

Chapter 3

Fluency Development and Whole-Class Instruction

Approaches for Shared Reading

With Paula Schwanenflugel

Instructional Approach	Grade Levels	Grouping	Type of Text
FORI (Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Originally grade 2Can be used with grades 3 and above (primarily in small groups)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Originally whole classCan be used with small groups	Longer, challenging texts (twenty to forty minutes of reading per day)
Wide Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Originally grade 2Can be used with grades 3 and above (primarily in small groups)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Originally whole classCan be used with small groups	Longer, challenging texts (twenty to forty minutes of reading per day)

- What roles do repeated reading and wide reading play in fluency development?
- What approaches can you use for shared repeated reading?
- How can you integrate multiple texts into shared reading?



Whole-Class Approaches to Fluency Instruction

While it is easy to say that round-robin reading is an ineffective approach to oral reading instruction (e.g., Rasinski, 2006), until recently, it was difficult for teachers to find an effective alternative for whole-class instruction. Since the mid-nineties, two approaches have emerged that have been successfully used as part of the **shared reading** component of the literacy curriculum. The first of these, Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI; Stahl & Heubach, 2005) incorporates the use of repetition, and the second, Wide Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (Wide FORI; Kuhn et al., 2006), makes use of multiple texts coupled with **scaffolded reading strategies**. These two approaches are designed for whole-class instruction and are meant for second and third graders—students who are making the transition to fluent reading at what we consider to be a developmentally appropriate point. That said, both could easily be modified for use with smaller groups of older struggling readers (i.e., grades four and above). Underlying both approaches are concepts presented as part of the Oral Recitation Lesson (Hoffman, 1987; see Chapter 4 for a discussion of the Oral Recitation Lesson), such as a focus on comprehension early in the weekly lesson plan and the modeling of the expressive elements of a text. Prior to addressing these approaches, we feel it is important to discuss the role that both repetition and the scaffolded reading of a wide range of texts can play in the development of your students' reading fluency.

Repetition Versus Scaffolded Wide Reading

For years, one of the basic tenets of fluency instruction has been repetition. In a seminal article about both automaticity theory and flu-

ency instruction, “The Method of Repeated Readings,” Jay Samuels (1979) argues that students who are experiencing difficulties developing automatic word recognition might benefit from seeing a given text multiple times. He bases his argument on the fact that, in the majority of classrooms, then and now, students are exposed to a given text only once before moving on to new material. He suggests it might be useful to have students reread a given text several times. Such rereadings would enable learners to develop familiarity with a given piece to the point where they could read it automatically. Significantly, over the past three decades this approach has proven effective in developing the reading rate and accuracy of many students. As a result, repetition has become an underlying principle in a host of successful instructional methods designed to increase learners’ fluency (e.g., Dowhower, 1989; National Reading Panel, 2000).

However, in a recent review of fluency instruction (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003), my colleague Steven Stahl and I noticed that when comparing approaches based on repetition with those that incorporate *scaffolded* reading of an equivalent amount of different texts, both methods of instruction appeared to lead to equivalent gains. This led us to wonder: is there something unique in the repetition of texts that leads to increased reading fluency or is it possible that the reading of challenging texts for sufficient amounts of time (e.g., a minimum of twenty to thirty minutes per day) with adequate support can lead to similar results? A number of studies conducted in the years since this review was published have indicated that, not only is supported wide reading as effective as repeated reading in developing critical components of fluency such as accurate and automatic word recognition, text comprehension, and prosody, but it may be more effective (e.g., Kuhn, 2005; Kuhn et al., 2006; Mostow & Beck, 2005; Schwebel, 2007). This may be because it is easier to learn a given word when you see it in a variety of contexts than if you see it in the same context multiple times. For example, students

are likely to learn a word, say, the word *sun*, more quickly if they see it in three different contexts (the *sun* sets, the yellow *sun*, and the *sun* and stars) than if they see the same context (the *sun* sets) three times (Mostow & Beck, 2005). Given the overlap of words that exist in texts at all levels, but especially in the early elementary grades, it seems likely that by providing students with access to many supported texts, you are increasing the chances that they will encounter words in just such multiple contexts.

Appropriate Texts, Appropriate Settings

Clearly, students need significant amounts of practice reading connected text in order to become fluent, but there are two important caveats (Kuhn et al., 2006). The first involves the type of text you use and the second involves the types of instructional settings that are appropriate. We feel it is essential that you use **challenging text** as the basis of your fluency instruction. This means having students read material considered to be at the top end of their instructional level or even the beginning of their frustration level (i.e., 85% to 90% accuracy on the initial reading). While we would not normally expect students to work with challenging texts even in instructional settings, students experience tremendous success with such material *provided they have sufficient support*. In fact, virtually all the approaches in this book use material that many educators would consider too difficult for learners if they were taking part in a typical reading lesson; yet, because these methods are carefully scaffolded, they are successful. In the FORI program, Steven Stahl and Kathleen Heubach found that students experienced success with just such texts. And in our own use of challenging text (Kuhn & Schwanenflugel, 2006), we found that, over the course of a week, students were able to go from the twenty-fifth to the seventy-fifth

percentile in terms of their cwpm rate based on the norms determined by Jan Hasbrouck and Gerald Tindal (1992). On the other hand, when learners read texts with which they are already fairly fluent, scaffolding results in relatively little gain, if any at all (e.g., Hollingsworth, 1970). This makes sense, since there is little room for growth when students use such texts. These results suggest that you use challenging material for fluency instruction, even if it is too difficult for other literacy activities such as guided reading.

