



EXPEDITIONARY
LEARNING

Reading Foundations and Language Standards: Fluency Resource: Creating a Routine for Fluency Instruction



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Overview

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. Historically, there has been a strong focus on building fluent reading skills in the primary grades, with a tendency to shift the majority of our instructional focus to comprehension in the intermediate grades. But despite our best efforts, some upper elementary and secondary students aren't making adequate progress toward established reading goals. What can we do to help *all learners* acquire the skills they need to become highly capable and competent readers?

Fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Because fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding the words, they can focus their attention on what the text means, can make connections among the ideas in the text, and draw from background knowledge (Rasinski, 2004).

When fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically. They group words quickly to help them gain meaning from what they read. They recognize words and comprehend at the same time. Fluent readers read aloud effortlessly and with expression. Their reading sounds natural, as if they are speaking.

By contrast, readers who have not yet developed fluency read slowly, word by word. They must focus their attention on figuring out the words, leaving them little attention for understanding the text. Their oral reading is choppy and plodding. Direct instruction related to fluency is especially important for readers who are struggling. Readers who have not yet attained fluency are not likely to make effective and efficient use of silent independent reading time. For these students, independent reading time takes time away from needed reading instruction and support (National Institute for Literacy, 2001). It is important, therefore, for struggling readers to spend significant time working on their fluency.

Fluency is not a stage of development at which readers can read all words quickly and easily. Fluency changes depending on certain variables: what readers are reading, their familiarity with the words, and the amount of their practice when reading text. Even very skilled readers may read in a slow, labored manner when reading texts with many unfamiliar words or topics.

The role of fluency must be emphasized beyond primary grade classrooms to support older students' ability to engage with and comprehend increasingly complex levels of text. This resource is designed to provide educators with ideas for developing routines that promote the acquisition of essential fluent reading skills.

The Fluency Resource includes these sections:

Getting Started: creating a safe environment for practice, introducing fluency criteria and self-assessment, and helping students set a fluency goal

Planning a Fluency Routine: The MAPP Approach: how modeling, assistance, practice, and performance help build students' fluency

Fluency Center Sample Schedule: sample schedule specifically for the Fluency Center (within the Additional Literacy Block)

Fluency Passages and the Special Role of Poetry in Fluency Practice: links to general passages for fluency practice, plus specific passages and poems that are related to Module 2B topics

Additional Reading: a research-based article with further information regarding fluency

References: citations for those who would like to do further study

Getting Started

Creating a Safe Environment for Fluency Practice

(Adapted with permission from an activity created by David Liben, Student Achievement Partners)

If a student is not a fluent reader, he or she is unlikely to think, “I have a fluency problem.” Instead the student is likely to think, “I can’t read” or “I am stupid.” This likely is not true. Fluency has been shown time and time again to be unrelated to intelligence. However, just telling students who have struggled with reading that they can improve their fluency with practice probably won’t convince them of this. The following activity, designed to demonstrate the effects of practicing fluent reading skills, is best facilitated with an individual student. However, it can also be done in small groups if students are comfortable with one another and the group is led by an adult whom they trust.

1. Make copies of a grade-appropriate, short paragraph and distribute it.
2. Ask the student to read the passage aloud. If working in a small group, try doing this chorally, so each student becomes aware that the passage is difficult to read fluently, but individual voices are not “in the spotlight.”
3. Have students follow along silently while you read the passage aloud at least two times.
4. Read the passage chorally at least two more times.
5. Follow this with buddy reading, echo reading, or any similar technique (see the “Practice” section for more ideas).
6. Finally, have the student read the passage aloud again. At this point the reading is likely to be much better.
7. With the student, evaluate, then reflect on what happened: “Did you get smarter in 20 minutes?” Help the student realize that reading fluently has nothing to do with how smart you are; it has everything to do with practice, like layups, fixing cars, or playing an instrument. Point out that, with sufficient practice, he or she can become a more fluent reader.

Getting Started

Introducing Fluency Criteria and Self-Assessment

Purpose: Because students in the intermediate grades tend to be more independent than primary grade students, teachers may consider supporting them to self-assess and set goals for their fluency skills. The purpose for introducing and modeling specific fluency criteria is to help students understand the criteria they must work toward to become fluent readers.

