

Reading Hall of Fame Member
TIMOTHY V. RASINSKI & MELISSA CHEESMAN SMITH

THE MEGABOOK OF FLUENCY

*Strategies and
Texts to Engage
All Readers*

 **SCHOLASTIC**

Timothy V. Rasinski & Melissa Cheesman Smith

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OF
FLUENCY

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to Engage All Readers

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To my mom, Lark Cheesman, who left me this year but whose memory will always sing inside me, “a sightless song.”

—MCS

To all the wonderful teachers I have met and have had the honor to work with over the past 40+ years. So much of what is in this book comes from you. Thank you. Keep a poem in your pocket and a song in your heart!

—TVR

Credits

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INTRODUCTION



“Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.”

—Frederick Douglass

It was one of those years. Beth Thomas, a very dedicated third-grade teacher, knew she had her work cut out for her. Of the 24 students in her class, over half struggled with reading. Although nearly all students were proficient at word decoding, thanks to a new approach to phonics instruction that seemed to be working well, most of the strugglers did it in a slow and monotone manner. They expressed little joy or confidence in their reading as they labored from one word to another. To make matters worse, these students also struggled in comprehending what they read. When asked to retell a passage just read, for example, few could offer more than a few facts from the passage.

From previous professional development presentations that she had attended and her own professional reading, Beth knew that a lack of reading fluency was likely the problem. Even some of her good readers seemed to exhibit difficulties in fluency. So she decided that fluency instruction was just what her students needed in the coming year.

At the same time, Beth was not comfortable with the “speed read” approaches to fluency instruction that were in vogue at the time. Timed readings that required students to practice a short passage repeatedly for the primary purpose of reaching a prescribed reading speed were less-than-authentic reading activities. Were there other more authentic ways to provide fluency instruction that her students would find engaging and effective?

Fortunately for Beth, she began to think about the true nature of fluent speech and fluent reading. It’s not speaking or reading fast; rather, fluency is speaking and reading with expression that reflects and adds to the meaning of the oral or written message. Beth began looking for texts and activities that lent themselves to expressive oral reading. She found poetry, songs, scripts, famous speeches, and other such texts that beg for expressive reading. And, she found ways for her students to perform these texts in real ways—poetry coffee houses, Readers’ Theater festivals, classroom sing-alongs, and so forth. Her students began to beg to do more and more fluency work. It was the one of the best parts of the school day. Moreover, the authentic reading practice scenarios that Beth created led to significant improvements in her students’ fluency and overall reading achievement in a matter of weeks! Beth is a believer in the importance of fluency and authentic fluency instruction.

Teachers across the country face Beth’s predicament all the time. Reading fluency is a critical goal for reading success. Yet, the approaches for teaching fluent reading are often divorced

from real reading. Teachers are looking for approaches that go beyond increasing students' speed. This book is aimed at providing you, a dedicated and knowledgeable teacher, with smart alternatives.

What Is Fluency? All EARS!

Fluency is the ability to read with Expression, Automatic word recognition, Rhythm and phrasing, and Smoothness (EARS). Fluency has traditionally been neglected in reading programs (Allington, 1983), and when it has been embraced, it is often misunderstood (Rasinski, 2006, 2012). So having a good grasp of reading fluency is certainly an appropriate place to start.

We often think of the act of reading as involving two major competencies: word decoding (phonics) and comprehension. Fluency is, in a sense, a critical link between those two competencies (Rasinski, 2010). Fluency itself is made up of two subcomponents: word recognition automaticity and prosody, or expressive reading.

Automatic and Smooth Word Recognition

Automaticity and smoothness in word recognition is critical because it minimizes the cognitive energy needed to recognize many words, thus enabling the reader to focus on the more important task of comprehending the text. While reading this paragraph, you are likely exhibiting word recognition automaticity. As you read, you can accurately decode the words. In fact, most of the words you are encountering you are recognizing instantly and holistically, without applying any phonic analyses. Most of the words we encounter as proficient adult readers are read this way—as sight words we recognize automatically.

