Teachers on the Cutting Edge

Volume 16   Studies and Research Committee   Fall 2004

Fluency: Development and Instruction.

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Foreword

Each year the Studies and Research Committee of the Florida Reading Association (FRA) publishes *Teachers on the Cutting Edge,* a sampling of research literature and instructional techniques representative of best practices in an area of literacy. Designed to aid teachers and administrators in their efforts to learn about research and best practices, *Teachers on the Cutting Edge* is one of the many benefits of membership in FRA. Responding to a renewed interest in reading fluency effected by the findings of the National Reading Panel and the work of a number of researchers, this year's edition, volume 16, addresses fluency development and instruction.

In this volume, you will find articles that address the current knowledge base concerning fluency including the following:

- Reasons for developing fluency
- Research on effective fluency instruction
- Fluency's relationship to comprehension
- Reading levels suited for developing fluency
- Suggestions of practical strategies for developing fluency
- Techniques for assessing fluency

This year, the Studies and Research Committee changed the format for the *Cutting Edge.* In addition to the source, summary, and implications, we have added a new "applications" section offering practical suggestions for the classroom. Framed quotations, in most cases, come from the summarized entries. Names, dates, and page numbers have been included for ease in posting or copying the quotations independent of the main entries.

Readers are urged to share this issue of the *Cutting Edge* with administrators, colleagues, and others who may be decision makers. In an effort to disseminate the research as widely as possible, the committee encourages readers to copy the volume, check the website for an electronic copy, or purchase additional books.

Table of Contents

FLUENCY

Source
Allington, R. L. (2001). Kids need to learn to read fluently. In *What really matters for struggling readers: Designing research-based programs*. New York: Longman.

Summary
Chapter four in Allington's groundbreaking study of struggling readers critically analyzes the need for developing fluency in struggling readers. The chapter is broken into two segments: understanding the importance of reading fluently and interventions to develop fluency in struggling readers. Allington describes the most successful intervention strategies that have demonstrated effectiveness in developing fluency, reviewing them in three clusters: tutorial approaches, small group approaches, and whole-class instructional redesign.

Implications
- Identify struggling readers.

- Involve expert tutors in offering tutorial approaches in the classroom or resource room.

- Include paired reading, peer tutors, timed reading, and older kids/baby books in tutorial strategies.

- Demonstrate small group interventions.

- Include choral reading, teacher modeling, and echo reading in small group interventions and provide students with fluent models.

- Include a whole-class approach to improve the fluency and comprehension of struggling readers.

- Plan whole class redesign to include shared book experiences incorporating family/home involvement, repeated readings for interpretation, and Readers Theatre.

Applications
- Employ a variety of reading strategies to help struggling readers.

- Help students increase their reading fluency by involving them in rereading text.

"Fluent reading is an important milestone in reading development...Working to develop fluent reading is important for fostering more thoughtful literacy performances."

Allington, 2001, pp. 85-86.

FLUENCY

Source
Rasinski, T. (2004). Creating fluent readers. *Educational Leadership, 61,* 46-51.

Summary
Fluency plays a significant role in the understanding of written material. The students who have difficulty decoding pay little attention to punctuation and phrasing; they lack expression in their oral reading and most often have a great deal of difficulty comprehending.There are three dimensions of reading fluency: 1) accuracy in word decoding, 2) automatic processing, and 3) prosodic reading. Fluency should be addressed at all grade levels. This article includes the Multidimensional Fluency Scale, with a four-point rubric, that can be very useful for the classroom teacher.

Implications
- Specific strategies have been developed to assess and teach the three dimensions of reading fluency. Teachers must be careful to focus on comprehension when helping students develop fluency. Many teachers are "emphasizing speed over meaning." The students have the opportunity to make excellent gains when instruction and coaching are consistent.

- Assessing reading fluency includes
  - Decoding—"...calculate the percentage of words a reader can accurately decode on grade-level material." (p. 47) The student should be able to read at 90-95 percent accuracy.

  - Automatic Processing—Use reading rate by having students read a grade-level passage for 60 seconds and calculate the number of correct words.

  - Prosodic—"...listen to a student read a grade-level passage and" (p. 47)...judge the quality based on a rubric provided on p. 49.

Applications
- Instructing for reading fluency includes
  - assisted readings.

  - repeated readings.

  - passages read aloud to perform, such as poetry, plays, and the like.

  - modeling expressive reading, pointing out inflections, pauses, chunking, and use of punctuation.

  - Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (Stahl & Heubach, in press).

  - Fluency Development Lesson (Rasinski, Padak, Linek, & Sturtevant, 1994).

  - Fast Start (Rasinski, 1995).

> "If we emphasize speed at the expense of prosodic and meaningful reading, we will end up with fast readers who understand little of what they have read."
>
> Rasinski, 2004, p. 49

FLUENCY

Source

National Reading Panel (2000). *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction. Reports of the subgroups.* Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.

Summary

The report presents the findings of a national panel charged with the task of determining the effectiveness of various approaches to teaching children to read in the primary grades. Panel members reviewed experimental studies in five essential areas: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension, using seven broad questions to guide their review. Results in each of the five areas are summarized as are research studies on teacher education and computer technology. In the area of fluency, the report recommends classroom practices that encourage repeated oral reading with feedback and guidance as a means to improve reading speed, accuracy, and expression.

Implications

- Include instruction in the five essential areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension in all reading programs.

- Provide explicit instruction in essential strategies in each of the five areas.

- Design and coordinate reading programs to meet specific student needs.

- Provide teachers with specific strategies and skills to help students in each of the five areas.

- Use technology to facilitate program implementation whenever possible.

- Use a variety of strategies to develop students' fluency while reading orally.

Applications

- Encourage repeated readings of texts at least through grade four for students not experiencing reading difficulties and through high school for students experiencing reading problems.

- Use strategies such as repeated reading, neurological impress, radio reading, shared reading, assisted reading with tapes, and paired reading for guided, repeated oral reading practice.

- Assess fluency regularly using informal and standardized assessments of oral reading accuracy, rate, and comprehension to determine if students are reading quickly, accurately, and with proper expression and understanding.

