

## Building Fluency – Molly McCabe

The teacher-to-teacher initiative was created by the U.S. Department of Education to provide the latest strategies and research of educational practices that work inside a classroom. Welcome everybody. I'm so glad you're here today. My name is Molly McCabe and I come from Riverside, California. Now I'm going to ask for your fun participation, so everybody prepare. You're going to be disfluent, and you are going to experience what it's like to be disfluent in a moment. We want to start getting our students to start reading in larger chunks, so that's actually part of reading fluency is that we cluster the words. This series features teachers from across the country presenting techniques that can be used with students of all ages. It's just one way the Department of Education is helping teachers get the support they need so no child is left behind.

Well, welcome everybody. I'm so glad you're here today. My name is Molly McCabe and I come from Riverside, California. It's a pleasure to be here in Madison. I'm so glad we're all here today to talk about one of my very favorite subjects. We're going to be talking about reading fluency today. Now the topic – I'm very, very passionate about. A few years back I briefly went to the middle school for a couple of years and decided to go back down to primary and I went back into a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom in a school that was basically 92% English language learners and children of poverty. And I started teaching this 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class. I'm in my first week of school. Now I've said I've gone from 8<sup>th</sup> grade to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade so I have this big jump already and I'm in shock, right? So I'm working with my new students who are just wonderful, and I'm going wait a minute – there's something going on here. They know how to read, but when I asked them what they read – nothing! Anybody have that in their class? Zero comprehension. They could read all the words for me – they were doing great reading – they had no comprehension of what they were reading. I'm going okay, well, we must need reading comprehension instruction, right? So that was my first thought. So I'm looking at this going wait a minute – what's wrong – what's the disconnect here? So then at that point I finally got to my fluency assessment and I'm a week or two into school, and I gave my students a fluency assessment and I went "Oh – now I know what's going on!" I had an entire class of students that were really, really disfluent. They were really only reading about 30 to 60 words per minute – and we'll be talking about that a little bit later. They were definitely under 3<sup>rd</sup> grade fluency benchmarks. I went "Aha – I think I have found the missing link." And reading fluency is often the missing component between that skill of decoding and children being able to fully comprehend text when they read independently – and that's oral fluency as well as silent fluency. So my quest was to find out how can I help my students in my classroom really improve their reading fluency so that was no longer a barrier for them when they needed to comprehend text. So that's what I'll be sharing with you today. Here are our goals for today. I'm going to be sharing with you things I actually did in my classroom with students to improve fluency. We're also going to be looking at what the research says about reading fluency, and fortunately now we have well-documented research on what we can do to help students. And those are in these two publications, which are free. I don't know how familiar with them you are. One of them is the National Reading Panel and in here this gives you a synthesis of the research on reading fluency and then you could also look to the back unit – Put Reading First – and this gives you the more practical classroom application of things that you can do to address reading fluency. And what I'll be doing is sharing those components with you in this presentation. These are both available on line for free. You can download them or contact the Department and they will send them to