The second caveat concerns the instructional setting in which your students read challenging material. We have already alluded to this issue, but it is important to remember that when we refer to wide reading, we are not talking about an independent reading period such as Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) time or Sustained Silent Reading (SSR). Rather, we are discussing a carefully structured and supported approach to the reading of multiple texts as part of your shared reading instruction. If you do have an independent reading period, we also encourage you to provide your learners with the *option* of using supported reading approaches during this time. Rather than simply asking students to read independently, we feel students can benefit from having several strategies available during this time, including partner reading; *mumble reading* (reading performed so quietly it sounds like mumbling to a passerby); the use of “phones” made from PVC pipes to direct children’s voices back to themselves; and the inclusion of books on tape, CDs, or podcasts. We have found that the students who are most in need of additional practice are also the students most likely to take part in avoidance activities when it comes to reading on their own (e.g., Hasbrouck, 2006). Drawing attention to their dilemma by providing these options only to your struggling readers does little to develop their confidence. By instead opening up these alternatives to all your students, your struggling readers can receive the practice they need without singling them out.

Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI)

The first strategy, Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI; Stahl & Heubach, 2005), was designed for whole-class instruction. It was developed in response to a districtwide mandate that required schools to use only grade-level material for their reading lessons—despite a wide range of reading levels in the district’s classrooms. In fact, because the district served many low-SES households, there was a real concern that grade-level texts would be well above the instructional level for the majority of the children and would set them up for failure. In response, both the teachers and the researchers decided to create a program they hoped would maximize the students’ chances of success. They hoped that, by incorporating extensive amounts of support or scaffolding as part of the overall lesson plan, the learners would benefit from instruction within the classroom.

Stahl and Heubach worked with the teachers to create an intervention that would support the learners’ reading development. Their program was both straightforward and based on significant amounts of scaffolded practice. One of the primary program goals was the provision of heavily scaffolded reading instruction to ensure that students have multiple opportunities to read each selection. The schools that first worked with the approach built their lesson plans around selections from the **basal reader** that were part of their literacy curriculum. Since then, however, teachers have experienced equal success using both *trade books* and **literature anthologies**. Should you decide to use FORI with either basal readers or literature anthologies, it is critical that you select collections designed for your class’s grade level. On the other hand, if you are working with trade books, we suggest employing a system that evaluates the reading levels for individual selections; for example, see Fountas and Pinnell (1999) or Gunning (1997), to help you select grade-level texts.

The FORI approach proved successful with the students in the initial study (Stahl & Heubach, 2005), with children making an average growth of 1.8 years in the first year of the intervention and 1.7 years in the second year on the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI; Leslie & Caldwell, 1995). FORI is a five-day program that is relatively easy to implement. However, if you decide to use this program, it is essential that the students read connected text for at least twenty to thirty minutes per day. So, for example, if you are using poems or other short selections, your learners will not be spending sufficient time engaged with print for their word recognition to become automatic. It is, therefore, critical that you find alternatives, such as older anthologies that your school may have kept from previous years. In fact, FORI seems so easy that you may be tempted to treat it casually, but recent research has shown that without sufficient attention to text length, time-on-task, and purposeful implementation of the procedures, the approach quickly loses its effectiveness. Conversely, when teachers implement the approach with adequate attention to details, the program is more effective than alternatives such as round-robin reading or reader's workshop.

Allowing for some variability in terms of the number of days it takes to cover a given selection (i.e., longer texts may require additional days), we have found that the five-day lesson plan presented in Table 3.1 and explained in the lesson snapshot works well with most texts, no matter what the source (i.e., literature anthologies, basal readers, or trade books). Further, teachers have found the FORI format to be very helpful in a number of ways: first, it provides students access to material that would be too difficult for them to read on their own, thereby exposing them to richer vocabulary and a broader range of concepts than they would otherwise have access to; second, the students tend to enjoy the regularity of the procedure (for example, on several occasions, we have seen

Table 3.1

Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction

Monday (Day 1)	Tuesday (Day 2)	Wednesday (Day 3)	Thursday (Day 4)	Friday (Day 5)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher introduces selection to class using prereading activities • Teacher reads the selection to class while class follows along • Teacher and class discuss selection to develop text comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher and students echo read selection • Comprehension should be developed through various strategies such as teacher and student questioning, visualization, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher and students choral read selection • Additional comprehension activities can be undertaken, but the primary focus of Day 3 is the choral reading of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students partner read selection • Additional comprehension activities can be undertaken, but the primary focus of Day 4 is the partner reading of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students complete postreading extension activities • Activities may include writing in response to story, discussion of character motivations, summarization, etc.

kids come in and ask, “today is partner [or choral or echo] reading, isn’t it?”); and third, teachers find that the structure reduces the stress of trying to create entirely new lesson plans on a weekly basis.

Lesson Snapshot

The FORI procedure usually follows a five-day lesson plan, allowing you to cover approximately one story per week, as follows:

Day 1

- Introduce each week’s selection with the prereading activities that you would normally use to introduce a story. These can include teaching key vocabulary words, making predictions, or developing the students’ background knowledge regarding the subject matter.

- Read the text aloud while students follow along in their own copy. It is important to circulate around the room to ensure that your students are following along. Further, some students may need to track the print as you read to them. This helps them follow along with your reading and keeps them from getting lost or becoming stuck on an unfamiliar word or phrase.
- Engage your students in a discussion of the story by extending the text (what do you think happened to the characters after the story ended?); discussing character motivation (why do you think a given character made a particular choice?); or developing your students' empathy (would you have made the same decision as the character in a given situation? why or why not?). This first day focuses your students' attention on two important elements of literacy learning: the fluent rendering of a text and the construction of meaning.
- Students should read a book of their own choosing for homework.

