

A FOCUS ON FLUENCY:
READING FLUENCY INSTRUCTION FOR TIER 2 AND TIER 3
STUDENTS AT LANCASHIRE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by

Sandra N McBride

An executive leadership portfolio submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in
Educational Leadership.

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STUDENTS AT LANCASHIRE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

by

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ABSTRACT

The primary focus of this ELP is to provide information to teachers about reading fluency in order to strengthen reading fluency instruction in grades two through five at Lancashire Elementary School. More specifically, this project offers fluency instruction methods and strategies for teachers who provide tier 2 and tier 3 reading instruction in order to boost student reading proficiency. In order to achieve this objective, I focused on the following three goals: 1) research the best strategies, interventions, and assessments needed to monitor progress 2), provide teachers with the tools needed to increase reading fluency for tier 2 and tier 3 instruction, and 3) offer professional development for teachers in order to implement instructional strategies and to use assessments effectively. While the ultimate goal is to increase student reading fluency, this is neither the scope nor purpose of the project. Instead this is the first step of providing reading fluency instruction information to teachers. In the future, it will be important to assess whether teacher practice changes and also if student reading fluency improves due to these changes.

An online survey for staff members identified their fluency needs in terms of knowledge, interest, and instructional practices. As a first step, empirically validated instructional strategies and interventions were identified that could be used to strengthen the reading fluency of struggling readers. Using those materials, I compiled

a set of reading fluency resources for the Lancashire staff. These resources included a fluency toolkit and an informational web site. In addition I created and presented professional development sessions for the Lancashire staff to introduce fluency strategies and interventions.

After three professional development sessions and the development of my website, Lancashire teachers are now more aware of the importance of reading fluency instruction as determined through observations, surveys, and informal interviews. A variety of research-based strategies and interventions are being used in classrooms for instruction in all three tiers.

Future recommendations include continued PD fluency sessions with Lancashire teachers to strengthen fluency strategies and interventions and to share fluency information. Also student growth in reading fluency should continue to be monitored and addressed when necessary.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Reading fluency is an important component of reading instruction and can influence a student's academic success (Schwanenflugel, Kuhn & Meisinger, 2010; Rasinski, 2012; Chard, Vaughn & Tyler, 2002). It is very important to the overall development of reading competence (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006) and can be used as an indicator of general reading proficiency (Spear-Swerling, 2006; Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001). In addition, there are relationships between oral reading fluency and student achievement (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003; Pikulski & Chard, 2005). Those not able read text fluently are at a great disadvantage (Shaywitz, 2003; Hudson, Lane & Pullen, 2005).

In the state of Delaware, elementary students are expected to meet reading fluency benchmarks throughout the school year. Delaware schools are expected to help students meet these benchmarks through the three-tiered Response to Intervention (RTI) instructional model. As a Delaware school in the Brandywine School District, Lancashire Elementary must provide tier 2 and tier 3 reading instruction for students with reading difficulties. It is challenging for teachers to learn and to implement effective fluency instruction with their students who have reading fluency difficulties in their classrooms.

This ELP is designed to address the challenge of tier 2 and 3 fluency instruction. A multi-component approach was used to provide training in effective instructional approaches and to offer teachers access to resources for instruction and assessment. Data was also collected.

This portfolio is organized into six chapters and appendices. In chapter 2, I describe the problem at Lancashire Elementary School and review material presented in the proposal. In chapter 3, I discuss the improvement strategies that were used, and in chapter 4, I examine the results. In chapter 6, I address my reflections on leadership development. To conclude, the appendices include my original proposal and the 11 artifacts used in my inquiry. “Effective Interventions to Help Elementary Students Become Fluent Readers” is a literature review that was used to help identify strategies and interventions for a fluency toolkit and fluency website (See Appendix E). A fluency toolkit, which contains both general information about reading fluency as well as specific strategies and interventions was also developed (See Appendix M). This information is organized around the three RTI tiers. I also created a reading fluency website to convey reading fluency information to elementary school teachers (See Appendix N). Three white papers were written, each addressing a specific RTI tier (See Appendices F, G, H). In addition I developed a curriculum analysis of the Read Naturally fluency program (See Appendix B). I also wrote an article about reading fluency in the style of a practitioner journal such as for *The Reading Teacher* (See Appendix C). Finally, I developed three professional development sessions to convey reading fluency information to the Lancashire staff (See Appendices I, J, K).

Chapter 2

PROBLEM ADDRESSED

The Motivating Initiative

As a member of my school's leadership team, I am often asked by teachers for ideas to help struggling students improve their reading skills. As part of the discussion, I ask about a student's reading fluency and subsequent fluency strategies that are used in the classroom. Although most teachers at Lancashire Elementary are familiar with basic fluency strategies used with students such as echo reading, choral reading and partner reading, many appear to be unfamiliar with fluency interventions to improve reading fluency with the tier 2 and 3 populations.

As a special needs teacher, I have always been interested in how children learn to read. During my many years of teaching, I noticed that fluency is rarely addressed during reading instruction. This was a concern as fluency instruction is an important part of the reading process. This lack of fluency instruction, as well as the interest of the Lancashire staff in learning about fluency strategies and interventions helped guide me to focus on this topic for my ELP.

Organizational Role

I have been a special education teacher at Lancashire Elementary School for nine years. During the past nine years, I have been a member of the school's

Instructional Strategies Team and the Instructional Leadership Team. Currently I am second grade team leader. As a member of these leadership teams, I have been privileged to be able to advise and assist teachers needing help in the reading domain. Since beginning the Ed.D. program, I have also served as a reading instruction resource for teachers at Lancashire. Since my enrollment in the Educational Leadership program, I have served as a resource for all classroom teachers. As a teacher of students with special needs and a team leader, one of my jobs is to help teachers learn about and navigate through new programs and strategies. This includes introducing reading strategies and interventions in addition to providing direct instruction for my own students. Given that reading fluently is an important part of the reading instruction process, I also work with staff members individually, at PLC meetings and at staff meetings about ways to incorporate fluency instruction into the reading block as well as specific interventions that can be used in the classroom.

Organizational Context

Demographic Composition of the District

Brandywine School District is located in Wilmington, Delaware, encompassing part of the city and the suburbs. The total enrollment for the 2013-2014 school year was 10,802 students. The school district consists of three high schools, three middle schools, and nine elementary schools. Brandywine has a diverse student body, that is 37% African American, 6% Asian, 5% Hispanic, and 50% White. Forty-

four percent of students are low income, and 12% are students with special needs (See Table 1).

Table 1 Brandywine School District Demographics 2012-2013

<u>Demographics</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
English Language Learner	4.70%
Low Income	43.80%
Special Education	11.60%

Lancashire Elementary School Demographics

Lancashire Elementary School is a suburban school located in the Brandywine School District whose majority population is white. There are currently 516 students enrolled at Lancashire Elementary for the 2014-2015 school year. The demographics of the student body are 22% African American, 8.5% Asian, 6% Latino, 3% Multiracial, and 60% White. Twenty-five percent of students are low income and more than 7% are English Language Learners (ELLs). Nine percent of the total population is identified as students with special needs (see Table 2). Typically, students falling into the special needs, low income and ELL populations are at risk for reading delays and/or difficulties that prevent them from meeting grade-level expectations (Linan-Thomson et al., 2003; Chard, Vaughn & Tyler, 2002; Dion, Brodeur, Gosselin, Campeau & Fuchs, 2010). It should be noted that the state of Delaware changed the way it calculated low-income status between the 2012-2013 and

the 2013-2014 school years, which is why it appears that there is a significant drop in the school's low-income population in Table 2.

Table 2 Lancashire Elementary School Demographics

Table 2

Lancashire Demographics

<u>Demographics</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>	<u>2013-2014</u>
English Language Learner	6.40%	7.50%
Low Income	43.40%	25.20%
Special Education	7.80%	9.40%

Lancashire has a staff of thirty-seven. Eighty-seven percent of all instructional staff members are white and 11% are African American. Sixty-eight percent of the teachers have a Masters degree. Forty-five percent of Lancashire teachers have taught for 15 to 24 years. Fifteen percent have 30 or more years of teaching experience.

In its mission statement Lancashire leaders state that the school is committed to providing an educational experience based on the principles of equity, differentiated instruction, and a promise and belief of academic and social success for all. This is to occur in an environment that encourages collaboration with staff, parents, and community, effective and ongoing assessment, and the implementation of best teaching practices. In turn, Lancashire will foster students to excel as life-long learners. Currently 91 students, or approximately 18 percent of the entire student population at Lancashire qualify for tier 2 and tier 3 learning in the reading domain.

Common Core State Standards for Fluency

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) provide broad, end-of-year expectations for students at each grade level. The standards related to reading fluency are part of the Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity standards, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.10. These standards state that students should be able to read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently. In terms of fluency, there are specific standards that state that students should be able to read accurately and with expression at an appropriate rate.

The CCSS, while addressing general fluency, are not specific in nature. They do not describe what constitutes sufficient accuracy. In addition, the fluency standards do not address what is considered to be an appropriate oral reading rate when reading grade-level materials. This lack of specificity makes it difficult for teachers to determine if students are meeting the CCSS for fluency. BSD has worked to provide clearer guidelines for teachers about students' fluency performance by using two standardized assessments to measure progress throughout the school year.

District Procedure For Identifying Struggling Readers

Given the demands of the CCSS, early identification of students who may benefit from reading interventions is important. The Brandywine School District has recently developed a specific procedure for identifying students who may require tier 2 and tier 3 RTI instruction. Students in second through fifth grade are given the STAR Reading assessment at the beginning of the school year. The STAR Reading test is a standardized, computer-adapted assessment that is norm-referenced. This

means that the STAR Reading assessment compares student scores against the performance of other similar students. The Brandywine School District uses students' performance on the STAR Reading assessment to determine placement in RTI groups. If a student scores below the **25th percentile** on the assessment, then the district recommends further assessment and considers that student for RTI services.

Students scoring below the 50th percentile on this assessment are given the The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Next Oral Reading Fluency (DIBELS Next ORF) assessment. If these students do not reach the grade-specific score on the DIBELS Next ORF, the Informal Decoding Inventory (IDI) (Walpole, McKenna, & Philippakos, 2011) is administered to identify the specific decoding skills that have not been mastered. The district and Lancashire have a sizable proportion of students who need more intensive fluency instruction, as evidenced by the results from the STAR Reading assessment, which is presented below.

STAR Reading Assessment Results

District STAR Reading results show that 18% of all second grade students and 17% of all third grade students achieved an overall score below the district criterion for the first half of the 2014-2015 school year (Figure 1). In addition, 14% of all fourth grade students and 13% of all fifth grade students scored below the 50th percentile. This means that approximately 15% of all elementary students in grades two through five scored below district cut-off scores, based on the district criterion of the 50th percentile (See Figure 1).

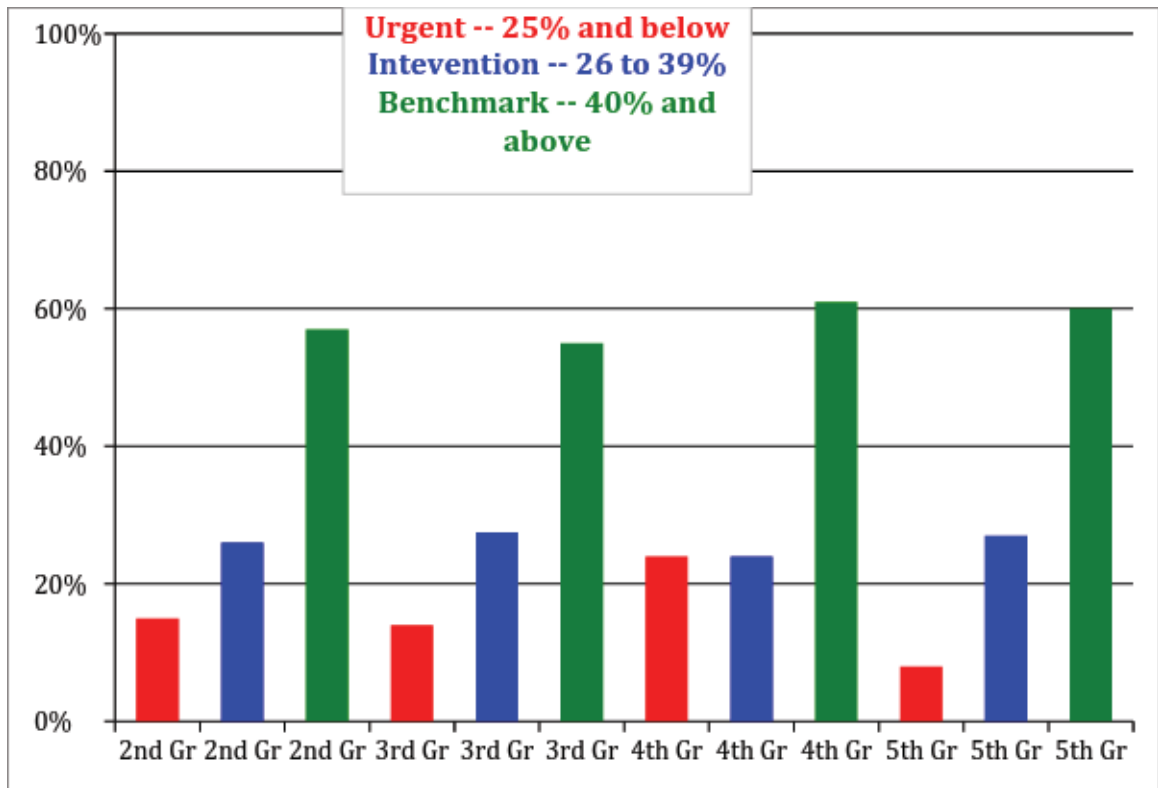


Figure 1 Winter 2015 Brandywine District STAR Reading Results - Percentage of Students At Each Mastery Range

On the STAR Reading assessment, there is no direct fluency assessment. Instead the assessment uses comprehension questions to estimate a student's fluency proficiency. The publisher, Renaissance Learning, states that although test items are not directly aligned with the standards, fluency levels can be predicted by student performance. Renaissance Learning claims that in order for a student to successfully read grade-level test items and complete them in the specified time period, a student would need to be a fluent reader, thus meeting the fluency standard (Renaissance Learning, n.d). It should be noted that the test is unable to differentiate difficulties

with vocabulary, fluency, or word reading for comprehension test items. This makes it difficult to obtain an accurate account of a student's reading fluency ability.

The STAR Reading data suggest that a large group of Brandywine students may not be able to meet the fluency CCSS standards. According to STAR Reading winter 2015 results, 28% of second -grade students and 26% of all third-grade students in the Brandywine School District were predicted not to meet fluency standards. Sixteen percent of all fourth and fifth grade students also would most likely not meet the standards as well. This is a concern, as reading fluency is an important part of reading development. As reading demands on students grow each year, students not meeting these fluency standards may become farther behind in reading understanding.

The Need for Fluency Instruction in the District

The STAR Reading data show that 46% of students in the Brandywine School District were able to reach the benchmark in reading; however, that means 54% of students require additional help in this area. Focusing on additional reading fluency instruction will help to make students in the district more proficient readers.

Lancashire Reading Fluency Results

Lancashire STAR reading scores. When focusing on Lancashire's results, the STAR Reading scores show that slightly more than 20% of second grade students and 25% of third grade students scored at or below the twenty-fifth percentile. Sixteen percent of Lancashire's fourth grade students and 11 percent of fifth grade students also scored at or below the twenty-fifth percentile. It is interesting to note that a smaller percentage of fourth and fifth grade students scored below the twenty-fifth

percentile (See Figure 2). One reason for this may be that RTI instruction, in use for several years now, is working and students are becoming better readers. The results could also be an anomaly for these two particular groups of students. Even with the smaller percentage of fourth and fifth grade students requiring reading intervention, there are still a large number of students that needs additional reading instruction in order to reach grade-level expectations. The STAR Reading score is an indication of general reading ability, including all aspects of reading. Reading fluency is an important component in this process. When a student's fluency is not well developed, overall reading scores are affected.

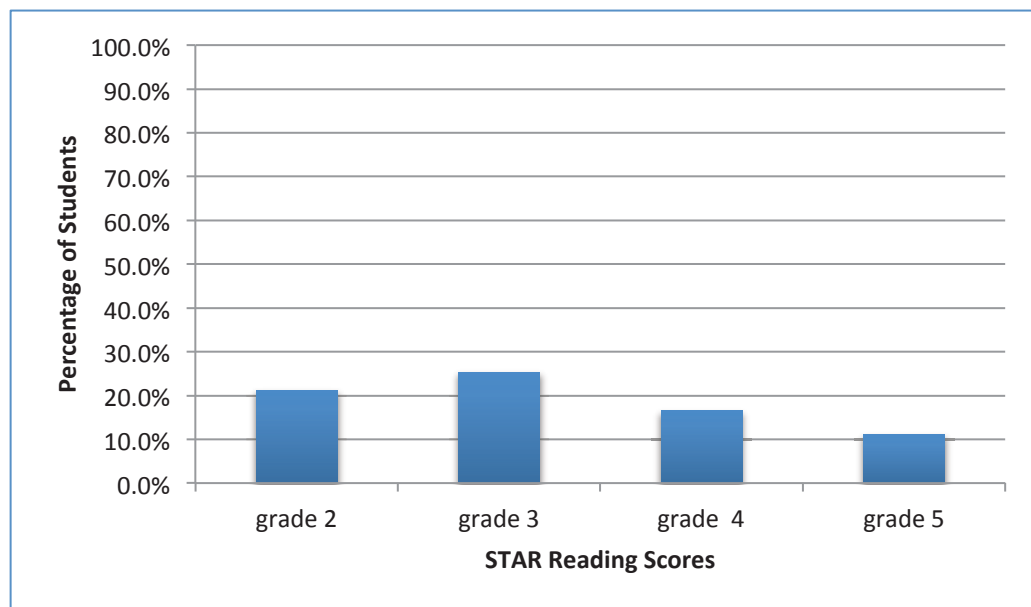


Figure 2 Percentage of Lancashire Students Scoring at or below the 25th Percentile on the STAR Reading Assessment

At Lancashire Elementary School, performance on the STAR Reading tests suggests that 20% of second grade and 25% of third grade students would most likely not meet the fluency standard. In addition, 18% of all fourth and 10% of fifth grade students scored may not meet the fluency standard (See Figure 2). While STAR Reading may be an indirect measure of fluency, it does show there is a need for additional fluency instruction both at Lancashire as well as in the majority of Brandywine School District elementary schools.

Lancashire DIBELS next ORF assessment. The DIBELS Next ORF provides a direct assessment of fluency. The DIBELS Next ORF component is given to students in grades two through five who do not reach the benchmark level on the STAR Reading assessment. It is a criterion-referenced assessment that is administered on an individual basis. Students are expected to be able to read a specific number of correct words per minute at the beginning, middle and end of each grade level.

In the fall, 15 second grade students and 11 third grade students at Lancashire failed to reach the benchmark on the DIBELS Next ORF assessment. In the fourth grade, 14 Lancashire students did not achieve the benchmark score on this assessment. Thirteen fifth graders also did not reach the benchmark on the DIBELS Next ORF. This means that 15% of all second- grade students, 12% of all third-grade students, 13% of all fourth- grade students, and 13% of all fifth-grade students performed below grade-level expectations in the area of oral reading fluency on the DIBELS Next ORF.

Comparing Lancashire student scores of STAR reading and DIBELS Next

ORF. In the Brandywine School District, the two assessments used to identify struggling readers are the STAR Reading test and the DIBELS Next ORF. Students who score below the 50th percentile on STAR Reading are given the DIBELS Next ORF test. If students score below the benchmark on the DIBELS Next ORF, they are placed in an RTI reading group.

I was interested in analyzing this data to determine if students scoring below the benchmark level on the STAR Reading assessment would be identified by the DIBELS Next ORF assessment as needing reading fluency intervention. I compared the scores of students receiving tier 2 and tier 3 instruction who were given both tests to determine the sensitivity of the STAR Reading assessment and if students that achieve a score below the 50 percentile really do have fluency problems.

A limitation of the STAR Reading assessment is that it provides only an indication of general reading ability. There is no direct fluency portion of the assessment. Instead the assessment uses comprehension questions to estimate a student's fluency. An additional limitation is that a student could perform well on the STAR Reading assessment and still need fluency instruction. The DIBELS Next ORF subtest directly measures reading fluency. Since students who achieve the benchmark score on STAR Reading are not given the DIBELS Next ORF assessment, this could be considered a limitation of using solely an indirect measure of fluency as an initial screener.

The majority of students who scored poorly on STAR Reading also scored poorly on the DIBELS Next ORF. One grade level in particular had a sizable percentage of students that scored poorly on the STAR Reading assessment but reached the benchmark criterion on DIBELS Next ORF. In fifth grade 15% of students that took both assessments scored above the benchmark criterion on DIBELS Next ORF but below the benchmark criterion on STAR Reading. I am not sure of the reason for this discrepancy. An additional possibility is that since STAR Reading assesses a combination of reading skills while DIBELS Next ORF only addresses reading fluency, a student may have excellent fluency skills but poor comprehension. This would present as a lower score on STAR Reading while it would be reaching the benchmark on DIBELS Next ORF. Second grade had six percent of students perform better on DIBELS Next ORF than on STAR Reading. This is a fairly small percentage and so appears to be less meaningful than the fifth grade difference.

Results of my analysis indicate that most students performing below benchmark expectations on STAR Reading needed RTI instruction to improve their fluency skills. Even though STAR Reading addresses only general reading skills, it does appear that the vast majority of students who score below the 50th percentile on the STAR Reading have weak fluency skills, as assessed by the DIBELS Next ORF. These students are likely to benefit from extra instruction in reading fluency.

Problem Statement

Reading Fluency in the Classroom

As a member of my school's leadership team, I am often asked by teachers for ideas to help struggling students improve their reading skills. As part of the discussion, I will ask about a student's reading fluency and subsequent fluency strategies being used in the classroom. Although most teachers at Lancashire Elementary are familiar with basic fluency strategies used with students such as echo reading, choral reading and partner reading, many appear to be unfamiliar with fluency interventions to improve reading fluency with the tier 2 and 3 populations.

It is challenging for teachers to find the time to learn and implement research-based reading instructional strategies for their tier 2 and tier 3 students (Dearman & Alber, 2005). It is even more difficult when teachers are not provided with the tools needed to teach reading fluency. This is a challenge that Lancashire Elementary School teachers face each day. However, teachers are very interested in learning more about fluency interventions and assessments for their tier 2 and tier 3 students (See Appendix B).

My goal is to provide information to teachers in order to increase reading fluency instruction for grades two to five at Lancashire in order to improve the reading skills for struggling students. I plan to do this by educating teachers about the importance of reading fluency instruction and providing the information and tools needed to make this happen. The anticipated long-term outcome is targeted instruction that will result in increased student reading fluency. While I would like to observe

stronger student reading fluency, neither the scope nor purpose of this project is to increase student reading fluency. Instead, my project is a first step in providing information to teachers. In the future, it will be important to assess whether changes in teacher practice result in student reading fluency improvement.

My personal goals aligned with the expectations of the school administration. Through informal meetings and emails with the principal, it was decided that one of my responsibilities would be to provide reading PD for the staff during the 2016-2017 school year. I have also been asked to assume a consulting role with different grade levels to help improve overall student reading progress. At the district level, it has been discussed that I offer reading fluency professional development sessions at some of the other elementary schools in the Brandywine School District.

Chapter 3

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

Rationale

It is challenging for teachers to find the time to learn and implement research-based, reading instructional strategies for their tier 2 and tier 3 students (Dearman & Alber, 2005). It is even more difficult when teachers are not provided with the tools needed to teach reading fluency. This is a challenge that Lancashire Elementary School teachers face each day. However, according to the survey administered to staff, teachers are very interested in learning more about fluency interventions and assessments for their tier 2 and tier 3 students (See Appendix D).

The purpose of this project was to introduce strategies and interventions to strengthen teachers' fluency instruction in order to increase student reading fluency. The project had three goals: (a) research the best strategies, interventions, and assessments needed to monitor progress, (b) provide teachers with the tools needed to increase reading fluency for tier 2 and tier 3 instruction and (c) offer professional development for teachers in order to implement strategies and assessments. A preliminary step before designing my ELP was to learn about the needs of the Lancashire staff concerning fluency instruction. In order to do this, I created a survey for teachers to complete. I did this to determine what information teachers needed to

strengthen fluency instruction. The survey included items about reading fluency strategies, programs, and assessments. By obtaining surveying teacher knowledge in this area, I was able focus on my research on fluency information that would benefit Lancashire teachers.

All of the teachers that responded to the survey stated that fluency instruction is important, but about one-third of them use fluency-building routines only occasionally or never. Most are familiar with tier one strategies such as choral reading and echo reading. One third of the teachers never assess student fluency. The results showed that teachers are interested in learning more about fluency instruction and assessment, which influenced my focus on this important topic.

Improvement Strategies

Implementation of Strategies

After learning of Lancashire teachers' knowledge of reading fluency instruction, I began to review current reading fluency research. I did this by conducting a literature review that focused on reading fluency strategies, interventions, and assessments (See Appendix E). In addition, I developed a curriculum analysis of the Read Naturally Program (See Appendix B). Read Naturally is a program that I have used for several years with my students with special needs. I was interested to analyze the program to determine if research had found it to be an effective method to improve reading fluency. The information obtained from the

literature review and curriculum analysis helped me to choose the strategies, interventions and assessments for both the fluency toolkit and website.

My next step involved gathering and developing fluency materials and information that could be used by classroom teachers. This included writing three white papers, each focusing on one of the three RTI tiers (See Appendices F, G, H). The white papers were designed to give teachers general information, strategies and interventions that can be used for instruction in each tier.

