

What Should Teachers Consider in Designing Repeated Reading Instruction?

Three critical factors



For repeated reading to benefit students' fluency, teachers need to consider materials and instructional strategies carefully. Effective fluency building instruction involves three critical factors:

- Selecting appropriate instructional tasks (i.e., passages students can decode accurately but not fluently);
- Scheduling sufficient practice (brief, multiple opportunities per day); and
- Focusing on fluency can often begin much earlier than is sometimes thought. Students are ready to practice developing fluency in connected text when they can:

Recall that, even though we are focusing on fluency at the passage level in this tutorial, teachers should help students develop fluency at the word level. Automatic or fluent reading of individual words is a critical precursor to fluent reading of connected text and, in fact, to comprehension of word meanings (Perfetti, 1995). For more on teaching fluent decoding of words, see the tutorial by Blachman and Murray (2008).

Considerations in Selecting Materials for Fluency Development

When selecting materials for use in text-level fluency building, two issues should be considered: (a) materials that the student will practice reading with fluency; and (b) materials the student will practice reading with understanding.

- **Reading with fluency:** Because the student will be re-reading the materials numerous times, the student needs to practice reading accurately; therefore, teachers should select materials that the student can read with high accuracy (> 95%).
- **Reading with understanding:** Because the goal for reading with fluency is to enable reading comprehension and building vocabulary, materials should be of high interest to the student, yet challenging to the student.



Considerations and Activities Prior to Reading

Samuels described the method of repeated reading in this way: "The method consists of rereading a short, meaningful passage several times until a satisfactory level of fluency is reached. Then the procedure is repeated with a new passage" (1979, p. 377). Put that way, it is quite simple. However, educators have learned more since then, and we can refine the procedure. Here are recommendations that teachers should consider when using repeated reading methods.

- Pre-teach words that are difficult to read and understand. Difficult-to-recognize words (e.g. irregular or unfamiliar words) will be barriers to students' independent reading, so provide practice with those words in isolation before having students begin reading passages containing them.
- Make links to students' background knowledge. Link the content of the text to previous reading, class discussions, or lessons and to local contextually-relevant experiences with which the student is more familiar.
- Preview the text content. If content is particularly unique, novel, or challenging for students, provide a brief, general overview of the content prior to having them read it, so comprehension will facilitate fluency.

Reference:

Teaching Tutorial 6: Repeated Readings to Promote Fluency

Beth Harn, Ph.D., University of Oregon and David Chard, Ph.D., Southern Methodist University

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