Professional Development Guide

Reading Fluency: Principles for Instruction and Progress Monitoring

Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts
College of Education, University of Texas at Austin • Texas Education Agency • Region XIII Education Service Center
# Professional Development Guide

## Reading Fluency: Principles for Instruction & Progress Monitoring

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1. Introduction
What is the Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts?

The Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts assists K–12 educators in enhancing the Reading and Language Arts knowledge and skills of Texas students, through implementation of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

How are the Center’s Activities Accomplished?

**Goal 1:** To provide a cadre of school-level specialists with expertise in phonological awareness, word analysis, fluency strategies, and comprehension strategies who are able to use documented approaches to reading and language arts instruction to address TEKS objectives with students in grades K–3.

**Goal 2:** To enhance the knowledge, skills, and practices teachers use to implement the TEKS reading and language arts objectives with second language learners.

**Goal 3:** To enhance the knowledge, skills, and practices teachers use to implement the TEKS reading and language arts objectives with students in grades K–5 who are experiencing difficulty in reading and language arts.

**Goal 4:** To enhance the knowledge, skills, and practices teachers use to implement the TEKS reading and language arts objectives with students in grades 6–8, focusing on content area reading instruction.

**Goal 5:** To disseminate information generated by the Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts using current technology and media.

**Goal 6:** To communicate the goals, activities, and accomplishments of the Center to professionals and other community members.

Literacy Labs
Both school-based and university-based labs served as models for universities and school districts.

Professional Development Guides and Videos
These guides are designed to provide educators across the state with materials and plans for professional development in reading and language arts, and to introduce the TEKS.

Reading Liaisons
Education Service Center Reading Liaisons work collaboratively with Center personnel to engage in and provide professional development on the TEKS.

School Partnerships
Collaborative relationships with schools that assist in the development of materials, curriculum guides, and product development.
**Organization & Content of the Guide**

The guide *Fluency: Principles for Instruction and Progress Monitoring* contains four sections of materials and a video for presenters to teach fluency. Section 2 (*Professional Development*), includes speaker’s notes and suggestions on how to guide participants through the workshop. Section 3 (*Overheads*), contains transparencies containing key points and activities to accompany your speaker’s notes; Section 4 (*Handouts*) includes “Workshop Notes” for participants to take notes from the presentation, and “Activity Handouts” for group activities; Section 5 (*Appendices*) provides a list of references and resources on fluency. Lastly, the video “ Fluency: Principles for Instruction and Progress Monitoring” provides an understanding of fluency research.
2. Professional Development
Preparing for the Workshop

This workshop is designed to introduce primary grade teachers to oral reading fluency principles for instruction and progress monitoring. Classroom teachers, reading coordinators, media specialists, curriculum directors, and principals who work at the primary level are also appropriate participants. The key components of fluency instruction are presented and group discussion and activities are provided.

Materials
- Distribute copies of the handouts (Section 4) to each participant prior to the beginning of the workshop.

Equipment
- Overhead projector/markers
- VCR and monitor

Room Arrangement
- Activities are designed for small group participation and cooperative work. Seating needs to be arranged to facilitate interaction in small groups. All participants will need to be able to see the screen.
Introduction

• Use Overhead #1 to communicate the topic of your presentation.

Reading Fluency

• Use Overhead #2 to show an overview of the Fluency workshop.
• Use Overhead #4 to define oral reading fluency.
• Point out that once children begin to automatically and rapidly decode and access the meaning of individual words, they are on their way to becoming fluent readers.
• Remind participants that fluent readers read fairly effortlessly, group words into meaningful phrases, and use expression appropriately (prosody).
The Importance of Fluency

- Use Overhead #5 to review the importance of comprehension.

- Point out that fluent readers are better able to comprehend what they read because of their ability to process information quickly.

   (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; NAEP, 1995.)

Reading TEKS

- Use Overhead #6 to review and discuss the fluency component of the TEKS for Grades 1–3.

   Note: Fluency is only one part of the reading curriculum or program. “Appropriate” refers to the reading level not grade level of a student.

