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The Fluency Curriculum and Text Elements that Support It

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This chapter describes:

•the importance of attending to the words in texts that students read as part of repeated and guided reading fluency instruction;

•a fluency curriculum that consists of high-frequency words and words with consistent rimes (i.e., vowel and consonant patterns) that appear frequently in texts for young children;

• evidence that the fluency levels of beginning and struggling readers are supported when repeated and guided reading occurs with texts that follow the fluency curriculum; and

• sources for texts that give students experiences with the fluency curriculum.

Young children participate in reading long before they are said to be reading. They listen and follow along as adults read to them. Often, they pick out words that they know in a book. For children to be described as reading, however, they need to be able to decipher the words in written texts and understand the ideas represented by the words. Children differ enormously, both at particular points in their development and within an age group, in their ability to read the same text. Consider, for example, how two second graders read a text that is a benchmark of mid second-grade reading on a widely used oral reading assessment (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)) (Good & Kaminski, 1996).

> My parents decided we were just too crowded in our apartment and we needed more room. At our new house my brother and I won't have to share a room anymore. The house has two bathrooms so we won't have to stand in line to use the bathroom anymore. (Good & Kaminski, 1996)

The first child, Jasmine, reads this excerpt at the rate of approximately 80 words correct per minute (wcpm), meaning that she is at the 50th percentile in oral reading fluency (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006). There are only a handful of words on which Jasmine hesitates, words such as *anymore, apartment,* and *bathroom.* Jasmine's reading shows that a fluent reader in an age cohort does not read every word in the text automatically. However, because she recognizes a sufficient number of the words in the text automatically, she can sustain her understanding of the text when attending to new, unknown words.

Marc, a student at the 15th percentile of a mid-second-grade age cohort, reads the same passage at 33 wcpm. After Marc pauses for five seconds on the words *parents, decided, crowded,* and *apartment*, Marc's teacher steps in and pronounces these words for him. Marc recognizes the words *share* and *brother* only after pausing and studying the words. He makes several attempts at *bathrooms* and *anymore*, finally coming up with the correct words. The number of words that Marc does not recognize automatically means that his rate of reading is sufficiently slow to impede comprehension. Marc is an example of a dysfluent reader and is likely to be labeled a struggling reader in subsequent grades.

By the middle of second grade, Jasmine has developed automatic recognition of words that occur frequently in written language—a proficiency that is part of fluency. By contrast, Marc has trouble with words that appear frequently in written English, such as *share, brother, decided,*

parents, and *crowded*. To use context and phonics effectively in order to recognize rarer words in the texts he has to read, Marc needs to automatically recognize the words that comprise the bulk of texts. In my thinking about fluency, these highly and moderately frequent words are what make up the word zone "fluency curriculum."

This paper addresses three questions: (a) What is the word zone fluency curriculum? (b) How do texts affect students' fluency? and (c) Where can teachers find texts that support students' fluency?

What is the Word Zone Fluency Curriculum?

In the state standards of the two largest American states, California and Texas, which are the home to approximately one-fifth of the nation's students, the terms *grade-appropriate* or *grade-level text* are used but never defined, leaving the meaning of grade-appropriate or grade-level text unclear. This lack of clarity becomes apparent when the grade levels assigned to the same texts are compared. For example, *Officer Buckle and Gloria* (Rathman, 1995) is considered a middle of the second-grade text of the most widely used program in California (Cooper et al., 2003). By contrast, this very same text also appears in the middle of the third-grade textbook of the most widely used program in Texas (Farr et al., 2001). What accounts for this discrepancy? It is unclear. Neither the California nor Texas state standards provide any information that would lead to an understanding of this full-year difference in grade appropriate texts.

Insight into the words that make up the bulk of texts comes from analyses of popular textbooks. The most recent of these, conducted by Zeno, Ivens, Millard, and Duvvuri (1995), sampled 17.25 million words came from schoolbooks of different content areas from kindergarten through college. Zeno et al. were able to estimate the number of times unique or

different words can be expected to appear in a sample of one million words. From this database, I identified seven *word zones* (Hiebert, 2005a) that appear in Table 1.

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Insert Table 1 about here

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The word zones differ in size and also in the number of times the words in them can be expected to appear in a million-word sample of words. the number of words in the highly frequent zones is relatively small (930) compared to the number of words in the least frequent zone (135,000).

