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How educators and parents can collaborate to improve student reading fluency

Abstract

In this project, fluency practices are defined and explored in relation to an elementary school setting that is partnering with parents on how to promote fluency practices in the home. The Literature Review describes the importance of fluency instruction, how fluency instruction supports literacy instruction, and finally how educators and parents can begin partnering to provide literacy practices in the home. Following the literature review, there is a professional development plan that lays out the key components of collaborating with parents to implement fluency practices in the home.

How Educators and Parents Can Collaborate To Improve Student Reading Fluency

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HOW EDUCATORS AND PARENTS CAN COLLABORATE TO IMPROVE
STUDENT READING FLUENCY

2

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Has been approved as meeting the project requirement for the Master of Arts in Education.

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In this project, fluency practices are defined and explored in relation to an elementary school setting that is partnering with parents on how to promote fluency practices in the home. The Literature Review describes the importance of fluency instruction, how fluency instruction supports literacy instruction, and finally how educators and parents can begin partnering to provide literacy practices in the home. Following the literature review, there is a professional development plan that lays out the key components of collaborating with parents to implement fluency practices in the home.

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How Educators and Parents Can Collaborate to Improve Student Reading Fluency

There is strong evidence that it is important for educators and parents to work together to support students' literacy development and improve student achievement. Educators and parents can work together to provide students' with a solid literacy foundation that they can carry with them and build on for the rest of their lives, hopefully helping them graduate from college and build a career. A solid literacy foundation can help students become productive adult citizens in society. An effective partnership between school and parents has the potential to provide students with a better education than either schools or parents could do alone. This professional development project will share beliefs educators need to build for effective relationships with parents.

This project focused on partnering with parents in the areas of fluency. It includes a one year professional development plan for educators focusing on how they can collaborate with parents to support their children in this area.

Fluency is identified as one of the five pillars of reading (National Reading Panel [NRP], 2000; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000). Fluency includes the following components: accuracy in decoding, automaticity in word recognition, appropriate use of prosodic features such as stress, pitch, and appropriate text phrasing. (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Nichols, Rupley, & Rasinski, 2009; Wilfong, 2008) Fluency instruction has been shown to effectively improve students' reading fluency. (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Nichols, et al., 2009; Wilfong, 2008). Students who read fluently may have increased comprehension and confidence in reading.

Through this professional development workshop, educators can learn how to collaborate with parents to provide fluency practice for students so they can develop into fluent readers. The end goal is to support students' literacy development by improving student reading fluency.

Rationale

As a title one teacher and reading specialist, one of my roles it to provide professional development for my colleagues and collaborate with parents to support student literacy development. I chose the professional development workshop format for this project and decided to focus on the literacy areas I had read the most about: collaborating with parents and fluency. It made sense to combine these and focus on how educators could collaborate with parents to support students' literacy development through fluency practice in the home. In our school improvement plan, our school has a goal to improve student reading fluency so I am hoping the methods presented in this professional development workshop will support teachers at my school with implementing effective fluency instruction. These methods could also be applied at many other schools serving students through Title One.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to design a professional development plan for an elementary school. Educators will learn about effective fluency instruction and how to work with parents to provide fluency experiences in the home.

Terminology

Fluency includes the following components: accuracy in decoding, automaticity in word recognition, and appropriate use of prosodic features such as stress, pitch, and appropriate text phrasing. (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Nichols, et al., 2009, Wilfong, 2008)

Project Questions

The main question that guided my project was: How can educators collaborate with parents to support students' literacy development through implementation of fluency instruction in the home? From this question, there were two other more specific questions I needed to address. These questions will also be discussed in the following literature review:

- How can educators and parents build a strong partnership?
- What are the most effective fluency practices parents can do with their child at home?

Literature Review

Through collaboration, educators and parents can improve student reading fluency. First, this literature review explores the literature about effective practices for partnering with parents. Next, it explores the literature about effective fluency instruction. Finally, it explores the literature on how educators and parents can collaborate to implement effective fluency practices in the home.

Importance of Home School Collaboration

When home and school cooperate, the most effective learning occurs (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Epstein, 1998; Edwards, 2004; Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007). Most parents, regardless of educational level, class, or ethnicity, believe that involvement in their children's education will help their children. Further, most parents recognize the importance of a positive home learning environment.

What keeps teachers from building effective relationships with families? In some geographical locations, there is a tradition of keeping home and school separate. Also, teachers are sometimes unsure how to connect with families because they may have had little education or experience in this area. Teacher preparatory colleges and schools can help with this. They can spend time focusing on this area with educators so they feel more prepared to build connections with families. (Beed, Sandvold, & Maslova, 2004)

Communication and collaboration are key to effective school-home partnerships. Two-way communication between home and school is important. With two-way communication students begin to see the connection between what they do at home and what they do at school (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Another benefit of collaboration is that both educators and parents have ownership in student's education (Epstein, 1998). However, it is the educator's responsibility to initiate this relationship (Beed, Sandvold, & Maslova, 2004). Beed, Sandvold, and Maslova (2004) suggest some ways schools can communicate and collaborate with parents are through informal messages, open house, parent-teacher conferences, and parent education workshops. The book *Beyond the Bake Sale* (2007) is a helpful source for more information on working with parents. It

includes four versions of school and home partnerships, and educators can evaluate themselves to see how their school is doing in this area. The four versions are partnership school, Open-Door School, Come-If-We-Call School, and Fortress School. Henderson et al (2007) encourages schools to strive to be a partnership school.

Rasinski (2003) states that success in parent involvement depends on the development of a partnership between parents and teachers. He suggests that the partnership needs to be based on mutual respect and valuing of the position of each partner and the ongoing, frequent communication between parents and teachers. Both teachers and parents must be empowered to help solve the literacy learning problems that vex many students. Rasinski recommends that teachers communicate regularly, clearly, and frankly with parents about the status of their child's progress, the nature of the work that is being done in the classroom, and suggestions that parents can implement to help their children. He also recommends teachers to encourage parents to communicate about how their child is responding to the literacy instruction provided to their child and to make suggestions to the teacher about ways in which the teacher can more effectively address the needs of their children.

Rasinski (2003) suggests some activities that parents can implement with their children to support their fluency development including reading rhymes to pre-kindergarteners to support their phonemic awareness, help with tracking their child's minutes of reading at home by signing off on a reading log, and by parents' help to implement the home component of reading programs like Fast Start.

Effective Practices in Fluency Instruction

Fluency instruction has been shown to effectively improve students' reading fluency (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Nichols, et al., 2009; Wilfong, 2008). Fluency includes the following components: accuracy in decoding, automaticity in word recognition, appropriate use of prosodic features such as stress, pitch, and appropriate text phrasing. Fluency is identified as one of the five pillars of reading along with phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension (NRP, 2000;

NICHD, 2000) There are several interpretations of the reading process however I support the developmental stage theory. The process of becoming literate can be conceptualized as a series of qualitatively different stages through which children progress as they become increasingly proficient with print (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Chall, 1996b; Harris & Sipay, 1990). It is important to recognize that readers often share attributes of multiple stages often dependent on the text type, text level, and familiarity with the content of the text.

One of the primary advances in this process involves the shift from dealing with words on a word-by-word basis to a rapid, accurate, and express rendering of text. In other words, learners develop such familiarity with print that they achieve fluency in their reading. Fluent reading may underlie or assist in effective engagement with text. Chall (1996b) identifies the first reading stage as the pre-reading *Stage 0*. During this stage, the children are increasing their conceptual knowledge and beginning to develop an understanding of the world around them and how language functions in this world. In order to read at this stage, children rely heavily on their experiential and contextual knowledge. During this emergent stage of reading development, children use the contextual information provided by the pictures, the predictable language of the text they encounter, and the way that stories mimic spoken language in order to read. Throughout this stage, children use logographic (e.g. the golden M in McDonald's and the swoosh for Nike) information to make guesses about words. The first printed words that are learned such as their name and other environmental print are read holistically and are recognized more easily in context. As children progress through Stage 0, they begin to develop phonological insights into the nature of words. For example, they can often identify and create words that rhyme, are conscious that words are made up of sounds, and understand that some words have the same beginning and ending sounds (Nichols et al., 2009).

As children become more aware of the relationships of spoken language to written language, they grow in their knowledge of the broader areas of phonological awareness. Such growth shows that they are transitioning into Stage 1 of reading where the focus becomes on narrower features

of phonological awareness, such as refined understanding of phonemic principles, onsets and rimes in spoken syllables, and phonics. This new understanding of alphabetic principles allow the stage 1 reader to become more proficient at mapping sounds of spoken words onto written words in systematic ways. A major focal point of Stage 1 is that developing readers begin gluing to print and often attempt to sound out every letter in words. Even words that were easily recognized holistically in stage 0 may now be sounded out by the Stage 1 readers. The Stage 1 readers are learning to break the code of print and realize that letters and letter combinations represent sounds of their language. To the stage 1 reader, word recognition is extremely important, and systematic and direct phonics instruction is an essential component of a reading program for these children. As children gain richer understandings of alphabetic principles they become adept at using letter sound correspondence and develop a foundation for accurate word recognition. This development of alphabetic knowledge is a prerequisite for fluency (Nichols et al., 2009).

