

2016

How can a child's fluency be improved and provide support for comprehension?

Sharon Marie Collins
University of Northern Iowa

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Copyright ©2016 Sharon Marie Collins

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp>



Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), and the [Language and Literacy Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Collins, Sharon Marie, "How can a child's fluency be improved and provide support for comprehension?" (2016). *Graduate Research Papers*. 741.
<https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp/741>

This Open Access Graduate Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Research Papers by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.

How can a child's fluency be improved and provide support for comprehension?

Abstract

This paper examines the literature that addresses ways to improve fluency and to provide support for fluency development and comprehension. The culmination of this literature review results in the creation of a project addressing the question, How can I encourage the families of my students to be more involved in their child's reading? This project uses the structure of a family literacy night to focus upon fluency development and literature engagement between children and their families.

**HOW CAN A CHILD'S FLUENCY BE IMPROVED AND PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR
COMPREHENSION?**

A Graduate Project

Submitted to the

Division of Literacy Education

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements of the Degree

Master of Literacy Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

Sharon Marie Collins

August 2016

This Research Project by: Sharon Marie Collins

Titled: How can a child's fluency be improved and provide support for comprehension?

**has been approved as meeting the research requirements for the
Degree of Master of Literacy Education**

07-20-2016
Date Approved

Deborah Tidwell

Graduate Faculty Reader

7/26/16
Date Approved

Sarah Vander Zanden

Graduate Faculty Reader

7-26-16
Date Approved

Jill Uhlenberg

Head, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Table of Contents

Introduction.....4

Methodology5

Literature Review7

Defining Fluency7

 Automaticity7

 Rate.....8

 Prosody.....8

 Accuracy8

Why Is Fluency So Important to the Development of a Good Reader?9

Importance of Fluency to Comprehension11

Fluency Strategies14

 Repeated Reading14

 Readers theatre15

 Whole-class choral reading18

 Paired or buddy reading19

Assessing Fluency20

Family Literacy23

Conclusions.....26

The Project27

Family Literacy Night Timeline28

Family Literacy Night Activities.....28

 Bulletin board.....29

Scavenger Hunt	32
Readers' theatre	34
Paired reading	36
Author visit	37
Closure to Family Literacy Night	38
Concluding Thoughts	39
References	41
Appendix A: List of Lexile Leveled Books by Genre Areas	44
Appendix B: List of Selected Books by Maribeth Boelts	48
Appendix C: List of Exit Survey Questions	51

List of Figures

Figure 1: Critical Bridge in Reading.....	13
Figure 2: Multidimensional Fluency Scale	22
Figure 3: Flyer for Family Literacy Night with Time and Activities	29
Figure 4: Bulletin Board of Photos of School Staff with Book Choices	32
Figure 5: Scavenger Hunt Protocol	34
Figure 6: Example of a Readers' Theatre Script	35

INTRODUCTION

Fluency and comprehension are two terms in literacy that are mentioned and referred to often in discussions among researchers and educators in the world. The connection between fluency and reading is a complex one. Teachers often have students that can read words with ease. Do students who read with ease also comprehend the text? . Increasing speed of reading to improve fluency can help with comprehension (Pey, Min, & Wah, 2014). Yet there are students who will read a text slower, but have good comprehension of the text. There are other students who struggle to decode the word in order to read it with meaning. So, what does a teacher do to improve word recognition for that child who struggles to identify the meaning and word with automaticity. How can instruction build the fluency in a child's reading? How can a child's fluency be improved and provide support for comprehension?

This paper examines the literature that addresses ways to improve fluency and to provide support for fluency development and comprehension. The culmination of this literature review results in the creation of a project addressing the question, How can I encourage the families of my students to be more involved in their child's reading? This project uses the structure of a family literacy night to focus upon fluency development and literature engagement between children and their families.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research project is to research the literature addressing the question, How can a child's fluency be improved and provide support for comprehension? I gathered studies that focused on the role of fluency in the reading process, the impact of fluency upon reading comprehension, and effective strategies that address the improvement and support of fluency development. As this is a project that culminates in the development of a family literacy night, I also examined the literature addressing effective family literacy night programs, focusing specifically the efficacy of such a program and recommendations provided for creating a family literacy night.

I started my research through the ROD library data base system online by looking for articles that provided the history of fluency and the importance that fluency plays in literacy. The search focused on the terms *fluency*, *comprehension*, *fluency strategies*, and *family literacy night* or *family literacy program*. The term *fluency* provided an initial 13,092 citations. When I combined *fluency* with *strategies* I uncovered 2,115 citations. The term *comprehension* provided 86,384 citations. And the term *family literacy night* revealed 452 original citations with *family literacy program* providing 2,595 citations.

The articles and key texts were narrowed by focusing on primary sources, peer-reviewed process, and full text availability. The research continued to narrow by looking for strategies that aid specifically in fluency development. I then researched the connection between fluency and comprehension. This was further narrowed by a focus on including family into the fluency and comprehension development of a child. I continued my research by looking for articles that supported the idea of a family literacy night. I found 23 articles that cohesively discussed these topics. I also used three

websites in order to support the development of a Family Literacy Night project (http://www.thebestclass.org/rtscripts.html, https://www.readinga-z.com/books/leveled-books, and Survey Monkey for survey development).

LITERATURE REVIEW

What does fluency mean? How long has fluency been in discussions related to reading success? There are varied definitions of fluency in the literature. “Defining reading fluency has been a complex issue for multiple reasons. Fluency itself, as a concept is complex, involving rapid and accurate processing that is also prosodically appropriate” (Grabe, 2010, p. 72). The following literature review begins with defining the meaning of fluency, including critical terms. This is followed by a discussion...

Defining Fluency

Rasinski (2014) states that reading fluency is made up of two components involving automaticity in word recognition and expression in oral reading that reflects the meaning of the text. Many definitions of fluency include terms such as automaticity, rate, prosody, accuracy, and these aspects will be discussed below.

Automaticity. “Automaticity in word recognition refers to the ability to recognize or decode words not just accurately, but also automatically or effortlessly” (Rasinski, 2014, p. 4). This means that a reader should be able to recognize a word and read it without having to put effort into sounding out the word. It should be a natural flow into reading a text. Some researchers (Rasinski, 2014; Stanovich, 1980) suggest that automaticity of fluency represents the difference between good and struggling readers. Good readers are defined as being able to read with little effort to understand the text, and struggling readers work so hard to decode that they often are not understanding because the cognitive load is too great to bear as they work to figure out parts of words to make meaning of the text (Rasinski, 2014).

Reading automatically is the ability to recognize a word with little effort in the decoding because word recognition is already there (Rasinski 2014). Hudson et al. (2009) suggest that "...automaticity is memory retrieval: performance is automatic when it is based on single step direct-access retrieval of past solutions from memory" (p. 7).

Rate. "Reading rate (the number of words a reader can read on grade level text in a minute) has come to be the quintessential measure of reading fluency" (Rasinski, 2012, p. 516). Rate, then is the speed of reading. There is a high correlation between high reading rate and comprehension. But this should not be correlated to reading fast as good reading. Many readers can read accurately and with comprehension but with a slower more methodical rate.

Prosody. "Expression in oral reading, or prosody, is fluency's connection to meaning or comprehension" (Rasinski 2014, p. 4). This means that the reader must have some understanding of the text in order to allow for expression while reading the text. Schreiber (1980) suggests that good readers employ prosody in their reading to phrase text into syntactically appropriate and meaningful units that are not always explicitly marked by punctuation.

Accuracy. "Word-reading accuracy refers to the ability to recognize or decode words correctly" (Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005, p. 703). Rasinski (2012) connects accuracy with both rate and prosody for defining fluent reading. The role of accuracy is critical in comprehending an author's intended message.

A current definition applied in professional development and schools includes fluency as "the ability to read rapidly with ease and accuracy, and to read with appropriate expression and phrasing" (Grabe, 2010, p.72). According to Grabe (2010),

students need to be able to read smoothly with precision. Students should also read accurately. Grabe argues that students also should be able to read with correct articulation. He suggests that fluency means students need to be able to read with proper expression while they are reading. Grabe (2010) found in his research that students read with speed and often forget about accuracy and phrasing.