Beth's struggling readers were able to decode words accurately, but not automatically. They had to use their phonics skills to analyze many of the words they encountered. This resulted in two outcomes. First, their reading was excessively slow because of the phonic analyses required of so many of the words they encountered. Second, because they had to invest so much cognitive energy into the decoding task, comprehension was impaired. Word recognition automaticity is critical for proficient reading. Research has demonstrated a robust correlation between word recognition automaticity and reading comprehension (Rasinski, Reutzel, Chard, & Linan-Thompson, 2011).

Expression and Rhythm

The second subcomponent of fluency, which is often overlooked, is prosody—or expressive reading with appropriate rhythm and phrasing that reflect the meaning of the text. Prosodic reading is fluency's link to comprehension. In order for readers to read a passage with good expression and rhythm, they have to be comprehending the meaning of the passage. And, conversely, reading with appropriate expression and rhythm enhances readers' comprehension of the passage's meaning (as well as the comprehension of anyone listening to the reading).

Because silent reading proficiency is often viewed as the gold standard for reading instruction over oral reading proficiency, or more precisely, expressive oral reading proficiency, it is sometimes overlooked by curriculum developers.

The Vocabulary of Fluency

Fluency: The ability to read with Expression, Automatic word recognition, Rhythm and phrasing, and Smoothness.

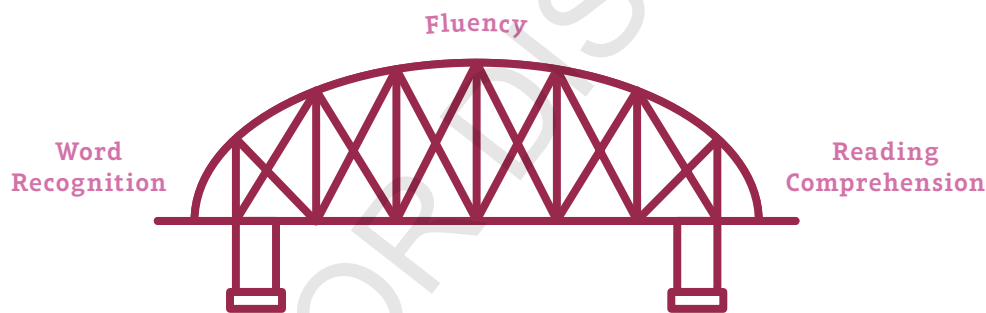
E Expression	Prosody	Expression used in reading that reflects and expands on the meaning of the text.
	Intonation	Fluctuation of voice in the strength of pitch and volume to match the meaning of the text.
	Tone	Reading to show an emotion or feeling.
	Monotone	Having single or unvaried tone in a way that expression doesn't match the meaning of the text.
	Stress	Emphasis on particular words or phrases as one would do in conversational speech.
A Automatic Word Recognition	Automaticity	The ability of a reader to recognize/decode words in text accurately and effortlessly or automatically.
	Pace/Rate	The pace or speed at which the reader can move through the text. Pacing is a good way to assess automaticity.
	WCPM	Words Correct Per Minute—the rate or pace at which a student reads.
R Rhythm and Phrasing	Phrasing/ Chunking	Reading in meaningful phrases or word chunks instead of word by word.
	Pausing	Using punctuation as a guide to when to pause while reading.
S Smoothness	Accuracy	The ability to accurately recognize or decode words regardless of rate.
	Self-correct	The ability of a reader to recognize an error in her/his reading and fix/repair it.

Why Is Fluency Important?



The research of the past two decades demonstrates quite clearly a robust correlation between expressive oral reading and silent reading comprehension (Rasinski, Reutzel, Chard, & Linan-Thompson, 2011). That is, students who read orally with good expression are more likely to comprehend deeply when reading silently.

So we see fluency as this critical bridge between word recognition and comprehension. If students are unable to develop that bridge, they will likely have difficulty in achieving necessary levels of comprehension when reading.