Day 2

- Conduct an echo reading of the text with your students (see Chapter 1 for an explanation of the echo reading procedure). If your learners are already familiar with the process of echo reading, try longer chunks of text, at least a paragraph or two at a time, so that they are not relying on their verbal memory to echo the text back to you. If this is their first encounter with echo reading, make sure to only read a sentence or two before asking them to echo the text, at least until they become comfortable with the procedure. This should take only a few weeks. As the students become familiar with the process, start to expand the amount of material being read to a paragraph or two—or as much as a page, if either your students are very comfortable with the process or the layout of the selection is such that the amount of text on a single page is not overwhelming. And remember to circulate around the

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room to guarantee that students are participating in the reading of the text and not reciting from memory.

- Another vital piece of the second day's instruction involves ensuring that your readers focus on the meaning of the selection and not just on word recognition. This can be accomplished in several ways. For instance, you can integrate questions within the text at appropriate pausing points to check that students understand the meaning of a new vocabulary word or a particular event. Alternatively, ask students to summarize sections of texts in pairs, with each partner taking a turn in revolving order. Or have students create questions to ask each other about the story and give them the opportunity to pose their questions to their peers. A number of comprehension strategies could work at this point in the lesson; for example, see Cooper and Kiger (2005) or Gunning (2002).
- Students should also take the text home and read the story aloud to a family member or friend for additional practice starting on Day 2.

Day 3

- The third day is the shortest in terms of the amount of time spent reading the text. On this day, choral read the selections with your students. Choral reading simply involves you and your students' reading the text in unison (see Chapter 1 for a description of the choral reading procedure); however, pay particular attention to students who may experience trouble keeping up with their peers. As was suggested for the preceding days, it is helpful to circulate around the room, refocusing students who have lost their place simply by pointing out where the class is reading or by making sure they are looking at the material rather than out the window!
- At this point, what students read for homework depends on how fluently they appear to be reading the week's primary selection. If they seem to be fairly comfortable with the text,

you can give them the option of reading something of their own choosing. If, on the other hand, they seem to need additional practice, ask them to reread the main selection out loud to a family member or friend.

Day 4

- The final reading of the story incorporates a partner reading of the selection. Partner reading involves dividing the class into pairs of readers and having each member of the pair read alternate pages of text (see Chapter 1 for a description of effective partner reading procedures as well as ways to select partners). Because the students have already covered the material at least three times, if one reader experiences difficulty with the text, their partner will likely be able to provide assistance. You should once again circulate among the students during this period in order to provide additional help as needed. Once partners have completed reading the text, and if time allows, they can reread the material again; however, on this second reading students should read the pages opposite those they read earlier to ensure that both children read the entire text at least once during this period.
- For homework, follow the outline for Day 3: students who are reading the primary text fluently can read a text of their own choosing, whereas struggling readers read the week's selection one last time.

Day 5

- The final day of the weekly lesson plan consists of extension activities to develop a richer understanding of the text; these can include student-led discussions (perhaps following a literature circle model), written responses or alternative endings to the text, or an artistic response to the selection (see Cooper and Kiger [2005] or Gunning [2002], for examples of additional comprehension activities).
- Students can read a book of their own choosing for homework.

Wide Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (Wide FORI)

The other whole-class approach is that of Wide Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (Wide FORI; Kuhn et al., 2006). As mentioned earlier, when Steven Stahl and I (2003) reviewed the research on fluency instruction, it appeared to us that the scaffolded reading of many texts frequently produced outcomes similar to the repeated reading of a single text. Further studies conducted with second graders have indicated that Wide Reading¹ is highly effective at improving reading fluency. As with the FORI approach, Wide FORI is heavily scaffolded. Unlike the FORI approach, which involves the repeated reading of a single text, Wide FORI involves reading multiple texts over the course of a week.

Because Wide FORI calls for three sets of texts over the course of each week, you may need to be creative to ensure you have enough reading material available for your learners. For the original study (Kuhn et al., 2006), each class used the school's basal reader or literature anthology as the week's first selection and grade-level trade books for the second and third texts. Based on this format, if your class is currently using a basal program or a literature anthology, its selections can serve as your primary text each week. It is likely to be more difficult to procure two class sets of trade books for each week of the school year, so you may need to do some creative thinking to find enough selections to undertake this program. For example, if your school is using a guided reading program, it is likely that, between your colleagues and the school library, you will be able to find enough copies of a given book to create a class set. One school we worked with was able to locate twenty-four copies of *Frog and Toad Are Friends* (Lobel, 1970) this way. Older versions of basals may also be stored somewhere in the school, perhaps in a storage closet or in the basement, and these

could be used as an additional text. Further, schools often subscribe to student magazines such as *My Weekly Reader* or *National Geographic Kids*; these contain substantive articles, both in terms of content and length, that can be used for a reading. Finally, grade-appropriate material can be downloaded from the Internet, and copies can be made for each student in the class.

Despite the differences between the number of texts used, the FORI and Wide FORI approaches have several similarities: Wide FORI is also a five-day program that is relatively easy to implement as part of your shared reading program; comprehension is brought to the fore in both methods; both programs call for students to spend at least twenty to thirty minutes per day reading connected text; and classroom-based research has also shown the Wide FORI approach to be successful (Kuhn et al., 2006). In a recent study, students using the Wide FORI and FORI approaches made significantly greater growth on standardized measures of comprehension and word recognition in isolation than did their peers who used alternative reading methods. Interestingly, the students in the Wide FORI group also did better than their peers in either the FORI or the other reading groups in terms of correct words read per minute. This indicates that, while both the FORI and the Wide FORI approaches are effective, the use of multiple texts may be preferable. As a result, we recommend the Wide FORI approach as our first choice, if it is at all possible for you to implement it within your classroom.