I use this concept of word zones to think about the texts in popular standardized tests of reading fluency such as the Gray Oral Reading Test discussed earlier (GORT, see Chapter X [C1]) (Wiederholt & Bryant, 2001). Through grade two, 97% or more of the words on the GORT come from zones 0-2. By the end of grade 4, highly frequent words still account for a high percentage (86%) with moderately frequent words accounting for 11% of the words and rare words for only 2%. Rare words do not account for an appreciable percentage of words (31-38%) until grades 9 and 10. At least in measuring oral reading fluency on a widely used measure such as the GORT, automatic recognition of highly frequent words figures heavily.

This is no accident. William S. Gray, the conceptual source of the GORT and also of the "Dick and Jane" readers (Gray, Monroe, Artley, Arbuthnot, & Gray, 1956), believed that proficient reading depended on learning high-frequency words. Gray was right in that the frequency rating of a word influences readers' recognition of words (Rayner, 1977). In his exclusive focus on highly frequent words, Gray failed to recognize the importance of phonetically regular words. Numerous rimes (i.e., vowels and subsequent consonants) appear consistently in a large number of words that occur commonly in texts for young children (Wylie

& Durrell, 1970). An example of a consistent, common rime is *at* which appears in five words among the 1,000 most-frequent words: *at, that, cat, hat,* and *sat* as well as additional four words among the 5,000 most-frequent words: *bat, fat, flat, rat*. Beginning readers recognize words with consistent, common rimes more readily than words that have inconsistent or infrequent rimes (Thompson, Cottrell, & Fletcher-Flinn, 1996). Fluent reading depends on automatic recognition of common, consistent letter-sound patterns *and* of high-frequency words.

In this chapter, I describe a model of fluency development that addresses the features of text that students read as part of fluency instruction as well as instructional activities such as the guided and repeated reading. Similar to Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI) (Stahl & Heubach, 2005) that underlies most of the chapters in this volume, the model that underlies the work of this chapter emphasizes guided and repeated reading as important mechanisms in the development of fluency. Unlike the FORI perspective, the model underlying this chapter's work is that the texts used for guided and repeated practice matter. Texts, not just instructional activities, are important factors in the instruction and intervention of fluency.

The model that underlies this chapter is called the TExT (Text Elements by Task) model (Hiebert, 2002). In this model, the percentage of words within a text that come from different word zones and that have particular vowel patterns can be used to establish how easy or difficult a text is for beginning and struggling readers. The curriculum moves from texts with high percentages of words with simple vowel patterns and highly frequent words to texts with progressively more complex vowel patterns and less frequent words. The curriculum is presented in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

The word zone fluency curriculum in Table 2 is proposed as a source for selecting texts for fluency practice for beginning and struggling readers. According to the TExT model, beginning and struggling readers need a substantial amount of practice with carefully chosen texts that have a large percentage of words from particular zones and with particular vowel and syllabic patterns. Texts that have a high proportion of high-frequency words and simple vowels in one-syllable words also are likely to have few words that are rare and multisyllabic (i.e., difficult to recognize for beginning and struggling readers).

The curriculum based on the TExT model is not intended as a guide in the selection of texts for all students, such as those who are proficient readers even as first or second graders. Further, while beginning and struggling readers may benefit from receiving a good number of texts at these levels, they should not be limited to reading only texts that fall within this range. However, without automatic recognition of the words that account for large percentages of texts (i.e., the word zones that are lower in the curriculum and simple rather than complex or variant vowel patterns), children's meaningful reading of text will be jeopardized. Students who aren't proficient grade-level readers will need lots of experiences with texts in which these two types of words (i.e., high-frequency and one-syllable words with simple vowels) account for the majority of the words in the texts.

How Do Texts Affect Students' Fluency?

This section brings research to bear on the question of how texts affect students' fluency by: (a) describing the features of current texts, (b) summarizing research on what texts have been used in successful fluency interventions, and (c) presenting a project where texts that emphasize the fluency curriculum have been developed and tested.

Features of Current Texts and the Fluency Curriculum

The distributions of the words in texts that students commonly experience in school reading instruction are given in Table 3 and excerpts from these texts appear in Table 4.