Following Nichol et al (2009)'s approach to the reading process, these developing readers become more confident and successful in word recognition, they begin to progress forward to the final stage of developmental reading, *Stage 2*. A successful reader is a fluid reader, one who automatically and accurately decodes words, thus freeing up attention for higher levels of comprehension and meaning. As children progress through Stage 2, they acquire the ability to connect words with their background knowledge and focus on chunking the ideas represented. They recognize spelling patterns of words and reach a level of automaticity in word recognition. Chall (1996b) often referred to this stage as "more of the same." In other words children need an opportunity to hone their skills of reading in comfortable text and reading situations. Reading instruction that encourages fluent reading needs to be a vital part of the stage 2 readers' curriculum. This stage is not for gaining new information, or using reading to learn, but is the stage where children begin to integrate control of their reading and is the juncture at which comprehension begins to be the primary focus. Developing the attributes associated with these

developmental stages is critical so that children can invest their cognitive energies for higher levels of comprehension (Nichols et al., 2009).

Ultimately, through continuous assessment and reflection, teachers should be able to recognize the current stage of reading development of their students and thus know which aspect of reading should be emphasized during reading instruction. If students are identified as at stage 0, then phonemic awareness and alphabetic knowledge could be emphasized to assist them in making the successful transition into stage 1. If they are Stage 1 readers, then instruction could emphasize word recognition to promote the development of phonic knowledge and an automatic sight vocabulary necessary to transition into stage 2. If the students are in Stage 2, fluent expressive reading at their independent and instructional reading levels is essential to complete the developmental reading stages and help them transition successfully into Stage 3 and beyond where the focus is reading for meaning and to learn from increasingly more difficult texts. (Nichols et al., 2009)

Stage 3 is primarily associated with content areas reading or “Reading to Learn.” During this stage of reading development the reader must use reading as a tool for acquiring new knowledge. Before the child entered stage 3 of reading, he or she relied on the environment or the spoken word to acquire new knowledge, but as the child enters stage 3 he or she must use reading to gain novel information. Stage 3 is also characterized by the growing importance of word meaning, prior knowledge, and strategic knowledge and in order for the child to focus attention on these cognitive aspects the learner must reach a level of fluent reading. Successful reading occurs when the reader is able to bring previous knowledge and experiences as well as fluent decoding of the text to their reading (Nichols et al., 2009).

Kuhn and Stahl (2003) studied the range of definitions for fluency, main features of fluent reading, and studies that have tried to improve the fluency of struggling readers. They found that (a) fluency instruction is generally effective, especially for children in the confirmation and fluency stage, although it is unclear whether this is because of specific instructional features or

because it involves children in reading increased amounts of text; (b) assisted approaches seem to be more effective than unassisted approaches; (c) repetitive approaches do not seem to hold a clear advantage over non-repetitive approaches; and (d) effective fluency instruction moves beyond automatic word recognition to include rhythm and expression, or also known by linguistics as prosodic features of language.

Nichols, et al. (2009) provided an overview of fluency development and focused on instructional approaches that are intended to improve fluency that go beyond the most frequently recommended strategy of repeated readings. They described fluency as the gateway to comprehension that enables students to move from being word decoders to passage comprehenders. Several factors can be associated with the successful development of fluency in reading. First, fluent readers are exposed to fluent reading patterns modeled both at school and at home. Second, they are the learners who are provided with varied opportunities to apply fluent reading behaviors in connected text as opposed to just working on isolated skills. Third, they are given more time to focus on and practice reading appropriate texts with expression through guided and repeated reading activities aimed at expressive reading that enhances the meaning of the passage. Fourth, in addition to receiving direct instruction on fluency, these learners are also provided with the time to engage in fluent reading in a variety of texts at both their independent and instructional levels. Finally, and most importantly, fluent readers know that reading is more than just identifying words correctly, but it is also about reading with expression and understanding the meaning of the text.

Repeated reading is the most recognized approach for developing fluency, and although repeated readings have shown successful results in development students' fluency, continual reliance on repeated readings without appropriate guidance and support can lead to diminished student engagement. Providing children with varied opportunities to practice and acquire fluency will enhance their active participation in fluency instruction and engage them in reading for

multiple purposes. Nichols', et al (2009) research provided an overview of fluency instructional methods that went beyond unassisted and unguided student reading practice.

According to Chall's (1996b) stage model presented at the beginning of the article, one would expect that fluency instruction would be most effective for children in the confirmation and fluency stage. The results of Kuhn and Stahl's (2003) and Wilfong's (2008) studies are consistent with Chall's stage model. Fluency instruction seems to work best with children from between a late preprimer level and late second grade level. Beyond or below that level, the results are not as strong. Children need to have some entering knowledge about words to benefit from rereading but not be so fluent that they cannot demonstrate improvements (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003).

Hollingsworth (1970) used average fourth graders, who should have been in the learning-the-new stage and not in need of fluency instruction and found that the treatment did not produce significant improvement over a control. Hollingsworth (1978) replicated this study with below-average fourth graders, who would have been predicted to benefit from this training, and found that they did. Stahl et al. (1997) found that their fluency-oriented reading instruction program was highly effective with children reading at a primer level or higher at the beginning of second grade. Nearly all of those students were reading at the second-grade level by the end of the year. With children reading below the primer level, the approach brought only half to that level. Teachers dropped children who were reading at an emergent stage from the program, because it did not seem to benefit them at all. Blum et al. (1995) found that only children who entered their assisted-reading treatment with some reading ability (a preprimer level) benefited from the treatment. Turpie and Pastore (1995) found that their repeated-readings treatment seemed to work better for the higher level first graders that they worked with than with the lower achieving first graders (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003).

Wilfong (2008) discussed the validity of the Poetry Academy, a program she developed that sought to enrich student lives with personal attention and engaging text while retaining a research-based premise as a literacy intervention. Findings revealed that the Poetry Academy

used poetry for literacy intervention with positive results. Mastery of short poems caused students to feel confident and successful early in the program, similar to the success that other researchers found when researching the use of short texts in conjunction with fluency development.

Components of repeated reading, listening-while-reading, assisted reading, and modeling were all equally important factors in the Poetry Academy Process. These components were combined to combat the boredom often associated with repeated reading of a single intervention. Community volunteers were trained in repeated reading, listening-while-reading, modeling, and assisted reading. Poems were chosen by the teacher, based on knowledge of the students' current reading levels. Students had an opportunity to participate in a poetry celebration where they selected their favorite poem from the year and performed it in front of the group. The format of poetry is especially suited to struggling or reluctant readers, and enhances reading motivation. In addition, humorous poetry drew students in and held their attention.

The participants in Wilfong's Poetry Academy (2008) were 86 third graders divided into four classrooms. This design was chosen for several reasons. When they conducted the first Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) test in September, two different groups were identified from the fluency test: 36 disfluent readers and 50 fluent readers. To control for the effects of the Poetry Academy, it was scheduled during independent work in language arts instruction in the classroom. During this time, the Poetry Academy students were not exposed to more instruction, a time factor that could have confounded results. Instead, both the treatment and the control groups received equal amounts of language arts instruction. Also, the treatment group was not pulled out for any additional intervention during the 11 weeks the program took place (Wilfong, 2008).

Students in the Poetry Academy made gains greater than those in the control group on the CBM administered before and after the implementation of the program. The CBM involved students reading a grade level passage in a normal manner and then they were asked to retell the story. A rubric was used to rate them on the number of the events they were able to recall.

Between the combination of words read correctly per minute (WCPM), percentage of words read correctly, and retelling score, a rounded picture of the students' reading abilities was obtained (Wilfong, 2008).

When students were given the CBM again at the end of the program 11 weeks later, statistically significant gains of the treatment group were made in the area of WCPM and word recognition. Students in the treatment group made gains of an average of 45.06 words per minute. Students in the control group made an average gain of 37.32 words. Students in the treatment group also made gains in their comprehension when compared with the control group and these gains were marginally statistically significant. In semester one, during the pretest CBM, three students in the treatment group were labeled with an "excellent" rating on their retelling compared with thirteen students from the control group with an "excellent" rating on their retelling. In semester two, when the CBM was readministered, twenty six students from the treatment group scored an "excellent" rating, making them equal to their control group counterpart who also had twenty six students with an "excellent" rating (Wilfong, 2008).

According to Nichols et al, 2009, the best way to ensure the transition to fluent reading is through extensive practice. As with any skill that requires a learner to coordinate a series of smaller actions to create a unified process, it is practice that allows the learner to develop expertise. In terms of reading, this practice consists primarily in providing the successive exposures to print. As letters, and later words, become increasingly familiar to the learner, less and less attention needs to be directed toward processing text at the orthographic level. This ability to complete a process without conscious attention fulfills LaBerge and Samuels's (1974) criterion for automaticity. In this way, the automaticity theory accounts for two of the components of fluent reading, accurate decoding at a sufficient rate. It further posits an explanation for automaticity's role in text comprehension (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003).

It is recommended that this exposure to print comes in the form of teacher modeling and abundant reading. Through a model, the student is exposed to fluent expressive reading that helps

ensure comprehension and through scaffolded repeated exposures to text, students begin to recognize orthographic patterns in words, experience various components of language, enhance their sight word vocabulary, develop a quick and effortless ability to recognize words, and free up attention for higher levels of comprehension (Nichols, et al., 2009). Many highly intelligent students experience difficulty in reading for meaning because they remain mired in the halting, unproductive stage of word recognition. The essence of fluency is that the reader has the ability to decode and comprehend at the same time (Samuels, 1988).