As with any self-assessment practice, the recommendations below will work best within a classroom culture in which students feel safe and supported. Note that students' ongoing self-assessments should be kept private between the student and teacher. This ensures that students are working on setting and celebrating their individual accomplishments, rather than comparing their abilities to those of their peers.

Below is a suggested way to introduce and model specific criteria described on the Fluency Self-Assessment.

In advance:

Place students in triads or groups of four.

Choose a fun poem or song lyrics to use during the following activity.

Create and display a new Fluent Readers Do These Things anchor chart.

Review the Fluency Self-Assessment rubric (see following page of this document).

Launch the lesson:

Tell students they are going to spend time getting familiar with the word *fluency*. Ask:

* “What do you think the word *fluency* means?”

Students may say: “Being able to read really fast; sounding normal when you read and not too slow.”

If students are unfamiliar with the word, tell them it means being able to read without sounding out every word and reading smoothly in the way that the author meant for it to sound.

Distribute the Fluency Self-Assessment rubric (see below) to each student.

Read each criterion aloud: accuracy, rate and flow, phrasing and punctuation, expression and volume.

Then go row by row, starting with the “On Target” descriptors for accuracy, then reading the descriptors for “Almost There,” “Working on It,” and “Need More Support.”

Clarify the meaning of any unfamiliar terms and/or clear up any misconceptions.

Pause after each descriptor level to ask students to notice and discuss the similarities and differences between each level. Ask students to share out (responses will vary, but listen for students to use specific language from the self-assessment).

Getting Started

Introducing Fluency Criteria and Self-Assessment

Repeat the above steps for each of the remaining criteria and level descriptors.

Tell students you will read aloud a piece of text three different ways. Challenge them to try to decide which of the three readings they would call fluent, based on the criteria described on the Fluency Self-Assessment rubric.

Read the piece the first time really quickly, so quickly that you can hardly be understood. Make mistakes, but just ignore them and plow right through to the end. Do not attend to punctuation, do not pronounce things clearly, and do not give yourself or your listener time to think about what's on the page.

Ask students if that seemed "fluent" to them and listen for the reasons why they say "yes" or "no." Many students will tell you "yes" because it was really fast. Students often hold the misconception that reading quickly is the goal, even if they can't understand what's being read. They often believe reading quickly is the most impressive skill a reader can strive for.

Ask students if they have any idea what the passage you just read is about. (Most students will likely respond "no" because they did not have time to absorb the information when the text was read so quickly.) Focus their attention on the rate and flow criteria on the self-assessment, specifically the "On Target" descriptor, "I read at a rate that is appropriate for the piece" (i.e., "I read a complex text at a slower, more understandable rate; I read a less complex text using a conversational rate.").

Ask them to listen to the next version and decide if they think it is fluent. This time, read the passage very slowly, word by word, sounding out every fifth word or so. Again, pay no attention to punctuation. Make errors and ignore them. Ask students to tell you what they thought of the fluency of that reading.

Most will answer with a resounding "No! That was not fluent." But push them to try to name the reasons why based on the criteria (listen for them to reference rate and flow that is "appropriate for the piece" and/or accuracy). Also listen for students to name anything about punctuation or the robotic nature of the voice.

Ask students once again if they understood anything about the passage. Students will likely answer "no" this time, as well. Ask them to explain and listen for them to mention the errors, slow rate, and/or lack of adherence to phrasing, punctuation, or expression as a hindrance to their comprehension of the piece.

Read the passage a third time. This time, read it at an "appropriate rate." Wear your intention to help students understand the "On Target" criteria for fluency on your sleeve, with every move you make. Make a mistake or two, but show how fluent readers would self-correct. Match your facial expression and body language to the piece. Change your rate, volume pitch, and tone to reflect an understanding of the author's intended message.

Next, ask students to tell you if they thought that was fluent reading. If they still aren't sure, ask them to refer to and discuss in groups the "On Target" fluency criteria on the self-assessment to help them make a decision.

