



Provincial Outreach  
Program for the Early Years

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Chilliwack  
School District

# Learning Series Day One: Fluency

April 17, 2025

Presenter:

Jacque Anderson



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# POPEY's Approach

POPEY shares research and knowledge around how we learn to read, the reading brain, and the foundational skills that support learning to read and write.

In workshops, POPEY offers a collection of evidence-based strategies for teachers to consider.

Teaching reading is not a one-size fits all model - no two districts are the same, just as no two students are the same.

POPEY meets teachers where they are at.

We invite teachers to consider implementing evidence-based instructional techniques to ensure literacy success for their diverse learners.



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# Not either / or

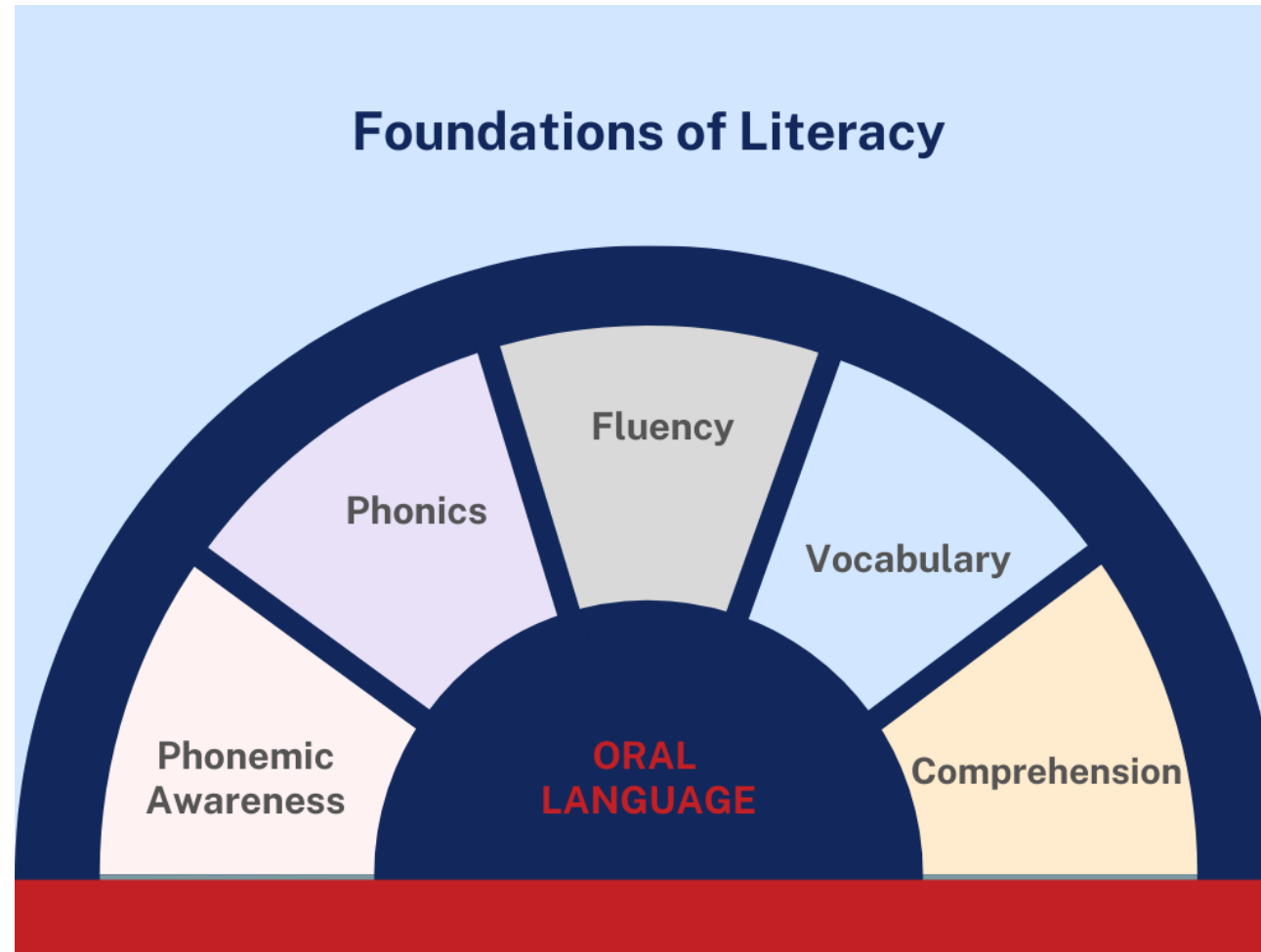


Decodable texts	vs.	Authentic literature
Research	vs.	Classroom practice
The art of teaching	vs.	The science of teaching
Individual student needs	vs.	Whole class efficiency
Direct instruction	vs.	Discovery Learning
Practice-In-isolation	vs.	Practice-In-context
Mastery of skills	vs.	Joy of Reading
Structure	vs.	Choice
Urgency	vs.	Joy

