

# Florida Center for Reading Research

## Elements of Reading: Fluency

### What is Elements of Reading: Fluency?

*Elements of Reading: Fluency* is a supplemental program designed to build reading fluency and sight vocabulary of high frequency words for students in grades 1-3. It contains three levels: A, B, and C with five four-week units contained in each level. The units revolve around three story books consisting of a similar theme. In a 90 minute reading block, *Elements of Reading: Fluency* is recommended for 20-30 minutes of whole class instruction per day every other week. It could also be used 20-30 minutes a day every other day.

*Elements of Reading: Fluency* is one component of a modular reading program by Steck-Vaughn, an imprint of Harcourt Achieve. Each of the components: Phonics and Phonemic Awareness, Vocabulary, Fluency, and Comprehension have been designed to be used together or separately for supplementing specific areas of need. Dr. Timothy Shanahan authored this program and based his work on reading research surrounding fluency, including the findings of the National Reading Panel (2000) of which he was a member.

This program is organized in a tote box for each level and contains student books, audio CD recordings of each book, big books, tabbed teacher's lesson folders containing sequenced instruction for the week's lesson, teaching versions of the student books, a teacher's guide, and stopwatches for assessment. A detailed scope and sequence is included for each level. Each set of lessons includes well-defined objectives and necessary materials.

A weekly lesson contains five steps. First, in the Previewing and Modeling step the teacher activates prior knowledge regarding the story topic and then reads it aloud to the class while modeling the characteristics of fluent reading. Second is the Repeated Reading step with a focus on specific high-frequency words. Depending on the text, this could be tape-assisted reading, echo reading, partner reading, or choral reading. Two audio recordings are provided for each story, a slower Beginner Version and a faster Fluent Version. The third step, Providing Explicit Fluency Instruction, provides specific methods for teacher instruction using the Teaching Version of the book. The fourth step, Repeated Reading: Paired Reading, groups students in pairs with each one listening to and monitoring the other's fluency with the Fluency Flip page at the end of the book and the Fluency Checklist. The fifth step, Fluency Assessment, requires the teacher to progress monitor the students' reading fluency using the provided recording sheets and Fluency Flip page. Also included in each weekly lesson are comprehension questions at each step, strategies to meet the needs of English-language learners, a shared writing activity, and suggestions for integrating fluency skills across the curriculum.



### How is Elements of Reading: Fluency aligned with Reading First?

*Elements of Reading: Fluency* was designed based on the findings identified in the Report of the National Reading Panel (2000) and Put Reading First (2001). Current reading research is directly applied to each step of the weekly fluency lessons. The focus of this program is to provide classroom teachers practical methods to improve their students reading fluency using scientifically-based instructional techniques. In addition to providing instruction in fluency, *Elements of Reading: Fluency* includes progress monitoring tools for each book in the theme to

track progress, identifies key concepts for comprehension of text, and strategic support for English-language learners.

The amount of professional development received by teachers when adopting this program depends on the materials purchased and the degree of program implementation. At initial program adoption, an in-service to assist teachers with program implementation is provided. This could include a simple half-day program conducted by the sales representative, a full day training conducted by consultant staff, and additional consultant services for larger implementations. The simple implementation training encompasses an introduction of the materials, management, getting started, and a walk through. District personnel may request specific adjustments, as program consultants will accommodate the needs while maintaining the integrity of the content in the program. A Professional Development Workshop Guide is also available for additional purchase. Information on fluency research and instructional methods are arranged in order to form a faculty study group among teachers and professionals within a school or district. Topics discussed in the workshop include: definition of fluency and its relevance, current research, goals and instructional methods for improving fluency, and assessment.

### Research Support for Elements of Reading: Fluency



*Elements of Reading: Fluency* is a new program that appeared in January, 2004. Dr. Shanahan developed the program according to findings from the Report of the National Reading Panel (2000), Put Reading First (2001), his own research, and the research of others that emphasizes the need to acquire skills in fluency via modeling, guiding, and providing repeated opportunities to practice (Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler, 2002; Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Dowhower, 1987). The design and content of the program are derived from a strong research base. A year-long study to evaluate the effectiveness of *Elements of Reading: Fluency* was implemented in multiple schools in two demographically different districts and involved a randomized control group design with second grade students. This study is nearing completion and findings should be available in winter 2006.

### Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths of *Elements of Reading: Fluency*:

- Organizational set up of program makes it easy to keep track of materials and cover all aspects of the lesson.
- Audio CD provides two speeds for listening to each story.
- Themes contain fiction and non-fiction books purposely written to enhance reading fluency skills.
- The faculty study group, part of the professional development, allows for deepening knowledge of current research on reading fluency.

Weaknesses of *Elements of Reading: Fluency*:

- None were noted.

### Which Florida districts have schools that implement Elements of Reading: Fluency?

Brevard	321-631-1911	Manatee	941-708-8770
Charlotte	941-255-0808	Miami-Dade	305-995-1430
Collier	239-377-0212	Okaloosa	850-833-3109
Dixie	352-498-6131	Orange	407-317-3202
Duval	904-390-2115	Osceola	407-870-4008

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Hamilton	386-792-6501	Palm Beach	561-434-8200
Hillsborough	813-272-4050	Pinellas	727-588-6011
Lake	352-253-6510	Polk	863-534-0521
Lee	239-337-8301	Saint Johns	904-819-7502
Leon	850-487-7147	Seminole	407-320-0006

### For More Information

[www.harcourtachieve.com](http://www.harcourtachieve.com)

### References



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Kuhn, M.R. & Stahl, S.A. (2003). Fluency: A review of developmental and remedial practices. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 95*, 3-21.

National Reading Panel (2000). *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction*. NIH Publication No. 00-4754. Washington, DC: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

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**Important Note:** FCRR Reports are prepared in response to requests from Florida school districts for review of specific reading programs. The reports are intended to be a source of information about programs that will help teachers, principals, and district personnel in their choice of materials that can be used by skilled teachers to provide effective instruction. Whether or not a program has been reviewed does **not** constitute endorsement or lack of endorsement by the FCRR.

For more information about FCRR go to: [www.fcrr.org](http://www.fcrr.org)