Assisted Reading has shown to be more effective than non-assisted approaches (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Nichols, et al., 2009; Wilfong, 2008). Continual reliance on repeated readings without appropriate guidance and support can lead to diminished student engagement and may not help students recognize that increased fluency provides for more focus on meaning. Data lends support to the notion that assessments of fluency without concurrent assessments of thoughtful comprehension are potentially misleading and damaging (Applegate, et al, 2009). What may ultimately be even more detrimental is the establishment of programs of instruction that divorce fluency and word recognition from comprehension (Applegate, et al., 2009). Providing students with varied opportunities to practice and acquire fluency at school and at home will enhance their active participation in the instruction and engage them in reading for multiple purposes (Nichols, et al. 2009).

As students practice reading it should come under the guidance and scaffolding of a teacher, proficient peer, or parent. The teacher's responsibility is to model expressive readings that demonstrate both automaticity and prosody as well as provide a scaffold for students who continue to need additional support in developing fluency (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Nichols, et al., 2009, Wilfong, 2008).

Teacher read-aloud, listening-while-reading, echo reading, choral reading, partner reading, assisted reading, repeated reading and independent reading were identified as components of effective instructional approaches to promote fluent reading (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Nichols, et al.

2009, Wilfong, 2008). Many effective instructional approaches used a combination of these instructional components. Approaches include partner reading (Kuhn & Stahl 2003, Nichols et al., 2009), phrase reading (Kuhn & Stahl 2003, Nichols et al, 2009) Fluency Development Lesson (FDL) (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003, Nichols et al, 2009), Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI) (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003, Nichols et al, 2009), Fast Start (Nichols et al, 2009), and the Poetry Academy (Wilfong, 2008). Wilfong identified repeated reading, listening-while-reading, assisted reading, and modeling as all equally important factors in the Poetry Academy Process. These components were combined to combat the boredom often associated with repeated reading as a single intervention, to take advantage of the ease of implementation and success of listing-while-reading, to take advantage of the one-on-one nature of assisted reading, and to provide modeling of good reading (Wilfong, 2008).

Instruction should be scaffolded (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Nichols, et al. 2009, Wilfong, 2008) Components that offer the most support to students include teacher read aloud or listening while reading. In these components the teacher is modeling automaticity and prosody for students while students listen. The next supportive components may include echo reading and choral reading where students practice fluent reading with strong teacher support. Then partner reading may be the next supportive where teacher and student take turns reading the text and the teacher gives the student more responsibility in reading the text independently. Then, assisted reading may be the next supportive where the student reads to the teacher while the teacher provides support as necessary. Lastly, a student may read the text independently without the teacher's support.

Fluency development is often compared to skill development such as in sports or music development, which suggest that repeated practice leads to fluent reading in the same way that repeated practice or rehearsal leads to improved performance in athletic or musical performance. The repeated practice frees the reader from focusing on a decoding skill and allows the reader to more critically examine the text for meaning. For many beginning teachers this translates into simply providing time for students to read (Nichols et al., 2009).

Assisted and guided repeated reading and parsing of texts (phrase reading) all seem to aid students' comprehension, and speeded recognition of isolated words does not. Therefore, it seems it is more than simply automaticity and accuracy that allow this understanding to develop. Further, the discussion surrounding prosody as a necessary component in children's ability to understand oral language and its role in language acquisition all add to the argument that prosody is equally necessary to developing an understanding of written text. Finally, given that fluent oral reading is considered to be expressive as well as quick and accurate and that prosodic features are, to a large extent, responsible for such expression, it is important to consider a definition of fluency that encompasses more than rate and accuracy (Kuhn and Stahl, 2003).

The Fluency Development Lesson (Nichols et al., 2009) and the Poetry Academy (Wilfong, 2008) both employ the use of short texts (50 to 150 words) to practice fluency. They believe that these short reading passages (poems, rhymes, songs, story segments, or other texts) that students read and reread over a short period of time are quick and do not require as much instructional time as longer passages. Also, mastery of a short passage would cause students to feel confident and successful early in the program, similar to the success that other researchers found in the use of short text in conjunction with fluency development (Wilfong, 2008).

The Poetry Academy and many of Nichol's et al. (2009) instructional approaches included performance of the text as a component. Also, performance of text was a component of Wilfong's program (2008). Students in Wilfong's program improved their reading attitude over the course of the program. Based on these findings, it is possible that performance of text could contribute to increased student motivation towards reading.

Parental involvement in a child's learning development is critical. When parents are involved in the education of their child and if this involvement is utilized effectively, the need for remedial programs in the school could be lessened dramatically (Nichols et al. 2009). In addition, when parents were involved in education teachers are viewed to have better interpersonal and teaching skills, receive higher evaluations by the principal, and manifest greater satisfaction with their job

(Nichols et al., 2009). The Fluency Development Lesson (Nichols et al, 2009), Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI) , (Nichols et al, 2009) , Faststart (Nichols et al, 2009), and Poetry Academy (Wilfong, 2008) include a home -school component. Students take the text that they are practicing at school home with them and read to someone at home. Providing students with varied opportunities to practice and acquire fluency at school and at home will enhance their active participation in the instruction and engage them in reading for multiple purposes (Nichols, et al. 2009).

Nichols, et al., (2009) and Wilfong (2008) provided students with text at their independent/instructional level while Kuhn & Stahl (2003) hold the notion that having children read easy text improves fluency but it seems that the most successful approaches involves children reading instructional-level text or even text at the frustration level with strong support. Kuhn & Stahl also state that Mathes and Fuchs (1993) used both relatively easy and relatively difficult texts and found no effect for text difficulty. Kuhn & Stahl (2003) hold that more directed work needs to be done to assess the effects of the relative difficulty of text on learning.

Also, while Nichols et al., (2009) and Wilfong (2008) seemed to stress guided repeated readings in their instructional approaches, Kuhn and Stahl (2003) say while rereading of text, through assisted reading, repeated reading, or assisted approaches all seem to be effective, it is not clear why they are effective. Specifically it is not clear whether these studies have their effects because of any particular instructional activities or through the general mechanism of increasing the volume of children's reading. Kuhn and Stahl (2003) hold that fluency instruction may work only by increasing the amount of reading children do, relative to traditional instruction. If so, then there may be other approaches that work as well or better. We know that increasing the amount of reading children do will improve their achievement (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988). Repeated readings and assisted readings may enable children to read more difficult material than they might otherwise be able to read or may provide a manageable structure to enable increased amounts of reading. Several studies compared repeated and nonrepeated reading.

Homan, Klesius, and Hite (1993); Mathes and Fuchs (1993); Rashotte and Torgesen (1985); and Van Bon, Bokseveld, Font Tredide and Van den Hurk (1991) found no difference in effects between repeated reading of a small number of texts and non-repetitive reading of a larger set of texts. It is not the repetition that leads to the effect but the amount of time spent reading connected text. Because paired reading does not involve repetition, although assisted reading does, this comparison would be useful in teasing out the effects of repetitive reading (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003).

Wilfong (2008) suggests the use of short humorous texts in fluency instruction. She pointed out that poetry's format is especially suited to struggling or reluctant readers and enhances reading motivation. When selecting poetry she turned to the crude, rude, and funny. She wanted her students to enjoy their time with their volunteer. She noticed that humorous text drew students in and held their attention. She also included a reading attitude component. She assessed students' reading attitude before implementing the poetry academy and after and found a significant change in attitude toward academic reading. This is important because, historically, struggling readers tend to feel more negatively toward reading in school. It makes sense that when students are comfortable and feel successful in a task, they are more likely to enjoy engaging in it. The Poetry Academy helped students create that comfort and success toward academic reading (Wilfong, 2008).

Summary. Fluency instruction is reading written text with accuracy, automaticity, and prosody that ultimately leads to comprehension. Fluency instruction is most beneficial to students in Chall's (1996b) Stage 2 of Reading. Best practice includes modeling in which the student is exposed to fluent expressive reading that helps ensure comprehension. Through scaffolded repeated exposures to a variety and wealth of text, students begin to recognize orthographic patterns in words, experience various components of language, enhance their sight word vocabulary, develop a quick and effortless ability to recognize words, and free up attention for higher levels of comprehension (Nichols et al., 2009) Scaffolding can be provided through

components of instruction such as teacher read aloud, listening-while-reading, echo reading, choral reading, partner reading, assisted reading, repeated reading, and independent reading. Effective instructional approaches such as the Poetry Academy, Paired Repeated Reading, The Oral Recitation Lesson (ORL), Fluency Development Lesson (FDL), Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI), Phrase Reading, and Fast Start include many of these components.

The use of short (50 to 150 word) passages (poems, rhymes, songs, story segments, or other texts) to practice fluency are beneficial to students since they can be reread by students over a short period of time (Nichols et al, 2009; Wilfong 2008). Also including performance of text and a home-school component in fluency instruction is beneficial (Nichols et al., 2009, Wilfong, 2008). More research needs to be done on what level of text is most effective for students to read to develop fluency. Nichols et al. (2009) and Wilfong (2008) used text at an independent or instructional level while Kuhn and Stahl claim that text could also be at the instructional/frustrational level if students are given appropriate scaffolding. Also Kuhn and Stahl (2003) claim that it is not clear whether it is rereading of text or volume of reading that promotes fluency. More research needs to be done in this area.