@TheSixShifts



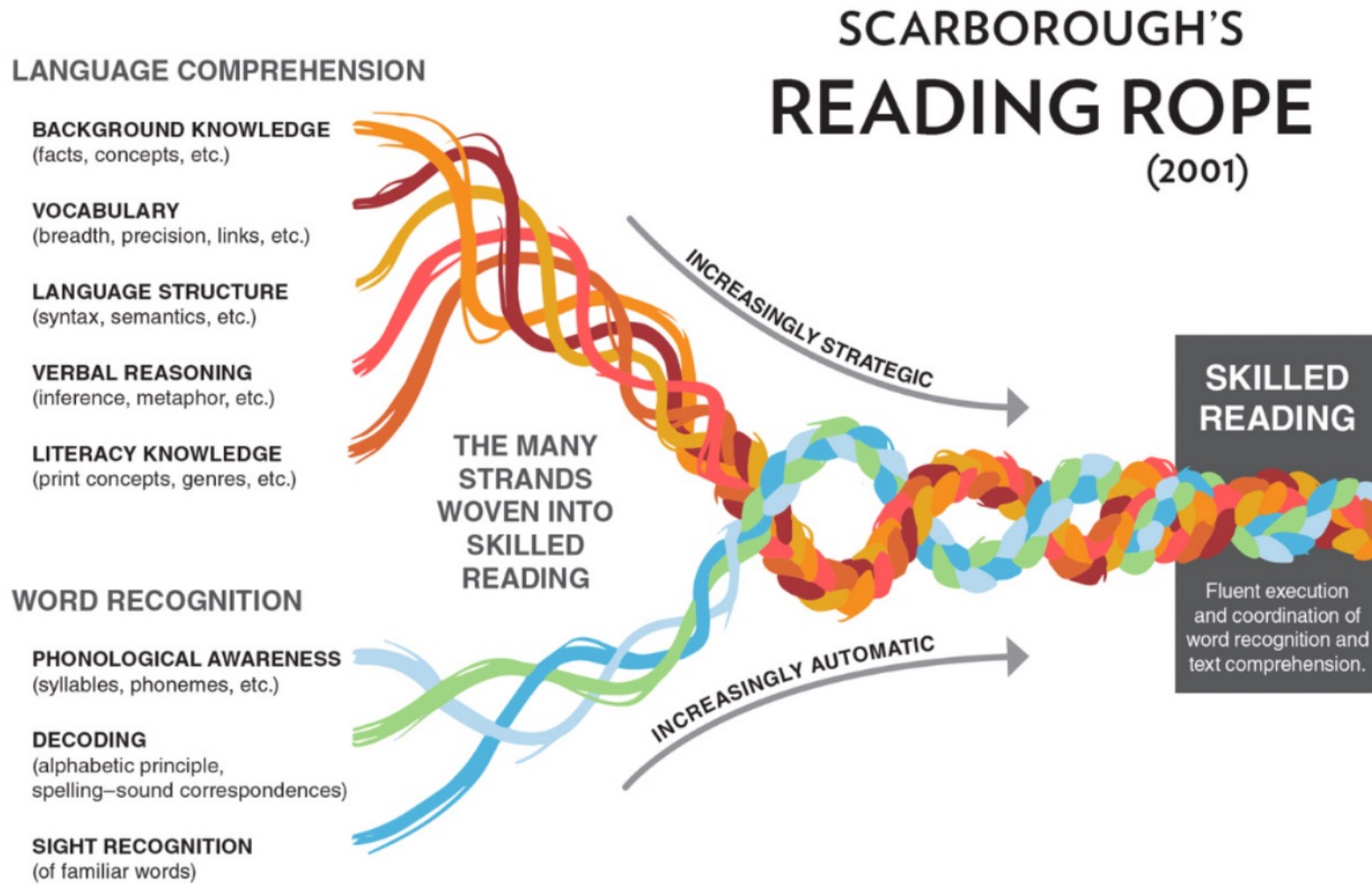
# Foundational Skills for Reading



Proficiency in these foundational skills is necessary to all students to be reflective, critical and independent readers



