Setting aside small amounts of time in your daily instruction to practice reading fluency can make a huge difference for your students. Classroom strategies for increasing fluency can be employed using text passages that are currently a part of your existing curriculum or you may choose to supplement with other texts, particularly for certain strategies such as repeated reading (outlined below). A critical principle of fluency instruction is that students must have sufficient practice with a variety of texts. Strategies that provide practice with independent and instructional level texts encourage fluency development in readers. Below, we briefly mention several fluency strategies while a more detailed description is available for each at the link provided at the end of the description.

Whole-Class Choral Reading
Whole-class choral reading is a strategy where all students read the same text aloud with the teacher. This is a powerful assisted reading strategy that can use either a repeated-reading or wide-reading implementation. Texts can and should be drawn directly from the curriculum. In a repeated-reading protocol, the same text is read multiple times across several days. With a wide-reading implementation, different but very similar texts are read each day. An example of a similar text might be an extended story where each day the next succeeding paragraph(s) is read. Whole-class choral reading provides many benefits for students. For example, students are able to hear a model of good reading because the teacher leads the class in reading. This also means that students are provided with immediate assistance on pronouncing unfamiliar words and phrases. Because students read with the teacher, they also hear a model of prosodic reading while they are reading. A key feature of choral reading is that it provides a safe “cover” for struggling readers as individual students are neither asked to read nor are they singled out for either good or poor reading. All praise and correction is given to the class as a single entity and not to individual students. Research evidence suggests that whole-class choral reading helps both proficient and struggling readers whether implemented in reading or content classes. The link below provides explicit implementation instructions.

“That Sounded Good!” Using Whole-Class Choral Reading to Improve Fluency

16 Minutes of “Eyes-on-Text” Can Make a Difference: Whole-Class Choral Reading as an Adolescent Fluency Strategy

The Importance of Adolescent Fluency

Alternative Text Types to Improve Reading Fluency for Competent to Struggling Readers

Paired or Buddy Reading

Paired or buddy reading is a peer-assisted learning strategy (PALS), where students read in groups of two; while it is most often used in the elementary grades, it can be used in older grades as well. In this strategy students take turns reading the text to each other. It is helpful if less fluent readers are paired with a more fluent reader. Texts are chosen that serve the curricular needs of the class and that are at the independent reading level of the better reader, but not so difficult that the partner is frustrated. It’s important that a routine for paired reading be decided in advance by the teacher. Directions for how students will take turns reading, how they will handle instances where a student does not know a word, how to check for understanding, and how long a paired reading session will last must be decided in advance. The link below provides instructions for implementation.

Using Paired Reading to Increase Fluency and Peer Cooperation
Repeated Reading

Repeated reading refers to instances when students read the same text several times. Often, repeated readings are distributed across several days where the passage is read two or three times the first day to reinforce proper pronunciation and phrasing, and then once a day for two to three more days. The idea is to help the student increase their automaticity with words and phrases specific to the text. This automaticity will then transfer to words and phrases in other texts. Repeated reading can be implemented in a one-on-one basis where a teacher or paraprofessional works directly with the student, in small groups, or as a whole class. In other instances, repeated reading is a feature within a strategy such as whole-class choral reading. SAP provides fluency packets at the link below:

SAP Fluency Packets

Fluency Development Lesson

Fluency instruction is not something that is “in addition to;” rather, it is intrinsic to effective reading instruction. The Fluency Development Lesson (Rasinski et al., 1994) was recognized by the National Reading Panel (2000) as an effective approach to developing fluent readers in grades 1-3. The FDL routine uses a Gradual Release of Responsibility model where the teacher shifts reading responsibility for reading to the students. At its essence, the FDL uses short pieces of text including poems, rhymes, and segments of stories which students read aloud in unison with the teacher (choral reading) several times (repeated reading). The reader should refer to the link below for the FDL instructional protocol. The Fluency Packets on Achieve the Core are very similar to this technique.

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