> "Teachers need to know that word recognition accuracy is not the end point of reading instruction. Fluency represents a level of expertise beyond word recognition accuracy, and reading comprehension may be aided by fluency. Skilled readers read words accurately, rapidly and efficiently. Children who do not develop reading fluency, no matter how bright they are, will continue to read slowly and with great effort."
>
> National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 3-3

FLUENCY

Source

Johns, J. L. & Berglund, R.L. (2002), *Fluency: Questions, answers, and evidence-based strategies.*
    Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing.

Summary

Fluency is a "how to" book focusing on the major aspects of fluency. Part I presents a series of question and answers on the basic principles of fluency that are supported by research:

1) Fluency is one of three core elements of skilled reading; the other two are word identification and constructing meaning;
2) Fluency is linked to comprehension;
3) Fluency develops from practice;
4) Fluency is dependent on difficulty and interest level of materials and the amount of practice; and
5) Fluency can be improved by teaching.

Part II gives evidence-based strategies, practical activities, and resources to promote fluency.

Implications

- Fluency training should receive one third of the instructional time.

- Strategies of oral reading practice, feedback, comprehension assessment and retellings can impact comprehension.

- A variety of fluency activities, including multiple readings, may help build fluency.

- Materials should be at appropriate levels and of interest to students.

- Systematic and explicit fluency training should be taught as a regular part of the reading program.

Applications

- Match students to appropriate materials at their instructional levels.

- Model oral reading.

- Provide guided oral reading regularly.

- Provide daily opportunities for reading at independent level.

> "What kinds of practice develop fluency? If fluency were just a word recognition phenomenon, then having students reviewing and rehearsing word lists might make sense. Although there is some benefit to isolated word recognition study of this type, the evidence is that such training is insufficient as it may fail to transfer when the practiced words are presented in a meaningful context. Competent reading requires skills that extend beyond the single-word level to contextual reading, and this skill can best be acquired by practicing reading in which the words are in a meaningful context."
>
> National Reading Panel, 2000, pp. 3-10, 3-11.

Source

O'Shea, L. J., Sindelar, P. T., & O'Shea, D. J. (1985). The effects of repeated readings and attentional cues on reading fluency and comprehension. *Journal of Reading Behavior, 17* (2), 129-142.

Summary

O'Shea, Sindelar, and O'Shea investigate the effects of repeated readings and cues to attend to either rate or to meaning on reading comprehension and reading fluency of 30 third graders who initially read at or above grade level. Students read passages one, three, or seven times, given cues either to read quickly and accurately or to read for meaning. Story propositions retold and rates of reading were analyzed after each reading. Students cued to read quickly and accurately had more words read correctly per minute but fewer story propositions retold than those students cued to read for meaning. All students increased reading rates with repeated readings.

Implications

- Use repeated reading exercises as they facilitate both rate and comprehension gains when students are reading in instructional level materials. Four readings of a passage seem to produce optimal fluency of over 120 words per minute.

- Monitor error rates. They should decrease as reading rates increase.

- Cue students to read for understanding as those cued for understanding improved more than those cued to read quickly and accurately.

- Use multiple assessment measures. Single assessment measures are not accurate for understanding students' fluency, for rate and accuracy increase with additional readings.

Applications

- Use multiple assessment measures over time to get accurate assessments of reading fluency.

- Encourage repeated readings of instructional level text to increase both fluency and comprehension.

- Direct students to read for understanding as they engage in repeated readings of a text.

> "Repeated reading provides students with the necessary practice to build fluency, acquire new information, and maintain established information."
>
> O'Shea, Sindelar, & O'Shea, 1985, p. 140

FLUENCY

Summary
Dowhower studied the effects of two repeated reading procedures, read-alongs with tapes or independent
reading practice, on 17 second-grade transitional readers' oral reading performance on practiced and
unpracticed passages. The study was completed over a period of seven weeks. Students' rate, accuracy,
comprehension, and prosodic reading improved with both training procedures and gains from repeated
readings of practiced passages transferred to unpracticed passages. Read-along procedures were more
helpful at rates under 45 wpm, while independent practice was more helpful for students reading at higher
rates of speed. Prosodic reading was more improved by read-alongs than by independent practice.

Implications
- Use repeated oral readings of passages for developing students' fluency and
  comprehension.

- Use multiple reading passages because practice on a single oral reading passage is not as
  effective as practice over a series of passages.

- Select short initial passages for repeated readings, until students gain both confidence and
  rate.

- Let children who read slowly read with a tape when practicing independently. They will
  probably be less frustrated.

Applications
- Use both read-alongs and independent reading to improve students' fluency and
  comprehension.

- Use taped read-alongs for students who are experiencing more fluency difficulties.

- Use a variety of short passages to build confidence, skills, and rate.

"The major conclusion of this study was that repeated reading worked."
$$\text{Dowhower, 1987, p. 402}$$

"When readers can minimize the cognitive resources needed to decode the words in
front of them, they can devote these resources to comprehension."
$$\text{Rasinski, } \textit{Instructor, } \text{2003, p. 16}$$

FLUENCY

Source
Samuels, S. J. (1997). The method of repeated readings. *The Reading Teacher, 50*, 376-381. (Original work published 1979).

Summary
Samuels builds a case for why fluency is an important skill for a reader. He then explains the procedure of repeated readings, a method consisting of rereading a short, meaningful passage several times until a satisfactory level of fluency is reached. He advocates the theory of automaticity, stating that fluent readers are those who decode text automatically, thus freeing their attention so they can focus on comprehension. When readers do not have automaticity, they necessarily focus on decoding, rather than text understanding.

Implications
- Use repeated readings to help students build speed and accuracy. As speed increases, errors decrease.

- Stress speed, rather than accuracy. When accuracy is stressed, students are fearful of making mistakes, and they slow down their reading.

- Use short texts for repeated readings, beginning with passages of approximately 50 words and increasing in length as students gain in skills.

- Use tapes as part of repeated reading practice, but diminish the use of tapes over time.

Applications
- Teach students all the strategies and procedures involved in doing and reporting their repeated readings so that they can engage in these practices with partners or independently and not need the teacher's on-going assistance.

- Teach parents and/or classroom volunteers the practices of repeated readings so that they can assist students during repeated readings, thus freeing up the teacher to work with other students' needs.

- Make sure that texts used for repeated reading practice are relatively short and at the appropriate levels of reading difficulty.