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Insert Tables 3 & 4 about here

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Those texts are: (1) those in a widely used basal reading program (Cooper et al., 2003) such as those used in the FORI intervention (Kuhn, Schwanenflugel, Morris, Morrow, Woo, Messinger, Sevcik, Bradley, & Stahl, in press), (2) texts used in the Wide Reading intervention described in chapters across this volume and in Kuhn et al. (in press), (3) decodable texts, (4) high interest/low vocabulary (HI/LV) texts, (5) texts created from the fluency curriculum in Table 2 ("scaffolded" texts), and (6) science textbooks. In addition, the features of texts from the widely used assessment that introduced the chapter and those from a historical basal reading program (McKee, Harrison, McCowen, Lehr, & Durr, 1966) are included. All of the texts are at a second-grade level since weekly fluency development is especially rapid at this level relative to other grades—approximately 1.5 words per week (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hamlett, Walz, & Germann, 1993). Each program was represented by similar sized sample of 200 words from 10 different texts, for a total of 2,000 words per program.

A source that influences text difficulty for developing and struggling readers is represented in the second column of Table 3: the number of *new,* unique words per 100 words. This figure indicates the rate of appearance of new, unique words, for each new set of 100 words that have not appeared previously in the *second-grade* portion of the program. It is likely that some of these unique words, at least those that are among the first one to three hundred most-

frequent words in written English, appeared in the first-grade texts of this program. However, since many of the words that appear in the first-grade core reading programs beyond the first 100 to 300 most-frequent words appear a single time (Foorman, Francis, Davidson, Harm, & Griffin, 2004), many of the new, unique words in the second-grade program will be new to developing and struggling readers. For developing and struggling readers, the appearance of each unfamiliar word requires attention.

As shown in Table 3, the texts are of two types. Assessment, literature anthology, wide-reading, and decodable texts have around 26-27 new, unique words per 100. By contrast, HI/LV, science textbook, and scaffolded texts have 17. Moreover, each word is repeated an average of 3.7 times in the anthology and decodables and 5.9 times in the other texts.

For beginning and struggling readers, the rate of introduction and repetition of words is especially challenging when percentages of new, unique words are moderately frequent or even rare. In all of the texts except for the anthology, new words that are less frequent *and* multisyllabic range from 1 to 3 words per 100 words of text. If students can recognize highly frequent and single syllable words, these texts will be at the independent level (98-100%) or high end of instructional level (95-97%) (Betts, 1946). After several rereadings of such texts, students should be reading the texts smoothly and facilely.

For those students who are not automatic with highly frequent words, texts such as those in the anthology with six infrequent, multisyllabic words will fall within their frustration level. Even after guidance and several readings, many second-grade students will be unable to recognize six new, infrequent, multisyllabic words. This challenge is exacerbated by single appearances of many of these words (see Table 3). The lack of repetition and the density of the

multisyllabic rare words make it unlikely that struggling and beginning readers will learn even a small percentage of these words.

Some have suggested that texts that are difficult for students—even ones at their frustration levels—should be used for fluency practice (Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005). However, the majority of American students, such as Marc, for whom the typical grade-level texts are at frustration level, do not display fluency, even on the texts of tests that are easier than their instructional texts. As can be seen in Table 3, the mid-second-grade texts of the DIBELS (Good & Kaminski, 1996) benchmark assessments resemble the decodable, HI/LV, science, and scaffolded texts in their percentage of highly and moderately frequent words and of rare single-appearing words than the anthology texts. Even though the DIBELS texts are easier than the anthology texts that most American second graders read for instruction, students such as Marc read neither the highly frequent nor moderately frequent to rare words automatically on the assessment. Even for students who are at the 50th percentile in oral reading fluency such as Jasmine, a text with 6 new, multisyllabic words in every 100 words of text may place them at frustration level. In contrast, texts with one or two new words allow attention to smooth, automatic reading of the words that make up the majority of texts. This automaticity with core words supports students' capacity to attend to less frequent, multisyllabic words in future texts.

Research on Texts in Fluency Interventions

I believe that primary-level readers' fluency is supported when their repeated and guided reading occurs with texts that have a limited number of new, multisyllabic words. The first piece of evidence comes from an analysis that Charles Fisher and I conducted of the texts in the fluency studies reviewed by the National Reading Panel (NRP) (NICHD, 2000). Our analysis of the original reports of the 16 studies in the NRP meta-analysis on fluency showed that three-

quarters of the studies used texts with a high percentage of highly frequent words and a low percentage of rare, multisyllabic words (Hiebert & Fisher, 2005). Of the handful of studies using texts with a relatively high percentage of rare, multisyllabic words and a relatively lower percentage of highly frequent words, only one reported a fluency outcome and that was not significant. Thus, the effect size for fluency reported by the NRP came from the studies using text types with some level of controlled vocabulary.