Teachers have generally found that the lesson plans provided for this approach are an effective way to incorporate three selections into a typical school week. Note, however, that if you are using lengthy selections, you may not be able to cover three texts within the five-day lesson plan described in the lesson snapshot and outlined in Table 3.2. Since the use of multiple texts offers learners access to a broader range of vocabulary and concepts than does a

Table 3.2**Wide Reading**

Monday (Day 1)	Tuesday (Day 2)	Wednesday (Day 3)	Thursday (Day 4)	Friday (Day 5)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher introduces selection to class using prereading activities • Teacher reads the selection to class while class follows along • Teacher and class discuss selection to develop text comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher and students echo read the first selection • Comprehension should be developed through various strategies such as teacher and student questioning, visualization, etc. • If time allows, a second reading (choral or partner) should take place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students complete postreading extension activities • Activities may include writing in response to story, discussion of character motivations, summarization, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher and students echo read a second selection • Comprehension should be developed through various strategies such as teacher and student questioning, predicting, etc. • If time allows a choral or partner reading of the second selection can occur • Students can complete postreading extension activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher and students echo read a third selection • Comprehension should be developed through various strategies such as teacher and student questioning, predicting, etc. • If time allows a choral or partner reading of the third selection can occur • Students can complete postreading extension activities

single selection, the Wide FORI approach may better counter the gap that begins to occur as early as the primary grades between more skilled readers and their struggling peers. By helping all students become skilled readers, this procedure aids in laying the groundwork for independent reading success in later grades. As with all the fluency approaches presented in this book, it is critical that these texts be substantial enough to deserve the focus of a twenty- to forty-minute daily reading lesson.

Lesson Snapshot

The five-day procedure focuses on one primary text—and incorporates a limited amount of repetition for that selection, after which a single reading of the second and third texts is typical:

Day 1

- Day 1 parallels that of the FORI approach. Begin by introducing each week’s selection with the prereading activities that you would normally use. These can include building background knowledge, making predictions, and preteaching important vocabulary words that the students will encounter as they read the text.
- Next, you should read the text aloud while your students follow along in their own copy. Since some students may drift off-task during your reading, it is important to circulate around the room to ensure students are following along. It may also be necessary to have some students track what is being read as you read to them.
- End the first day’s lesson with an engaged discussion of the selection among you and your students. As with the FORI approach, the goals for Day 1 are to provide your students with a fluent rendering of the text and to develop their comprehension of the material (see Day 1 of the FORI approach for some ideas for the discussion).
- Students should read a book of their own choosing for homework.

Day 2

- On Day 2, conduct an echo reading of the text with your students. As explained earlier, if your learners are familiar with

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this process, begin by reading passages between a paragraph or two and a page long so that your students are not relying on their verbal memory. But if your students are unfamiliar with this procedure, start by reading only a sentence or two and build up to longer passages over the course of several weeks.

- In addition to giving your students the opportunity to develop their word recognition, it is also important that you work on expanding your readers' comprehension of the selection on Day 2. As was discussed for the FORI component, a number of comprehension strategies could work here, including embedding teacher-directed questions within the text, summarization, and the use of student-created questions at predetermined stopping points (see Cooper and Kiger [2005] or Gunning [2002] for further suggestions).
- Finally, if there is time, the students can partner read the text at this point as well.
- On Day 2, the homework should consist of reading the text aloud to a family member or friend for additional practice.

Day 3

- The Wide FORI approach begins to diverge from its FORI counterpart on Day 3. Rather than rereading the primary text again, the focus is on postreading. A number of extension activities can be employed to further develop your students' comprehension at this point (see Cooper and Kiger [2005] or Gunning [2002] for further suggestions).
- What students read for homework on Day 3 depends on their fluency with the week's primary text. If they appear to be fairly fluent with the selection, they should choose another text they want to read, however, if they appear to need additional practice, ask them to reread the primary text again.

Days 4 and 5

- The fourth and fifth days parallel one another and involve the echo reading of the second and third texts. Since you may only read these texts once as a class, it is important that you focus on comprehension of the stories as well, either through a structured activity, such as the Directed Reading Thinking Activity, or through informal questioning and discussion.
- If there is sufficient time on a given day, have the students read the texts a second time, either by choral or partner reading the selection.
- Students should also read each of these texts aloud to a family member or friend for homework on Thursday (the second text) and Friday (the third text) in order to receive additional practice.

Conducting Effective Whole-Class Instruction—Some Final Thoughts

Before leaving these two approaches, we would like to emphasize some final thoughts. These approaches have helped promote the fluency development of second graders across several studies (Kuhn et al., 2006; Stahl & Heubach, 2005; Schwanenflugel et al., under review) and have set the stage for fluency development in several ways. Both make use of challenging material that exposes children to a variety of concepts, vocabulary, and ideas that might not be accessible through instructional-level texts. Exposure to such texts also helps to establish ideas and phrases in students' memory and leads to better fluency and comprehension of future texts (Logan, 1997). Further, these programs provide students with extensive scaffolding as they read these texts; and both programs require children to spend at least twenty to forty minutes per day focusing on complex texts.

Finally, both programs include at least some repeated reading, a procedure that has also been shown to improve text comprehension (Walczyk et al., 2004). However, of the two methods, the Wide FORI approach has been more consistent in accelerating learners' fluency and comprehension, so we recommend it as the preferred approach if at all possible.

Study Guide Questions

- How does the use of repetition help students become fluent readers?
- How does the reading of multiple texts with support also assist students in becoming fluent readers?
- Do you think repetition or wide reading might benefit comprehension more? Why?
- Of the two approaches to shared reading presented in this chapter, which do you think would work best in your classroom? Why?
- Select one of your shared reading texts and think through how it could be used as part of a FORI or Wide Reading lesson. Is it sufficiently complex and lengthy for the approach? What prereading activities would you use to facilitate understanding? What questions could you ask to begin discussion? What questions could you embed in the echo reading to deepen your students' comprehension? What extension activities would be appropriate for the selection?

