

## FLUENCY

Challenges	Possible Solutions
What do I need to remember as I plan and facilitate STAR fluency groups?	Keep the overall goal of STAR fluency instruction in mind: “To improve accurate word reading and meaningful text phrasing at an efficient speed with some expression.”
I don’t understand the purpose of three levels of fluency! It can be so confusing...	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The <b>Fluency Mastery Level</b> determines <u>who</u> needs fluency instruction: all students &lt;8+.</li> <li>2. The <b>Fluency Instructional Level</b> determines <u>what dimension(s)</u> are of priority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students with lower <b>Accuracy Levels</b> (1-4) need to focus on accurate word reading within text <i>first</i>.</li> <li>• Students with <b>Rate/Prosody Levels</b> &lt;= 8+ need to work on efficient speed (rate) and meaningful phrasing (prosody) within text.</li> <li>• If <b>Rate/Prosody/Accuracy</b> Levels are close (4/5, 5/6, 6/7, 7/8), you can address all three within the same level text.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. The <b>Fluency Instructional Levels</b> also determine <u>what level or range of text</u> is slightly challenging.</li> </ol> <p><b>NOTE:</b> The new fluency test process from Project STAR (focused on word error counting) will not determine Fluency Mastery Levels, just Rate/Prosody and Accuracy Instructional Levels (or range).</p>
What if students have Fluency Mastery Levels <8+ but Instructional Levels of 8+?	They still need fluency instruction. Accuracy is the highest level of text rated as 1 (poor) and Rate/Prosody is the highest level of text rated as 2 (fair). This means they are NOT reading Level 8 text fluently and will benefit from repeated readings of Level 8/8+ materials.
Fluency assessment does not always seem to place students in the correct Levels.	If fluency assessment scores seem off, it is usually by only 1-2 levels. A STAR teacher has the privilege (and responsibility) to make adjustments in fluency groupings and leveled materials as needed.
The level of the passage or book according to the publisher seems too high or difficult for my students (especially ELLs).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fluency materials should be <u>somewhat</u> or <u>slightly</u> challenging for students, but not defeating or discouraging. Also include your knowledge of students when selecting appropriate fluency materials.</li> <li>2. If the selected level seems <u>too</u> challenging or complex for the group, adjust as needed and/or increase your teacher modeling.</li> <li>3. For ELLs, consider selecting fluency materials on the ‘easier’ side and build towards challenge. Newsela at <a href="https://newsela.com/">https://newsela.com/</a> offers same content materials at different levels.</li> </ol>
My students want to stay all together as one group!	Revisit the purpose of fluency instruction: to build accuracy, rate, chunking, and expression with repeated oral readings of somewhat challenging text. This requires frequent opportunities for each reader to read aloud and be heard by the teacher. Smaller (rather than larger) groups allow everyone to read aloud more than once and receive teacher guidance, correction, and support.

<p>How do I manage mixed fluency levels with limited staff?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Limit the number of fluency groups to two: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The level range for echo reading and marked phrase boundaries can be up to 2 (4-5, 6-7).</li> <li>• The level range for collaborative oral reading can be up to 3 (4-6, 6-8).</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Provide individualized repeated readings using computers, iPads, headsets, and audio files of leveled passages.</li> <li>3. Contact the Minnesota Literacy Council and inquire about FREE fluency trainings for educational assistants and volunteers.</li> </ol>
<p>How do I manage the noise of multiple fluency groups?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Alternate fluency groups: one day work with one group; the next day with the other - even if the groups meet only once a week.</li> <li>2. Crowd in around a table in the back or off to the side of the classroom.</li> <li>3. If other space is available, conduct fluency groups in separate rooms or areas. All you need are chairs and readers facing one another!</li> </ol>
<p>How do I select the most appropriate fluency technique(s) for my students?</p>	<p>All four STAR fluency techniques are supported by reading research and determined most effective by adult literacy experts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Echo reading</b> works best for lower-level students, especially those with accuracy needs. It provides the MOST teacher/tutor support; each and every word, phrase, sentence, and paragraph is modeled by a proficient reader.</li> <li>• <b>Repeated reading</b> works well for all levels, especially if you have access to a computer lab, headphones, and the Internet. Then all fluency students can hear and read passages at their individual instructional levels as many times as needed.</li> <li>• <b>Collaborative oral reading</b> works well for all levels, especially for book or novel reading. Depending on the readers and reading, increase teacher/tutor modeling and support; read aloud every other paragraph or section; every third paragraph or section, etc.</li> <li>• <b>Marked phrase boundaries</b> work best for higher-level students with rate/prosody needs. It does require more work because the passages need to be pre-marked for modeling and guided practice.</li> </ul>
<p>Some of my students are very nervous about reading aloud in front of others.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be sure to explain the purpose of repeated oral reading. Clarify that making mistakes is part of the process and <u>only you</u> will correct as needed.</li> <li>2. Scaffold the read aloud experience: First, model reading the entire passage. Second, have students reread the entire passage with a partner. Third, bring them together a more collaborative oral reading.</li> </ol>
<p>Can I answer students' questions about word and/or text meanings during fluency instruction?</p>	<p>Yes! However, keep your definitions <u>simple</u> and explanations <u>brief</u>. When too much time is spent talking or explaining, fluency drifts into being more about vocabulary or comprehension.</p>
<p>How do I best teach "chunking" of words into meaningful phrases?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Talk about obvious cues: commas, periods, question marks, and exclamation points.</li> <li>2. Then talk about less obvious cues: 3-5 word meaningful phrases (or chunks) that may answer who, what, where, when, why, or how.</li> <li>3. Pre-mark passages, model the chunking, and have students reread more than once. <u>Seeing and hearing</u> appropriate chunking multiple times can make a big difference for some students!</li> </ol>