The studies in the NRP (NICHD, 2000) meta-analysis of fluency compared different instructional techniques with the same kinds of texts, so the effects on fluency of different kinds of texts were not examined. Among the few studies where texts have been varied, Rashotte and Torgesen (1985) found that repeated reading resulted in improved reading rate only when students read stories with high percentages of shared words (most of which were highly frequent words). Similarly, Faulkner and Levy (1994) found that improvements in dysfluent readers' reading rate and accuracy were linked to texts where words overlapped.

Identifying and Designing Texts That Support the Fluency Curriculum

Many of the texts in the NRP (NICHD, 2000) studies that supported fluency texts came from old basal reading programs (Hiebert & Fisher, 2005). An example of such a text is summarized in Table 3—*Tim's Woods*. This text, while having a high number of new, unique words per 100, has a low percentage of single-appearing multisyllabic words. While a text such as this may be accessible, its style and content of these texts do not engage students (Bruce, 1984). Some interventions—including some of the teachers in the Wide-Reading intervention described in other chapters in this volume—have used these texts to increase fluency levels. However, giving such texts to struggling readers in the 21st century is unlikely to generate the engagingness that invites repeated and extended reading (Guthrie, Anderson, Alao, & Rinehart,

1999). Nor are these texts likely to support the development of background knowledge needed to be a proficient reader (Anderson & Pearson, 1984).

There are numerous sources, other than historical basal readers that will support students in becoming automatic with highly frequent words and words with common, consistent vowel patterns), while at the same time providing content that engages students and extends their background knowledge. One source for fluency practice that may seem an unlikely resource for teachers consists of the texts of science programs at least in the primary grades. As can be seen in Table 3, rare or moderately frequent words are often repeated in science texts. This repetition reflects the purpose of science texts. Authors of science texts are intent on communicating particular concepts related to topics such as *habitats of organisms* or the *nature of energy*. Because the aim is to communicate information about particular concepts, key concepts are repeated. Such repetition does not necessarily occur with primary-level social studies texts where the names of places, events, and people can be many (and are not necessarily repeated. Further, in higher grades, science texts become substantially more difficult (building on the assumption that students have developed the facility with the science concepts and vocabulary of previous levels) (Armstrong & Collier, 1990). However, in the primary grades, the hard words for basic concepts are repeated, as is evident in the summary of the text features in Table 3. This repetition of core words makes science texts ideal for fluency practice in the primary grades. At the same time, these experiences with science texts give students receive the opportunities they need to build background knowledge of nature and the world around them.

These characteristics of informational texts at the primary-level, especially in science, was the basis for the creation of a set of informational texts (Hiebert, 2003) that were aimed at automatic reading of highly and moderately frequent words. Because of the scaffolding of the

fluency curriculum provided by these texts, they are referred to as "scaffolded texts." These scaffolded texts were written to give struggling readers systematic experiences with the fluency curriculum in Table 2. Approximately 98% of the words in the first level are among the 300 most frequent words or have the most common, consistent vowel patterns (i.e., short, long vowels) in monosyllabic words. By the third level of texts, approximately 98% of the words are either among the 1,000 most frequent words or monosyllabic. By the final level, 98% of the words are among the 5,000 most-frequent words or are monosyllabic.

These texts were tested in several studies (Hiebert, 2005b, 2006) where one group was involved in the FORI intervention (Stahl & Heubach, 2005) where repeated and guided reading occurred with texts from the basal reading anthology (see Tables 3 & 4) and the other group's repeated and guided reading occurred with scaffolded texts. In both studies, the students whose repeated reading occurred with the scaffolded texts had higher performances than students in the FORI intervention. While differences between the two groups were not statistically different, the scaffolded texts group performed significantly higher than a control group that read the literature in the basal reading program but without repeated reading ($p < .04$) (Hiebert, 2005b). The FORI group did not perform significantly higher than the control group ($p < .2$).