Overhead #5

Oral Reading Fluency

**Why is it Important?**

**Fluent readers are able to:**

focus their attention on understanding the text (and therefore are better able to interpret the text, make connections among the ideas in the text)

**Nonfluent readers must:**

focus their attention on decoding and accessing the meaning of individual words (thus leaving little attention free for comprehension)

English Language Arts and Reading, Grades 1 - 3

The student reads with fluency and understanding in texts at appropriate difficulty levels.

The student is expected to:

(a) read regularly in independent-level materials (texts in which no more than approximately 1 in 20 words is difficult for the reader)
(b) read regularly in instructional-level materials that are challenging but manageable (text in which no more than approximately 1 in 10 words is difficult for the reader)
(c) read orally from familiar texts with fluency (accuracy, expression, appropriate phrasing, and attention to punctuation)
(d) self-select independent level reading such as by drawing on personal interest, by relying on knowledge of authors and different types of texts, and/or by estimating text difficulty.
Overhead #7

**Important Facts About Fluency Building**

- Use Overhead #7 to address some key points about the context of fluency building.

(Samuels, 1979; 1997.)

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Overhead #8

**Fluency Building**

**Important!!!**

- Students should have a strong foundation in word recognition skills before fluency instruction begins.
- Fluency instruction usually does not begin until at least the middle of the first grade.
- Not all children require fluency instruction.

**Steps of Fluency Development**

- Use Overhead #8 to introduce the two steps in fluency building.

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**How do you develop fluency?**

**Step One: Screening**

- Screening (preparation and procedure)
- Calculating reading fluency
- Identifying appropriate reading levels

**Step Two: Implementation**

- Repeated Reading
  - Tape Assisted Reading
  - Readers Theater
  - Partner Reading

---
Step One: Screening

- Use Overhead #9 to explain the screening process.

Preparation for Screening

- Use Overhead #10 and #11 to discuss the steps to prepare for fluency screening.

Note: Refer participants to Guidelines for Choosing Material for Fluency Screening handout.

Overhead #9

Fluency Building

Step One: Screening

- Plan to assess every student individually to screen for fluency problems and to obtain baseline data.
- Prepare and administer to each student a short (approximately 5 minutes) fluency screening.
- Although many students may be involved in fluency activities, identify students who need fluency building.

Overhead #10

Preparation for Screening

1. Select 2 or 3 unread passages from students' grade level text (look for passages of consistent difficulty and readability).
2. Type up a teacher version (with words tallied) and a student version of the selected text; make copies of the numbered version so you have a record for each student.

Example of Teacher Version

The teacher noticed that four students read very slowly. She decided to screen everyone for fluency problems. She was surprised by what she found.
Preparation for Screening (con’t.)

• Use Overhead #12 and #13 to explain the screening procedure.

• Point out that a fluency check is not a deep analysis of errors, but a notation of the number of errors made by the student.

• Refer participants to the Directions for 1-Minute Administration of Reading Passages handout.

Fluency Building

Screening Procedures

1. Screen students individually
2. Inform each student he/she will be timed reading 2 or 3 passages
3. Instruct each student to do his/her best reading and to begin reading when ready
4. Begin timing only when the student begins to read aloud, not before
5. Mark errors on your numbered passage

Example of Errors:
- mispronunciations
- substitutions
- hesitations > 3-5 sec.
- no attempt to read
- omissions
- reversals

Fluency Building

Example of Student Version

The teacher noticed that four students read very slowly. She decided to screen everyone for fluency problems. She was surprised by what she found.

3. Review procedures for marking errors
4. Have a stopwatch handy to time readings (a tape recorder is optional)
Screening Procedures (con’t.)

- Use Overhead #13 to emphasize that errors such as insertions, self-correction, and repetitions are not to be counted as errors.

Overhead #13

You may note, but do not count as errors:
- insertions
- self-correction
- repetitions

6. Stop timing at the end of one minute, and be sure to mark in the text the last word read by the student (You may allow the student to read to the end of the passage)

Group Activity 2

- Guide participants in Group Activity 2.

Note: Refer participants to Reading Passages handout.

Note: Be sure participants clearly understand the activity before groups begin.

