

Achieving Reading Fluency: Where to Start?

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1

Reading Fluency

Understand • Assess • Teach

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- Ch. 1 Defining Reading Fluency
- Ch. 2 Assessing Reading Fluency
- Ch. 3 Teaching Reading Fluency
- Ch. 4 Integrating Fluency Skills

www.benchmarkeducation.com

2

Agenda

Defining passage fluency (necessary but not sufficient for reading comprehension).

Appropriate instruction is needed at each developmental stage.

FLUENT reading is **NOT** fast reading!

3

THE MANY STRANDS THAT ARE WOVEN INTO SKILLED READING

LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION
 BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE (facts, concepts, etc.)
 VOCABULARY (breadth, precision, links, etc.)
 LANGUAGE STRUCTURES (syntax, semantics, etc.)
 VERBAL REASONING (inference, metaphor, etc.)
 LITERACY KNOWLEDGE (genre concepts, genres, etc.)

WORD RECOGNITION
 PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS (syllables, phonemes, etc.)
 DECODING (alphabetic principle, spelling-sound correspondences)
 SIGHT RECOGNITION (of familiar words)

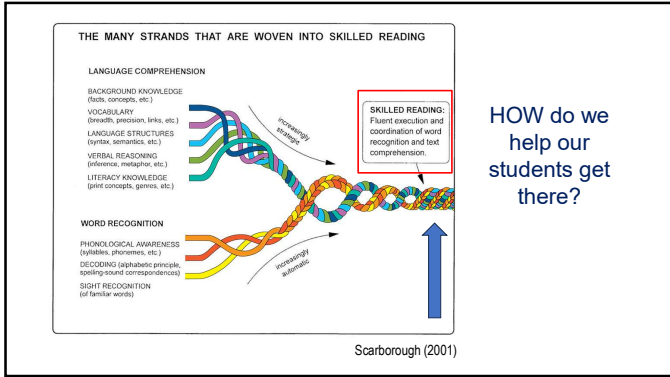
SKILLED READING: Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.

... a visual metaphor for the development of skills over time (represented by the strands of the rope) that lead to skilled reading.

The Reading League (2022)
Science of Reading: Defining Guide

Scarborough (2001)

4



5

"We define (passage) fluency as:

- reasonably **accurate** reading
- at an appropriate **rate**
- with suitable **expression**
- that leads to accurate and deep **comprehension** and **motivation**."

Hasbrouck & Glaser (2019)

6

Reasonably accurate?

During **INSTRUCTION**? **100%**

During **INDEPENDENT READING**? **95-98%**

Emerging readers? **97-98%**

7

Appropriate rate?

Number of words read correctly per minute:


Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)

- Unpracticed passage
- 1:1 for 60-seconds
- Standardized scoring protocol
- Grade level text for screening

Grade	Type	100th Percentile			90th Percentile			80th Percentile			70th Percentile			60th Percentile		
		W	Min	Max	W	Min	Max	W	Min	Max	W	Min	Max	W	Min	Max
1	Pr	100	80	120	90	70	110	80	60	100	70	50	90	60	40	80
	Gr	100	80	120	90	70	110	80	60	100	70	50	90	60	40	80
	Sc	100	80	120	90	70	110	80	60	100	70	50	90	60	40	80
2	Pr	120	100	140	110	90	130	100	80	120	90	70	110	80	60	100
	Gr	120	100	140	110	90	130	100	80	120	90	70	110	80	60	100
	Sc	120	100	140	110	90	130	100	80	120	90	70	110	80	60	100
3	Pr	140	120	160	130	110	150	120	100	140	110	90	130	100	80	120
	Gr	140	120	160	130	110	150	120	100	140	110	90	130	100	80	120
	Sc	140	120	160	130	110	150	120	100	140	110	90	130	100	80	120

8

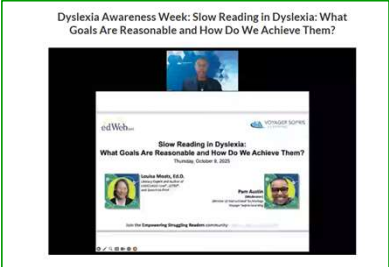
Appropriate rate?



Research suggests 50-75th+ %ile range of ORF/WCPM norms supports comprehension; the 50th %ile necessary for comprehension. There may be unique issues with our students with dyslexia.

9


Dyslexia Awareness Week: Slow Reading in Dyslexia: What Goals Are Reasonable and How Do We Achieve Them?