you. The website is right there and I will pass these around for you to peruse. So what we'll be looking at what the research says about fluency and how to bring it into our classroom. So when we look at a successful reader, we all know that successful readers have well-developed skills in all five of these areas – phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. And all of them are critical and all of them work together to bring together a successful reader. And there are presentations on these same topics for you to see. So, we'll just really zoom in on this one area today, but don't discount those other areas. You'll need to be doing all of those as well throughout your instruction. So, why fluency? When we look at the data, 44% of our 4<sup>th</sup> graders were low in fluency on the NAPE, so it is a national issue for our students. And also it's a neglected field that is not really being addressed in our classrooms in our nation, and we want to make sure that fluency is being addressed on a daily basis in all of our classrooms. And as I was saying earlier, fluency is often the bridge between word recognition and reading comprehension. Now, it's not always the only issue, but in many cases that really is the disconnect for some of our students. So before we begin, I want to really start with my definition of fluency that I will be using today. There are many definitions of fluency out there. I will be using these two terms. The first term I will be using is automaticity. And when I'm using the term automaticity I'm really talking about that really fast, rapid recalling of words. Okay, it's not necessarily really great reading, but the kids can read and word call usually. When I'm talking about fluency today, I'm actually using the broader definition of fluency, which is when children read with inflection, they pause, their voice changes in their reading, and they read with meaning. And that's really our ultimate goal. When we're looking at fluency it's not just about "Hey, kids, read really fast!" That's not really our goal here. What we really want are students that read well and are good oral and silent readers with expression and comprehension. Here's some other definitions that I've found in my travels on what fluency is. I love this. If you look at the Latin root of fluency it actually means "to flow" and I really like that perspective of reading fluency. So how do you know if a child is a fluent reader? Well, first of all, we've all heard disfluent readers first of all right? We've all sat in that time with a child – they're reading, and they're really struggling through the text. It certainly is an indicator. The number of words per minute – hopefully many of you have fluency assessments already in place in your district. If not, you may want to begin using the fluency assessment with your students, just to be able to determine what number of words per minute they are reading. They will definitely be an indicator for us on the fluency. Again – when they read, do they read with expression? You want to be listening for that. It's not just words per minute, because when they read with expression, that's actually when they probably – not always, but probably – are comprehending the text. Because it's fairly difficult to read with prosody or inflections if you don't know what you're reading about. So that's a great indicator for you. And then the ability to retell what they read. If a child reads something and they don't know what they've comprehended, and they can't really retell it or give you any information about it there may be a fluency issue. There may be other things, but those are just some general indicators for you to look at. So before we talk about fluency, I'm going to ask you to become a disfluent reader, and the only way I can do that is by giving you some text you can't read. So I'm going to ask for your fun participation, so everybody prepare – you're going to be disfluent and you're going to experience what it's like to be disfluent in a moment. So in your handout you have a passage called Rapunzel and there is a passage in Italian. Can everybody find that for me? Everybody find it? You will need a partner. I think we're okay. You can do it in a trio too as well if you need to. Now here's what I'd like you to do. Person #1 – you are going to read for one minute out loud to your partner. And I will

set a timer and it will go off after one minute and that will be your signal to stop. We'll laugh – because that's what you're going to do. And we'll all have fun with it. And then we're going to switch, and Person #2 will read for one minute. But you do not get to read the same text. You're going to continue reading where they've stopped. You were hoping you had an advantage! There is no advantage. You may have a few words, okay. But, the point here first of all is just to experience disfluency, but while you're doing it I want you to be thinking about why are you disfluent? I know you're not going to comprehend this text. I'm not even worried about comprehension at this point. But, what are the barriers for you in being able to read this text fluently. When you are done reading, I'd like you to talk about that with your partner for a couple of minutes and then we'll talk about that whole group. (Inaudible) This is hard. Remember, the torture is over. (Laughter) Okay. Alright, let's switch, and you're going to continue reading where they stopped. Okay, ready, set, go. (Inaudible) Okay, your minute of torture is over! So what were your experiences as a disfluent reader, and what were some of the things that were causing the disfluency? I had no clue what I was reading, just like you were saying. All of your cognitive energy was on reading the words, and there was none left for comprehending the text. Absolutely. And that is one of our main points here today. How about concepts of print? How did that affect you? Did it? Well, I knew I had to read from left to right. I knew where to stop for a word, because there was a space. But did anyone know what those accents meant? No. And that would be part of concepts of print, right? Absolutely. You had no idea. Could you get lost in the text. Yeah, you're like wait – you had no word reference, and you had no high frequency words. Now, does anybody in here speak Spanish? That should have helped you. You guys had an advantage. Because Italian decodes like Spanish. I chose Italian for a very specific reason. First of all I love the language, but second of all it is a completely decodable language. So what would have helped you to read this text? Granted, if it was in English, that would have helped. But, let's just pretend it was not a language issue. But what are some of the things that I could have done as an instructor to help you access this text? Provide some background. Absolutely. Would it have helped if I had told you that you were reading Rapunzel? But you would have at least – it wouldn't have helped you to read it – but at least it would have taken that frustration of meaning. You were looking for meaning. When we read we want meaning – and it would have taken that frustration away. You've all read the story of Rapunzel, so you would have at least been less frustrated – let's put it that way. What else could I have done? Tell us the unknown words. Preview the critical words, for the meaning of the text, yes, and for reading – absolutely. How about if I had taught you the phonics pattern of Italian, and how to decode in Italian? That would have helped, right? What if I had pre-taught some of the vocabulary? That would have helped with the meaning – absolutely. So those are some of the things that we want to consider when we address fluency with our students. And thank you for being such good sports. (Laughter) So here's some of the things that really help – I mean cause this. Syntax – we didn't mention that one. But what are the syntactical patterns of the language – if I had taught you that. And those of you that teach 2<sup>nd</sup> language learners – I don't know how many in this room do that – but giving our 2<sup>nd</sup> language learners the syntax of English before they're reading and actually teaching them the patterns that they'll find in the text is actually very helpful for them as well. So, let's go into assessment really briefly – I'm not going to spend a lot of time on this. But it's very important that you have some kind of fluency assessment with your students. How many in here actually have a fluency assessment in place in their district? Okay – a good portion. So those of you that don't, I would highly recommend that you look in your curricular program first of all and see if there are any fluency measures that