Activity 2

1. Find a partner.

2. One partner will read from Passage #1 and the other from Passage #2.

3. Carefully read the directions.

4. For Part A, the partner with Passage #1 will be the Tester, and the one with Passage #2 will be the Student.

5. For Part B, reverse the roles.

6. Discuss the activity with your partner.
Overhead #15

**Calculating Reading Fluency**

- Use Overhead #15 to explain how to calculate the fluency rate.

---

**One-minute reading**

\[
\text{Total Words Read} - \text{Errors} = \text{Words Correct Per Minute}
\]

**Example:**

62 words read - 7 errors = **55 wcpm**

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Overhead #16

**Oral Reading Fluency Guidelines**

The following range of fluency standards (Hasbrouck and Tindal, 1992) can help teachers evaluate scores for placing students in appropriate reading level materials and setting reasonable goals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Fall wcpm</th>
<th>Winter wcpm</th>
<th>Spring wcpm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>53-82</td>
<td>78-106</td>
<td>94-124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>79-107</td>
<td>93-123</td>
<td>114-142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>99-125</td>
<td>112-133</td>
<td>118-143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>105-126</td>
<td>118-143</td>
<td>128-151</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Use Overhead #16 to discuss how students’ fluency scores can be compared to a range of fluency standards to help teachers evaluate scores.

- Point out that the scores range from the 50th to the 75th percentile for each grade level.

**Note:** Instructional goals for students should be based upon their reading levels (wcpm), not grade levels, on the chart.
Calculating Percent Reading Accuracy

• Use Overhead #17 to calculate the percent accuracy and discuss how to determine the appropriate level of text for individual students.

• Point out that this information affects instruction.

• Point out that fluency building passages should be between a student’s independent and instructional reading level (approximately 95% to 98%).

Interpreting the Results

• Use Overhead #18 to point out how to interpret results.

Overhead #17

Calculating Percent Reading Accuracy

To determine the appropriate level of text for a student, calculate the following:

\[
\text{Percent Accuracy} = \frac{\text{Number of Words Read Correctly}}{\text{Total Words Read}} \times 100
\]

Example:

\[
\frac{145 \text{ (words correct)}}{156 \text{ (Total words read)}} = 92.9 \%
\]

Level of Challenge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Instructional</th>
<th>Frustrational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>97% - 100% accuracy</td>
<td>96% - 94% accuracy</td>
<td>93% accuracy &amp; below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(good/excellent comprehension)</td>
<td>(good/satisfactory comprehension)</td>
<td>(satisfactory/fair/poor comprehension)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overhead #18

Identifying Appropriate Reading Levels

• Take the mean or median of 2-3 fluency measurements

• Judge the appropriateness of the text by using the traditional categories (independent, instructional, or frustrational) or the general guideline for the primary grades of 50-60 wcpm with < 5 errors

• Compare each student’s fluency rate to the Oral Reading Fluency Guidelines
**Group Activity 3**

- Guide participants in Group Activity 3.

**Activity 3**

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**Vignette 1**
In January of 3rd grade, Joe reads 43 wcpm with 3 errors in 3rd grade level materials.

**Vignette 2**
In the Fall of 3rd grade, Mary reads 54 wcpm with 12 errors in 3rd grade level materials.

**Vignette 3**
In the Fall of 2nd grade, Tim reads 30 wcpm with 18 errors in 2nd grade level materials.

---

**Answers to Vignettes of Group Activity 3**

**Vignette #1**
Is fluency building appropriate? Yes
What would be an appropriate placement? 3rd
What would be an appropriate goal? 70 wcpm

**Vignette #2**
Is fluency building appropriate? No (refer participants back to the guideline)
Give the new scores on overhead (write them in the box):
Mary reads 62 wcpm with 4 errors in 2nd grade level materials.
Answer the three questions again:
Is fluency building appropriate? Yes
What would be an appropriate placement? 2nd
What would be an appropriate goal? 90 wcpm

**Vignette #3**
Is fluency building appropriate? Possibly (refer participants back to the guideline)
Ask, “What would you do?” (Retest in 1st grade level materials)
Give new scores on the overhead (Write them in the box):
Tim reads 42 wcpm with 9 errors in 1st grade level materials.
Ask the three questions again:
Is fluency building appropriate? No, too low
What would be an appropriate placement? Not necessary
What would be an appropriate goal? Not necessary (refer back to the guideline)

---

**Interpreting Screening Results**

- Is fluency building appropriate at this level?
  - YES
  - NO

- What level materials would be appropriate?