> "When children are allowed to reread familiar material, they are being allowed to learn to be readers, to read in ways which draw on all their language resources and knowledge of the world, to put this very complex recall and sequencing behavior into a fluent rendering of the text. The orchestration of these complex behaviors cannot be achieved on a hard book."
>
> Clay, 1991, *Becoming Literate: The construction of inner control*, p. 184

Source

Shany, M. T. & Biemiller, A. (1995). Assisted reading practice**:** Effects on performance for poor readers in grade 3 and 4. *Reading Research Quarterly, 30,* 382-395.

Summary

Shany and Biemiller investigate two types of assisted reading practice with at-risk third- and fourth-graders over a four-month period. Those in the teacher-assisted group practiced reading materials orally, receiving teacher assistance with word recognition, as needed. Those in the tape-assisted group practiced their reading while listening to tape recordings of the same stories. At study end, students in the tape-assisted condition had read twice the amount of text as those in the teacher-assisted condition. They also scored higher on listening comprehension measures. Overall gains were highest for those students who had a larger differential between their listening comprehension and their reading comprehension prior to assisted practice treatment.

Implications

- Try both teacher-assisted and tape-assisted repeated readings to increase rates of reading and reading comprehension.

- Consider using tape-assisted repeated readings as students reading along with tapes often read more words than those practicing with the teacher.

- Use tape-assisted practice for students who lack strong listening comprehension skills.

Applications

- Acquire tapes to accompany many of the texts and children's literature selections in your classroom. Purchase commercial tapes, check out tapes from the public library, or elicit parents, community volunteers, or older students to make tapes to accompany classroom materials. Students at neighboring high schools might produce tapes as a service learning project.

- Teach students how to use classroom tape recorders and listening stations so that they can practice tape-assisted reading independently or with partners.

- Spend time at the beginning of the school year identifying students who lack strong listening comprehension skills, as they will be good candidates for tape-assisted reading.

"The main results are encouraging, and suggest strongly that assisted practice has an important role to play with students making below-average progress in reading."
Shany & Biemiller, 1995, p. 393

Source

Rasinski, T.V. & Padak, N. (1994). Effects of fluency development on urban second-grade readers. *Journal of Educational Research*, 87 (3), 158-165.

Summary

Rasinski et al. tested the effects of a program to improve the general reading and fluency development of urban second-graders. Students received daily 10-15 minute Fluency Development Lessons over a variety of text types during a 6-month period. Lessons included teacher modeling of fluent reading, discussion of the text read by the teacher, discussion of the teacher's fluency, student choral reading of each text, student paired readings of each text (3 times), student performance of each text and student independent practice with each text. Statistically significant differences were found in oral reading rates. Teachers also reported student improvement in general reading performance and attitudes toward reading.

Implications

- Include systematic instruction to improve students' reading fluency.

- Incorporate multiple readings of a variety of different text types.

- Model fluent reading for students wherever possible.

Applications

- Read aloud to students on a regular basis, encouraging students to focus on your reading rate, phrasing, expression, and intonation. Discuss how your fluent reading helps students' understand and visualize the text, and how fluent reading increases their pleasure in listening to the text.

- Model fluency and practice fluency with a variety of text types, poems, songs, narratives, and information text.

- Engage in fluency lessons over an extended period of time for continued student growth.

> "Based on acknowledged reading theory, fluency instruction holds promise for improving reading for all students in the 'real world' of classrooms."
> Rasinski, Padak, Linek, & Sturtevant, 1994, p. 164

FLUENCY

Source
Fletcher, J. M. & Lyon, G. R. (1998). Reading: A research-based approach. In Evers, W. M. (Ed.). *What's gone wrong in America's classrooms?* Palo Alto, CA: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University.

Summary
Fletcher and Lyon review research studies sponsored by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development on processes related to reading: phonological awareness, word recognition, reading fluency and automaticity, reading comprehension, and social and biological factors in literacy. Studies explore three questions: what aspects of reading must be taught; why do children fail to learn to read; and what is the best way to teach poor readers. Findings suggest the importance of explicit classroom instruction and the value of early identification, prevention, and intervention. Reading programs should ensure that children receive adequate instruction in all reading components. Skills need to be taught in an integrated manner in appropriately leveled materials.

Implications
- Establish a system to identify children who are experiencing difficulties in learning to read.

- Provide early intervention to get reading help for students experiencing difficulty.

- Ensure that pre-service and in-service educators have strong knowledge of reading skills and programs.

- Provide parents and community leaders with information on early literacy processes.

- Teach reading processes explicitly and systematically.

- Use materials at the appropriate level of difficulty.

Applications
- Use a variety of informal and commercial observational and assessment instruments (IRI's, running records, *DIBELS, ERDA, DRA*, etc.) to identify students who may be experiencing reading difficulties.

- Intervene with explicit and systematic instruction for children who are identified.

- Provide ample opportunity for students to practice skills in appropriately leveled materials.

- Monitor student progress and adapt instruction to meet wide-ranging student needs.

> "Although there has been some speculation that fluency development is complete for most students by grade 3 or 4, the Panel's analysis found that these procedures continue to be useful far beyond that—at least for some readers. Repeated reading and other guided oral reading procedures have clearly been shown to improve fluency and overall reading achievement."
>
> National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 3-38

FLUENCY

Source

Oakley, G. (2003, March). Improving oral reading fluency (and comprehension) through the creation of talking books. *Reading Online, 6*(7). Available: Retrieved March 15, 2004, http://www.readingonline.org/articles/art_index.asp?HREF=oakley/index.html

Summary

After briefly reviewing representative research on fluency, the author reports a formative experiment in which three 9- and 10-year-old girls in Australia created their own "electronic talking books" as a way to improve their levels of oral reading fluency. The author explains the process of book development, reports on the software used for book construction and recording of text voices, and presents observations of the girls' involvement and progress as they collaboratively worked on the project over several weeks' time. Teacher observations focused on the effectiveness and efficiency of the procedures, as well as on their appeal to the students. The three subjects completed *The Neale Analysis of Reading Ability* and the *Multidimensional Fluency Scale* as pre and post assessments. Each girl improved in phrasing, read in more meaningful chunks, and paid more attention to semantic cues and punctuation. Two improved in their reading rates. Observations include identification of both facilitative and inhibitive factors that emerged during the composing and recording processes, as well as some unplanned outcomes, such as improvement in the students' comprehension.

