

Strategies for Teaching Fluency

Reading Rate and Comprehension

Research has shown that as reading rate increases so does reading comprehension. When students have word recognition skills, their reading becomes more automatic, and they can dedicate more cognitive resources to understanding what is being read. Many students lack the reading rate and fluency necessary to comprehend complex texts, such as those found on the GED[®] Science Test. Students at the GED[®] level should be able to read with comprehension at a rate of approximately 250-300 words per minute. However, many students read at less than 150 words per minute, spending more time decoding and less time extracting meaning from text.

What is reading rate vs. reading fluency?

Reading fluency is the speed and ease with which one reads connected text aloud with accuracy, speed, and appropriate phrasing.

Reading rate is how quickly one reads with understanding.

Many students have acquired poor reading habits that have affected their reading rate and fluency.

- Regression or skip-backs where students reread the same text multiple times.
- Sub-vocalization where students say the words silently to themselves and often move their lips as they are reading.
- Low concentration when students lose focus on what they are reading, which often leads to regression or skip-backs.
- Reading word-by-word with their eyes moving to one word at a time or using a pencil to physically point at words.

If you observe students reading aloud, you can possibly identify those habits and provide them with feedback to reduce them.

Some strategies that students can use to improve reading rate:

- Reading silently
- Choral reading – reading along with another person
- Observing modeling of reading
- Repeated reading
- Scooping – using the finger to “scoop” the syllables while reading
- Underlining the words with the finger while reading
- Practice reading a variety of materials

Assess your students' reading rates by taking a text that is at an appropriate grade level and having them read for one minute. Determine how many words they read within that one-minute time frame. Once you know your students' reading rates, you can provide time in the classroom for students to practice their reading and improve their reading rate.

One excellent source of materials is currently operated through Marshall Adult Education in Marshall, Minnesota. The website includes numerous reading passages from different content areas. You can read the passages online or print them out. A sample of the materials available to assist students in building their reading rate is provided on the next page.

Check out the website:

http://resources.marshalladulthoodeducation.org/reading_skills_home.htm

Timed Reading Activity

This includes a timed reading activity developed by http://resources.marshalladulthoodeducation.org/reading_skills_home.htm program. The activity includes a reading passage, basic comprehension questions, and two writing activities (Insert Timed Reading Activity Doc).

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