

How Do We Know Repeated Reading is Effective?

The four instructional elements



Therrien (2004) examined many repeated reading studies completed between the 1990s and early 2000s. He identified four instructional elements related to improved reading fluency and comprehension.

- **Reading to an adult.** Although there are many variations to implementation (discussed later), studies where the student reads out loud to an adult at some point during the intervention showed significantly better results than studies in which the student read to a peer.
- **Clearly stated purpose focused on comprehension.** Studies where the intervention made it clear that the student's efforts were to improve overall reading proficiency had significantly better results than interventions where this was unclear or if it emphasised rate of reading.
- **Repeatedly reading passages 3-4 times.** Interventions in which students read three or four times produced significantly better effects than interventions in which students read fewer than three times. Additionally, there was no added benefit to reading a passage more than four times.

- **Establishing a reading goal and providing corrective feedback.** Studies in which students received corrective feedback on errors resulted in significantly better student outcomes than studies where students simply practised independently. Additionally, studies in which there was a clearly marked goal in the passage yielded better outcomes than studies without an indication of success for the students to meet.

Therrien (2004) found some aspects of repeated reading for which the results were unclear. He was not able to make definitive recommendations about whether students benefitted from (a) charting their performance regularly, (b) using different methods for reading with peers, or (c) having a model of fluent reading prior to practise. This does not mean that these practises are ineffective; their benefits simply have not yet been unambiguously demonstrated.

Reference:

Teaching Tutorial 6: Repeated Readings to Promote Fluency
Beth Harn, Ph.D., University of Oregon and David Chard, Ph.D., Southern Methodist University

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Therrien provided guidelines for effective repeated reading: Have students (a) read to an adult, (b) focus on comprehension, (c) reread passages 3-4 times, and (d) pursue a goal while receiving corrective feedback.