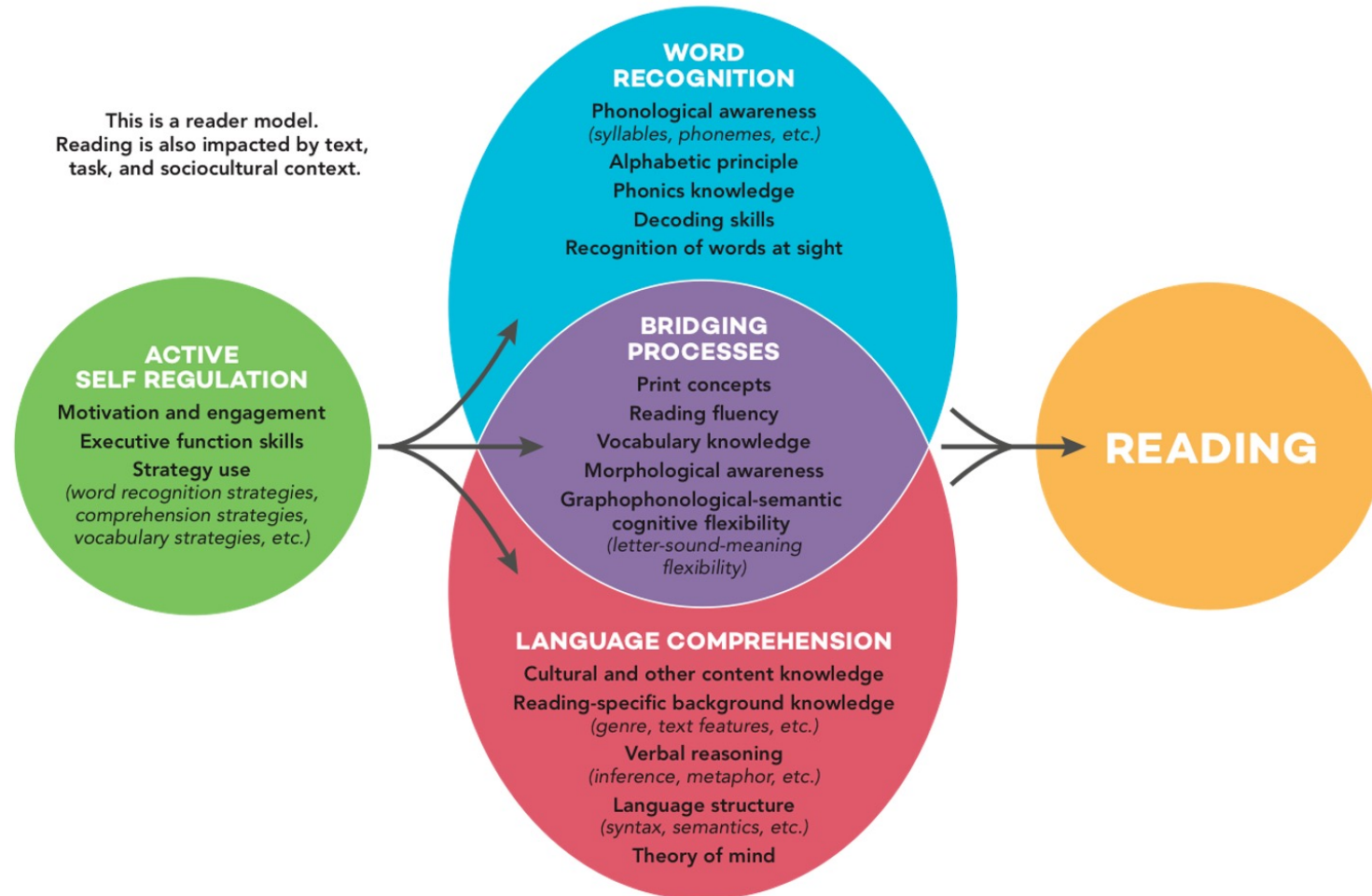
# Scarborough's Reading Rope





# Active View of Reading

## ACTIVE VIEW OF READING



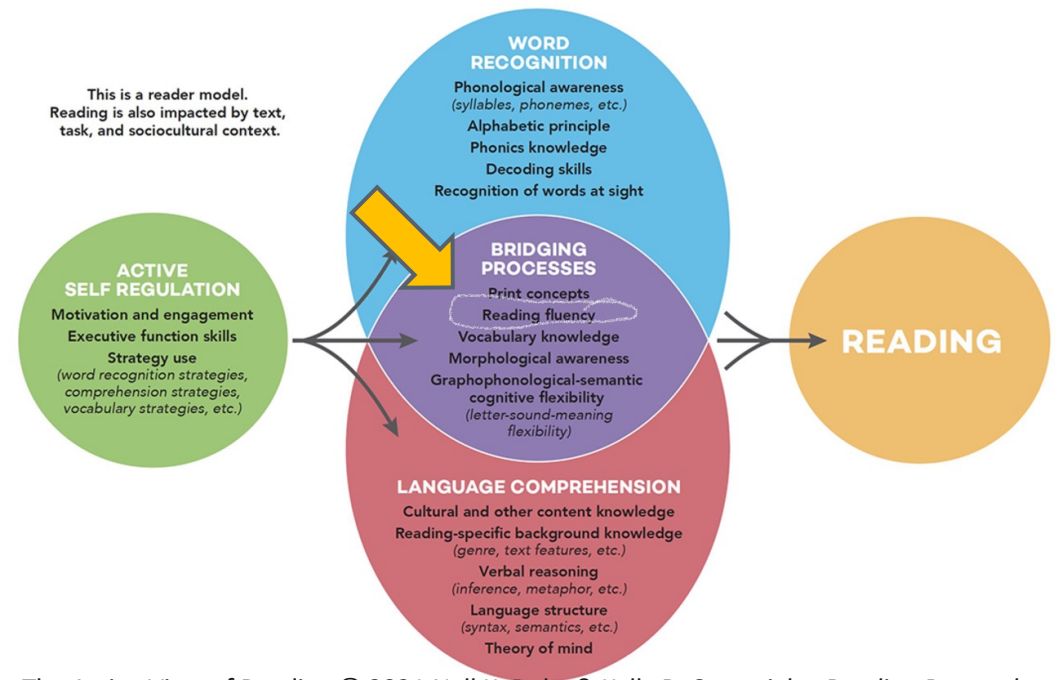


- Fluency is key for Comprehension
  - It is a bridging component in Active View of Reading Model

“First, foremost and forever, accuracy is the foundation of fluency.”  
*Jan Hasbrouck*

Fluency is not an isolated skill...it develops as other, underlying skills are consolidated.  
not a first/then,  
but a this/and

### ACTIVE VIEW OF READING



The Active View of Reading © 2021 Nell K. Duke & Kelly B. Cartwright. *Reading Research Quarterly* published by Wiley Periodicals LLC on behalf of International Literacy Association.

Not too fast, not too slow  
Make few mistakes as you go.

Read as if talking to friend—  
It is what you know in the end!

Christianne Lane, 2010  
Director of PD,  
Lee Pesky Learning Centre  
Boise, Idaho





# Fluency Definition

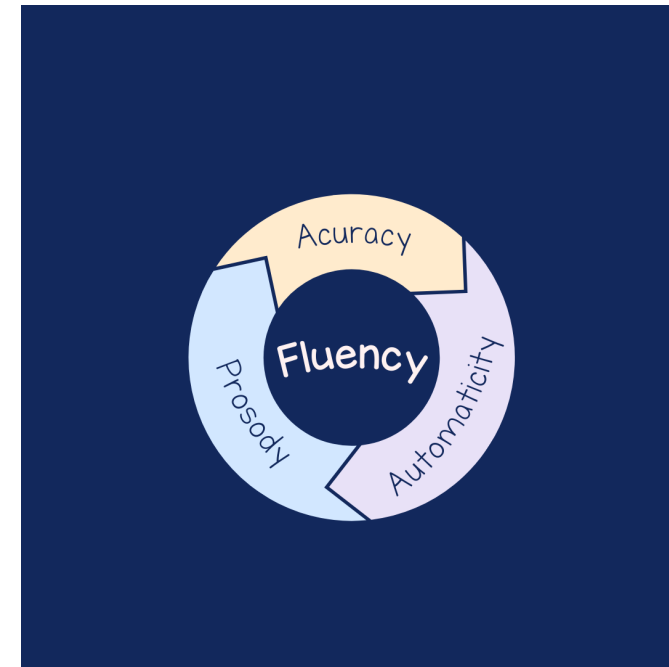
Fluency refers to the development of three components: accuracy, automaticity and prosody and provides the bridge between word recognition and comprehension (Duke & Cartwright, 2021)