Notes

1. Wide Reading incorporates any single scaffolded reading of texts that allow students to spend substantial amounts of time reading with support and differs from a more general use of wide reading where students simply read large amounts of texts on their own.



Chapter 4

Fluency and Differentiated Instruction

Working with Flexible Groups

Instructional Approach	Grade Levels	Grouping	Type of Text
Oral Recitation Lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Originally grade 2Can be used with grade 3 and above	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Originally small-group instructionCan be used for whole-class instruction depending on the selections and students' needs	Longer, challenging texts, including basals, chapter books, novels, speeches, longer poems, etc. (20–30 minutes reading per day)
Fluency-Oriented Oral Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Originally grade 2Can be used with grade 3 and above	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Originally small-group instructionCan be used as a supplement for whole-class instructionCan be used in a tutorial situation with one or two students	Challenging texts including short chapter books, longer poems, speeches, etc. (15–20 minutes reading per lesson)
Wide Fluency-Oriented Oral Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Originally grade 2Can be used with grade 3 and above	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Originally small-group instructionCan be used as a supplement for whole-class instructionCan be used in a tutorial situation with one or two students	Challenging texts including short chapter books, longer poems, speeches, etc. (15–20 minutes reading per lesson)
Supported Oral Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Originally grade 2Primary and elementary grades (excluding first)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Originally small-group instructionCan be used as a supplement for whole-class instruction	Longer, challenging texts, including basals, chapter books, novels, speeches, longer poems, etc. (20–30 minutes reading per day)

- What role does fluency play in differentiated instruction?
- What approaches to fluency instruction are effective for flexible grouping?



Fluency Instruction for Flexible Groups

Given that most students make the transition to fluent reading around the second and third grades (e.g., Chall, 1996), it makes sense that strategies designed for your whole class are most appropriate for those learners. However, you will find that some students in the early grades are already fairly fluent readers and others are still working on basics such as concepts of print and phonemic awareness. As such, fluency approaches such as Wide Reading and FORI are not going to be the best option for these students. Similarly, you may have groups of older readers who have not made the transition to fluent reading and who would benefit from instruction that focuses on this area, even though these strategies would not be appropriate for your whole class. In terms of text level as well, you may find that what constitutes challenging text for some of your learners is not sufficiently challenging for others or, on the opposite end of the spectrum, some material may actually be so challenging for a group of your students that they will not be able to benefit from its use no matter how much scaffolding you incorporate. In any of these situations, you will likely want to use **flexible grouping** as a means of meeting the varied needs of your learners.

One option is to use the Wide FORI or FORI (Kuhn et al., 2006) approaches discussed in the previous chapter with smaller groups. The weekly lesson plans for both methods are readily adaptable.

One teacher divided her class into two groups to ensure that her most struggling readers had greater opportunities for support. By dividing the class into a small group of struggling readers (about six students) and a larger group of students (about eighteen) who were not experiencing such difficulties, she was able to better meet the needs of all her students. Several other approaches can also help you meet your needs within a flexible grouping format. These methods are designed specifically for small groups of learners and can assume a more adaptable role in your overall literacy curriculum as a result. The principles of support, modeling, focus on phrasing, extensive opportunity for practice (Rasinski, 2003), and use of challenging text (e.g., Kuhn, 2005) nevertheless remain critical components of these practices—whether you are working with students in the second and third grade or readers in grade four and beyond.

Oral Recitation Lesson (ORL)

The Oral Recitation Lesson (ORL) is a seminal method designed by Jim Hoffman (1987), along with Susan Crone (Hoffman & Crone, 1985), that has served as a model for many of the approaches in both this chapter and the proceeding one (so the framework may seem familiar). The authors were searching for alternative approaches to round-robin reading in order to make more effective use of basal readers. After exploring oral reading practices from the nineteenth century, they found two forms of literacy instruction that seemed particularly relevant: the recitation lesson and the story method. Both approaches were effective at developing expressive reading and increasing comprehension among readers, so Hoffman and Crone designed the Oral Recitation Lesson around the principles found in these two methods. The ORL was initially developed for groups of second graders who were experiencing difficulties reading their grade-level basals; however, by using speeches or literature as your

reading material, ORL can readily be adapted for a broader range of students, including students beyond the second and third grade.

According to the authors, three principles were central to the effectiveness of the recitation lesson and the story method. First is comprehension, which was dealt with early in the lessons to emphasize its role as the primary reason for reading; this is particularly important for struggling readers, who often develop the mistaken notion that the main goal of reading is word identification. By focusing students on comprehension early in the lesson, you increase the likelihood they will learn that accurate word recognition is important only insofar as it allows access to a text's meaning. Second is modeling. Before asking the students to read the text themselves, teachers were expected to model the material by reading it aloud as the students followed along. This was important because it provided the learners with a prosodic interpretation of the material and allowed them to hear the text being read accurately and automatically. Third is repetition, which was used to scaffold the learners' reading as they developed comfort with the text.

When reflecting on the ORL's initial implementation, Jim Hoffman noted, "many of the basal reader stories could be described as non-stories" (1987, p. 371) with minimal plot and character development and limited vocabulary and language structures. While this remains a problem with some materials currently in use, recent editions of literature anthologies and basal readers by and large incorporate more sophisticated text selections, minimizing the likelihood of encountering this particular problem. If you do find that selections in your reading program are not substantive enough to merit a significant proportion of your class time, I suggest that you find alternative sources of material to serve as the basis of this ORL instruction. These can range from science or social studies textbooks to trade books to weekly student magazines that make use of more natural language and more complex concepts.