An article I wrote about reading fluency entitled “Focus on Fluency. Strategies for Classroom RTI Instruction” was developed in order to provide information about fluency instruction to teachers (See Appendix C). The article was formatted in the method required by the journal *The Reading Teacher*. “Focus on Fluency” contains information about reading fluency as well as strategies, interventions, and fluency activities that can be used in the classroom.

I also created a fluency toolkit of effective instructional approaches as well as fluency programs and materials (See Appendix L). The toolkit contains hard copies of information Lancashire teachers can use with their students to improve reading fluency. It provides general information about fluency as well as specific strategies and interventions that can be used in the classroom. All three of the white papers and the fluency article, “Focus on Fluency” that I wrote are also included in the toolkit. In addition, there is an assessment component to help teachers learn ways to measure and monitor student fluency gains.

In addition, I created a reading fluency website to help teachers learn information about strategies, interventions, activities, and assessments that can be used by teachers to increase reading fluency. The website information is designed around the RTI instructional tiers. It is an open site that is available to all interested parties. My website, www.reading-fluency.com is hosted on the GoDaddy server (See Appendix M).

In order to convey my strategies to the Lancashire staff, I needed to add a teacher- training component. This component included three professional development sessions for Lancashire teachers that focused on reading fluency information, strategies and interventions. All three sessions were organized around instruction in the three RTI tiers.

The first presentation was created for the entire Lancashire staff. It included general fluency information and tier 2 strategies and interventions that can be used in the classroom. When designing this PD, I chose to focus primarily on the Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) as the majority of Lancashire teachers were unfamiliar with the program. Research has shown that PALS is an effective way to increase reading fluency and reading comprehension (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2005), so it seemed like an excellent intervention to introduce to teachers.

My second PD session was designed for special education teachers and focused on tier 3 interventions. I decided to concentrate on two programs: Read Naturally and Quick Reads. Both are supplemental programs that can be used in addition to the school reading curriculum. I chose to focus on these two programs

because they are comprehensive programs that can be used with individual students for tier 3 instruction. Also, both programs have been shown to help increase reading fluency (Vadasy & Sanders, 2008; Hancock, 2002).

I first reviewed Read Naturally, but did not spend a lot of time discussing the program because the majority of the special education teachers were familiar with it. I spent more on the Quick Reads since most of the teachers did not know about this program.

The third presentation was a comprehensive look at reading fluency that was designed for the entire staff. This PD reviewed fluency information and discussed strategies, interventions and assessments for all three RTI tiers. The first two PDs were 30 minutes in length while the final PD was 60 minutes long. The third PD was longer since it included information about all three tiers and provided time for teachers to review hand-outs describing the intervention programs that were discussed. During this session, I focused on the Book Buddies program and Fluency Oriented Reading Instruction. Book Buddies uses trained volunteers to deliver one-on-one reading tutoring. Reading fluency is a component of this program both at the word and sentence level. Book Buddies is an effective way to increase reading skills, including fluency (Meier & Invernizzi, 2001). FORI is a comprehensive intervention intended to be used with a school's basal reading series during a five-day week. The program uses teacher modeling, repeated reading, echo reading, and partner reading.

I also discussed the Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency- 2 (TOSWRF-2) during this session. All teachers at Lancashire are very familiar with DIBELS Next

ORF as most must administer this assessment multiple times during the school year. I wanted to introduce an additional fluency assessment, the TOSWRF-2 that can be administered in a group setting. The TOSWRF-2 is a timed test where students identify as many words as they can within a three-minute time period. The TOSWRF-2 has been shown to produce positive results when compared to other assessments (Bell, McCallum, Burton, Gray, Windingstad, & Moore, 2006).

The PD sessions helped inform the staff of strategies and fluency programs that can be used to improve reading fluency. This helped me achieve my goal of providing teachers with the tools needed to increase reading fluency instruction. I found through observation, PD surveys, and teacher comments, that teachers are now more aware of strategies and programs that can be used with their students. Many are using fluency strategies during their daily reading instruction. The website and toolkit I created serve as resources for classroom teachers. All of the interventions are available to help teachers incorporate reading fluency instruction into their daily reading instruction

Although policies were not modified after the implementation of my project, procedures have been modified. Our principal is now specifically asking teachers to include fluency instruction as a focus in their reading block. New fluency resources are now available including the fluency toolkit and website. Also, teachers are sharing a limited supply of Quick Reads materials. Also I have requested additional fluency materials from the principal for the 2016-2017 school year to continue the focus on reading fluency. These include Quick Reads materials and PALS teacher manuals.

Chapter 4

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES RESULTS

I was able to implement all of my improvement strategies at Lancashire. These strategies consisted of developing and presenting three PD sessions about fluency instruction, creating a fluency toolkit for faculty use and establishing a fluency website to provide information to all teachers. All strategies were put into effect during the winter of 2016. Below I will discuss the results of all three PD sessions. I will also discuss my fluency toolkit and website.

My first PD session was designed for my school's special education staff and addressed tier 3 strategies and interventions. The PD occurred during the team's PLC and focused on the Quick Reads and Read Naturally programs as well as assessments such as the DIBELS Next ORF and the TOSWRF-2.

The next PD was created for the Lancashire faculty. This PD focused on tier 1 and tier 2 interventions and strategies that can be used in the classroom. The strategies that were introduced were teacher modeling, echo reading, choral reading, whisper reading, and partner reading. The Book Buddies program was discussed as a way to increase reading fluency as was the use of poetry and songs. Repeated reading and wide reading were discussed as well. The Quick Reads program and the Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) program were also introduced to the staff during this PD.

The third PD provided a general overview of all three tiers regarding reading fluency. This session was offered to all staff members and occurred after school hours. During this PD, in addition to reviewing tier 1 and tier 2 fluency strategies, I discussed Fluency Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI) and the Book Buddies programs. I also talked about tier 3 interventions including Read Naturally and Quick Reads. The DIBELS Next ORF was also discussed as was the TOSWRF-2.

Tier 2 Professional Development Session

I spoke to the Lancashire staff about reading fluency on February 16, 2016 at an after school curriculum meeting. The session lasted for thirty minutes and focused on tier 1 and tier 2 fluency interventions and strategies (See Appendix J). I began the talk by discussing the importance of reading fluency instruction. In this portion of the talk, I also discussed the disadvantages of round robin reading. Tier 1 strategies were then reviewed with the staff before concentrating on the tier 2 information. Tier 2 materials talked about included the Quick Reads program and Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS). After the presentation, teachers were asked to complete a short survey (See Appendix M). Twenty-eight staff members completed the survey.

Survey results indicated that all teachers felt they either learned new information, or were reminded about fluency information from the presentation. All but eight staff members who responded to the survey were interested in the PALS program. Twenty-one staff members were interested in using Quick Reads. Written comments were very positive, and included “Thank you! Great reminders and new

information! Awesome presentation! Needed Reminders! Like the PALS program!
Great presentation! Seems like something to learn more about.”

Tier 3 Professional Development Session

I presented my tier 3 professional development session to Lancashire’s special education staff members on Jan. 22, 2016 (See Appendix K). Seven professionals attended the 30-minute presentation including four teachers, a speech therapist, a psychologist and the District special education coordinator. The session began by first providing a review of reading fluency instruction and its importance. I then focused on two tier 3 interventions, Read Naturally and Quick Reads. Since most of the professionals attending the session were familiar with the Read Naturally program, I spent the majority of my time discussing Quick Reads. Most of the team were unfamiliar with this intervention.

After the presentation, participants were asked to complete a short survey (See Appendix M). Five of the seven staff members returned the survey. All five participants agreed that they learned something new during the presentation. In addition, all five members were interested in either using or continuing to use the Read Naturally program. Four of the five were interested in using or continuing to use the Quick Reads program. The participants agreed that the speaker presented information in a clear and concise manner. One member commented, “It was great to have information about Quick Reads. I have not used it, but now intend to.” “It was great to have a sample as a handout.” “Good to have the research results about each program.”

The staff members also provided positive verbal comments directly after the presentation. Three participants commented that it was beneficial to review reading fluency instruction. Many expressed interest in using Quick Reads with their students. The team discussed ordering Quick Reads materials for the upcoming 2016-2017 school year.

Tiers 1, 2 and 3 Professional Development Session

The final professional development session entitled Fluency Through the Tiers was given on February 26. This comprehensive session was scheduled for a 60-minute time period. This session provided an overview of fluency in all three tiers as well as specific strategies and interventions for all three levels of instruction. Afterwards teachers had the opportunity to look at a variety of fluency materials and programs.

Ten teachers attended this PD. In the survey completed after the session, all participants indicated that they learned new information during the presentation and were interested in using some of the strategies and interventions in their classrooms (See Appendix M). Five teachers would like to use Quick Reads in their classrooms, three staff members were interested in using PALS, and one teacher would like to use Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI). FORI is a comprehensive plan that uses strategies such as choral reading, echo reading and partner reading. It can be used for whole class or small group fluency instruction. In addition, teachers were interested in the Book Buddies program and Read Naturally. One teacher mentioned that she would like to use Reader's Theatre in her classroom. Survey comments include, "Helpful,

useful information that gets you talking about reading.” Also, “I did not realize the amount of research-based programs available.” “Interested in the toolkit.” and “Nice presentation and good information.”

There were requests at the end of the presentation to provide summer training sessions for the PALS program and Book Buddies. A fifth grade teacher spoke of possibly training fifth grade students in the Book Buddies program and then having the students work with first and second grade struggling readers. Although Book Buddies is not designed to use student volunteers, I plan to meet with teachers to design peer-tutoring sessions using fifth grade students as peer tutors. I will arrange and facilitate both of these sessions this coming summer.

Although no school resources were allocated to support improvements, the Lancashire administration generously allotted time for me to present all three PD sessions. I have requested funding from my principal for the coming school year in order to obtain reading fluency materials for each grade level. Since several teachers are interested in using PALS, and Quick Reads, I would like to purchase materials to help implement these programs. If school funding is not available, I will apply for a literacy grant to acquire additional fluency programs for the Lancashire staff.

Conclusion

According to surveys distributed after all three PD sessions, the sessions were well received. Teachers were interested in learning new ways to teach reading fluency. Many commented both verbally and in writing that they were happy to be reminded about the importance of reading fluency instruction. In addition, several teachers

verbally expressed the use of specific reading fluency strategies introduced during the PD sessions in their classrooms.

The fluency toolkit, although not a strategy, is a way for teachers to access information about fluency instruction. It is organized by RTI tiers, with additional sections addressing fluency assessment, data collection, and information conveyed through white papers, my literature review and the fluency article. At the present time, there is no data on the toolkit's effectiveness. Since this resource that will continue to be available to teachers for a long time period, its impact could be observed possibly through observation or by surveying Lancashire teachers in the future.

Another fluency tool is the fluency website. The site is also organized and aligned to the three RTI tiers. All Lancashire teachers were given the website address, and it is an open site, accessible to all interested parties. There is no data available at the present time to measure the website's effectiveness. Possibly I could monitor people who visit the site, but it may be difficult to differentiate users since it is an open site. I may need to create a teacher survey to discover its usefulness to teachers. I can also interview teachers to determine its usefulness.

Although it is difficult to measure if the toolkit and website have influenced fluency instruction at Lancashire, the fluency information is available to all interested teachers. In the future, I need to determine a way to collect measurable data that will confirm their usefulness.

Chapter 5

REFLECTION ON IMPROVEMENT EFFORT RESULTS

When reflecting on my improvement effort, I find that some components of my program were quite effective while the effectiveness of other parts has not been determined. According to surveys given at the end of the three PD sessions, participants agreed that I achieved my goal of introducing a variety of fluency strategies and interventions to the Lancashire staff. Other components such as the fluency website and toolkit should help teachers by providing fluency information. However, during the preliminary stages of my ELP, the evaluation process for these two tools was not planned. This was an oversight that I need to remedy.

Through my actions, Lancashire teachers have been reminded of the importance of fluency and were introduced to different programs and strategies that can be used with their struggling readers. Information about programs and resources is available through my fluency website and the fluency toolkit. I plan to continue to offer information about fluency instruction through PD both at staff meetings and at PLCs.

Providing specific fluency programs to the staff has proven challenging because of limited access to fluency materials. Some but not all teachers have access to Quick Reads materials. Most of the teachers who do have the Quick Read program

do not have enough student workbooks. I am hoping to apply for a grant during the 2016-2017 school year to purchase reading fluency materials such as the Quick Reads program and PALS manuals for teachers. Teachers will meet with me this summer to plan for this program.

I was pleased with the results of my three PD sessions. It was my first time presenting information in this format to Lancashire staff members, and I was happy to receive a very positive response during each meeting. Teachers were receptive to many of my strategy and intervention suggestions. Ten of the teachers were interested enough to attend my third PD session after school hours. At all three PD sessions, teacher asked many questions about the programs presented, both procedural and specific information about each program. It has been gratifying to have teachers acknowledge more awareness about the importance of reading fluency as well as observing teachers use fluency strategies with their students. The interest shown in the use of programs such as Quick Reads and PALS has also been rewarding. I am hoping to continue to maintain teacher cognizance of the need to teach reading fluency through PD sessions both at staff meetings and also at after school sessions. Using PD to convey reading fluency information was a positive experience for staff members according to my exit surveys. Their interest in different interventions and strategies were conveyed both through surveys and to me verbally after each session. In the future I plan to create additional PD about reading fluency to address expanded versions of specific interventions discussed during my three sessions. In addition, I plan to survey teachers during the 2016-2017 school year to determine their use of

specific reading fluency strategies and interventions introduced during my PD sessions.

It is difficult to measure the impact of both the fluency website and toolkit. I have received positive verbal feedback from teachers about both of them, but there is no way for me to measure their effectiveness. Perhaps I need to collect website data to monitor who visits the site. The effectiveness of the toolkit also needs to be measured. I may need to survey Lancashire teachers to measure its effectiveness. I could also interview teachers to learn their thoughts and opinions about both of these tools.

Looking forward, I would like to develop a plan to evaluate both the website and toolkit. I also hope to meet with teachers at other elementary schools in the district to discuss the importance of reading fluency. In addition, I will continue to add information to the website and toolkit as new programs become available.

Changes in the Brandywine School District

Since I first enrolled in the Ed.D. Leadership Program, many changes have occurred in the Brandywine School District. New district administrators have come on board and a new reading program was introduced. These new administrators have changed the district reading program to one that focuses on research-based interventions that target student reading difficulties. In addition, three different principals have been assigned to Lancashire during this time period, all with different ideas about the teaching of reading. None of these changes were anticipated when I began my classes at the University of Delaware.

Brandywine School District has recently assigned new district personnel to address reading needs in the district. Due to this change, new reading interventions were introduced during the 2014-2015 school year. Currently, the *Journeys Common Core Series* is being used with all students in the elementary schools for tier 1 instruction. Until recently, there was no prescribed method to use for struggling readers for tier 2 instruction. Beginning in early 2015 teachers were directed to use the book *How to Plan Differentiated Reading Instruction: Resources for Grades K-3* (Walpole & McKenna, 2009) for tier 2 intervention. This resource offers step-by-step directions for addressing phonics, fluency and comprehension. This teaching resource was introduced to district elementary teachers through a two-hour professional development presentation in January, 2015, and an additional hour of professional development in February, 2015. Additionally, in November, 2015, the Elementary Special Education Coordinator provided special education teachers with a new curriculum called SPIRE to use with students having the greatest difficulty with learning to read. There has been minimal professional development for this program.

Also, five years ago, there was much talk in the district about differentiated instruction, but not much follow-through. The district had no RTI program in place, and Common Core State Standards had not yet been adopted by the state of Delaware. Over the past two years, RTI guidelines have been implemented. Recently the district has developed procedures for identifying students as well as specific programs that must be used for tier 2 and tier 3 RTI instruction. This targeted instruction has had a positive impact on student reading skills, including fluency. The district reading

program and RTI interventions have become much better as now research-based programs have been developed along with specific procedures that have been put in place to utilize these program in a systematic way.

The teaching of reading has now evolved to include all of the foundational skills, including reading fluency. The process of identifying students that need additional help with reading instruction has also changed for the better. Teachers now use data to assess student progress and pinpoint student deficits in the reading process.

Next Steps

Overall, I believe my plan has helped teachers to recognize and begin to rectify the lack of reading fluency instruction for tier 2 and tier 3 students. According to my surveys as well as comments for individual teachers, teachers are more aware of the many strategies and programs that promote reading fluency. Many have begun to implement some of these strategies and programs in their classrooms. Others plan on trying out some of the programs in the near future.

The PD sessions were an effective way to present information to staff members. Teachers in all three sessions were receptive to the information I introduced. In each session, teachers asked many questions about how to implement different programs such as PALS, Book Buddies, and Quick Reads into their reading blocks. I have been approached after the sessions and asked to help get started with these interventions.

I believe my toolkit and website can be beneficial tools for Lancashire teachers. However, I need to determine how I can measure their usefulness. Also, both

items are works in progress. I plan to continue adding information to the toolkit and website as new materials become available. There is nothing at this time that needs to be dropped from my plan. All of my interventions can be useful to Lancashire staff members.

We have a procedure for identifying students and intervening using the STAR Reading and DIBELS Next ORF assessments. Although teachers at Lancashire are now focusing more on reading fluency instruction, it is still useful and necessary to continue to remind staff members about the importance of teaching reading fluency in their daily practice. It would be helpful to obtain information about how often teachers teach reading fluency as well as the methods used. In addition, reading fluency information should continue to be conveyed to staff members in order to help struggling readers, particularly those students that require tier 2 and tier 3 intervention. With the many directives, initiatives, and new programs bombarding teachers on an almost daily basis, it helps to have reminders about the importance of basic reading instruction.

When reviewing the fluency interventions that I designed for my ELP, I do not believe at this time that any parts should be omitted. There are a few things that could be altered however. Although the PD sessions were an effective way to convey fluency information, I think the three PD sessions should have been presented in a different order. The session that provided an overview of interventions and strategies for all three tiers should have been introduced first, with the PDs focusing on tier 2 and tier 3 interventions offered afterwards to provide a more in-depth follow-up.

Unfortunately scheduling did not permit this during the current school year. However, in the future, if I were to talk about fluency at other district elementary schools, the order of the presentations could be adjusted. I also think that more PD follow-up sessions as well as reminders at both PLCs and staff meetings will continue to be needed at Lancashire so that teachers continue to use fluency strategies and interventions in their classrooms.

I am hoping the toolkit and website will prove useful to staff members by supplying them with fluency information. Although the website is more accessible than the toolkit as it can be easily accessed from a multitude of locations, some teachers said that they prefer a hard copy. For this reason, I think both options are necessary and should be available to the staff. At the present time, it appears that both the toolkit and website are helpful to teachers. However, I still need to continue to update them and add additional information that could be useful to teachers as it becomes available.

Looking forward, it is necessary for the other Brandywine elementary schools to address the importance of fluency instruction with their staff. This can be accomplished through similar PD sessions addressing reading fluency strategies and interventions. Sessions can occur during PLCs, staff meetings, or after school. School reading specialists can be asked to stress the importance of reading fluency instruction in their elementary schools. Also my website can be shared with district staff. In addition, a fluency toolkit can be provided for the other district elementary schools.

If others were trying to address a similar problem, I would advise them to consider creating professional development opportunities, as I did to convey information to staff members. PD sessions are a good way to relay information to large groups of people in a positive way. Providing handouts that provide information about specific fluency topics/programs that have been discussed during the PDs is also useful for teachers to review after the presentation. In addition to PDs, there needs to be follow-up sessions and reminders to help encourage teachers to use fluency interventions and strategies with their struggling readers.

I am optimistic that my efforts in this area will continue to be beneficial to the Lancashire staff. For my next steps, I plan to help implement some of the programs that I introduced to the staff this past spring. I will also meet with individual teachers upon request to help them use different fluency strategies in their classrooms. Already summer sessions are in the planning stages to create a Book Buddies program to begin in the fall. Also, a PALS workshop is being planned for the summer. Several teachers are interested in utilizing this program in the fall. I plan to continue to stress the need for fluency instruction in the classroom in the coming year. In addition, I hope to speak about this topic at other district elementary schools in the near future.

Chapter 6

REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

There are several reasons that I decided to apply to the Ed.D. Leadership program. First, I have always been interested in learning new information, particularly information about the teaching of reading. Also, I really enjoyed the process of pursuing my Master of Instruction degree at the University of Delaware and was reluctant to end my search for new knowledge. In addition, I was interested in taking more of a leadership role in my school and thought this program would be beneficial to this process. I began the program not knowing what to expect but eager to dive right in and learn new information that would help me to become a better teacher and education leader.

How My Skills Have Changed

My participation in the Ed.D. program has helped me to grow both personally and professionally. I am now more confident in my abilities as both a teacher and a leader. Due to this program, I have become better at using research to form decisions about educational programs and techniques. In addition, I now tend to look at multiple perspectives when analyzing new information or programs. Also, I feel more comfortable presenting information in front of large groups of people, such as staff members. I look forward to continue applying what I have learned during my years at the University both in my elementary school as well as in my school district.

Growth as a Scholar

My skills as a scholar have greatly increased during my time in the program. Not only has my knowledge base grown, but I have also learned how and where to access new resources and information about both reading and leadership. In addition, I gained many new skills from designing websites and creating tables and graphs to writing a curriculum analysis and researching topics in depth. I also now have a much greater depth of knowledge about literacy instruction, which is very beneficial as a team leader.

Growth as a Problem Solver

During my time in the Ed.D. Leadership Program, I have become much more cognizant of the role that both research and data play in defining and solving a problem. My ability to research best practices and specific educational programs has greatly increased. This has given me more confidence when trying to solve problems and challenges that come with being both an educator and team leader.

When I learn about new educational programs or techniques, I now look for research studies that show their effectiveness. For example, my special education team is always looking for programs to accelerate our students' academic progress. I have used my skills to research programs such as Quick Reads and Read Naturally to determine which program would be most beneficial for our students. Due to the

research I conducted, the team has decided to use Quick Reads in the coming school year.

Growth as a Partner

My skills as a partner have also benefited from my participation in the Ed.D. program. Before I began my studies, I was a bit of a loner when it came to working collaboratively with the school staff. I have since learned to be a better collaborator, being more inclusive with both my team members as well as the rest of the Lancashire staff. In addition, I have learned to value the importance of collaboration particularly when it comes to decision-making. Also, I am better at delegating jobs to other team members.

When I first became second-grade team leader, the team was fractured. Teachers did not communicate with each other and refused to work together as a team. Today my team has grown into a collaborative and cooperative group. I believe that this positive outcome is due to skills I have learned during my time in the leadership program.

I have also become more of collaborator and leader with my special education team. As with the second grade team, the special education team has not always been a cohesive group. As I have grown through the Ed.D. program, I have become more comfortable with helping the team to have a more positive outlook on our role as special education teachers.

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Appendix A

A FOCUS ON FLUENCY READING FLUENCY STRATEGIES FOR ELEMENTARY TIER 2 AND TIER 3 STUDENTS: AN ELP PROPOSAL

Proposal Overview

I am a special education teacher and second grade team leader at Lancashire Elementary School in the Brandywine School District. Teachers at Lancashire must provide tier 2 and tier 3 reading instruction for students with reading fluency difficulties in their classrooms. It is challenging for teachers to learn and implement effective fluency instruction to their students with reading fluency difficulties in their classrooms. I am proposing to address this issue by designing instructional support and assistance to teachers at Lancashire and the Brandywine School District. For this project, I will design a reading fluency toolkit to provide information about reading fluency approaches, materials, assessments and teacher training to remedy this situation. To compliment the toolkit, professional development will be designed and implemented to help teachers use the fluency toolkit in their classrooms. In addition, I will build a website to provide fluency information to other elementary teachers.

Organizational Context

Brandywine School District is located in Wilmington, Delaware, encompassing both part of the city and the suburbs. The total enrollment for the 2013-

2014 school year was 10,802 students. The school district consists of three high schools, three middle schools, and nine elementary schools. Brandywine has a diverse student body, that is 37% African American, 6% Asian, 5% Hispanic, and 50% White. Forty-four percent of students are low income, and 12% are students with special needs (see Table 1).

Brandywine School District has recently assigned new district personnel to address reading needs in the district. Due to this change, new reading interventions have been introduced during the 2014-2015 school year. Currently, the Journeys Common Core Series is being used with all students in the elementary schools. Until recently, there was no prescribed method to use for struggling readers for tier 2 instruction. Teachers are now told to use the book *How to Plan Differentiated Reading Instruction: Resources for Grades K-3* (Walpole & McKenna, 2009) for tier 2 intervention. This resource offers step-by-step directions for addressing phonics, fluency and comprehension. This teaching resource was introduced to district elementary teachers through a two-hour professional development presentation in January, 2015, and an additional hour of professional development in February, 2015. There is currently no prescribed method for teaching reading to tier 3 reading instruction.

Lancashire Elementary School

There are currently 516 students enrolled at Lancashire Elementary for the 2014-2015 school year. The demographics of the student body are 22% African American, 8.5% Asian, 6% Latino, 3% Multiracial, and 60% White. Twenty-five percent of

students are low income and more than 7% are English Language Learners (ELLs). Nine percent of the total population is identified as students with special needs (see Table 2). Typically, students falling into the special needs, low income and ELL populations are at risk for reading delays and/or difficulties that prevent them from meeting grade-level expectations (Linan-Thomson et al., 2003; Chard et al., 2002; Dion, Brodeur, Gosselin, Campeau & Fuchs, 2010). It should be noted that the state of Delaware changed the way it calculated low-income status between the 2012-2013 and the 2013-2014 school years, which is why there is a significant drop in the school's low-income population (See Table 2).

Lancashire has a staff of thirty-seven. Eighty-seven percent of all instructional staff members are white and 11% are African American. Sixty-eight percent of the teachers have a Masters degree. Forty-five percent of Lancashire teachers have taught for 15 to 24 years. Fifteen percent have 30 or more years of teaching experience.