**Accuracy** refers to identifying or reading letter names/sounds and words correctly.

**Automaticity** can be considered in two levels:

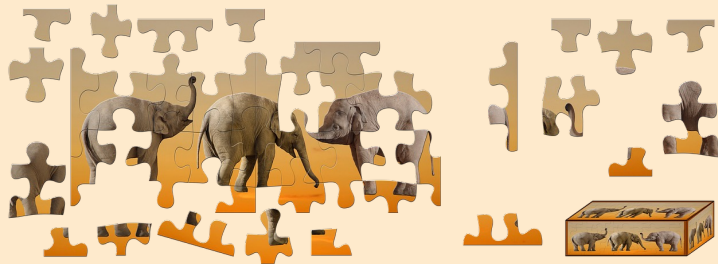
- word level (ability to read words quickly and effortlessly)
- text level (ability to read connected text including sentences, passages and books quickly and effortlessly)

**Prosody** refers to a reader's natural voice and expression





Automaticity reduces cognitive load  
so there is more room for  
connections to background  
knowledge, vocabulary, etc.  
= COMPREHENSION



## Components of Fluency:

- Accuracy
  - <95% = comprehension deteriorates
  - *Decoding is paramount*
- Rate
  - Words correct per minute (wcpm)
  - *Appropriate speed; not a race!*
- Prosody
  - Expression, pacing, emphasis



# Fluency and Comprehension Connection

- The hard slog
  - There is no easy way through it
- “Practice builds permanence”
- Learning takes patience and time
  - Beware of fake fluency—the product of inefficient strategies



Students progress at a much faster rate in phonics when the bulk of instructional time is spent on applying the skills to authentic reading and writing experiences, rather than skill-and-drill work. – *Wiley Blevins*



# Building Fluency

**Accuracy:** we can build accuracy through decoding as part of explicit and systematic phonics instruction.

**Automaticity:** reading words with automaticity is a result of orthographic mapping (Ehri, 2014).

We can build **word level automaticity** through blending drills and Beat the Clock and other word reading activities including word mapping.

**Text level automaticity** is achieved through reading practice of connected text. Such practice can include repeated reading, choral reading and echo reading.

**Prosody** is built through teacher modeling of fluent reading during read alouds and can also develop through repeated reading and activities like readers theatre





# The role of orthographic mapping in learning to read

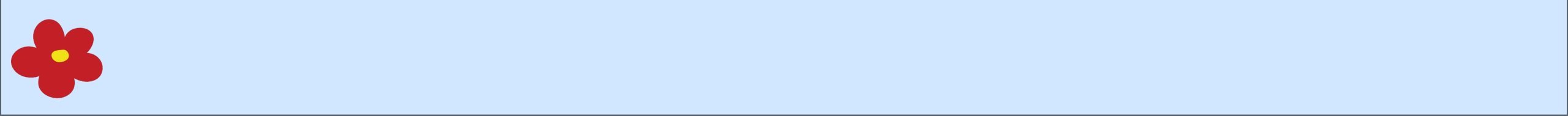
**Automaticity**: reading words with automaticity is a result of orthographic mapping (Ehri, 2014).

Orthographic mapping is the **cognitive process** that supports a reader to recognize words instantly as sight words where they no longer need to decode or segment each sound to read a word.



All high-frequency words are sight words, but not all sight words are high-frequency words.



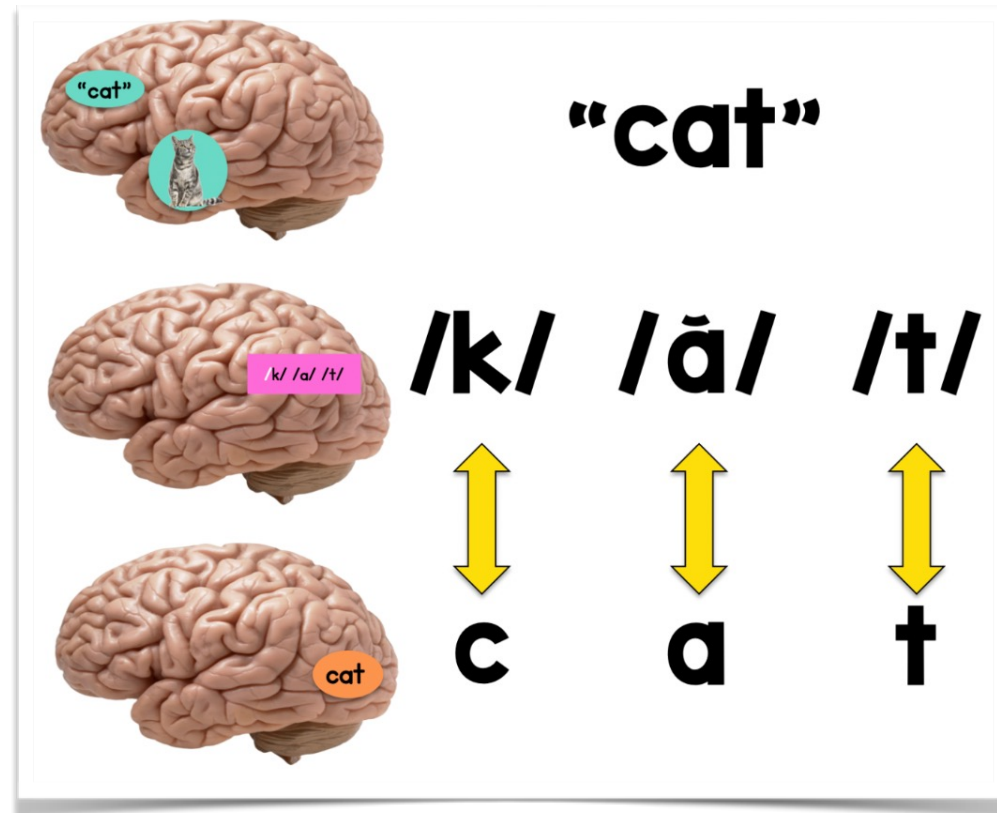




# The role of orthographic mapping in learning to read

Each word has three forms:

- Meaning
- Phonology (sound)
- Orthography (spelling)



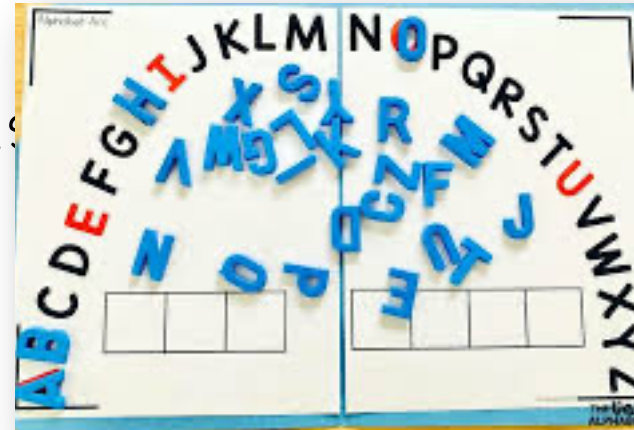


# K-I Fluency Strategies

## Kindergarten and early grade one

- Fluency with letters (names and sounds)
  - Alphabet arcs
  - Missing letter cards
  - Fluency grids
  - Games: Slap and Bang!

