

Study Guide

The Upper Elementary PD Series

Module 4—Fluency

PREFACE

This study guide is intended to help teachers get the maximum benefit from the seven modules that make up the Upper Elementary PD Series. Its goal is to provide you with a deeper understanding of the scientifically based reading research (SBRR) contained within and to give you a clear concept of what these strategies look like when implemented in the classroom.

This guide can be used by the individual teacher completing the modules independently as well as by groups of teachers who might be using this professional development series as part of their Professional Learning Community (PLC) time on campus.

This guide discusses reading/language arts skills in great detail. However, it is important to state that these same skills apply across the entire curriculum. There is a lot of truth in the education adage that “All teachers are reading teachers.” This does not mean that we expect content area teachers to be teaching lessons in parts of speech or giving spelling tests to their students. What it does mean is that at the places where science/social studies/math/art/music/PE/health intersect with reading, both the content area and the reading teachers should work together to ensure that their students have the requisite reading “chops” that empowers them to succeed in the content areas. We will point out these areas of intersection and how this collaboration can take place to help all students succeed.

CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS



Look for these icons throughout this guide. They indicate places where reading skills intersect with the rest of the curriculum. These will be stopping points where PLC members can discuss how the RLA and content teachers can work together.

Slide 5: Building Fluency

Why is the bridge analogy appropriate to describe fluency? What does the fluency bridge connect?

Slide 6: Defining Fluency

Read the definition of fluency on this slide. What do you think are the key elements of the definition? Write down those key components in the space provided below.

Slide 8: Diagnose the Problem

The type of fluency issue determines the intervention the student will require.

very slow reading rate—indicates a problem in foundation skills. Check letter-sound correspondences and work to improve automaticity and accuracy.

reads without expression—teach children to use contextual clues (interjection/question words and punctuation) that offer insights into how a sentence should be read. Teachers should provide modeling during read-alouds and provide corrective feedback.

reads without chunking (reads one-word-at-a-time)—draw lines underneath words that should be read together. Teachers should stress that reading should mimic natural speech patterns.

doesn't pause at breaks—Have students read shorter passages with the punctuation highlighted. Teachers can model pausing after a comma, a semi-colon and a period.

Slide 9: Reading Rate \neq Fluency

Reading faster does not always improve comprehension. All teachers have had students in their class who could read quickly and accurately, but who struggled mightily to comprehend.

Rather than teaching students how to read “fast”, the focus should be on teaching students to read at an appropriate rate, with proper phrasing, expression and intonation so that it improves their comprehension.

Slide 10: Fluent Reading?



Listen to the three audio clips of Martin Luther King's “I Have a Dream” speech. What differences do you hear between the readings?

Please turn to the next page to complete this activity.

Slide 10: Fluent Reading?



The notes for this slide state, “He could have read this speech quickly. But doing so would have taken away from the meaning. He was able to focus on the meaning he wished to convey orally. He raised and lowered his voice, had dramatic pauses, and changed volume and tone to more effectively deliver his intended meanings to his audience. What truly made the speech fluent was not the speed, but the expression (prosody) that was imbedded in the reading.” What does this mean to you?

Slide 11: Reading Accuracy

There are three levels of accuracy:

Independent Level text—95% or better accuracy

Instructional Level text—88-95% accuracy

Frustration Level text—Less than 88% accuracy

To determine a student’s accuracy level, use the following formula:

$$\text{Accuracy} = \frac{(\text{Total words read} - \text{words read incorrectly})}{\text{Total words read}} \times 100$$

Practice calculating the students’ fluency rates. You can use the calculator on your phone.

1. John read 173 words. He made 14 errors. What is his accuracy rate? _____
What level is he reading at (Independent, Instructional, Frustration) _____
2. Amber read 216 words. She made 10 errors. What is her accuracy rate? _____
What level is he reading at (Independent, Instructional, Frustration) _____
3. Zoe read 98 words. She made 12 errors. What is her accuracy rate? _____
What level is he reading at (Independent, Instructional, Frustration) _____

Slide 12: Proven Fluency Strategies

Read through the different activities on this slide. If working as a team, discuss each and how you could implement these in your classroom. Then write a brief explanation of each and how it would look in your classroom.