After several minutes, ask students to share their thoughts with the class. Listen for them to recognize that based on the criteria, the way the piece was read aloud the third time is an example of fluent reading. Ask them to refer specifically to the descriptors for each criterion to name the things you did that made the passage easy to listen to and understand.

As students share out, make a list of their ideas on the new **Fluent Readers Do These Things anchor chart**. Listen for:

- Read almost all words correctly.



Getting Started

Introducing Fluency Criteria and Self-Assessment

- Read at a smooth pace without taking breaks that leave the listener hanging.
- Pause at commas and fully stop at periods.
- Read questions like questions and exclamations with excitement.
- Change voice and volume depending on meaning.
- Change the tone to match the message (sad, serious, funny, joyful, surprised).
- Match the story with your face and body.
- Correct mistakes.

If students stall out in their observations, read the text again. Ask them to listen and watch for specific things they didn't notice during the previously modeled fluent read.

Encourage them to watch what your body and face do as you read.

After reading fluently a second time, ask:

- * “Did you notice what fluent readers do when they make a mistake?”





Listen for students to share ideas similar to: “When you made a mistake, you didn't need anyone to tell you that you messed up. You could hear when something sounded off and went back to correct yourself.” If students are not able to recognize that self-correction is a fluent reading skill, point it out to them.

Next, give students differentiated reading passages (see the Fluency Passages links at the end of this document).



Getting Started





Fluency Self-Assessment Rubric

	On Target 	Getting There 	Working on It 	Need Support 
Accuracy	I read all/almost all the words correctly. (99–100 percent accuracy)	I read most of the words correctly. (95–98 percent accuracy)	There were several words I had trouble pronouncing. (90–94 percent accuracy)	I had trouble pronouncing many of the words. (less than 90 percent accuracy)
Rate & Flow	_I read at a rate that is appropriate for the piece. _My reading flows smoothly, without many breaks. _I independently correct myself when I encounter difficult words and phrases.	_Sometimes I read a little too fast, and sometimes I read a little too slowly. _My reading flows somewhat smoothly, with occasional breaks. _As I read, there were a few words and phrases I needed help with.	_I read slowly. _As I read, I took many breaks. _As I read, there were many words and phrases I needed help with.	_I read slowly and had a lot of difficulty with the passage. _I had to take a lot of breaks to sound out words and/or repeat many of the words and phrases before I got them right. _I needed a lot of help to figure out the words and phrases.



Getting Started

Fluency Self-Assessment Rubric

	On Target 	Getting There 	Working on It 	Need Support 
Phrasing and Punctuation	<p>_I read groups of related words and phrases together.</p> <p>_I noticed and read all of the punctuation (e.g., paused after a comma; stopped after a period; questions sounded like questions; read exclamations in an excited voice)</p>	<p>_Occasionally, I ran sentences together; and/or broke off in the middle of a sentence, reading only 2-3 words at a time.</p> <p>_I noticed and read almost all of the punctuation.</p>	<p>_I read only 2-3 words at a time.</p> <p>_I noticed and read some of the punctuation.</p> <p>_I rarely changed my tone to express meaning.</p>	<p>_I read only 1-2 words at a time.</p> <p>_I noticed and read only a few or none of the punctuation.</p>
Expression and Volume	<p>_My tone expressed the author's meaning (e.g., surprise, grief, anger, joy, etc.).</p> <p>_My facial expressions and body language matched the expression in my voice.</p> <p>_The volume of my voice changed naturally, as if I were talking to a friend.</p>	<p>_Sometimes I changed my tone to express the author's meaning.</p> <p>_Sometimes my facial expressions and body language matched the expression in my voice.</p> <p>_Sometimes my voice sounded flat, not like I was talking to a friend.</p>	<p>_I rarely changed my tone to express the author's meaning.</p> <p>_I rarely used facial expressions or body language that matched the expression in my voice.</p> <p>_Often, I read quietly; my reading did not sound natural, like when I talk to a friend.</p>	<p>_I did not change my tone to express the author's meaning.</p> <p>_I did not use facial expressions or body language as I read.</p> <p>_Most or all of the time, I read quietly; my reading did not sound natural, like when I talk to a friend.</p>

Getting Started

Helping Students Set a Fluency Goal

Once students develop a sense of what fluent reading sounds and looks like (fluency criteria), they can begin to evaluate their own strengths and establish goals. This goal setting process may vary from grade to grade and student to student. For example, some students may use the Fluency Self-Assessment Rubric to set their own goals to build fluent reading skills. Other students may need more support with teachers using the Fluency Self-Assessment Rubric to help students set these goals. Overall, it is important to meet with students regularly to help them identify their strengths, determine areas for improvement, establish reasonable goals, and help them track, refine, and add to their goals for improving their fluency.