*“Pocket kids”* : assess, check-in, practice  
*embedded in the day*





# Where to start?

- Automaticity with word reading
  - Mid-grade one
  - Start with assessment
    - Oral Reading Fluency ORF: Words Correct per Minute (WCPM)
    - If accuracy poor, more time on decoding; if accuracy is good, but WCPM is slow, more time on fluency.
    - WCPM reliably predicts comprehension

*Timed reading*

*Timed retelling*

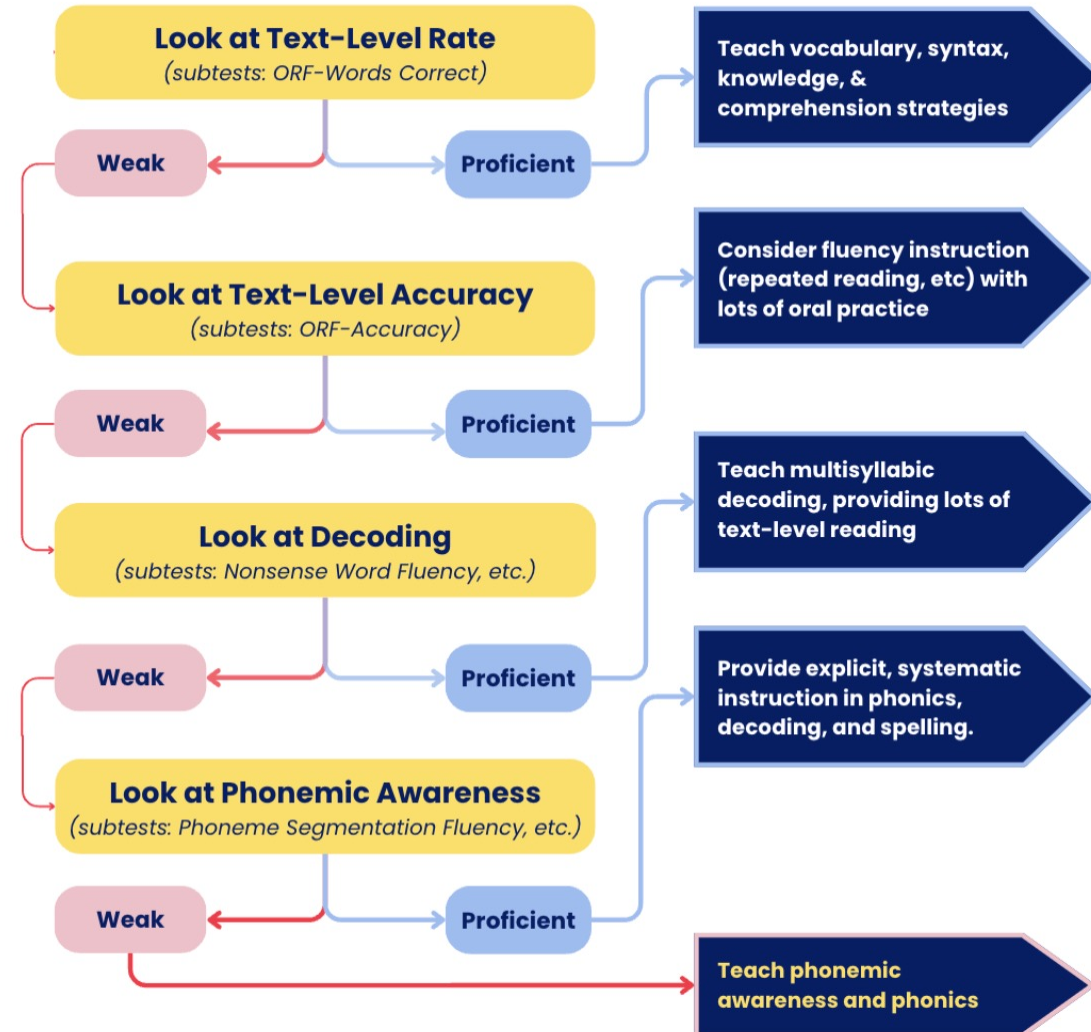
*Three  
passages per  
student*

*Repeated over  
the year*

It's like a thermometer: can tell you there is a problem, but not exactly what the problem is