Implications

- The creation of talking books may be preferable to more traditional techniques for developing reading fluency and is a highly engaging and motivating activity for students.

- Finished products are better when students collaborate in all stages of the project.

- Finished products are better when students are very clear about their audience and mindful of their audience's needs and skills.

- Access to computer and camera equipment for the project needs to be carefully considered, so that materials are readily available when needed.

Applications

- Try creating electronic storybooks with your students as a means of assisting their oral reading and their comprehension. Creating electronic storybooks may build both your students' performance and confidence.

- Consider using electronic storybooks in situations where you wish your students to gain competency in a range of outcomes such as phrasing, collaboration, visual literacy and general ICT skills.

"Adequate progress in learning to read English (or any alphabetic language) beyond the initial level depends on sufficient practice in reading to achieve fluency with different kinds of texts written for different purposes."

Snow, Burns, & Griffin,
Preventing reading difficulties in young children, 1998

FLUENCY

Source
Rasinski, T.V. (2000). Speed does matter in reading. *The Reading Teacher, 54,* 146-151.

Summary
A common manifestation of struggling readers is the slow, disfluent way in which they read. This is often called inefficient reading. Although students may be able to comprehend while reading at this slower rate, it affects the amount of reading they may be able to complete. For some students this slower rate impacts comprehension because of the laborious manner in which they must attend to word recognition. Such attention to words can influence memory of content. Educators must not ignore this area for instruction. There are a number of strategies that have shown to be very successful for improving fluency with struggling readers. These strategies can be woven into the curriculum and made available for all students.

Implications

- It is important for teachers to reflect on the fluency of all students.

- Fluency can affect comprehension and also cause students to become discouraged, leading to less reading, which creates a vicious cycle. "To ignore reading rate when assessing children's reading and designing appropriate instruction may do a major disservice to many readers who struggle with reading." (p. 150).

Applications

- Reading rate and efficiency can be helped through opportunities for repeated readings, preferably in authentic settings.

- Teachers must identify the appropriate text for the struggling reader—"within the reader's independent-instructional range." (p.148)

- Poetry is an excellent way to provide opportunities for repeated readings.

- Teachers should read stories aloud, modeling meaningful expression and pace, followed by an explanation to help "students develop a metacognitive understanding that the meaning of a passage is not carried only in the words, but also in the way the words are presented to the reader." (p. 150)

- Readers Theatre provides a motivating, nonthreatening environment that encourages students to read scripts numerous times while preparing for performances.

- Research has shown that paired reading experiences significantly improve struggling readers' reading rate and overall reading achievement.

- Echo reading, choral reading, and buddy reading are other excellent ways to improve the achievement of disfluent readers.

> "Even with adequate comprehension, slow and labored reading will turn any school or recreational reading assignment into a marathon of frustration for nearly any student."
>
> Rasinski, 2000, p. 150

Source
Sindelar, P. T., Monda, L. E., & O'Shea, L. J. (1990). Effects of repeated readings on instructional-
    and mastery-level readers. *Journal of Educational Research, 83* (4), 220-226.

Summary
Sindelar, Monda, and O'Shea investigated whether the effects of repeated reading are comparable for students identified as learning disabled or nondisabled. All students read two passages, one passage once and one passage three times. Some read at their instructional level (between 50 and 100 wpm with two or fewer errors) and some at their mastery level (faster than 100 wpm). Students were assessed for fluency, accuracy, and information after their final reading. Rate increased with each reading for both groups, with no significant differences for students initially identified as disabled or nondisabled. Mastery level students made fewer reading errors. All students retold more story propositions after third reading than after first.

Implications
- Have students read passages more than one time as rates and comprehension increase and errors diminish significantly with multiple readings.

- Use repeated readings with students at varying levels of reading ability, as all seem to benefit.

Applications
- Include repeated readings as part of on-going classroom practice for all learners.

- Teach all students procedures for repeated readings early on in the school year so that they can use the practice independently or in small groups, without teacher direction.

> "In this study, the method of repeated readings had the same effects on the reading fluency and recall of elementary-aged students reading instructional-level materials as those reported in previous research…Reading rate increased significantly from one to three readings, an occurrence that brought instructional-level readers to near mastery-level performance."
>
> Sindelar, Monda, & O'Shea, 1990, p. 224

> "One of the best ways to assess student fluency is to simply listen to them read. Teachers need to trust their ears; many have been listening to children read for years, and they know what good reading sounds like."
>
> T. Rasinski, *Instructor,* 2003

FLUENCY

Source

Chard, D. J, Vaughn, S., & Tyler, B. J. (2002). A synthesis of research on effective interventions for building reading fluency with elementary students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 35 (*5), 386-407.

Summary

The authors synthesize research on interventions for building reading fluency for students with learning disabilities. The study yielded 24 studies that reported findings on intervention features, including repeated reading with and without a model, sustained reading, number of repetitions, text difficulty, and specific improvement criteria. The authors' findings suggest that teachers can effectively build LD students' fluency through explicit modeling of fluent reading, providing multiple opportunities to repeatedly read familiar text independently and with corrective feedback, and establishing performance criteria for increasing text difficulty.

Implications

- Use repeated reading interventions for students with LD, and chart daily progress in reading rate, accuracy, and comprehension.

- Model reading of text by reading aloud to students. Repeated reading with a model seems to be more effective than repeated reading with no model.

- Consider using audio tape- and computer-enhanced reading which seem more effective than having no model but may not be as effective as teacher read alouds.

- Use more capable peers to model reading.

Applications

- Provide daily time for students to reread text many times and to many different people.

- Provide progressively more difficult text with feedback and correction for missed words.

- Research on the internet methods for measuring student's reading rate (e.g, oral reading of words per minute).

- Use quantitative measures (time with a stop watch) and qualitative measures (rubrics) for assessing fluency.

- Show students how to measure and assess their own reading rates.

- Help students set realistic criteria for improving fluency and reading rate.