may already be provided for you. Or your district may have some that are available to you. If you need another resource, I will pass this around. This is a book called “The 6 Minute Solution” and it’s published by Sopris West, and I’m certainly not selling for them, but there are a nice collection of passages in here, which are sometimes hard to find, so I’ll pass this book around. You always want to assess with grade-level appropriate text. The assessment component of fluency is always at grade-level so you can get a real feel for where students are at their level, and I’ll give you some benchmarks in a few minutes. I’m going to assume most of you know how to assess – do a fluency assessment – but it’s really a timed passage for 1 minute, deleting or taking away the number of errors from the total number of words read. So let’s get into what skills do children need to become fluent. And basically to be a fluent reader, you need to be able to decode, and you need to be able to comprehend the text. So we’re going to be looking at that today. So when we look at decoding, it’s very much about understanding the patterns of the English language. And when we look at comprehension, it’s about being able to bring our personal experience and our strategies to that text. We all know what a disfluent reader sounds like, right? We all have them in our class? Absolutely. So, here are some benchmarks for you, if your district does not have them. These are pretty broad. They are in your powerpoint. If you don’t – your district guidelines should fall within these ranges – they tend to. If not, of course, you would use your district measurements. But these are pretty broad numbers for you. Now, why is 1<sup>st</sup> grade not on here? Anybody have a thought? They’re just learning – absolutely. But the 1<sup>st</sup> grade recommendation usually at the end of the year is somewhere between 30 and 60 words per minute – It’s closer to 60 words per minute. So, by mid-year, it’s about 30 to 60 is where we end up in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Okay, I’m going to continue on. So, what do I do if I have a student that is disfluent, and I bet all of you do, right? Absolutely. Well, there’s a couple of things. The first thing we need to do is look at a pattern. We need to figure out what the root cause is. We have to be fluency investigators here. When a student reads a one-minute timed passage, we want to look at how many errors are they making? If a student is making an error every 10 words, the issue is probably a decoding issue. And if that’s what we are dealing with in our classroom, we want to be looking at reinforcing that phonics decoding component of fluency instruction. If they’re reading the words accurately, but slowly, then it’s actually more of a reading fluency, reading automaticity issue, and we actually need to address those differently, and I’ll be talking about that today. If you have students that are below 30 to 40 words per minute – kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> grade, or maybe even a little bit older that are really struggling readers – we don’t want to be working on super-speed automaticity with them. We actually want to be working on the decoding component with them. And I’ll be sharing with you how we can address fluency in those students at that rate. So we don’t want to be going “Oh, you’re a new 1<sup>st</sup> grader. Okay, here - read this text really fast.” That’s not really our goal here. So we want to consider that. Really, before we put all this pressure on super-speed in reading and automaticity – remember, I’m using that term – that we make sure that our students are actually well-grounded and rooted in their word patterns. So how do we work our fluency in the K-1 realm? We certainly want to begin on it. The first thing that we can do is something called “rapid naming”. Do I have any “K” teachers in here? Great – I have one? In kindergarten we want to be laying the foundation for reading fluency – and the beginning of 1<sup>st</sup> grade. So we want our young students to be doing fluency activities – not necessarily reading passages for speed – but they can do other things. They can do rapid naming of colors, rapid naming of shapes, animals, letters, symbols, any of those things that you are covering in your classroom, because we want our students to begin doing things with a more rapid pace. Some students just process slower