In addition, classroom observations in study one (Hiebert, 2005b) revealed that classes in the FORI intervention spent more than twice the time in repeated and guided reading as classes who received the scaffolded text intervention. In contrast, the scaffolded text intervention consumed approximately 15 minutes of language arts/reading blocks, leaving time for teachers to conduct guided reading lessons with the literature selections of the basal readers. Even with less time spent on repeated reading, students who did that reading with scaffolded texts had higher

fluency gains than students who spent considerably longer periods of time in repeated and guided reading of less accessible text.

Where Can Teachers Find Texts That Support Students' Fluency?

Since current anthologies of basal reading programs contain many rare, multisyllabic words even in the first-grade anthologies (Foorman et al., 2004), where can teachers find texts to support students' experiences with the fluency curriculum? It is to be hoped that writers and publishers would have recognized this need and provided appropriate texts for fluency practice. Since recognition of the low fluency levels of many American students is recent (e.g., Pinnell, Pikulski, Wixson, Campbell, Gough, & Beatty, 1995), programs aimed at fluency are only beginning to appear on the market. Teachers need information to evaluate new programs and, in the face of declining funds, choose the best texts from those already available in their classrooms. Choices of texts for fluency instruction are informed by two sets of principles about texts: (a) guidelines on the features of accessible texts and (b) guidelines for reasons to read repeatedly.

Guidelines for Features of Accessible Texts

First, I believe texts for fluency practice should be short. In the studies that were reviewed by the NRP (NICHD, 2000) sub-group on fluency, the typical text for a fluency session was between 50 to 150 words in length. There is a general perception, as fluency mandates have become more widespread, that entire texts of considerable length should be read repeatedly. In only one of the studies reviewed by the NRP were entire texts of approximately 500 or more words used for fluency practice—and in that study, students' fluency did not improve. This does not mean that an entire text of 500-600 words cannot be used for fluency practice over time. For example, a HI/LV text such as *And I mean it, Stanley* (Bonsall, 1984) could be used for fluency

activities over several sessions with each 100-word segment providing the focus for another session.

Teachers also need to choose from where in the fluency curriculum to choose books. In the intervention with scaffolded texts (Hiebert, 2005b, 2006), texts were at the top end of students' instructional level and the low end of their independent level. Two unique words that fell outside the curriculum appeared within every 100 words. Students were given an assessment to determine the level of text on the fluency curriculum in Table 2 where they could recognize the words at 97-98% levels of accuracy but lower than the 50th percentile for fluency.

General Guidelines for Reasons To Read Repeatedly

Just as young children who are acquiring a new skill can repeat a task over and over, young children who are learning to read can reread the same texts as they gain in competency. While beginning readers may respond favorably to the task of repeatedly reading a text, the response of struggling readers to the repeated reading of difficult texts may not be as favorable. Struggling readers need legitimate reasons to read texts repeatedly.

The goal of becoming a smoother, faster, and more knowledgeable reader is the underlying raison d'etre for repeated oral reading of texts. Guiding students to an awareness of their pace of reading provides a strong incentive for oral reading. Students can track their progress and set goals for reading. However, too strong an emphasis on data-gathering of reading rate can create pitfalls as students focus on reading rapidly to the detriment of expression and meaning. Consequently, students benefit from tasks that require them to comprehend and learn from the texts that are used for fluency development. For example, in the scaffolded text intervention (Hiebert, 2005b, 2006), students keep a record of new vocabulary and information that they intend to remember on graphic organizers.

Reading with teachers or tutors who model fluent reading or monitor students' reading has been part of the repeated reading activity since Samuels' (1979) study. Teachers, tutors, or partners support students' attention to the text and ensure that repeated readings are productive. Repeated reading with technology including voice-recognition on computers (Adams, 2006) is proving successful with students from the primary through high-school grades. As voice-recognition on computers becomes more sophisticated, dysfluent readers have increased opportunities for repeated reading that is monitored, provides models of proficient reading, and presents information on pronunciation and meaning.

While the NRP (NICHD, 2000) identified repeated and guided oral reading as most effective in improving fluency, the long-term goal is for students to be fluent in silent reading. Considerable debate has centered around the failure of the NRP to locate empirical evidence validating the benefits of sustained silent reading on reading proficiencies, including fluency. Part of the explanation may lie with the typical implementation of silent reading in which students select their own texts and are not held accountable for what happens during the event. By contrast, Reutzel (2005) included a "scaffolded silent reading" treatment in a study of fluency. Students in this treatment read specified texts silently with particular tasks in mind. Reutzel reported that students in the scaffolded silent reading treatment had the same fluency gains as students in the repeated oral treatment.