How Parents Can Incorporate Reading Fluency Practices into their Daily Home Routine

Parental involvement in a child's learning development is critical. However, in order to utilize parents as effective tutors in teaching fluency, clear specification of objectives and communication between the teachers and the parents are essential. The following methods of instruction go beyond repeated readings to also include other varied instructional activities. Practice is essential for acquisition of fluency; however, varied instructional activities have been shown to maintain students' active engagement in learning tasks and provide stronger connections to reading comprehension. Continual reliance on repeated readings without appropriate guidance and support can lead to diminished student engagement and may not help students recognize that increased fluency provides for more focus on meaning. Providing students with varied opportunities to practice and acquire fluency will enhance their active participation in

the instruction and engage them in reading for multiple purposes. In the following sections , instructional methods are described that go beyond unassisted and unguided student reading practice. (Nichols et al., 2009).

Phonemic Awareness. Phonemic awareness is one of the five pillars of reading and there are ways parents can help develop this critical awareness (NRP, 2000). Most children can develop phonemic awareness through opportunities to play with the sounds of language-to hear sounds, make sounds, and manipulate sounds in an engaging and metacognitive manner. For many children, rhymes, chants, and poems provide the sort of oral texts to promote phonemic awareness. When children hear and recite, “Diddle diddle dumpling my son John,” followed by “Dickery dickery dare, the pig flew up in the air,” it provides an opportunity to explore the sound of the letter “d” in a way that is engaging and fun. Moreover when the rhymes are read to them from a book, children have the opportunity to begin the match written words to their spoken equivalents. Thus they begin to acquire a sight vocabulary and take important beginning steps toward understanding how sounds and symbols work in reading (Rasinski, 2003).

One way to promote reading fluency and help students learn nursery rhymes is to provide parents with locally-made books of nursery rhymes and assistance in using them with their children. When four-year-olds visit their school for the first time before attending kindergarten, they and their parents might leave with a nursery rhyme book as a gift from the school along with directions for parents about how to use the book with their children (Rasinski, 2003).

Nursery rhymes are public domain material (not copyrighted), so anyone can copy them without violating copyright law. Schools and teachers, then, can easily put together collections of favorite rhymes in simple stapled books that are essentially cost free. Rasinski (2003) suggests that if parents spend 15 minutes per day over the summer preceding children’s entrance into kindergarten, it is very likely that the level of phonemic awareness in the children will rise considerably, print concept knowledge will increase, and children will be much more ready to learn to read once the school year begins .

National and International studies have demonstrated the relationship between wide reading and student achievement (NAEP, 2001). Some schools have developed school-wide programs to encourage home reading. One intriguing program challenges the entire student body of a school to read 100,000 minutes over the course of a school year (Baumann, 1995; O'Masta & Wolf, 1991; Shanahan, Wojcechowski, & Rubik, 1998). This can be done if every student reads 20 minutes per day or is read to for this amount of time (Rasinski, 2003).

If done at the classroom level the program could involve a 100,000 minute challenge. If a class of 25 students read (or was read to) 20 minutes per day, six days a week, for 35 weeks of school, the entire classroom will have read 105,00 minutes (Rasinski, 2003)!

The 100,000 Minute Challenge is very simple. Students take home a log sheet every Monday in which they record the daily number of minutes they read over the coming week. Parents sign off on the sheet to verify their child's reading, and the log is returned the following Monday and replaced with a fresh log sheet for the coming week. A parent volunteer tallies the cumulative number of minutes read by student, by classroom, by grade level, and by school. Signage posted in the lobby of the school indicates the ever-growing number of minutes read by the entire school and by grade levels. Prizes are often awarded when predesignated benchmarks (e.g., every 100,000 minutes) are achieved by the school or grade level. Awards are also given at the end of the year to the highest achieving students and classrooms (Rasinski, 2003). The program works to the extent that it has the enthusiastic participation of teachers and parents. Small groups of parents run the mechanics of the program, but the heart of the program-whether children will actually read or not is largely up to the encouragement and support of teachers and parents.

Assisted Reading. This is a simple yet effective intervention that can be used at school or at home when a child is reading with a parent or other helper at home. In this instructional routine, the student reads aloud while a more experienced or accomplished reader follows along silently. If the student commits a reading error or pauses at an unknown word for about three seconds the helping reader corrects the student error.

Many teachers, when working with stage 2 readers working on fluency development, tell the reader to sound out the unknown word. Nichols et al (2003) state that if the reader was a stage 1 reader who was trying to develop stronger phonetic analysis skills then this would be an appropriate suggestion, depending on the word and the child's strategy knowledge for decoding. However, for the stage 2 reader who is working on developing fluency, it is more appropriate for the partner to simply provide the word for the struggling reader. Steps in implementing Assisted Reading are as follows:

1. Find a quiet location where both the student and the helping reader can both view a copy of the text.
2. Instruct the student to begin reading orally using his or her best "reading voice."
3. Parent should follow along silently in the text as the student reads.
4. If the student mispronounces a word or pauses for longer than five seconds provide the word for the student. The student should repeat the word correctly and then continue reading the passage aloud.
5. The reading helper should recognize when the reader is reading fluently by praising when the student reads with expression and in a smooth conversational manner (Nichols, et al., 2009).

Fluency Development Lesson (FDL). The FDL originated from the Oral Recitation Lesson but uses relatively short reading passages (poems, rhymes, songs, story segments, or other texts) that students can read and reread over a short period of time. The format for lesson follows a routine of the teacher taking responsibility for reading the daily passage and gradually shifting responsibility for the reading to the students:

1. The teacher introduces a new short text and reads it to the students two or three times while the students follow along silently. The text can be a poem, a segment from a basal passage, trade book selection, and so on.

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

The instructional routine then begins again with step number one using a new passage (Nichols, et al., 2009).

Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction. Another approach that builds on the Oral Recitation Lesson is Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI). FORI was developed to work with basal readers and whole class reading programs. The procedure consists of three components including redesigned basal reading lessons, a home reading program, and a daily

free choice reading period. FORI, while a fluency approach, places an initial emphasis on comprehension of the text. The procedures are:

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

6. **Free-Choice Reading:** To make sure that students have wide reading experiences students are also encouraged to read a variety of books on their own. 20 minutes a day is set aside for independent, self-selected reading (Nichols et al., 2009).

Fast Start. Fast Start (Rasinski, 2005), which has shown positive results with first-grade populations, involves a 10-15 minute daily lesson that involves parents in reading a brief text to and with their children repeatedly. The steps for Fast Start are as follows:

1. Parent and child sit together. The parent draws the child's attention to the text by pointing to the appropriate lines and words.
2. Parent reads the text to the child several times until the child is familiar with the passage. Parent and child discuss the content of the passage.
3. Parent and child simultaneously read the passage together. The passage is read several times until the child feels comfortable with reading the passage alone.
4. The child reads the text alone with the parent providing backup or shadow reading support. The text is again read several times.
5. The parent engages in the word study activities, requiring the parent and child to choose words from the text that are of interest, or choose words from the word lists in their packets. The words are printed on cards and added to cards from previous days. This word bank is used for word practice, sentence building, word sorts, and other informal word games and activities (Nichols et al., 2009).

Poetry Academy. As discussed above at length, mastery of a short poem could help students to feel confident and successful early on in the program, similar to the success other researchers found in the use of short texts conjunction with fluency development (Rasinski, Padak, Linek, and Sturtevant, 1994) The Poetry Academy uses short poems to bring humor and pleasure to struggling readers while encouraging them to read smoothly and fluently. Community volunteers were very important to the success of this home-school literacy intervention. The following are the instructional steps for this strategy:

1. The volunteer reads a new poem to the student.
2. The student reads the poem with the volunteer (listening-while-reading and assisted reading)
3. The student reads the poem to the volunteer. (Repeated Reading)
4. The student reads the poem to people at home, gathering signatures as proof.
5. The student reads the poem one last time to the volunteer to prove mastery (Wilfong, 2008).

Reader's theater. There are many ways of performing reader's theater, and all kinds of materials can be used such as books, websites devoted to reader's theaters, book-based scripts (esp. fairy tales and folk tales), poetry, and famous speeches. Books with a lot of dialogue work well to adapt to reader's theater. It is also helpful to use books from a series to capitalize on familiar plot structures, language, and characters.

Texts chosen for performance should not be above readers' instructional levels. With initial support from the teacher, students can and should write their own scripts for reader's theater. Sometimes student scripts are more creative than teacher-created scripts (Worthy & Prater, 2002).

It is important that students practice until they can read their parts fluently. Ample rehearsal time makes the difference for struggling readers in any kind of performance (Worthy & Prater, 2002). To begin, give each student a copy of the script, and read it aloud as you would any other piece of literature. Before, during, and after your read aloud, discuss the plot. Then do an echo read, and a choral read of the script to involve the entire class. Once the class has had enough practice, choose students to read the various parts. Put together a few simple props and costumes, and invite other classes to attend the performance. For the presentation, have readers stand, or sit on stools, in front of the room and face the audience. Position them in order of each character's importance. Encourage students to make eye contact with the audience and one another before they read. Once they start, they should hold their scripts at chest level to avoid hiding their faces, and look out at the audience periodically. After the performance, have students state their names and the part they read. You might also want to videotape the performance so that you can review

it with students later. In doing so, you will show them that they are, indeed, fluent readers (Blau, 2001).