## Decision pathways: *Response to data*





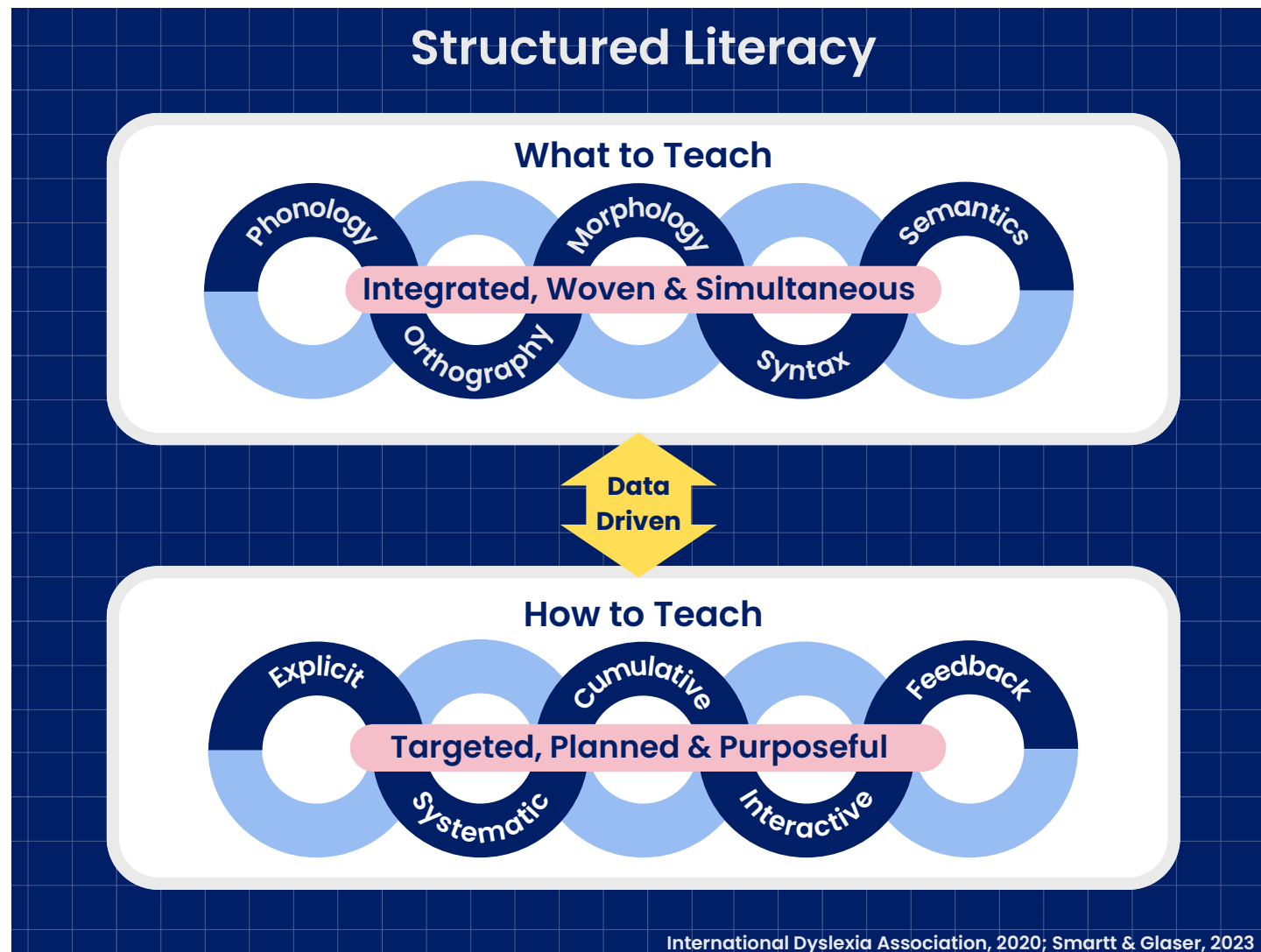
## WHAT is taught:

- Both foundational skills
- AND
- Higher-level literacy skills

## HOW it is taught

- Systematic and Cumulative
  - Organized, from simple to complex, follows a scope and sequence
- Explicit
  - Direct instruction
  - “Today we are learning to...”
- Continuous student-teacher interaction
- Not assuming all students can infer concepts
- Careful and considered practice
- Prompt and specific feedback (corrective if needed)

I Do. We Do. You Do.



## READ–SPELL–WRITE–EXTEND ROUTINE (Blevins, 2017)

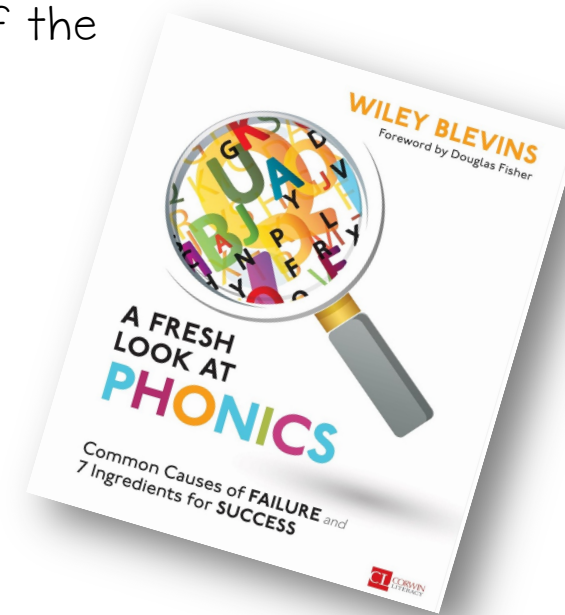
When teaching high frequency words, remember to engage all three parts of the reading brain:

- Phonological (sounds)
- Orthographic (letters)
- Semantic (meaning)

A deep dark imprint

instead of

A shadowy grey imprint



## READ–SPELL–WRITE–EXTEND ROUTINE (Blevins, 2017)

READ: Teacher

1. Writes the word in a sentence and underlines the high–frequency word
2. Read the sentence
3. “This word is ‘See’.”
4. Students read the word

Teacher repeats the sentence and points to the word. “This is the word ‘see’. What is the word?”

SPELL: Teacher

Spells the word out loud, students repeat the word

points out any letters or sounds the students already know or words that may be similar that they are familiar with

“Spell this word with me: S–e–e. What is the first sound? What letter is that? See starts with s.”



## READ–SPELL–WRITE–EXTEND ROUTINE (Blevins, 2017)

EXTEND: Teacher

1. Ask students to write and say the word several times as they spell *see* out loud on their paper or whiteboard

“Watch as I write and say the word. I will say each letter as I write. (Demonstrate) Now it is your turn. Write the word and say it three times. Say each letter as you write *see*.”