Furthermore, a number of studies have found strong connections between reading fluency and general measures of reading achievement, including comprehension (Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler, 2002; Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Kuhn, Schwanenflugel, & Meisinger, 2010; National Reading Panel, 2000; Rasinski, 2010; Rasinski, Reutzel, Chard, & Linan-Thompson, 2011). Moreover, these and other studies have documented the power of reading fluency in primary, intermediate, middle school, and high school students (e.g., Rasinski, Padak, McKeon, Krug-Wilfong, Friedauer, & Heim, 2005; Rasinski, Rikli, & Johnston, 2009). Higher levels of fluency are associated with more proficient reading, while low levels of fluency point to lower levels of reading proficiency.

A growing number of studies have examined the effects of authentic fluency instruction. By “authentic,” we mean real reading of real texts for real purposes, to communicate meaning. We contrast authentic fluency instruction with programs that tend to require readers to increase their reading speed. The studies of authentic fluency instruction confirm that the type of instruction we describe in this book not only leads to improved fluency, but also to higher levels of reading proficiency, including comprehension, and also greater levels of

interest and motivation for reading for all readers (Rasinski, 2010, 2012), especially those who are experiencing difficulty (Rasinski, 2017).

Despite the recognition of fluency's importance, many students struggle with it. A study of elementary students identified as experiencing difficulty in reading and recommended for intervention found that fluency was their greatest challenge (Rasinski & Padak, 1998). Another study of elementary students who performed poorly on a state-mandated reading proficiency test found that 75 to 90 percent of the students exhibited significant difficulties in one or more aspects of reading fluency (Duke, Pressley, & Hilden, 2004; Valencia & Buly, 2004). And, difficulties are not limited to younger students. If fluency concerns are not addressed early, during the foundational years, it is likely that those concerns will find their way into the middle school and high school grades. Indeed, several studies have found that fluency is associated with reading achievement beyond the elementary grades (Paige, Rasinski, & Magpuri-Lavell, 2012; Paige, Rasinski, Magpuri-Lavell, & Smith, 2014; Rasinski, Padak, McKeon, Krug-Wilfong, Friedauer, & Heim, 2005). Furthermore, because fluency is a foundational competency, difficulties in fluency can also lead to difficulties in content areas that rely heavily on reading.

Given the importance of fluency and the fact that fluency difficulties are widespread among students of all ages, effective fluency instruction and intervention are essential to improving the overall reading achievement of those students, as well as their achievement in the content areas. That is what this book is all about.

Is Fluency Foundational to Reading Proficiency? Yes, the Standards Say So!

Over the past several years, much attention has been focused on learning standards for reading success—the Common Core State Standards for the English Language Arts (National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2016), as well as standards developed by individual states and local school districts. Most standards documents suggest that higher and more sophisticated levels of reading are built on a solid foundation of reading fluency. Without a solid foundation, a building cannot stand; without a solid foundation in reading fluency, other reading competencies, such as comprehension and close reading, cannot develop. It is critical, then, that we help all our students so they may move on to higher levels of reading achievement.

But it's not just the standards that tell us that reading fluency is important. A number of scientifically-based studies have demonstrated that fluency instruction leads to overall improvement in fluency and comprehension for students in the elementary, middle, and secondary grades (Rasinski, Reutzel, Chard, & Linan-Thompson, 2011), especially for students who struggle in reading (Stevens, Walter, & Vaughn, 2017).

What Are the Building Blocks of Reading Fluency?



If reading fluency is the foundation for reading success, what instructional building blocks can we use to lay that foundation? We identify several major approaches to building fluency that you can use to move students to more fluent reading. All the activities in this book incorporate one or more of these building blocks. (For a more complete discussion of these approaches, see *The Fluent Reader, Second Edition* [Rasinski, 2010]).

Modeled Fluent Reading

If we want students to move toward fluency in reading, we have to give them a sense of what fluency is. The best way to do that is for them to hear fluent reading often. We need to read to students regularly. Moreover, we should take time to discuss why our reading is fluent and how fluent reading makes it easier for listeners to understand and enjoy the reading.

Supportive or Assisted Reading

Simply listening to a fluent reader will not make a student a fluent reader. They need to engage in fluent reading themselves. However, not all students can read a text fluently on their own—some need support and assistance. Supportive or assisted reading simply means that a student reads a passage while listening to a reading of the same passage.