Fluency is important in reading because it helps to link decoding of words with comprehension of the words. Stayter and Allington (2001) agree that fluency and comprehension are connected. “Developing oral reading fluency, while not the only goal of reading instruction, has the potential to help readers develop more resonant understandings of text” (p. 145). In fact, the connection between oral fluency passage and reading comprehension are higher than word reading fluency (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, & Jenkins, 2001; Grabe, 2010). Oral fluency is reading with rate and accuracy (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006). Word fluency is the ability to use the word recognition in a text or isolation (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, & Jenkins, 2001).

Fluency is a key component in literacy development. Children decode words to aid in their understanding of the text. Fluency helps the reader acquire a fundamental building block in reading (Rasinski, 2014). The ability to recognize words in a text quickly and accurately supports being able to comprehend what the author is trying to convey in the text.

Why is Fluency So Important in the Development of a Good Reader?

Fluency is important because it has an impact on the comprehension process in reading. In fact, Grabe (2010) points out that good readers, when reading in their native language, usually read very fluently in almost everything that is read. He suggests that

while the fluent reader reads, there are multiple dynamics occurring at the same time, including “reading at a reasonable rate, between 250-300 WPM, using very efficient and fast word recognition skills and combining information from various sources while reading under fairly intense time constraints” (Grabe 2010, p.72). Rasinski (2012) states that reading rate is “the number of words a reader can read on a grade level text in a minute” (p. 516). However, Rasinski is concerned that when educators look at how many words are read in a minute, the focus becomes speed over other aspects of reading. He argues that if reading fluency is defined as just reading fast then fluency should not be such a hot topic in research. “The terms automaticity and fluency are often used interchangeably, but the concept of automaticity actually implies more about a response than does the concept of fluency” (Hudson, Pullen, Lane, & Torgesen, 2009, p.9). A reader needs to be able to read more than just the word correctly, the reader has to be able to read the text automatically. Decoding is a step in the meaning making process, but it can take time and can detract from comprehension (Rasinski, 2014).

Grabe’s (2010) premise about fluency is that the reader needs to be able to read a text in meaningful phrases, provide syntax, and add expressive interpretation all at a reasonable rate. These skills depend on the development of “automaticity in word recognition and expression in oral reading that reflects the meaning of the text” (Rasinski 2012, p.517). Rasinski (2014) suggests that the development of automaticity is a key element of effective reading comprehension because if the reader spends too much time trying to decode a word, the meaning of the text can be lost. Some readers spend so much of their time trying to read the text that the focus becomes the decoding of text, which is referred to as cognitive energy (LaBerge and Samuels, 1974; Rasinski, 2012). “If they

have to use too much of that cognitive energy to decode the words in text, they have little remaining for the more important in reading--comprehension” (Rasinski 2012 p. 517). Automaticity while reading allows the reader to focus more on the meaning of the text (Rasinski 2014).

“Readers develop their word recognition automaticity in the same way that other automatic processes in life are developed--through wide and deep practice (Rasinski 2012, p. 517). Wide reading practice is commonly done in a classroom setting by reading the text, which is accompanied by a discussion led by the teacher. Wide reading is designed to allow a student to read text after text. The deep reading practice happens with repeated reading until the students able to read the text fluently (Rasinski 2012). Rasinski (2012) states that deep reading happens when a student reads the same text multiple times. “Reading speed is an outcome of automaticity, it is not the cause of automaticity” (Rasinski 2014, p. 6). Rasinski goes on to say that with automaticity the word recognition develops and prosody starts coming into play. “Expression in oral reading, or prosody, is fluency’s connection to meaning or comprehension” (Rasinski 2014, p 4). Rasinski argues that expression happens when a reader is able to understand the text and the purpose of the text.

Importance of Fluency to Comprehension

In a survey conducted in 2009, experts were canvassed for what they believed were hot topics in literacy, as reported by Cassidy and Cassidy (2010). Results indicated that the topic of fluency was not considered to be a hot topic. Rasinski (2012; 2014) suggested that the lack of concern for fluency as a critical issue grew out of the notion that fluency in and of itself was minor in relationship to overall student achievement. However, he

argues that fluency is important “because it is a reading competency that contributes to comprehension” (Rasinski 2014, p. 1). He further argues that readers need to use accuracy, automaticity, and prosody to aid in their understanding of the text and these are all components of fluency (Rasinski, 2014). Many people believe that fluency has to do with reading speed (Rasinski, 2004). “What happens when readers read for speed? Speed becomes the primary goal, and meaning or comprehension become secondary at best” (Rasinski 2014, p. 1). This issue of speed should not be the focus of instruction, but rather the result of good instruction in “authentic meaningful reading” which then results in better “word recognition accuracy and automaticity and this will, in turn, lead to increases in reading speed” (Rasinski 2014, p. 1).

One component in fluency that gets lost in the shuffle is prosody or expressive reading. A common misconception is that expression in reading only occurs while reading orally, which happens while guided reading is taking place. This misconception suggests that prosody is lost when the transition is made to silent reading. Rasinski (2014) argues that expressive reading happens during silent reading and helps to aid the understanding of the text. “We hope that informed teachers will find, through their own observations and efforts, that fluency is in fact important and is connected to comprehension” (p. 2). Students that struggle with reading comprehension do not usually have high achievement in fluency either (Rasinski, 2014).

Pikulski and Chard (2005) suggest that fluency is the connection between word recognition accuracy and text comprehension (as cited in Rasinski, 2014) (see Figure 1).

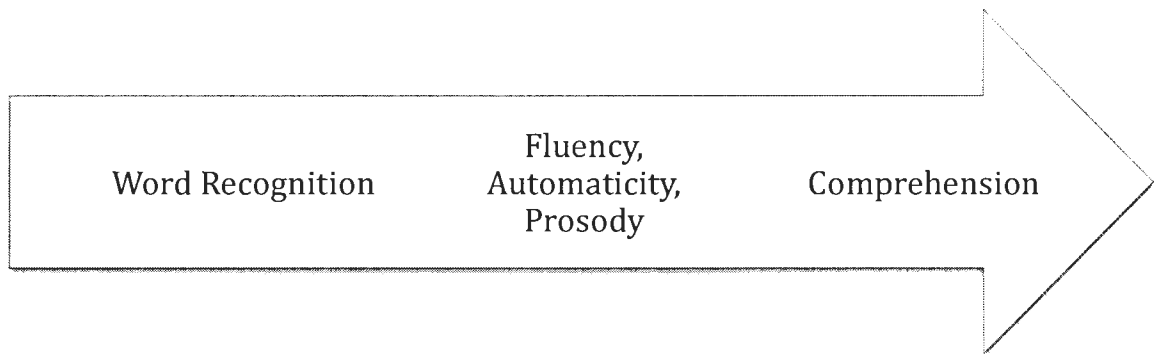


Figure 1: Critical Bridge in Reading

Automaticity is the skill to be able to recall words right away and competently (Rasinski 2012). The goal for a reader is to read a text with accuracy and without effort. “When the words in text are identified automatically, readers can employ most of their limited cognitive energy to that all-important task in reading-text comprehension” (Rasinski 2012, p. 517).

Reading comprehension is a process of consisting of the simultaneous extraction and construction of meaning through interaction and involvement with written language and consists of three essential elements: a) the text; b) the function of the text, and c) the reader’s capacities, abilities, knowledge, and experience with the act of reading (Patton, Crosby, Houchins, & Jolivette 2010, p.101).

The underlying foundation to a fluent reader is to practice reading (Adams, 1990; Rasinski, Reutzel, Chard & Linan-Thompson, 2011; Paige & Magpuri-Lavell, 2014). “Instruction in reading fluency depends on the area in which students require the most help” (Rasinski, 2004, p.47). There are several actions that work to inspire and enhance the reading fluency in a child (Paige & Magpuri-Lavell, 2014). Rasinski (2014) refers to modeling fluency like someone modeling how to drive a car. Children need to listen to fluent reading among adults and peers to build their confidence (Rasinski 2014). The teaching about fluency and teaching

for fluency helps provide practice and modeling of fluent reading to support children's fluency development.

Fluency Strategies

There are many different types of strategies that can be used to build and develop fluency in a reader. "The science of teaching reading has shown us that reading fluency is a key component to proficient reading and that teacher-guided wide and deep reading are two ways to improve reading" (Rasinski 2012, p. 520). Wide reading is providing and allowing students to read from a wide variety of materials and having discussions that deepen their understanding of the text. Deep reading or repeated reading of the same text allows students to increase their reading rates because of the familiarity to the text with a second or additional (Rasinski, 2012).