These guidelines can help you support students with goal setting for improving their fluency:

First, help students identify an area of relative strength on the Fluency Self-Assessment rubric. Then have them describe their strength in the “Describe a FLUENCY STRENGTH” box at the bottom of their self-assessments.

Then help students identify one criterion from the Fluency Self-Assessment rubric that they want to improve on. For that specific criterion, ask students to circle and write today’s date in the box that corresponds to their current level (likely “Need Support” or “Working on It”).

Ask students to focus on the bottom of their self-assessments and write the name of the criteria they want to improve on the line next to “Specific” in the “Describe a FLUENCY GOAL” box.

Next, ask students to look one level above where they circled and draw a star there (e.g., if a student circled “Need Support,” she would draw a star next to “Working on It”).

Then ask them to record their goal on the line next to “Measurable” (e.g., “move from ‘Need Support’ to ‘Working on It’”).

Ask students to think about: “Is this goal achievable? If so, how?”

Ask a few students to share out. On the line next to “Achievable,” ask students to paraphrase how they will achieve their goals (e.g., “interesting text; assistance/practice”).

Then ask them to think about: “Is this goal relevant? Why?”

Invite a few students to share out. On the line next to “Relevant,” ask students to paraphrase why their goal is relevant (e.g., “understand what I’m reading better”).

Finally, ask students to think about: “How much time each day do you think you need to reach your goal? How many days total do you think you need?”

Ask a few students to share their thoughts aloud. On the line next to “Time-bound,” ask students to paraphrase the time for their goal (e.g., “15 minutes/day for 5 days”).

- With students setting goals around “Accuracy,” initiate a math lesson/“teachable moment” by showing them how to determine accuracy scores based on 100 words (50, 20, 10), or they can be based on odd numbers such as 123, 97, etc., for a more advanced option.
- Students compute accuracy at the beginning of the week with a fun poem or other piece of interesting and, if possible, thematically related text.



Throughout the week, provide modeling, assistance, and sufficient opportunity to practice with the same text.

Give students a choice about whether to perform or record the piece to share at the end of the week.

Help them track and then compute errors at the end of the week. Students should show increased accuracy.

Encourage them to continuously refine and add to the boxes “Describe a FLUENCY STRENGTH” and “Describe a FLUENCY GOAL” at the bottom of their Fluency Self-Assessments.



Name _____ Date _____

Describe a FLUENCY STRENGTH	Describe a FLUENCY GOAL
	<p><i>Remember to be SMART about your goal ...</i></p> <p><i>Specific:</i> _____</p> <p><i>Measurable:</i> _____</p> <p><i>Achievable:</i> _____</p> <p><i>Relevant:</i> _____</p> <p><i>Time-bound:</i> _____</p>



Planning a Fluency Routine: The MAPP Approach¹

Overview

The MAPP approach to fluency instruction includes the following components: Modeling- teacher and peer modeling of fluent to help students understand what reading with fluency looks and sounds like; Assistance- students reading along with more fluent readers or recordings of fluent readers; Practice- students get to practice reading selected passages aloud to help build their fluency skills; Performance- students read practiced passages aloud to an audience (teacher, peers, or others). These components form an instructional cycle that provides students with the necessary modeling, support, practice, and motivation they need to build their fluency skills (Rasinski, 2006).

When establishing routines for the MAPP approach, note that students must feel that they are in a safe learning environment that encourages them to learn from mistakes and celebrate their accomplishments as they practice their reading fluency. Please see “Creating a Safe Environment for Practice” (in the Getting Started section, above) for ways to ensure students understand that fluency can be developed with practice and that their initial struggles with fluent reading are in no way indicative of their intellect.

