



Session 4:
Reading Fluency
*MS/HS Literacy Teacher Professional
Development Series*

Recap

In the last session, we spent time...

- defining what morphology is and the impact it has on middle and high school students specifically.
- designing morphological awareness activities to improve vocabulary awareness and reading comprehension that coincide with lessons.

Today's Objective

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ★ understand how fluency practice can improve students' proficiency in reading at the middle and high school level.
- ★ determine where in a lesson fluency practice may fit, as well as the parameters for implementing fluency practice effectively.

Reading Fluency

- The National Reading Panel (2000) defines reading fluency as the ability to read text with the appropriate rate, accuracy, and prosody.
- Reading fluency depends on well-developed word-recognition skills that are acquired through systematic, explicit instruction in phonemic/phonological awareness and phonics. Strong language comprehension skills also support reading fluency.
- As a student's decoding automaticity increases, reading fluency increases.



Reading fluency essentially lives in all strands of the rope.

LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
(facts, concepts, etc.)

VOCABULARY
(breadth, precision, links, etc.)

LANGUAGE STRUCTURE
(syntax, semantics, etc.)

VERBAL REASONING
(inference, metaphor, etc.)

LITERACY KNOWLEDGE
(print concepts, genres, etc.)

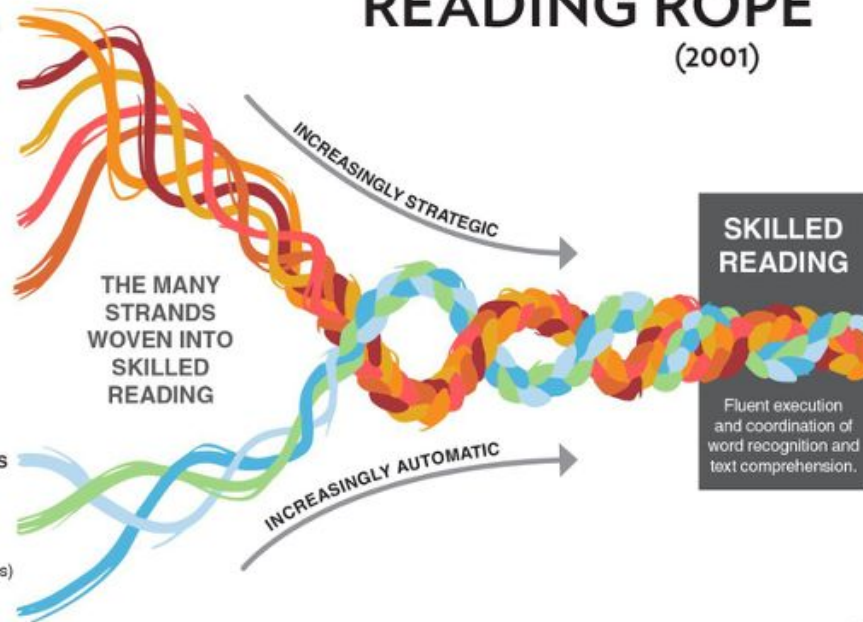
WORD RECOGNITION

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS
(syllables, phonemes, etc.)

DECODING
(alphabetic principle, spelling-sound correspondences)

SIGHT RECOGNITION
(of familiar words)

SCARBOROUGH'S READING ROPE (2001)



**SKILLED
READING**

Fluent execution
and coordination of
word recognition and
text comprehension.

Fluency Improves Proficiency in All Content Areas



- Fluency is said to be the bridge between word recognition and comprehension (Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004). Slow and laborious reading is frustrating for secondary students and often leads them to avoid reading altogether (Rasinski et al., 2005).
- There is a correlation between reading fluency and reading comprehension, so in addition to instruction in comprehension strategies, teaching students to read fluently may help them better understand what they read (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, & Jenkins, 2001). If students spend most of their effort focused on word recognition or reading one word at a time without phrasing, their ability to comprehend text is compromised.

Source: [The Reading Teacher's Sourcebook](#)

Determining if a Reader is Fluent

- If a student is struggling to read fluently in class or having trouble comprehending what they read, they should be assessed using grade-level passages to determine their “words correct per minute” (WCPM) score and reading accuracy.
- Assuming a minimum accuracy rate of 95%, a student’s WCPM score can be compared to [fluency norms](#) to determine their reading percentile. Fluency norms have been established for students until grade 6 (Hasbrouck and Tindal, 2017). The norms set at 6th grade are the expected fluency beyond 6th grade; by 6th grade students should be able to read 146 wpm at the 50th percentile.



Preparing for Fluency Practice for Non-Fluent Readers

- Group students homogeneously based on their reading levels.
- Limit groups to four students.
- Groups should rotate to the teacher every 15 minutes or so.
- This is a perfect activity for intervention time if time is allotted in ELA or any other content areas.
- If there is no intervention time allotted, teachers can carve out 15 minutes a day of their content area or designate one day a week to do small group.
- Pick out fluency passages based on the student's independent reading level. A student's independent reading level is where a student is reading with 95-100% accuracy (no more than 1 in 20 words is difficult for the student).



Preparing for Fluency Practice for Non-Fluent Readers (continued)

- Expectations for small groups need to be clearly communicated. Expectation may include:
 - what work students are doing that are not in the small group.
 - how students will be held accountable for the work.
 - the volume that should be used in small groups, with redirecting and feedback as needed.
 - a timer that is visible to the students.
 - keeping students informed of their progress in small groups.
- Communicate to students the purpose for this activity and how this will translate to gains for them in the future. Be as specific as possible. Students need to buy in to the activity in order for it to be effective.