Some struggling readers or reserved students may not want to perform in front a group initially, but most lose their fear with opportunities to practice a script with a teacher, tutor, or friends in a safe atmosphere. A script with students parts highlighted can be sent home and practiced with parents or other family members. Students can plan, practice, and perform new texts as often as every week. It is important to remember that, as in all group and independent work, students and teachers will need time to plan and establish routines and appropriate behavior. It may take several weeks of explaining, role modeling, and guided practice before such activities run smoothly. As students learn what is needed to prepare for a successful performance, they are motivated to work and practice together productively. This allows the teacher to move from group to group, listening and offering instruction and feedback as students practice (Worthy & Prater, 2002).

Methodology

The methodology chapter includes sections to provide the purpose of this project and to explain the professional development I created to help educators and schools collaborate to improve student reading fluency. The following subsections are included along with specific details relating to each one: the project design, setting, procedures, tools for data collection, and a description of data analysis.

Project Design

A variety of references from several different sources were used to write the literature review. The book, *Beyond the Bake Sale*, and several peer-reviewed articles that I found in electronic databases such as EBSCO, ERIC, and Wilson provided the information that was the foundation of the literature review. There were a handful of other references that were from the reference lists of the articles I read. Most of my references and sources for my professional development plan came from my literature review.

Setting

This professional development project will support educators in grades kindergarten through fifth grade with methods for helping students improve their reading fluency. Some of the fluency lessons are suited for primarily large group, while others may be more suitable for small groups or partners. Students will need access to teacher support, parent support, and sometimes peer support.

Procedures

I learned about parent collaboration and effective fluency practices in my graduate classes and created class presentations in these areas. I discussed effective fluency practices with our school's instructional coach. After reading our school's improvement plan, I learned that one of them is to improve student reading fluency. This professional development plan aligns with our school improvement goal.

Tools Used for Data Collection

The procedures I used to collect data included searching for data via electronic databases such as: ERIC, Education Full Text, Academic OneFile, and Academic Search Elite. I also read the book, *Beyond the Bake Sale*. Also reviewed were articles read in previous graduate classes that related to my project.

Description of Data Analysis

To determine which articles and information to include in my project, I followed a process. To begin, I made an outline of the information I wanted to include in the professional development with an emphasis on parent school collaboration and best practices in fluency instruction. With this in mind, I read articles related to parent school collaboration and best practices in fluency. I highlighted information that was important to include in my project. Also reviewed were powerpoints and handouts I had created in my graduate classes related to these topics. I synthesized this information into the project format.

The Project

The professional development project was created based on the literature findings and may be referred to as Fluency and Parent Collaboration Professional Development (FPCPD). FPCPD is outlined in this section. First, the target audience and purpose of the project are stated. Next the goals, necessary resources, assessment, and evaluation are included. Finally, each session of the professional development plan is detailed for a deeper understanding of the project.

Audience

This project is directed toward elementary school educators who would like to collaborate with parents to improve their students' reading fluency.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to provide professional development on how elementary educators can collaborate with parents to improve students' reading fluency.

Goals

The professional development goals are as follows:

- Teach staff about building effective relationships with parents and how they can collaborate with parents to implement fluency practice with their child in the home.
- Increase student achievement scores on formative and summative district assessments.
- Give staff time and support as they begin to collaborate with parents to implement fluency practices in the home.
- Provide staff with the guiding principals of working with parents and best practices in fluency instruction.
- As a result of educator and parent collaboration, parents will become more effective with supporting their child's literacy development.

Currently Used Instructional Materials and Approaches

Currently used instructional materials and approaches include (a) Macmillan McGraw-Hill Treasures Reading and Language Arts Program (Bear, 2007) (b) variety of different literacy center approaches (c) Wise Owl Reading Program (1st Grade) (d) Scholastic Reading Counts (Scholastic, Inc., 2013), (e) Benchmark Assessment System 1 and 2 (Fountas and Pinnell, 2010) and (f) Staff survey about other approaches already in use.

Professional Resources

One copy of *Beyond the Bake Sale* (2007) will be purchased for each staff member and all grade level teams will read chapters of the book and discuss chapters during the school in-service.

In-Service and Workshops

Session One of the in-services will focus on important points regarding working with parents from the book *Beyond the Bake Sale*. Session Two of the in-services will focus on reading fluency. Session Three will focus on how educators and parents can collaborate to implement reading fluency practices in the home.

Self Assessment/Peer Coaching/Mentoring During Professional Development

Coaching cues and prompts will be used as needed during the professional development to scaffold instruction and make learning as meaningful and responsive as possible for staff during the in-service. I will make informal observations during professional development. Small group or one on one help will be available to anyone who needs more support. Staff may also request demonstration lessons if they would like someone to model how to implement the fluency practices in their classroom. After each professional development session staff will complete a feedback form so I can assess the staff's response to the new material and make adjustments to instruction as needed.

Following Professional Development

Staff will work in grade level teams to create a plan of action for collaborating with parents to implement fluency instruction at home. I will honor staff requests for support in working together

with parents to implement fluency instruction in the home. Staff may e-mail requests for support and plans will be made to address requests.

Professional Development Folder

The folder will be located on our staff-shared computer drive and will include (a) notes from previous professional development sessions including video links (b) references of professional resources (c) commonly asked questions and answers, and (d) staff submissions in which staff can share ideas/feedback/resources for other staff to read and use.

Student Outcomes

The pre and post Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment (Fountas & Pinnell, 2010) will be used to determine student fluency outcomes.

Evaluation

A variety of methods will be used to evaluate FPCPD. This will include (a) feedback from staff about their understanding of how to collaborate with parents to provide fluency instruction in the home (b) surveys from staff about their comfort level with implementing the fluency plan, and (c) comparison of pre and post Fountas and Pinnell Assessments.

Estimated Budget

Estimated costs include (a) professional reading materials-\$800 (b) duplicating printed materials-\$100 (c) other materials needed for inservice days-\$200, and (d) supplementary classroom literature and materials-\$1000. The estimated total cost to implement the professional development plan is \$2,100.

Sessions

This section contains the agenda for the three sessions of the professional development. Session one focuses on *Working Together with Parent*. Session two focuses on *Effective Practices in Fluency Instruction* and Session three focuses on *How to Collaborate with Parents to Implement Best Practices in Fluency Instruction*.

Timeline

This project will be implemented over a course of 5 months with inservices being implemented every 8 weeks within this time.

Session 1

Working Together with Parents: A *Brief introduction to PD (5 minutes)*, *Complete Presurvey, (20 minutes)*, *Jigsaw Discussion on Beyond the Bake Sale (30 minutes)*, *Session 1 Powerpoint Presentation (20 minutes)*, *Partnership Quiz (10 minutes)*, *Small Group Discussion (25 minutes)*, *PD Question and Answers (10 minutes)*, *PD Feedback Form (5 minutes)*

Materials

- Session 1 Agenda (See Appendix A)
- Staff Pre-Survey (See Appendix B)
- Session 1 Powerpoint (See Appendix C)
- Partnership Quiz (See Appendix D)
- Professional Development Feedback Form (See Appendix F)
- Beyond the Bake Sale Book (one copy for each staff member)
- Chart Paper and Markers for Each Group

Welcome staff and explain that the subsequent professional development sessions will focus on the area of educators and parents collaborating to improve student reading fluency, one of our school improvement goals. First, information will need to be gathered from the staff during the session. Staff will complete the pre-survey about working with parents, fluency instruction in the classroom, and collaborating with parents to implement fluency instruction in the home. Staff will have jigsaw discussion in small groups over Chapters 1-5 of the book *Beyond the Bake Sale*. Each group will record on chart paper 3 key points they would like to share from their assigned chapter. Spokesperson from each group shares out 3-5 key points with staff. Next staff will watch the powerpoint presentation on working with parents from *Beyond the Bake Sale (2007)*. Staff will be

given time to take the partnership quiz, complete core beliefs, and time to discuss chapters in small groups. Last of all, staff will have time to ask questions about the new professional development plan and complete the feedback form.

Professional Development Team

Analyze the pre-survey results and partnership quiz results and share summary of results with staff through email.

Session 2

Best Practices in Fluency Instruction: *Welcome/Review (10 minutes), Quickwrite (10 minutes) Powerpoint presentation on best practices in fluency instruction (20 minutes), 3-2-1 activity (10 minutes), Small group discussion over best practices in fluency instruction (15 minutes), Whole Group Discussion on best practices in fluency instruction (15 minutes) PD feedback form (5 minutes)*

Materials

- Session 2 Professional Development Agenda (See Appendix G)
- Best Practices in Fluency Instruction Powerpoint (See Appendix H)
- Best Practices in Fluency at a Glance (Appendix I)
- 3-2-1 Form (See Appendix L)
- Feedback Form (See Appendix F)

Session Two of the inservices will focus on *Best Practices in Fluency Instruction* and this phase will be implemented 8 weeks after Session 1. First, there will be a brief welcome and review of main points from Session 1. Then staff will complete a quickwrite on current fluency instruction in their classroom. The powerpoint on best practices in fluency instruction and Best Practices in Fluency at a Glance Handout will be shared. Following the presentation, staff will complete a 3-2-1 reflection which includes writing 3 ideas they had about fluency instruction that were reinforced, 2 reasons to include fluency instruction in their classroom, and 1 new thing they

might try. Staff will be given small group discussion time in which they can discuss their 3-2-1 reflections. Then, volunteers can share thoughts with the whole group. Finally, staff will complete the Professional Development Feedback Form.

