasing; meaning and expression are lost in the "labor" of reading. • No attention is paid to punctuation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encounters several unfamiliar words and rarely or never self-corrects.
Score				

Rubric Source: ISAT Reading Rubric regrouped by criteria for scoring purposes.

READING ALOUD

Performance Standard 1B.E

Read a passage aloud, using all the following strategies accordingly:

- *Using appropriate speed, rate, or pace:* Use consistent, appropriate and conversational pace that enhances meaning.
- *Using appropriate voice quality:* Distinguish all characters and accentuate feelings appropriate for the passage.
- *Phrasing:* Apply phrasing well, using mostly clause and sentence units to augment clarity of meaning and expression; use punctuation effectively.
- *Being familiar with words:* Demonstrates familiarity with words or self-corrects words with minor interference with flow and meaning.

Procedures

1. *In order to understand reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency (1B)*, students should experience sufficient learning opportunities to develop the following:
 - Make judgments based on prior knowledge during reading.
 - Distinguish between significant and minor details.
 - Apply self-monitoring and self-correcting strategies (e.g., reread, read ahead, use visual and context clues, ask questions, retell, clarify terminology, seek additional information) continuously to clarify understanding during reading.
 - Read age-appropriate material aloud with fluency and accuracy.
2. Have students review and discuss the assessment task and how the rubric will be used to evaluate their work.
3. Select a new passage or story that is age-appropriate in terms of length, format and level of difficulty for students to use during the assessment.
4. Have each student individually read the selected passage or story aloud and mark the rubric as student reads. Alternatively, have students individually read the selected passage into a tape recorder and mark the rubric while listening to the recording of the readings. All students should complete the task within 2 or 3 days of each other. The time needed for each student to complete the reading of the passage or story is dependent upon the length of the selection and the reading skills of the students. A recommended time would be 3 to 5 minutes.
5. Direct each student by saying, "Read this passage [or story] aloud using your best oral reading skills."
6. Evaluate each student's performances using the rubric. Add each student's scores to determine the performance level.

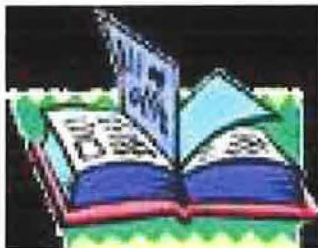
Examples of Student Work not available

Resources

- Teacher-selected story or passage
- Tape recorder and tape (optional)
- Reading Aloud Rubric

Time Requirements

- Three to five minutes for each student



Section V: Student Reading Passages

“Nonfluent readers are most often nonfluent because of a lack of practice with reading. We cannot confuse teaching about reading with the act of reading” (Beers, 2003, pg. 218).

Teacher Instructions & Procedures

- Twelve seventh grade reading passages are provided which range in reading ability from beginning seventh grade to the expected reading level at the end of seventh grade.
- Twelve eighth grade reading passages are provided which range in reading ability from beginning eighth grade to the expected reading level at the end of eighth grade.
- Teachers will conduct initial screenings of each student using the beginning passage identified for their current grade.
- The teacher will instruct the student that he or she will be reading aloud for one minute. Provide the student with the reading passage and explain that they are to begin reading starting at the first paragraph, reading aloud with expression, intonation, and a reading rate that is comfortable for them. If the student comes to a word he or she is unsure of, instruct the student to sound it out as best he or she can and then continue reading the rest of the passage. Also, if the student feels that an error has been made, then he or she may go back and state the correct word or words.
- The teacher will tell the student that as he or she reads aloud, the teacher will be making notes about their reading. This test or read aloud is to help the teacher better understand the student's reading abilities and how the teacher can best help the student.
- Now testing begins. The student will begin at the first paragraph of the reading passage (not the title or author) and read as far as he or she can read in one minute. The teacher will need to follow along making notes on another copy of the reading passage.