In its mission statement Lancashire leaders state that the school is committed to providing an educational experience based on the principles of equity, differentiated instruction, and a promise and belief of academic and social success for all. This is to occur in an environment that encourages collaboration with staff, parents, and community, effective and ongoing assessment, and the implementation of best teaching practices. In turn, Lancashire will foster students to excel as life-long learners. Currently 91 students, or approximately 18 percent of the entire student population at Lancashire qualify for tier 2 and tier 3 learning in the reading domain.

Organizational Role

I have been a special education teacher at Lancashire Elementary School for nine years. During the past nine years, I have been a member of the school's Instructional Strategies Team, the Instructional Leadership Team and a second grade team leader. As a member of these leadership teams, I have been privileged to be able to advise and assist teachers needing help in the reading domain.

Moving forward, I hope to share my knowledge of reading fluency and assessment with both the Lancashire staff and other elementary staffs in the Brandywine School District through professional development and the fluency toolkit that I plan to develop. Not only will this plan benefit teachers in my district, but it will also contribute to my own professional growth by helping me to increase my leadership skills, and increase my understanding of reading fluency.

Reading Fluency

Reading fluency is an important component of reading instruction and can influence a student's academic success (Schwanenflugel, Kuhn & Meisinger, 2010; Rasinski, 2012; Chard, Vaughn & Tyler, 2002). It is very important to the overall development of reading competence (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006) and can be used as an indicator of general reading proficiency (Spear-Swerling, 2006; Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001). Those not able read text fluently are at a great disadvantage (Shaywitz, 2003; Hudson, Lane & Pullen, 2005).

It is a challenge to define fluency, as it encompasses every aspect of reading (Wolf & Katzir-Cohen; Schwanenflugel, Kuhn & Meisinger, 2010). Many researchers

define reading fluency as the rate that a reader accurately recognizes words within a connected text (Burns, Kwoka, Lim, Crone, Haegele, Parker, & Scholin, 2011. Others include accuracy, automaticity and prosody in their definition (Rasinsky & Hoffman, 2003). Wolf & Katzir-Cohen (2001) developed a more comprehensive definition, incorporating all of the above aspects as well as adding more details into their definition of reading fluency:

In its beginnings, reading fluency is the product of the initial development of accuracy and the subsequent development of automaticity in underlying sublexical processes, lexical processes, and their integration in single-word reading and connected text. These include perceptual, phonological, orthographic, and morphological processes at the letter, letter-pattern, and word levels, as well as semantic and syntactic processes at the word level and connected-text level. After it is fully developed, reading fluency refers to a level of accuracy and rate where decoding is relatively effortless; where oral reading is smooth and accurate with correct prosody; and where attention can be allocated to comprehension. (p. 219).

Why Reading Fluency Instruction is Necessary

Research has shown that oral reading fluency can be used as an indicator of overall reading proficiency (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp & Jenkins, 2001). Fluency builds on the foundation of oral language skills, phonemic awareness, knowledge of alphabet letterforms and decoding skills. Reading fluency is demonstrated during oral reading, silent sentence reading, reading connected text, and silent paragraph reading. In

addition, there are relationships between oral reading fluency and student achievement (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003; Pikulski & Chard, 2005). Research has shown that automaticity, prosody and comprehension are linked, which explains why students who are fluent readers can easily read texts and many demonstrate good comprehension skills (Berninger & Wolf, 2009; Rasinski, 2012; Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003; Schwanenflugel et al., 2010). Readers who are not fluent due to weak decoding skill and/or weak word recognition skills will have difficulty constructing meaning from texts (Pikulski & Chard, 2005).

Common Core State Standards for Fluency

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are goals that students should be able to meet by the end of each grade level. The anchor standard that is related to reading fluency falls under the heading of Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.10 which states that students should be able to read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently. Four fluency goals are strands of this anchor standard. These include: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF. Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.a Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.b Read grade-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.c Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.

The CCSS, while addressing general fluency are not specific in nature. They do not discuss what constitutes sufficient accuracy and fluency. In addition the standards do not address what is considered to be an appropriate oral reading rate when reading grade-level materials. This lack of specificity makes it difficult for teachers to determine if students are meeting the CCSS for fluency.

District Reading Performance

Brandywine School District measures student reading progress using the STAR Reading Test for students in grades two through five and the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Next (DIBELS Next) for students in kindergarten and first grade. The STAR Reading test is a standardized, computer-adapted assessment that is criterion-referenced as well as norm-referenced.

The STAR Reading test is designed to provide information about student growth and achievement. The assessment consists of 34 test items. The first ten items target reading comprehension. The additional 24 test items are skill based, focusing on a variety of reading skills including word meaning and phonics. This test is scored automatically by its software, and compares student performance to national norms. In the Brandywine School District, the STAR Reading assessment is used as both a screening and progress-monitoring tool. Students in grades two through five are administered the STAR Reading test a minimum of three times a year. Scores are recorded in the Itracker computer program, where progress is tracked and monitored.

District winter STAR Reading results show that eighteen percent of all second grade students and seventeen percent of all third grade students achieved a score below district benchmarks for the first half of the 2014-2015 school year. In addition, 14% of all fourth grade students and 13% of all fifth grade students scored below district benchmarks. This means that an average of 15% of all elementary students in grades two through five scored below grade-level expectations, based on the district cut score of the 40 percentile (See Figure 1).

Assessing the CCSS Fluency Standards

Common Core State Standards in reading are addressed either directly or indirectly in the STAR Reading test. The creator of the assessment, Renaissance Learning claims the assessment estimates a student's level of ability to master these standards through a multi-step process, by first identifying concepts and skills needed for each specific standard and then aligning these concepts with the test items. The degree of difficulty for the test items is statistically analyzed on an ongoing basis. A content area expert then reviews the level of difficulty and compares the standards to both grade-level standards as well as standards required in grades above and below the targeted grade-level (Renaissance Learning, n.d., p.75).

On the STAR assessment, there is no direct fluency assessment. Instead the assessment uses comprehension questions to estimate a student's fluency. The company states that although test items are not directly aligned with the standards, fluency levels can be predicted by student performance. Renaissance Learning claims that in order for a student to successfully read grade-level test items and complete

them in the specified time period, a student would need to be a fluent reader, thus meeting the fluency standard (Renaissance Learning, n.d., p.iv). It should be noted that the test is unable to differentiate difficulties with vocabulary, fluency, or word reading for comprehension test items.

When looking at STAR data and comparing the related results to the CCSS fluency standards, it appears that a large group of Brandywine students may not be able to meet these standards. According to STAR winter 2015 results, 28% of second - grade students and 26% of all third-grade students in the Brandywine School District are predicted not meet the CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.2.4 on the STAR Reading test during winter 2015 testing. Sixteen percent of all fourth and fifth grade students also would most likely not meet this standard (See Figure 3 and Figure 4). This is a concern, as reading fluency is an important part of reading development. As reading demands on students grow each year, students not meeting these fluency standards may become farther behind in reading understanding.

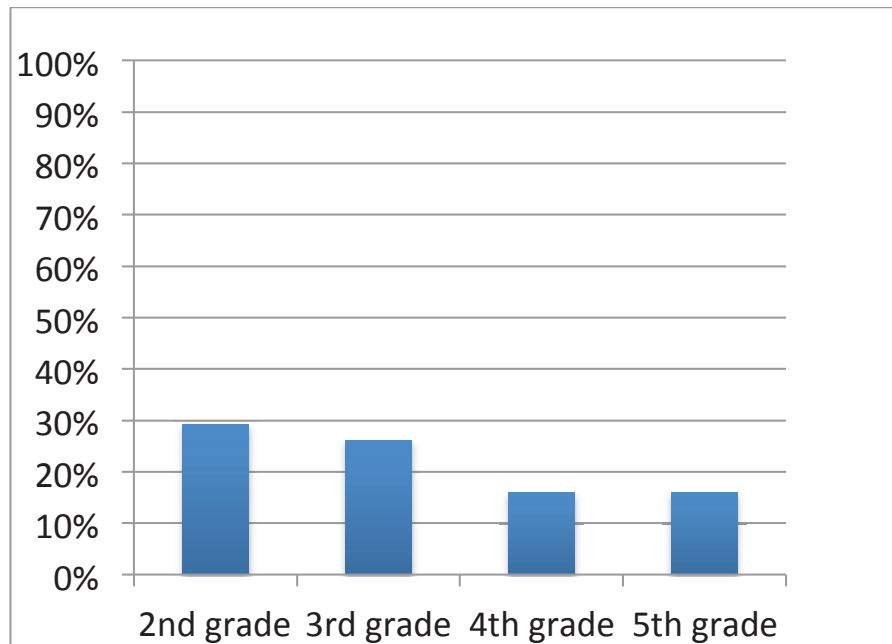


Figure 3 Percentage of Students in Brandywine School District Who May Not Meet CCSS.ELA-Literacy RF Standard Based on the STAR Reading Fluency Results

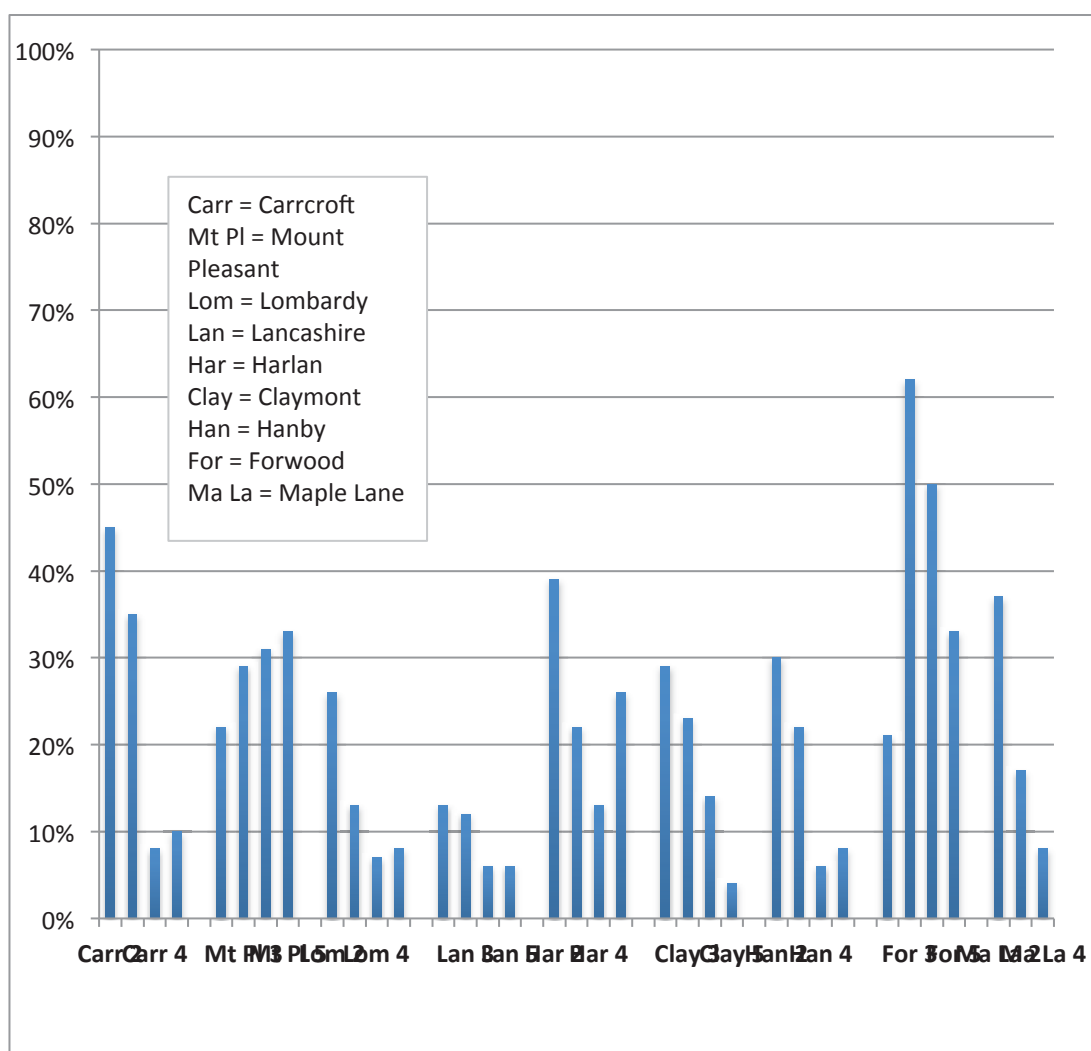


Figure 4 Percentage of Students by School Who May Not Meet CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF Standard Based on the Winter 2015 STAR Reading Fluency Results

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Next (DIBELS Next) is a criterion-referenced assessment used to measure reading progress for students in kindergarten and first grade. The Brandywine School District uses the print version of

DIBELS Next, which is administered to students individually. Each section takes one minute to complete.

The DIBELS Next assessment also addresses Common Core State Standards. For students in grades two through five, the Brandywine School District only administers the Oral Reading Fluency part of DIBELS Next. Students are expected to be able to read a specific number of correct words per minute at the beginning, middle and end of each grade level. For this portion of the assessment, students read a grade level passage for one minute and then orally retell what they have just read (See Table 3).

Table 3 DIBELS Next Oral Reading Fluency Benchmark Goals

Table 3. <i>DIBELS Next Oral Reading Fluency Benchmark Goals</i>			
Grade	Beginning	Middle	End
1		34	69
2	80	100	111
3	97	115	123
4	111	130	144
5	132	150	155

The results of the District Oral Reading Fluency scores for winter 2015, for all first grade students showed that an average of 31% of students scored at the intensive level indicating that these students achieved a score well below benchmark and will need intensive support. Twenty-two percent scored at the strategic level, which indicates that students achieved a score below benchmark and will need additional

support. An intensive score is below 20 percentile below benchmark words per minute, and a strategic score is between 20 and 40 percentile below benchmark words per minute. DIBELS Next results display a need for additional fluency instruction for struggling first grade students in the Brandywine School District.

The Need for Fluency Instruction in the District

The STAR Reading and DIBELS Next data show that many students in the Brandywine School District were able to reach the benchmark in reading fluency; however, there is still a sizable group of students that requires additional help in this area. STAR Reading results indicate that an average of 22 percent of all students in grades two through five require supplemental reading fluency intervention. The DIBELS Next data shows that an average of 34 percent of all district first-grade students need more fluency instruction as well. Focusing on additional reading fluency instruction will help to make students in the district more proficient readers.

Lancashire STAR Reading Scores

When focusing on Lancashire's results, the STAR Reading scores show that slightly more than 20% of second grade students and 25% of third grade students scored at or below the twenty-fifth percentile. Sixteen percent of Lancashire's fourth grade students and 11 percent of fifth grade students also scored at or below the twenty-fifth percentile (See Figure 5). It is interesting to note that a smaller percentage of fourth and fifth grade students scored below the twenty-fifth percentile. One reason for this may be that RTI instruction, in use for several years now, is working and

students are becoming better readers. The results could also be an anomaly for these two particular groups of students. Even with the smaller percentage of fourth and fifth grade students requiring reading intervention, there are still a significant number of students who need additional reading instruction in order to reach grade-level expectations. The STAR Reading score is an indication of general reading ability, including all aspects of reading. Reading fluency is an important component in this process. When a student's fluency is not well developed, overall reading scores are affected.

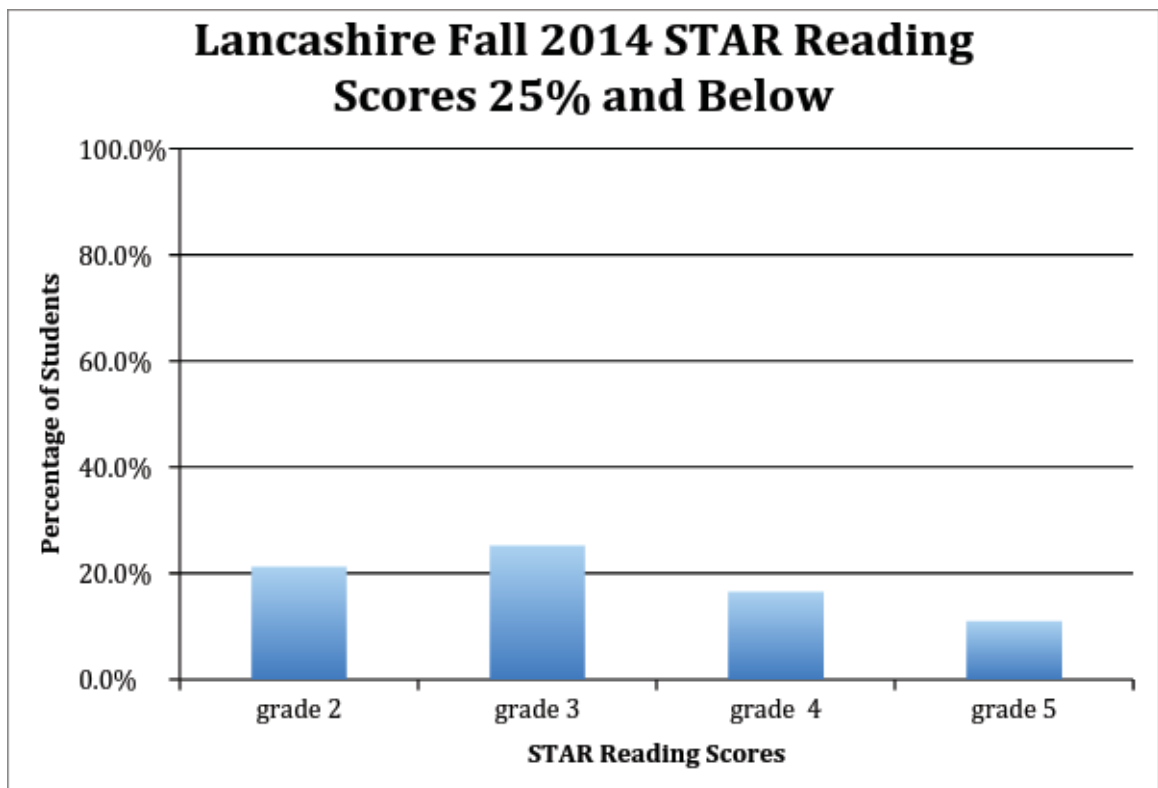


Figure 5 Percentage of Lancashire Students Scoring at or Below the 25th Percentile on the STAR Reading Assessment

At Lancashire Elementary School, performance on the STAR Reading tests predicts that 13% of second grade and third grade students would most likely not meet this fluency standard. In addition, 6% of all fourth and fifth grade students scored may not meet this fluency standard. While STAR Reading may be an indirect measure of fluency, it does show there is a need for additional fluency instruction both at Lancashire as well as in the majority of Brandywine School District elementary schools.

Problem Statement

Reading Fluency in the Classroom

As a member of my school's leadership team, I am often asked by teachers for ideas to help struggling students improve their reading skills. As part of the discussion, I will ask about a student's reading fluency and subsequent fluency strategies being used in the classroom. Although most teachers at Lancashire Elementary are familiar with basic fluency strategies used with students such as echo reading, choral reading and partner reading, many appear to be unfamiliar with fluency interventions to improve reading fluency with the tier 2 and 3 populations.

To determine teacher knowledge of reading fluency strategies, programs and assessment as well as their use of these strategies, programs and assessments in the classroom, I created a survey for teachers to complete. Teachers were asked to answer eleven questions about reading fluency using an online survey. These questions

addressed knowledge of fluency strategies, programs and assessments. Twenty-seven out of thirty teachers responded to the survey (see Appendix A).

The results indicated that although 100 percent of teachers believe that fluency is an important component of reading instruction, not all teachers address this important skill to the majority of their students. Twenty-two percent use fluency-building routines occasionally and 7% do not practice reading fluency at all. The majority of teachers appeared to be familiar with several strategies that are used to increase reading fluency such as choral reading, echo reading and having students reread text. Sixty percent of the teachers surveyed use the commercial program Quick Reads with at least some of their students. When surveyed about fluency assessment, 74 percent of teachers would like to learn more about this topic. I also found that 30 percent of teachers never assess their students' reading fluency. The fact that the majority of teachers would like to learn more about reading fluency strategies, programs and assessments, along with their lack of fluency assessment, helped motivate me to focus my ELP on this important topic.

It is challenging for teachers to find the time to learn and implement research-based reading instructional strategies for their tier 2 and tier 3 students (Dearman & Alber, 2005). It is even more difficult when teachers are not provided with the tools needed to teach reading fluency. This is a challenge that Lancashire Elementary School teachers face each day. However, teachers are very interested in learning more about fluency interventions and assessments for their tier 2 and tier 3 students (Appendix B).

Improvement Goal

The purpose of this project is to strengthen teachers' fluency instruction in order to increase student reading fluency. The project has three goals: (a) provide teachers with the tools needed to increase reading fluency for tier 2 and tier 3 instruction, (b) research the best strategies, interventions, and assessments needed to monitor progress, and (c) offer professional development for teachers in order to implement strategies and assessments. The plan is to complete these goals in this order: Research fluency strategies, interventions, and assessments, create a toolbox of fluency information and materials for teachers and provide teacher training to help implement strategies, interventions and assessments (See Figure 8). Table 4 presents a schedule of when each action will be completed, with an end date for all actions at the end of October, 2015.

For Fluency Research

Action 1: Review current research

1. Conduct a literature review focusing on reading fluency strategies, interventions and assessments.
2. Review the Read Naturally curriculum analysis.
3. Review the teacher survey

Evidence to collect: Literature review, curriculum analysis, teacher survey

For Fluency Information and Instructional Materials

Action 2: Gather and develop fluency materials and information to be used in the classroom

1. Create a toolkit of effective instructional approaches as well as fluency programs and materials
2. Write a white paper for teachers, containing information about reading fluency
3. Write a reading fluency article, which contains information about fluency as well as strategies that can be used in the classroom

Evidence to collect: Copy of fluency toolkit, copy of white paper, fluency article

For Teacher Training

Action 3: Design a presentation for teachers to review reading fluency strategies, interventions and assessments for struggling readers.

1. Create a thirty to forty-five minute power point presentation for staff that includes information about the teacher survey
2. Discuss presentation with principal and finalize a date for the presentation
3. Present the presentation to Lancashire staff during a staff meeting or on a professional development day
4. Power point presentation will be uploaded to the Blackboard site to be available to all district teachers

Evidence to collect: Copy of the power point presentation and handouts

Action 4: Create a fluency website that conveys information about strategies, interventions and assessments for teachers

1. Find a server (Google Sites)

2. Make a web site containing general information about fluency as well as strategies, interventions, assessments
 - a. Material and information from the Toolkit will be placed on the web site
 - b. The white paper and fluency article will be uploaded to the web site
3. Upload the information onto the website and open to entire community

Evidence to collect: Access to the website

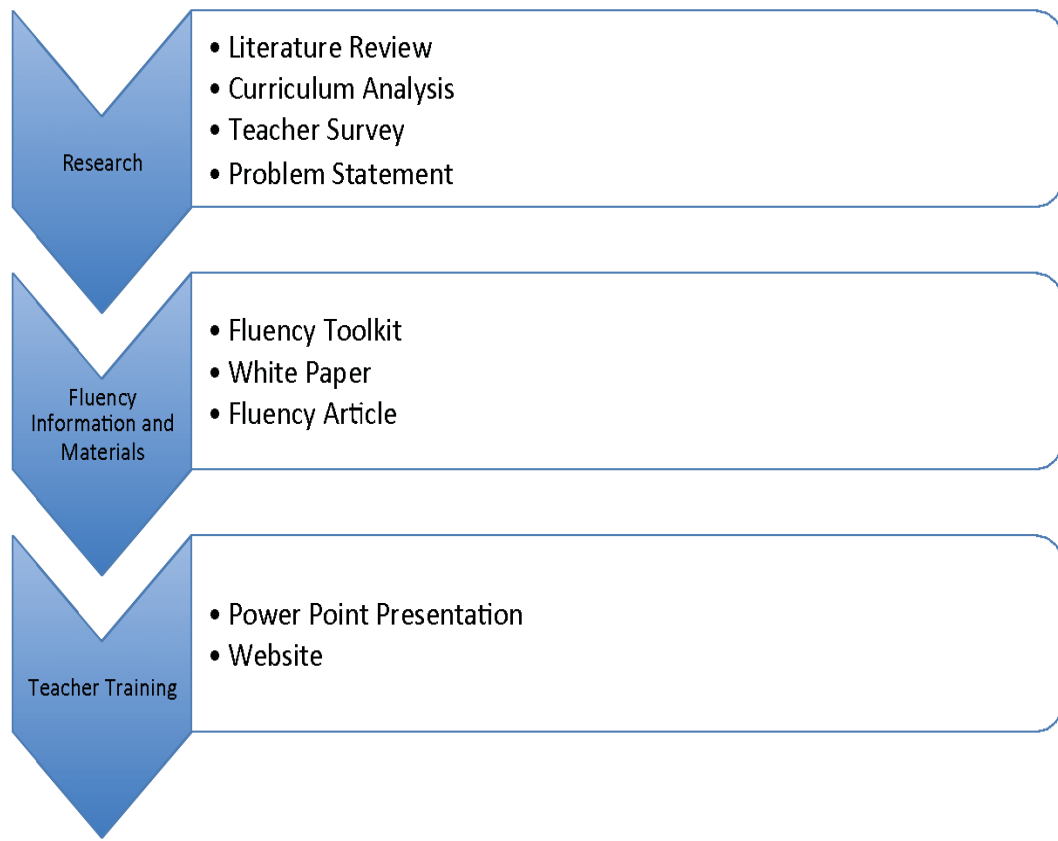


Figure 6 Illustration of Planned Action

Table 4 Artifacts

Artifact	Type	Audience	Description
1	Read Naturally Curriculum Analysis	Committee, School Faculty	Analysis of a curriculum that focuses on reading fluency
2	Focus on Fluency Article	District Elementary Teachers	Strategies for fluency instruction in the elementary classroom
3	Teacher Survey	Committee, school faculty	Survey of what teachers know about fluency, fluency strategies, interventions, and assessments currently used in the classroom
4	Problem Statement	Committee	Reading Fluency for Tier 2 and Tier 3 Elementary Students
5	Literature Review	Members of ELP Committee	Effective Interventions to Help Students Become Fluent Readers
6	White Paper 1	District Elementary Teachers	A research paper addressing fluency strategies, interventions and assessments for teachers
7	White Paper 2	District Elementary Teachers	A research paper addressing fluency strategies, interventions and assessments for teachers
8	White Paper 3	District Elementary Teachers	A research paper addressing fluency strategies, interventions and assessments for teachers
9	Professional Development 1	Lancashire Elementary Teachers	A power point presentation will be developed and delivered to inform teachers of strategies, interventions, and assessments that can be used with tier 2 and tier 3 students. This presentation will be placed on Blackboard for district teachers to access
10	Professional Development 2	Lancashire Elementary Teachers	A power point presentation will be developed and delivered to inform teachers of strategies, interventions, and assessments that can be used with tier 2 and tier 3 students. This presentation will be placed on Blackboard for district teachers to access
11	Professional Development 3	Lancashire Elementary Teachers	A power point presentation will be developed and delivered to inform teachers of strategies, interventions, and assessments that can be used with tier 2 and tier 3 students. This presentation will be placed on Blackboard for district teachers to access
12	Fluency Tool Kit	Members of ELP Committee, school administrators and faculty	Fluency strategies, interventions that can be used in the classroom with Tier 2 and Tier 3 students
13	Reading Fluency Website	Elementary teachers and Parents	Create a website for teachers and parents providing information about reading fluency

Narrative of Planned Artifacts

Problem Statement

The problem statement defines why my project is necessary and describes the steps needed to help teachers increase reading fluency with their tier 2 and tier 3 students. These steps include the development of all additional artifacts for this ELP.