In the scaffolded text intervention described earlier (Hiebert, 2005b, 2006), repeated reading moves between silent and oral reading. Whether students are in an oral or silent portion of the repeated reading cycle, the teacher specifies the portion of text to be read, the amount of time spent reading, and the task to be accomplished with the text. The instructional cycle is oriented toward what students are learning and remembering from reading, not on simply reading

faster or sounding better. Huxley (2006) found that, while third graders gained in fluency over a 10-week intervention with the scaffolded texts, their most significant gains were in retaining information about the content of the texts.

Places to Find Texts

Current anthologies of basal reading programs consist primarily of selections from children's literature that, as has been described, often consist of relatively high percentages of rare, multisyllabic words. But even among selections of children's literature, percentages of rare multisyllabic words will vary. Informational texts within the basal anthology are especially good candidates for fluency practice as is evident in the excerpt from *Ants* (Stefoff, 1998) in Table 4 that is part of the same basal reading unit as *Office Buckle and Gloria*. In this excerpt of *Ants*, there are no rare multisyllabic words. Further, once a selection in the basal anthology such as *Officer Buckle and Gloria* has been studied, a portion might be used for fluency practice.

At least at the second-grade level, there is likely another excellent source for fluency development in most basal reading anthologies: one or two selections from HI/LV texts such as the *Frog and Toad* or *Henry and Mudge* series. These texts have high percentages of highly frequent words and relatively low percentages of rare multisyllabic words (see Table 3). Within the teachers' manuals of basal programs, guidelines for instruction are the same for HI/LV texts as for any other text. However, with the knowledge that these texts were designed to emphasize highly frequent words, you might choose to reserve the HI/LV texts in your basal reading programs for fluency development. When a 500- to 600-word HI/LV text is segmented into chunks of about 100 words, you will have sufficient texts for five or more fluency sessions.

Another source of accessible texts for fluency experiences consists of the decodables that are part of primary-level basal reading programs. The decodables that are part of the same unit as

Officer Buckle and Gloria have the same percentage of rare words as the anthology. Unlike the rare words in the anthology that tend to be multisyllabic, the rare words in the decodables are mostly monosyllabic. Some rare monosyllabic words, such as *tam* or *vat* may not be in the known speaking or even listening vocabularies of second and third graders who are struggling readers. However, these words will be easier for many students to decode than most rare multisyllabic words, such as *penalty* and *auditorium* (words in the basal unit summarized in Table 3). When rare words can be pronounced and context can be used to make meaning of them (as is the case with some rare monosyllabic words), students may have the experiences they need to become more fluent.

The excerpt from *Ants* confirms another source of accessible texts for fluency development that has already been described—the textbooks of science programs. At least in the primary grades, science textbooks have features that make them less difficult than the texts of basal reading programs. While rare words in literature are typically used a single time to capture a trait of a character or the circumstances of an event, rare words in science texts represent the concepts that are the focus of the text. As Excerpts 1.b. and 5 in Table 4 illustrate, writers of science texts typically repeat rare words as they describe and elaborate upon the central concepts of the texts.

Finally, educators will find an increasing number of texts offered specifically for fluency development. Excerpt 6 in Table 4 indicates that texts can emphasize the fluency curriculum, while conveying information in an engaging manner. As programs aimed at fluency come into the marketplace, be assured that the same principles should be applied to these texts as to any other set of texts. That is, texts should be evaluated from the vantage point of the opportunities

provided with the fluency curriculum and the challenges inherent in significant numbers of rare multisyllabic words.

The ideas about fluency are not new (see, e.g., Huey, 1908) but the wide-scale recognition of the importance of fluency is new. The NRP (NICHD, 2000) based its conclusions on classroom practices for encouraging of the development of fluency, not the texts that are most useful in implementing these practices. It is my view that, for dysfluent readers, the texts that are read and reread for fluency practice need to have sufficiently high percentages of words within what I have called "the word zone fluency curriculum" and low percentages of rare words, especially multisyllabic ones. By using texts that emphasize the word zone fluency curriculum, educators can be assured that they are supporting their beginning and struggling readers on the road to fluent and meaningful reading.