Professional Development Team

Analyze feedback forms and email comments from the feedback forms to staff. Distribute fluency handout to staff and email request for staff to read this article and come prepared to discuss the article at the next inservice. Explain to staff that as they read the article, they should consider which fluency strategies they might like to implement in their classroom.

Session 3

How to Collaborate with Parents to Implement Best Practices in Fluency Introduction.

Welcome/Review (10 minutes), Grade level team discussion over fluency handout (45 minutes), Share out session (20 minutes), PD feedback form (5 minutes)

Materials

- Session 3 Professional Development Agenda (See Appendix J)
- Fluency Handout (See Appendix K)
- PD Feedback Form (See Appendix F)

Session 3 will be implemented 8 weeks after Session 2. Welcome staff and review main points from the Session 2 Inservice. Staff was asked to read the fluency handout and will work in grade level teams to discuss which fluency strategy they are going to try, how they will share and teach the strategy to parents, and how they will follow up with parents on implementation of the fluency strategy. Staff shares out with the rest of the staff which fluency routine they plan to try, how they will share and teach the fluency strategy to parents, and how they will follow up with parents on implementation of the strategy. Finally, staff completes the professional development feedback form.

The plan will be implemented the following school year and surveys will be administered mid-year and at the end of the school year to get feedback on how implementation is going.

Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessment data will be collected in the winter and spring and compared to the fall data to determine if student achievement in the areas of fluency improved.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to answer my primary question, “How can educators collaborate with parents to support students’ literacy development through implementation of fluency instruction in the home?” First, I will summarize how educators can do this by building strong partnerships with parents and collaborating with parents to implement effective fluency practices. Next, I will explain the limitations of the project, and lastly, I will make recommendations for teaching practices based on my findings though my work with this project.

How Can Educators Build Strong Partnerships with Parents?

Through this project, educators can learn steps they can take to build strong partnerships with parents. First the school staff can identify what type of partnership their school has with parents and discuss the core beliefs that are essential for collaborating successfully with parents (Henderson et al., 2007) . In addition, educators can learn that clear specification of objectives and communication between the teachers and the parents are key.

How Can Educators Collaborate with Parents to Implement Effective Fluency Practices?

Through this project, educators can learn how to collaborate with parents to implement effective fluency practices. They can do this by studying research based-fluency practices and working with parents to implement at least one of these fluency practices. Fluency instruction is most beneficial in Chall’s Stage 2 of Reading, with teacher modeling of fluent reading, and scaffolded repeated exposures to a variety and a wealth of text. It is beneficial when students are given opportunities for performance of text and when a home-school component is included. Some fluency routines that include many of these components and that educators could collaborate with parents to implement are: a) Assisted Reading b)Fluency Development Lesson (FDL) c)Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI), d) Fast Start, e) Poetry Academy, and f) Reader’s Theater.

Limitations

One limitation with this project is that more research needs to be done to clarify whether repeated reading of text or amount of text read leads to greater improvements with reading fluency.

Recommendations

It is important that educators are lifelong learners always striving to improve their practice and have greater influence on students' learning. I recommend that educators use the information and research based-teaching practices from this professional development plan to collaborate with parents to improve students' reading fluency. Fluency is one of the five pillars of literacy and is a skill that will aid students in their academic and career pursuits. It is educators' and parents' role to support students' with their fluency development so they can become literate individuals who can achieve their career aspirations and improve their quality of life.

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Appendix A

Session 1 Staff Professional Development Agenda

Appendix B

Staff Survey

Staff Survey

Dear Staff member,

The purpose of this survey is to learn more about our staff's current level of collaboration with parents and implementation of fluency instruction. Please be honest. We will use this information to inform our instructional decision-making for professional development in the next year.

Sincerely,
Jackie McDermott

Grade Level: K 1 2 3 4 5

On a 1-5 scale (5 being very comfortable) please rate your comfort level with the following:

I currently collaborate with parents to implement fluency practice in the home.

1 2 3 4 5

I know the best practices of fluency instruction that are supported by research.

1 2 3 4 5

I implement best practices of fluency instruction in my classroom.

1 2 3 4 5

I work with parents to support implementation of fluency practices in the home.

1 2 3 4 5

Appendix C

Session 1 Beyond the Bake Sale Powerpoint Presentation



Purpose

- Build Connections with hard to reach parents to support student's literacy development
- Personal motivation for this topic.

Statistics

- Studies show beyond dispute that children's achievements in school improve with increased parent involvement in education. (Henderson, 1998)

Four Versions of Partnership

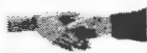
- What type of partnership is your school?
- Mostly A's = Partnership School
- Mostly B's = Open-Door School
- Mostly C's = Come-if-We-Call School
- Mostly D's = Fortress School

(Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davis, 2007)

Partnership School

- All families and communities have something great to offer- we do whatever it takes to work closely together to make sure every single student succeeds.


(Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davis, 2007)



Open-Door School

- Parents can be involved at our school in many ways- we're working hard to get an even bigger turnout for activities. When we ask the community to help, people often respond.


(Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davis, 2007)



Come-if-We-Call School

- Parents are welcome when we ask them, but there's only so much they can offer. The most important thing they can do is help their kids at home. We know where to get help in the community if we need it.

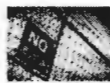
(Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davis, 2007)



Fortress School

- Parents belong at home, not at school. If students don't do well, it's because their families don't give them enough support. We're already doing all we can. Our school is an oasis in a troubled community. We want to keep it that way.

(Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davis, 2007)



- We all would like to work in a Partnership school.
- In order to achieve that, all educators need to not only be aware, but believe in the 4 core beliefs.

| | |
|---|---|
| Core Belief 1: All parents have discerns for their children and want the best for them. | Core Belief 2: All parents have the capacity to support their children's learning. |
| Core Belief 3: Parents and school staff should be equal partners. | Core Belief 4: The responsibility for building partnerships between school and home rests primarily with the school staff, especially school leaders. |

(Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davis, 2007)

Core Belief #1: All parents have dreams for their children and want the best for them.

Strategies

- If parents are not available, find a family friend to help. (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davis, 2007)
- Why is this important in the "big picture"? (Eccles & Harold, 1992)
- Ask parents about their goals for their students. (White, Clark & Decker, 1999)

Examples:
Newsletter, goal setting at conferences.

Core Belief #2: All parents have the capacity to support their children's learning

Strategies:

- Ask for parents funds of knowledge and connect it to classroom curriculum. (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davis, 2007)
- Show parents the school's expectations of them. (Henderson, 1998)
- Show parents ways to support at school and home. (Anderson, 1996)

Examples:
Compact, conference questions, webpage activities, book bags.

Core Belief #3: Parents and school staff should be equal partners.

Strategies:

- Consult groups of parents, not just PTO. (Henderson, 1998)
- Ask what they need to be able to help their children. (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson & Davis, 2007)
- Try to involve all groups in school and classroom decision making. (Eccles & Harold, 1992)

Examples:
Compact, beginning of the year survey, title parent committee.

Core Belief #4 The responsibility for building partnerships between school and home rest primarily with the school.

Strategies:

- Looking out the window vs. in the mirror. (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davis, 2007)
- Provide multiple ways of contact. (Aronson, 1996)
- Allow for convenient meeting or communication time. (Aronson, 1996)

Example:
Provide transportation, positive informal notes home, open house, parent teacher conferences, Literacy nights

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Appendix D

Partnership Quiz

How Would You Describe Your School?

Partnership, Open-Door School, Come-if-We-Call, or Fortress School

Building Relationships

- A: Activities honor families' contributions.
- B: Teachers contact families once a year.
- C: Better-educated parents are more involved.
- D: Families do not "bother" school staff.

Linking to Learning

- A: All family activities connect to what students are learning.
- B: School holds curriculum nights three or four times a year.
- C: Parents are told what students will be learning at the fall open house.
- D: If parents want more information, they can ask for it.

Addressing Differences

- A: Multicultural nights are held once a year.
- B: Teachers use books and materials about families' cultures.
- C: "Those parents need to learn English"
- D: "Parents can bring a translator with them"

Supporting Advocacy

- A: Student-led parent-teacher conferences are held three times a year for thirty minutes.
- B: Parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year.
- C: Families visit school on report card pickup day and can see a teacher if they call first.
- D: Parents don't come to conferences.

Sharing Power

- A: Parents can raise issues at PTA meetings or see the principal.
- B: Parents group is focused on improving student achievement.
- C: Principal picks a small group of "cooperative parents" to help out.
- D: Principal sets agenda for parent meetings.

(Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davis, 2007)

Appendix E

Core Beliefs

The 4 Core Beliefs- Beyond the Bake Sale

(Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davis, 2007)

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Core Belief 1: All parents have dreams for their children and want the best for them</p> <p><u>Examples:</u></p> | <p>Core Belief 2: All parents have the capacity to support their children's learning</p> <p><u>Examples:</u></p> |
| <p>Core Belief 3: Parents and school staff should be equal partners</p> <p><u>Examples:</u></p> | <p>The responsibility for building partnerships between school and home rests primarily with the school staff, especially school leaders.</p> <p><u>Examples:</u></p> |

Appendix F

PD Feedback Form

Staff Professional Development Feedback

| + | - |
|---|---|
| | |

Parking Lot:

Appendix G

Session 2 Professional Development Agenda

Staff Professional Development Agenda-Session 2

Best Practices in Fluency Instruction

- 8:00-8:10 Welcome/Review
- 8:20-8:30 Staff completes a quickwrite on current fluency instruction in their classroom.
- 8:30-8:50 Best Practices in Fluency Instruction Powerpoint w/ At a Glance Handout.
- 8:50-9:00 Staff completes a 3-2-1 over powerpoint.
- 3-ideas about fluency instruction that were reinforced
- 2-reasons to include fluency instruction in your classroom.
- 1-new thing you might try
- 9:00-9:15 Staff shares their 3-2-1's in small groups.
- 9:15-9:30 Volunteers can share out with all staff and staff completes +/- feedback.
- 9:30-9:35 PD Feedback Form

Appendix H

Best Practices in Fluency Instruction Powerpoint



Fluency is a gateway to comprehension

"The ability to understand and react to ideas expressed in writing is the essence of reading, and therefore, the ultimate goal of reading is comprehension and learning from text. It is important for teachers to understand how fluency is the essential component that nurtures and brings about this capability. (Nicholas Rupley, Rasinski, 2009)."

Five Pillars of Reading

Fluency is identified as one of the five pillars of reading, which are:

1. Phonemic awareness
2. Phonics
3. **Fluency**
4. Vocabulary
5. Comprehension

Fluency includes the following components:

- Accuracy in decoding
- Automaticity in word recognition
- Appropriate use of prosodic features such as stress, pitch, and appropriate phrasing.

Chall's Stages of Reading

Stage 1-Pre-Reading/Phonemic Awareness
Stage 2-Phonics
Stage 3-Fluently Reading and Comprehension
Stage 4-Reading to Learn

Readers can fluctuate between stages

Readers often share attributes of multiple stages depending on:

- *Text type
- *Text level
- *Familiarity with the content of the text

Suggested Practices

- Provide a student a high-contrast font (font in 12 or 14 pts) & El (Reading) Fluency and Comprehension (2011) 4th grade 5th grade or 6th grade students who struggle with reading fluency.
- Texts should be at easy or instructional level
- Model fluent reading frequently
- Scaffolded repeated exposures to a variety and wealth of connected text
- Ask questions and discuss reading to emphasize reading for meaning.

Connected Text should be used

- "Assisted and guided repeated reading (and rereading of texts (phrase reading) or listen to the learners' comprehension, and speeded recognition of isolated words does not (Kuhn, and Stahl, 2003)."

Teachers as Coaches

• "Recent developments in music pedagogy have revealed evidence of the effectiveness of these interventions which suggest that repeated practice (especially repeated practice) is essential for improved performance in artistic or musical performance... having a coach directly working with you, modeling the desired outcome and providing scaffolded practice is better than just practicing on your own (Nichols, et al., 2009)."

Fluency can be provided through instructional components such as:

- Teacher read aloud
- Listening while reading
- Echo reading
- Choral reading
- Partner reading
- Assisted reading
- Independent reading

Text Types

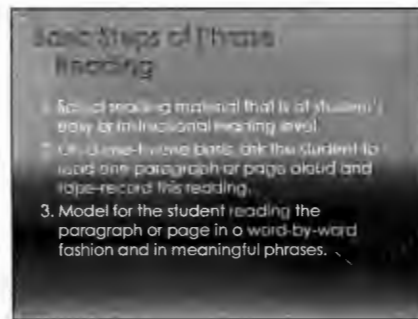
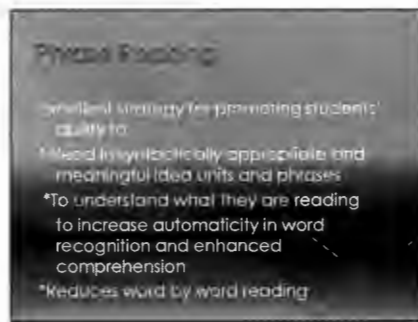
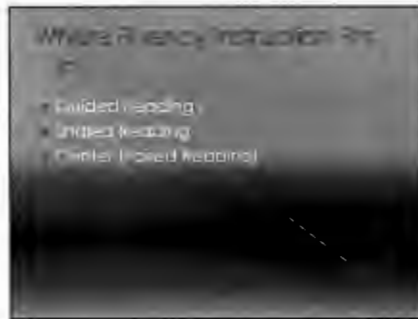
- Variety and width of text
- Short (50-150 words) passages can be mastered by students over a short period of time
- Poems, rhymes, songs, story segments work well
- Reader's Theater

Suggestions for motivating students

- Variety and width of text
- Use variety of instructional components
- Give students opportunity to read or perform text for audience

Home-School Component





Basic Steps in Phrase Reading
Cont'd.

4. Using a pencil, you may want to re-write the material (e.g., words of meaning), divide the text into sentences, into meaningful phrases, and then methodically reproduce the reading material by typing it in phrases in a vertical column.
5. Divide the rest of the sentences into meaningful phrases with both you and the student explaining how a sentence should be divided.

Basic Steps of Phrase Reading
Cont'd.

6. Have the student read the text aloud in meaningful phrases (word-free lines) you may want to read the phrases aloud with the student.
7. Tape the last trial reading and compare the tape with the initial reading of the text.
8. Discuss with the student the benefits of reading sentences in meaningful phrases as opposed to word-by-word reading.

Providing Opportunities to Practice

"Providing students with several opportunities to practice and acquire fluency at school and at home will enhance their active participation in the instruction and engage them in reading for multiple purposes. (Nichols, et al. 2009)"

References

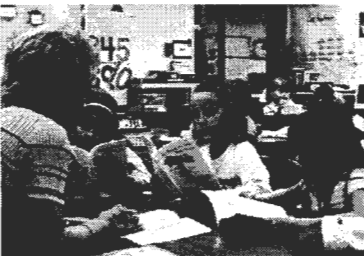
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Wilson, L. G. (2008). Building Fluency, word recognition ability and confidence in struggling readers. *The Poetry Academy, The Reading Teacher, 62*(1), 4-13.

Appendix I

Best Practices in Fluency At a Glance

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Fluency is a gateway to comprehension “The ability to understand and react to ideas expressed in writing is the essence of reading, and if we accept that the ultimate goal of reading is comprehension and learning from text, it is important for teachers to understand how fluency is the essential component that nurtures and brings about this capability (Nichols, Rupley, Rasinski, 2009).”</p> | <p>Five Pillars of Reading: 1. Phonemic awareness 2. Phonics 3. Fluency 4. Vocabulary 5. Comprehension</p> | <p>Fluency includes the following components: 1. Accuracy in decoding 2. Automaticity in word recognition 3. Appropriate use of prosodic features such as stress, pitch, and appropriate phrasing</p> |
| <p>Suggested Practices: 1. Fluency instruction is most beneficial to students in Chall’s Stage 2 of Reading: Fluency and Comprehension (Late first grade-3rd grade or older students who struggle with reading fluency). 2. Texts should be at easy or instructional level. 3. Model fluent reading frequently 4. Scaffolded repeated exposures to a variety and wealth of connected text 5. Ask questions and discuss reading to emphasize reading for meaning. 6. Give students opportunity to read or perform text for audience 7. Home-school component</p> | <p>Best Practices in Fluency Instruction By: Jackie McDermott</p>  | <p>Phrase Reading 1. Select reading material that is at student’s easy or instructional reading level. 2. Tape record first oral reading of text 3. Model reading the paragraph or page in a word-by-word fashion and in meaningful phrases and discuss what the text is about. 5. Write phrases from text on sentence strips and practice reading phrases 6. Practice reading text 7. Tape record oral reading a second time and compare to first reading. 8. Discuss importance of reading in phrases compared to word by word</p> |
| <p>Text Types: *Variety and wealth of text *Short (50-150 words) passages can be reread by students over a short period of time. *Poems, rhymes, songs, story segments work well *Reader’s Theater</p> | <p>Instructional Components listed from most to least support: *Teacher read aloud *Listening-while-reading *Echo reading *Choral reading * Partner reading *Assisted reading *Independent reading</p> | <p>References: Kuhn, M.R. & Stahl, S.A. (2003) Fluency: A Review of Developmental and Remedial Practices. <i>Journal of Educational Psychology</i>, 95 (1), 3-21 Nichols, W.D. , Rupley, W.H., Rasinski, T. (2009) Fluency in Learning to Reading for Meaning: Going Beyond Repeated Readings. <i>Literacy Research and Instruction</i>, 48: 1-13. Wilfong, L.G. (2008) Building Fluency, word recognition ability and confidence in struggling readers: The Poetry Academy. <i>The Reading Teacher</i>, 62(1), 4-13.</p> |

Appendix J

Session 3 Staff Professional Development Agenda

Staff Professional Development Agenda-Session 3

How to Collaborate with Parents to Implement Best Practices in Fluency Instruction

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 8:00-8:10 | Welcome/Review |
| 8:10-8:55 | Staff work in grade level teams to discuss which fluency routines they would like to implement in their classrooms, how they will share and teach strategies to parents, and how they will follow up with parents on implementation. |
| 8:55-9:15 | Spokesperson shares out for each grade level team about which fluency routine they would like to implement next school year, how they might share and teach strategy to parents, and follow up with parents. |
| 9:15-9:20 | PD Feedback Form |

Appendix K

Fluency Handout

Research-based Methods for Effective Fluency Instruction

Phonemic Awareness. Phonemic awareness is one of the five pillars of reading (NRP, 2000) and there are ways parents can help develop this critical awareness. Most children can develop phonemic awareness through opportunities to play with the sounds of language—to hear sounds, make sounds, and manipulate sounds in an engaging and metacognitive manner. For many children, rhymes, chants, and poems provide the sort of oral texts to promote phonemic awareness. When children hear and recite, “Diddle diddle dumpling my son John,” followed by “Dickery dickery dare, the pig flew up in the air,” it provides an opportunity to explore the sound of the letter “d” in a way that is engaging and fun. Moreover when the rhymes are read to them from a book, children have the opportunity to begin the match written words to their spoken equivalents. Thus they begin to acquire a sight vocabulary and take important beginning steps toward understanding how sounds and symbols work in reading (Rasinski, 2003).