Teacher Survey

The teacher survey was used to determine the need for information and assistance with fluency strategies, interventions and assessments for teachers in my school. The data obtained from the survey and the literature review is helping to guide my selection of items to be included in the fluency toolkit.

Literature Review

The literature review will help to choose the strategies, interventions and assessments that will be used to design the fluency toolkit. I will do this by examining a multitude of studies that focus on fluency instruction and assessment.

Read Naturally Curriculum Analysis

Read Naturally is a fluency program that I have used for the past four years. It has helped to increase my special needs students' reading fluency. I was interested in analyzing this curriculum to determine if Read Naturally should be considered as an intervention for all tier 2 and tier 3 students. If the analysis and collected data support it, Read Naturally may become a recommended program to use with struggling readers. The Read Naturally information will be available to staff members in both the fluency toolkit and the web site.

Fluency Article

The reading fluency article was written for the Reading Teacher journal. It contains information about research based programs, strategies, interventions and practice activities that teachers can use in their classrooms to help increase reading fluency. This article will be placed on my website and in the fluency toolkit. Parts of it will also be included in the professional development component.

White Paper

The white paper will provide general information about fluency for classroom teachers. It will be included in the toolkit to help inform teachers about the importance of focusing on reading fluency.

Fluency Toolkit

The fluency toolkit is the means teachers will use to help tier 2 and tier 3 students improve their reading fluency. The toolkit will contain general information about fluency as well as specific strategies and interventions that can be used in the classroom. In addition, an assessment component will be included for teachers to use to measure gains. The white paper will be included in the toolkit to provide a general overview of reading fluency.

Reading Fluency Website

A reading fluency website will be designed to help teachers and parents learn information about strategies, interventions and assessments that can be used to increase reading fluency. It will be an open site, available to all interested parties.

Professional Development

An approximately 30 minute professional development presentation will be designed to inform teachers about strategies, interventions and assessments that can be used to help increase tier 2 and tier 3 students' reading fluency. A power point presentation will be created for elementary teachers and will be uploaded to Blackboard and available to all district teachers.

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Wolf, M. & Katzir-Cohen, T. (2001). Reading fluency and its intervention. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 5(3), 211-239.

Appendix B

READ NATURALLY® CURRICULUM ANALYSIS

Introduction

The Read Naturally® curriculum is a program designed to improve the very important skill of reading fluency. This supplemental program, designed for students in grades one through 12, was developed to increase reading fluency for struggling readers (*Read Naturally*®, 2008). My curriculum analysis will address the question: Does Read Naturally® help students with reading deficits become more fluent readers?

I chose to focus on this program because special education teachers in the school where I work has been using Read Naturally® for several years. I am interested in learning about the research behind the program and its overall effectiveness. My elementary school uses the Read Naturally Masters Edition® which utilizes hard copies of stories and an accompanying CD.

Reading fluency greatly influences a student's academic success (Meisinger, Bloom & Hynd, 2010; Hudson, 2011) and it is a critical component of reading development (Kuhn, Schwanenflugel, & Meisinger, 2010). Students who are fluent readers can easily read texts and many demonstrate good comprehension skills. Those not able read text fluently are at a great disadvantage (Shaywitz, 2003).

It is a challenge to define fluency, as fluency encompasses every aspect of reading (Wolf & Katzir-Cohen; Kuhn et al., 2010). Many researchers define reading fluency as the rate and automaticity that a reader uses to accurately recognize words within a connected text (Speece & Ritchey, 2005). Proficient reading within a connected text is important for comprehension, and incorporating the development of foundation skills, are necessary for beginning reading (Burke, Crowder, Hagan-Burke, & Zou, 2009).

Most researchers agree that reading fluency's multiple components include combining automaticity, prosody, accuracy, rate and expression (Kuhn et al., 2010; Berninger, Abbott, Trivedi, Olson, Gould, Hiramatsu, Holsinger, McShane, Murphy, Norton, Boyd & Westhaggen, 2010; Kuhn & Stahl, 2003). Reading fluency occurs during oral reading, silent sentence reading, reading connected text, and silent paragraph reading (Berninger et al., 2010).

The primary goal of reading is the ability to build meaning (Kuhn, 2005). There is a strong correlation between fluency and reading comprehension (Hudson et al., 2005). In fact the National Reading Panel (NRP) report in 2000 recognized reading fluency as one of the reading foundations (Hudson, 2011).

Read Naturally® Curriculum

The Read Naturally® program is designed to increase reading fluency in students from early elementary school through adulthood (*What Works Clearinghouse*, 2013; *Read Naturally®*, 2008). The program has both ELL and Spanish versions as

well an English version. Online forms of this curriculum are also available. All forms of Read Naturally® programs focus on the same strategies and methods.

Read Naturally® claims to improve reading proficiency by developing reading fluency, supporting vocabulary development and promoting comprehension. The program also claims to increase student motivation to read and improves self-esteem and confidence (Read Naturally®, 2008).

The Read Naturally® program uses a combination of research-based strategies, including repeated reading, teacher modeling and progress monitoring (See Figure 7). It is designed for students in first through eighth grades but can be used with older struggling readers as well (*Read Naturally®*, 2008; *What Works Clearinghouse*, 2013; Hasbrouck, Ihnot, & Rogers, 1999).

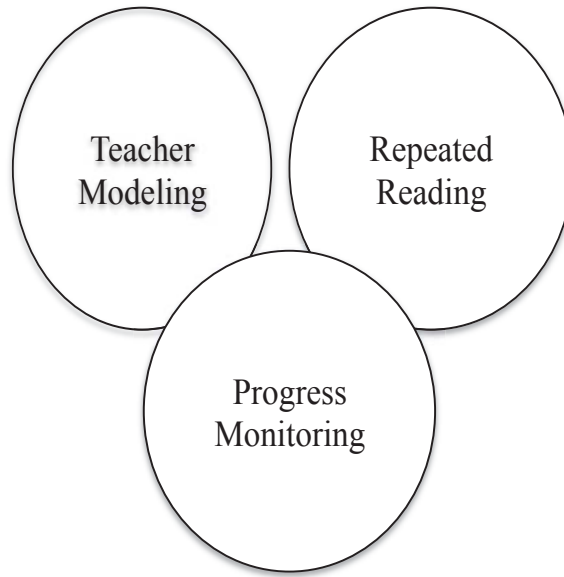


Figure 7 The Read Naturally® System

Read Naturally® uses a print/CD format, or a computer program format, and is segmented by grade level. Materials include stories, audio CDs, graphs, posters, reader awards and answer keys. Additional materials that need to be purchased are timers, student folders, colored pencils or crayons for graphing, CD players and headphones for the print/CD editions. Each of the eight grade levels includes 24 reading passages. The curriculum is designed to be used in 30-minute blocks, at least three times a week (*Read Naturally®*, 2008).

Procedures for the program include:

1. Select a story.
2. Learn key words from the story.
3. Predict what will happen in the story.
4. Do a cold read.

5. Graph the cold read score.
6. Orally read along with the CD several times.
7. Answer questions about the story.
8. Practice timed reading.
9. Do a hot read.
10. Graph the hot read score.
11. Retell the story (*Read Naturally*, 2008; Hasbrouck et al., 1999).

Theoretical Framework

Read Naturally® was developed around the idea that practicing reading fluency will improve reading ability by developing automaticity (Hasbrouck et al., 1999). This is related to LaBerge & Samuels' (1974) theory of automaticity. The theory of automaticity contends that people have a limited capacity of attention and working memory. Mastering an aspect of reading, such as decoding skills allows for more attention to be paid to higher order processes such as reading comprehension (Hudson et al., 2005; LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Kuhn & Stahl, 2003).

The Read Naturally® program fits into this framework by having students focus on the practice of fluency in order to become better readers. Non-fluent readers, who are the focus of the program and need to focus more on automaticity, have less capacity available for comprehension, which is the main purpose of reading (Kuhn, 2005; Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, & Jenkins, 2001; Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005). According the theory of automaticity, Read Naturally® should be a successful

intervention program, as its goal is to increase a reader's automatic processing of information, which should lead to better reading comprehension.

Methodology

I began my search by using the databases, Education Full Text, ProQuest, and PsychInfo. Key search words included reading fluency, oral reading, elementary reading fluency, elementary school, and Read Naturally®. Searches for information about the Read Naturally® program also included the Read Naturally® website, the What Works Clearinghouse website, the Florida Center for Reading Research website, and the National Center on Intensive Intervention website.

I chose research studies that focused on the elementary school population. A framework was developed to analyze the Read Naturally® curriculum. Since I am most interested in the program's effectiveness, I focused on the efficacy of fluency and comprehension in the program, the duration of studies, and the population by grade level (See Table 5). For this search, the student population was defined as struggling readers, special education, English language learners (ELL), and low socioeconomic status (SES). Struggling readers were those whose reading skills were at least one year below grade level expectations. I also recorded the length of intervention time for each study.

Table 5 Framework Designed for Naturally analysis. Academic progress, population and the duration of each study are examined and discussed.

Academic Progress	Improvement in Reading Fluency
	Improvement in Reading Comprehension
Sample Population	Sample Size
	Student Grade Level
Duration of Study	Student Classification (Special Ed., ELL, Struggling Reader, Low SES)
	Specific Time Period for Intervention

I created a scoring rubric to document student growth in each study. Fluency and comprehension were measured by percentage of growth and a numerical system was used to rate the studies. Fluency and comprehension were individually rated and an overall score was recorded. The total score was an average of the fluency and comprehension scores. If specific information in a study was unknown, “not available” was stated and the study results were not scored. A score of 0 was considered no growth, as that meant there was no increase in either reading fluency or comprehension. A score of 1-2 showed some growth, with a small increase in skills. A score of 3-4 was significant growth, meaning there was a larger increase in skills.

Scores of 5 and above meant very significant growth, with a considerable increase in the fluency and/or comprehension areas (See Table 6).

Table 6 Scoring Rubric. The percentage increase scores of both fluency and comprehension will be added together to achieve a total score. A score of 0 means no growth. A score of 1-2 means some growth. A score of 3-4 means significant growth. A score of 5 and above means very significant growth.

	Percentage Increase	Score in Points
Information Unknown	Information Unknown	Not Available
No Growth	<1%	0
Some Growth	1-5%	1-2
Significant Growth	6-10%	3-4
Very Significant Growth	11% +	5 and above

Analysis of Research

I focused on five studies of the Read Naturally® program for this analysis. I created a table that included improvement in reading fluency and comprehension, the age of the test subjects, the type of reader being tested and the duration of the study (See Table 7). A rating of satisfactory, unsatisfactory, or unknown was given to each study based on improvement in reading fluency and comprehension. The studies were measured using an improvement index. This index is the difference between the group mean and the comparison group mean, on the comparison group distribution. It is

based on the effect size of each study, with information found on *What Works Clearinghouse* (2013).

Table 7 Analysis of the Research Studies.

	Sample Size	Reading Fluency Improvement %	Reading Comprehension Improvement (%)	Age of Population	Population	Duration of Study	Score
Arvans, 2010	82	6	1	Grades 2,3,4	Struggling Readers	8 weeks	3
Christ & Davie, 2009	106	14	-3	Grade 3	Spec. Ed., ELL, Low SES	10 weeks	3
Hancock, 2002	94	6	2	Grade 2		11 weeks	3
Kemp, 2006	158	1	1	Grade 3	Struggling Readers	16 weeks	2
Heistad, 2008	156	13 (combined fluency/comp.		Grades 3,4,5	Spec. Ed., ELL, Struggling	35 weeks	5

Findings

All of the studies found at least some improvement in the area of reading fluency (Table 3). One study in particular, Christ & Davie (2009) reported significant improvement in this area. It should be noted that all five studies used control groups. In most of the studies, there were no statistical differences between the control group and the Read Naturally group.

Comprehension appears to be minimally affected by the Read Naturally® program. Christ & Davie (2009) reported a negative average in this area. Heistad (2008) reported increases in reading comprehension, but did not provide a percentage

number. All other comprehension averages showed a 2% or less increase in reading comprehension.

The duration of the studies varied from eight weeks to 35 weeks. Although the populations varied by study, all included struggling readers. Sample size varied greatly, from eight students to 158 students.

Efficacy of Read Naturally with English Language Learners, Low Income Students, and African American Students

English Language Learners, low income students and African American students can all benefit from the Read Naturally program (Christ & Davie, 2009, Gibson, Cartledge, Keyes, 2011). Gibson, Cartledge, Keyes (2011) conducted a study using eight first grade at-risk students, low income students, and African American students to determine if the Read Naturally program would increase reading fluency. The Read Naturally Software Edition (RNSE) was used in this study. RNSE is a computer-based program that is identical to the hard copy edition. The study found that all students in the study increased both their reading fluency and comprehension skills after using the RNSE three-four times per week for 14-16 weeks.

Christ & Davie (2009) also used the RNSE in a randomized controlled trial. This study was conducted in six different elementary schools and involved 109 third grade students. Twenty-three percent of the students were English Language Learners, 28% were African American, and 60% of students qualified for free and reduced lunch. The study was completed over a 10 week time period where students used

RNSE for 20 minutes each day. Christ & Davie (2009) found that students increased their reading accuracy and fluency after using this program.

Read Naturally advertises that their program is helpful to English Language Learners due to the audio component built into each lesson, definitions of words in each story, and the modeling of reading rate for each story. In addition, students are able to learn vocabulary and background knowledge while reading the Read Naturally non-fiction stories. Also, a Spanish translation is provided for some of the stories (See Table 8).

Table 8 Read Naturally English Language Learner Table

Read Naturally Intervention Program	Series	Areas of Support for ELL Students						
		English Language Skills		Vocabulary			General Background Knowledge	
		Audio Support for Each Story	Repeated Readings	Student-Friendly Definitions With Audio Support	Vocabulary Questions	Audio-Supported Spanish Translations	Informative Nonfiction Stories	U.S. Culture and Language
Read Naturally Live Read Naturally Encore	Sequenced, Phonics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
One Minute Reader	iPad App, Book/CD	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Read Naturally SE	Sequenced, Phonics	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Read Naturally SE Read Naturally ME	Spanish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Idioms, American Manners & Customs	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Read Naturally GATE	—	✓	✓				✓	
Take Aim at Vocabulary	—	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	

Strengths and Weaknesses

Read Naturally® uses research based practices that have been tried and tested successfully over many years. These include repeated reading, repeated reading with a model, and progress monitoring. This is a strength of the program. All seven studies of Read Naturally showed an increase in reading fluency, in all intervention populations. A weakness is the lack of affect on reading comprehension. No study reported significant gains in this area. This is a concern as comprehension is the primary reason for reading.

One interesting observation reported is that teachers have observed an increase in students' self-esteem and confidence in reading when using this program (Hasbrouck et al., 1999). This is a strength that I have observed in my own school where students with special needs, in grades 2-5 have become more interested in reading. Students seem to enjoy using the Read Naturally program and challenge themselves to increase their fluency as they complete each lesson.

Limitations

I was disappointed in the relatively few research studies that focused on the Read Naturally® program. It was very difficult to find research studies about this program that met my needs. In addition, some of the studies I found did not provide specific information about some necessary aspects of their studies such as participant information, or the time period of the intervention. Others lacked a control group. The Read Naturally® website did provide access to nine studies, but again, specific

information about the interventions was missing. Other studies combined Read Naturally® with additional interventions, and did not differentiate the data. Many of the studies, such as Arvans (2010), Hancock (2002), and Kemp (2006) were master's theses or doctoral dissertations. Although I was able to access some theses and dissertations studies through ProQuest, many were not available, and some were incomplete.

Reflection

I am very surprised to find so little research on this program, especially since it has been on the market since 1997. Most of the research on Read Naturally® consisted of Master's thesis and dissertations. One reason may be the lack of emphasis on reading fluency in our schools. Perhaps now that the importance of reading fluency is being recognized, additional research will be published, particularly on programs such as this.

It is interesting, and concerning, to learn that the program appears to have minimal effect on reading comprehension. Although not part of the Read Naturally® instructions, I wonder if this could be remedied by direct instruction or other innovative approaches that can be researched and explored during the reading of the passages.

Conclusion

Read Naturally® is a program that utilizes proven research techniques such as repeated readings, teacher modeling, and progress monitoring to improve reading fluency skills. Although it delivers less improvement in the comprehension area, the

program is still worth using with below level readers to improve reading fluency. I hope there will be additional research on this program in the near future.

My recommendations are to continue to look for current research on this program. The data from this analysis suggests that Read Naturally® helps students improve their reading fluency. I agree and recommend using it with students who have fluency needs. I cannot recommend Read Naturally® as a comprehension intervention, since results in this area are weak. However, since I have utilized this program during the past several years, and have witnessed positive results with my special education population, This analysis has made me wonder about other intervention programs that are used in my school district, and if there is research to prove their effectiveness. It would be interesting to explore this further.

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Appendix C
FOCUS ON FLUENCY
STRATEGIES FOR CLASSROOM RTI INSTRUCTION

Abstract

Teachers today are challenged to fit all academic requirements into the school day. This makes the inclusion of reading fluency strategies for struggling readers very difficult. Reading fluency is an important component of the reading process and can be used as an indicator of reading proficiency. In order to become a fluent reader, students must become proficient in automaticity, prosody and accuracy. When these three components are mastered, the brain is able to focus on the higher-level skill of reading comprehension. It is possible for teachers to learn and incorporate new reading fluency strategies into the daily classroom routine by using methods such as wide reading, repeated reading or Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI) in the reading block as well as at other times during the school day. Additional practice activities help to engage and motivate students as they work on reading fluency skills.

Focus on Fluency

New and challenging standards have pushed many teachers I know to repurpose their instructional time for the reading of difficult texts and text-based writing. But that doesn't mean we can forget the basics! I work with teachers who cannot find the time to fit in all necessary instruction during the school day. Adding

time to address reading fluency strategies for struggling students may add another layer of stress. Learning new strategies to help these students is yet another time commitment. However, effective fluency work can be incorporated into daily instruction with a little planning, preparation, and creativity. The goal is to introduce a series of effective fluency strategies.

Reading Fluency

It is difficult to fully define fluency, as it encompasses every aspect of reading (Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001; Schwanenflugel, Kuhn & Meisinger, 2010). Many researchers define reading fluency as the rate that a reader accurately recognizes words within a connected text (Burns, Kwoka, Lim, Crone, Haegele, Parker, Petersen & Scholin, 2011; Speech & Ritchey, 2005). In a connected text, words are linked in phrases or sentences, rather than appearing in a list. By contrast, others argue that accuracy, automaticity and prosody should be included in the definition of reading fluency, as in Figure One (Rasinsky & Hoffman, 2003). Automaticity is the ability to read words without conscious thought and accuracy is the ability to pronounce words found in print successfully. Prosody is the expressive intonation and phrasing used when one reads (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003).

Oral reading fluency can be used as an indicator of overall reading proficiency (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, & Jenkins, 2001). In addition, fluency builds on the foundation of oral language skills, phonemic awareness, knowledge of alphabet letters and decoding skills. Fluency can be associated with foundational skills including phonological awareness, letter name, and letter sound knowledge that are below the

word level (Ritchey & Speece, 2006). In fact, letter sound fluency measures have been found to predict reading fluency in the kindergarten and first grade years (Ritchey & Speece, 2005; Speece & Ritchey, 2006). However, it may be more accurate to call this task an automaticity task and to reserve the term fluency for connected text.

There is a correlation between oral reading and student achievement (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003; Pikulski & Chard, 2005). Students who are fluent readers can easily read texts and many demonstrate good comprehension skills (Rasinski, 2012; Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003; Schwanenflugel et al., 2010). Good comprehension strategies may include predicting both before and during reading, visualizing by using prior knowledge to create a graphic picture, and inferring by using clues to draw conclusions about text information. Additional strategies may include retelling the story, finding the main idea and synthesizing content information (Walpole & McKenna, 2007). In the classroom setting, reading fluency work occurs during oral reading, silent sentence reading, and silent paragraph reading.

Teaching Strategies

It is important to address a student's poor reading fluency through specific strategies and procedures in order to increase reading rate, accuracy and prosody (Begeny & Silber, 2006). Being proactive and addressing fluency at the beginning of the reading process may help prevent fluency problems later on (Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001). It is possible to achieve fluency gains at both the word and connected text level (Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001; Hiebert, 2005; Marcell, 2011). Figure Two

displays how the strategies are connected, and Figure Three describes fluency strategies.

Fluency strategies do not need to solely be implemented in one-on-one instructional situations. Strategies can also be carried out in small- and large-group settings, as group-based fluency strategies have been proven to be effective (Begeny & Silber, 2006; Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001). Small group fluency instruction in particular can be very successful in improving student reading fluency (Begeny & Silber, 2006). Fluency lessons can be implemented into a classroom's daily, differentiated small group reading instruction.

Modeling

Modeling fluent reading by either a teacher or a peer can be an effective fluency strategy that has a positive effect on students (Chard, Vaughn & Tyler, 2002). Reading is modeled when a skill or strategy is demonstrated in the correct manner (Walpole & McKenna, 2007). For example, a teacher may model how to read fluently and with expression. Pre-recorded books can also be used as a model to increase fluency (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003).

Repeated Reading

Repeated reading is another technique that can be used to improve fluency. It involves reading one text several times until a predetermined reading level is achieved (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001)). As a student continues to read the same text, fluency rate should increase as word errors decrease. Repeated reading has been found to improve word recognition accuracy, automaticity and

comprehension. Prosody is also improved by using repeated reading. In addition, the repeated reading process has been found to help students successfully read subsequent new passages (Kuhn, 2005; Rasinski, 2012).

Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction

Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI), developed by Stahl and Heubach (2005), is a comprehensive intervention that has led to positive results in improving reading fluency. This intervention was originally designed for classrooms where the majority of students were reading below grade level (Schwanenflugel et al., 2009). FORI is intended to be used with a core reading program during a five day week. The process utilizes teacher modeling, repeated reading, echo reading, and partner reading. With FORI, one story is read repeatedly throughout the entire week. Initially, the teacher introduces a text, reading the selection to the class as she models fluent reading. He or she will then lead a discussion focusing on comprehension and key vocabulary words. The next lesson entails students echo reading the selection, and sending the reading selection home to read for homework. The selection is read chorally on the third day, and is again assigned to read for homework. On the fourth day, partner reading is utilized as well as other extension activities. The teacher assesses reading fluency on the final day by asking individual students to read the story on a one-on-one basis (Schwanenflugel et al., 2009; Hiebert, 2005).

Wide Reading

One method that can be used to increase fluency is wide reading. Wide reading uses a large assortment of reading topics and materials to engage students in the

reading process (Schwanenflugel et al., 2009). When participating in wide reading, students read several books during the week with teacher support, rather than reading just one single text repeatedly throughout the week. Wide reading exposes students to a broad range of reading materials, and can lead to improvement in prosody, word recognition and reading comprehension (Schwanenflugel et al., 2009; Kuhn, 2005). Teachers' supports of wide reading can include modeling, expressive reading, echo reading, and choral reading (Kuhn, 2005). Wide reading can increase student accuracy and reading rate as well as prosody and comprehension (Kuhn, 2005).

Paired Reading

Paired reading is an additional way to increase reading fluency (Topping, 1987). When engaging in paired reading, a reader who is struggling is matched with a strong reader. The stronger reader modifies his or her reading level to the less fluent partner. Each takes turns reading, with the less fluent partner signaling when he or she begins to struggle. The more fluent partner then begins to read again. As the students read, the more fluent partner corrects decoding errors as they occur (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003). Partners should change weekly which is beneficial to the less fluent reader (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003). Paired reading has proven to be a very successful strategy that helps increase both accuracy and reading comprehension (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003).

Echo Reading

Echo reading is a strategy that is easy to implement. When echo reading, a teacher reads a passage to students, one or two sentences at a time, and then students

orally read the same sentences as a group. Echo reading can be used in both large and small group settings. It is an additional way to provide assisted reading practice (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003).