Repeated reading. "The repeated reading is not aimed at improving reading speed, but in being able to engage in oral reading that an audience will find meaningful and satisfying" (Rasinski, 2012, p.520). Rasinski (2012) states that In order to make repeated reading more authentic, the reader should be encouraged or allowed to do a reading performance. This allows the reader to be more engaged with the text. Rasinski also suggests "readers theater scripts, dialogues, monologues, poetry, song lyrics, speeches and oratory, and narratives or stories all lend themselves to performance" (2012, p. 520). In the preparation for these performances, Mraz et al. (2013), see the idea of repeated readings as a vehicle for reading improvement and suggest that "Students with reading problems need numerous opportunities to read if they are to achieve fluent word recognition" (p. 167). Rereading a passage provides assistance in both reading fluency

and comprehension (Dowhower, 1989; Hoffman & Isaacs, 1991; Mraz et al., 2013; National Reading Panel, 2000; Samuels, 1997).

Students given a chance to read and reread a text to build their fluency also allows them to gain comfort with the text and give them time to work on the comprehension of the text (Perez, 1989). This allows for a student to become familiar with the text and words used in it. Once they are familiar with the text, they can work on understanding the text for meaning. In order for the students to connect with the text, the student need to be instructed, given guidance, or reasons for reading the text more than once (Perez, 1989). The students will continue to gather more information from the text if they are allowed to dig deeper into a text. Reading a text more than once teaches a child to apply what they are learning in the next text they read (Mraz et al. 2013). “The method [for rereading] consists of rereading a short, meaningful passage several times until a satisfactory level of fluency is reached. Then the procedure is repeated with a new passage” (Samuels, 1979, p. 404). Samuels also states that repeated readings can work to motivate a child who struggles in reading because it builds their confidence to read a text fluently. Rasinski’s (2012) idea of performance can be realized in the Readers Theatre strategy, where students are required to reread a text again and again in preparation for performance. Readers Theatre is a way to apply repeated reading to improve children’s fluency through a venue that has a purposeful outcome of performance to an audience (Mraz et al., 2013). “Readers Theatre requires repeated reading but also requires intonation and phrasing aspects of prosody” (Mraz et al, 2013, p. 168).

Readers theatre. Readers Theatre helps build reading fluency, but first the text needs to be within the reading range of the reader (Martinez, Roser, & Strecker, 1999).

“By definition, text within a reader’s instructional range reduces word recognition demands and allows for more rapid reading” (Martinez, Roser, & Strecker 1999, p. 327). The second consideration is that the work should be within oral interpretation to allow for features that are easier to adapt to in Readers Theatre. These stories present a plot with characters having a problem that allows for conversations and thinking through it (Martinez, Roser, & Strecker, 1999). The third helpful suggestion with Readers Theatre is that it builds excitement for a reader.

The implementation of Readers Theatre into the classroom takes some planning (Rasinski & Griffith, 2012). Martinez, Roser, and Strecker (1999) provide a clear explanation of the steps for success in Readers’ Theatre. Four of those steps, which directly affect the implementation of Readers’ Theatre, include choosing the text, preparing the scripts, organizing the repertory groups, and establishing a weekly routine. The first step is getting the appropriate text for the readers (Mraz et al., 2013). “Because the children in each classroom were at a range of reading levels we looked for books of varying difficulty level, so that each child could meet with text within his or her instructional range” (Martinez, Roser, & Strecker 1999, p. 329). The next step is to prepare the script. The script should have a short narration of the story and provide two copies to the students, one for school and one for home. Two additional steps for implementation are organizing of groups based on reading levels, and finding a time to practice each week. Martinez et al. (1999) suggest that designing a weekly routine allows for the students to read the scripts read by the teacher, get into their groups and rehearse, rehearse each day to prepare for production, and perform in front of a live audience.

What does a child gain from Readers Theatre? “Over the 10-week project nearly all the children posted gains in their reading rate” (Martinez, Roser, & Strecker 1999, p. 331). In their study, Martinez et al. found that one student improved from 74 words per minute to 125 words per minute. Another student’s rate went from 40-88 word per minute. Overall, students who were below instructional level displayed improvements and gains when using Readers Theatre. The improvements occurred in reading fluency rate and grade level. Rasinski and Griffith (2012) agree that Readers’ Theatre experiences improve reading fluency and comprehension of text.

“Readers Theatre seemed especially well suited to helping children go ‘inside’ the story, experiencing the thoughts and feelings of characters” (Martinez, Roser, & Strecker 1999, p. 332). Collaborative conversations among the students in the study started because the oral interpretation of the text lead to deeper understandings of the text (Martinez, Roser, & Strecker 1999).. “Reading practice as ‘rehearsal’ proved to be a motivational method to encourage repeated readings” (Martinez, Roser, & Strecker 1999, p. 332 In addition, Martinez et al. found that reading a text more than once enables a reader to become more expressive.

Readers Theatre, then, offers a reason for children to read repeatedly in appropriate materials. It provides a vehicle for direct explanation, feedback, and effective modeling. Perhaps due to interplay of these influences, we found that Readers Theatre promoted oral fluency, as children explored and interpreted the meanings of literature (with joy)! (Martinez, Roser, & Strecker 1999, p. 333)

Readers Theatre is a way in which students can practice their fluency by reading a text multiple times. It allows the students to fill the role of the character and get a better understanding of the text while reading it. Another activity that allows the student to be more involved with the text is whole class choral reading.

Whole-class choral reading. Whole-class choral reading (WCCR) is when the teacher and students are reading from the same text at the same time. It allows students to read together, gives them experience hearing how the text should be read while they are reading, and provides a model for how to pronounce the words correctly (Paige & Magpuri-Lavell, 2014). Paige and Magpuri-Lavell suggests that the text used in whole-class choral reading be from the curriculum that is on grade level or slightly above. The goal of whole-class choral reading is for the students to become aware of important words, gain knowledge on the material, and to improve their reading skills *with* the whole class instead of reading *in front of* the class (Paige and Magpuri-Lavell 2014).

“Implementing WCCR can be done on either a repeated-reader basis where the text is practiced several times over 3-4 days, or, in a wide-reading format where a different, but very similar text is read each day” (Paige & Magpuri-Lavell, 2014, p. 88). When using the repeated reading format, first the teacher should read the text aloud with the students following along. Then, in the next few days, the teacher allows the students to reread the text on their own (Paige & Magpuri-Lavell, 2014).

Paige and Magpuri-Lavell encourage a balance between repeated reading and wide reading with the class. Paige and Magpuri-Lavell also suggest to allow times when the whole class is split in half to conduct a WCCR (2014).

Whole class choral reading allows the students to work with the text multiple times. The advantage to WCCR is that it provides the students with repeated opportunities to gain knowledge about the text as well as obtain an understanding of the meaning of the text. In addition, WCCR provides a chance for the students to practice their fluency as a whole class instead of individually. It allows for the student struggling with fluency or

comprehension to follow along in the text while listening to other students read fluently. This fluent expression of the text then can support better comprehension as well. Another opportunity for students to gain in their fluency and understanding of a text is by using paired or buddy reading.

Paired or buddy reading. Paired or buddy reading is a strategy that allows students to work with their peers (Paige & Magpuri-Lavell, 2014). Paige & Magpuri-Lavell suggest that pairing or buddying up the students with a fluent reader and a less fluent reader. The difference between the students should not be too significant (2014). The time spent in the paired or buddy reading groups should be 10-15 minutes. The text should be read aloud and at the independent level of the fluent reader (Rasinski & Young, 2014). Rasinski and Young (2014) suggest that the developing reader pick out the text to read for buddy reading. The key component to making paired reading work in the classroom is that the teacher decides how it is going to work before pairing up the students (Paige & Magpuri-Lavell, 2014). Paired reading provides tangible support for fluency expression.