¹ The MAPP Approach is based on the work of Timothy Rasinski. This approach is described by Rasinski in the following article: “Reading Fluency for Adolescents: Should We Care?” AdLit in Perspective, September 2006.



Planning a Fluency Routine: The MAPP Approach

Modeling

Modeling means building in time every day to read aloud to students and model the criteria that are described on the Fluency Self-Assessment rubric to help students gain a deeper understanding of what fluent reading is and support their progress toward the attainment of critical reading skills.

In Module 2B, teachers are strongly encouraged to “kick off” fluency by introducing and modeling criteria for fluency (see “Introducing Fluency Criteria and Self-Assessment” in the Getting Started section above). Use a fun and thematically related poem or lyrical piece. During this introduction, emphasize with students that the ability to read fluently is *not* a matter of intelligence. Rather, all students can become fluent readers when provided with opportunities to hear fluent reading, get assistance from adults and peers, and work independently or in groups to practice developing *accuracy*, *appropriate phrasing*, and *expression*. It is also important to help students understand that a reader’s fluency can fluctuate: Readers may be very fluent when reading texts they love, and even a typically fluent reader may struggle when reading text that is difficult or on a topic with which they are not familiar.

Once the criteria for fluency has been modeled (preferably more than once and with a variety of texts), students can begin to use the Fluency Self-Assessment rubric as a tool to help them recognize their strengths and set individual goals for areas of relative weakness. See the sample lesson, above, that shows one way to introduce fluency criteria to students. Be sure they understand the criteria clearly and feel safe enough to honestly and accurately self-assess their strengths and gaps. Do not just distribute the Fluency Self-Assessment rubric without explaining and modeling each of the four fluency descriptors: *accuracy*, *rate and flow*, *phrasing and punctuation*, and *expression and volume*. This likely would be ineffective and could have a negative impact on students’ self-esteem.



Planning a Fluency Routine: The MAPP Approach Assistance

Assistance is when a student reads along with a more fluent reader or recording to help pace and monitor his or her own fluency. Once students understand the fluent reading criteria (based on teacher modeling), they can begin to use *assistance* to achieve their fluency goals. Reading at the same time as another individual lets them see, hear, and speak the text all at once; through this multiple sensory experience, they will make a more solid cognitive connection to the text.

This type of assistance can be offered in various ways:

1. Pair students with another individual to read the same passage aloud simultaneously. Student partners can be the teacher, a parent, an older student, or a peer (also see *Fluency Work: Partnered Reading* by Meredith and David Liben (of Student Achievement Partners) in the Additional Reading section of this resource).
2. “Evaluate and Emulate”:
 - A student first listens to another fluent reader’s audio recording of a piece of text.
 - Then, the student uses the Fluency-Self Assessment to evaluate the reader.
 - The student chooses one area from the self-assessment that she/he thought the speaker did exceptionally well (*accuracy, rate and flow, phrasing and punctuation, or expression and volume*) and wants to emulate, or read in the same way the speaker from the audio recording did.
 - The student then reads *simultaneously* with the audio recording to repeatedly practice emulating the speaker.
 - The student may then choose to perform the piece for the class or record (audio/video) the practiced piece for feedback and self-evaluation of his or her emulation goal (see the “Performance” section for more details).

Note that audio versions of popular books often can be found at local libraries or ordered through interlibrary loan. Several Internet sites also offer free, prerecorded versions of stories read aloud. One such site is Storyline Online (<http://www.storylineonline.net/>). You can locate other sites by using search terms such as “stories read aloud” or by using the specific title of a piece and “read aloud” (e.g., “*James and the Giant Peach* read aloud,” and so forth).



Planning a Fluency Routine: The MAPP Approach Practice

Practice means giving students ample opportunity to read passages with the fluency criteria (*accuracy, rate and flow, phrasing and punctuation, and expression and volume*) in mind. Because repetition is part and parcel of practice, it is important to choose texts that students will enjoy reading multiple times and that give students an opportunity to perform (see the “Performance” section for more details.)

