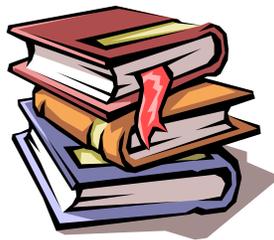


Improving Literacy for Intermediate Students

Comprehension
Vocabulary
Fluency
Word Identification



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This *Improving Literacy for Intermediate Students* manual is taken from the longer *Guided Literacy Manual*, which includes a section on writing as well as additional activities for the four components of reading.

FLUENCY

Aspects of Fluency and their Affects on Comprehension

1. Accuracy of word identification
 - a. Students accurately identify words by recognizing them at sight, by using context, and by decoding them. For words not immediately recognized, students use context to narrow down what the word might be and use decoding skills to identify the word. If students are focusing on understanding what they read, they also use context to self-correct. Their self-monitoring tells them that their comprehension has broken down.
 - b. Accurate word identification is the basic building block of fluency and of reading, in general. It doesn't matter how fluent readers SOUND if they are miscalling so many words that comprehension is not adequate.
2. Phrasing and expression, sometimes jointly referred to as prosody
 - a. Phrasing includes reading in thought units and pausing at punctuation marks. When students read word-by-word, in very brief phrases, or without attending to punctuation, they have difficulty comprehending the text. As they are reading, they are not really expecting the selection to make sense.
 - b. Expression typically includes emphasizing important rather than unimportant words, attending to punctuation to indicate HOW the sentence should be read, reading in a conversational tone, and having appropriate voice quality and projection, e.g., reading at an appropriate volume.
3. Rate
 - a. Reading at an appropriate rate, neither too fast nor too slow, is important to efficient reading.
 - 1) Often people talk about reading rate in words per minutes (w.p.m.).
 - 2) When evaluating reading rate, it is important to take into account accuracy of word identification as well as speed. That is why teachers prefer to talk about words CORRECT per minute (w.c.p.m.) rather than simply w.p.m.
 - b. Both reading too fast and too slowly are problems. When readers read too fast, they miss ideas. When they read too slowly, they forget what they're reading about. Slow readers typically read slowly because they

are concentrating so much on word identification that there is not much “energy” left over to think about meaning.

The Aspect of Fluency to Work on First

1. Word Identification is a GIVEN.

When choosing material for fluency work, you will purposefully choose material that you expect the student will be able to read accurately.

2. Phrasing is an important FIRST ISSUE.

For reading to make sense, the words of a sentence have to be read in thought units. Making use of commas, periods, question marks, and other punctuation marks helps the reader to chunk the passage into phrases. However, sometimes the break between one phrase and the next is not signaled by punctuation.

Example: Slash marks show possible phrasing for this sentence.

a. Short Phrases

After class was over/ for the evening,/ the students stood around/
talking about /what they were going to do / over the weekend.//

b. Longer phrases

After class was over for the evening,/ the students stood around/
talking about what they were going to do over the weekend.//

Some students can read longer phrases than others; however, all students should strive to read “groups of words.”

3. Reading with Expression and Reading Rate are issues to address later.

For some students, rate may be more important to address than expression, especially if the reader is reading so slowly that he can’t remember what he has read by the time he gets to the end of the sentence.

For other students, expression may be more important to address. Reading with expression includes a variety of elements which may be fluency issues for certain readers.

Three Concepts upon which Fluency Activities Are Built

1. **Modeling**

Students need to hear what fluent reading sounds like.

- a. In some fluency activities the teacher models the reading of the exact material that student will be reading.
- b. In other fluency activities, the teacher models by turn-taking. The teacher and the student(s) are not reading the same sentences/paragraphs.

2. **Repetition**

Readers become more fluent when they read, reread, and read again the same text. The text needs to be relatively short with interesting content.

3. **Reading material where the student's word accuracy is very high**

- a. Practice fluency with easy-reading materials!
- b. This is especially true if the student is practicing rate building and timing himself. The student can independently figure his words per minute; however, without the teacher listening to the student and providing feedback, the student cannot figure his words correct per minute.

If you use materials easy for the student to read orally, you will not have to be so concerned about not figuring words CORRECT per minute.