As the developing reader hears his/her partner's voice while simultaneously reading the text on his/her own, the link between the written and spoken word is strengthened. The developing reading also begins to model and map the expression provided by the proficient reader into his or her own reading (Rasinski & Young, 2014, p. 2)

Rasinski and Young (2014) suggest that proficient readers should be allowed to assist the developing readers as needed. This can happen during the oral reading if the reader is struggling on a word or two or maybe even a section of the text (Rasinski & Young, 2014). Paige and Magpuri-Lavell (2014) caution that this is the area in which the teacher needs to set the limits or expectations before hand. Paige and Magpuri-Lavell

also suggest that before pairing up the students the teacher should model in front of the class the procedure for providing support for difficult words or phrases. Paired reading allows developing readers to read a text with someone there to support them during reading to avoid losing their flow or understanding of the text (Rasinski & Young, 2014). The research results with paired reading showed the children gain in both word recognition and comprehension (Rasinski & Young, 2014). Topping (1987) reported that students involved in paired reading showed on average “three times normal progress in reading accuracy and five times normal progress in reading comprehension” (p. 163).

Providing students with several different rereading strategies to improve their fluency and understanding of the text (whether rereading for performance, within a group choral reading, or a paired dynamic) allows the students an opportunity to use an approach that works for them. Teacher modeling of the different strategies is critical for the students to see how the strategies work and to establish guidelines for engagement. Determining whether the strategies are helping to make improvements in a child’s fluency rate and understanding of the text can be done through assessment.

Assessing Fluency

“In order to determine if fluency is a concern among readers and how progress in fluency can be monitored, we need to have methods of assessing fluency” (Rasinski, 2014, p. 5). How should fluency be assessed? Assessing fluency often occurs by documenting a 60 second oral reading by a student using a grade level text, while the teacher documents the number of words read correctly including self corrections (Deno, 1985; Rasinski, 2004 & 2014). The rate of the student’s oral fluency is compared with the norms of the current grade level (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006; Rasinski, 2014).

“The most common method for assessing fluency, frequently referred to as Curriculum-Based Measurement Oral Reading Fluency (R-CBM), measures the number of words read correctly in one minute” (R. F. Hudson et al, 2009, p. 20). By reading the grade level passage the teacher can get an idea of what the student can do with decoding, automaticity and prosody (Rasinski, 2004). According to Rasinski (2014), assessing prosodic reading is allowing the student to read a text at grade level and evaluate student’s reading by using a rubric to score phrasing, structure, pace, intonation, and self-corrections (see Figure 2).

Are one-minute assessments the best way to assess fluency? “Some researcher and teachers have suggested problems with a one-minute timing because a student may be able to sustain a rate for one minute that is not sustainable in a longer passage, potentially making it an inaccurate estimate of the student’s true fluency, or rate for longer passages” (R. F. Hudson et al., 2009, p. 20).

The issue of stamina in reading is one that has not been addressed sufficiently in fluency research. In most studies, fluency is assessed during the first minute of reading a text. Moreover, fluency instruction generally occurs using relative short passages that can be read in less than five minutes. We don’t know the impact on fluency or fluency impact on comprehension as students become more involved in a text at one setting. (Rasinski, 2014, p. 11)

The issue of one-minute probes as an assessment of fluency is that it often contradicts the importance of prosody and expression in fluency as a reflection of meaning making. The issue of stamina in reading is directly tied to being able to make sense of the author’s message and to engage with author in reading the text. An alternative to one-minute probes, as suggested by Rasinski (2014) where fluency is seen as a reflection of meaning making, and assessment focuses on phrasing, structure of the

language, the pace of the reading (including pace in relation to the author's meaning), intonation, and the child's use of self-corrections. The connection of strategies with

Use the following rubric (1-4) to rate reading fluency in areas of expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace.

A. Expression and Volume

1. Reads words as if simply to get them out. Little sense of trying to make text sound like natural language. Tends to read in a quiet voice.
2. Begins to use voice to make text sound like natural language in some areas of the text, but not in others.
3. Makes text sound like natural language throughout the better part of the passage. Occasionally slips into expressionless reading. Voice volume is generally appropriate throughout the text.
4. Reads with good expression and enthusiasm throughout the text. Varies expression and volume to match his or her interpretation of the passage.

B. Phrasing

1. Reads in monotone with little sense of phrase boundaries, frequently reads word-by-word.
2. Frequently reads in two- and three-word phrases, giving the impression of choppy reading, improper stress and intonation fail to mark ends of sentences and clauses.
3. Reads with a mixture of run-ons, mid-sentence pauses for breath, and some choppiness; reasonable stress and intonation.
4. Generally reads with good phrasing, mostly in clause and sentence units, with adequate attention to expression.

C. Smoothness

1. Makes frequent extended pauses, hesitations, false starts, sound-outs, repetitions, and/or multiple attempt.
2. Experiences several "rough spots" in the text where extended pauses or hesitations are more frequent and disruptive.
3. Occasionally breaks smooth rhythm because of difficulties with specific words and/or structures.
4. Generally reads smoothly with some breaks, but resolves word and structure difficulties quickly, usually through self-correction.

D. Pace

1. Reads slowly and laboriously.
2. Reads moderately slowly.
3. Reads with an uneven at mixture of fast and slow pace.
4. Consistently reads at conversational pace; appropriate rate throughout reading.

Scores range 4-16. Generally scores below 8 indicate that fluency may be concern. Scores of 8 or above indicate that the student is making good progress in fluency.

Figure 2. Multidimensional Fluency Scale (Rasinski,2004, p.49)

assessment can enable children to learn how to read fluently, to see to reading as a relationship with the author, and to focus more on meaning making rather than speed.

As suggested earlier, a reader's experiences with an adult or older reader can support their understanding of fluency through modeling. Rasinski (2014) discusses the importance of adults reading to children and how modeling fluent reading can improve a child's motivation for reading. Families reading at home can aid in the motivation for reading in a young child. Providing support for parents' addressing the fluency needs of children can be an important goal of an effective literacy program.

Family Literacy

Denny Taylor (1983) first coined the term *family literacy* in her research on how families of different economic backgrounds engaged within the family, with a focus on reading and writing. The term has since been used in different ways and in different contexts. Some family literacy programs are intended to work with family members to increase their literacy while families also work with their own children to improve literacy development (St. Pierre, Ricciuti, & Rimdzius, 2005). Other programs are used to help families teach their children specific literacy skills (Pahl & Kelly, 2005). And some programs and schools use the term *family literacy* to describe time set aside for families and children to spend meaningful time together for learning and playing (Grinder, Saenz, Askov, & Aldemir, 2005).

In a five-year longitudinal study, Senechal and LeFevre (2002) found that elementary school children whose parents were involved in their literacy development were consistently higher in their performance in literacy at school. While this study focused more on younger grades and the impact of early literacy engagement on future

literacy performance in schools, the impact of parent involvement is critical at any grade level. “When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more”

(Henderson & Mapp, 2002, p. 7)

What are some ways to support parents/guardians to work with their child at home on fluency and comprehension? McGahey (2005) suggests that educators need to present strategies to families and showcase how families can help at home with a child’s literacy. The promotion of family literacy through a family literacy night is designed to improve literacy and the education of a student overall by getting the family involved with their child’s learning. The evening consists of the families coming to school with the child. The children and families are read to and shown ways to conduct a discussion over the text. These strategies will allow for the families to become actively involved with the child’s learning (Chance, 2010). The strategies of reader’s theatre, paired or buddy reading, and whole class or family can be used in a home setting to allow each family member to be involved.

How does a family literacy night get started? What planning is needed to complete the event? McGahey (2005) suggests that when planning the event, it needs to have purpose that is driven by a well developed goal that is realized throughout the event. McGahey (2005) further suggests that the program should have activities that include family and child interactions. Chance (2010) states that a family literacy night is about engagement and interaction; it is not intended to provide adult education and training or instructing families to be more involved in their child’s education.