Edweb.net October 9, 2025

10


Assessing rate?



Number of words read correctly per minute:	Words read correctly:
Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)	ACCURACY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unpracticed passage ▪ 1:1 for 60-seconds ▪ Standardized scoring protocol ▪ Grade level text for screening 	Words per minute:
	RATE
	Accuracy + rate =
	AUTOMATICITY

11


Assessing AUTOMATICITY!



- Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) assesses automaticity in TEXT/PASSAGES.
- Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)
- Letter Sound Fluency (LSF)
- Nonword/Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)
- Word Reading Fluency (WRF)

These assess automaticity in developing foundational skills of word reading.

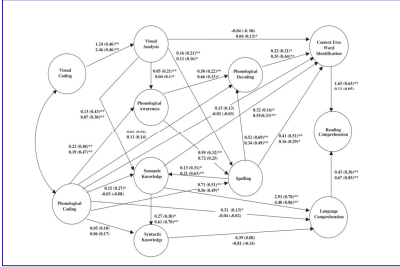
12



“Reading is a highly complex task that involves many interconnected and codependent linguistic processes that draw upon a variety of separate skills.”


Hasbrouck & Glaser (2019)

13



Vellutino, F. R., Tunmer, W. E., Jaccard, J. J., & Chen, R. (2007). Components of Reading Ability: Multivariate Evidence for a Convergent Skills Model of Reading Development. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 11(1), 3-32.

14



The development of reading fluency starts early...


Fluency develops in **progressions**:

Accuracy then automaticity at the **letter**, **letter-pattern**, and **word** levels plus semantic and syntactic processes at the **phrase** and **sentence level**.

THEN: fluent effortless reading of text, so attention can be fully allocated to comprehension.

Wolf & Katzir-Cohen (2001)

15



Fluency instruction?


“The growth of reading fluency, in all its multifaceted glory, is an outcome of many different kinds of instruction...

...coupled with large amounts of carefully orchestrated reading practice.”

Hudson, Lane, & Pullen (2005)

16

Fluency instruction?



TRIPLE A!

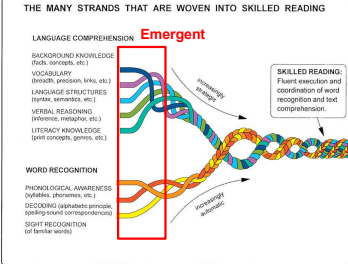
- ACCURACY!
- AUTOMATICITY!
- ACCESS meaning!

Based on:
Instructional Hierarchy
 Haring & Eaton (1978)

Hasbrouck & Glaser (2019)

17

THE MANY STRANDS THAT ARE WOVEN INTO SKILLED READING



Emergent

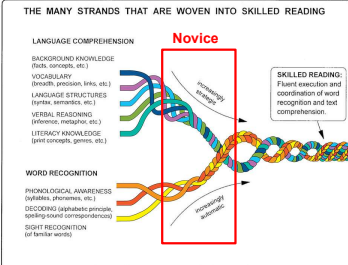
ASSESSMENT
 LNF
 LSF
 + language

AAA INSTRUCTION
 PA (blending; segmenting)
 Letter names
 Letter sounds
 + language

Scarborough (2001)

18

THE MANY STRANDS THAT ARE WOVEN INTO SKILLED READING



Novice

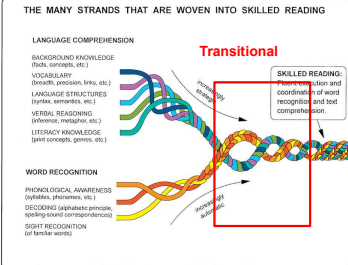
ASSESSMENT
 NWF
 WRF
 Phonics Skills
 + language

AAA INSTRUCTION
 Decoding words
 Decodable text
 + language

Scarborough (2001)

