

# Fluency Activities

*Beginning readers, whether children or adults, need to develop fluency, the ability to read smoothly with appropriate intonation. Beginning readers also need to develop a sight vocabulary. The fluency activities described below help learners achieve both these goals.*

## **Fluency Development Lesson (FDL):**

1. Choose brief texts (50-200 word poems work great). Make a large copy and/or provide copies for each student.
2. Do the FDL four to five times each week. Each lesson takes about 10 to 15 minutes. One text per day. Can return to old texts.
3. Lesson Format:
  - a. Teacher reads poem to class (1-3x). Students listen and/or follow along.
  - b. Teacher discusses content of poem and how s/he read the poem (loud, soft, fast, etc.).
  - c. Choral, antiphonal reading (2-3x).
  - d. Students divided into pairs and practice poem 3x each with partner. Partner gives positive feedback.
  - e. Performance— to class, other classes.
  - f. Practice poems at home.

Developed by Tim Rasinski and Nancy Padak, Kent State University.

## **The Neurological-Impress Method:**

The use of the neurological-impress method was explained in the 1960s by R.G. Heckelman. It has been extremely successful with students with reading difficulties, and it is easy to use. A procedure for its use is as follows:

1. Sit the student slightly in front of you, so you can point to the material the student is reading and so you can read directly into the student's ear.
2. Begin reading material that is easy. As you continue to work with the student, you can increase the level of difficulty of the material.
3. Tell the student that you are going to read the material and that s/he is to read along with you as you point to the words. Then begin to read at a slightly slower pace than normal rate for you. While reading, be sure to point to each word as it is read. *This part of the procedure is extremely important.* The student may complain, at first, that s/he is unable to keep up with you. This should not, however, keep you from using the procedure.
4. As you work with the student, you are likely to notice a sharp improvement in ability to read. Begin to increase your rate of reading as the student's reading improves.
5. Read for periods of 5 to 15 minutes two to four times per day.

Heckelman has emphasized that in using this method you will probably see a great increase in the student's ability to read. He cautions that one of the teacher's most frequent mistakes is to spend too much time reading material written at low levels of difficulty because the teacher does not expect the student to learn so rapidly. For example, Heckelman says that if a student is started at the 1st-grade level, s/he might be expected to be reading in materials at the 3rd-grade level after an accumulated total of 2 hours and that after an accumulated total of 6 hours, the student might be reading materials at

the 5th- or 6th-grade level of difficulty.

Heckelman suggests that one of the reasons for the tremendous success that students often experience with the neurological-impress method is that the student is exposed to many words, many times, in a relatively short period of time. For example, a student reading for a period of approximately 15 minutes may be exposed to from 1,000 to 2,000 words.