No matter how programs are scheduled, there are two major underlying objectives for family literacy night in schools:

- Entice parents into the school so they can become comfortable with an educational system that may be unfamiliar to them.
- Give parents time to practice techniques to help their children read and be successful in school. (Chance 2010, p. 10)

Chance (2010) describes three family programs that were effective, and how these programs were offered to families. All three programs took place in the state of Texas. These family literacy nights offered items such as refreshments, activities for the family, prizes, and a guest speaker (Chance, 2010). The first program Chance discussed took place every six weeks and focused on a different grade level each week. The intent was to provide specific and focused family literacy night experiences for the families of children within a specific grade level. The second program was a come-and-go evening event which allowed for flexibility in family schedules. This come-and-go family night was set up for two-three hours in the evening when it worked best for work and family schedules. Families were provided choice across several activities during the evening, and were provided the flexibility to leave when they needed. The third program also was offered at a time that allowed for flexible scheduling (Chance, 2010). This program started out with a read aloud, provided refreshments, and was designed for families and students to work together at four different stations (Chance, 2010). The activities were designed to provide interactions between family and child with a bonus that these same activities could be done at home as well. Chance (2010) states all three of these programs, as with any family literacy program, were successful both because of organization and participation, but also because they received support from the administration in their districts. This administrative support aided in both the funding and planning which helped to make the family literacy nights successful.

Conclusions

Fluency is an important aspect of reading and reading comprehension that involves an ongoing process of practicing and modeling over time (Rasinski & Young 2014). One procedure involves a gradual release of responsibility where the learner knows the expectations because they are modeled to them. They are asked to practice with guidance and then finally learners are asked to perform the task on their own (Rasinski & Young, 2014). Teachers need to realize that improving fluency in a child needs support from several different methods. These methods are reader's theatre, paired or buddy reading, and whole class choral reading. The teacher needs to provide multiple ways to improve fluency (Hudson et al., 2009).

Hudson et al. (2009) suggests a student needs to be encouraged to read for meaning or understanding in the early years of their reading instruction. This allows for vocabulary development, real life connections, and reading comprehension, which aids in fluency development (R. F. Hudson et al., 2009). "Demonstrations of, instruction on, and practice with oral reading can be both useful and enlightening but only as a means to an end--the fostering of active, independent, and self-aware readers" (Stayer & Allington, 2001, pg. 147).

Family literacy night is a way to involve parents in their children's literacy development. A family literacy night allows for engagement from all members on a child's learning team. Children need many people to help them in literacy development. Hosting a family literacy night provides opportunity for families to work with each other and with teachers in their literacy development.

THE PROJECT

This project focuses on addressing the following question, How can I encourage the families of my students to be more involved in their child's reading? A family literacy night provides that opportunity for students to bring in their families to interact in reading activities. While a literacy night can incorporate all aspects of reading (word recognition, comprehension, fluency, decoding, phonics, and so on), this project hones in on the specific aspects of fluency and its role in effective reading and reading comprehension.

The following demographics of my school district provide a context for the development of a Family Literacy Night, The families in my school district are rural and small town community members. Many of the families have a long tradition of attending the local schools, and there are close community ties to the school district through the parent organization, and after school programs (sports, Lego League, book clubs, and after school tutoring support). Student demographics include: 12% of the student population receive free/reduced lunches; 16% of the student population receive Special Education services; and 99% of the student population are White native speakers of English. The design of this Family Literacy Night was informed by the language and culture of the community, with a strong focus on improving fluency for children in grades three through five. . This population of students was chosen for three reasons: (1) they traditionally have had fewer evening programs provided when compared to the younger grades; (2) they have shown a need for improvement in fluency to support comprehension (particularly in prosody and focusing on meaning making); and (3) families of older students have been provided fewer opportunities to engage with their children's school-based literacy experiences.

Using information from the successful family night programs described in the literature review, I designed the family literacy night at my school with five specific activities intended to engage both the child and the child's family in literacy. I chose the school site for the family night evening because it provides a familiar venue for the child, and enables the child to have a sense of autonomy as the host of her or his family to the evening event.

The purpose and goal of the family literacy night is to provide an opportunity for families to spend time together and to try different activities that help make connections to their child's literacy. The activities for the family literacy night starts with a scavenger hunt to allow the families to get familiar with the school library. The reader's theatre and paired reading are opportunities to experience different ways to read as a family. The culminating event of the author's visit is a way for the author to express the importance of following your dreams.

Family Literacy Night Timeline

The family literacy night will occur in the month of April on a Thursday evening. The focus for this initial family literacy night will address three grade levels, grades 3-5. This family literacy program is designed to be a fun night of reading and writing activities for the whole family.

Family Literacy Night Activities

Each family team is encouraged to visit three different areas and complete the activities. The family literacy night consists of the following events for the family: bulletin board, scavenger hunt, Readers' Theatre, paired reading, and a guest reader. A flyer will be sent

home with the students to remind the families of the time and location of the Family Literacy Night, and to provide an overview of the family night activities (see Figure 3).

FAMILY LITERACY NIGHT

5-7 PM



Activities

Bulletin Board

Scavenger Hunt

Reader's Theatre

Paired/Buddy Reading

Author Visit

Figure 3. Flyer for Family Literacy Night with Time and Activities

Bulletin board. The first activity for family literacy night will be a bulletin board displayed in the hallway entitled, *We Read, Too! Can You Guess Who?* This idea was originally piloted as a *Teachers Read, Too!* bulletin board (see Figure 4) where the teachers, associates, and administration from the school were pictured on the bulletin board, each holding up a favorite book in front of their face. This was such a success with students wanting to know who read what book, the idea was expanded for the

Family Literacy Night to include all adults working at the school who have been a part of the children's education life. All employees of the school will be asked to bring a favorite reading material to school for photos and posting on the board. This will include janitors, cooks, aides, volunteers from the community, teachers, administrators, and other personnel who work at the school site. The faces of the adults will be hidden. The objective of the bulletin board is to show students that everyone reads.

An integral part of becoming a fluent reader is having the opportunity to share your reading interests and experiences with others. By providing a bulletin board of the various staff members with their favorite reading material, it sets the tone for Family Literacy Night, that reading is an activity in which everyone engages. In addition, reading is seen as an important part of each staff member's life. This idea of placing value on reading supports the notion of motivation as a critical aspect of becoming a fluent reader (Rasinski, 2014). The bulletin board activity is intended to spark interest in reading, and to show the importance of reading something that is enjoyable and meaningful to the reader (another catalyst for improving fluency in reading). Many of the books selected by the staff are books that the reader found to be enjoyable whether they are books that are read to children, magazines, or even books read at their leisure. Reading for enjoyment is a great motivator to read, and to read more often.

A contest entry form will be provided with the list of all the names of the adults pictured on the bulletin board with space provided by each name to write the title of the book. Students who are interested in participating can work with their families to try to identify which staff member is holding which book. At the conclusion of the evening, the

family that is able to identify the most staff members and the book they are holding correctly would be allowed to pick out a prize from the prize book, for example a book, bookmark, or poster. A volunteer will be standing next to the bulletin board to hand out the contest papers and explain the directions to the family members. At the end of the evening the papers will be collected, the names and books of the staff will be revealed, and the top five winning forms (and families) would be announced and each member of the five families would be allowed to pick out a prize of a book of choice (see Appendix A).

Creating the bulletin board for the family literacy night will require collaboration with the school staff, and communication in advance. Each staff member will be sent an email explaining the intent of the bulletin board, and would be asked to bring a favorite book to school for a photo shoot. The “book” can be their favorite children’s book, the current book being read, a favorite newspaper or magazines, an e-readers, or a menu. A designated range of one week will be given for the staff to bring in their favorite readings. Photographs will be taken with their books held in front of them so that just below their eyes their faces would be obscured (looking like each individual was peaking over their open book). Once all the photos are taken, the frame for the bulletin board (similar to the format in Figure 4) will be printed and colored with different colors, laminated, and cut out. The pictures will be taped on the frame so the frame could be used again. Finally, the pictures will be hung on the bulletin board in rows following a pattern with the color of the photo frames. The title will be added using letters and letters with circles that are visible from a distance. Graphic images of a man and woman

reading a book will be added to the bulletin board as well (see Figure 4 for an example of the layout).



Figure 4. Bulletin Board of Photos of School Staff with Book Choices

Scavenger hunt. The second activity for the family literacy night will be a scavenger hunt in the library. The scavenger hunt should take place in the library to allow the families to search in different parts of the library for different types of books. The purpose behind the hunt is to allow the families to become more familiar with the library and find out what the library has to offer. Interest in reading is a strong motivator for reading more. Part of the development of fluency is the desire to read and the interest

in reading good books. The scavenger hunt is intended to improve the interest in reading with families that attend the family literacy night. Each family would be given a scavenger hunt list and a pencil (see Figure 5 for the Scavenger Hunt protocol).