Lesson Snapshot

The Oral Recitation Lesson was intended to create effective instruction using narrative selections from the basal readers that were the dominant instructional materials of the 1980s, but it can be used with any material that is of reasonable length and is appropriately challenging for your readers. The procedure itself incorporates five components divided into two basic phases, which should occur over several days, or possibly a school week, depending on the length and complexity of the selection. The first phase, direct instruction, incorporates a comprehension, a practice, and a performance component. The second phase, indirect instruction, involves practicing to mastery.

- The procedure begins with the comprehension component, in which you read a selection aloud to your class. Use appropriate expression and phrasing so your students can hear the pronunciation of any unknown words and where appropriate breaks occur. This models the type of oral reading you will be expecting from them. By providing them with the opportunity to hear the text as a whole, you are also building their understanding of the selection in its entirety. Since the students will eventually be responsible for reading a section of the text themselves, it is critical that they follow along in their own copy of the selection. By circulating around the room, you can note whether your students are following along and redirect any of them who have lost their place or are off-task. It may also be helpful for you to introduce your students to the text prior to your initial reading by using prereading activities, such as asking prediction questions, building background knowledge, and introducing unknown vocabulary words.
- Following completion of the reading, you and your students should discuss the story in order to expand their understanding of the material. In the original intervention designed by

continued

Hoffman and Crone, this involved constructing a story map with the students (e.g., identifying the setting, characters, main events, and resolution), but a number of other comprehension-based activities would also be appropriate choices. For example, you and your students could create a summary of the selection, discuss character motivation, or generate drawings based on the key events or important points in the readings.

- The second component of the direct instruction phase involves various fluency strategies. Depending on how much assistance your students need, you could ask them to echo or choral read the selection (it is worth noting that echo reading provides more scaffolding than does choral reading; see Chapter 1 for a detailed description of these two strategies). This component is meant to reemphasize prosodic reading and move students away from the word-by-word reading common to disfluent readers and toward reading that incorporates appropriate expression, phrasing, and automatic word recognition. Should you feel that your students would benefit from additional supported readings, you can revisit this step before moving on to the next component, performance.
- In the final component of the direct instruction phase, students select and practice a section of the text; in Hoffman and Crone's original study, the length of these sections was usually about one page, but this may vary depending on the amount of text per page and the reading ability of your learners. This independent practice not only allows the students to develop their fluency, but also gives them the opportunity to create their own interpretation of the text. Once students become comfortable reading their selection, they can choose to read it aloud to their classmates. Peers are invited to provide positive feedback for the reader. However, if a student does not want to read aloud in front of other children, don't force him. As students see their friends perform, they will likely develop a willingness to read aloud themselves.

- The second phase of the ORL, indirect instruction, involves additional practice on the stories being used by the class. This component was added to Hoffman and Crone’s original intervention because the students, all of whom were struggling readers, required the extra practice in order to master the passage. During this phase, students who have not achieved mastery of their passage are asked to practice the selection they are working on for ten minutes a day. They are expected to practice the text until they are able to read it with at least 98 percent accuracy, at a rate of seventy-five correct words per minute or higher, and with appropriate expression. If some of your learners could benefit from additional practice, you may want to integrate this component into your curriculum during your classroom “down times,” perhaps in the mornings before lessons get under way or during independent reading period. Your students should reread their section of the text using either mumble or **whisper reading** and should be encouraged to take copies of the stories home for extra practice as well. Once they have achieved the established criteria with a given text, urge them to begin reading a book of their own choosing until the class begins to work with their next selection.
- This extra practice was deemed unnecessary for students who were not struggling. Should you use a more challenging text with these readers, the indirect instruction component may be a necessary addition to your lessons for all your students.

Fluency-Oriented Oral Reading (FOOR) and Wide Fluency-Oriented Oral Reading (Wide FOOR)

The next approaches, Fluency-Oriented Oral Reading (FOOR) and Wide Fluency-Oriented Oral Reading (Wide FOOR) (Kuhn, 2005), were designed to explore repetition versus **scaffolded wide reading**,

or reading a variety of texts with significant support (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of the role both types of instruction play in fluency development). As with many other fluency methods, I designed the intervention to use challenging text that required significant amounts of scaffolding. Since I was working with struggling second grade readers, this meant using texts ranging from a late-first- to an early-third-grade reading level (e.g., Gunning, 1997; Fountas & Pinnell, 1999), and included titles such as *The Fire Cat* (Averill, 1988), *The Case of the Dumb Bells* (Bonsall, 1982), and *Whistle for Willie* (Keats, 1977) (for a list of all the titles used in the original study, see Table 4.1). But this approach is readily adapted for work with small groups of older readers. Just remember to select reading material that is appropriately challenging for your students' reading level.

In order to determine the effectiveness of FOOR and Wide FOOR for small-group instruction, I initially worked with four groups of five or six second graders, although you could have fewer students in the group, and it would certainly be possible to use these procedures in a one-on-one tutoring situation. I met three times a week for approximately fifteen to twenty minutes per session with three of the groups. The first group used a modified repeated readings technique, or Fluency-Oriented Oral Reading (FOOR). This consisted of my echo or choral reading a single trade book three times over the course of a week with the students (i.e., we read the same book each time we met). With the second group, I used Wide Fluency-Oriented Oral Reading (Wide FOOR); this involved echo or choral reading three different texts per week, or one new text for each session. The third group simply listened to the same stories used with the Wide FOOR students, but were not provided with their own copy of the texts. The fourth group did not receive any extra reading instruction beyond what was occurring during their classroom literacy instruction.