Choral Reading

Choral reading is another way to help increase reading fluency. When choral reading, a teacher leads an entire group as they read aloud together. Choral reading provides a significant level of support from the teacher (Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005). Choral partner reading is another type of choral reading. It entails a teacher modeling a short passage or sentences, and then the partners orally read the same passage or sentences together. Both choral reading techniques help students to practice fluency while also focusing on reading comprehension (Schwanenflugel et al., 2009). As students choral read, the teacher can observe them to measure progress. This process can be used with basal reader stories, short passages, commercially made resources or poems. Multiple copies are needed as students are reading the material at the same time.

Previewing and Preteaching

Other ways to improve reading fluency are previewing passages and preteaching key vocabulary words (Berninger, Abbott, Trivedi, Olson, Gould, Hiramatsu, Holsinger, McShane, Murphy, Norton, Boyd & Westhaggen, 2010; Pikulski & Chard, 2005). To preview passages, a teacher reviews upcoming readings with students in order to familiarize them with readings. Preteaching vocabulary words involves reviewing key vocabulary words that will be featured in readings to be

introduced in the near future. In addition, increasing the amount of reading in which a student engages in can result in fluency growth (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003).

Using Multiple Strategies Together

Teachers can easily use more than one of these instructional practices, depending on the needs of the student (Schwanenflugel et al., 2009; Begeny & Silber, 2006). FORI incorporates several other fluency strategies into instructional practice. Additional strategies can also be incorporated through wide reading and repeated reading instruction as well. Some of the strategies that can be used in conjunction with repeated reading, wide reading and FORI include teacher modeling of expressive reading, paired reading, echo reading and choral reading (Schwanenflugel et al., 2009; Kuhn, 2005). In addition the combination of repeated and modeled reading can improve fluency. This process may include students listening to a text that is read to them and then reading it themselves, or listening to a pre-recorded text while reading it at the same time. It may also involve reading to a partner who provides assistance with unknown words (Schwanenflugel et al., 2009; Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003). Previewing passages and preteaching vocabulary can also be combined with most of the other strategies that have been previously discussed.

Fluency Activities for the Classroom

It is important to address a student's poor reading fluency through specific intervention procedures in order to increase reading rate, accuracy and prosody (Begeny & Silber, 2006). Being proactive and addressing fluency at the beginning of

the reading process may help prevent fluency problems later on (Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001). In conjunction with the aforementioned reading fluency strategies, fluency activities can assist in promoting automaticity, prosody and accuracy, which encompass the components of reading fluency (Schwanenflugel et al., 2010; Berninger et al., 2010; Kuhn & Stahl, 2003) as depicted in Table One. Fluency activities are a motivating and engaging way to supplement fluency instruction. They present an opportunity for individual and group practice of fluency skills that have been focused on during classroom reading instruction. These activities are an additional way to help increase reading fluency.

Fluency Practice for the Word and Phrase Level

It is possible to achieve fluency gains at both the word and connected text level (Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001; Hiebert, 2005; Marcell, 2011). The first group of activities addresses fluency at the word and phrase level. They focus on repetition, accuracy and automaticity. When working on fluency at the word level, you may want to use either the Dolch sight word list or the Fry sight word list. The Fry list includes 1,000 common words that make up 90% of all written language, and all 220 Dolch words are incorporated into the Fry word lists. See Figure Four for websites containing Dolch and Fry word lists as well as additional word level fluency activities. Also, the same word cards or word phrases can be used for several of the activities. Another suggestion is to use vocabulary words that are being focused on during the weekly reading lessons. Being able to read words automatically greatly influences how well one can read fluently (Hudson et al., 2009).

Bang (Small Group Activity)

This activity is for two or more students. Materials you will need include a timer and at least 30 word or phrase cards. These can be 3 x 5 cards or cards made from card stock. Sometimes I cut 3 x 5 cards in half for this game. As students learn the original words, continue to add more words to the basket. For every 10 word cards, add an additional “bang” card. Students sit in a circle, next to one another. Both the word cards and “bang” cards are placed upside down in a box or basket. Students take turns choosing and reading word cards from the basket for a set time, usually five minutes. If the card is read correctly, the student holds onto that card. If a student misreads a word, it is put back into the basket. Students who select a “bang” card must place all their cards back into the basket. Once the timer goes off, students count their word cards. The student with the most cards wins. This is a fast moving game that keeps all students engaged and motivated.

Popcorn Game (Small Group Activity)

This is a variation of the bang game. Instead of index cards, words or phrases are placed on popcorn cutouts and “pop” is written on several of the kernels. Students place all of their popcorn cards back in the container when they choose a card containing the word “pop”. I put the popcorn cards in a plastic popcorn container that I bought for \$1 at a dollar store. See Figure Five.

Pick a Stick (Small Group Activity)

This is yet another variation of Bang. This time, write the words or phrases and “bang” on wide popsicle sticks and place the sticks in a tall container.

How Many Can You Read? (Small Group Activity)

How Many Can You Read? is a noncompetitive variation of Bang. The “bang” cards are removed from the set. Students set the timer and try to read as many words as possible during the allotted time. Each time they play, students try to improve upon the number of cards read correctly. Sometimes I have students work together to discover how many cards they can read collaboratively in a given time period. I have found this to be a great team building activity as well as a fluency activity.

Roll and Read (Small Group Activity)

This activity is for two or more students. Provide students with a paper containing 12 words. Students take turns rolling two dice, and reading the word that corresponds to the number rolled. You will need two dice and a paper containing twelve numbered words.

Find a Word/Phrase (Small Group Activity)

This is an activity for two or more students. You will need to make two copies each of 20 word or phrase cards. Students use word or phrase cards to play a go fish type game. A student distributes four cards to each player. Students take turns asking each other for specific word cards. If the student asked has the specific card, he/she is given that card and places the two matched cards on the table in front of him/her. The student with the most pairs of cards at the end of the game wins.

Read Listen and Learn (Individual or Small Group Activity)

This activity works best with either individual students or pairs of students. A card reader is used for this activity (Figure Six). The only materials needed for Read

Listen and Learn are a card reader and blank card reader cards. Both the reader and cards are available through educational supply companies. However, card readers used to be very popular in elementary schools. Check with your reading teacher to see if there is one in a closet somewhere in your school. Write a sight word, or another targeted vocabulary word from your reading series, on individual blank cards and then record your voice saying one word on each card. Short phrases can be written on the cards as well, if that is what your students need to work on.

Students will listen to teacher-selected cards by putting them through the card reader. They will then record themselves reading the same word. Then students listen to themselves reading the word. I have found that students thoroughly enjoy this activity, especially listening to themselves read the words. The repetitive nature of Read Listen and Learn helps students to really learn the words.

Fluency Activities for the Text Level

The next group of activities addresses fluency at the text level. They address accuracy, prosody and automaticity. These activities focus on reading connected text.

Whisper While You Work (Individual or Small Group Activity)

This activity is for individual or small groups of students, depending on the materials you have on hand. For Whisper While You Work, you will need some type of audio device, a c.d. player, computer, tablet or tape recorder, along with a prerecorded story and a text copy of the same story for students to read. Students are asked to use their finger to track words as they whisper read with the prerecorded story. Using an audio

model can be an effective way to increase fluency (Chard et al., 2002). See Figure Seven.

Be a Buddy (Small Group of Two Activity)

This is a buddy reading activity designed for two students. You will need a short story or part of a text for each student. Students take turns reading a short text to each other. Pairing a strong reader with a weak reader can be an effective way to help increase reading fluency (Schwanenflugel et al., 2009).

Read and Record (Individual or Small Group Activity)

Read and Record can be used with either individuals or a pair of students. Materials that are needed for this activity include a recording device (tape recorder, tablet) and a short story or paragraphs from a text. After practicing reading a short text or paragraphs several times, students record themselves reading the text, practicing prosody, and accuracy. They then listen to themselves on the recording. You may want to provide students with a checklist to rate themselves on their accuracy and prosody. In addition, students can be asked to complete a graphic organizer to monitor their reading comprehension.

Poem Power (Individual or Small Group Activity)

This activity is for either individuals or small groups of students. Provide a copy of a poem for each student. Poems can be collected and placed in binders, or commercial books of children's poetry can be used. Students can practice reading the poem aloud either individually or in a group. Poems are great for practicing prosody and phrasing (Rasinski, 2012).

Sensational Songs (Whole Group Activity)

This is a fun whole group activity, but can also be used by individual or small groups of students as well. It is a great way to practice fluency, prosody, and automaticity (Rasinski, 2012). Materials needed are copies of songs for each student. You can collect a packet of songs or an already published book of children's songs to use for this activity. You will need to create a songbook. It is best to place songs in a binder so that additional songs can be added during the year. Plastic sleeves can be used for durability. A computer, CD player or tape recorder is also needed in order to play the songs. The teacher chooses songs for the class and prints copies of them for students. Sometimes I let students request songs to sing. As the song is played, students track the words of the song as they sing along. See Figure Eight.

Final Words

Research over the years has demonstrated that fluency instruction is an effective way to increase reading skills. Reading fluency is an important skill that is a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Although it may be challenging to carve out the time, reading fluency strategies should be included as part of the school day for struggling readers. This can be achieved by integrating fluency instruction into the reading block. Fluency activities can be incorporated into those small pockets of time during the day such as morning work, after recess or even as a final activity at the end of the school day. It is beneficial to pair fluency activities and strategies to reinforce skills and provide students with additional practice. Whether

embedded in a reading curriculum, or by using teacher-designed lessons, it is important that reading fluency is incorporated into the daily school routine.

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Pause and Ponder

What is your definition of reading fluency?

What reading fluency interventions do you find most effective?

How can you add more reading fluency interventions for struggling readers in your daily instruction?

Why does reading fluency come easily to some students and is much more difficult for other students?

Take Action

- Reflect on your reading fluency instruction and how you can improve it.
- Think about the variety of fluency strategies available. Incorporate a new fluency strategy in your reading instruction.
- Review the activities mentioned in this article. Prepare and introduce new fluency activities in your classroom.
- Consider additional engaging activities that can be used with your students to improve reading fluency.

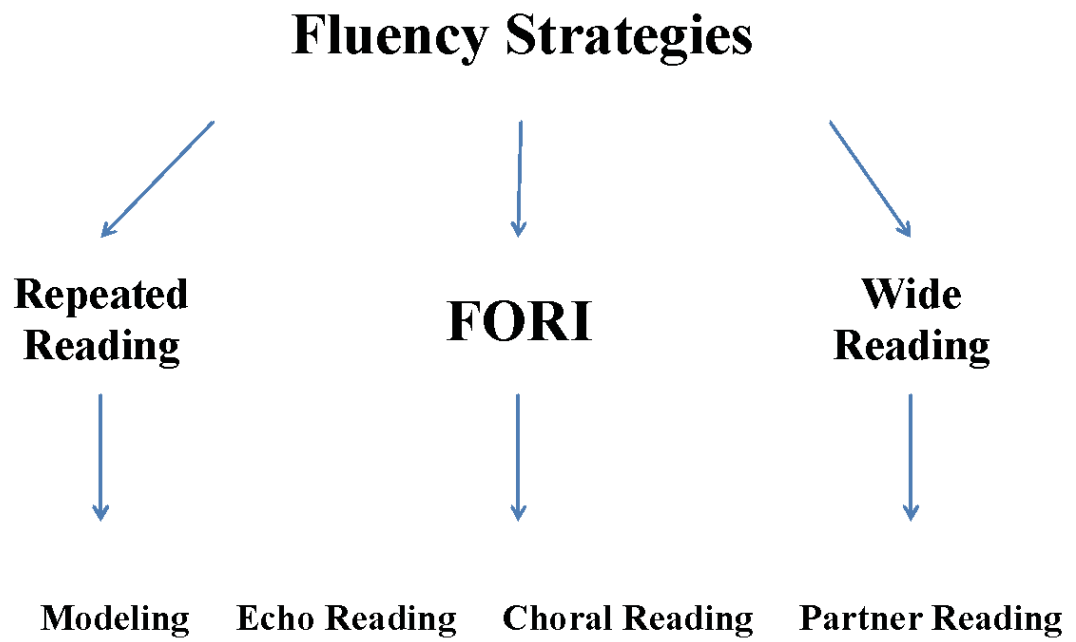


Figure 8 Fluency strategies

Strategies	Description	How to Use
Wide Reading	Use wide variety of of reading materials, exposing students to a broad range of reading materials. This engages and motivates students in the reading process and helps to improve word recognition, reading comprehension and prosody.	With teacher support, read several new stories each week with students.
Repeated Reading	Read one text continuously during the week to increase word recognition, automaticity and comprehension.	With teacher support, students read only one story each week.
FORI	A program designed to be used with a basal reading series. It uses teacher modeling, repeated reading, echo reading and partner reading.	Using one story per week, teacher focuses on a different type of fluency intervention each day, including teacher modeling, repeated reading, echo reading and partner reading. Comprehension and key vocabulary words are also included in the process.
Modeling	Teacher models by reading passage aloud.	The teacher reads a passage demonstrating good prosody, accuracy and automaticity.
Paired Reading	Students read text in pairs. The teacher pairs a strong reader with a weak reader.	As students take turns reading, the weaker reader signals when he/she begins to struggle. Also, the stronger reader helps corrects decoding errors as they occur.
Echo Reading	Repeated reading after the teacher reads.	Teacher reads a sentence or short passage and then students read the same sentence or short passage.
Choral Reading	Teacher models the reading of a text.	The teacher reads part of a text. Students read the same text after the teacher.
Previewing/Preteaching	Teacher helps familiarize students with upcoming readings.	Before introducing a new story to the class, the story and new vocabulary are reviewed.

Figure 9 Description of Fluency Strategies

Table 9 Skills Addressed in Fluency Activities

Fluency Activities	Accuracy	Automaticity	Prosody	Word Fluency	Phrase Fluency	Text Fluency
Bang	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Popcorn	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Pop	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Whisper While You Work	✓	✓	✓			✓
Be a Buddy	✓	✓	✓			✓
Roll and Read	✓	✓		✓	✓	
How Many Can You Read?	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Read and Record	✓	✓	✓			✓
Find a Word/Phrase (Go Fish)	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Read Listen and Learn	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Poem Power	✓	✓	✓			✓
Funny Voices	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sensational Songs	✓	✓	✓			✓
Just Breathe	✓	✓		✓		

The School Bell website includes a comprehensive Dolch sight word kit. It includes organizational and record keeping suggestions as well numerous games and student practice. The School Bell site is user friendly and is my favorite sight word website.

<http://theschoolbell.com/Links/Dolch/Contents.html>

K-12 Reader provides a list of all 1,000 Fry sight words.

<http://www.k12reader.com/worksheet/fry-words-complete-list/>

The Curriculum Corner has Fry sight word activity suggestions.

[http://www.thecurriculumcorner.com/
thecurriculumcorner123/2012/07/06/fry-word-activities-for-all-words/](http://www.thecurriculumcorner.com/thecurriculumcorner123/2012/07/06/fry-word-activities-for-all-words/)

Figure 10 Suggested websites for Dolch and Fry sight words and sight word activities

Additional Websites That Address Reading Fluency

Read Naturally	www.readnaturally.com
Readers Theatre	http://www.thebestclass.org/rtscripts.html
Reading A-Z	readinga-z.com
QuickReads	http://www.pearsonschool.com/

Figure 11 Fluency Websites

Appendix D

READING FLUENCY SURVEY

Teacher Survey About Reading Fluency

Purpose

In order to determine the knowledge, interest and needs of the Lancashire staff regarding reading fluency, an eleven-question survey was created using a Likert scale. In addition, after the final item, there was space for optional teacher comments.

Sample

Thirty elementary classroom teachers, including kindergarten through fifth grade teachers and a reading specialist were asked to complete the survey. Twenty-seven of these teachers completed the survey.

Methodology

I designed my survey questions to learn about teachers' knowledge of fluency instruction, fluency programs and assessments. In addition, I wanted to determine if teachers were interested in learning additional information about fluency instruction and assessment.

Survey items consisted of yes/no statements, checklist items and three to five choices answers. The three to five choice answers included the choices of

- yes, maybe, and no
- daily, weekly, occasionally, I would but I don't have time and never
- daily, weekly, monthly, tri-annually and never

The survey was completed on line. Teachers were asked to participate in the survey both verbally and through an email request. An additional reminder email was also sent a week after the original request.

Results

All of the survey participants believe that fluency is an important component of reading instruction. This is encouraging as it means that the staff values the role fluency plays in the reading process. Fourteen of the twenty-seven teachers work on fluency skills in a small group setting with six respondents teaching fluency to only their struggling readers. One teacher responded that reading fluency is not taught in the classroom.

Only nine teachers teach reading fluency daily while ten teach it weekly. Two teachers noted that they would teach fluency but do not have the time to address it.

Teachers use a variety of strategies to teach reading fluency with the majority using choral reading, paired reading and teacher modeling.

When asking about access to commercial fluency programs, seventeen teachers reported they have access to the Quick Reads program. However, only nine of these teachers use Quick Reads with their students. Six teachers have access to Read Naturally, but only four of them use the program.

Nineteen teachers assess the reading fluency of at least some of their students. Most use either informal teacher assessments or DIBELs to monitor progress. Eight teachers reported that they do not assess reading fluency.

The majority of responders stated that they would be interested in learning additional information about reading fluency strategies, interventions and assessments for their tier 2 and tier 3 students. This confirms my premise that professional development in this area would be beneficial.

Two teachers added optional comments at the end of the survey. One noted that she assessed reading fluency informally. The other teacher stated:

I am a 5th grade teacher, so I do not teach fluency. Only the reading specialist and Spec Ed teacher teach fluency with 5th graders. I did teach fluency when I was a first and third grade teacher!!!

Conclusion

The survey shows that although teachers realize the importance of teaching reading fluency, not all teachers include this topic in their daily instruction. Many of the respondents are using some techniques in their fluency instruction, including echo reading, choral reading, paired reading, rereading and teacher modeling. Most teachers

do not use commercial fluency programs. A little more than half of teachers surveyed assess reading fluency, at least tri-annually.

Techniques, strategies, commercial programs and assessment will be addressed in the fluency toolkit that will be developed. In addition, the importance of both fluency instruction and assessment will be addressed in professional development sessions that will be presented to the school staff.

Teacher Survey About Reading Fluency

Fluency is an important component of reading instruction.

True

False

Not sure

Do you teach reading fluency?

Yes, with a whole group

Yes, with a small group

Yes, only with struggling students

No, I never teach fluency

How often do you teach reading fluency?

Daily

Weekly

Occasionally

Only with struggling students

I would teach this, but don't have the time

Never

What strategies do you use to teach fluency?

Echo reading

Choral Reading

Paired Reading

Books on Tape/CD

Modeling

Phrasing

Poetry

Rereading

Other strategies

None of the above

What commercial fluency programs to do you have access to?

Reader's Theatre
QuickReads
Read Naturally
RAVE-O
FORI
Other programs
None of the above

What commercial programs do you use to teach reading fluency?

Reader's Theatre
QuickReads
Read Naturally
RAVE-O
FORI
Other programs
None of the above

How often do you assess student progress in reading fluency?

Daily
Weekly
Monthly
Tri-annually
Never

What materials do you use to assess student progress in reading fluency?

Informal teacher assessment
Journeys fluency assessment
DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency
Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency (TSWRF)
Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI)
Phonological Awareness Literacy Survey (PALS)
Other
I don't assess reading fluency progress.

I would like to learn more about reading fluency strategies and interventions.

Yes
Maybe
No, I know enough about this

I would like to learn more about reading fluency assessments.

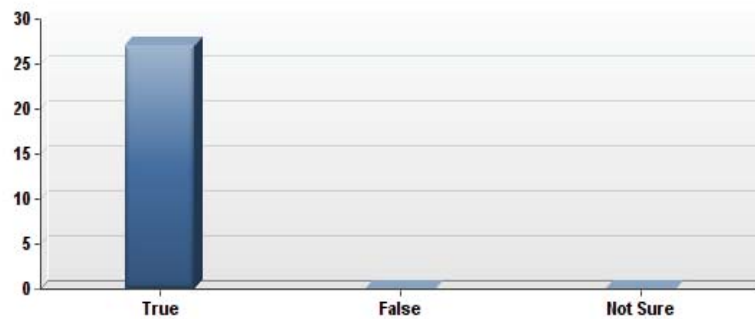
Yes

Maybe
No, I know enough about this

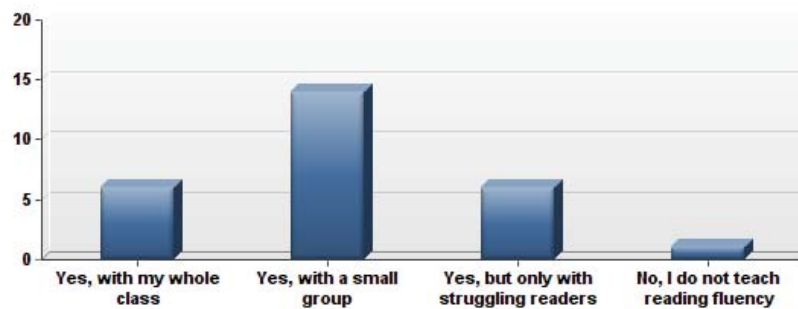
Please add additional comments here.

Fluency Graphs of Survey Items

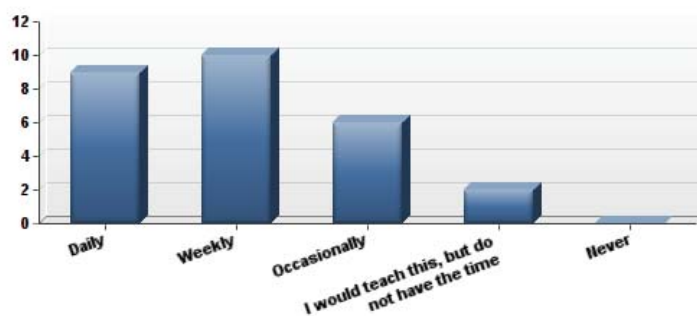
1. Fluency is an important component of reading instruction.



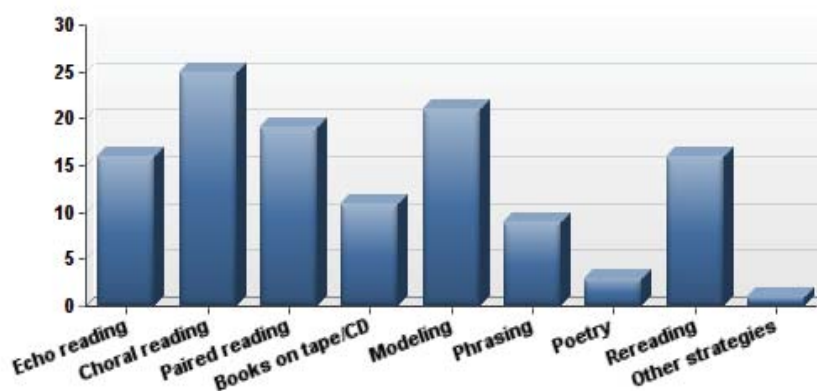
2. Do you teach reading fluency?



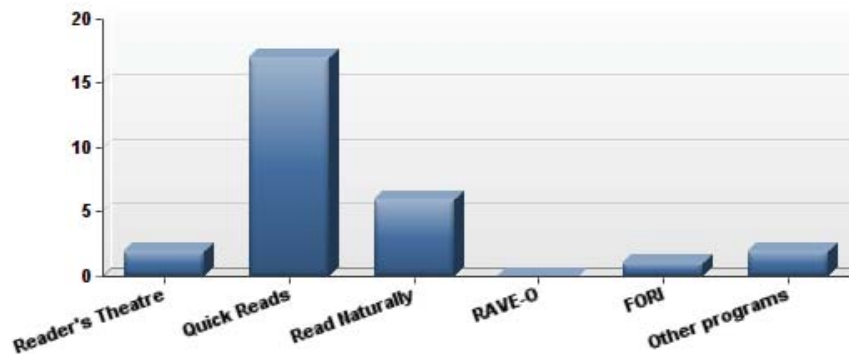
3.How often do you teach reading fluency?



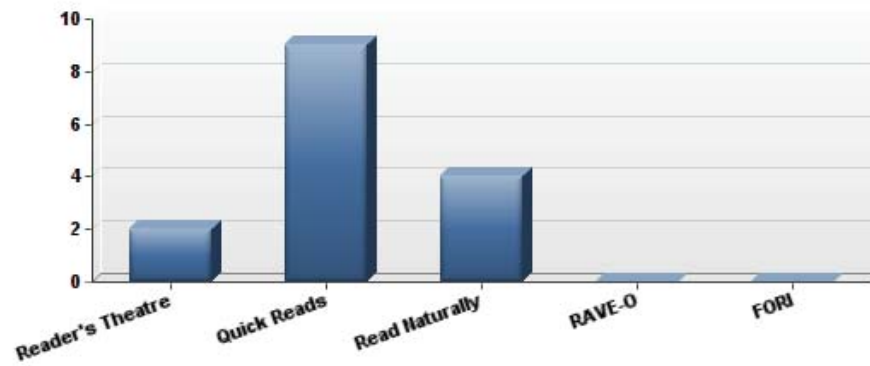
4. What strategies do you use to teach reading fluency? Please check all that apply.



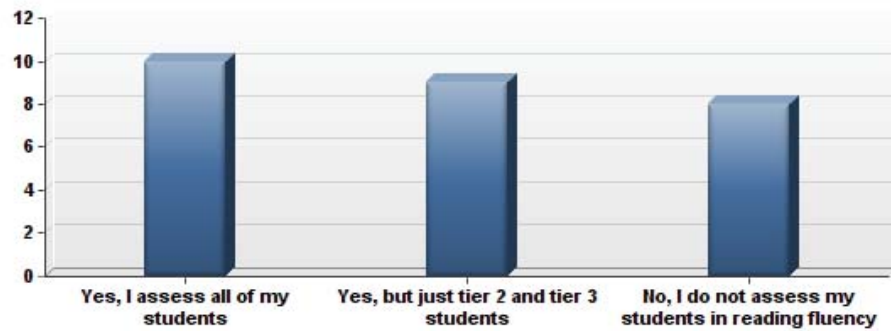
5. What commercial fluency programs are available for your use?