The selection of book types provides prompts that address narrative text (story grammars) and expository text (nonfiction that is not written in a narrative format). The narrative text prompts include finding a biography (nonfiction narrative) and finding a book that is also a movie (a narrative story line is most common in movies). For nonfiction books there are prompts to look for a science text about the moon, as well as social studies texts about another country or about a specific holiday. However, these possible nonfiction prompts could also result in book choices that are narrative with the moon as a character or a setting, the country as a setting, and the holiday as an event. The other prompts in the scavenger hunt can elicit either narrative or expository choices (a book that has won an award, a picture book, and a book that is a part of a series). Whether choosing narrative or expository, the scavenger hunt activity provides the family with opportunities to engage about texts, discover more about the library, and foster an interest in the books being found. An additional perk in this activity is to allow the child at the end of the evening to check out one of the books that was found during the scavenger hunt. The families will be told this information at the end of the scavenger hunt activity. This will not only support the child's interest in reading, but also provide a context for the family to share the book once they are home. As the families are able to locate the books on the scavenger hunt they can do one of the following options: snap a photo of the books, write the title down on their paper, or collect the books on the list.

Library Scavenger Hunt

- Find a book that has won an award
- Find a book that is also a movie
- Find a holiday book
- Find a biography
- Find a book about the moon
- Find a book about another country
- Find a picture book
- Find a book that is part of a series



Figure 5. Scavenger Hunt Protocol

Readers' theatre. The next station is an area in the school where the families can have an opportunity to practice and prepare a Readers' Theatre. Readers' Theatre is an activity that provides repeated readings of the same text in preparation for an oral reading performance of that text to an audience. Readers' Theatre allows the family to have a time to read together with expression and to put a little acting into their reading. Rehearsing the parts allows the children to become more fluent with the words through repetition. The Readers' Theatre scripts reflect a selection of familiar stories that have been scripted for Readers' Theatre use. Stories for this activity were chosen from a website designed specifically to provide a range of Readers' Theater scripts (thebestclass.org). The four Readers' Theatre scripts include: *The Giving Tree*, *Twas the*

Night before Thanksgiving, Tacky Penguin, and The Ant and the Grasshopper (see Figure 6 for an example of a script).

<u>THE ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER</u>					
<u>Aesop's Fable</u>					
Parts (5):	Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Narrator 3	Ant	Grasshopper
Narrator 1:	On a beautiful summer day a grasshopper sat and sang a sweet song.				
Narrator 2:	The grasshopper saw an ant working hard carrying grain to his house				
Grasshopper:	Look at that silly ant. All day long he works hard and never enjoys the sunshine.				
Narrator 3:	The grasshopper laughed at the ant and then he continued his song. He basked in the warm sun all summer long without a care in the world.				
Narrator 1:	As summer turned to autumn the grasshopper continued to sing his song and enjoy the sunshine. The ant, on the other hand, continued to gather food and store it in his house.				
Narrator 2:	When winter came the cold winds blew hard and the snow covered the meadow with a thick blanket of white.				
Narrator 3:	The grasshopper tried to find food, but of course he found nothing.				
Narrator 1:	It didn't take long for the grasshopper to knock upon the ant's door and beg . . .				
Grasshopper:	Please help me! I have nothing to eat! I shall starve without your help.				
Ant:	My dear Mr. Grasshopper, all summer long I worked hard carrying food to my home while you played in the sunshine. I will not share my food with someone who is so lazy.				
Grasshopper:	I was busy singing my song. I was making beautiful music. What should I do now?				
Narrator 2:	The ant thought for a moment and then said...				
Ant:	I suggest you dance.				
Narrator 3:	And the moral of this fable is...				
Ant:	You must do the work before you take the time to play.				
All:	The End.				
Scripted by Lisa Blau					

Figure 6 Example of a Readers' Theatre Script, *The Ant and the Grasshopper*

To prepare the families for using Readers Theatre, an explanation of Readers' Theatre is provided at the beginning of the activity. The teacher introducing the activity will read a small selection from one of the provided scripts, and briefly discuss how Reader's Theatre improves oral reading, fluency, and comprehension of the story. During

this presentation the teacher will explain how the different characters and the role of the narrator of the story are highlighted on the script. The teacher will then provide an explanation of how to use the script to read an individual part. The teacher will then share that the families will choose a script they want to try out, and practice their parts. At the close of the activity they will have the option to present the script in a Readers' Theatre performance. The families are then provided with an overview of the four script choices.

Several classrooms are provided for the families to use to rehearse their Readers' Theatre script. In each of the classrooms there would be enough copies of the Readers' Theatre scripts for each part in each of the stories. The families would have 20 minutes to read and rehearse their parts. As the families are reading and rehearsing their Readers' Theatre scripts, the teacher who introduced the activity will roam from class to class providing support and encouragement. At the end of the rehearsal, the families will be brought back together into a single classroom, and will be given the option of reading their final performance in front of the other families who have chosen Reader's Theatre.

Paired reading. Another station at family literacy night will be a paired reading area. Paired reading is a research-based fluency strategy that provides a venue for reading aloud with another reader. This paired reading activity provides a safe context for reading aloud and enables the less fluent reader to hear and get support from the oral reading of a more fluent reader. In this strategy, the family members will read aloud to each other. This paired reading area will have multiple books at different Lexile levels placed into baskets (see Appendix A for a listing of the books to be included). These baskets will be marked on the outside with the lexile levels. The idea behind the baskets is to provide ample choices for the child to pick a book within her or his reading level. There are

multiple copies of the same book so that the families can read together. Included in this area of paired reading will be a list of options for the families to do during their paired reading time. The families have options of using any book, and taking turns in reading, whether by sentences, paragraphs, pages, or chapters.

Author visit. The culminating activity for family literacy night would be an author visit from a Maribeth Boelts. Maribeth Boelts lives in Iowa and has been writing children's books for over 20 years. She is known in the local community for her award-winning books and for her passion for engaging children in reading and writing. She will start the presentation by asking the families to raise their hands if they like to read, write, or draw. Then, the author will talk briefly about how challenging writing can be, even for a published author. The author will discuss her struggle with the exact same things that the audience may struggle when writing -- such as, coming up with ideas, not being sure how to develop characters fully, how to make the plot interesting and active, etc. This presents the families with the objective for the presentation, which is that "We're all in this together." The author would take some time to share her process of developing a character, setting and plot of a story. She would then allow time for the audience to brainstorm ideas about a story they would like to write, with a focus on the audience developing the characters, the setting(s), and a plot.

The author's presentation is structured around some of the truisms about writing, such as "Writers write about the things that stir their emotions," "Writers make their characters struggle," and "Writers experiment with ideas." The author would unpack these truisms with examples from her own books (see Appendix B for possible titles),

sharing what prompted her to write that particular book, and the path the story took in terms of rough drafts, edits, illustration, and publishing.

The author would share a book that is being published or has been recently published. Although it may be a picture book, it might have a moral dilemma that older students and their families can relate to and discuss in full.

Finally, the author will hold a questions and answers session. If families are familiar with the books for the author, the author may allow a little longer time for questions. If the author senses that families are grasping for a question to ask, this session might be brief. Another option the author could do is shoot questions towards their audience, asking about their own writing, the books they're reading, the roadblocks they're experiencing in writing, etc. The author will close with a brief movement activity that illustrates the truism, "Writers pay attention and observe the world around them."

Closure for Family Literacy Night

The evening will conclude following the guest speaker presentation. At the close of the guest speaker presentation, the Family Literacy Night team will come to the front of the room and thank all the families for their participation. An electronic survey (on Survey Monkey) will be provided for feedback before the families leave. The families will be asked to take a moment to fill out the survey about family literacy night. There will be several computer stations set up allowing families to complete the survey. If the families are unable to stay, they will have the option to take the survey online at home by providing them with a small piece of paper with the link to the survey. The survey will include questions about what they liked about family literacy night and what they would like to suggest for changes or additions in future Literacy Night activities (see Appendix

B). Each family will be given an autographed book by Maribeth Boelts to take home in appreciation of their participation in the family literacy night and in completing the survey for feedback. This family feedback will provide information about the family literacy night regarding what went well and what improvements could be made for future family literacy nights.