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Table 1. Word Zones for 160,000 Unique Words[1]

Word Zone	Label for Zone or group of zones	Number of Unique Words	Percentage of Total Words (Cumulative)	Examples of Words
0	Highly frequent	107	48	the, of
1		203	57	away, between
2		610	67	day, different
3	Moderately frequent	1676	74	tree, travel
4		2980	79	invited, blanket
5	Rare	13882	87	butterfly, frosting
6		135473	100	jeered, parasol

[1]Based on Zeno et al. (1995)

Table 2. Word Zone Fluency Curriculum

	High-Frequency Content	Phonics & Syllabic Content	Morphological Content
A	300 most frequent words;	Short & long vowels	Simple inflected endings (ed, ing, s, es, ‘s)
B	500 most frequent words;	short, long, & r-controlled vowels	
C	1,000 most frequent words;	all monosyllabic words	
D	1,000 most frequent words	Two-syllable compound words with at least one root from 1,000 most frequent words	Prefixes: un, a Suffixes: er, est, ly, y (with doubling of final consonant)
E	2,500 most frequent words		
F	5,000 most frequent words		

Table 3. Number of New, Unique Words of Particular Types Per 100 Words of Text

Text Type	New unique words per 100 words	Highly frequent words	Monosyllabic words (Moderately Frequent & Rare)	Multisyllabic Words (Moderately Frequent & Rare)	Multisyllabic Words (Moderately Frequent & Rare): Single Appearing
Assessment (DIBELS)	27	20	3	4	2
Literature Anthology	27	18	3	6	4
Wide Reading	27	19	5	3	2
Decodable Text	26	18	6	2	0
HI/LV	17	12	3	2	1
Science Textbook	17	12	2	3	1
Scaffolded Text	17	14	2	1	0
Historical Basal	26	20	3	3	2

Table 4. Excerpts from Texts Used for Reading Instruction

Excerpt #	Source of Text	Text Excerpt
1.a	Literature Anthology (Passage 1)	Officer Buckle knew more safety tips than anyone else in Napville. Every time he thought of a new one, he thumbtacked it to his bulletin board Safety Tip #77 NEVER stand on a SWIVEL CHAIR. Officer Buckle shared his safety tips with the students at Napville School. Nobody ever listened. Sometimes there was snoring. (Rathman, 1995)
1.b	Literature Anthology: Passage 2	Ants do all kinds of things together. They pass pieces of food to one another. Sometimes they even carry each other around. Some jobs are too big for one ant. That's when ants team up. A bunch of little ants working together can carry a big dead bug. (Stefoff, 1998)
2.	Wide-Reading Intervention	"Seth!" said Al. "That does it! You sit in the stands! Do not bother me!" Seth went to sit in the stands. But it was no fun just sitting still. It was dull. He began to jump on the steps. Then he spotted the hot drink stand. Seth ran to the stand. (Rowland, 1982)
3.	Decodable Text	At the town meeting, Bart Horn stood up. "I have something important to say this morning," he told the town board. "We feel that a town named Parkdale needs a park." Doctor Short nodded. So did Miss Martin. "Pardon me," said Cora Barkway, but how will we pay for this park? (Cooper et al., 2003)
4.	HI/LV	"I can play by myself, Stanley. I don't need you, Stanley. And I mean it, Stanley. I am having a lot of fun. A lot of fun. I am making a great thing, Stanley. A really, truly great thing. And when it is done, you will want to see it, Stanley." (Bonsall, 1984)
5	Science Textbook	All these objects are solids. They are different in color, size, and shape. They have different textures. A texture is the way something feels. Solids are alike in some important ways. Each one has its own size and shape. A solid will not change in size or shape unless you do something such as cut, bend, or break it. (Badders, Bethel, Fu, Peck, Sumners, & Valentino, 2000)
6	Scaffolded Text	George Washington Carver was a scientist who knew about plants. He learned that soil wears out when farmers grow the same crop every year. When soil wears out, crops are poor. George Washington Carver showed farmers how to grow one crop in one year. Then they would grow a different crop in the next year. (Hiebert, 2003)
7	Historical Basal	It had snowed in the night. Tim Baker could tell that it had without looking out of his bedroom window. There was always a bright whiteness about the daylight when the world was deep in snow. Tim lay in bed and thought about what he would do. (McKee, Harrison, McCowen, Lehr, & Durr, 1966)