

Fluent Reading Activity

LEVELS 15, 18, 21

What is Fluent Reading?

Fluent readers read with appropriate accuracy, rate, and expression. A critical component of fluent reading is prosody, which is the intonation, emphasis, phrasing, and rhythm that support expressive reading and allow a reader to convey clear meaning to a listener. Since fluent readers do not tax their cognitive resources in order to recognize words, they are free to focus on the comprehension of text. As such, being a fluent reader allows a student to more fully understand text whether he or she is reading aloud or reading silently.

Why focus on Fluent Reading?

Fluency, which has been described as the bridge from word recognition accuracy to text comprehension (Pikulski & Chard, 2005), is one of the five pillars of effective reading instruction as identified by the National Reading Panel (2000). Fluency can be thought of as having two essential components: automaticity and prosody (Rasinski, 2012). Automaticity is defined as the ability to read words quickly and accurately (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). Prosody underpins expression: it refers to how speakers and readers use their voices to convey meaning to listeners. This prosodic component of fluency has been shown to be significantly related to reading comprehension skills (Arcand et al., 2014; Rasinski, Rikli, & Johnston, 2009) and to overall reading proficiency (Miller & Schwanenflugel, 2008). Fluent readers use punctuation, phrasing, and emphasis to make sense of a text, supporting comprehension and advancing reading proficiency.

How does Lexia® Core5® Reading address Fluent Reading?

Levels 15, 18, and 21 of Lexia Core5 Reading each contain an activity titled Fluent Reading. In order to develop prosodic awareness, students should hear appropriate models of expressive reading. Therefore, students listen to such models throughout the Fluent Reading activities. Specific units emphasize the elements that comprise prosody: intonation, emphasis, phrasing, and rhythm. Research has shown that explicit instruction in intonation focused on the importance of inflection is beneficial (Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005). Consequently, in the units that target intonation, students listen to both real and nonsense sentences, paying close attention to the rise and fall of the reader's voice. Then, they select the appropriate ending punctuation, which draws their attention to the connection between punctuation and sentence meaning. In other units, students listen to sentences and identify specific words that are emphasized by the reader. As research has shown the importance of instruction devoted to phrasing based on syntax and meaning, additional units require students to identify appropriate phrasing in presented sentences (Kuhn & Rasinski, 2011). In particular, they must determine how the syntactic structure influences the expression of these sentences. Finally, students listen to a series of engaging poems, paying close attention to the expression and rhythm in order to identify the rhyme scheme.

Works Cited

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