- The teacher will identify on the copy of the reading passage the word(s) missed and mispronounced. If word(s) are inserted that are not there in the text and or if words are omitted or skipped, then that is also noted as a miscue.
- Miscues that are not counted but noted as the student is reading, is when a student repeats a word(s) or parts of a sentence, and word(s) that were said incorrectly, but were corrected. Make a note of the repetition by underlining the word(s). Also, note when word(s) are self corrected as SC in order to discuss these miscues later with the student.
- Now at the end of one minute, the teacher will add up the uncorrected miscues. Next, the teacher will add up the total number of words read and subtract the number of uncorrected miscues. The end total is the oral reading fluency rate in one minute.
- The teacher now asks the student several questions about the text (provided at the end of each passage) and a short summary.
- This is an excellent opportunity to conduct a mini-conference and make a connection with the student. However, before discussing miscues and future improvements, the teacher can give several positive comments about how the student read aloud. Then, the teacher can share the fluency rate with the student.
- Suggestions can now be offered that will aid future reading improvement and the correct pronunciation of any words that were mispronounced can also be shared with the student at this time.
- The teacher can also discuss the goals needed in order to achieve fluent oral reading, and review the student's independent reading habits. Finally, the teacher can end with comments of encouragement and praise.

Please note:

These pages have been redacted due to copyright restriction.

Chapter 4, after page p22 through the end of Chapter 4:
These pages contain reading selections and have been redacted due to copyright concerns or restrictions.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary

Repeated reading as an effective strategy for increasing students' oral reading fluency and comprehension has been studied quite extensively over the last thirty years. The positive results in using repeated reading as a supplement to a quality reading program and teacher instruction have been proven. However, repeated reading has been generally unused and misunderstood by the educational community. A lack of fluency or expressionless, methodical reading has been seen by most educators as a lack of decoding skills. The result has been an increase of isolated instruction in letters, sounds, and words for children with reading difficulties. However, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's (2000) review of research found that "phonics instruction failed to exert a significant impact on the reading performance of low-achieving readers in second through sixth grades" (p. 2-133).

Repeated reading improves one's reading fluency and reading comprehension. Considerable gains are attained through the use of a ten to fifteen minute daily supplemental repeated reading instructional activity (Rasinski, Linek, Sturtevant, & Padak, 1994). Connected texts for repeated reading also provides consistent gains in oral reading fluency, grade level reading, and comprehension.

Conclusion

Reading fluency is an important component in the overall process of excellent reading. Repeated reading has been generally used as a strategy to gain

oral reading fluency in the elementary grades. Unfortunately, a large portion of middle and secondary level students are reading well below their expected grade level reading fluency rate. The result of this slow, halting reading is decreased comprehension ability, increased time to complete homework assignments, and a negative affect on a student's attitude toward reading.

Repeated reading is a successful strategy when used consistently.

Therefore, it was determined to implement repeated reading as a supplement to the established, adopted reading curriculum at Union Gap Middle School. In searching for possible repeated reading programs, there were none that were a part of the current adopted curriculum. Upon investigation outside of the adopted curriculum, it was found that there were no other supplemental programs available specifically for grades seven and eight. Therefore, it was determined to create short, fiction and nonfiction texts that were at the grade seven and grade eight reading level. Comprehension questions were also created for each reading passage.

Recommendations

First, when implementing repeated reading in order to gain oral fluency, it is important for teachers to be as explicit as possible when giving instruction on the specific strategies of intonation, expression, and comprehension. Second, details must be overtly stated regarding what is going on inside the reader's mind while reading aloud. In other words, the teacher needs to make the thinking processes as visible as possible. Third, educators must assist struggling readers and explicitly teach what good readers sound like and how they think about the

text. Finally, teachers need to help struggling readers become good readers by encouraging them to repeatedly read a text until they gain, prosody, understanding and fluency.

To improve the project, a variety of materials, such as magazines, books, newspapers, etc. could be included in order to motivate the reluctant reader to find texts that are of interest to repeatedly read. Monologues, short plays, lyrics, speeches, or poems to be performed or shared can also be excellent material for repeated reading. Educators know their students best; therefore the passages attached herein may be adapted, modified, and or added to as best seen fit for individual interests and needs.

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