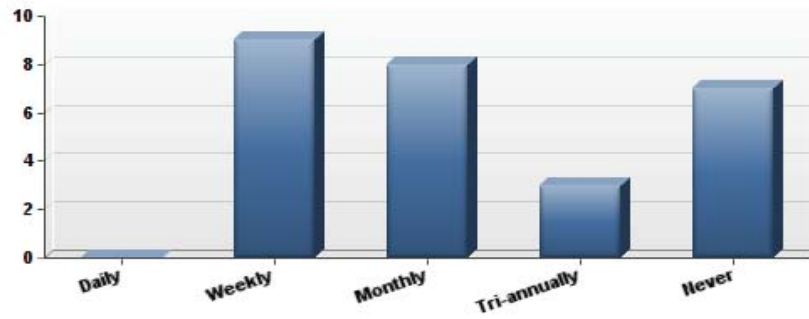
6. What commercial programs do you use to teach reading fluency?



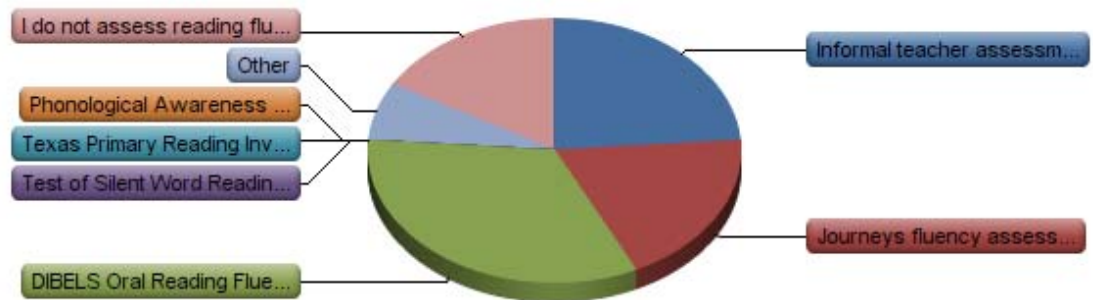
7. Do you assess your students in reading fluency?



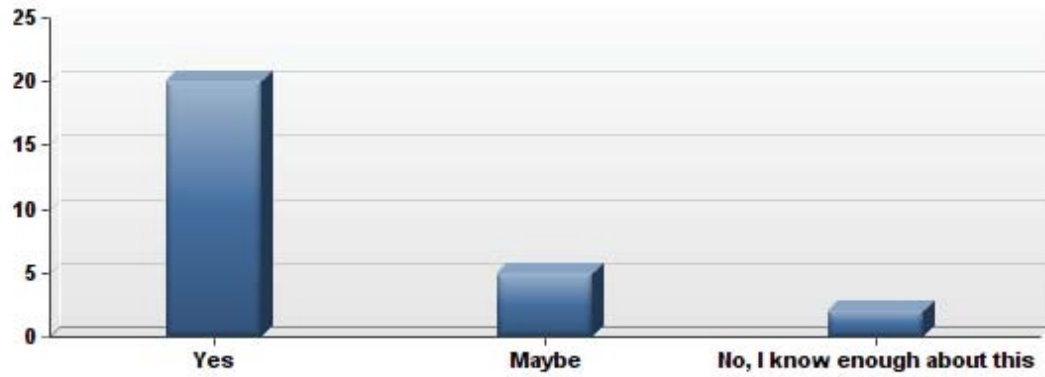
8. How often do you assess student progress in reading fluency?



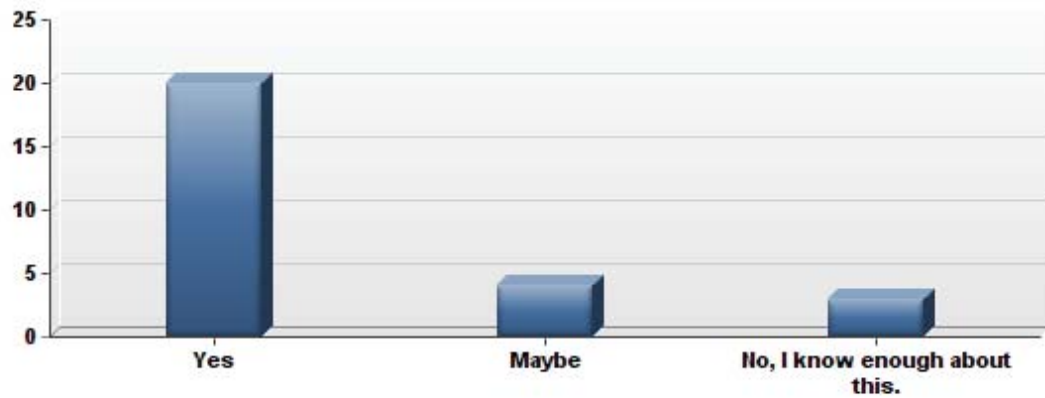
9. What materials do you use to assess student progress in reading fluency?



10. I would like to learn more about reading fluency strategies and interventions for tier 2 and tier 3 students.



11. I would like to learn more about reading fluency assessments.



Appendix E

EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS TO HELP ELEMENTARY STUDENTS BECOME FLUENT READERS A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Reading fluency is a critical component of reading development that greatly influences a student's academic success (Kuhn, Schwanenflugel, & Meisinger, 2010; Meisinger, Bloom & Hynd, 2010). It is essential to read fluently in order to comprehend text (Kim, Wagner & Foster, 2011; Berninger & Wolf, 2009).

Defining fluency can be challenging, as fluency encompasses every aspect of reading (Wolf & Katzir-Cohen; Kuhn, Schwanenflugel, & Meisinger, 2010; Meisinger, Blook & Hyne, 2010; Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001). Many define reading fluency as the rate that a reader accurately recognizes words within a connected text (Speech & Ritchey, 2005). A more encompassing definition is the ability to read fluently, accurately and with prosody by simultaneously decoding and comprehending (Li et al., 2010). Reading fluency occurs during oral reading, silent sentence reading, reading connected text, and silent paragraph reading (Berninger, Abbott, Trivedi, Olson, Gould, Hiramatsu, Holsinger, McShane, Murphy, Norton, Boyd & Westhaggen, 2010). Being proactive and addressing fluency when children first learn to read may help prevent fluency problems later on (Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001).

The primary goal of reading is the ability to build meaning (Kuhn, 2005) and as such there is a strong relationship between fluency and reading comprehension (Kim et al., 2011). Oral reading fluency correlates to reading comprehension accuracy (Berninger et al., 2010). Fluency has been found to be a predictor of reading comprehension (Berninger et al., 2010; Wise, Sevcik, Morris, Lovett, Wolf, Kuhn, & Schanenflugel, 2010).

In order to comprehend text, students need to be able to read fluently at a minimum of 63 words per minute. At this rate students should be able to successfully answer comprehension questions (Burns, Kwoka, Lim, Crone, Haegele, Parker & Scholin, 2011).

Two primary questions are explored in this literature review. The first is, what interventions are most effective in helping elementary students, in kindergarten through fifth grade, who receive tier 2 and tier 3 instruction, become fluent readers? Next, what are effective ways to assess reading fluency?

Method

I used ERIC and PsychInfo to research information on reading fluency. All articles used in this review were empirical and peer reviewed. The key words used to find relevant research studies were *fluency*, *oral reading fluency*, *reading fluency in young children* and *fluency instruction*, *reading fluency assessment*, *fluency interventions*, and *reading fluency*. I focused on studies pertaining to reading fluency and young children, reading fluency and assessment of fluency. Articles published

before 2000 were not included in order to focus on more current research. Studies and articles used in this review were found in the following journals: *Psychology in the Schools*, *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessments*, *Remedial and Special Education*, *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Annals of Dyslexia*, *Scientific Studies of Reading*, *Language, Speech, Assessment for Effective Intervention*, and *Hearing Services in Schools*.

I will first discuss a group of studies that focus on a variety of fluency interventions. The first group of studies will investigate the use of a single intervention. I will then discuss studies that employ two or more interventions to increase reading fluency. Next I will talk about fluency assessments, first focusing on silent reading fluency assessments and then addressing oral reading fluency assessments. Recommendations and a conclusion will follow.

Approaches to Reading Fluency Intervention

Fluency approaches are strategies and interventions used to increase reading fluency, which in turn improves reading comprehension. I will be discussing studies that focus on several approaches that can be used in this manner as well as study limitations.

Individual Fluency Strategies

Ardoyn, Eckert & Cole (2008) examined the generalization effects of two fluency-based reading interventions. These interventions, Repeated Reading and Multiple Exemplars, were administered to 42 second- and fourth-grade general

education students. Half of the students were exposed to repeated reading conditions and the other half to Multiple Exemplars. The repeated reading intervention consisted of an examiner first reading an intervention passage to students and then asking students to read the same passage aloud three times. While students read the entire passage, the examiner recorded words per minute for the first minute. After each complete reading, the examiner reviewed student errors.

The multiple exemplars condition involved reading three different intervention passages. The procedures followed by the examiner were identical to the repeated readings intervention.

Results found that although both methods increased oral reading fluency, there was a significantly greater increase in fluency from the Repeated Reading intervention. However, it was noted that there was more generalization of oral reading fluency skills from the Multiple Exemplars intervention. The authors stated that this may be the word overlap from the Multiple Exemplars passages was greater and subsequently easier for students to read. The study concluded that both interventions are beneficial to increasing oral reading fluency. In other words, using either of the interventions will help students generalize reading fluency skills.

Both Ardoin et al. (2008) and Silber & Martens (2010) compared repeated reading and multiple exemplars to determine which method is best for increasing and generalizing reading fluency. Ardoin et al. (2008) found that although both methods increased reading fluency, more generalization was obtained from the multiple exemplars intervention. Both Ardoin et al. (2008) and Silber & Martens (2010)

determined that the multiple exemplar group showed greater gains in generalization as compared to the repeated reading and control groups. The multiple exemplar treatment appears to assist in improving reading fluency using both small and larger sample sizes. Therefore this may be a technique that teachers may want to be implement to increase fluency. Both studies showed an increase in fluency skills. Focusing on fluency using any of these specific treatments appear to improve reading fluency.

Silber & Martens (2010) also compared the generalization of reading fluency skills by using the Repeated Reading strategy and the Multiple Exemplar approach. This study, with 111 first- and second-grade participants and including a control group, found that students in both the repeated reading groups and multiple exemplar groups significantly increased oral reading fluency skills compared to the control groups.

Peer coaching to increase oral reading fluency was examined by Marr, Algozzine, Nicholson, & Dugan (2011). This study included 34-second grade students, all who had great difficulty with oral reading fluency. The peer coaching, which was a one-on-one intervention was implemented three times a week for a 30-minute period. At the conclusion of this yearlong study, students in the treatment group showed significant growth in oral reading fluency rates as compared to the control group.

Fluency interventions can also occur at the subword levels. The study reviewed in this section focuses on a subword treatment. Tressoldi et al. (2007) examined a

subsyllabic intervention to determine if it would improve reading fluency for students with dyslexia. This intervention was designed to help students recognize syllables within words using connected texts. The goal was to help students to read with greater automaticity. Sixty-three second through eighth-grade students, all diagnosed with dyslexia, participated in this Italian study. Participants were placed in three different treatment groups, including a control group. The control group engaged in a method that focused on phonemic blending, synthesis and reading isolated words in twice-a-week sessions, delivered by speech therapists. The treatment for this group did not include a focus on recognizing syllables in isolation or embedded in words. The two subsyllabic groups focused on syllables by using different versions of a software intervention, one a self-paced version and the other an automatic version of the same computer program. Students attended the intervention once a week for a month, and subsequently every two weeks. The subsyllabic groups included parent participation at home and focused on reading text on the computer at his/her own reading pace. Students were asked to read as fast as they could but still pay attention to content. Reading was monitored, and when the fluency goal was met, the reading rate expectation was gradually increased.

Results showed that the subsyllabic method could improve reading fluency significantly as compared to the linguistic control group after a three-month treatment. The automatic group obtained better results than the self-paced group. After concluding the study, researchers had some of the students use the subsyllabic intervention for two or three more times, which resulted in fluency increases.

When looking at results of this study, it should be noted that the control group and the two subsyllabic groups received treatment for different amounts of time. The control group met twice a week with a speech therapist while the subsyllabic groups met at first once a week for the first month and then every two weeks after that, working with a psychologist. In addition, these two groups were able to practice skills at home five days a week. The larger amount of time given to the subsyllabic groups may be why their results were so greatly elevated.

The Tressoldi et al. (2007) study had some limitations. The study only included students with diagnosed reading learning disabilities who received treatment in a clinical setting. The Tressoldi et al. (2007) study lasted for nine months or approximately 36 weeks.

Multiple Fluency Strategies

Three methods that can be used to increase reading fluency are word list training (WLT), listening passage preview (LPP), and repeated reading (RR). A study by Begeny & Silber (2006) used three treatments that included different combinations of word list training (WLT), listening passage preview (LPP), and repeated reading (RR) to examine if one or more specific reading interventions would help increase reading fluency with a third grade population when provided in a small group setting rather than individually. The sample size of this study consisted of four third-grade students, all identified as needing extra reading help by their classroom teacher.

Students were administered subtests from the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP) to check for phonological awareness deficits as

well as the Broad Reading subtest of the Woodcock-Johnson III (WJ-III). They were then given curriculum-based measurement reading probes. These probes were created using passages from the Silver, Burdett and Ginn (Pearson et al., 1989) reading series, both at their current grade level and three levels below. Two passages were provided for each grade level, including an easy-medium version and a medium-difficult version.

Begeny & Silber (2006) found that these fluency interventions could be successfully administered in a small group setting. It also determined that a combination of all three interventions, WLT, LPP, and RR, was more effective when all three were used together rather than using the techniques individually to increase reading fluency. However only one of the four students was able to retain fluency increases in all conditions after the study ended. The other three students retained gains in some but not all conditions. While results of this small-group based intervention appear promising, it is important to note that this study focused on only four participants, all in third-grade and from one urban school. In addition, there was no control group and a limited number of treatment sessions. Also, two of the four students missed one of the four treatment sessions. Although all three treatments have research suggesting successful interventions (Begeny & Silber, 2006), I believe the results of this study should be read with caution given the small sample size and limited amount of treatment sessions. It would be beneficial to repeat this study using a larger sample size, more treatment sessions and the addition of a control group.

Another study that addressed fluency interventions was designed by Vaughn et al. (2000) and focused on two fluency treatments; partner reading (PR) and collaborative strategic reading (CSR). The study included 111 third-grade students and was implemented in the classroom setting. Sixteen of these students had significant reading problems. Each class implemented one of the two interventions, PR or CSR. Both techniques involved students working in pairs. The intervention was carried out in a 12-week time period, two to three times each week. For the partner reading groups, a strong reader was paired with a weak reader. The partners took turns reading for three minutes at a time. The stronger reader read first to model fluent reading and helped the weaker partner sound out unknown words during his/her turn.

The CSR group used four reading strategies that were implemented before during and after the reading activity. The strategies included using prior knowledge to preview a text, reading sections of the text to figure out the meaning of unknown words, summarizing information from the text to recap key information, and generating questions related to the text.

Each intervention used materials from the Read Naturally series. To measure progress, several assessments were administered, including Testing of Reading Fluency (TORF), the GORT-3, and the Implementation Validity Checklist (IVC). Results of this study found that both intervention groups increased their rate of reading and correct words per minute. Neither group however, made gains in the area of comprehension.

Fuchs & Fuchs (2005) conducted a study with 385 first-grade students that addressed fluency through the Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) approach. During PALS instruction, students work in pairs or teams. Teachers place one higher and one lower performing student in each team. The higher performer performs each task first and acts as a model. Teams try to earn points for completing activities and exhibiting good tutoring behavior. Individual teams keep track of their own points. Teams are changed every four weeks. Before each session, the teacher introduces new sounds, sight words, and a segmenting and blending activity.

Every session includes three activities: partner reading, paragraph shrinking, and prediction relay. Partner reading involves each student reading the same text and then two minutes of retelling the sequence of what happened in the reading. In paragraph shrinking, students orally read one paragraph at a time, stopping to identify the main idea. Then the readers must form a main idea statement of 10 words or less. For the prediction relay, the reader predicts what will be learned in the next one-half page, and then reads the page aloud. The other student acts as a tutor, correcting errors, discusses the prediction, and states the main idea of the reading.

The Fuchs and Fuchs (2005) study randomly assigned three conditions; a control group, PALS, and PALS with repeated reading. Results showed that students in both PALS groups improved significantly more than the control group in the areas of word recognition, phonological awareness and decoding. The PALS with repeated reading group was the only group to outperform the control group in the areas of fluency and comprehension skills.

The investigations used different sample sizes. For example Begeny & Silber (2006) used only four students in his study while Marr et al. (2011) worked with 34 students. The Vaughn et al. (2000) study examined 111 students and Burns et al. (2010) worked with 84 students. All studies focused on the elementary population. Burns et al. (2011) used only second grade samples while both Begeny & Silber (2006) and Vaughn et al. (2000) worked with third graders. It is difficult to generalize results to the when the focus is on only one grade level. In addition, Begeny & Silber (2006) used an urban, low SES student sample while the sample for the Burns et al. (2011) studies consisted largely of Caucasian students. Also, Burns et al. (2011) asked students to read only one passage in the study (See Table 1). Marr et al. (2011) assessed only speed and accuracy. In addition, the study did not use a standardized comprehension measure. Ardoin et al. (2008) did not have a control group and examined only second and fourth grade students. Silber & Martens (2010) focused on first and second grade students. Students participated in only one intervention session. Also, some of the passages used in the study were said to be highly repetitive which may have resulted in higher fluency scores. The fluency research needs to be expanded by working with multiple grade levels and with diverse populations in order to determine if results will be consistent.

Table 10 Reading Interventions

	<u>Sample Number</u>	<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>CBM or Standard Measures</u>	<u>Control Group</u>	<u>Treatment Gains</u>
Begeny & Silber (2006)	4	Grade 3	CBM	No	Yes
Silber & Martens (2010)	111	Grades 1-2	CBM	Yes	Yes
Marr et al. (2011)	34	Grade 2	CBM	Yes	Yes
Ardoin et al. (2008)	42	Grades 2 and 4	CBM	No	Yes
Marr et al. (2011)	34	Grade 2	CBM	Yes	Yes
Fuchs & Fuchs (2011)	385	Grade 1	CBM	Yes	Yes
Tressoldi et al. (2007)	63	Grades 2-8	CBM	Yes	Yes

It is interesting that students in all of these studies increased their reading fluency after treatment. Focusing on any of these specific fluency intervention appears to help increase reading fluency.

Effective Ways to Help Elementary Students Become Fluent Readers

To conclude, there are several effective methods to help elementary students become more fluent readers. These include a combination of word list training, listening passage preview and repeated reading (Begeny & Silber, 2006) as well as the use of both repeated reading and multiple exemplars (Ardoin, Eckert & Cold, 2008; Silber & Martens, 2010). The subsyllabic method can also help to increase fluency (Tressoldi et al., 2007). Although most studies examined individual treatments,

Begeny & Silber (2006) found that small group instruction can also have positive results, which can be beneficial in the classroom setting. PALS is an additional approach that can improve reading fluency (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2005).

Reading Fluency Assessments

Silent Reading Assessments

Fluency assessments that are reviewed include Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency (TSWRF) (Mather, Allen, & Roberts, 2005; Bell, McCallum, Burton, Gray, Windingstad, & Moore, 2006) and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Next Assessment (DIBELS Next) (Munger et al., 2014). In addition assessment methods that compared the reading of passages versus reading lists of words were studied as well as a comparison between a one-minute oral reading assessment and a measure that combines oral reading fluency (rate, accuracy, prosody) and comprehension.

The first research study compared the reading of short passages and the reading of word lists in order to assess students for reading disabilities (Meisinger et al., 2010). The purpose of this study was to determine if students could have adequate word identification and decoding skills but still have a deficit in reading fluency and if poor readers exhibit different fluency features than those exhibited by typical readers. In addition they researched if the lack of using fluency assessments resulted in the under identification of students with reading disabilities. Fifty students between the ages of eight and twelve, all identified with dyslexia, participated in this study. The

assessments were implemented in a clinical setting. Assessments administered included the Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence (WASI), the Word Attack, Word Identification and Passage Comprehension subtests of the Woodcock Reading Master Tests-Revised (WRMT-R), the GORT-3, and The Rapid Naming and Rapid Digit Naming and the Elision subtests of the CTOPP.

Results of this study found that reading fluency assessments were able to detect reading disabilities better than word reading measures making it essential to include this type of assessment when identifying students with reading disabilities. Word reading measures may not be as effective for a few reasons. First, students may have memorized some of the words in the list. Also it may help students to read text because of context clues rather than reading random words in isolation. In addition, they found that students having difficulty with reading fluency had deficits in rapid naming speed but not in phonological processing. Also, students with reading disabilities exhibited below average comprehension skills. This is important since the purpose of increasing reading fluency is to improve reading comprehension.

One research study focused on the Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency (TSWRF). The TSWRF is an assessment designed to measure fluency through word identification and speed through silent reading (Mather et al., 2005). The test is designed for people of ages six through 24 and can be used both as an initial screening and a progress-monitoring tool. It takes approximately five minutes to complete one of the two forms and can be administered in a large group setting. Words are presented in

rows, with no spaces between words and are arranged by level of difficulty. Students must draw a line after each word.

Bell et al. (2006) compared test results of the TSWRF to subtests from the California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) (Nolan & Jacobson, 1972) and the Woodcock-Johnson III (WJ-III) (Woodcock, McGrew, & Mather, 2001) with 98 students, in second through six grades. All participants were diagnosed with reading disabilities. The study found that the TOSWRF was a good screening tool, but did not measure all aspects of fluency, such as prosody. It was noted that the large range of reading abilities and age levels made it difficult to generalize the findings, particularly since all participants had reading problems. Another point made was that this assessment did not provide information to direct classroom instruction, and therefore was not helpful to teachers. However, it was determined to be a quick and efficient fluency assessment and it correlated with other reading measures.

Oral Reading Assessments

Li et al. (2010) compared words correct per minute assessments with other assessments that use the combined indicators of fluency, including rate, accuracy, prosody and passage comprehension. The study, involving 279 students in grades two, four and six, found that assessments that included multiple indicators resulted in the ability to pinpoint more specific deficits in oral reading fluency as well as provide a stronger predictor of reading comprehension. The study concludes that ORF in the early grades should probably focus on rate, accuracy, prosody and comprehension while higher grades should focus more on prosody and comprehension. Also, rather

than developing new assessments to measure the combined indicators of fluency, it may be possible to enhance informal reading inventories and leveled reading passage assessments already used in schools.

Munger, LoFaro, Kawryga, Sovocool, & Medina (2014) conducted a study to determine the validity of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Next Assessment (DIBELS Next), and whether DIBELS Next Daze scores can predict reading comprehension skills. Eighty-five third- and fifth-grade students participated in the study. The study determined that both DIBELS Next Oral Reading Fluency scores and DIBELS Next Daze scores strongly correlated with other reading comprehension assessments that are a strong predictor of reading comprehension skills. A limitation of this study was the use of a small homogenous population and the focus on students in only two grade levels.

Limitations

The assessment studies had a few limitations. Except for Li et al. (2010), whose sample size was 279, the other studies had a relatively small sample size ranging from 50- 98 students. The Bell et al. (2006) study only examined students with diagnosed or suspected reading disabilities. In addition, Munger et al. (2014) focused on only two grade levels.

Effective Assessments to Monitor Student Progress

When assessing students using fluency measures, it is best to use passages rather than word lists as reading word lists can lead to a false positive when

diagnosing reading deficits (Meisinger et al., 2010). Word reading measures are not sensitive enough alone to determine a student's underlying reading difficulty (Meisinger et al., 2010). In addition, the using of the measures of rate, accuracy, prosody and comprehension can more accurately assess reading fluency (Li et al., 2010).

The Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency (TSWRF) is a good screening tool, but does not measure all aspects of fluency, such as prosody. DIBELS Next can help identify students with deficits in reading fluency (Meisinger et al., 2010). A different option is to use enhanced informal reading inventories and leveled reading passage assessments already in use to determine reading fluency levels (Li et al., 2010).

A good assessment tool to measure reading fluency should include prosody, accuracy and comprehension components in addition to reading rate. I have not yet found an assessment that addresses all of these parts of reading fluency. It was very difficult to find studies that addressed specific measures of reading fluency. Most of the widely used assessments focus on rate and provide questionable measures of comprehension.

Two studies, Meisinger et al. (2010) and Mather et al. (2004) focused on word reading measures. Meisinger et al. (2010) concluded that word reading measures were not sensitive enough by themselves to determine a student's underlying reading difficulty. Li et al. (2010) found more encompassing measures that included rate, accuracy, prosody, and comprehension more accurately assessed reading fluency.

Recommendations/Conclusions

The studies reviewed in this report provide beneficial information related to the topic of reading fluency. There are many effective methods to help students increase reading fluency including using the subsyllabic method with students with dyslexia (Tressoldi et al., 2007), repeated reading, listening passage preview and practicing difficult words in isolation (Begeny & Silber, 2006). The PALS program also helped increase reading fluency (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2005). In addition, partner reading and collaborative strategic reading also produced positive results (Vaughn et al., 2000). All of the fluency interventions reviewed in this paper produced at least some successful results which leads me to believe that when fluency is specifically focused on, student fluency rates will increase regardless of the method used.