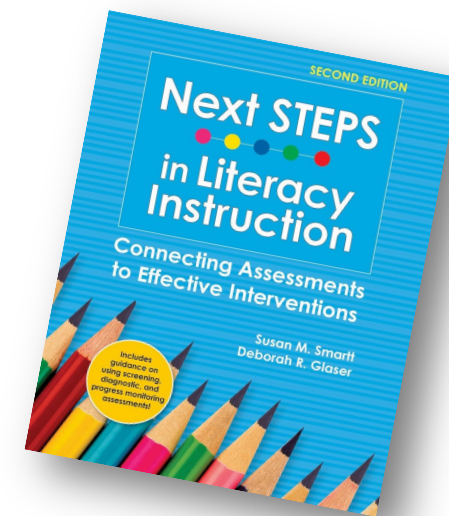
EXTEND: Teacher provides opportunities for students to use the new words, and use them in context

1. Use a sentence frame: “I see a dog (where, when). Emphasize “See” since it is the target word.
2. Turn to your partner and finish my sentence. (orally)
3. “Write your sentence on the paper/whiteboard.”
4. Share the sentences.
5. Add the word to your class word wall, or....other ideas?

## Teaching Irregular High-frequency words:

Similar process except we need to be explicit about the “by heart” part

- ✓ Introduce the word, saying it and spelling it (“Said”)
- ✓ “What do we notice? What seems normal and what is surprising?”
- ✓ Spell it together: “what is the part we already know?” (s-d)
- ✓ “What is the unusual part we have to learn by heart?” (ai=/e/)
- ✓ Have the word written out on separate cards for each sound. Turn over the cards as you say the sounds:  
“what is first letter? /s/”—turn over the card; “next comes the ‘heart part’—what is it?” turn over the ‘ai’ card, and finally, “what is the last letter? /d/”. Turn over the card and read the whole word together..
- ✓ Create oral sentences, then written ones. Read them together and add the word to the Heart Word Wall.





# Fluency Interventions

- Whole-Class Instruction

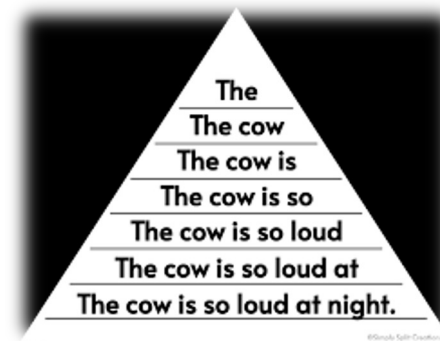
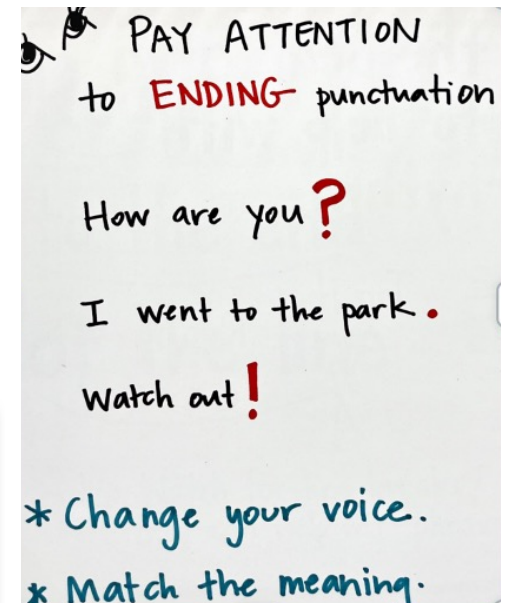
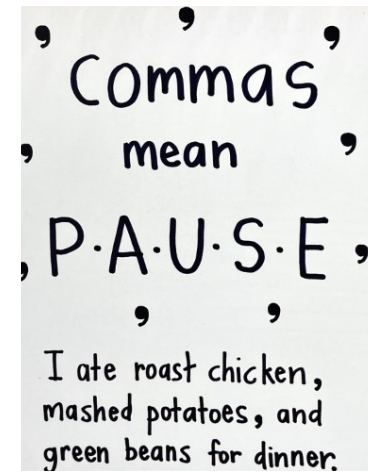


*the importance of repeated oral reading*

- Using poems, short stories with scripts
  - inherently mimics fluent speech
  - Early reading books are often typographically supportive with sentences printed in natural phrases.
- Readers Theatre
- Wide Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI)
- Fluency Development Lesson
  - Poetry or short selection
  - Developed through the week
  - Read/perform for others

*\*Others:*

- Fluency triangles (paired or small group)
- Lessons on punctuation



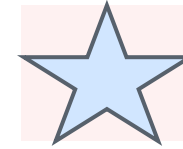


# Fluency Interventions

- One–One sessions

- Timed Repeated Reading

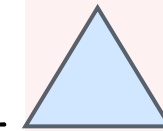
- For accurate but slow readers
    - 3–5 times per week, 10–15 minutes



Repeat until 95% accuracy

- Paired Reading

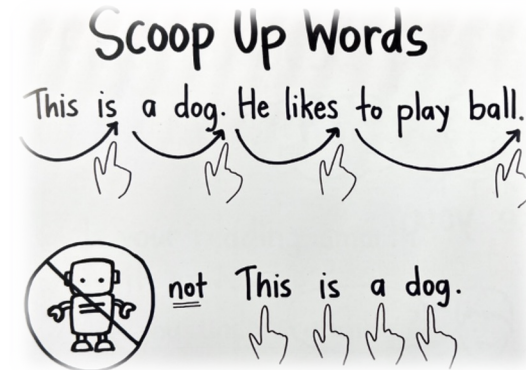
- Adult and child side–by–side, shared text
  - Could start with ‘taking turns’
  - Read together, adult adjusting pace, student tracking text



Doesn't need to be a teacher.