> "The findings of the present review provide strong support for the implementation of fluency-building activities for students with learning disabilities."
>
> Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler, 2002, p. 405

FLUENCY

Summary

Kuhn and Stahl reviewed studies related to fluency and reading development. They surveyed definitions for fluency and the characteristics of fluent reading. Their selection of studies that have attempted to improve the fluency of struggling readers focused on repeated readings and assisted reading as the basis for instruction including tutorial approaches, small group approaches, and whole-class instruction. They found 58 studies dealing with assisted reading (15), repeated reading (33), or classroom intervention designed to improve fluency (10). Their examination of repeated readings found that in those cases that used material at or above the child's instructional level, greater gains were achieved. In many of the 58 studies, they found that while gains were reported, such gains were often insufficient to accelerate learning. The article includes 2 charts, one listing repeated reading studies and the critical elements of each study; the other listing assisted reading studies and their critical elements.

Implications

- Time spent reading may be as important as the method.

- Achievement may be greater when rereading is done at the instructional level or above.

- The various approaches to increasing fluency should be integrated into the classroom.

Applications

- Look for creative ways to increase the amount of time students spend reading.

- Consider using repeated readings at student's instructional level and higher.

- Provide scaffolding for students' repeated reading.

- Vary repeated readings with nonrepetitive reading methods such as echo reading, cloze reading, choral reading, paired reading.

- Emphasize those methods that accelerate comprehension.

- Choose read-along tapes so that students can follow the print rather than listening centers where everyone reads at the same pace.

- Be aware of the importance of fluency training in the primary grades and with struggling students at any grade level.

> " . . .we have come to view fluency instruction as successful in improving the reading achievement of children at a certain point in their reading development. However, we have seen relatively little of this instruction in the schools. To help more readers move from labored decoding to the construction of meaning, we consider it to be important that educators integrate these (fluency instruction) techniques in the classroom more frequently."
>
> Kuhn & Stahl, 2000, p. 11

Tea ... *ssociation*

Source
Worthy, J. & Prater, K. (2002). The intermediate grades—"I thought about it all night": Readers theatre for reading fluency and motivation. *The Reading Teacher, 56* (3), 294-298

Summary
Readers Theatre provides intermediate students with an authentic reason to engage in repeated reading of the material. By preparing text to be shared with classmates, the student practices by reading the text numerous times while trying to emphasize certain words to enhance the listener's experience. The repeated readings improve the student's ability to orally read material with improved prosody. Readers Theatre was beneficial for all students including the very resistant readers. Students had a reason to engage in repeated reading of the same text, which is a research-based technique to improve fluency.

The variety of materials appropriate for Readers Theatre includes poems, famous speeches, excerpts from chapter books and novels, fairy tales, and even expository texts. Although expository texts take some ingenuity, one teacher reported a great deal of success with Christopher Maynard's, *Micro monsters: Life under the microscope* (1999). Students created and played the roles of mites, lice, and other microscopic insects.

Implications
- Readers Theatre leads to increased engagement with literacy.

- Resistant readers enjoy Readers Theatre.

- Students practice until they can read with expression.

- Readers Theatre ends with a performance for an audience.

- Fluency is an essential aspect of reading.

- Fluency and comprehension are closely related.

Applications
- A variety of materials including poems, excerpts from chapter books, picture books, famous speeches, and even expository texts should be used.

- Readers Theatre provides authentic reasons to engage in multiple readings of a single text.

- Rehearsals are a natural step in preparing for an audience.

- Feedback from teachers, parents, and peers is appropriate.

> "Even resistant readers eagerly practice for a Readers Theatre performance, reading and rereading scripts numerous times."
>
> Worthy & Prater, 2002, p. 295

FLUENCY

Source
Allington, R. L. (1983). Fluency: The neglected reading goal. *The Reading Teacher, 36* (6), 556-561.

Summary
Early research in fluency noted that students that lacked fluency were classified as poor readers but were seldom given instruction in improving fluency. Because fluency is trainable, researchers began to look at the best ways to help students to gain fluency. Allington noted that most teachers felt students needed to work to improve their automaticity by receiving large doses of letter, sound, and word instruction. Students who were somewhat successful in their fluency were receiving instruction that was more meaning oriented and that focused their attention on making sense of the story. Fluent reading or prosodic reading was the goal for young readers. Repeated readings of texts produced better achievement than did programs designed to develop automatic word recognition.

Implications
- Repeated readings produce better achievement than does practice on automatic word recognition.

- Written English uses few graphic signals to prepare the reader for phrase boundaries that are common in oral speech dialogue.

- Students need to learn to group words into phrases, particularly on an initial reading.

- Six hypotheses of how children learn to phrase:
    - Children with varied backgrounds in reading understand that prosodic reading is the goal.
    - Successful beginning readers receive more encouragement to "read with expression."
    - Fast learners are given greater opportunities for reading, so they move more rapidly through the transition to fluency.
    - Successful readers are more often reading material that is relatively easy for them, thereby facilitating the transition to fluent reading.
    - Silent reading practice provides a base for acquiring the ability to parse sentences in phrases.
    - Children's different notions about the reading process result in different performances.

Applications
- Teacher modeling of fluent reading has a positive effect on students' fluency.

- Poor readers primarily hear other poor readers; they need fluent readers to emulate.

- Students' repeated readings are an effective approach to improving fluency.

- Developing oral reading fluency should never become the only goal in beginning or remedial reading instruction, but it is at least as important as many other reading goals.

> "The surprising finding was that "repeated readings," which focused on developing oral reading speed and fluency, produced better achievement than did the program that developed automatic word recognition."
>
> Allington, 1983, p. 557

Source

Topping, K. (1989). Peer tutoring and paired reading: Combining two powerful techniques. *The Reading Teacher, 42,* (7), 488-495.

Summary

Topping discusses how structured pair-work between children of differing ability has great potential for effective co-operative learning. Peer tutoring and paired reading are presented. Research shows that peer tutoring accelerates the reading skill of both tutor and tutee. A reader supported by a more capable peer can sustain higher readability levels than when reading independently. The key to having an effective cooperative reading program is teacher organization.

Implications

- Consider the benefits of adding opportunities for social learning over independent, competitive seatwork.

- Provide flexible grouping for reading instruction. Balance independent, isolated skill work with group work for discussion, collaboration, and critical thinking.

Applications

- Rank all the children in your class on reading ability. Draw a line through the middle of the list to separate tutors from tutees. Match the most able tutor with the most able tutee, and so forth down the two halves of the list in parallel.

- Schedule three 15- to 30-minute paired reading sessions per week.