Modeling fluent reading

Choral reading

Echo reading

Partner reading

Re-reading

Rapid Automatic Naming

Reader's Theater

Slide 13: Partner Reading

BENEFITS: Better readers monitor and provide feedback to classmates; this feedback helps lower readers improve their accuracy, reading rate, phrasing and other fluency skills.

PROCEDURE

Strategically Select Partners: Make sure that the reading ability gap between partners is not too large.

Model How Partner Reading Should Work in Your Classroom: Model clear expectations, such as

- who should read first
- what does the other partner do when they are not reading, and
- how to provide feedback

Slide 14: Repeated Reading

How does one motivate students to engage in repeated reading?

What kinds of text best lend themselves to the repeated reading strategy?

Slide 15-17: Rapid Automatic Naming

After reviewing these slides, what is your impression of Rapid Automatic Naming (RAN)? Do you think your students would enjoy RAN?

Slide 18: Linking Fluency Across All Content Areas



Think about how your student struggle with fluency in your content area course. Do you think any of the strategies presented in this module can be applied to help your students overcome that struggle without taking too much time away from content? If working with others, discuss your thoughts with a neighbor. Then jot down your takeaways from this training.

KEY

Slide 10: Fluent Reading?

The notes for this slide state, “He could have read this speech quickly. But doing so would have taken away from the meaning. He was able to focus on the meaning he wished to convey orally. He raised and lowered his voice, had dramatic pauses, and changed volume and tone to more effectively deliver his intended meanings to his audience. What truly made the speech fluent was not the speed, but the expression (prosody) that was imbedded in the reading.” What does this mean to you?

Rate (or speed) is only one aspect of fluency. Dr. King used other aspects of fluency to effectively communicate his message to his audience. Dr. King’s reading was FLUENT and has very little to do with the reading speed.

Slide 11: Reading Accuracy

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Independent Level text—95% or better accuracy

Instructional Level text—88-95% accuracy

Frustration Level text—Less than 88% accuracy

To determine a student’s accuracy level, use the following formula:

$$\text{Accuracy} = \frac{(\text{Total words read} - \text{words read incorrectly})}{\text{Total words read}} \times 100$$

Practice calculating the students’ fluency rates. You can use the calculator on your phone.

4. John read 173 words. He made 14 errors. What is his accuracy rate? 92%
What level is he reading at (Independent, Instructional, Frustration) Instructional
5. Amber read 216 words. She made 10 errors. What is her accuracy rate? 95%
What level is he reading at (Independent, Instructional, Frustration) Independent
6. Zoe read 98 words. She made 13 errors. What is her accuracy rate? 87%
What level is he reading at (Independent, Instructional, Frustration) Frustration

Slide 12: Proven Fluency Strategies

Read through the different activities on this slide. If working as a team, discuss each and how you could implement these in your classroom. Then write a brief explanation of each and how it would look in your classroom.

Modeling fluent reading—Classroom read-alouds using texts that lend themselves to reading with expression and prosody.

Choral reading—Having multiple students reading aloud as a group at the same time. In the classroom, switch up the groups reading with frequency to avoid “fish reading” (when students move their lips but aren’t actually reading). Switching also ensures that all students track text.

Echo reading—Teacher reads a portion of text (usually 2 to 4 sentences) modelling expression, phrasing and prosody. Student then reads back the same text in the same way the teacher read it.

Partner reading—Team up a stronger reader with a weaker reader. Pick a text at the weaker reader’s independent reading level. Stronger reader goes first to model text. Students take turns reading 1 paragraph at a time. Teacher models how partners should give feedback. Can be used during small group time as an independent practice activity.

Repeated reading—Students re-read the same text several times, working to improve their rate, phrasing, expression, intonation and prosody. In the classroom, teacher needs to take great care to select text that is intended to be read repeatedly, otherwise activity becomes boring and unmotivating. Try to have some sort of performance so that students have a reason to read repeatedly.

Rapid Automatic Naming—Students pair off and are given a grid with letters, numbers, shapes or pictures. They take turns stating what they see as quickly as possible. RAN helps with automaticity and is good predictor of word reading.

Reader’s Theater—Student perform texts that are intended for reading aloud for others (other classes, classmates, parents, principal, etc.) This gives students a reason to practice the material repeatedly and to read it with appropriate expression, phrasing, intonation and prosody.

