



## Triple R Teaching

Fluency is defined as the ability to read text at an appropriate rate, accurately, and with proper expression. In the past, it was neglected because it was assumed that when students could accurately decode words, fluency was the immediate result.

We now know this is not true. In fact, we have readers who read accurately, but slowly, and that slowness is a problem because fluency is closely related to comprehension. Some people call fluency the bridge from decoding to comprehension.

According to the National Reading Panel's report, "Fluency helps enable reading comprehension by freeing cognitive resources for interpretation, but it's also implicated in the process of comprehension. Although accuracy and word recognition is indeed an important reading milestone, accuracy is not enough to ensure fluency. And without fluency, comprehension might be impeded."

The bottom line is that fluency is important for comprehension, the end goal of reading. We know this. So the point of the National Reading Panel's study was to find out, does fluency instruction make a difference in reading achievement?

To answer this question, the National Reading Panel studied articles that examined either the impact of repeated reading or some other form of guided oral reading instruction. It probably comes as no surprise that repeated reading and other related oral reading procedures have clear value for improving reading ability. These activities improve oral reading itself, but they also have a consistent and positive impact on word recognition and comprehension.

Interestingly, the National Reading Panel found that repeated reading and guided oral reading aren't just for struggling readers. They also have a positive influence on more typical students. Based on the panel's results, Timothy Shanahan tells us that successful oral reading instruction should include three things: oral as opposed to silent reading, repetition so students can improve the quality of their reading, and guidance or feedback from a listener, which could be the teacher or a peer as in paired or buddy reading.

If you're looking for a specific example of an activity that fits this criteria, in his followup article to the panel's report, Shanahan delineates "Pause, Prompt, Praise." So this is how that works: When the reader misreads a word, the listener should pause and wait until the next phrase ending or punctuation point to see if the reader self-corrects the mistake.

If the reader does not self-correct, the next thing you should do is prompt. Guide the reader to decode more carefully or to self-monitor for meaning. So you could say, "Look closely at this word and try again," Or "Did that make sense? What should it say?" If one of those prompts doesn't work, just tell the student the word. You should not give more than two prompts for self-correction.

And finally, praise the student for reading fluently, self-correcting, or reading correctly with your guidance.

Here are some final thoughts from Timothy Shanahan in his article, The National Reading Panel Report: Practical Advice For Teachers: "Oral reading fluency instruction provided learning benefits to students in a wide range of grade levels, particularly when they were practicing oral reading with materials written at an instructional or frustration level. Instruction in which students read portions of text allowed repeatedly with feedback from a peer, parent, or teacher helped students to become better readers. These improvements were evident with word reading skills, oral reading fluency, and oral and silent reading comprehension."

I hope this has given you a few things to think about when it comes to building fluency. Next week, we're going to talk all about what the panel had to say about teaching vocabulary.

You can find the show notes for today's episode at [themeasuredmom.com/episode5](http://themeasuredmom.com/episode5). Talk to you next week!