- Model for students working in pairs how to provide praise, correction, and feedback for improving oral fluency.

- Monitor the working effectiveness of reading pairs by actively circulating around the classroom. Provide praise and corrective feedback.

"Instruction is most effective when it is aimed within the child's zone of proximal development . . . "

Vygotsky, *Thought and Language*, p. 84

"Because the ability to obtain meaning from print depends so strongly on the development of word recognition accuracy and reading fluency, both should be regularly assessed in the classroom, permitting timely and effective instructional response when difficulty or delay is apparent."

C. E. Snow, S. M. Burns, & P. Griffin,
Preventing reading difficulties in young children, 1998

FLUENCY

Summary
Worthy and Broaddus encourage teachers to teach strategies that improve fluency in upper elementary and middle schools. They argue that oral reading fluency is an essential aspect of mature reading but instruction in fluency has been missing in many classrooms. The authors draw a parallel between fluent reading and playing music; noting that rate, accuracy and automaticity are similar to phrasing, smoothness, and expressiveness. Several strategies appropriate for students in the upper elementary and middle schools are explained.

Implications
- Both experienced and less skilled readers have negative associations with oral reading in school.

- Students who aren't good at reading, don't read.

- Students who avoid reading have less exposure to ideas and vocabulary in books and may lose intellectual as well as academic ground.

- Unrehearsed oral reading of textbooks and novels is often the only time when students read aloud.

- Performance is traditionally limited to special occasions with struggling readers rarely given speaking parts thus reinforcing students' low self esteem.

Applications
- Repeated reading designed to provide students with practice rereading familiar text should include teacher guidance and feedback.

- Reading performance that becomes a regular part of the reading program allows all students to have an opportunity to practice and to successfully perform.

- Poetry, jokes, stories, Readers Theatre scripts, speeches, or other texts can be used to engage students in repeated readings.

- Effective performances are built upon positive social interactions focused on reading.

- Modeling by reading aloud is essential to fluency development.

- Buddy reading pairs upper level students with younger students to engage in read alouds.

- Sharing favorite books provides reluctant or struggling readers opportunities to share rehearsed passages instead of the traditional experiences in which read alouds are spontaneous or unrehearsed.

- Allowing free choice reading time provides students time to practice their silent reading skills.

- Students should read interesting and manageable texts every day, preferably at their independent or easy reading level.

Source

Richards, M. (2000). Be a good detective: Solve the case of oral reading fluency. *The Reading Teacher*, *53* (7), 534-539.

Summary

Richards determines that oral reading fluency is a critical component of reading performance and instruction. Teachers must understand the three clues to fluency: the importance of reading rate, automatic word recognition, and reading with expression (prosody) in order to improve students' reading ability. Oral reading fluency can be incorporated in the regular classroom and in individualized reading lessons. Richards suggests five methods for capturing students' reading fluency. They follow under implications.

Implications

- *Modeling*: teachers should model oral reading frequently in the classroom.

- *Repeated readings*: repeated reading increases rate and accuracy, which then transfer to new texts**.**

- *Paired oral readings*: students work in pairs, repeatedly reading a particular passage. Each in turn takes on the role of teacher, providing feedback to the partner.

- *Oral Recitation Lesson (ORL)*: comprehension is the main focus as children are introduced to a text.

- *Choral reading*: choral reading helps students to enjoy listening and responding to sound, stress, duration, and pitch.

Applications

- Facilitate students' oral reading fluency by providing appropriate reading level materials.

- Train students to read fluently by helping them to understand contextual and syntactic clues.

" Reading fluency refers to the reader's ability to develop control over surface-level text processing so that he or she can focus on understanding the deeper levels of meaning embedded in the text."

Rasinski, 2004, p. 49

Source

Martinez, M., Roser, N., & Strecker, S. (1999). "I never thought I could be a star": A Readers Theatre ticket to fluency. *The Reading Teacher*, 52(4), 326-334.

Summary

Martinez, Roser, & Strecker's powerful article describes how Readers Theatre can be used to help young students develop meaningful and oral fluent reading skills. Readers Theatre also encourages students' appreciation of literature and eagerness to read. The authors determine that Readers Theatre helps children "go 'inside' the story, experiencing the thoughts and feelings of the characters" (p. 332). Suggestions for successfully integrating Readers Theatre in students' instruction follow under implications.

Implications

- Students need manageable texts to practice fluency.

- Stories with straightforward plots that present characters grappling with dilemmas requiring thought and talk can be easily turned into scripts.

- Readers Theatre can build on children's enthusiasm for series books.

- Students need to hear effective models in order to know what fluent reading sounds like.

- Students who have opportunities for repeatedly reading the same texts become fluent.

- Students who receive instruction and feedback are more likely to develop reading fluency.

Applications

- Use books that students are familiar with to implement Readers Theatre.

- Model fluent reading for students so they understand what is expected of them.

> "Readers Theatre is an interpretative reading activity in which readers use their voices to bring characters to life."
>
> Martinez, Roser, & Strecker, 1999, p. 326

FLUENCY

Source

Rasinski, T.V. (1998). Fluency for everyone: Incorporating fluency instruction in the classroom. In R. Allington (Ed.), *Teaching struggling readers: Articles from The Reading Teacher* (pp. 257-260). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Summary

Although an important aspect of proficient reading, fluency is often neglected by published reading programs and teachers. Several methods have been shown to be effective with struggling readers. Most of these methods can be imbedded into the instructional program for all learners, using principles identified in this article.

Implications

- Fluency instruction using motivating and meaningful strategies improves students' reading.

- Teachers can feel empowered by incorporating suggested strategies into classroom instruction, based on student needs.

Applications

A set of principles for fluency instruction has been identified and include:

- Repetition of text can be provided using repeated readings and preparation for play performances.

- Modeling of fluent reading should be done by the teacher, reading aloud from good children's literature.

- Direct instruction and immediate feedback help students understand the factors involved in fluency, including expression and voice, speed, and pauses.

- Support can be provided during reading through choral reading, the neurological impress method, and tape-recorded passages.

- Text units should be identified for students, helping them to read in chunks or phrases.

- Easy materials provide support and encourage students to read more.