There are many engaging options that give students opportunities to practice mastery of fluent reading skills both independently and with peers. Below are suggestions for both individual and partner/group work (some activities fit into both categories):

Independent Options (note that almost all of these options also can and should occasionally be done in pairs):

1. Whisper Reading
 - A student reads the same piece of text multiple times in a whisper-level voice.
 - This activity can be done in pairs by coupling more fluent and less fluent readers to provide feedback.
 - Focus can vary (accuracy, expressions, etc.)
2. Poetry for Multiple Voices
 - All poetry is written with a special attention to language and word choice and is thus great for practice with fluency.
 - A student reads portions of the poem in different “voices” with a focus on appropriate *expression and volume*.
3. Tongue Twisters and Alliteration
 - A student reads the same piece repeatedly, noting and correcting areas of difficulty with a focus on *accuracy* and/or *rate and flow*.
4. Hyperbole and Quotations
 - To maintain student engagement, select statements and quotes related to topics of student interest or study.
5. First-Person Accounts (e.g., interviews, journals, letters, speeches, etc.)
 - To maintain student engagement, select statements and quotes related to topics of student interest or study.
 - Focus can vary, but these types of resources lend themselves particularly well to practicing *phrasing and punctuation* and/or *expression and volume*.

Planning a Fluency Routine: The MAPP Approach Practice

Partner and Small Group Options

1. Choral Read (students take turns reading different chunks or paragraphs of the text; focus can vary)
2. Partner reading
 - A student reads the same selection repeatedly with a focus on *phrasing and punctuation* and/or *expression and volume*.
 - Pair stronger students with weaker students, having the stronger student read first and the weaker student read the text again, using the stronger student's modeling as a guide.
 - The stronger student can coach the weaker student.
 - This can also be done with two students of the same ability level regarding fluency, providing that the teacher first models the reading aloud so the students can emulate it.
3. Poetry for Multiple Voices (choose poems that represent a variety of cultural perspectives; poetry for multiple voices can be found at libraries and on the Internet; two or more students read different portions of the poem in different "voices" with a focus on appropriate *expression and volume*)
4. "Race for Spelling Patterns"
 - This fast-paced activity helps students recognize spelling patterns with phonograms.
 - This activity supports students' reading with accuracy.
- A. Punctuation Pictures
 - Students are given a statement or question that uses punctuation differently, e.g., "Let's eat, Grandpa" versus "Let's eat Grandpa."
 - Then students read each sentence aloud with attention to accurate phrasing based on the punctuation to help them determine and discuss with a partner what each sentence actually means and try to create a "mind picture" of each meaning.
 - As a possible extension, students can sketch the meaning of each punctuation picture.
5. Readers Theater scripts
 - Choose scripts that represent a variety of cultural perspectives and, if possible, thematically related to the content of the module (a variety of Readers Theater scripts can be found on the Internet, or students may develop their own scripts).
 - Two or more students work together to practice repeatedly reading various roles/parts of the script with a focus on *accuracy, rate and flow, phrasing and punctuation, and/or expression and volume*.
 - Students may choose to perform the piece or audio/video record the performance (see the "Performance" section for details).
 - See the Grades 3–5 curriculum plan for specific modules that include Readers Theater (e.g., fifth-grade Module 1, *Esperanza Rising*).



Planning a Fluency Routine: The MAPP Approach

Performance

Performance involves the opportunity to perform practiced pieces aloud in front of an audience. This gives students authentic purpose and motivation to practice their fluent reading skills. Performances can take place in a variety of ways, either whole group, small group, with a partner, or independently. The most suitable passages for performance have a strong “voice” and offer students an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to apply what they know about how to read with accuracy, rate and flow, phrasing and punctuation, and expression and volume.

Some examples of the types of pieces students may consider performing:

Letters

Journal entries

Readers Theater

Poetry/song lyrics

Speeches/monologues

Jokes

Chants/cheers

Performance options can be differentiated by giving students choices:

1. What type of piece will be performed? (content and length)
2. Who will be the audience? (large or small group, partner)
3. How much time is needed to practice before the performance? (Set a schedule/days/amount of time per day.)
4. Will the performance be live or audio/video recorded?
5. Will students read directly from a script/paper or memorize the piece?

