

Repeated Reading Implementation Guide

Oral Reading Fluency Indicates Reading Comprehension

Accurate and automatic word reading is believed to support reading comprehension because it frees the reader's cognitive resources to focus on the meaning of the text (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Perfetti, 1980, 1985; Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001). Although the relationship is complex, accurate and fluent reading of connected text is highly correlated with reading comprehension (Pinnell, Pikulski, Wixson, Campbell, Gough & Beatty, 1995).

As a result, researchers have highlighted the importance of fluency instruction for many decades (Chomsky, 1978; LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Perfetti, 1980, 1985; Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001). Fluency instruction is important for all students, but particularly important for students with learning disabilities, since automatic word level reading defines the disability (Bashir & Hook, 2009; Chard et al., 2002; Chard, Ketterlin-Geller, Baker, Doabler, & Apichatabutra, 2009).

When students struggle to read at a level that supports comprehension, they tend to spend less time reading, which negatively impacts vocabulary acquisition and comprehension development (L. S. Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton, 2010). Fluency instruction is integral to effective reading instruction for all students, and particularly for those with reading difficulties (Bashir & Hook, 2009; Chard et al., 2009; Morgan, Sideridis, & Hua, 2012; Therrien, 2004).

Repeated Reading Research

In 2002, Chard and colleagues conducted a systematic review of fluency intervention research conducted between 1975 and 2000 with elementary-age students with learning disabilities. The findings indicated that repeated reading interventions improved reading rate, reading accuracy, and reading comprehension.

The Report of the National Reading Panel (2000) identified fluency as one of five essential early literacy skills that underlies reading comprehension. Guided oral repeated reading was identified as an effective approach to improving reading fluency and comprehension. These recommendations were incorporated into the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) and the reauthorization of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004), which require schools to assess individual progress, use research-based practices, and provide specialized instruction to students with disabilities, including in the essential early literacy skill areas, including reading fluency.

In 2004, Therrien conducted a meta-analysis of the effects of repeated reading on familiar and unfamiliar (i.e., transfer) passages for students with learning disabilities in kindergarten through 12th grade. Results suggested that repeated reading improves fluency and comprehension of familiar texts and may improve fluency and comprehension on transfer tasks.

In 2006, Morgan and Sideridis synthesized the research on reading fluency interventions in single-subject design studies. They found that fluency improved when repeated reading

instruction included vocabulary definitions, listening passage preview, goal setting and performance feedback, and listening preview.

In 2017, Stevens, Walker, and Vaughn extended the work of Chard et al and reviewed more recent research from 2001 to 2014. They found that repeated reading is associated with positive outcomes in reading rate, accuracy, and comprehension (Chafouleas et al., 2004; Kubina et al., 2008; Stevens et al. Nelson et al., 2004; O'Connor et al., 2007; Welsch, 2007). Repeated reading is an effective intervention for improving reading fluency for students with learning disabilities. Although comprehension was not a focal point of most fluency building interventions, repeated reading improved reading comprehension in most cases (O'Connor et al., 2007; Oddo et al., 2010; Staubitz et al., 2005; Welsch, 2007; Yurick et al., 2006). Repeated reading improvements in rate, accuracy and comprehension were found to generalize to unpracticed texts (Ardoin et al., 2009; Chafouleas et al., 2004; Daly et al., 2005; Welsch, 2007). These results align with previous research findings are support the theory of automaticity first proposed by LaBerge & Samuels (1974) and Perfetti (1980).

Accurate and automatic reading of connected text supports reading comprehension. Repeated reading is the most effective, research-based approach for improving reading fluency.

Components of Effective Repeated Reading Instruction

1. Level of Text

Students should practice for fluency in text they can read accurately. This may be below-grade level text. Using progressively more difficult text over time has been associated with improved reading fluency.

2. Rereading

Students do best when they reread the same section of a passage five times, although rereading three times also has been shown to be effective.

3. Set a Goal

It is helpful to set goals for students to increase the number of words read correctly per minute by 10% from the cold read to the hot read.

4. Modeling

Students do better when they hear a skilled model of the text prior to repeated reading. The model can be done by the teacher, a more skilled peer, or on audio recording (this is often referred to in the intervention literature as listening passage preview).

5. Corrective Feedback

Students do better when they have goals and error correction. It is helpful for the teacher or peer to supply the word after an error or three second hesitation. Practicing decoding words that are read incorrectly also improves the effectiveness of repeated reading.

