

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 5

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# Exceptional Programs for Exceptional Learners Monthly Newsletter

## Get the Most Bang for Your Buck—Part 3: Fluency

### Teacher goal for this month:

*Change what is not working*

### BEST PRACTICE

*Teachers have been hard at work monitoring progress for the last 4 months, preparing students for many challenges, including learning the next skill in a standard and preparing them for the state assessments. Students and teachers not only deal with academic challenges at school, but behavioral challenges as well. There are a team of teachers that have been focusing on both these challenges and living up to that challenge—Sonya Austin, 3rd grade resource teacher at Lincoln Elementary, Brenda Dumler, 4th grade resource teacher at Lincoln Elementary, and Kim Therrien, based at Washington Elementary. They continue to problem solve and are willing to change even though it may not be in their comfort zone.*

Phonemic Awareness was the first big area of reading that was discussed in the October newsletter and in the Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read. Phonics was the second essential area of reading and best practices in phonics were shared in the November newsletter.

The third big area of reading is fluency. "Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly." Fluency is the bridge between word recognition and comprehension.

**More fluent readers** focus their attention on making connections among the ideas in a text and between ideas. **Less fluent readers** must focus their attention on decoding.

There is a close relationship between fluency and comprehension. Best practice related to fluency instruction:

- Repeated and monitored oral reading improves reading fluency and overall reading achievement—the student reads the same passage several times and receives feedback from teacher
- Repeated oral reading:
  1. students read and reread a text to reach a certain fluency level (4 readings are sufficient for most students)
  2. oral reading practice is increased through the use of audiotapes, tutors, etc
- No research evidence is available to confirm that instructional time spent on silent, independent reading with minimal guidance

improves fluency and reading achievement.

- Direct instruction is especially important for struggling readers
- Teachers model and then have students reread
- For fluency practice, students should be reading at their independent level (95% success or no more than 1 out of 20 words missed)
- Students can read aloud by: student-adult reading, choral reading, tape-assisted reading, partner reading, reader's theatre
- Assess frequently

Phonics Progress Monitoring tools are:

DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency Running Record (words/minute)

## A Time To Reflect

In the November newsletter I shared a little about the book Results Now. It's time for you to reflect and be ready to share by the February monthly meeting on these topics:

Evaluate your current practices:

How much time do you have your students coloring, cutting and crafting?

How much time do you devote to actual reading in the class?

How much time do you devote to actual writing (and teaching writing skills) in class?

Do you post the standard and skill the students will be focusing on for that lesson?

Do you use short term assessments to look at how to make student improvements? What are those assessments?

Do you work in effective teams with your colleagues?

Make a list of the "best

practices" you use as a teacher and what are "best practices" that you know about, but do not currently use?