- What would be an appropriate goal?

- Retest at a lower level.

---

**Note:** Explain the importance of considering the 3 questions when placing students in materials for fluency building.

- Remind them of the general guideline for primary grades of 50–60 wcpm with <5 errors.
Implementation of Fluency Building

- Use Overhead #20 to introduce methods for increasing oral reading fluency.

Note: Remind participants that fluency building is only one part of a reading program.

Repeated Readings

- Use Overhead #21 to introduce the purpose of repeated readings.

(Samuels, 1979; 1997.)

Overhead #20

Fluency Building

Step Two: Strategies for Enhancing Fluency

Implement research-proven methods that are effective in increasing oral reading fluency.

Repeated Readings

- Taped Assisted Reading
- Readers Theater
- Partner Reading

Overhead #21

A repeated reading activity:

- is not intended to constitute “the reading curriculum”
- involves reading the same passage several times
- is not a method for teaching beginning reading skills (students must be able to decode most of the words before they will derive benefit from a Repeated Reading activity)
Repeat Readings

• Significantly increases reading rate, accuracy, and comprehension
• Works with older students as well as elementary children
• Fosters fluent word recognition through multiple exposures to words
• Encourages rapid decoding and permits greater attention to understanding the text
• Is effective for many learners

What the Research Says

• Use Overhead #22 to point out that repeated readings is one of the most well-researched fluency building methods and has been utilized in classrooms for over 20 years.


Repeated Readings Activities

• Direct students to reread a relatively short passage (50–200 words) until a predetermined level of fluency is attained or to reread the text 3-5 times
• Incorporate a variety of reading materials that integrates students’ culture and interests
• Utilize a variety of reading activities (read along/assisted reading, independent/unassisted reading, and partner or group reading)

• Use Overhead #23 to explain the characteristics of repeated readings activities.

(Bos & Vaughn, 1998; Dowhower, 1989.)
Tape Assisted Reading

- Use Overhead #24 to discuss the purpose of tape-assisted reading.
- Explain the steps students follow during tape-assisted reading.

**Note:** Computer-based reading is another example of how children can repeatedly read books by listening to books being read by a computer, reading along with a computer, or recording their own reading of a book into a computer.

Readers Theatre

- Use Overhead #25 to explain Readers Theatre.
- Point out that students do not memorize lines like in a traditional play, but read from scripts with the emphasis on interpreting and sharing their understanding of a character through appropriate intonation and oral expression.

**Note:** Students may write their own plays (original or adapt a story or book).

Overhead #24

**Repeated Readings**

**Tape Assisted Reading**

The purpose is to give children support and a sense of the proper phrasing and speed of fluent reading.

**The student...**

- listens to text read at 80-100 wpm by a fluent reader and follows along by pointing to the text
- reads aloud in sync with tape subvocalizing the words
- reads same text independently following Repeated Reading procedures

**Important**

The taped reading should not have distracting sound effects or music!

Overhead #25

**Repeated Readings**

**Readers Theatre**

The rehearsing and performing of a dialogue-rich play (with scripts in hand) for peers or others

**Readers Theatre...**

- provides readers with a legitimate reason to reread text
- promotes cooperative interaction with peers
- makes the reading task appealing
- makes scripts appear less daunting than whole books
- provides a variety of roles to suit a diverse group of students
- involves practicing Repeated Reading outside of the classroom (at home) in preparation for presentation
Overhead #26

Partner Reading

Repeated Readings

- Pairing reading partners
- Selecting reading materials
- Assembling materials
- Implementing Partner Reading

Overhead #27

Partner Reading

Pairing Reading Partners

1. Rank order students according to reading fluency.
2. Split the list in half to form pairs.
3. Pair the top-ranked student in the higher-performing half (HP) with the top-ranked student in the lower-performing half (LP); do the same for the two students who are second from the top in each half; continue this process until all have partners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Higher</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Pairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top-ranked HP</td>
<td>Top-ranked LP</td>
<td>Pair A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second-ranked HP</td>
<td>Second-ranked LP</td>
<td>Pair B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third-make HP</td>
<td>Third-make LP</td>
<td>Pair C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Partner Reading

- Use Overhead #26 to introduce the steps in Partner Reading.