The reading fluency assessment studies also provided useful information and evidence. TSWRF is a quick and easy to use screening tool to use for measure reading fluency (Bell et al., 2006; Mather et al., 2005). Also, DIBELS Next is a good predictor of reading comprehension skills.

The reviewed studies in this report indicate that fluency is a crucial component of the reading process and should be researched further. Since fluency appears to begin with reading acquisition, the kindergarten and first grade populations need to be included when researching this topic.

Meisinger et al. (2010) brought up an interesting point, stating that reading fluency measures detect reading problems better than word reading measures, and that these measures need to be included when identifying students with reading disabilities.

This is another area that requires further research.

My recommendations are to continue researching reading fluency, particularly in the lower elementary grades. Also, successful reading fluency interventions need to be shared with elementary school teachers, who rarely receive this type of useful information. A user friendly fluency tool box, containing information about fluency instruction, teaching methods, fluency assessments as well as strategies and interventions should be created for elementary teachers to use with their tier 2 and tier 3 students. In addition, professional development needs to be produced to help teachers become aware of the importance of teaching reading fluency, and to help implement fluency strategies and interventions in their classrooms.

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Appendix F
EFFECTIVE APPROACHES FOR TIER 1 FLUENCY INSTRUCTION
A WHITE PAPER

Introduction

Reading fluency is a key component of reading development that can greatly influence a student's academic success. Students who are fluent readers can easily read texts and many demonstrate good comprehension skills. Fluency encompasses every aspect of reading.

It is essential to address a student's poor reading fluency through specific intervention procedures in order to increase reading rate, accuracy and prosody. Being proactive and addressing fluency as students learn to read may help prevent fluency problems later on.

The purpose of this white paper is to provide strategies for teachers to use to increase reading fluency. The target audience is elementary school reading teachers and special needs teachers. Reading fluency strategies can be integrated into classroom reading instruction to increase reading skills. There are several approaches that can be used in tier one reading instruction. All strategies are listed from most to least teacher support and can be utilized in both whole group and small group settings.

Tier 1 Fluency Strategies

Teacher Modeling

Teacher modeling involves the teacher reading text to students in an expressive manner. This allows students to hear reading in a fluent and expressive way. Teacher modeling can be a positive and effective fluency strategy. In addition, pre-recorded books can also be used as a teacher model.

Echo Reading

Echo reading is an intervention that is easy to implement. To echo read, a teacher reads a sentence to students and then students reread the same sentence.

Choral Reading

To choral read, a teacher first models the reading of a text. Students then chorally read the same part of the text, either as a group or with a partner. Choral reading provides a large level of support from the teacher. This reading technique helps students to practice fluency while also allowing them to focus on reading comprehension. As students choral read, a teacher can observe their reading. This process can be used with basal reader stories, short passages, commercially made resources, or poems.

Partner Reading

When engaging in partner reading, a struggling reader is matched with a strong reader. Each takes turns reading, with the less fluent partner signaling when he or she begins to struggle. The more fluent partner then takes over and begins to read again.

As the students read, the more fluent partner corrects decoding errors as they occur.

Partners are changed every four weeks.

Wide Reading Fluency

Wide reading uses a large assortment of reading topics and materials to engage students in the reading process. When participating in wide reading, students read several books during the week with teacher support, rather than reading just one single text repeatedly. Wide reading exposes students to a broad range of reading materials, and can lead to improvement in prosody, word recognition and reading comprehension. Teacher support during wide reading can include modeling, expressive reading, echo reading, and choral reading.

Conclusion

These techniques can be used individually or together to help improve reading fluency. All can be integrated into an existing reading program. The most important objective is to focus on reading fluency, which in turn will help to increase fluency skills.

Additional Information/Resources

Reading fluency information can be found at readingrockets.org/reading-topics/fluency.

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Appendix G
EFFECTIVE APPROACHES FOR TIER 2 FLUENCY INSTRUCTION
A WHITE PAPER

Introduction

Reading fluency is a key component of reading development that can greatly influence a student's academic success. Students who are fluent readers can easily read texts and many demonstrate good comprehension skills. Fluency encompasses every aspect of reading.

It is essential to address a student's poor reading fluency through specific intervention procedures in order to increase reading rate, accuracy and prosody. Being proactive and addressing fluency as students learn to read may help prevent fluency problems later on.

Tier 2 instruction is designed for students that are not making progress during core curriculum lessons. These students need supplemental research-based instruction in a small group setting. Students having trouble with reading fluency and not meeting grade level standards would fit in this tier.

The purpose of this white paper is to provide strategies and interventions to help students struggling with reading fluency in the regular classroom. The target audience is elementary school reading teachers and special needs teachers. Reading

fluency strategies and interventions addressed in this paper can be taught in the regular classroom, in a small group setting.

I will first discuss some strategies that can be used to help increase reading fluency. Then research-based interventions that can be implemented in the classroom setting will be discussed. In addition, I will talk about an assessment that can be used to monitor student progress. Finally, resources will be listed for further information.

Strategies

Repeated Reading

Repeated reading is a method that helps to improve fluency by having a student reading a passage or short text usually three-to-four times until an appropriate level of fluency is achieved. This intervention has been found to improve the ability to read words correctly, accurately, and with expression. In addition, the repeated reading process helps students successfully read subsequent new passages.

Preview/Pre-teach

Previewing passages and pre-teaching key words in a small group setting is another way to improve reading fluency. Teachers introduce new reading material and/or vocabulary before initial whole group instruction.

Interventions

Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)

Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) is a peer mediated tutoring program that focuses on four reading strategies: partner reading, retelling, paragraph shrinking, and prediction. It is designed to supplement an existing reading curriculum. PALS is intended for use with students in kindergarten through sixth grade. Students participate in 20-40 minute sessions, depending on the grade level, three to four times each week. Students follow specific routines during PALS instruction. In grades two through six, the same routine is used. Kindergarten and first grade routines are different due to the need to focus on beginning reading skills.

PALS is a comprehensive approach to reading that targets many areas, including fluency. Both partners are given a card containing questions to be asked during each of the four activities. The questions are general in nature and not specific to the text. For partner reading, the teacher places students in pairs, pairing high-level readers with middle-level readers. Students alternate the role of the coach and reader throughout each lesson. Students predict what will happen next in the portion of the text and later discuss their predictions. They also engage in paragraph shrinking, where students retell the main idea in 10 words or less. Students can earn points as they work through each activity. Points are tracked and accumulate toward the reward of class recognition.

QuickReads

QuickReads is a program designed to increase reading fluency, comprehension, and background knowledge. It can be used for either classroom use or small group instruction. For tier 2 instruction, the program will usually be administered in a small group setting. This comprehensive curriculum can be used with students in grades one through six. It is recommended that QuickReads be used for three-to-five sessions per week, with each session lasting 15-20 minutes.

Each lesson consists of three repeated readings of a short, nonfiction passage. Before the first read, the teacher first discusses background knowledge about the topic with students. Students are then asked to read the passage independently and look for two words that are challenging for them. Afterwards, they write down key phrases or ideas from the passage. The second reading involves the teacher reading the same passage aloud with the students, to model fluent reading. For the third reading, students are asked to read as much of the passage as possible in a one minute time period. After the third reading, comprehension questions about the passage are reviewed with the students.

Assessment

Oral reading fluency measures can be a good indicator of general reading proficiency. They provide a quick and easy way to both screen students and measure fluency progress.

It is important to create a baseline for tier 2 students and then measure student progress biweekly during each RTI cycle. A quick and easy way to do this is to

administer the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Next Oral Reading Fluency (DIBELS Next ORF) subtest. DIBELS Next is an assessment that is designed to monitor early literacy and reading skills. It can be used both as a screening assessment as well as progress-monitoring tool. This assessment uses short passages to benchmark and progress monitor reading fluency skills. The ORF subset consists of grade level passages that are read aloud for one minute. Omitted words, substitutions and hesitations of more than three seconds are considered errors. The ORF score consists of the number of correct words read in one minute. All DIBELS Next materials can be obtained on line.

Resources

PALS

http://www.ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/beginning_reading/pals/info.asp

QuickReads

<http://www.intensiveintervention.org/content/quickreads>

DIBELS Next

<https://dibels.uoregon.eduhttps://dibels.uoregon.edu>

Appendix H
EFFECTIVE APPROACHES FOR TIER 3 FLUENCY INSTRUCTION
A WHITE PAPER

Introduction

Reading fluency is a key component of reading development that can greatly influence a student's academic success. Students who are fluent readers can easily read texts and many demonstrate good comprehension skills. Fluency encompasses every aspect of reading.

It is essential to address a student's poor reading fluency through specific intervention procedures in order to increase reading rate, accuracy and prosody. Being proactive and addressing fluency as students learn to read may help prevent fluency problems later on.

The purpose of this white paper is to provide interventions for teachers to use to increase reading fluency for students not making progress during tier 2 lessons. Tier 3 instruction provides research-based intensive instruction through specially designed programs for individual students. Students are progress monitored weekly to ensure the intervention is being effective. The target audience for this white paper is elementary school reading teachers and teachers of students with special needs.

I will discuss two fluency programs that can be used with the students who are not making progress during tier 2 lessons. Next I will discuss an assessment that can

be used to progress monitor students. Finally, resources are provided in order to obtain additional information.

Interventions

Quick Reads

Quick Reads can be used for tier 3 as well as tier 2 instruction. When Quick Reads is taught as a tier 3 intervention, lessons are taught individually rather than in a small group. Quick Reads is a program designed to increase reading fluency, comprehension, and background knowledge. This curriculum can be used with students in grades one through six. It is recommended that Quick Reads be used for three-to-five sessions per week, with each session lasting 15-20 minutes. The Quick Reads program consists of four levels, each focusing on either science or social studies topics. Each topic contains five related passages along with a comprehension component.

Students first read a text, highlighting two or three words that they do not know. A graphic organizer is then completed. The teacher then reads the story aloud with the students, modeling fluent reading. Next students silently read the text one more time independently, trying to read as many correct words as possible as the teacher measures how many correct words they read in a minute. Finally, the students answer comprehension question about the passage.

Read Naturally

Read Naturally is another program designed to increase reading fluency. Read Naturally is a structured intervention program that uses teacher modeling, repeated reading, and progress monitoring strategies to improve reading proficiency. Students work on lessons individually when using this program.

Students begin by first selecting one of 24 stories within their assigned reading level. Students listen and read along as key words and their definitions are read aloud. They then write a prediction of what they think the story is about by using the story title, key words and provided pictures. A cold read, where students read the story for the first time, is completed to provide a baseline. This is a timed reading where the teacher notes the words that are unfamiliar to students. The number of words a student has correctly read is then recorded on a graph in blue. Students then whisper read while listening to the recorded story several times. Next students time themselves as they read the same story several times, working to meet a predetermined goal. Then students do a hot read where the teacher times students. The number of correct words per minute is recorded in red on the student's graph. Students then answer comprehension questions about the story. Finally students retell the story either orally or in writing, focusing on the main idea of the story.

Assessment

Oral reading fluency measures can be a good indicator of general reading proficiency. They provide a quick and easy way to both screen students and measure fluency progress.

It is important that students receiving tier 3 instruction be progress-monitored each week. A quick and easy way to do this is to administer the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Next Oral Reading Fluency (DIBELS Next ORF) subtest. DIBELS Next is an assessment that is designed to monitor early literacy and reading skills. It can be used both as a screening assessment as well as progress-monitoring tool. This assessment uses short passages to benchmark and progress monitor reading fluency skills. The ORF subset consists of grade level passages that are read aloud for one minute. Omitted words, substitutions and hesitations of more than three seconds are considered errors. The ORF score consists of the number of correct words read in one minute. All DIBELS Next materials can be obtained on line.

Resources

Quick Reads

<http://www.intensiveintervention.org/content/quickreads>

Read Naturally

www.ReadNaturally.com

DIBELS Next

<https://dibels.uoregon.edu/>

Appendix I

READING FLUENCY THROUGH THE TIERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Reading Fluency Across the Tiers

Sandra McBride
University of Delaware

February 26, 2015



Today's Agenda

- Importance of Reading Fluency
- Definition
 - Automaticity/Accuracy, Rate, Prosody
- RTI Tier 1 Instruction
- RTI Tier 2 Instruction
- RTI Tier 3 Instruction
- Assessments
- Resources
- Questions/Comments



Importance of Reading Fluency

- Reading fluency is a key component of reading development and can greatly influence a student's academic success (Meisinger et al., 2010; Kuhn et al., 2010).



Importance of Reading Fluency

- Fluency encompasses every aspect of reading (Wolf & Katzir-Cohen; Kuhn et al., 2010).
- Its importance was recognized in 2000 when the National Reading Panel named fluency one of the five pillars of effective reading instruction (Rasinski, 2012; Hudson, 2011).



Definition

- The ability to read fluently, accurately, with a proficient rate and with prosody by simultaneously decoding and comprehending text (Li et al., 2010).
- Fluency provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension – fluent readers recognize words and comprehend at the same time.



Automaticity (Rate)/Accuracy

- Often, the only part of fluency that we measure
- Should always be measured in a meaningful context
- Accuracy plays a part



Prosody

- Often a neglected aspect of fluency
- Powerful relationship with comprehension
- Includes:
 - Know when to change emphasis and tone.
 - Divide the text into meaningful chunks, including phrases and clauses (syntax).
 - Pause appropriately for punctuation (mechanics).



Tier I

- General education
- All students begin in tier I
 - Best practice for all students



Tier I Fluency Instruction

- Fluency Instruction in the Classroom
 - During whole group reading instruction
 - Small groups
 - Individual work
 - During RTI instruction



Tier I Reading Fluency

Other Ways to Practice Reading Fluency

- Reader's Theatre
- Say It Like a Character/Different Voices
- Sing Songs
- Recorded Books
- Performance Reading Poetry/Speeches

Tier I Fluency Instruction

- Teacher Modeling
- Echo Reading
- Choral Reading
- Partner Reading
- Whisper Reading



Tier 1 Fluency Instruction

Fluency Station

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1wuAGbVqo>



Tier 2 Fluency Instruction

- Tier 2 instruction is designed for students that are not making progress during core curriculum lessons.
- These students need supplemental research-based instruction in a small group setting.
- Students struggling with reading fluency and not meeting grade level standards would fit in this tier.



Tier 2 Instruction

- Today we will focus on:
 - Informal strategies
 - Previewing/Pre-teaching
 - Repeated Reading
 - Wide Reading
 - Intervention Programs
 - Book Buddies
 - Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)
 - Fluency Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI)



Tier 2 Instruction

Strategies

- Preview/Preteach
- Repeated Reading
- Wide Reading



Tier 2 Fluency Instruction

Book Buddies

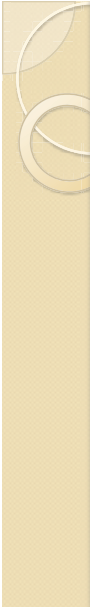
- Is a one-on-one tutoring program for primary-grade struggling readers
- individualized, structured lesson plans based on ongoing assessment.
- Lesson plans written by experienced reading teachers who train tutors and supervise them during each lesson.
 - Tutors primarily volunteers, students; school personnel.



Tier 2 Instruction

Book Buddies

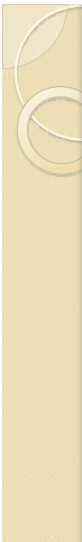
- Lessons divided into three parts.
 - Rereading for fluency for 5-10 minutes,
 - Word study for 10-15 minutes
 - Reading and writing for 20-30 minutes.



Tier 2 Fluency Instruction

- **Book Buddies**

- Rereading (10-12 minutes)
- Word Bank/Word Study (15-20 minutes)
- Writing (8-10 minutes)
- New Reading (8-10 minutes)
- Take-Home Book



Tier 2 Fluency Instruction

PALS

- Partners – Pair high reader with a middle reader, middle reader with low reader
- Partner change every 4 weeks
- 2 Roles – Coach and Reader
 - Coach – The tutor, helps the Reader
 - Reader – Reads aloud to Coach, answers questions



Tier 2 Fluency Instruction

Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)

- Peer mediated tutoring program
- 30-40 minutes 3-4 times a week
- 4 Activities
 - Partner Reading (10 minutes)
 - Story Retell (2 minutes)
 - Paragraph Shrinking (10 minutes)
 - Prediction Relay (10 minutes)



Tier 2 Fluency Instruction

PALS

- Partners – Pair high reader with a middle reader, middle reader with low reader
- Partner change every 4 weeks
- 2 Roles – Coach and Reader
 - Coach – The tutor, helps the Reader
 - Reader – Reads aloud to Coach, answers questions



Tier 2 Fluency Instruction

Fluency Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI)

- (Stahl and Heubach, 2005)
- Comprehensive intervention
- Originally designed for classrooms where most students were reading below grade level (Schwanenflugel et al., 2009).
- Intended to be used with basal reading program during a five- day week.



Tier 2 Instruction

FORI

- Uses teacher modeling, repeated reading, echo reading, and partner reading.
- One story is read repeatedly throughout the entire week.



Tier 2 Fluency Instruction

FORI

- Teacher introduces text, reading the selection to model fluent reading
- Then leads discussion focusing on comprehension and key vocabulary words
- Selection is read chorally on third day
Subsequent lessons entail students echo reading the selection



Tier 2 Fluency Instruction

FORI

- Partner reading also utilized as well as use of extension activities
- Sends reading selection home to read for homework for several nights.



Tier 2 Instruction

FORI

- Teacher assesses reading fluency on final day by asking individual students read story on one-on-one basis (Walpole & McKenna, 2007; Schwanenflugel et al., 2009; Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003).



Tier 2 Instruction

- **FORI - Five Day Cycle**

- Day 1 – Read selection aloud to class and lead comprehension-focused discussion.
- Day 2 – Echo read with students. Send the selection home to read .
- Day 3 – Read same selection chorally. Again students practice at home.



Tier 2 Instruction

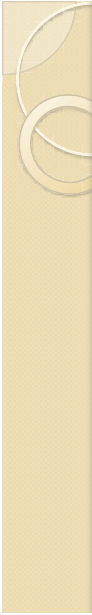
FORI

- Day 4 – Partner-read story. Practice at home.
- Day 5 – Students do extension activities. As they work, teacher assesses students individually by having them read the story aloud (Walpole & McKenna, 2007).



Tier 2 Instruction

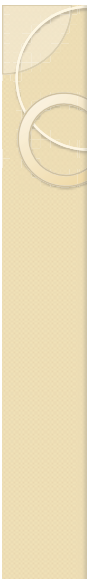
- **Retrieval Automaticity Vocabulary Engagement with Language Orthography (RAVE-O)**
 - Tier 1 and/or Tier 2
 - Small group
 - Explicit teaching



Tier 2 Instruction

RAVE-O

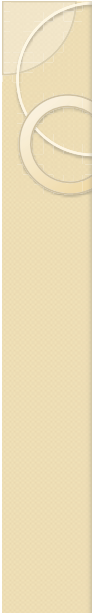
- Students in Grades 2–4
- Designed for at-risk students and ELL students
- Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention in a Response to Intervention (RtI)



Tier 2 Instruction

RAVE-O

- <http://www.voyagersopris.com/curriculum/subject/literacy/rave-o/overview>



Tier 3 Fluency Instruction

- Individual specialized instruction
- Tier 3 instruction provides research-based intensive instruction through specially designed programs for individual students. Students are progress monitored weekly to ensure the intervention is being effective.
- We will look at two programs today
 - Read Naturally
 - QuickReads



Tier 3 Fluency Instruction

Quick Reads

- Program should be used a minimum of 3-4 times each week
- Approximately 15 minutes per session

Tier 3 Fluency Instruction

Quick Reads (Tier 2 or Tier 3)

- Evidence-based program
- Can be taught in a large group, small group, individually
- Includes comprehension component
- Passages focus on science and social studies topics
 - 9 science and 9 social studies topics in each level
 - Promotes meaningful reading
- Levels A-F (2nd through 6th grade reading levels)
 - Grades 1-6



Tier 3 Fluency Instruction

Read Naturally (tier 2 or tier 3)

- Uses combination of research-based strategies, including repeated reading, teacher modeling and progress monitoring
- Designed for students in 1st through 8th grades
- Individual instruction



Tier 3 Instruction

Read Naturally

- Eight grade levels
 - 24 reading passages.
- Designed to be used in 30-minute blocks, at least three times a week



Assessment

- DIBELS Next
- Test of Silent Word Fluency



Assessment

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS Next)

- Set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade
- Benchmark and Progress Monitoring



Resources

- Reading-fluency.com
- Fluency toolkit (hard copy of information)
- Readingrockets.org
- Florida Center for Reading Research
(<http://www.fcrr.org>)



Assessment

Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency (TOSWRF – 2)

- Designed to measure silent reading fluency
- Ages 7-18
- Can be administered to a group or individually
- Can be used for screening or progress monitoring
- Students given rows of words with no spaces between the words. They are given 3 minutes to draw a line between the boundaries of as many words as possible.

Appendix J
FLUENCY TIERS 1 AND 2
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 2

Today's Agenda

- The Importance of Reading Fluency
- Definition
 - Automaticity and Accuracy
 - Prosody
- Round Robin Reading
- Tier 1 Instruction
 - Strategies
- Tier 2 Instruction
 - Strategies
 - Quick Reads
 - Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)
- Conclusion



A FOCUS ON FLUENCY

Sandy McBride
University of Delaware

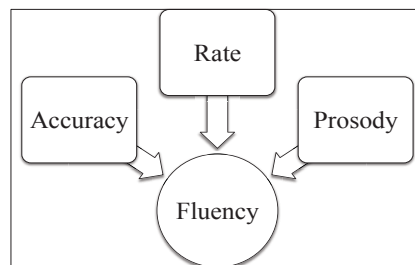


The Importance of Reading Fluency

- Is a key component of reading development
- Can greatly influence a student's academic success (Meisinger, Bloom & Hynd, 2010; Hudson, 2011)
- Is a critical component of reading development (Kuhn, Schwanenflugel, & Meisinger, 2010).
- Encompasses every aspect of reading (Wolf & Katzir-Cohen; Kuhn et al., 2010)
- Named by National Reading Panel in 2000 as one of the five pillars of effective reading instruction (Rasinski, 2012; Hudson, 2011).

Definition

- The ability to read fluently, accurately, with a proficient rate and with prosody by simultaneously decoding and comprehending text (Li et al., 2010).



Automaticity and Accuracy

- Letter, Word
 - Quick, effortless
- Text Level
 - Connected text, fluid pace
- Often, the only part of fluency that we measure
- Should always be measured in a meaningful context

Automaticity and Accuracy

Grade	Percentile	Fall WCPM	Winter WCPM	Spring WCPM
1	50	51	23	53
2	50	79	72	89
3	50	94	92	107
4	50	110	112	123
5	50	51	127	139

Source: WCPM, 2000

Round Robin Reading

- Instructional time is wasted
- Students not engaged
- Students don't read enough
- Stigmatizes poor readers
- Weakens comprehension
- Fluency/pronunciation compromised
- Teacher feedback is poor

Prosody

- Often, a neglected aspect of fluency
- Powerful relationship with comprehension
- Includes:
 - Know when to change emphasis and tone.
 - Divide the text into meaningful chunks, including phrases and clauses (syntax).
 - Pause appropriately for punctuation (mechanics).

Tier 1 Instruction

- **Strategies**
 - Teacher Modeling
 - Echo Reading
 - Choral Reading
 - Whisper Reading
 - Partner Reading

Tier 2 Instruction

- Today we will talk about:
- Strategies
 - Repeated Reading
 - Wide Reading
 - Preview/Pre-teach
- Interventions
 - QuickReads
 - Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)

Tier 2 Instruction

Repeated Reading

- Reading a text repeatedly until a level of fluency is achieved (Rasinski, 2012)
- Improves word recognition accuracy, automaticity, prosody, and comprehension (Rasinski, 2012, Kuhn, 2005).
- Has been found to help students successfully read subsequent new passages (Rasinski, 2012).

Wide Reading

- Practice of having students read non-repetitive story selections rather than focusing on a single text repeatedly during the week.
- Exposes students to a broad range of reading materials.
- Students read several books during the week with teacher support
- Exposes students to a broad range of reading materials
- Can lead to improvement in prosody, word recognition and reading comprehension (Schwanenflugel et al., 2009; Kuhn, 2005)

Tier 2 Instruction

Preview/Pre-teach

- Teachers introduce new reading material and/or vocabulary before initial whole group instruction (Berninger et al., 2010).

Tier 2 Instruction

Quick Reads

- Quick Reads
 - Evidence-based program
 - Can be taught in a large group, small group, individually
 - Includes comprehension component
 - Passages focus on science and social studies topics
 - 9 science and 9 social studies topics in each level
 - Promotes meaningful reading
 - Levels A-F (2nd through 6th grade reading levels)
 - Grades 1-6

Tier 1 Instruction

Reading Fluency Strategies

- Reader's Theatre
- Poetry Oral Reading
- Book Buddies (cross age reading)
- Songs

Tier 2 Instruction

Quick Reads

- Reading Routine - Three Reads
 - First
 - Prior knowledge
 - Read passage
 - Graphic organizer
 - Second
 - Read with teacher
 - Timed reading practice (1 minute)
 - Important fact from reading
 - Third
 - Timed reading
 - Comprehension questions

Tier 2 Instruction

PALS

- Partners – Divide class in half. Pair high reader with a middle reader, a middle reader with a low reader- Reading material is at lower reader's reading level.
- Partner change every 4 weeks
- 2 Roles – Coach and Reader
 - Coach – The tutor, helps the Reader
 - Reader – Reads aloud to Coach, answers questions

Tier 2 Instruction

PALS

- Each pair can earn points (point card)
 - Being focused
 - Cooperating
 - Catching mistakes
 - Using helping strategies
- Points tallied at end of the month

Tier 2 Instruction

PALS- Partner Reading

- Partner Reading
 - First reader reads for 5 minutes
 - Second reader is the coach
 - Second reader reads for 5 minutes
 - First reader is the coach

Tier 2 Instruction

PALS

- Peer mediated tutoring program
- 30-40 minutes 3-4 times a week
- 4 Activities
 - Partner Reading (10 minutes)
 - Story Retell (2 minutes)
 - Paragraph Shrinking (10 minutes)
 - Prediction Relay (10 minutes)

Tier 2 Instruction

PALS- Story Retell

Story retell for 2 minutes

- Each reader takes turns retelling what happened in story, paying close attention to correct order of events

Tier 2 Instruction

PALS

- Paragraph Shrinking (understanding main idea)
 - State most important idea of the paragraph by shrinking the information in that paragraph to 10 words or less
 - First reader will be first to paragraph shrink
 - Second reader will be second to paragraph shrink

Tier 2 Instruction

PALS

- Prediction Relay
 - Occurs right after paragraph shrinking (10 minutes)
 - Helps improve comprehension by making and checking predictions
 - First reader continues to read the new text, making a prediction and checking that prediction after each half page (5 minutes)
 - Second reader continues reading new text, making and checking predictions (5 minutes)

Resources

- www.reading-fluency.com
- Fluency Toolkit
- Workshop on Feb. 26 4:00-5:00 (Snow hour!)