Finding Fluency Passages

- Most high-quality ELA curriculum offer fluency passages in their supports.
- Fluency passages can also be found at [Achieve the Core](#).



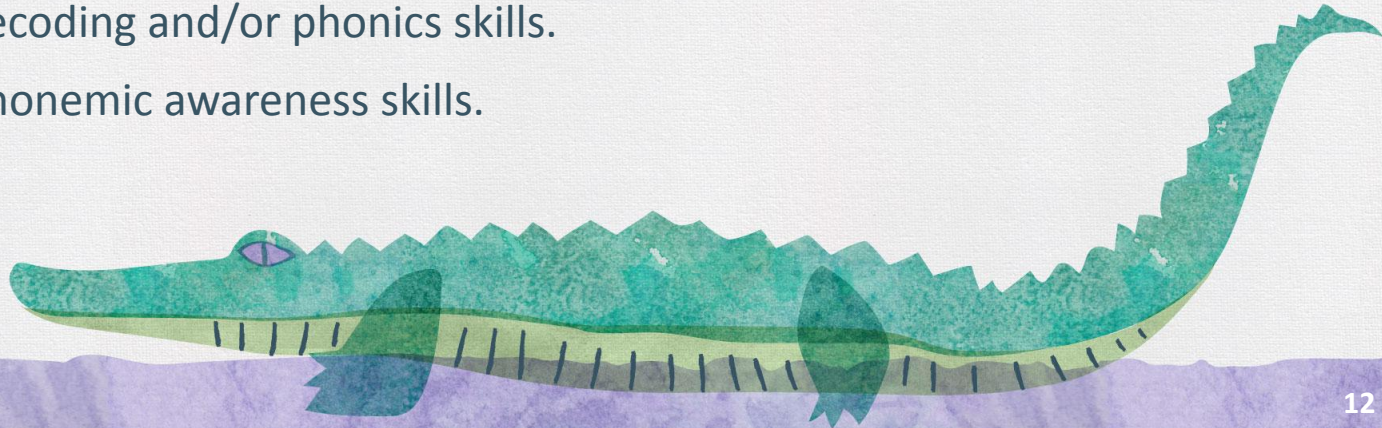
Fluency Practices in Small Groups

Fluency practice should include:

- walking students through previewing the text.
- modeling how the text should be read with the appropriate rate and prosody.
- where necessary, explaining prosody (i.e. *I paused at this comma because...*).
- moving through a progression of scaffolds after modeling, such as echo reading and choral reading before asking students to independently read.
- conducting 3-4 reads of a passage to ensure students are building their sight word recognition.
- providing frequent corrective feedback to students as they are reading, helping to pronounce incorrect words.
- moving to timed reading eventually so that students can increase their words read per minute.
- asking “check for understanding” questions as students progress through the readings.

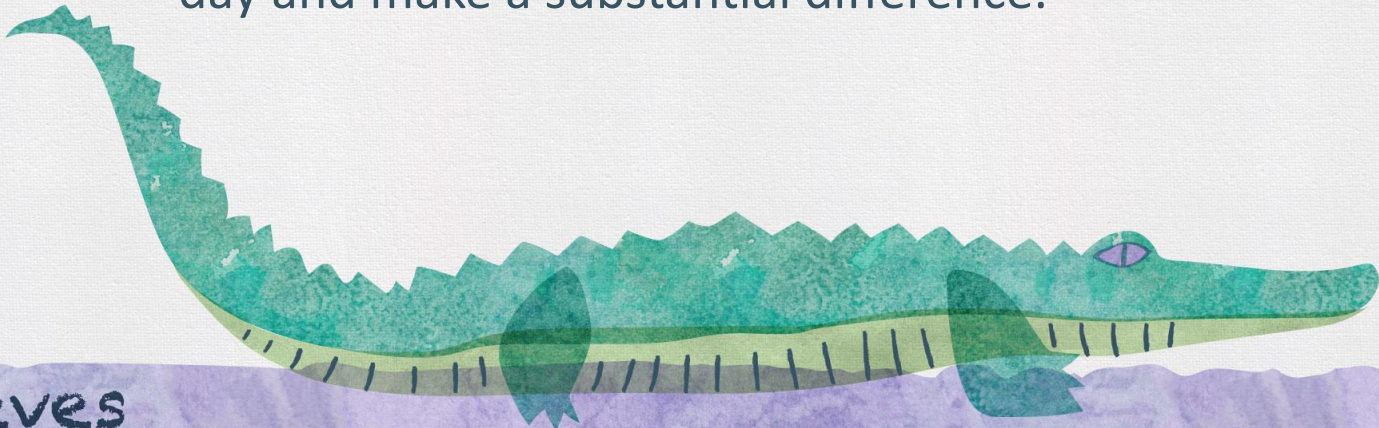
Next Steps if Not Progressing

- If students are still not progressing with the small group instruction for fluency, then they may need to be referred to the school's administration or SBLC team for next steps.
- Very little or no progress could indicate that student needs help with word recognition skill such as:
 - decoding and/or phonics skills.
 - phonemic awareness skills.



Final Thoughts

- Fluent readers in middle and high school will lead to higher proficiency in the content areas, as well as produce life-long learners.
- Fluency practice at this level can take as little as 15 minutes per day and make a substantial difference.



Engage



- Where does fluency practice fit inside of your day or week?
- What resources do you still need to implement fluency practice?
- How will having mostly fluent readers impact your classroom?

Question or Suggestions?

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