- Phrase–cued text

- Phrase boundaries are marked with lines or slashes
  - Model proper/improper phrasing
  - Build up to practice with no markings





# Fluency Interventions

- Whole-Class Instruction

- Echo reading

- Everyone has a copy
    - Model read
    - Students read
    - Cloze reading

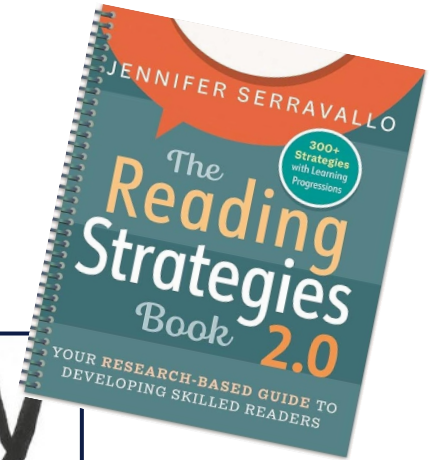
*"Getting miles on the page."*

- Choral reading

- Similar to echo, but everyone is reading, and teacher gradually fades out

- Partner reading

- Match up stronger/weaker readers
    - "whisper reading": start by whisper reading individual passages, then after a minute of practice, mark where they stopped; read out loud to their partner.
    - Partner can correct errors.
    - Did they read further the 2<sup>nd</sup> time?
    - Repeat, reading further in the passage. Compare their "distance".

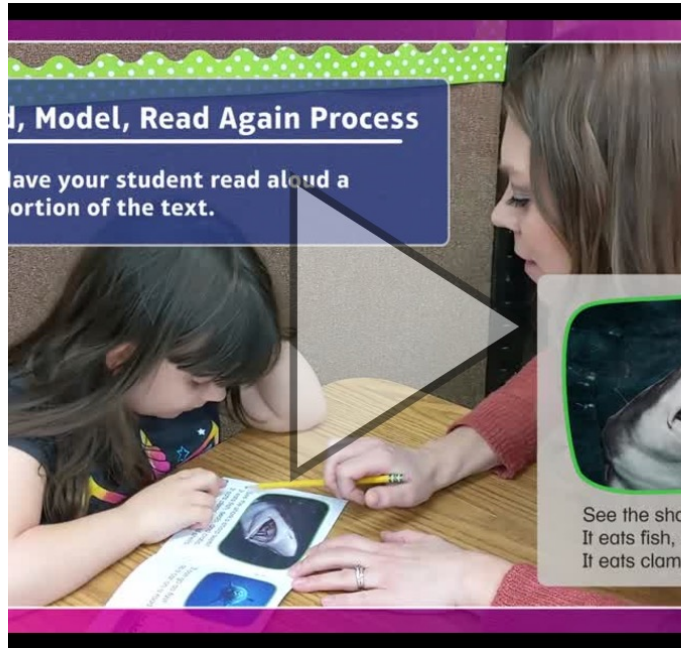


Fluency Partners	
Partners can help each other by listening and coaching. Take turns being the "Reader" or the "Coach".	
Reader	Coach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▲ read aloud to your partner</li><li>▲ Remember to read with expression</li><li>▲ read accurately</li><li>▲ try to make your reading sound like a conversation.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ give feedback to your partner.</li><li>■ compliment areas of strength</li><li>■ point-out areas that need improvement</li></ul> <p>Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Go back and reread that</li><li>• Smooth that out</li><li>• Make your voice match the feeling</li></ul>





# Partner reading



- read, model, read again
- Partner reading
- me/we reading

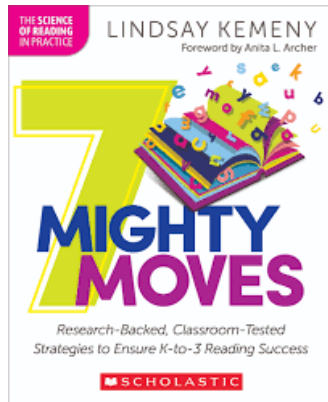




# Building Fluency

## Keep in mind:

- More than just reading fast
- Don't teach phonics in isolation
- Avoid "round robin" reading
- Be mindful of how you use independent reading time



## Ideas for instructional Strategies:

- Remember...fluency is not an isolated skill
  - subskills: phonemic awareness, sound-symbol knowledge, automaticity at letter or word level
- Small Group instruction affords specific, immediate feedback
- Model, model, model!!!
- Whole Group Reading including:
  - Read aloud, cloze reading, choral reading, echo reading
- Partner Reading
- Reader's Theatre
- Beat the Clock Timed Reading
- Repeated Reading







# Fluency Interventions

## A Prosody Scale

National Assessment of Educational Progress Fluency Scale		
Fluent	Level 4	Reads primarily in larger, meaningful phrase groups. Although some regressions, repetitions, and deviations from text may be present, these do not appear to detract from the overall structure of the story. Preservation of the author's syntax is consistent. Most of the story is read with expressive interpretation.
Fluent	Level 3	Reads primarily in 3-4 word phrase groups. Majority of phrasing seems appropriate and preserves the syntax of the author. Little or no expressive interpretation is present.
Non-Fluent	Level 2	Reads primarily in two-word phrases with some 3-4 word groupings. Some word-by-word reading may be present. Word groupings are awkward and unrelated to larger context of sentence or passage.
Non-Fluent	Level 1	Reads primarily word-by-word. Occasional 2-3 word phrases may occur- but infrequent and/or do not preserve meaningful syntax.

Source: White, S., Sabatini, J., Park, B. J., Chen, J., Bernstein, J., & Li, M. (2021). The 2018 NAEP Oral Reading Fluency Study. NCES 2021-025. National Center for Education Statistics.



# Resources

## Books & Articles

*Active Reading Classrooms - Kelly, 2023*

*A Fresh Look at Phonics - Blevins, 2017*

*Shifting the Balance - Burkins & Yates, 2021*

*Reach All Readers—Anna Geiger, 2024*

*7 Mighty Moves - Kemeny, 2023*

*The Reading Strategies Book 2.0—Jennifer Serravallo,  
2023*

*Next STEPS in Reading Instruction—Smartt and Glaser  
2024*

## Digital Resources

[The Literacy Fan Adapted from: A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction](#)

[Reading Rockets: The Active View of Reading](#)

[Reading Rockets: Models of Reading](#)

[Sarah's Teaching Snippets](#)

[Anna Geiger Resources](#)

[International Dyslexia Association Ontario](#)

[ONLit: Structured Literacy infographic](#)

[Lindsay Kemeny:](#)

[read. model. read again](#)

[Partner reading](#)

[me/we reading](#)

[A Prosody Scale](#)



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