> "The fluent reader is one who can perform multiple tasks—such as word recognition and comprehension—at the same time. The nonfluent reader, on the other hand, can perform only one task at any time. The "multitask functioning" of the fluent reader is made possible by the reduced cognitive demands needed for word recognition and other reading processes, thus freeing cognitive resources for other functions, such as drawing inferences."
>
> National Reading Panel, 2000, pp. 3-8, 3-9

FLUENCY

Source

Tankersley, K. (2003). *The threads of reading: Strategies for literacy development.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Summary

Fluent readers read with expression, recognize words quickly, make connections with their backgrounds, have good reading vocabularies, and comprehend what they read. Fluency changes continuously based on background knowledge and interest of the reader, as well as difficulty of the text. Teachers can help students develop fluency through a number of strategies. Tankersley states "...it is essential that the thread of fluency be deliberately focused and strengthened as readers grow and develop."

Implications

Fluency is not automatic for all students. It is important that teachers weave instructional strategies that focus on fluency into the daily activities in the classroom. Many of these strategies are effective with all learners and additionally provide a higher level of motivation to read. The teacher must insure that the materials are on either an independent or instructional level for fluency training. Otherwise the students will become discouraged and not do the necessary practice.

Applications

The author identifies the following strategies for the development of fluency:

- Model fluent reading, pointing out expressive language or correct phrasing.

- Provide coaching as the students participate in oral language activities.

- Work with students on reading rate using independent reading materials.

- Use the Shared Book approach, which uses modeling and multiple reading of text.

- Practice reading conversational parts in text.

- Have students perform 'radio plays' or Readers Theatre.

- Encourage students to use different voices for characters in text.

- Change punctuation and have students read the indicated changes in expression.

- Have students choral read.

- Provide time for students to dictate stories for transcription/publication in the classroom.

- Ask students to "echo" read a story with you once. Then have student rotate parts.

- Have students read in pairs or buddy read.

- Use a book or play to act out characters in a story for audio taping or live performance.

- Select high interest stories from the basal and have students read and reread with partners.

- Use rhythmic poems, short passages, songs, raps, rhymes to motivate and encourage practice.

- Help students visualize the events; model "your own thinking and visualization process."

- Have students tape record their reading, allowing them to listen to the tapes and identify needs on their own and chart growth as the reading improves.

FLUENCY

Source

Strickland, D. S., Ganske, K., & Monroe, J. K. (2002). *Supporting struggling readers and writers: Strategies for classroom intervention 3-6.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Summary

Fluency appears to be an overlooked aspect of reading instruction. Struggling readers need to see and hear fluent reading modeled. They should receive direct instruction in using techniques such as attending to phrasing and chunking words. Assessing fluency should be an integral part of any reading program. Running records and miscue analysis can provide direction for best practices in working with the struggling reader. "For many struggling readers acquiring fluency is a major step toward becoming a skilled reader."

Implications

- Teachers must provide instructional strategies that foster fluency, especially for struggling readers, who often do not have opportunities to hear fluent reading. These strategies are readily available and provide excellent instruction for all readers.

- Struggling readers "...need many opportunities to orally and silently read text that is not too difficult so they can learn to read expressively, increase their sight vocabularies, and discover reading as a pleasurable, meaning-making activity."

Applications

Instructional strategies that foster fluency include

- Modeling
- Read-alouds
- Choral reading
- Using appropriate text
- Multiple readings of text
- Readers Theatre
- Visiting readers (Buddy reading)
- Dictated experience stories
- Paired repeated reading
- Timed repeated readings
- Teaching phrasing, expression, and attention to punctuation
- Engaging in silent reading

> "Teachers need to give students time to read silently, but they also need to provide varied reading materials."
>
> p. 136
>
> "Teachers who routinely give struggling readers books to read that are too hard because they are concerned that the students will feel "different" or because they fear easier materials will not interest them do these students a disservice."
>
> Strickland, Ganske, & Monroe, 2002, p.125

FLUENCY

Source
Rasinski, T.V. & Hoffman, J. V. (2003).Oral reading in the school literacy curriculum. *Reading Research Quarterly, 38,* 510-523.

Summary
The authors explore the role of oral reading for instructing elementary levels students, and particularly those who struggle. They discuss the positive role of oral reading in instruction. They describe and advocate several types of oral reading fluency instruction that have been found to improve students' reading achievement. Techniques discussed include: repeated reading, guided reading with direct instruction of strategies, buddy reading, talking books, and reader's theatre. The authors conclude that researchers and practitioners need to systematically and scientifically study the nature of oral reading and develop models of effective reading curricula and instruction.

Implications
- Teachers should seriously reconsider the potential role for oral reading.

- Teachers should routinely provide instruction in the areas of: (a) oral reading fluency, (b) teacher responses to students' miscues, (c) self-monitoring and miscue analysis, and (d) guided reading and strategy development.

Applications
- The shared book experience (SBE), or shared reading, has become one of the most widely used applications of fluency instruction. In SBE the teacher introduces a book, reads the book to a class or group of students, and discusses it. Later, the students read and reread the text with the teacher, in small groups, with partners, and eventually on their own.

- In the Fluency Development Lesson (FDL) poems are often used because they are brief and meant to be read orally. In the FDL the teacher begins reading the poem to the students and briefly discusses its meaning. Next, the children chorally read the text with the teacher several times. Then, students, in pairs, practice the text three times each with their partner. Students also perform the text for the class or another audience. Finally, the students are assigned to read the text at home.

- The positive impact of such teaching applications as the SBE and FDL for reading achievement may be maximized when the teacher also provides direct, guided instruction in self monitoring strategies. Teachers can explicitly show readers how to (a) read with proper phrasing and meaningful expression, (b) monitor miscues and apply fix-it strategies and (c) repair blockages to meaning construction.

> " . . . it is not the sheer quantity of oral reading that takes place in the classroom but the type of oral reading that makes the difference in student achievement."
>
> Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003, p. 513

Source

Taylor, R. T. & McAtee, R. (2003). Turning a New Page to life and literacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy , 46* (6), 476-480. Retrieved February 21, 2004, from EBSCO*host* database.