While the approaches were fairly straightforward, the results were quite interesting. To begin with, both the FOOR and the Wide

Table 4.1

Books Used for Intervention

<i>The Golly Sisters Go West</i> (1985) by Betsy Byars (K)*
<i>Hooray for the Golly Sisters!</i> (1990) by Betsy Byars (K)
<i>Whistle for Willie</i> (1977) by Jack Ezra Keats (L)*
<i>Harry the Dirty Dog</i> (1984) by Gene Zion (2)
<i>Big Max</i> (1992) by Kin Platt (J)*
<i>The Fire Cat</i> (1988) by Esther Averill (J)
<i>Amelia Bedelia</i> (1992) by Peggy Parish (L)
<i>Come Back, Amelia Bedelia</i> (1995) by Peggy Parish (K)*
<i>Frog and Toad Are Friends</i> (1970) by Arnold Lobel (K)
<i>Frog and Toad Together</i> (1979) by Arnold Lobel (K)*
<i>Bedtime for Frances</i> (1995) by Russell Hoban (K)
<i>The Case of the Dumb Bells</i> (1982) by Crosby Bonsall (K)*
<i>The Case of the Cat's Meow</i> (1978) by Crosby Bonsall (K)
<i>Arthur's Funny Money</i> (1984) by Lillian Hoban (K)
<i>Arthur's Prize Reader</i> (1984) by Lillian Hoban (K)
<i>Aunt Eater Loves a Mystery</i> (1987) by Doug Cushman (K)
<i>Aunt Eater's Mystery Vacation</i> (1993) by Doug Cushman (K)
<i>The Case of the Two Masked Robbers</i> (1988) by Lillian Hoban (K)

Note: Titles marked with an asterisk indicate books read by Fluency-Oriented Oral Reading group; the remaining texts were used by the Wide Reading Instruction group and the Listening-Only group. Letters represent guided reading levels (Fountas & Pinnell, 1999).

FOOR groups did better than either the students who simply listened to the texts or the students who did not get any additional literacy instruction on measures that looked at word recognition in isolation, prosody, and correct words per minute. Further, the Wide FOOR group made greater growth in terms of comprehension than any of the other groups. It seems possible that this last result may be due to the types of tasks required by the differing reading approaches; while there was some discussion of the readings during these sessions, there was no specific comprehension instruction. Consequently, the students may have developed their own sense of what to focus on during the lessons. That is, since repetition was used in the FOOR group, the students in that group may have thought they were rereading a single text per week primarily to improve their word recognition and prosody, whereas the students in the Wide FOOR group may have thought they were reading multiple texts to construct meaning as well. It may be that such differences in implicit purposes are reflected in the differing outcomes on the measure of comprehension. It is important to note that similar results have been found in other repeated reading studies (e.g., O'Shea, Sindelar, & O'Shea, 1985, 1987) and that merely by asking students to focus on the meaning of the story, student comprehension has improved. Given this, it may be that by adding a meaning-focus to the lessons, the students in the FOOR group could have made gains in comprehension similar to those made by the students in the Wide FOOR group.

Both FOOR and Wide FOOR can be used as part of a flexible grouping format with anywhere from two to six students or in a one-on-one tutorial setting across grade levels, starting in second grade. The approaches are based on a Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule, although any days are fine so long as students are given the opportunity to read challenging material with support for significant periods of time (fifteen to twenty minutes per session).

You can use these approaches throughout the school year, but you should reevaluate how well the students are able to read material at a given level every few weeks. This will allow you to determine when the students are ready to advance to the next reading level; it is essential that you keep raising the reading level of the texts so that the material remains challenging. These evaluations will also tell you when students are ready for grade-level material as their instructional level text. At this point, you will need to determine whether to maintain a fluency component as part of their reading instruction or whether an alternative focus, say on comprehension instruction, may be more beneficial. The answer to this may, in fact, be complicated. Even if your learners are fairly fluent with grade-level material, you may want to continue with this instructional strand in order to further solidify their reading fluency. On the other hand, if students have become comfortable with grade-level material, it may be more productive to minimize or even eliminate their fluency instruction. What you decide will depend on the varying needs of each group of learners and is likely to change from year to year.

Lesson Snapshot

Day 1 (FOOR and Wide FOOR)

- Briefly discuss what the story may be about based on the title and the cover of the book. Since you are likely to have a limited amount of time, and since the focus of this activity is to develop reading fluency, comprehension should be dealt with as you read the text rather than through distinct instructional activities.
- Echo read the selection with your students. As your students' word recognition improves, switch occasionally to choral

continued

reading for the initial reading (see Chapter 1 for a more in-depth discussion of these strategies).

- Interweave questions as you go through the story, stopping occasionally to ask students to predict or clarify the story, and explain new or interesting words or terms as you encounter them. After completing the story, you can involve your students in a short, informal discussion of the story.
- If time allows, complete either a second echo or choral reading of the story or a section of the story.

Days 2 and 3 (Wide FOOR)

- The second and third days of the Wide FOOR approach follow the same procedure as on Day 1, but with a second and third text. This material could include sets of books taken from a guided reading program, selections from a basal series or literature anthology, trade books garnered from the school and classroom libraries, student magazines, or selections gathered from websites. As long as the material remains challenging and all the students have their own copies, virtually any type of text can be used.

Day 2 (FOOR)

- On the second day of the FOOR procedure, have the students partner read the week's selection (see Chapter 1 for a more detailed discussion of this procedure). Students should work in pairs with one student reading the even pages and the other student reading the odd pages. Because there will be a maximum of three pairs of students, you can easily circulate and assist students with any difficulty they encounter. Alternatively, you can act as a partner for one of the students should there be any absences. After the students have completed the first partner reading of the story, if there is enough time, they can switch pages and read through all or part of the text for a second time.

Day 3 (FOOR)

- On the third day, lead the students in a final choral reading of the story (again, see Chapter 1 for a further explanation of this approach). By this point, they should be fairly familiar with the text. If you feel students need greater support, echo read the selection with them instead. After completing this last rereading of the text, ask the students to volunteer to read a section of the material or complete a running record with each of your learners to determine how their reading of the text has developed.