Supportive or assisted reading can take a variety of forms. Students may read chorally as part of a group. Or they may read with a more fluent partner such as a teacher, parent, classroom aide, older student, or even a classmate. Something special happens when a less fluent reader reads a text the best he or she can and simultaneously hears a more fluent reading of the same text: a movement toward more fluent and meaningful reading. Researcher Keith Topping found that regular assisted (paired) reading could accelerate a student's overall reading progress by a factor of three or more. That is, students who previously were making a half-month's progress in reading for every month of instruction could be expected to make one-and-a-half-months' progress when assisted reading was included in the curriculum (Topping, 1987a, 1987b, 1989).

The student does not always have to read with another person. He or she can read a text while simultaneously listening to a prerecorded version of the same text. We call this audio-assisted reading, and the recording can be an audio file (e.g., an MP3 file) stored on your

computer or other device. As with other forms of supportive or assisted reading, the research into audio-assisted reading points to improvements in students' fluency and overall reading proficiency (Rasinski, 2010; Rasinski, Reutzel, Chard, & Linan-Thompson, 2011).

Reading Practice: Wide Reading

Becoming fluent at anything, from walking to reading, requires practice. For most students (and adults), wide reading is the most common form of practice that leads to growth (Kuhn, et al., 2006). Wide reading simply means reading a text once, perhaps discussing it and/or doing some extension activity related to it, and then moving on to a new text—in other words, reading one text after another. This form of authentic reading practice is important because we want students to read as much as possible in order to develop critical competencies.

Reading Practice: Repeated Reading

For students who struggle to attain fluency, wide reading is not enough. These students need to read one text a few times until they are able to achieve fluency. In other words, they need repeated reading. A more common name often associated with repeated reading is rehearsal. Interestingly, the Common Core State Standards refer to repeated reading as close reading.

Research has demonstrated that each time students read a text, their reading improves on many fronts: word recognition, accuracy, automaticity, expression, and comprehension (Dowhower, 1994; Samuels, 1979). More importantly, when they move on to a brand-new text to read, their gains “stick.” In other words, the benefit from practicing one passage repeatedly carries over to passages they've never before read.

The key to successful repeated reading is making it authentic (Rasinski, 2012). In many current programs for and approaches to developing fluency, students are asked to read a text repeatedly until they achieve a specified reading speed or rate (since reading rate is a way to measure one aspect of fluency). But this approach to repeated reading lacks authenticity. Who in real life repeatedly reads a passage for the purpose of reading it quickly?

We believe that authenticity starts with rehearsal. Any type of performance for an audience, whether it is giving a speech, reciting a poem, singing a song, or acting in a play, requires rehearsal. Rehearsal is not about reading quickly, but about communicating with meaning for the enjoyment of a listening audience. This is the type of repeated reading that students will find not only authentic, but also highly engaging and motivating.

Rhythm and Phrasing

If you think about it, a hallmark characteristic of a less fluent reader is reading in a word-by-word manner, without concern for meaning making. These readers may be able to read the words of a text correctly, but the staccato-like delivery minimizes the meaning that is communicated to the listener. Although we might think of the word as the basic unit of meaning in a text, it's really in the phrasing where meaning is lodged. What do words such as *the*, *of*, *to*, *and*, or *if* mean by themselves? Not much. But when they become part of a phrase, their meaning becomes clear. Fluent readers read in meaningful phrases; struggling readers very often read word-by-word. Helping our less fluent readers move away from word-by-word reading to more phrased and meaning-filled reading is an important goal for instruction and well worth the effort (Rasinski, Yildirim, & Nageldinger, 2011).

What Makes a Quality Fluency Activity?

While not all effective fluency activities are designed or structured the same, they do share common elements and characteristics (Rasinski, 2005).

Here are a few:

Quality Texts

Try to find texts that have a good voice and phrasing and are meant to be read orally with expression. Texts such as poetry, scripts, and narratives work very well for developing fluency.

Oral Reading

The text must be read aloud. Fluency practice should be oral so students can hear what good reading sounds like. And keep in mind, authentic practice in oral reading will not only improve fluency but also silent reading skills.