Concluding Thoughts

This Family Literacy Night project has been designed to support literacy education for students in grades three to five at my elementary school. While literacy is the overall focus of the evening, specific focus on fluency development is seen in the activity choices that promote what research has shown to make a difference in fluency development: seeing reading as valuable, focusing on reading as an active engagement, acknowledging reading as an enjoyable experience, experiencing reading as a repeated activity, and recognizing reading as meaning making and meaningful to the reader. The final closing activity of a presentation by an invited local author brings together the connection of reading and writing, and provides the families with a first hand connection to making meaning and creating text.

The survey provided to families for feedback to the school is designed to give the families time to think about their experiences before responding. The online nature of the survey (provided on Monkey Survey) enables easy access for families with stable internet connections, time to respond, confidentiality in their responses, and easy access to feedback for the school. Through this initial project, the survey feedback can help to further develop the Family Literacy Night as an ongoing and family-supported experience. The continuation of a Family Literacy Night can be extended beyond the

three grade levels (3rd-5th) in this initial experience to all the grade levels in the school. Perhaps the development of future Family Literacy Nights can include additional evenings at different times during the year, possibly targeting different ages groups, classrooms, or interest areas, as well as different literacy area foci (comprehension, word work, writing, etc.). Families could participate in the Who's Reading bulletin board by having students sign up to bring in family pictures and create a family board that could be a part of the next Family Literacy Night. Or during the next family literacy night, families could be encouraged to bring in a favorite reading material, then photos could be taken as part of a family night activity. By including family feedback in the future planning of Family Literacy Nights, the potential for further development of this family-school connection can be promising, with an intention of improving family participation in children's literacy development, and family engagement with the school.

REFERENCES

- Adams, M. J. (1990). *Beginning to read. Thinking and learning about print*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Chance, R. (2010). Family literacy programs--opportunities and possibilities. *Teacher Librarian*. 37(5). 8-12.
- Fuchs, L., Fuchs, D., Hosp, M., & Jenkins, J. (2001). Oral reading fluency as an indicator of reading competence: A theoretical, empirical, and historical analysis. *Scientific Studies of Reading*. 5, 239-256.
- Grabe, W. (2010). Fluency in reading-thirty-five years later. *Reading in a Foreign Language*. 22(1). 71-83.
- Grinder, E. L., Saenz, E., Askov, E. N., & Aldemir, J. (2005). What's happening during the parent-child interactive literacy component of family literacy programs? *Family Literacy Forum*, 4(1), 12 - 18.
- Hasbrouck, J., & Tindal, G. A. (2006). Oral reading fluency norms: A valuable assessment tool for reading teachers. *International Reading Association*, 59(7), 636-644.
- Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school family and community connections on student achievement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools.
- Hudson, R., Pullen, P., Lane, H., & Torgesen, J. (2009). The complex nature of reading fluency: A multidimensional view. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*. 25, 4-32.
- Martinez, M., Roser, N., & Strecker, S. (1999). "I never thought I could be a star": A readers theatre ticket to fluency. *The Reading Teacher*. 52(4), 326-344.
- McGahey, M. (2005). Hosting a family literacy night at your school. *Teacher Librarian*. 32(5). 28-30.
- Mraz, M., Nichols, W., Caldwell, S., Beisley, R., Sargent, S., & Rupley, W. (2013). Improving oral reading fluency through reader's theatre. *Reading Horizons*. 52(2), 163-180.
- Pahl, K., & Kelly, S. (2005). Family literacy as a third space between home and school: some case studies of practice. *Literacy*, 39, 91-96.

- Paige, D., & Magpuri-Lavell, T. (2014). Reading fluency in the middle and secondary grades. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 7(1), 83-96.
- Patton, B., Crosby, S., Houchins, D., & Jolivette, K. (2010). The comparative of fluency instruction with and without a comprehension strategy for elementary school students. *International Journal of Special Education*. 25, 100-112.
- Perez, S. (1989). Rereading to enhance text understanding in the secondary classroom. *Reading Horizons*. 30(1), 61-66.
- Pey, K. C., Min, L. H., & Wah, L. L. (2014). Relationship between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension among ESL students. *Journal of Language Studies*. 14(3), 19-32.
- Rasinski, T. (2012). Why reading fluency should be hot! *The Reading Teacher*. 65(8), 516-522.
- Rasinski, T. (2004). Creating fluent readers. *Educational Leadership*, 61(6), 46-51.
- Rasinski, T. (2014). Fluency matters. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Educations*. 7(1), 3-12.
- Rasinski, T. V., & Griffith, L. (2012). *Fluency through practice and performance*. Huntington Beach, CA: Shell Education.
- Rasinski, T. V., Reutzel, R., Chard, D. & Linan-Thompson, S. (2011). Reading fluency. In M. L., Kamil, P. D. Pearson, E. B. Moje, & P. Afflerbach (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol.4, pp. 296-319). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Rasinski, T., & Young, C. (2014). Assisted reading - A bridge from fluency to comprehension. *The NERA Journal*. 50(1), 1-4.
- Reading A-Z. (n. d.). *Leveled books*. Retrieved from <https://www.readinga-z.com/books/leveled-books>
- Samuels, S. J. (1979). The method of repeated readings. *The Reading Teacher*. 32, 403-408.
- Schreiber, P. A. (1980). On the acquisition of reading fluency. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 12, 17-186.
- Senechal, M. & LeFevre, J. (2002). Parental involvement in the development of children's reading skill: A five-year longitudinal study. *Child Development*, 73, 445-460.
- St. Pierre, R., Ricciuti, A., & Rimdzius, T. (2005). Effects of a family literacy program

- on low-literate children and their parents: Findings from an evaluation of the Even Start family literacy program. *Developmental Psychology* 41(6), 953-970.
- Stayer, F., & Allington, R. (1991). Fluency and the understanding of texts. *Theory into Practices*, 30(3), 143-148.
- Topping, K. (1987a). Paired reading: A powerful technique for parent use. *The Reading Teacher*. 40, 604-614.
- Wise, J., Sevcik, R., Morris, R., Lovett, M., Wolf, M., Kuhn, M., Meisinger, B., & Schwanenflufel, P. (2010). The relationship between different measures of oral reading fluency and reading comprehension in second-grade students who evidence different oral reading fluency difficulties. *Language, Speech, and Hearing in Schools*. 41, 340-348.
- Young, C. (n. d.). *Alphabetical listings of readers' theater scripts with number of parts*. Retrieved from <http://www.thebestclass.org/rtscripts.html>

Appendix A
List of Lexile Leveled Books
By Genre Areas

List of Book Choices by Genre Areas

NONFICTION - BIOGRAPHY

<i>Title</i>	<i># of Words</i>	<i>Level</i>
Albert Einstein	1,516 words	Level T (Grade 3)
Amelia Earhart: A Legend in Flight	1,507 words	Level Q (Grade 3)
Bessie Coleman	1,321 words	Level R (Grade 3)
Fearless Felix	1,439 words	Level W (Grade 4)
Frederick Douglass: Forever Free	1,337 words	Level V (Grade 4)
Ghandi	1,270 words	Level U (Grade 4)
Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad	1,257 words	Level S (Grade 3)
Joe Kittinger: An Unsung Hero	1,626 words	Level W (Grade 4)
Nelson Mandela	2,017 words	Level W (Grade 4)
Pocahontas at Jamestown	2,116 words	Level Y (Grade 5)
The Tuskegee Airmen	1,675 word	Level V (Grade 4)
Thomas Edison	1,457 words	Level U (Grade 4)

NONFICTION - DESCRIPTION

<i>Title</i>	<i># of Words</i>	<i>Level</i>
Expedition 60: The Subarctic	854 words	Level R (Grade 3)
Vincent's Bedroom	848 words	Level Q (Grade 3)

NONFICTION - INFORMATIONAL

<i>Title</i>	<i># of Words</i>	<i>Level</i>
Alaska: The Last Frontier	961 words	Level R (Grade 3)
Alternative Fuels	1,866 words	Level V (Grade 4)
Art Around Us	823 words	Level P (Grade 2)
Desert People	1,669 words	Level T (Grade 3)
Deserts Dry	1,226 words	Level T (Grade 3)
Early Moments in Rock Music History	1,873 words	Level X (Grade 5)
Electric Cars: History and Future	1,817 words	Level W (Grade 4)
Influenza	1,368 words	Level T (Grade 3)