Supported Oral Reading

Darrel Morris and Laurie Nelson (1992) have also created a successful fluency intervention for group instruction. Supported Oral Reading was originally designed for second graders whose reading was significantly below average, but has the potential to be used with other age groups. The authors developed the approach for an inner-city classroom where half of the class was reading below the primer level. The size of the discrepancy between the students' instructional level and their grade level led the authors to design a strategy that not only incorporated significant amounts of scaffolding but could also be implemented as part of the general literacy curriculum. The Supported Oral Reading lesson initially consisted of two twenty-minute sessions per week. During the first session the teacher and the students echo read a story; this was followed with the students' independent rereading of the selection at the second session.

However, the authors soon realized that one session of scaffolded reading did not adequately prepare students for the task of reading the text on their own. As a result, they rethought the design of their intervention and decided to increase the number of weekly

sessions to three, to incorporate the elements of modeling and discussion, and to increase the opportunities for student practice. These modifications helped ensure that the students had the support and practice necessary to read their assigned texts independently. According to Morris and Nelson, improvements in the students' reading could be seen in terms of rate, accuracy, and overall reading levels—not only for the passages practiced in class but for nonpracticed material as well. Moreover, all the participating students made gains on measures of word recognition, eight of the ten made significant gains on the Diagnostic Reading Scales, and their scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) ranged from 1.5 to 2.2—quite solid growth, given that these students were reading below the primer level at the beginning of the school year.

The three-day procedure can be integrated into your flexible grouping component most easily on an every-other-day schedule (e.g., Monday, Wednesday, and Friday). As the authors determined in their work with struggling readers, the lessons must be implemented at least three days a week if students are to develop sufficient comfort with one text before moving on to another. As with other approaches discussed in this book, challenging material should be used. It is important that each student have his or her own copy of the text, but since you are not working with your entire class, consider sources of material beyond the shared reading texts you use for whole-class instruction. By identifying a variety of resources, you are guaranteeing that your students work with at least two different selections per week: the text you use for their primary literacy instruction and a second text for their Supported Oral Reading lessons. Research on wide reading shows that using multiple texts provides students with access to a broader range of vocabulary and concepts than is the case with a single text.

If you find that the students are not making adequate progress following this lesson plan, try adding an additional session prior

to Day 2 (partner reading), in which you echo or choral read the text with the students again in order to give them extra practice. Remember as the students' reading develops over the course of the year to provide them with increasingly challenging texts. Otherwise, the material will begin to represent their independent reading level and any further gains will be minimal. It is worth noting that the students in the original study demonstrated a positive attitude toward the sessions and that their attitude toward reading in general improved as well. Ultimately, that is the best possible outcome for any approach to reading instruction.

Lesson Snapshot

Day 1

- Begin the Supported Oral Reading lesson by expressively reading the week's selection to your students while they follow along in their own copies.
- As with most of the other approaches presented thus far, follow up with a discussion to develop your students' comprehension of the material—a process that allows the text to be dealt with as a whole.
- After completing the discussion, you and your students should either echo or mumble read the text (see Chapter 1 for a more in-depth discussion of echo reading). This ensures that your students have had the opportunity to read the text in a supported manner prior to attempting to read it independently.

Day 2

- The second day incorporates one, and possibly two, partner readings of the selection (see Chapter 1 for a more detailed

continued

discussion of this procedure). The children work in pairs for this activity, reading alternate pages of text.

- After completing the first partner reading of the text, ask students to select and practice a hundred-word passage from the story. They can practice their passage by mumble or whisper reading the selection quietly or by reading into “phones” that direct the students’ voices back to themselves (these can either be made with PVC pipes or bought at many educational supply stores).
- At the end of the session, if time permits, the students can reform into pairs for a second partner reading of the text—this time with each partner focusing on the pages opposite those they read initially.

Day 3

- On the final day, provide your students with an opportunity to read aloud the passage they practiced while you take a **running record** of their rendition. If the students still appear to be disfluent, you can ask them to continue to practice the selection over the weekend. If their reading is smooth and expressive, encourage them to read a book or some other text of their own choosing for homework.

Conducting Effective Instruction with Flexible Groups—Some Final Thoughts

Because the pace of your students’ literacy development is likely to fluctuate, especially as students move into the upper elementary grades and beyond, integrating fluency instruction into flexible reading groups may be the best way to meet the needs of all your learners. This will allow you to vary your curriculum so that oral reading instruction is targeted to those who will most benefit from

it. If you choose to use the approaches outlined in this chapter, remember that oral reading instruction should not be the entirety of your students' literacy curriculum, but instead serve as one element within it. Further, as students become increasingly fluent with text at a given reading level, it is important to use increasingly challenging material. As your learners become comfortable with text that is at or even somewhat above their grade level, you can phase out fluency-oriented instruction and replace it with additional comprehension instruction, writing activities, or even the opportunity to read an expanded range of fiction and informational texts.

Study Guide Questions

- Do you think fluency instruction is appropriate for some of your students but not others? If so, which ones? Or do you think that most of your students would benefit from some form of fluency instruction? What constitutes challenging texts variation by group?
- Which of the strategies listed in this chapter do you think would be most effective for your learners? Would you use the same approach for all the groups or would you use different strategies for different groups?
- Think about your class; how would you group your students for fluency instruction? Think about your groups; which approaches would you use with each of these different groups? Which texts would you use with the different groups (remembering that the texts used for fluency instruction need to be sufficiently challenging to warrant the amount of scaffolding provided by these approaches)?
- Select one of the approaches that you would like to use with one (or several) of your groups, along with an appropriate text. How would you go about implementing the method you selected with this particular group of students?