Summary

Older, reluctant readers often lack the motivation necessary to engage in any intervention designed for them. Taylor and McAtee address both motivation and the necessary skill development in their work with 65 inmates at the Westmorland Institution in Canada. Inmates develop their reading skills by preparing tapes of children's books for the primary classes at local elementary schools. Because the material must be read perfectly and with expression, the heretofore reluctant readers read and reread the material. With this strong motivation, they were more willing to work through the less compelling mechanics of reading. "In one calendar year the mean growth in reading as measured by the SRI (Scholastic Reading Inventory) was 2.6 years, and some inmates experienced as much improvement as 3 to 4 years." Furthermore, more than 1,600 elementary students benefited from these recordings.

Implications

- Rereading develops fluency for older reluctant readers.

- Motivation is an important factor in convincing older reluctant readers to reread material to develop fluency.

- Older students must often read very low level material in order to read at their independent level.

- Students who feel success are encouraged to work on sound-symbol relationships, word patterns, and other elements of successful reading.

Applications

- Look for creative ways to encourage students to read and reread material at their independent level.

- Include repeated readings as part of on-going classroom practice for all learners.

- Allow time for students to read interesting and manageable texts every day, ideally at their independent or easy reading level.

- Match students with manageable and appropriate text.

> "Formerly unsuccessful students must be assured that they are in a respectful environment to develop literacy skills. Their self-concept as learners is intertwined with their perceived ability to comprehend printed words. The goal is to build fluency and confidence as independent readers so they will continue to read (practice) and get better as they leave the institution and become lifelong learners."
>
> Taylor & McAtee, 2003, p. 477

FLUENCY

Source

Strecker, S. K., Roser, N. L., & Martinez, M.G. (1998). Toward understanding oral reading fluency. In T. Shanahan & F. Rodriguez-Brown (Eds.), Forty-seventy yearbook of the National Reading Conference (pp. 215-223). Chicago: National Reading Conference.

Summary

The authors discussed varied definitions and views of oral reading fluency held by reading researchers. Many assume a single factor is responsible for fluent reading. However, current evidence suggests that fluency depends on a confluence of variables. Studies point to three key instructional opportunities that foster fluency development: reading manageable text, repeated reading of the same text, and observing effective models of fluent reading. Wide reading of many texts may also foster fluency development. Further research is needed into the components of fluency.

Implications

- If reading proceeds too slowly, connections between ideas in text are difficult to make.

- Processes beyond word recognition contribute to fluency.

- Development of better assessment tools will lead to greater understanding of the construct of fluency.

- Further research and development of fluency measures are needed to identify variables that impact fluency independently.

- Fluency and comprehension are interrelated.

Applications

- Match students with manageable and appropriate text.

- Use explicit instruction.

- Use echo reading, read along tapes, read-a-louds to model fluent reading prior to asking students to read.

- Increase the amount of reading through extended reading periods and varied types of reading materials.

- Utilize activities such as shared reading, Readers Theatre, paired reading, to achieve repeated readings of the same text.

- Teach phrasing by syntactically meaningful units and appropriate use of prosodic features such as intonation, stress and pauses.

> "In order to break out of the word-by-word reading and begin to group words, beginners must be aware that it is possible to read in some other way than word-by-word."
>
> M. W. Aulls, *Developing Readers in Today's Elementary School*, 1982

Source
Homan, S. P., Klesius, J. P., & Hite, C. (1993). Effects of repeated readings and nonrepetitive strategies on students' fluency and comprehension. *Journal of Educational Research, 87* (2), 94-99.

Summary
Homan et al. compared the effectiveness of repeated reading to echo reading, unison reading, and cloze reading assisted strategies that required no rereading as a means of improving fluency and comprehension among sixth-grade Chapter 1 students who read at 4th or 5th grade level. Students engaged in the reading activities during 20-minute sessions, 3 times a week for a 7-week period. Results of the study indicated that both methods improved comprehension. The researchers concluded that "additional time spent on connected reading apparently improves comprehension," (99).

Implications
- Instructional methods that encourage more student reading should be a primary instructional goal.

- Instructional alternatives to repeated reading may be beneficial for beginning readers.

- Older students may resist repeated readings of selections.

- Relevant purposes for repeated readings should be explored.

- Rereading of expository material is beneficial for recall.

Applications
- Look for creative ways to encourage students to read and reread material at their independent level.

- Include repeated readings as part of on-going classroom practice but not to the exclusion of other means of reading connected text.

- Allow time for students to read interesting and manageable texts every day, at their independent or easy reading level.

- Vary repeated readings with nonrepetitive reading methods such as echo reading, cloze reading, and choral reading.

- Provide time for additional reading of connected text.

> "When used wisely, repeated readings have a legitimate place in the reading program at all grade levels. The strategy complements assisted nonrepetitive reading strategies such as echo reading, cloze reading, and unison reading, which have the advantage of exposing students to a wider range of vocabulary, content topics, and literature genre."
>
> Homan, Klesius, & Hite, 1993, p. 98

FLUENCY

Source

Eckert, T. L., Ardoin, S. P., Daly III, E. J., & Martens, B.K. (2002). Improving oral reading fluency: A brief experimental analysis of combining an antecedent intervention with consequences. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 35*(3), 271-278.

Summary

The researchers investigated the effects of two consequences (contingent reinforcement or performance feedback) and antecedent interventions (of listening passage previews and/or repeated readings) on the oral reading fluency of six primary students. After listening to the oral reading passage, the student practiced reading the passage twice with fluency rates recorded. The child then selected a reinforcer (pencil, eraser, etc.) and was told he could have the item if he increased the correct words per minute on this reading. The antecedent intervention increased the number of correctly read words per minute for all students. For four of the students, pairing the antecedent intervention with either of the consequences resulted in higher reading rates over the antecedent intervention alone.

Implications

- Combining an antecedent intervention with consequences may enhance the oral reading fluency of students experiencing reading problems.

- Inclusion of consequences in a brief experimental analysis of reading can assist in identifying intervention components that will result in improvement in fluency.

Applications

- Provide listening previews to the text prior to individual reading, followed by repeated readings.

- Allow the student to select a reinforcement item from a variety of choices (10) prior to the reading. Let them know they may have the item if an improvement goal is reached.

- Provide performance feedback and reinforcement for achievement of increased correct words per minute.

"Speedy reading is an indication that students have freed their cognitive resources away from decoding. But they also have to use that cognitive capacity to make sense of the text. Thus, comprehension is an integral part of fluency, and is exhibited through appropriately phrased, expressive, and meaningful reading."

Rasinski, 2003, p. 16