

Reading Fluency Instruction: Moving Beyond Accuracy, Automaticity, and Prosody

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Because reading fluency is increasingly recognized as critical to students' literacy development, it is important to continue a professional conversation and dialogue on the topic. Instead of focusing just to increase reading rate, repeated reading of rhythmical text should be used to improve performance.

Author: Timothy Rasinski

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- Hudson, Lane, and Pullen (2005) defined and described three key elements of reading fluency: accuracy in word decoding, automaticity in recognising words, and appropriate use of prosody or meaningful oral expression while reading.
- These three components are a gateway to comprehension.

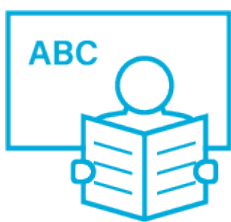
- Hudson et al. gave some solid suggestions for teaching each area of fluency.
- They noted that word accuracy and automaticity should be taught separately from prosodic reading.
- They suggested that accuracy and automaticity are best taught through methods aimed at improving student reading rate.
- Prosody in reading is taught through modelling, performance, focus on phrasing, assisted reading techniques, and explicit instruction on appropriate intonation.
- The author has no quarrel with the methods for teaching fluency; however, he has two concerns about the notion of teaching the components of fluency separately.
- First, dividing this instruction requires extra time to teach each component.
- Second, the concern about the segmentation described is the message it sends to students (and teachers) about the goal of fluency instruction.
- Because improvements in automaticity are determined by gains in reading rate, it is not difficult to see why students begin to focus almost exclusively on improving reading rate as the goal for fluency instruction.
- The result of such focus is faster reading with little improvement in comprehension, which is the goal of reading and reading instruction.
- It is feared that single-minded focus on using repeated reading to improve reading rate without commensurate emphasis on reading for meaning will not have the desired result of improving comprehension.

Good fluency instruction

- Instruction on accuracy, automaticity, and prosodic reading can and should occur in unison in an integrated and synergistic manner.
- The author agrees that repeated reading is one of the

best ways to develop fluency.

- What would really inspire me to engage in repeated reading or rehearsal is performance.
- If performance is the incentive to practice, then we need to ask what kinds of texts lend themselves to expressive oral performance.
- To the author poetry, song lyrics, and plays are texts that are suitable for fluency instruction and repeated readings.
- Using these, teachers expose students to a wider variety of reading genres, and by practicing and performing them, students gain in accuracy, automaticity, prosody, and comprehension.
- Classroom research has shown that this approach to repeated readings has helped students make remarkable progress in reading rate.
- General growth in reading and enjoyment of reading have also increased.
- Martinez, Roser, and Strecker (1999) found that students completing repeated reading with Readers' Theatre (reading plays aloud) made twice the gain in reading rate than a comparison group.
- The Readers Theatre students also made substantially better progress than the comparison group on an informal reading inventory (a measure of reading that includes reading comprehension as well as fluency).



Conclusions and implications

Repeated reading is a key instructional method for developing

reading fluency. The aim of repeated reading should be meaningful and expressive oral interpretation or performance of text, not faster reading. Teachers should be looking for texts that lend themselves to oral interpretive reading.