and haven't had a lot of practice giving a response quickly. So we can begin laying that foundation in kindergarten with our students. The next thing that you can do is phonemic awareness for fluency. You know, doing onset rhymes, blending words, identifying phonemes, and they can actually read some nonsense words as well, just decoding, and doing some of those things. So they can do all the phonemic awareness activities that you're doing in your K-1 classrooms to work on fluency. Now as we begin on to 1<sup>st</sup> grade and beyond – that's when we want to be able to get into the very explicit phonics instruction. And I put up here some of the vowel combinations. There is a phonics session that you can see as well here today and it will be on video as well, but we systematically walk our students through the vowels and of course the consonants – all the patterns of the English language. Your struggling readers – where do they struggle – which vowels? Yours are struggling with short vowels? Okay, how about everybody else? Okay, the short E is the hardest – absolutely. All vowels. You know, I always found that my student – when I was getting into 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and beyond – short vowels are not a problem. And my students actually were really, really struggling with the long vowels. Because the short vowels actually are pretty easy – they have one sound, right? But when you get into long A has 7 different potential spellings. So it gets really complicated for our students, so explicitly teaching that when you see each of these patterns, this is the sound that it makes in that word. It's actually a critical component in getting that foundation of reading fluency with our students. So, we also want to – when we're working with our younger students – be really cognizant of what types of errors are they making? You guys are saying short vowels. What kind of practice and instruction are you going to do with them – very targeted to the short vowels and lots of practice with text that has short vowels in it. For those of you who have students struggling with the vowels, you may want to do one vowel at a time in a very controlled, systematic way. We also want to consider, when they're struggling with a pattern, doing some of that pre-teaching that we were talking about. Today we're going to be focusing on words with the long A pattern – let's practice with those words before we read. Let's do some blending. Re-teach the actual pattern before reading the text with them. And then lots and lots and lots of practice – with a partner – they can listen to tapes – if you happen to have parent volunteers or other adults in the classroom that can work with your students – they need a lot of practice with their decoding and learning these patterns. Another thing we want to do with our beginning readers is teach the high-frequency words. I'm sure all of you that are in the primary grades already do high-frequency words, but another thing that we want to consider doing is teaching high-frequency word phrases. Because when we're looking at reading fluency, a disfluent reader reads word by word, right? We want to start getting our students to start reading in clusters of words and in meaningful phrases. So, once you get past the high-frequency words, then you may want to consider taking them to high-frequency word phrase practice. And prepositional phrases are great – because that's what we read a lot. So we want to start getting our students to start reading in larger chunks. So that's actually part of reading fluency is seeing that clusters of words go together. So I'd like to suggest that you add that to your repertoire of activities and then lots of experience and repeated experience with decodable text. But each day you always need to be bringing in fresh text for your students, so they continue having to practice with the decoding. So, here's a list of some of the things that we just talked about. You might want to consider Rebus books, if anybody has those for practice of sight words, and lots and lots and lots of teacher modeling. So I'm going to give you guys a few minutes at your tables to talk about some things that you could do in reading fluency to support your students that are more at the beginning reading phase of fluency. (Inaudible) Let me bring us all back together. Anything