Feedback

Students should receive feedback. Sometimes feedback comes from their own observations as they tap into their metacognitive skills and think about how they sound as they read. Sometimes feedback comes from you, the class, or a classmate. In either case, students should evaluate their oral readings. They can use the Student Fluency Evaluation forms at the back of this book (and available for download at Scholastic.com/FluencyResources) to get a sense of how they're progressing.

Repetition

For fluency to improve, repeated reading is strongly encouraged. Emphasis should be aimed primarily at providing practice reading the text with appropriate expression that reflects its meaning.

Motivation

Most fluency activities are naturally engaging and even fun. Songs, poems, chants, and other rhythmic texts are all motivational because there is an element of playfulness to them; they often beg to be read and performed aloud. And when students read them over and over, they become successful, which can be motivational in and of itself. But for the students to *want* to read the text repeatedly, the text should be engaging. It is a good idea to provide students with an audience of even just one person for their reading who can provide positive feedback.



Top Benefits of Fluency Instruction and Activities

- Improve not only oral reading fluency, but also silent reading fluency.
- Promote expressive reading.
- Highlight the richness of words in quality literature.
- Increase students' vocabulary.
- Help students express meaning through nuances in prosody.
- Improve classroom community and climate.
- Unify all types of learners in a community experience (English language learners, struggling students, etc.).
- Increase reading time at school.
- Boost student confidence.
- Increase comprehension (paying attention to punctuation, connotation of words through expression, etc.).
- Require rehearsal, an authentic form of repeated readings.
- Lead to improved word recognition accuracy and automaticity.

What Is the Best Way to Assess Fluency?



Using the Multidimensional Fluency Scale

Understanding reading fluency and understanding students who may require additional instruction in fluency require an understanding of how fluency can be measured. As we mentioned earlier, fluency is made up of two subcomponents: automaticity and prosody. Within these subcomponents, fluency can be broken down into four steps we call EARS (Expression, Automatic word recognition, Rhythm and phrasing, and Smoothness) and then measured using the Multidimensional Fluency Scale. Fluency is best measured both qualitatively and quantitatively, so all dimensions should be considered.

We know that fluency isn't all about speed, but it's a part of it, because slowing down to decode negatively impacts comprehension. Each section of EARS is measured by students reading one text, and then you choose the closest match to the choices in the Scale. For the "A" in EARS, Automatic Word Recognition, a simple protocol for assessing speed, or words per minute, can also be used. The basic steps are listening to a child read a text of 100 to 200 words at grade level for one minute. While the student reads, the teacher keeps track of errors and counts the words read in one minute minus errors. This number is the Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) score and is reported in Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM). Specific details and texts

Multidimensional Fluency Scale				
	4 Excelling	3 Proficient	2 Approaching	1 Developing
E Expression ✓ expression matches meaning ✓ varied volume, intonation, and tone ✓ reads with confidence ✓ natural sounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consistently uses expression through varied intonation, volume, and tone to match meaning reads with confidence is natural-sounding and easy to understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mostly uses expression by sometimes varying intonation, volume, and tone to match meaning shows confidence but inconsistently is mostly natural-sounding and easy to understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempts expression, but is inconsistent and often does not match the meaning lacks confidence, reads quietly primarily focuses on saying the words correctly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pays minimal or no attention to expression reads in a quiet and monotone voice reads words as if simply to get them out
A Automatic Word Recognition ✓ reads automatically ✓ reads effortlessly ✓ pace matches text (rate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reads nearly all words automatically and effortlessly uses a pace that is consistently conversational and appropriate for the nature of the text number of words read per minute matches grade-level requirement. See "Target Fluency Ranges" table on page 16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reads most words automatically and effortlessly uses a mixture of conversational and slow reading number of words read per minute meets grade-level requirement. See "Target Fluency Ranges" table on page 16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not read most words automatically and has to stop frequently to recognize words reads at a moderately slow pace number of words read per minute is below grade-level requirement. See "Target Fluency Ranges" table on page 16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not read words automatically and has to stop frequently to recognize words reads at an excessively slow and laborious pace number of words read is well below grade-level requirement. See "Target Fluency Ranges" table on page 16
R Rhythm and Phrasing ✓ reads phrase-by-phrase clearly ✓ attention to punctuation with intonation and pauses ✓ easy to listen to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reads primarily in phrases, chunks, and sentence units pays attention to intonation and pauses at punctuation consistently and accurately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reads with some chopiness, but is generally able to go phrase by phrase pays attention to intonation and usually pauses at punctuation consistently and accurately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reads in two- and three-word phrases frequently reads with chopiness often exhibits improper intonation and pauses at punctuation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reads word by word frequently reads in a monotonic manner shows little sense of phrase boundaries exhibits improper intonation and pauses at punctuation
S Smoothness ✓ smooth-sounding with flow ✓ accurate word recognition ✓ minimal hesitations ✓ self-corrects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reads nearly all words accurately reads smoothly with minimal hesitations has few word and structure difficulties and corrects quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reads most words accurately breaks occasionally from smoothness and hesitates has a few difficulties with specific words and/or structures, but they do not impede overall flow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> struggles to read words accurately pauses and hesitates frequently at "rough spots" in text, which disrupts the overall flow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> requires frequent assistance for inaccuracies: long pauses, insertions, mispronunciation, omissions, false starts, sound-outs, repetitions is unaware of mistakes

