



A conversation about standards-aligned instructional materials

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Improve Your Materials

PART 2 OF READING FLUENCY

## Building Reading Fluency

Four classroom strategies that can help build fluent readers

By: David Liben, David D. Paige

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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 **F**luency **D**evelopment **L**esson (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.

**About the Author:** David Liben is the Senior Content Specialist of the Literacy and English Language Arts team at Student Achievement Partners. David has taught elementary, middle school and high school students in public and private schools, as well as community college and teacher preparation courses, in New York City and Vermont. David still spends as much time as possible in schools with teachers and children. Together with Meredith Liben, David founded two innovative model schools in New York City - New York Prep, a junior high school in East Harlem, and in 1991, the Family Academy - where he served as Principal and lead curriculum designer. David holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Wisconsin and a master's degree in school administration from Teachers College, Columbia University.

**About the Author:** David D. Paige is Associate Professor of Education at Bellarmine University in Louisville, Kentucky. After a 20-year career in business, Dr. Paige began his educational career as a special educator in an urban middle school in Memphis, TN. After completed his doctoral studies at the University of Memphis, Dr. Paige entered higher education where his work in schools includes early reading instruction, reading fluency, assessment, vocabulary, and comprehension in children from poverty. Dr. Paige presents regularly at national conferences such as the International Reading Association, the

Association of Literacy Researchers and Educators, the American Educational Research Association, the Consortium for Research Accountability and Teacher Evaluation, the Standards Institute and Student Achievement Partners. In the summer of 2015 Dr. Paige was the recipient of the Jay and Maureen McGowan Presidential Award where he visited to Oxford University as a visiting research scholar. Dr. Paige has published his research in a variety of national journals including Reading & Writing, The Journal of Literacy Research, The Reading Teacher, Reading Psychology, Reading Horizons, Literacy Research and Instruction, the Yearbook of the Association of Literacy Researchers and Educators, the Journal of Adult and Adolescent Literacy, Cogent Education, and the Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, as well as several book chapters. Dr. Paige is Executive Director of the Thinking Schools Academy, an initiative to improve teaching and learning in India, and holds credentials as a special educator and school administrator. Dr. Paige is President-Elect of the Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers, a national literacy organization.

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