

Reading for Fluency Strategies

Reading fluency is the ability to read with efficiency and ease. It can also be thought of as the ability to read text accurately, automatically and with appropriate expression. This is something that fluent readers, like you, do automatically. Attention to punctuation helps the reader to “chunk” (group together) words and phrases. Getting the phrasing right brings a rhythm to the text, and understanding the rhythm helps the reader understand the author's intended meaning. Appropriate intonation is an important aspect of fluent reading and an indication that the reader is paying attention to meaning and comprehending what is read. Comprehension can be considered as the final or ultimate goal of reading.

Fluency is a set of skills that allows readers to rapidly decode text while maintaining a high level of comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2001). Students may struggle with reading fluency that can hinder their overall comprehension of passages. There are different strategies that teachers can use in the classroom to help students with reading fluency. The strategies are explicitly addressed (explained to students), modeled (demonstrated to students), and used in the classroom. Here are some you can use in any classroom where there is reading involved.

Teacher Fluency Modeling –

Students need to hear what fluent reading sounds like. This is an opportunity for teachers to model fluent reading. Here are the steps

Step 1: Explain to students what fluency is: as the ability to read text accurately, automatically and with appropriate expression. Further explain that you will model fluency and students should read silently along with your oral reading.

Step 2: Ask students when should you take a pause (a breath) while reading. If you have an overhead, point to the periods (a long breath/break) and commas (a shorter breath/break). You can also point out that your voice will go up when you see a question mark and that you will use expression with an explanation mark. Explain that these fluency skills that you express while reading show that you understand what you are reading.

Step 3: Read orally to the students. You should read passages with expression and model punctuation pauses. Teachers should also model stress and intonation when appropriate. Remind students to listen to how you “chunk” (group together) words and phrases together and how you make your voice expressive when necessary.

Student Oral Reading -

Explain to students that a method they can do to practice and improve their fluency is to read orally or aloud in class. Teachers can do this by calling on students or asking for volunteers to orally read a paragraph in a passage. Discuss with the students that this may take some time to make everyone comfortable with reading aloud in front of their peers. Stress the importance of oral reading needed in all areas of our lives, work, school, and the community. Remind students that as a class, we support everyone and we are all here to help one another. Explain to students that it is the job of the teacher and not other students to interrupt if needed to help with pronunciation. Practice oral reading often to help students gain comfort in reading aloud and improve their fluency.

Shared and Paired Repeated Readings –

Explain to students that there are different strategies that you will use in class to help improve fluency and comprehension. One method is a shared and paired repeated readings. Discuss the steps below with students. Write the method on the board if it helps

1- read silently

2 – listen and discuss

3 – read in pairs

Step 1: Students read passage silently.

Step 2: Teacher reads entire passage orally and asks students to highlight new vocabulary or confusing phrases and ideas.

Step 3: Teacher goes paragraph by paragraph to go over words and phrases students highlighted.

Step 4: After going over the entire passage, teacher asks students to orally read to each other in pairs. Depending on the length of the passage, students can read the entire passage to each other or just a paragraph.

Step 5: Teacher circulates the room and listens to pairs as they read. Teacher should take note of words or phrases that seem difficult for students to pronounce or understand and review with the whole class at the end of the paired reading.

Note- The teacher may want to pair a strong reader with a struggling reader. There are other times the teacher may want to pair like-leveled readers together.

For more information on reading strategies for adult learners go to the LINCS Reading Strategies and Assessment Profiles:

<http://lincs.ed.gov/readingprofiles/>