NONFICTION – INFORMATIONAL, continued

<i>Title</i>	<i># of Words</i>	<i>Level</i>
Mexico's Fight for Independence	1,689 words	Level V (Grade 4)
Microbes: Friend or Foe	1,658 words	Level U (Grade 4)
Plight of the Polar Bear	1,273 words	Level Q (Grade 3)
The Battle of the Alamo	1,909 words	Level V (Grade 4)
The Blues: More Than a Feeling	1,846 words	Level X (Grade 5)
The Great Hunger	1,249 words	Level Y (Grade 5)
The Story of Immigration	1,795 words	Level X (Grade 5)
The Titanic: Lost and Found	1,098 words	
Titanic Treasure	1,073 words	Level T (Grade 3)
More Valuable than Gold	1,149 words	Level U (Grade 4)

NONFICTION - PRO/CON

<i>Title</i>	<i># of Words</i>	<i>Level</i>
To Drill or Not to Drill?	2,161 words	Level W (Grade 4)

FICTION - ADVENTURE

<i>Title</i>	<i># of Words</i>	<i>Level</i>
Adventure in Bear Valley	2,039 words	Level W (Grade 4)
Adventure on the Amazon River	3,125 words	Level V (Grade 4)

FICTION - HISTORICAL

<i>Title</i>	<i># of Words</i>	<i>Level</i>
Ghosts in the House	1,581 words	Level S (Grade 3)
Two Kettles	2,497 words	Level Y (Grade 5)

FICTION – INFORMATIONAL NARRATIVE

<i>Title</i>	<i># of Words</i>	<i>Level</i>
Arrows	2,340 words	Level Y (Grade 5)

FICTION - LEGEND

<i>Title</i>	<i># of Words</i>	<i>Level</i>
Robin Hood and the King	1,233 words	Level Q (Grade 3)
Robin Hood Wins the Golden Arrow	1,183 words	Level R (Grade 3)

FICTION - MYSTERY

<i>Title</i>	<i># of Words</i>	<i>Level</i>
Mystery in the Moonlight	1,617 words	Level U (Grade 4)

FICTION – PERSONAL RECOUNT

<i>Title</i>	<i># of Words</i>	<i>Level</i>
Ants in My Bed	1,569 words	Level T (Grade 3)

FICTION - REALISTIC

<i>Title</i>	<i># of Words</i>	<i>Level</i>
Grandpa Smoke Jumper	2,559 words	Level X (Grade 5)
Growing Up Green	2,348 words	Level U (Grade 4)
Horseshoes Aren't Just for Good Luck	1,600 words	Level T (Grade 3)
Samson: A Horse Story	2,142 words	Level U (Grade 4)
The Gossip Monster	2,743 words	Level V (Grade 4)
The Mystery Twin	2,190 words	Level Y (Grade 5)

Appendix B

List of Selected Books by Maribeth Boelts

Maribeth Boelts Book Selections (with Amazon descriptors)

Happy Like Soccer: Nothing makes Sierra happy like soccer. Her shoes have flames as she spins the ball down the spread-out sea of grass. But nothing makes her sad like soccer, too, because the restaurant where her auntie works is busy on game days and she can't take time off to watch Sierra play. On game days, her auntie helps Sierra get ready and tells her, "Play hard and have fun." And Sierra does, but she can't help wishing she had someone there to root for her by name, and not just by the number on her uniform. With honesty and rare subtlety, author Maribeth Boelts and illustrator Lauren Castillo portray an endearing character in a moving, uplifting story that touches on the divides children navigate every day- and remind us that everyone needs someone to cheer them on from the sidelines.

Kids to the Rescue! First Aid Techniques for Kids: This simple first aid book helps kids think wisely in an emergency. Well illustrated and easy to understand, it describes accident situations that children are likely to find themselves in. The paramedic/teacher author team provides step-by-step directions for handling such common problems as cuts, bloody noses, stings, electric shock and burns. One of our most popular children's books, *Kids to the Rescue!* opens with a note for parents, explaining how children can practice the first aid techniques. It concludes with a first aid quiz and instructions on calling 9-1-1 and other emergency numbers. The back cover has an index so kids can easily find the page of instructions they need. Expanded and revised to cover HIV-safety.

Pupunzel: Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty got their fractured-fairy-tale due in *Dogarella* and *Sleeping Bootsie*. Which princess is next to be puppy-fied? Rapunzel, of course! In this Step 3 send-up, a cocker spaniel named Pupunzel grows long golden fur when a witch takes her from her family and locks her in a tall tower. Will Pupunzel's mama and brothers and sisters ever be able to rescue her from the tower? Or does Pupunzel have some tricks up her fur?

Sleeping Bootsie: Scat! Scram! Stay out! That's all Bootsie the stray cat hears when she tries to find a place she can call home. But then she meets Meg, a laundry maid at the nearby castle, who knows that a pet is exactly what the royal family needs. Everyone agrees, except one spiteful fairy. Bootsie falls under her spell and into a deep, deep sleep. Will Meg figure out how to break the magical spell? The engaging characters and easy-to-follow plot makes this furry fairy tale just right for children who are starting to read on their own.

The PS Brothers: Russell and Shawn call themselves the PS Brothers: P is for *poop*, S is for *scoop*, and *Brothers* is because they're best friends. Scooping poop is the fastest way to earn money to buy a puppy. These two are *crazy* about dogs. And they're sure that once their puppy grows into a tough dog, no one will ever pick on them for being weak or poor again. Unfortunately, getting a puppy is not that easy. Russell and Shawn don't count on uncovering a dog-fighting ring—and that can bust apart a dream faster than a dog can sniff out a bone.

Those Shoes: All Jeremy wants is a pair of those shoes, the ones everyone at school seems to be wearing. Though Jeremy's grandma says they don't have room for "want," just "need," when his old shoes fall apart at school, he is more determined than ever to have those shoes, even a thrift-shop pair that are much too small. But sore feet aren't much fun, and Jeremy soon sees that the things he has — warm boots, a loving grandma, and the chance to help a friend — are worth more than the things he wants.

When It's the Last Day of School: James can barely contain his excitement on the last day of school, but he vows to be good and get Mrs. Bremwood's last gold sticker of the year. He's determined not to talk during Silent Reading and he will get his drink at the water fountain properly and not spit out any of it because it's warm. At lunch, he'll take the wrapper off his straw and not blow it at his friend Tony, and he won't show Tiffany how he can burp and talk at the same time. It'll be a perfect day and at the end, after giving Mrs. Bremwood the biggest hug ever, he'll EXPLODE!

With My Mom, With My Dad: A Book About Divorce: A sensitive story to meet the needs of children experiencing the stress of having parents divorce---for ages 4-8 Helping Kids Heal is a new series from Zonderkidz designed to help children cope with traumatic experiences in their lives. At the end of each book R. Scott Stehower, Ph.D., professor of psychology, Calvin College, and clinical psychologist, provides suggestions for parents and caregivers of hurting children. These books reassure children that God is with them always. Divorce creates deep pain for children and makes them wonder: if Mom and Dad stopped loving each other, will they stop loving me? Children often blame themselves for the divorce and wish that things could go back to the way they were. They may hate the stress of having to go back and forth between their parents' houses. Included are two pages of suggestions for parents and others helping a child through loss.

Appendix C

List of Exit Survey Questions

List of questions for exit survey

1. What time works well for your family to attend family literacy night? (choose all that would work for your schedule)

4:00-6:00 5:30-7:30 or 6:00-8:00

2. What time of year would you like to see for future family literacy night? (choose all that would work for your schedule)

September or October or November or February or March or April

3. What stations did you complete?

Bulletin board Y or N comment:
 Repeated reading Y or N comment:
 Scavenger hunt Y or N comment:
 Reader's Theatre Y or N comment:
 Author Presentation Y or N comment:

4. Which station was the favorite for the family?

Bulletin board comment:
 Repeated reading comment:
 Scavenger hunt comment:
 Reader's Theatre comment:
 Author Presentation comment:

5. What overall rating would you give for family literacy night?

Not Satisfactory	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

6. What changes would you like to see at Family Literacy Night?

7. Any additional comments: