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Reviewed work:

Fluency Instruction: Research-Based Best Practices. (2006). Timothy V. Rasinski, Camille Blachowicz, & Kristin Lems (Eds.). New York: The Guilford Press. Pp. 302. ISBN 1-59385-253-3. \$30.00

Reviewed by:

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Fluency Instruction: Research-Based Best Practices, edited by Rasinski, Blachowicz, and Lems, is a comprehensive book about reading fluency that presents an overview of history, theory, instructions, programs, and assessment. This book is for teachers, school district administrators, and undergraduate and graduate students who would like to expand their knowledge of reading fluency and help struggling or beginning first language readers from kindergarten to secondary school as well as adult ESL learners.

This book is divided into three parts: (a) fluency theory and research; (b) best programs, practices, and assessment; and (c) special populations and issues related to kindergarteners, adult learners, and parents. The 16 chapters are contributed by 34 reading specialists from a range of different backgrounds, including universities, school districts, and classrooms for students at all age levels. A number of these authors emphasize the importance of oral reading and recommend multiple rereadings of the same text using a variety of techniques for developing reading fluency, such as paired reading, radio reading, and tape-assisted reading. In the same vein, strategies such as *reader's theater* and *parental support* are presented, the former as an effective reading strategy and the latter as a program beyond the confines of the school. In reader's theater, learners read a script aloud so that the audience can visualize the action (Martinez, Roser, & Strecker, 1999). In this respect, reader's theater provides a context for purposeful rereading. In a

parental support program, children listen to model reading. Parents who simply listen to and read with their children can foster reading advancement (Stevenson, Rasinski, & Padak, 2006). As is known, prosody is an important aspect of reading fluency (Samuels, 2006). Unfortunately, struggling readers often do not know how to read aloud with expression. Therefore, it is effective for learners to listen to a model reading to improve fluency. In the book, model reading is a necessary element for developing reading fluency. Finally, computer-based fluency assessment is proposed as a motivational tool. Because many children will enjoy hearing their own voices and receive immediate and specific feedback, it is a stimulating technology to use. As a tool for self-assessment, parental involvement and multiple learning opportunities are also described.

The structure of the book is well-balanced between theory and application. In the first part, theories for reading fluency are discussed. In the remaining sections, a variety of practices are presented as applications of fluency instruction. When the contributing authors present fluency programs, practices, and assessment, they cite research studies as a justification for their statements. In terms of statistical analyses, although some results are described in detail, most of them are written in a simple manner. Because not all teachers are trained in statistics, a simple way of reporting statistics makes them reader friendly and accessible to teachers.

The book presents a theoretical framework for reading fluency, which is important because reading instructors' accurate comprehension of reading fluency theory is fundamental for incorporating fluency instruction into classrooms. According to two of the contributors, Ash and Kuhn (2006, pp. 159–160), about 60 percent of the teachers they surveyed in the U.S. employed some kind of round robin reading in their classrooms, regardless of its low productivity and ineffectiveness for learners' comprehension of text (e.g., Stanovich, 1980). They also assert that 70 percent of teachers who employed round robin reading regularly could not explain fluency research accurately. Therefore, this book is suitable for teachers who may be familiar with the term *reading fluency* but are not sure what it actually means or are not able to describe it.

Samuels (2006) argues that due to the growing interest of practitioners, reading fluency has become a hot topic in the last few years, and there are now a number of textbooks which address this issue. *The Fluent Reader* (Rasinski, 2003), for example, provides compelling reasons for why oral reading is important in the 21st century, such as improving reading comprehension and vocabulary size, activating motivation, building confidence, and increasing fluency. Rasinski also supplies concrete applications such as paired reading, repeated reading, and error analysis that teachers can utilize in their classrooms, as well as research-based ideas of rereading practices and assessment. Although silent reading is predominant as students advance in grade level, oral reading remains a fundamental skill. Because *The Fluent Reader* addresses the need for information on oral reading in reading methods textbooks for teachers at elementary and middle schools, the target audience is narrow.

Fluency Instruction: Research-Based Best Practices is a useful resource for teachers and school district administrators working to develop reading fluency with struggling or beginning readers from child to adult learner level. Readers will acquire a sound knowledge of reading fluency theory and practice from the theoretical ideas and concrete instructions presented in the book. I strongly recommend this book, which combines the experience and research of 34 authors, as a synergistic and insightful book for a wide audience, whose readers range from those who simply

have an interest in reading fluency to those who feel a sense of crisis at the number of nonfluent readers in their educational programs.

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About the Reviewer

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