Fluency Center—Sample Schedule and Example

This example Fluency Center schedule zooms in on one part of the larger Additional Literacy Block schedule (see Foundational Reading and Language Standards Resources Package for Grades 3–5: Overview for the complete two-week alternating schedule). The purpose is to help teachers visualize what might happen in a Fluency Center. However, these Fluency Center activities can fit well into many other schedules; planning, grouping, and organization will vary across classrooms. This schedule can be modified for differentiation purposes by extending it to two weeks for additional modeling, assistance, and practice to meet individual student needs.

Day 1 – Teacher-Led Small Groups²

Read-aloud/modeling

Set a SMART goal for the week on Fluency Self-Assessment; meet one-on-one, five minutes, with teacher to discuss *strength* and *goal* (refine/add to as needed)

Students choose a fluency practice text, then choose to work independently or with peers.

Day 2 – Peer Modeling and Assistance

Modeling/assistance

Students practice with assistance.

Day 3 – Practice

Assistance/practice

Provide assistance as needed; allow students time to practice.

Informally assess students' fluency goals by “listening in” on practice sessions; offer specific positive praise and guidance as needed.

Day 4 – Practice and Feedback

Practice/refinement

Give brief specific feedback (30 seconds/student) to students based on informal fluency assessment from Day 1.

Let students keep practicing; “listen in” to make *informal assessments* of students' progress toward fluency goals; offer specific positive feedback and support.

Display a *Performance sign-up sheet* for students to add their names to if they want to give a “live” or “recorded” performance of their piece the next day.

Day 5 – Performance

Performance: Give students who signed up to perform a chance to practice (5 minutes or less), then perform or share a video/audio recording of their piece.

Formally assess students' fluency during performances.

² Note that based on the sample schedule in the Overview, Day 1 of this cycle would begin on Wednesdays.



Grade	Title, Author, and Link
3rd: Exploring the World (France, India, Iraq, Japan)	<p>“The Road Not Taken” Robert Frost http://www.poetrysoup.com/famous/poem/201/the_road_not_taken</p> <p>“If I Had a Magic Carpet” Delilah http://jottify.com/works/if-i-had-a-magic-carpet-and-other-poems-2/</p> <p>The Boy Who Drew Cats, a Japanese Fairytale http://www.aaronsherp.com/stories/O45.html</p>
4th: Animals/Predator- Prey Relationships	<p><i>Lafcadio, the Lion Who Shot Back</i>, Shel Silverstein (*audio excerpt from book) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWFR8pcm8x4</p> <p>“The Spider and the Fly,” Mary Howitt (1829) http://www.hellokids.com/c_6136/reading-online/poems/animal-poems-for-kids/the-spider-and-the-fly</p> <p>Adventures of Mouse Deer, an Indonesian Folktale http://www.aaronsherp.com/stories/R01.html</p>
5th: Inventions & Inventors (the Scientific Method)	<p>“Put It to the Test” They Might Be Giants (song about the scientific method) www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kf51FpBuXQ or vimeo.com/537789</p> <p>Peddler Polly and the Story Stealer, Aaron Shepard http://www.aaronsherp.com/rt/RTEo8.html</p> <p>The Crow and the Pitcher, by Tracy Hammett audio: http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/subjects/english/aesops_fables/17-24/crow_and_pitcher text: http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/aesop/the_crow_and_the_pitcher.pdf</p>

Additional Passages, Poetry and Fluency Resources:

<http://artshumanities.squidoo.com/k12interactivepoetry#module11976516>

www.poetry4kids.com

Coming Soon: a link to fluency passages for elementary grades students at www.achievethecore.org

Fluency Work: Partnered Reading

by Meredith and David Liben

The goal of partnered reading is to increase fluency in older students who are experiencing trouble with decoding and reading aloud. Until fluency is achieved, these students will focus their reading energy solely on decoding and will not be able to pay attention to the meaning of the text. Therefore, they are invariably far behind in their reading comprehension skills as well.