Tier 2 Instruction

- PALS DVD

Conclusion

“The unsettling conclusion is that reading fluency involves every process and subskill involved in reading.”

(Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001, p. 220)

Questions/Comments

Appendix K
FLUENCY TIER 3 READING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
FLUENCY INSTRUCTION

Agenda

- The Importance of Reading Fluency
- Definition of Reading Fluency
- Tier 3 Interventions
 - Read Naturally
 - QuickReads
- Reading Fluency Assessments
 - DIBELS Next
 - Test of Silent contextual Reading Fluency

FLUENCY – TIER 3

Sandy McBride
University of Delaware

January 22, 2016

The Importance of Reading Fluency

- It is important to address a student's poor reading fluency through specific intervention procedures in order to increase reading rate, accuracy and prosody (Begeny & Silber, 2006).
- Being proactive and addressing fluency at the beginning of the reading process may help prevent fluency problems later on (Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001).

The Importance of Reading Fluency

- Poor reading fluency can lead to frustration and disinterest particularly in the middle and high school years (Rasinski, 2012).
- This is a major concern as the ability to read is critical in today's society.
- Individuals that are not fluent readers are at a huge disadvantage in the workplace, and everyday life in general. This issue affects all of society.

The Importance of Reading Fluency

- Reading fluency is a critical component of reading development (Kuhn, Schwanenflugel, & Meisinger, 2010).
- It is a key component of reading development and can greatly influence a student's academic success (Meisinger, Bloom & Hynd, 2010; Hudson, 2011).

Definition of Reading Fluency

- The ability to read fluently, accurately, with a proficient rate and with prosody by simultaneously decoding and comprehending text (Li et al., 2010).

Tier 3 Intervention

- Individual specialized instruction
- Tier 3 instruction provides research-based intensive instruction through specially designed programs for individual students. Students are progress monitored weekly to ensure the intervention is being effective.
- We will look at two programs today
 - Read Naturally
 - QuickReads

Read Naturally

- Uses combination of research-based strategies, including repeated reading, teacher modeling and progress monitoring
- Designed for students in 1st through 8th grades
- Individual instruction

Read Naturally

- Print/CD format or computer program format
- Is segmented by grade level

Read Naturally

- **Materials Included**

- stories
- audio CDs
- graphs
- posters,
- reader awards
- answer keys.

- **Materials to be Purchased**

- timers
- student folders
- colored pencils or crayons for graphing
- CD players and headphones for the print/CD editions.

Read Naturally

- Eight grade levels
 - 24 reading passages.
- Designed to be used in 30-minute blocks, at least three times a week

Read Naturally - Procedure

- 1) Select a story
- 2) Learn key words from story
- 3) Predict what will happen in story
- 4) Do a cold read
- 5) Graph cold read score
- 6) Verbally read along with CD several times
- 7) Answer questions about story
- 8) Practice timed reading
- 9) Hot read
- 10) Graph hot read score
- 11) Retell story

QuickReads

- QuickReads
 - Evidence-based program
 - Can be taught in a large group, small group, individually
 - Includes comprehension component
 - Passages focus on science and social studies topics
 - 9 science and 9 social studies topics in each level
 - Promotes meaningful reading
 - Levels A-F (2nd through 6th grade reading levels)
 - Grades 1-6

QuickReads

- Program should be used a minimum of 3-4 times each week
- Approximately 15 minutes per session

QuickReads

First Read

- Prior knowledge check
- Passage read aloud or silently
- Graphic organizer to record words or phrases to help them remember what is important about topic

QuickReads

- Second Read
 - Teacher reads passage aloud with students
 - Teacher models reading at target rate of one minute
 - Students asked one thing author wants them to remember

QuickReads

- Third Read
 - Goal is to read as much of the passage as you can in one minute
 - Students read silently as teacher times them for one minute. They circle the last word they read when the teacher says stop
 - Students write the number of words they read at bottom of page.
 - They review in their mind what is important to remember from passage
 - Students complete comprehension questions about the passage

QuickReads

- Options
 - Write summary of passage
 - Partner reading
 - Additional research of topic

Reading Fluency Assessments

- The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS Next)
 - Set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade
 - Benchmark and Progress Monitoring
- Test of Silent Contextual Reading Fluency
 - Designed to measure contextualized silent reading fluency
 - Ages 7-18

Conclusion

“The unsettling conclusion is that reading fluency involves every process and subskill involved in reading.”

(Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001, p. 220)

Appendix L
FLUENCY TOOLKIT
www.reading-fluency.com

The toolkit is a box containing information about reading fluency strategies, interventions, assessments and data sheets for all three tiers. The notebook is divided into sections including tier 1 information, tier 2 information, tier 3 information, fluency activities, and a data recording sheets. The toolbox contains the following information:

Information in Section 1 – Tier 1

- Wide Reading Fluency
- Previewing/Pre-teaching
- Teacher Modeling
- Repeated Reading
- Choral Reading
- Echo Reading
- Paired Reading

Information in Section 2 – Tier 2

- Book Buddies
- Reader's Theater

- Read Naturally
- Quick Reads
- Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI)
- Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)

Information in Section 3 - Tier 3

Read Naturally

Quick Reads

Information in Section 4 – Assessments

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Learning Skills (DIBELS Next)

Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency (TOSWRF)

Information in Section 5 – Fluency Activities

- Bang (word/phrase fluency)
- Whisper While You Work (sentence fluency)
- Be a Buddy (sentence fluency)
- Read and Roll (word fluency)
- Read and Record (sentence fluency)
- Find a Word/Phrase (word/phrase fluency)
- Poem Power (sentence/phrase fluency)
- Funny Voices (word/phrase/sentence fluency)
- Sensational Songs (phrase/sentence fluency)
- Just Breathe (word fluency)

Information in Section 6 – Sight Word Lists

- Dolch Word Lists
- Fry Word Lists

Information in Section 7 – Fluency Data Sheets

- Fluency Partner Data Sheets
- Individual Fluency Evaluation Sheets
- Fluency Data Charts



Appendix M
READING FLUENCY WEBSITE



Welcome to a Focus on Fluency!

I have created this website to help teachers and parents understand the importance of fluency in the process of learning to read. You will find both information and ways to increase reading fluency throughout my website.

The site uses Response to Intervention to categorize specific strategies and interventions. **Response to Intervention** is a multi-tiered approach used to identify and support student learning.

Tier 1 consists of quality classroom instruction implemented in a whole group setting. Students that do not make adequate progress during **tier 1** instruction are moved to **tier 2** where they receive intervention targeting specific skill weaknesses. If students continue to struggle during **tier 2** intervention and do not make adequate progress, they begin to receive **tier 3** instruction. **Tier 3** instruction targets specific skill deficits in a more individualized fashion.

Reading Fluency

Defining fluency can be challenging, as fluency encompasses every aspect of reading (*Wolf & Katzir-Cohen; Kuhn, Schwanenflugel, & Meisinger, 2010; Meisinger, Blook & Hyne, 2010; Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001*). An encompassing definition is the ability to read fluently, accurately and with prosody by simultaneously decoding and comprehending (*Li et al., 2010*).

Reading fluency occurs during oral reading, silent sentence reading, reading connected text, and silent paragraph reading (*Berninger, Abbott, Trivedi, Olson, Gould, Hiramatsu, Holsinger, McShane, Murphy, Norton, Boyd & Westhaggen, 2010*). Those not able to read text fluently are at a great disadvantage (*Shaywitz, 2003*).

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. Tier 1 Strategies



- Tier 1 strategies can be used during the reading block to help all students practice reading fluency.
- **Teacher Modeling**
- Teacher modeling involves the teacher reading text to students in an expressive manner. This allows students to hear reading in a fluent and expressive way. Teacher modeling can be a positive and effective fluency strategy. In addition, pre-recorded books can also be used as a teacher model.
- **Echo Reading**
- Echo reading is an intervention that is easy to implement. To echo read, a teacher reads a sentence to students and then students reread the same sentence.
- **Choral Reading**
- To choral read, a teacher first models the reading of a text. Students then chorally read the same part of the text, either as a group or with a partner. Choral reading provides a large level of support from the

teacher. This reading technique helps students to practice fluency while also allowing them to focus on reading comprehension. As students choral read, a teacher can observe their reading. This process can be used with basal reader stories, short passages, commercially made resources, or poems.

- **Partner Reading**
- When engaging in partner reading, a struggling reader is matched with a strong reader. Each takes turns reading, with the less fluent partner signaling when he or she begins to struggle. The more fluent partner then takes over and begins to read again. As the students read, the more fluent partner corrects decoding errors as they occur. Partners are changed every four weeks.
- **Whisper Reading**
- Each student reads text in a quiet voice (not in unison).
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- **Wide Reading Fluency**
- Wide reading uses a large assortment of reading topics and materials to engage students in the reading process. When participating in wide reading, students read several books during the week with teacher support, rather than reading just one single text repeatedly. Wide reading exposes students to a broad range of reading materials, and can lead to improvement in prosody, word recognition and reading comprehension. Teacher support during wide reading can include modeling, expressive reading, echo reading, and choral reading.
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Tier 2 Interventions



Tier 2 instruction is designed for students that are not making progress during core curriculum lessons. These students need supplemental research-based instruction in a small group setting. Students struggling with reading fluency and not meeting grade level standards would fit in this tier.

Strategies

Repeated Reading

Repeated reading is a method that helps to improve fluency by having a student reading a passage or short text continuously until an appropriate level of fluency is achieved. This intervention has been found to improve word recognition accuracy, automaticity, prosody and comprehension. In addition, the repeated reading process has been found to help students successfully read subsequent new passages. Repeated reading does not have to happen during only one session or in one setting. It can occur in multiple settings and in multiple sessions.

Preview/Pre-teach

Previewing passages and pre-teaching key words in a small group setting is another way to improve reading fluency. Teachers introduce new reading material and/or vocabulary before initial whole group instruction.

Interventions

Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)

Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) is a peer mediated tutoring program that focuses on three reading strategies: retelling, paragraph shrinking, and prediction. It is designed supplement an existing reading curriculum. PALS is intended for use with students in kindergarten through sixth grade. Students participate in 20-40 minute sessions, depending on the grade level, three to four times each week. Students follow specific routines during PALS instruction. In grades two through six, the same routine is used. Kindergarten and first grade routines are different due to the need to focus on beginning reading skills.

PALS engages students in four activities; partner reading, retell, paragraph shrinking and prediction relay. Both partners are given a card containing questions to be asked during each of the four activities. For partner reading, the teacher places students in pairs, pairing high-level readers with low-level readers. Students alternate the role of the coach and reader throughout each lesson. Students predict what will happen next in the portion of the text and later discuss their predictions. They also engage in paragraph shrinking, where students retell the main idea in 10 words or less. Students can earn points as they work through each activity. Points are tracked and accumulate toward the reward of class recognition.

QuickReads

QuickReads is a program designed to increase reading fluency, comprehension, and background knowledge. The QuickRead program consists of four levels, each focusing on either science or social studies topics. Each topic contains five related passages along with a comprehension component.

This curriculum can be used with students in grades one through six. It is recommended that QuickReads be used for three-to-five sessions per week, with each session lasting 15-20 minutes. For tier 2 instruction, the program will usually be administered in a small group setting.

Students first read a text, highlighting two or three words that they do not know. A graphic organizer is then completed. The teacher then reads the story aloud with the students, modeling fluent reading. Next students silently read the text one more time

independently, trying to read as many correct words as possible as the teacher measures how many correct words they read in a minute. Finally, the students answer comprehension question about the passage.

Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction

Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI), developed by Stahl and Heubach (2005), is a comprehensive intervention that has led to positive results in improving reading fluency. This intervention was originally designed for classrooms where the majority of students were reading below grade level (Schwanenflugel et al., 2009). FORI is intended to be used with a core reading program during a five day week. The process utilizes teacher modeling, repeated reading, echo reading, and partner reading. With FORI, one story is read repeatedly throughout the entire week. Initially, the teacher introduces a text, reading the selection to the class as she models fluent reading. He or she will then lead a discussion focusing on comprehension and key vocabulary words. The next lesson entails students echo reading the selection, and sending the reading selection home to read for homework. The selection is read chorally on the third day, and is again assigned to read for homework. On the fourth day, partner reading is utilized as well as other extension activities. The teacher assesses reading fluency on the final day by asking individual students to read the story on a one-on-one basis (Schwanenflugel et al., 2009; Hiebert, 2005).

Reader's Theatre

Reader's Theatre can also work as a tier 2 intervention when teachers choose a play and parts specifically for students that need additional fluency intervention. Also, the teacher can assign each group of students different plays written based on reading level.

Book Buddies

Book Buddies is a one-on-one tutoring program for primary-grade struggling readers featuring individualized, structured lesson plans based on ongoing assessment. Lesson plans are written by experienced reading teachers who train tutors and supervise them during each lesson. Tutors are primarily volunteers, students and school personnel.

Individual lessons are divided into three parts. For the transitional reader, the lesson includes rereading for fluency for 5-10 minutes, word study for 10-15 minutes and reading and writing for 20-30 minutes.

Assessment

Oral reading fluency measures can be a good indicator of general reading proficiency. They provide a quick and easy way to both screen students and measure fluency progress.

Individual students read a grade-level passage aloud for a specific amount of time, usually one minute. The teacher measures accuracy and the number of words read. Prosody can also be noted.

It is important to create a baseline for tier 2 students and then measure student progress biweekly during each RTI cycle. A quick and easy way to do this is to administer the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Next Oral Reading Fluency (DIBELS Next ORF) subtest. DIBELS Next is an assessment that is designed to monitor early literacy and reading skills. It can be used both as a screening assessment as well as progress-monitoring tool. This assessment uses short passages to benchmark and progress monitor reading fluency skills. The ORF subset consists of grade level passages that are read aloud for one minute. Omitted words, substitutions and hesitations of more than three seconds are considered errors. The ORF score consists of the number of correct words read in one minute. All DIBELS Next materials can be obtained on line.

Resources

PALS

http://www.ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/beginning_reading/pals/info.asp

http://oregonreadingfirst.uoregon.edu/downloads/brown_bags/brown_bag_3_19_10_page_1

QuickReads

<http://www.intensiveintervention.org/content/quickreads>

Reader's Theater

Reading A-Z – https://www.readinga-z.com/newfiles/strat/theater_strat.html

Reader's Theater Scripts and Play – <http://www.teachingheart.net/readerstheater.htm>

FORI

<http://www.vriuvm.org/members/lii/fluency/FORI%20and%20wide%20reading%20variation.pdf>

Book Buddies

<http://curry.virginia.edu/articles/book-buddies-together-tutors-and-students-grow>

Assessments

Tier 3 Interventions



For students that have not made progress after a six-week cycle of tier 2 lessons, tier 3 instruction must be implemented. Tier 3 provides research-based intensive instruction through specially designed programs for individual students. Students are progress monitored weekly to make sure the intervention is being effective. Two interventions that can be used for tier 3 instruction are QuickReads and Read Naturally.

Interventions

QuickReads

QuickReads can be used for tier 3 as well as tier 2 instruction. When QuickReads is taught for tier 3 however, lessons are taught individually rather than in a small group. QuickReads is a program designed to increase reading fluency, comprehension, and

background knowledge. This curriculum can be used with students in grades one through six. It is recommended that QuickReads be used for three-to-five sessions per week, with each session lasting 15-20 minutes. The QuickRead program consists of four levels, each focusing on either science or social studies topics. Each topic contains five related passages along with a comprehension component.

Students first read a text, highlighting two or three words that they do not know. A graphic organizer is then completed. The teacher then reads the story aloud with the students, modeling fluent reading. Next students silently read the text one more time independently, trying to read as many correct words as possible as the teacher measures how many correct words they read in a minute. Finally, the students answer comprehension question about the passage.

Read Naturally

Read Naturally is another program designed to increase reading fluency. It is a structured intervention program that uses teacher modeling, repeated reading, and progress monitoring strategies to improve reading proficiency. The Read Naturally is designed to be used with individual students.

Students begin by first selecting one of 24 stories within their assigned reading level. Students listen and read along as key words and their definitions are read aloud. They then write a prediction of what they think the story is about by using the story title, key words and provided pictures. A cold read, where students read the story for the first time, is completed to provide a baseline. This is a timed reading where the teacher notes the words that are unfamiliar to students. The number of words a student has correctly read is then recorded on a graph in blue. Students then whisper read while listening to the recorded story several times. Next students time themselves as they read the same story several times, working to meet a predetermined goal. Then students do a hot read where the teacher times students. The number of correct words per minute is recorded in red on the student's graph. Students then answer comprehension questions about the story. Finally students retell the story either orally or in writing, focusing on the main idea of the story.

Assessment

Oral reading fluency measures can be a good indicator of general reading proficiency. They provide a quick and easy way to both screen students and measure fluency progress.

It is important that students receiving tier 3 instruction be progress-monitored each week. A quick and easy way to do this is to administer the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Next Oral Reading Fluency (DIBELS Next ORF) subtest.

DIBELS Next is an assessment that is designed to monitor early literacy and reading skills. It can be used both as a screening assessment as well as progress-monitoring tool. This assessment uses short passages to benchmark and progress monitor reading fluency skills. The ORF subset consists of grade level passages that are read aloud for one minute. Omitted words, substitutions and hesitations of more than three seconds are considered errors. The ORF score consists of the number of correct words read in one minute. All DIBELS Next materials can be obtained on line.

Resources

QuickReads

<http://www.intensiveintervention.org/content/quickreads>

Read Naturally

www.ReadNaturally.com

DIBELS Next

<https://dibels.uoregon.edu/>

Fluency Activities



Reading fluency activities can assist in promoting automaticity, prosody and accuracy (Schwanenflugel et al., 2010; Berninger et al., 2010; Kuhn & Stahl, 2003). Fluency activities are a motivating and engaging way to supplement fluency instruction. They present an opportunity for individual and group practice of fluency skills that have been focused on during classroom reading instruction.

The activities listed below work on different types of reading fluency. Some can be used for fluency practice at the word level, others at the phrase level, and some at the sentence level. The type of practice can be found next to each activity title.

Bang (Small Group Activity- Word/Phrase Fluency)

This activity is for two or more students. Materials you will need include a timer and at least 30 word or phrase cards. These can be 3 x 5 cards or cards made from card stock. Sometimes I cut 3 x 5 cards in half for this game. As students learn the original

words, continue to add more words to the basket. For every 10 word cards, add an additional “bang” card. Students sit in a circle, next to one another. Both the word cards and “bang” cards are placed upside down in a box or basket. Students take turns choosing and reading word cards from the basket for a set time, usually five minutes. If the card is read correctly, the student holds onto that card. If a student misreads a word, it is put back into the basket. Students who select a “bang” card must place all their cards back into the basket. Once the timer goes off, students count their word cards. The student with the most cards wins. This is a fast moving game that keeps all students engaged and motivated.

Popcorn Game (Small Group Activity-Word/Phrase Fluency)

This is a variation of the bang game. Instead of index cards, words or phrases are placed on popcorn cutouts and “pop” is written on several of the kernels. Students place all of their popcorn cards back in the container when they choose a card containing the word “pop”. I put the popcorn cards in a plastic popcorn container that I bought for \$1 at a dollar store.

Pick a Stick (Small Group Activity-Word/Phrase Fluency)

This is yet another variation of Bang. This time, write the words or phrases and “bang” on wide popsicle sticks and place the sticks in a tall container.

How Many Can You Read? (Small Group Activity-Word/Phrase Fluency)

How Many Can You Read? is a noncompetitive variation of Bang. The “bang” cards are removed from the set. Students set the timer and try to read as many words as possible during the allotted time. Each time they play, students try to improve upon the number of cards read correctly. Sometimes I have students work together to discover how many cards they can read collaboratively in a given time period. I have found this to be a great team building activity as well as a fluency activity.

Roll and Read (Small Group Activity-Word Fluency)

This activity is for two or more students. Provide students with a paper containing 12 words. Students take turns rolling two dice, and reading the word that corresponds to the number rolled. You will need two dice and a paper containing twelve numbered words.

Find a Word/Phrase (Small Group Activity-Word/Phrase Fluency)

This is an activity for two or more students. You will need to make two copies each of 20 word or phrase cards. Students use word or phrase cards to play a go fish type

game. A student distributes four cards to each player. Students take turns asking each other for specific word cards. If the student asked has the specific card, he/she is given that card and places the two matched cards on the table in front of him/her. The student with the most pairs of cards at the end of the game wins.

Read Listen and Learn (Individual or Small Group Activity-Word Fluency)

This activity works best with either individual students or pairs of students. A card reader is used for this activity (Figure Six). The only materials needed for Read Listen and Learn are a card reader and blank card reader cards. Both the reader and cards are available through educational supply companies. However, card readers used to be very popular in elementary schools. Check with your reading teacher to see if there is one in a closet somewhere in your school. Write a sight word, or another targeted vocabulary word from your reading series, on individual blank cards and then record your voice saying one word on each card. Small phrases can be written on the cards as well, if that is what your students need to work on.

Students will listen to teacher-selected cards by putting them through the card reader. They will then record themselves reading the same word. Then students listen to themselves reading the word. I have found that students thoroughly enjoy this activity, especially listening to themselves read the words. The repetitive nature of Read Listen and Learn helps students to really learn the words.

Fluency Activities for the Text Level

The next group of activities addresses fluency at the text level. They address accuracy, prosody and automaticity. These activities focus on reading connected text.

Whisper While You Work (Individual or Small Group Activity-Sentence Fluency)

For Whisper While You Work, you will need some type of recording device, a c.d. player, computer, tablet or tape recorder, along with a prerecorded story and a hard copy of the same story for students to read. Students are asked to use their finger to track words as they whisper read with the prerecorded story. Using an audio model can be an effective way to increase fluency (Chard et al., 2002).

Be a Buddy (Small Group of Two Activity-Sentence Fluency)

This is a buddy reading activity designed for two students. You will need a short story or part of a text for each student. Students take turns reading a short text to each other. Pairing a strong reader with a weak reader can be an effective way to help increase reading fluency (Schwanenflugel et al., 2009).

Read and Record (Individual or Small Group Activity-Sentence Fluency)

Read and Record can be used with either individuals or a pair of students.

Materials that are needed for this activity include a recording device (tape recorder, tablet) and a short story or paragraphs from a text. After practicing reading a short text or paragraphs several times, students record themselves reading the text, practicing prosody, and accuracy. They then listen to themselves on the recording. You may want to provide students with a checklist to rate themselves on their accuracy and prosody. In addition, students can be asked to complete a graphic organizer to monitor their reading comprehension.

Poem Power (Individual or Small Group Activity-Sentence Fluency)

This activity is for either individuals or small groups of students. Provide a copy of a poem for each student. Poems can be collected and placed in binders, or commercial books of children's poetry can be used. Students can practice reading the poem aloud either individually or in a group. Poems are great for practicing prosody and phrasing (Rasinski, 2012).

Sensational Songs (Whole Group Activity-Phrase/Sentence Fluency)

This is a fun whole group activity, but can also be used by individual or small groups of students as well. It is a great way to practice fluency, prosody, and automaticity (Rasinski, 2012). Materials needed are copies of songs for each student. You can collect a packet of songs or an already published book of children's songs to use for this activity. You will need to create a songbook. It is best to place songs in a binder so that additional songs can be added during the year. Plastic sleeves can be used for durability. A computer, CD player or tape recorder is also needed in order to play the songs. The teacher chooses songs for the class and prints copies of them for students. Sometimes I let students request songs to sing. As the song is played, students track the words of the song as they sing along.

Resources

These are resources that may be helpful to you. I do not personally endorse any of them.

Information

fluentreader.org – contains fluency information, commercially available programs and materials

Commercial Programs

Reader's Theatre – Scripts and plays are available at www.teachingheart.net/readerstheater.htm

Read Naturally – <http://www.readnaturally.com>

PALS – kc.vanderbilt.edu/pals

Quick Reads – <http://www.intensiveintervention.org/content/quickreads>

Book Buddies – <http://curry.virginia.edu/articles/book-buddies-together-tutors-and-students-grow>

Fluency Practice

Perfect Poems: With Strategies for Building Fluency (2004). New York: Scholastic Inc.

De Goede, L. (2004) *Fluency: Reading for Every Child*. Michigan: Instructional Fair

Hollenbeck, K.M. (2005). *Fluency Practice Mini-Books*. New York: Scholastic Inc.

Assessment

Rasinski, T.V. & Padak, N. (2005). *3-Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency & Comprehension*. New York: Scholastic Inc.

DIBELS Next – dibels.uoregon.edu

Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency-2 –
<http://www.mhs.com/product.aspx?gr=edu&prod=TOSWRF-2&id=overview>



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