(See full-sized Fluency Scale on page 316. You can also download it at Scholastic.com/FluencyResources.)

for assessment can be found in *3-Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency & Comprehension* (Rasinski & Padak, 2005).

Compare the score against the norms in the table below (Rasinski & Padak, 2005). Students who generally score within the ranges indicated in the table can be considered to be making adequate progress in fluency. Students near the lower end or below the ranges indicated in the table below should be considered for fluency intervention. Students scoring above the ranges in the table may be reading too quickly to comprehend the text adequately.

Target Fluency Ranges as Measured by Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM)			
Grade	Fall	Winter	Spring
1		20–50	30–90 wcpm
2	30–80	50–100	70–130
3	50–110	70–120	80–140
4	70–120	80–130	90–140
5	80–130	90–140	100–150
6	90–140	100–150	110–160
7	100–150	110–160	120–170
8	110–160	120–180	130–180

This assessment can be administered regularly (e.g., once per month) to determine if students are making good progress. You may choose to have students who are reading well below grade level read a passage that more closely matches their instructional reading level. However, because the norms in the table are based on students reading material at their assigned grade level, you will need to use your professional judgment to interpret the scores. This is a data-based approach for keeping track of reading progress in your classroom.

Scoring the Multidimensional Fluency Scale

In a matter of just a few minutes, using the Multidimensional Fluency Scale, you can get a good sense of how your students are doing in fluency. The scores will range from 4 to 16. Here are some score ranges to give you a sense of your students' performance:

- Score of 4–6: Student is underperforming in fluency levels.
- Score of 7–11: Student is approaching grade-level norms of fluency.
- Score of 12–16: Student is on or above grade level in fluency.

This book is designed in a way that you can identify concerns based on the four dimensions of the Multidimensional Fluency Scale and identify areas where students need instructional support and intervention. You can then choose strategies that will help develop those skills individually, in small groups, or as a class. Many strategies and activities can also be copied and sent home for parents to help their child one-on-one.

Why Is Fluency Sometimes Viewed as “Not Hot”?



Despite a growing recognition of the importance of reading fluency in students' reading development, that message is often lost because of how it is typically understood and taught (Samuels, 2007; Rasinski, 2012). As mentioned earlier, word recognition automaticity is generally measured by reading speed. If readers are able to recognize words in text automatically, it follows that they will be able to read at a faster pace and read better than readers who can't. This connection between word recognition automaticity and reading achievement has led to instructional practices aimed primarily at increasing students' reading rate. As such, “fluency instruction” often looks like this:

- Student reads a passage as quickly as possible.
- Teacher times the student's reading—how many seconds it takes to read the passage.
- Student reads the passage a second time, trying to outdo his or her time on the first reading.
- Student continues reading the same passage repeatedly until a target reading rate is achieved.
- The process is repeated with new passages for the student to read.

While we acknowledge that word recognition automaticity is highly correlated to reading speed, we do not feel that reading speed improves word recognition automaticity. Rather, the opposite is often true; as students become more automatic in their word recognition, two things occur: first, reading speed increases, and second, reading achievement improves. Reading speed is the result of automaticity, not the cause. Because of the type of “fluency instruction” described earlier, you can easily see how students begin to view reading as a contest in which they try to read as quickly as possible, without regard for comprehending what they are reading.

Many teachers have become aware of this misconception and, as a result, have dropped fluency instruction from their reading curriculum. Although we applaud teachers who resist ill-conceived methods of instruction, fluency is too important to ignore.

Another problem with fluency is associated with prosody. Readers who read orally with good expression that captures the text's meaning tend also to be proficient silent readers. Prosodic reading is often missing from fluency instruction, as we see it, for three reasons. First, if fluency instruction is improving reading speed, little emphasis can be placed on prosody. Indeed, expressive reading suggests that there are places where a reader needs to slow down. And, of course, reading with expression requires reading at a conversational pace, not a fast pace.

Second, in most classrooms today, the goal of the reading curriculum is for students to become proficient in silent reading. Therefore, oral reading, by default, receives less attention, and it follows that prosody in oral reading receives little to no attention.

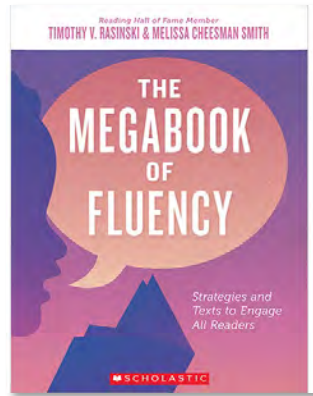
Third, prosody is difficult to measure objectively. Assessments are dependent on a teacher's or other listener's judgment of what makes reading expressive. Although we have found great consistency in how teachers assess prosody, the argument can be made that how one teacher assesses prosody in oral reading may be significantly different from the way other teachers do. If such assessments vary greatly, the reliability and value of the assessment (and any instruction that may follow) is questionable.

Why The Megabook of Fluency?

Richard Allington called fluency "the neglected goal of the reading program" (1983). In many ways, fluency continues to be not only neglected, but also deeply misunderstood or, at best, marginalized. We think that is a huge mistake. We do not advocate using the instructional methods described in the previous section, but rather effective, engaging, and authentic methods that build word recognition automaticity (not speed) and prosodic or expressive reading. In this book, you will find a wealth of motivating oral and silent reading strategies that we have found through our own work to be effective, engaging, and authentic in promoting reading fluency. Not only will these strategies promote fluency, they will also help you create students who use fluency for its intended purpose: to comprehend the texts they read (Rasinski, 2010).

The strategies will move your students to more meaningful reading. We hope you will adapt them to meet the specific needs of your students. We also hope you will be inspired to use them as templates or models for your own fluency activities.

Although we present the strategies for use in the classroom or clinic, they can easily be adapted to be used at home. Indeed, our experience has been that many parents find these strategies a great way to make reading a part of family life. As you peruse the book, our greatest hope is that the strategies are just a starting point for making fluency instruction an integral, enjoyable, and effective part of your overall reading curriculum.



The Megabook of Fluency

Fluency expert Timothy V. Rasinski teams up with Melissa Cheesman Smith, a veteran fifth grade teacher, to help teachers effectively weave fluency work into their daily reading instruction. The book is packed with engaging text and tools, an assessment scale, and high quality ready-to-use lessons including text phrasing and tonality, echo reading, word ladders, and more! Given the importance of fluency- and its pivotal relationship to comprehension and word recognition- the potential is high for improving students' overall reading achievement, and their performance in other content areas.

[Learn More](#)



TIMOTHY V. RASINSKI, professor of literacy education at Kent State University, began his career as an elementary and middle school classroom and Title-1 teacher. He has authored, co-authored, or edited more than 50 books and 200 articles on reading education including the seminal *The Fluent Reader*.



MELISSA CHEESMAN SMITH is an experienced teacher at the elementary and college level, with a Master's of Education in Curriculum and Instruction. She is the author of professional books on literacy and lives in Mesa, Arizona, with her husband and three children.