6. Partners

Students who practice with a teacher make more improvement than those who practice with a peer. Using a peer who is a stronger reader is equally as effective as using a peer at the same reading level.

7. Other Strategies

Repeated reading approaches that include other intervention components such as vocabulary instruction and comprehension instruction (retelling, summarizing, and predicting) have been shown to be effective.

How Much Fluency is Enough?

Oral reading fluency is not about speed reading. The authors of Acadience Reading (formerly known as DIBELS Next) have published a set of minimum oral reading accuracy and fluency scores that predict future reading performance. The benchmark goals predict performance on future Acadience Reading measures as well as group administered achievement tests and state accountability tests. You can find the Acadience Reading Benchmark Goals on their website. <https://acadiencelarning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/AcadienceReadingBenchmarkGoals.pdf>

There seems to be a “sweet spot” of words correct per minute, below which comprehension is impaired, and above which further gains in comprehension are not obtained. Faster and faster reading is not useful. Hasbrouck and Tindal provide normative information about reading rates for students around the country. <https://www.readingrockets.org/article/fluency-norms-chart-2017-update>

What About Fluency in Subskills?

Students need to be fluent in subskills such as phonemic awareness and phonics, but that will not be sufficient for all students to become fluent in connected text. The importance of automaticity in the subskills that contribute to oral reading fluency has long been known. This is one of the reasons why assessments such as Acadience Reading are timed. Automaticity in component, foundational skills such as phonemic awareness and decoding is necessary for fluent oral reading, but it is not enough for some students. Repeated reading in connected text is important for all students and essential for those who read accurately but not fluently.

Are Text Sets Better Than Repeated Reading?

In 2018, researchers at the Iowa Reading Research Center conducted a study with fourth graders that compared repeated reading to a new approach they called varied practice. Students were randomly assigned to either the repeated reading group or the varied practice group. Repeated reading involved re-reading the same passage three times with a partner. Varied practice involved reading three different passages in which 85% of the words overlapped, but were arranged in different order. Both groups made tremendous gains in words correct per minute after 30 sessions, conducted three to four times a week, over 12 weeks. Students in the repeated reading group improved oral reading fluency by 18.9 words correct per minute. Students in the varied practice group improved by 20.9 words correct per minute. Although statistically significant, the differences between groups are not large enough to be practically significant. In other words, teachers would not be likely to detect differences in the student's skills. Further research is needed on the varied practice approach.

What About Sustained Silent Reading and Reader's Theater?

Repeated reading involves rereading the same passage of text multiple times in one sitting. This is different from what is called fluency work in many published reading series. Reading the text at home each day of the week and Readers Theater are not approaches to repeated reading. Sustained silent reading is a common classroom practice, but it is not supported by research as a way to improve oral reading fluency. Spending class time reading silently or providing time for students to self-select books to read, are practices that help only those students who are already skilled readers. For students who are accurate but slow readers, it is better to spend classroom time doing repeated reading.

Resources

1. The Six Minute Solution An approach to repeated reading that involves partners.

<https://www.voyagersopris.com/literacy/six-minute-solution/overview>

2. Read Naturally A variety of print and digital solutions for repeated reading that can be delivered in person or remotely.

<https://www.readnaturally.com/research/read-naturally-strategy>

3 Quick Reads Procedures and materials for improving reading fluency and comprehension.

<http://textproject.org/teachers/students/commercially-available-products-powered-by-text/quickreads-family-of-products/>

4. Iowa Reading Research Center Research on Text Sets

https://iowareadingresearch.org/sites/iowareadingresearch.org/files/irrc_fluency_study_report.pdf

30 sets of varied practice text sets <https://iowareadingresearch.org/elearning#VPR%20Module>

5. Webinar Dr. Jan Hasbrouck defines oral reading fluency and what research says about how to assess and teach it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHSmwiNZe9s>

Repeated Reading Instructional Routine

Materials: Timer, Passages of approximately 100-250 words

Modeling (Listening Passage Preview)

1. Get out the reading passages and open to today's reading.
2. Say, ***“Here is a story that I would like for you to read. However, I'm going to read the story to you first. Please follow along with your finger, reading the words to yourself as I say them. Start at the top of the page (point to the top of the page) and go across the page (demonstrate by pointing).”***
3. Read the entire passage at a comfortable reading rate (approximately 130 words per minute), making sure that the students are following along with their fingers.