that any of our primary teachers do in here that they'd like to share for the common good of addressing reading fluency in their classroom? No? Alright, well let's move on. If we have students that are struggling with the decoding component of reading fluency, we're going to have to really target in – provide instruction at that level, and let them practice reading at that level. We're going to move up into the grade, because this presentation is really about K-5, so we're going to move more now into later 1<sup>st</sup> grade and beyond, for children that already know how to decode. Do some of you have students that know how to decode and just read slowly or don't read with any expression – they just go “The dog ran down the street chasing after a cat.” So we're going to be looking at what we can do to address the needs of those students now. So definitely we're going to need some fluency instruction and lots of fluency practice. These are the students that can definitely benefit from lots of practice with text. Every time we read aloud, we are modeling fluent reading. How about think-alouds? Interesting. Probably some of you do think-alouds for other components of instruction. But when we look at reading fluency, do any of us ever stop when we're reading and say “Now, there's an exclamation mark right here, so when I see an exclamation I know that I should read this sentence with a lot of enthusiasm or excitement.” Actually, every once in a while – not a lot, please, it's overkill – but every page or couple of pages when you're reading text with students or share a big book, or even in an anthology, or whatever materials you're using, to stop and do a teacher metacognition, because we know how to read fluently, so we want to kind of share that with our students – some of the tricks that we have when we read text – actually inserting some of that oral dialog. Echo-reading is a great strategy for children that need more fluency. The teacher reads a paragraph or passage, then the kids read the same thing. So first the teacher models, then the students repeat back. And choral reading. Choral reading is an excellent strategy – we all read together with the teacher and a group and it helps them read a little bit faster. We don't want large pieces of text – you want smaller pieces of text, because we don't want to overwhelm our students. Because those students that are less fluent may have challenges keeping up, but it gives your less fluent readers to read a little bit faster and move with the group. Those are all good strategies. Now my favorite strategy is teaching prosody, and this is your vocabulary word for today, and there will be a quiz at the end – no, I'm joking. Prosody is the term that we use to describe a child that reads with inflections in their reading – with expression – that's the actual academic word for that. And when I was in the classroom with those students when I was sharing with you – of course I began my year – because I had a lot of children struggling with long vowels in that class, so I did very explicit phonics instruction for the long vowels, taught the patterns and all those things. So I really got them decoding well. So I got to the point where they all could read, but when they read it was “The Dalmatian was running down the street,” – I mean it was just nothing. Do you have that? Absolutely. And I was like “Oh, my gosh – how can I get them to read with expression?” So then one day it hit me – maybe I need to teach them. That was a good idea, wasn't it? I thought it was, because we kept practicing and it wasn't getting any better, so obviously I needed to change what I was doing. So I went out and found out about how you actually teach fluency to students. It was very fascinating. And I found something called prosodic cue development – that's your big term for it – so I'm going to just to show you how we do it. And it's what we actually do is we actually teach children how fluent readers read. So I have a piece of text up here. Let me read it to you first of all, in case there are any who can't see it. Every 4<sup>th</sup> of July there's a parade in our town. It is so much fun! There are marching bands and floats. There are horses, ponies and pets. There are clowns and jugglers. There are wagons and fire engines. And most of all there are people, people, people. Now I read

that with a lot of expression, didn't I? How did I know how to do that? Well, the first thing I realized is that my students never stopped. This is how they read – Every 4<sup>th</sup> of July there is a parade in our town it is so much fun there are marching bands and floats there are horses ponies and pets there are clowns and jugglers there are wagons and fire engines and most of all there are people people people. Nobody told him that at periods, we stop. Do they do that in their writing too? Do they write, write, write – no periods? I think there's a connection here – I'm pretty sure there is. So, there's no stopping anywhere.

(Music)

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## Segment 2

(Music)