(Mathes, Fuchs, Fuchs, Henley, Sanders, 1994.)

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Selecting Reading Materials

- Use Overhead #28 to discuss how to select materials that are appropriate for partner reading.

Assembling Reading Materials

- Use Overhead #29 to explain the necessary materials teachers and students need for partner reading.

Note: Folder may contain partner reading directions and/or comprehension cue cards.

Overhead #28

- Identify materials appropriate for the lower reader’s instructional reading level (no more than 1 error in 10 words)
- Have both partners read the same passage from the same material
- Have enough materials selected for two new passages per week

Overhead #29

What Teachers Need:
- timing device
- partner pairings
- partner roles

What Students Need:
- partner
- reading material
- folder
Overhead #30

Implementing Partner Reading

• Use Overhead #30 to discuss the steps for implementing partner reading.

Note: Keep the reading level between independent and instructional so that the task is not too easy or too difficult. Partners can be encouraged to take turns responding to the comprehension questions. Implement partner reading approximately 2 times a week for 20-25 minutes.

Overhead #31

Fluency Building

How do you Monitor Fluency Progress?

Procedures:
• Graphing progress
• Interpreting fluency data
• Teacher monitoring

Feedback

• Use Overhead #31 to introduce fluency monitoring procedures.
**Reading Fluency: Principles for Instruction and Progress Monitoring**

**Graphing Fluency Progress**

- Use Overhead #32 to explain the graphing procedure.
- Point out that as students graph their scores (wcpm) they are given immediate feedback and concrete evidence of their progress.

**Note:** Fluctuations in scores (wcpm) may occur from time to time.

**Option:** Use the graph to demonstrate graphing procedure.

**Interpreting the Data**

- Use Overhead #33 to explain how teachers use the fluency data on the graphs to set goals and evaluate student progress.
- Point out that teachers work collaboratively with students when looking at fluency data and setting goals.

**Note:** Practice passages should be kept at the same level of difficulty until acceptable fluency is reached. Tracking progress (graphing) can be integrated within the curriculum (i.e., math).

**Overhead #32**

**Graphing Fluency Progress**

**Student Self-Monitoring**

- As part of a repeated readings program, the student records the wcpm of the first “cold” reading on a graph.
- On each subsequent reading, the student records the increase in fluency.

**Example:**

---

**Overhead #33**

**Interpreting the Fluency Data**

**Setting Goals**

- Together, teacher and student, set an individual goal for the school year using the current unpracticed wcpm + 20 to 30 words.
- Periodically (2-3 weeks), the student and teacher should determine if the student needs to:
  1. Continue at the same level towards the same goal
  2. Adjust the goal up or down
  3. Change the reading level
Teacher Monitoring

- Use Overhead #34 to explain the ways teachers should monitor progress of younger and lower-performing students who need fluency building.

Overhead #34

For younger and lower-performing students needing fluency building:

- Teacher should monitor progress frequently
- Every 6 to 9 weeks should read in end-of-year goal-level materials
- The results can be used to guide instruction and for reporting purposes

Overhead #35

Summing Up

- Fluency is important because:
  - It frees students to understand what they read

- Reading Fluency can be developed:
  - By engaging students in repeated reading activities

- Monitoring student progress in reading fluency:
  - Can be motivating to students
  - Is useful in setting instructional goals

Teacher Monitoring

- Use Overhead #35 to summarize the major points of today’s workshop.
3. Overheads
4. Handouts
5. Appendices
References


References (con’t)


**Resources**

(Representative products (not necessarily recommended)

**Peabody Classwide Peer Tutoring**
Contact: Dr. Douglas Fuchs or Dr. Lynn Fuchs
Box 328
George Peabody College
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN 37203

**Read Naturally** (Sets of tapes and printed materials)
2329 Kressin Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55120