One way to promote reading fluency and help students learn nursery rhymes is for schools to provide parents with locally-made books of nursery rhymes and assistance in using them with their children. When four-year-olds visit their school for the first time before attending kindergarten, they and their parents might leave with a nursery rhyme book as a gift from the school along with directions for parents about how to use the book with their children (Rasinski, 2003).

Nursery rhymes are public domain material (not copyrighted), so anyone can copy them without violating copyright law. Schools and teachers, then, can easily put together collections of favorite rhymes in simple stapled books that are essentially cost free. If parents spend fifteen minutes per day over the summer preceding children’s entrance into kindergarten, it is very likely that the level of phonemic awareness in the children will rise considerably, print concept knowledge will increase, and children will be much more ready to learn to read once the school year begins (Rasinski, 2003).

National and International studies have demonstrated the relationship between wide reading and student achievement (e.g., Latest NAEP", 2001; Postelthwaite & Ross, 1992). Some schools have developed school-wide programs to encourage home reading. One intriguing program challenges the entire student body of a school to read a million minutes over the course of a school year (Baumann, 1995; O'Masta & Wolf, 1991; Shanahan, Wojcechowski, & Rubik, 1998). This can be done if every student reads twenty minutes per day or is read to for this amount of time (Rasinski, 2003).

If done at the classroom level the program could involve a one hundred thousand minute challenge. If a class of twenty five students read (or was read to) twenty minutes per day, six days a week, for thirty five weeks of school, the entire classroom will have read one hundred five thousand minutes (Rasinski, 2003)!

The 100,000 Minute Challenge is very simple. Students take home a log sheet every Monday in which they record the daily number of minutes they read over the coming week. Parents sign off on the sheet to verify their child's reading, and the log is returned the following Monday and replaced with a fresh log sheet for the coming week. A parent volunteer tallies the cumulative number of minutes read by student, by classroom, by grade level, and by school. Signage posted in the lobby of the school indicates the ever-growing number of minutes read by the entire school and by grade levels. Prizes are often awarded when predesignated benchmarks (e.g., every one hundred thousand minutes) are achieved by the school or grade level. Awards are also given at the end of the year to the highest achieving students and classrooms (Rasinski, 2003). The program works to the extent that it has the enthusiastic participation of teachers and parents. Small groups of parents run the mechanics of the program, but the heart of the program-whether children will actually read or not is largely up to the encouragement and support of teachers and parents.

Assisted Reading. This is a simple yet effective intervention that can be used at school or at home when a child is reading with a parent or other helper at home. In this instructional routine,

the student reads aloud while a more experienced or accomplished reader follows along silently.

If the student commits a reading error or pauses at an unknown word for about three seconds the helping reader corrects the student error.

Many teachers, when working with stage 2 readers working on fluency development, tell the reader to sound out the unknown word. Nichols et al (2003) state that if the reader was a stage 1 reader who was trying to develop stronger phonetic analysis skills then this would be an appropriate suggestion, depending on the word and the child's strategy knowledge for decoding. However, for the stage 2 reader who is working on developing fluency, it is more appropriate for the partner to simply provide the word for the struggling reader.

Steps in implementing Assisted Reading are as follows:

1. Find a quiet location where both the student and the helping reader can both view a copy of the text.
2. Instruct the student to begin reading orally using his or her best "reading voice."
3. Parent should follow along silently in the text as the student reads.
4. If the student mispronounces a word or pauses for longer than five seconds provide the word for the student. The student should repeat the word correctly and then continue reading the passage aloud.
5. The reading helper should recognize when the reader is reading fluently by praising when the student reads with expression and in a smooth conversational manner (Nichols, et. al., 2009).

Fluency Development Lesson (FDL). The FDL originated from the Oral Recitation Lesson but uses relatively short reading passages (poems, rhymes, songs, story segments, or other texts) that students can read and reread over a short period of time. The format for lesson follows a routine of the teacher taking responsibility for reading the daily passage and gradually shifting responsibility for the reading to the students:

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

The instructional routine then begins again with step number one using a new passage (Nichols, et.al., 2009).

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

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

story at home with a parent or other person in the household. In addition to the basal story, students are also expected to read at least one other story a week at home.

6. **Free-Choice Reading:** To make sure that students have wide reading experiences students are also encouraged to read a variety of books on their own. Twenty minutes a day is set aside for independent, self-selected reading (Nichols et.al., 2009).

Fast Start. Fast Start (Rasinski, 2005), which has shown positive results with first-grade populations, involves a ten to fifteen minute daily lesson that involves parents in reading a brief text to and with their children repeatedly. The steps for Fast Start are as follows:

1. Parent and child sit together. The parent draws the child's attention to the text by pointing to the appropriate lines and words.
2. Parent reads the text to the child several times until the child is familiar with the passage. Parent and child discuss the content of the passage.
3. Parent and child simultaneously read the passage together. The passage is read several times until the child feels comfortable with reading the passage alone.
4. The child reads the text alone with the parent providing backup or shadow reading support. The text is again read several times.
5. The parent engages in the word study activities, requiring the parent and child to choose words from the text that are of interest, or choose words from the word lists in their packets. The words are printed on cards and added two rod cards from previous days. This word bank is used for word practice, sentence building, word sorts, and other informal word games and activities (Nichols et. al., 2009).

Poetry Academy. Mastery of a short poem could help students to feel confident and successful early on in the program, similar to the success other researchers found in the use of short texts conjunction with fluency development (Rasinski, Padak, Linek, and Sturtevant, 1994) The Poetry Academy uses short poems to bring humor and pleasure to struggling readers while encouraging them to read smoothly and fluently. Community volunteers were very important to

the success of this home-school literacy intervention. The following are the instructional steps for this strategy:

1. The volunteer reads a new poem to the student.
2. The student reads the poem with the volunteer (listening-while-reading and assisted reading)
3. The student reads the poem to the volunteer. (Repeated Reading)
4. The student reads the poem to people at home, gathering signatures as proof.
5. The student reads the poem one last time to the volunteer to prove mastery (Wilfong, 2008).

Reader's theater. There are many ways of performing Reader's Theater, and all kinds of materials can be used such as books, websites devoted to Reader's Theaters, book-based scripts (esp. fairy tales and folk tales), poetry, and famous speeches. Books with a lot of dialogue work well to adapt to Reader's Theater. It is also helpful to use books from a series to capitalize on familiar plot structures, language, and characters.

Texts chosen for performance should not be above readers' instructional levels. With initial support from the teacher, students can and should write their own scripts for Reader's Theatre. Sometimes student scripts are more creative than teacher-created scripts (Worthy & Prater, 2002).

It is important that students practice until they can read their parts fluently. Ample rehearsal time makes the difference for struggling readers in any kind of performance (Worthy & Prater, 2002). To begin, give each student a copy of the script, and read it aloud as you would any other piece of literature. Before, during, and after your read aloud, discuss the plot. Then do an echo read, and a choral read of the script to involve the entire class. Once the class has had enough practice, choose students to read the various parts. Put together a few simple props and costumes, and invite other classes to attend the performance. For the presentation, have readers stand, or sit on stools, in front of the room and face the audience. Position them in order of each character's importance. Encourage students to make eye contact with the audience and one another before they read. Once they start, they should hold their scripts at chest level to avoid hiding their faces.

and look out at the audience periodically. After the performance, have students state their names and the part they read. You might also want to videotape the performance so that you can review it with students later. In doing so, you will show them that they are, indeed, fluent readers (Blau, 2001).

Some struggling readers or reserved students may not want to perform in front a group initially, but most lose their fear with opportunities to practice a script with a teacher, tutor, or friends in a safe atmosphere. A script with students parts highlighted can be sent home and practiced with parents or other family members. Students can plan, practice, and perform new texts as often as every week. It is important to remember that, as in all group and independent work, students and teachers will need time to plan and establish routines and appropriate behavior. It may take several weeks of explaining, role modeling, and guided practice before such activities run smoothly. As students learn what is needed to prepare for a successful performance, they are motivated to work and practice together productively. This allows the teacher to move from group to group, listening and offering instruction and feedback as students practice (Worthy & Prater, 2002)

Appendix L

3-2-1 Form

3-2-1 Reflection

3 Ideas about fluency instruction that were reinforced:

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2 Reasons to include fluency instruction in your classroom:

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1 New thing you might try:

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