So the first thing I did is I go hold it! Every time there is a period, you will pause. So we modeled and practiced. So everybody read this with me – Every 4<sup>th</sup> of July, there is a parade in our town. It is so much fun. There are marching bands and floats. There are horses, ponies, and pets. There are clowns and jugglers. There are wagons and fire engines. And most of all there are people, people, people. So that was step #1. I actually copied text for them, and we highlighted, and we marked the text, and we actually made them stop. I had to practice. This was not an easy habit to break with these students. So, stop. So I was happy with that, but I wasn't happy yet – fully happy – because I realized we stop at other times. There are places that we have shorter pauses, and we always pause where? Certainly at a comma, right? But where else do we pause? Phrases – those meaningful phrases – remember that I was doing with my students in my classroom – the high frequency phrases? We almost always stop before a prepositional phrase when we read – we almost always pause. That's kind of critical for us to tell our students – I don't think anyone's told them that. Of course they have to know what a preposition is. But this – we're in 2<sup>nd</sup> and beyond, so yes. But they can learn prepositions. So it was always a fluent reader who stopped before a prepositional phrase. Any other place that we stop? Those meaningful chunks – things or ideas that cluster together. So that was step #2 with my students. Then we took another color highlighter or marker and I taught where to do the quicker pauses – a real brief pause. So stop there, da, da, da, da kind of reading – machine-gun kind of reading, you know. Slow down – so then that was great. I had all my students pausing – it took us a couple of months to really get good at this. But then I was like “Wait a minute – I'm still not happy.” What else do I want? I want them to have inflections in their voice. I want their voices to rise and fall. I want them to do some of these things. So, guess what I think I need to teach them? So, let's look at this text – why don't you read it with a partner – and pay attention to where your voice rises when you read it. I'll just give you a moment to read them. Just read it out loud. Do you want to choral-read it? Let's choral-read it – it will probably be easier. Every 4<sup>th</sup> of July there is a parade in our town. It is so much fun! There are marching bands and floats. There are horses, ponies, and pets. There are clowns and jugglers. There are wagons and fire engines. And, most of all, there are people, people, people. So where did our voices go up? So much fun. Always, always, always, before an exclamation mark – and we're going to hope these stick today – we always go up when we have an exclamation mark. Okay, where else? Sometimes at the beginning of a sentence – where specifically. (Inaudible) Proper nouns – actually our voice goes up on proper nouns, because we know that they're important, right? It's also the context of this poem, right? So the proper nouns, we tend – there's no right

or wrong answer here – we’re going to hope these stick. Okay, so where else did your voice go up? (Inaudible) Yes – repeated passages – people, people, people. Absolutely, for emphasis. So by the end of the people, people, people, we were definitely raising our voice – the inflection. Any other place? Yes. (Inaudible) At the and. We tend to do that on conjunctions, because we’re what? Yes, we’re emphasizing that there’s more things. We tend to go up on or around conjunctions. There are marching bands and floats – like wow, we have this, but there’s this also! Inaudible. Oh they, But, we do. What do you guys think? We do, absolutely. Emphasis. It’s the most important idea. We know that most of all it’s the biggest idea, right? So we emphasize it – most of all. Did you guys notice we’re actually starting to get into some comprehensive instruction by doing this? Are there any places where our voice goes down? End of a sentence our voice goes down. So then I took the new color – end of a sentence. There’s a parade in our town. Absolutely, we go down. There are horses, ponies – where else? There’s no right or wrong answer. I mean, each piece of text will be different – it really will, based on your emphasis. But, by walking through and having students have the conversation about where which word should be emphasized, we’re actually really teaching them how to comprehend text, if you think about it. Because what are the most critical words in this passage? It’s actually getting them to that. (Inaudible) Absolutely, absolutely. And most of all there are people, people, people. It was fun. You see that? You actually end up highlighting the biggest ideas of the text that you want them to walk away from. It’s a very powerful way to connect from reading fluency to comprehension. Yes? (Inaudible) Absolutely – that each piece of text will be different. Because we’re going to read a non-fiction piece of text in a moment, and you actually read it differently. So every piece of text is different – it’s not a right or wrong. What’s important in this activity is the discussion that you have with your students on how I as a proficient reader would read this with fluency, and then eventually leading to them actually talking with their partners – “no, no, no, no, no – we should read it this way. This is the most important word in this line. No, no, no, no, no – we should read it this way.” And it’s actually that dialog that your kids have and it’s absolutely engaging for them. And it’s so fun to watch them going “oh, no, no, this is the most important word in this line. Don’t you see? This is what it is about.” And they actually have these conversations by us modeling and practicing with the kids, and then when they’re actually reading, they actually have total engagement in the text. They also love this, because it’s very safe. I’m not going to say, “No, that’s the wrong word.” I mean there’s lots of interpretations here, but it lets them express their thinking about what’s most important. So it’s a wonderful strategy. We’re going to let you practice now. In your handout there’s a passage about plants. And with a partner, I’d like you to go through the text and just the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph – put slash marks where you would pause, and 2<sup>nd</sup> of all, decide which words you would emphasize in reading. You can circle them, underline – whatever works. But what I want you to pay attention to is the dialog that you’re having, to determine which words are most important to emphasize. So you’re emphasizing your vocab words. It’s just the conversation engaging the learner so that’s the critical piece in this. There should be some similarity, but there should be some differences. What did you choose to emphasize? What kind of words? The nouns a lot, but also the words denoted the number, like small, a little, a lot. And there was a very specific reason, because what was main point of this article? It was comparing and contrasting about plants, wasn’t it? Given, I didn’t tell you up front. Now in my classroom, I would tell my students “This is an article comparing and contrasting about plants.” I just wanted you to experience it. What types of words would we want to emphasize in a compare and contrast article? Adjectives – absolutely. So the type of text that you use actually determines