19

THE MANY STRANDS THAT ARE WOVEN INTO SKILLED READING



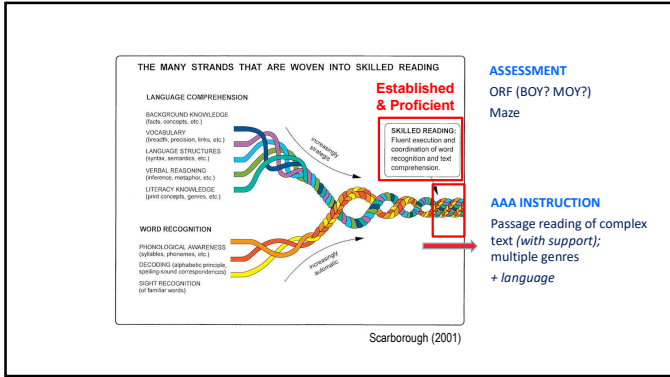
Transitional

ASSESSMENT
 ORF
 + language

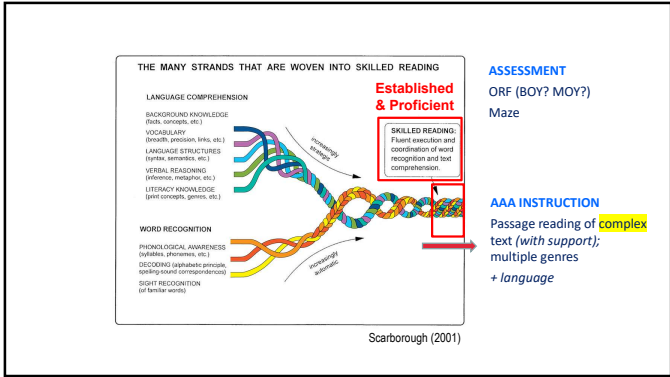
AAA INSTRUCTION
 Passage reading of instructional level text
 + language

Scarborough (2001)


20



21



22



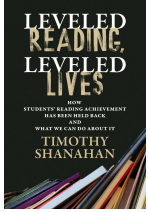

"The notion that kids should be taught to read with relatively easy texts [instructional level] is **great for beginners...**

but by grade 2, this approach is more likely **to hold kids back** than to help them to read better."

Shanahanonliteracy Blog 10-11-14

23

ReadW@ Webinar

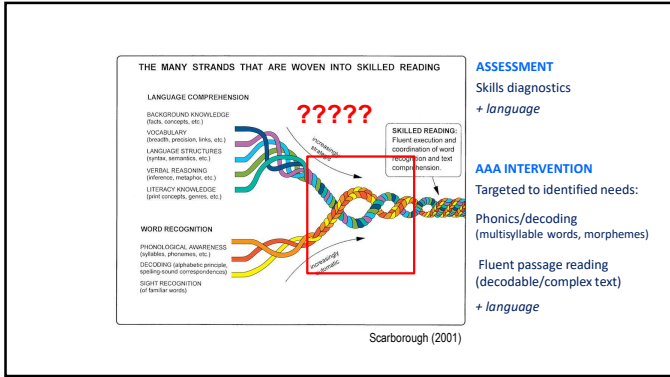
Dr. Tim Shanahan

The SCIENCE of Instructional Reading Levels

readwa.org/events

Saturday, October 25th
 10 AM-12 PM PT

24



25

**Triple A
 Phonics & Decoding**

Show students letter/grapheme; letter/phoneme; word; phrase

- ✓ See it
- ✓ Say it
- ✓ Write it
- ✓ Access meaning (or function)

Using
 I do it; We do it; You do it

26

Fluency Intervention:
 Triple A

- ✓ Accuracy
- ✓ Automaticity
- ✓ Access meaning
- ✓ Clear goals & graphing for motivation

www.readnaturally.com

27

Fluency Intervention:
 Triple A


Placement **FIRST** www.readnaturally.com

Place students in appropriate level:
CHALLENGING!

Assign wcpm goal:
 Placement baseline + 30 for Gr. 1.5 to Gr. 4
 Placement baseline + 40 for Gr. 5+

28

Fluency Intervention:
Triple A




(1) FOLLOW A MODEL

Reading along with a model of ACCURATE reading from a recording or... with a skillful reader

29

Fluency Intervention:
Triple A




(2) REPEATED READING— 60 sec

Students REREAD passage orally to themselves or a partner until AUTOMATICITY goal (WCPM) is achieved (4-10 times)

30

Fluency Intervention:
Triple A




(3) MONITORING PROGRESS

Students GRAPH their performance (before and after practice) after a "PASS":

- WCPM goal achieved
- No more than 3 errors
- Good expression
- Demonstrate comprehension ACCESS MEANING

31

Key Takeaways:



Passage fluency is complex; necessary but not sufficient for comprehension (& motivation).

Appropriate instruction is needed at each developmental stage; TRIPLE A!

FLUENT reading is NOT fast reading!

32