Practice (Repeated Reading)

4. When you have finished reading the passage, say: ***“Now I want you to read the story. We're going to practice reading this story several times to help you get better at reading. Each time I will tell you how far you have read the story. Read the story aloud. Try to read each word. If you come to a word you don't know or if I hear a mistake, I will tell you the word. Be sure to do your best reading.”***
5. Say, ***“Begin”*** and start your timer when the student says the first word of the passage.
6. Put a / through any mistakes. Correct the mistakes made while reading by saying the correct word and nothing more.
7. Stop the timer when the student finishes the passage. Record the time it took to read the passage the first time.
8. Say, ***“You read that story in _____ minutes/seconds.”***

Feedback/Error Correction (Phrase Drill)

9. Say, ***“Now we are going to correct the errors.”***
10. Go back to each error you slashed and use the following procedures to correct them.
11. Point to the error/help the student find the error (e.g., ***“look at the second word in the second sentence”***) and say, ***“That word is _____. What word? Yes, _____. Again, what word? Yes _____. Now read the whole sentence.”***
12. If there is an error while the student reads this time, correct it immediately.

Additional Practice (Repeated Reading)

13. (2nd Reading) After error correction, say, ***“Remember last time you read the story in _____ minutes/seconds. Try reading it again and I will tell you how quickly you read the story this time.”***

14. Repeat steps #5 - #12

15. (3rd Reading) After the second reading and error correction say, ***“Remember last time you read the story in _____ minutes/seconds. Try reading it one last time and I will tell you how quickly you read the story.”***

16. Repeat steps #5 - #12.

Comprehension Questions (optional)

At the conclusion of fluency practice and ask Who What When Where and Why questions.

- a. Who – ask for names of characters in the story
- b. What – ask about word meanings and events
- c. Where – ask for the location of things and events
- d. Why – ask about the reason things happened

Reread-Adapt and Answer-Comprehend (RAAC) Instructional Routine

The RAAC intervention is a supplemental program designed to include essential instructional components from the repeated reading and question generation literature bases. The intervention consists of the following eight instructional steps (Therrien, Gormley, & Kubina, 2006):

1. Teacher cues the student with the following statement:

“Read this story the best you can and as quickly as you can. Pay attention to what you are reading as you will need to answer these questions” (teacher points to the cue card questions)

2. A cue card containing the generic story structure questions is presented and the teacher prompts the student to read the questions aloud. See below for cue card questions.

Who is the main character?
Where and when did the story take place?
What did the main character do?
How did the story end?
How did the main character feel?
*Questions created by Short and Ryan (1984).

3. The student rereads the passage aloud until he/she reaches a pre-established number of CWPM. Regardless of CWPM achieved, each passage is read a minimum of two times or a maximum of four times. The criterion of CWPM is based on norms reported by Hasbrouck and Tindal (2017) of students reading at the 50th percentile at the student’s instructional reading level.

4. The teacher provides corrective feedback on word errors. If the student hesitates on a word for 3 seconds or omits a word(s), error correction is provided immediately. Otherwise, error correction is provided after the passage has been read, but prior to rereading the passage. Error correction in both cases entails providing the word(s) and asking the student to repeat it/them.

5. After the terminal passage reading, the teacher prompts the student to adapt and answer the cue card questions orally. Scaffolded assistance is provided to the student. For each incorrect (or non-) response, a prompt to look for the information in the passage was given. If the student answers the question incorrectly or no answer is provided a second time, the teacher points to the sentence where the answer could be found or inferred. If the student still is unable to answer the question, the answer is provided and the teacher explicitly points out where the information needed to answer the question can be found and/or provides the rationale needed to answer the question correctly.

6. The teacher asks factual and inferential comprehension questions about the passage.

7. The session ends and steps 1 through 6 are repeated the following session.

8. The teacher adjusts the difficulty of the reading material for use in the subsequent session using the following guidelines. If the student was unable to reach the pre-established number of CWPM required for their instructional reading level in four readings for three consecutive sessions, the reading material to be used in subsequent sessions is lowered by one grade level (e.g., from third to second grade). If, for three sessions in a row, the student was able to reach the pre-established number of CWPM required for their instructional reading level in one reading, the reading material to be used in subsequent sessions is raised by one grade level (e.g., from second to third grade).