what type of words you would emphasize – it really would. Take a moment and talk about how that might look with different types of text with a partner. (Inaudible.) We want to develop academically for our students. We want them to be hearing it. They may not master it, but we want to be talking about the type of text whenever we're reading big books – any type of reading with our kids we can be modeling this – we can be discussing it. What I love about fluency is it's another 30 seconds – it's not like an hour time block we have to add to our day. These are things that you can add into the things that you're already doing. And you just add it into your instruction. Any time you read a shorter piece of text, let's do some fluency practices with this, some prosody practice with it. You just squeeze it into what you're already doing. It doesn't need to be another time block in our already busy day that we have in our classroom. So, yes, absolutely, you can begin modeling this, and using academic language beginning in kindergarten. Because if we think about it, when we were young children, this is what our parents did with us when they read to us. They were reading text to us and they were modeling it and they were talking about these types of things with us – many of us, that's what our parents did. Oh, I always answer this question, because I know some of you want to know. How did I get my little plastic things to stick? Okay, here's my teacher tip for the day. I actually use the clear index tab dividers that you can buy at any office supply store. Cut them into little rectangles. Put post-it glue on them. It's a re-stickable, adhesive gluestick. And it's basically the same glue they use on post-it notes, and it is the greatest thing in the world for teachers. Do I get a perk from Scotch? From the company? Yeah, exactly – but it's wonderful! Any office supply store. I'll pass it around so you guys can see it. The other option – just so you know they have it – my friend found this for me. These are the see-through book covers – contact paper – and you can take that off and it gives you a clear, sticky adhesive. Yes, you can use highlighter tape as well. Absolutely. Any office supply store has it. But that gets expensive, so I like these because they're permanent. And I don't care if the kids mess with them and destroy them – I can just make more – it's no problem. I also – in my classroom – I have these things – we create these as a class, and then they're up in my room. So then that can be an independent activity that kids are doing for fluency practice as they go up to the charts with a partner and highlight the words that they would want to emphasize in the text, so it's another great way to let students practice in an independent way. Alright, now let's look at how do we build reading – I'm going to say speed for lack of a better word – that ability to read quicker, with more automaticity. And what the research says, is one of the most effective ways to build reading fluency is a strategy called timed repeated readings. And timed repeated readings had a profound effect on the students in my classroom. My students entered – you remember those charts I showed you earlier – all reading somewhere between 30 and 60 words per minute at the beginning of the year, and our target goal was 120 words a minute at the end of the year. Now, by doing timed repeated reading all year with my students, I got all of them into the 90 to 120 range, except for 3, in my class by using this one strategy. It had a profound impact on the fluency rate of my students. So, basically what timed repeated reading is a time every day where students read a short piece of text – several times – it's repeated, basically. They read for one minute. Basically, what I do is they have pieces of text that look like this. They read with a partner for one minute, just like you did with Rapunzel – Rapunzollo – and their partner timed them, and then they switched. And then they reread the text a minimum of 3 times – sometimes even more. Then what we do is we actually set specific reading goals – or fluency goals – with them. Every day I meet with a student in my class and do a quick one-minute fluency assessment, because I don't have time to do all of them, so I do one a day, and I meet with them and say “Okay, what is