In our experience, these students are reluctant readers, and will seldom volunteer to read aloud in classroom settings. Usually their more fluent peers and their teachers are reluctant to have them read aloud. Consequently, these students never get the chance to practice enough to improve fluency and reading speed. They are caught in a “Catch-22.” Partnered reading is a way to break that cycle, to support these students so that they can read fluently at an age-appropriate speed. Then they can shift their focus to reading for understanding.

Partnered reading is simple, quick, effective, and easy to implement. Students are paired who can work together sympathetically and who read at similar levels. We frequently try to cross grades and genders in making our pairs, and avoid pairing children who know each other well. The adult in charge can be drawn from any number of sources: parent or community volunteer, school aides and paraprofessionals, student teachers, or interns and high school students. No special setting is needed: Among other places, we always do fluency work in isolated parts of the hall so that adult presence is extended and passers-by maintain appropriate noise levels. Our fluency work doubles as hall monitoring.

Pairs come out of the classroom for a total of fifteen minutes daily for their fluency work. The adult coach maintains a file of passages for the pair that are at their approximate “frustration level”³. These can be accumulated and gathered into a fluency resource. We use a mix of writing: poems, non-fiction, interesting newspaper articles, commercial passages, and famous speeches. The student pairs only work on a paragraph or two a day, so gathering material is not very difficult. The coach has three copies of the day’s passage prepared, so that the readers and the coach all have their own copies.

One student reads first. He works intensively on decoding and reading accurately, word by word, punctuation included. The coach’s role is to support the reading, give cues and strategies, force attention to punctuation and overlooked syntax, but never to supply answers or let the student off the hot seat. The reader has to get every word and grammar point right, even if he only makes it through one or two sentences. The other student follows his partner’s work in a highly focused way. This is monitored by the coach’s insistence that both students have a finger or a pencil pointed at the word being read constantly. The resting reader is not at full concentration or tension, but he is getting the full benefit of the work his partner is doing and the cues the coach is providing so long as he is following faithfully.

³ Frustration level is defined as the reading point where a student has more than 10% miscues and falterings.



After the first reader has labored through a chunk of text for three or four minutes, generally a paragraph or two, the coach stops him. He then goes back to the beginning of the passage to read it fluently, starting over if he miscues. It is crucial for each reader to have, each and every day, a fluent reading experience before he stops. This is far more important than how much he reads. A single sentence read with fluency and expression is better than half a page read with mispronunciations and lack of expression. The resting partner moves his finger to follow the fluent reading, and the coach must continue to monitor the attention.

The partners switch roles, so that the first reader can rest (but still follow) while his partner does the hard work with the next section of the text. The coach continues to demand persistence on word attack, careful attention to punctuation and perfection on the final, fluent re-reading. In general, the fifteen minutes is most fruitful if both readers get two chances to be the oral reader, and two chances to read silently while following along.

There are several aspects of the fluency work that need to be monitored and adjusted by the adult coach. The passages may be too frustrating or too easy, so that the material itself may have to be adjusted. Some pairs may waste too much time in switching roles, so that it is more practical only to switch back and forth once. The pairs may not be even or compatible, and may need to be re-arranged.

We believe this fifteen minutes daily of fluency work is more important to a student's academic success than any other activity he might miss while out of any class. After all, until the student reads with grade appropriate fluency, reading content area books is not a real option. However, there may be times when efforts should be made to coordinate the time of the fluency work with another "pullout" program, like a resource room visit, so that disruptions to the academic classes are kept to a minimum. It is also better not to have the partnered reading at a time when one of the students might be missing a favorite activity like gym or recess. It is our experience that students appreciate the benefit of the fluency work and engage in it willingly. This should not be jeopardized by asking them to miss their favorite part of the day.

Partnered reading is a highly effective way to intervene with older students who have fluency problems. These fluency problems will affect comprehension negatively, as the student is spending all his mental energy on sounding out words, and none on understanding the meaning of the text. Coaches and students alike will see the results of their work quickly, and will continue to see improvements week by week as long as the system is followed consistently. Partnered reading is one of the most efficient and easy to implement of all remediation interventions for older students.

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