<p>How often should I correct student mispronunciations? All of the time? Some of the time? A few times?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If a mispronunciation changes the intended meaning, it should be corrected – gently and quickly. The same for incorrect or awkward phrasing, as this too can change the intended meaning.</li> <li>2. Be aware of your weaker readers in the group. It may be necessary to correct only some of their mispronunciations so they are not discouraged or embarrassed.</li> </ol>
<p>When I'm reading something to the students for marked phrase boundaries, I wonder if I'm reading it right, or I change when I read it a second time.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Script the boundaries on a master copy so you read it the same way each time.</li> <li>2. Explain that we don't always chunk exactly the same; however, we need to read in <u>meaningful phrases</u> to understand and retain information. Our brain's working memory can only hang onto 4-7 units (such as numbers or words) at a time!</li> </ol>
<p>Students add, delete, or change words as they are reading to the detriment of comprehension.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make sure students understand the author used the words for a reason and it is important to read them as written for full comprehension.</li> <li>2. Tape record students' first and last readings and discuss how accurate word reading is so important for comprehension.</li> </ol>
<p>Students don't follow even the simplest of phrase boundaries.</p>	<p>Have students follow the marked phrase boundaries with their finger during modeling and guiding. This adds <u>touching</u> to seeing and hearing, which is even more multi-sensory -- and may enhance visual, auditory, and tactile memory.</p>
<p>Students are over-correcting each other or jumping when another student is reading slowly.</p>	<p>Set clear ground rules for collaborative oral reading. Tell students <i>only</i> the teacher will correct or help. Tell them that corrections aren't always necessary. Tell them that we read at different speeds depending on the content, our comfort, and our understanding.</p>
<p>How do I include comprehension check-in questions without interrupting the flow of fluency?</p>	<p>Stop to ask questions at the end of a passage or book section. Ask just a few 6W questions and clarify answers as needed. The purposes are to: (1) ensure students' understanding, (2) maintain interest in story, and (3) model asking questions.</p>
<p>How do I integrate new students or students with irregular attendance into fluency instruction?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New students will often have Fluency Instructional Levels that "fit" within your existing fluency groups. If not, have them work with a volunteer or computer-based fluency program.</li> <li>2. Enforce attendance policies as much as possible. Students will not make reading progress if they are not present to receive reading instruction!</li> <li>3. Select separate passages for each fluency lesson (rather than an ongoing book or novel). Stand-alone fluency materials do not require previous participation.</li> </ol>
<p>My program cannot afford many instructional materials...</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider buying 6-8 copies of Six Way Paragraphs Introductory (Levels 1-4) and <i>Middle</i> (Levels 4-8). Each book contains 100 passages and can be reused by fluency groups for years!</li> <li>2. Go to <a href="http://atlasabe.org/resources/ebri/ebri-fluency">http://atlasabe.org/resources/ebri/ebri-fluency</a> for a variety of FREE sources of leveled passages. The only cost is paper!</li> </ol>