your fluency target?” And I usually pick about 10 words per minute more, so if a student is at 65 words per minute, your fluency goal is to be at 75 words per minute. So I set very specific, doable goals with each child, and then we graph their progress over time. We need to get text that’s appropriate for our kids. Now, if you recall, earlier I said we always assess at grade level – always, always, always. But timed repeated readings, we actually find text that they can read successfully with 95% accuracy, so this is a time where they need to be reading various types of passages in your classroom. And we don’t want them misreading words more than every 20 words. So it really needs to be in a place where they can be successful with it. If it’s too easy, we’re not doing anything. If it’s too hard, it’s going to frustrate them even more. They should be short passages like this. And in California we’re very lucky – our curriculum provides them for us in our curriculum, so that’s actually where we get them from, so I always look there first if you can find anything. So that may be your greatest challenge is in finding passages for them to practice. And you also want to use a variety of genres – not just narratives – like that expository text. It’s great for them too. Because their rate of speed will slow down on expository text in general. So here’s basically what they do. Students will read this same passage 3 to 5 times in one day. Well, what happens each time you read it? What do you guys think? It gets faster each time, right? The first time they may read 65 words a minute – the 2<sup>nd</sup> time they may read 68 – the 3<sup>rd</sup> time they’ll read 70 – each time they’ll read one or two more words faster. And why is that? It’s more familiar. First of all, they’ve mastered the sight words, they’ve gotten past the decoding of the words they didn’t know, so they’ve had that exposure, and they’re just getting more familiar with it. Now the beauty of timed repeated readings is what researchers have discovered, that if you increase your rate on this from say 65 to 75 words per minute, when you go to the next piece of text, your base rate will actually be faster, and each time you read and you continue reading this process, your kids will go up one or two words per minute every week or so by doing this practice. It’s a very systematic way of increasing students’ fluency over time in a safe way. So it takes say 5, 10 minutes every day. It’s a great activity for any time students are independent, not with you, because they can do it with a partner as an independent activity. Have them do it with a partner like I said, one person reads and times, the other person reads and times. I have a little timer that sits in my classroom that I, of course, train my students to use – that’s also a component of it as well. It does take some management for us to get this started, but it’s very powerful. I keep them at the same level passage – okay, say this is a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade reading level – this particular one – I keep them at that same level until they are pretty comfortable at their goal. So if their goal was 75 words per minute, and they are consistently reading passages at this level at 75 words per minutes, then I can up the text or I can up their reading goal. The critical component is the goal-setting, because just getting kids to read and nobody’s holding them accountable, what are they really going to do back in the corner? Goof off, right? If I’m not holding them accountable, if I’m not monitoring their progress on a very regular basis, if I’m not meeting with them and setting their individual, doable goals with them, this won’t be effective. You can’t leave that goal-setting component out. And again, what I do is I meet with one or two kids every single day. It’s done daily – at least 3 to 4 repetitions. If a child needs more repetitions with a piece of text – fine. You can also recycle it. You may have 5 different passages for a couple of weeks and they just keep practicing a different text each day, and they do it with a partner. I do something called alternate ranking. And that’s actually how I organize my students. You list your students. We have a fantasyland and only have 10 students in a class. This is how I organize my group. My most fluent reader – I rank them in the order of fluency proficiency. So this is my most fluent reader,

this is my 2<sup>nd</sup> most fluent reader, and I rank them all the way to my lowest fluency student. And the way I organize my students is this way. So, my highest fluency, my lowest fluency, so by doing it this way my most fluent reader is reading with somebody that's kind of in the medium level of fluency. I'm not going with my most fluent and my least fluent – you want to avoid those extremes – so get them a little bit closer. Or you can cluster it this way as well – so they're on the same passage. So whatever works best for you – it depends on the scope of students in your classroom. This is also why I tend to group them that way, because my more fluent students can maybe read first and maybe do some modeling so the less fluent student has already heard the passage when they read, so they have a level of experience with it. And they could also do it with choral reading, and they can also have these same passages on tape for them to hear. They can listen to the passage on tape several times and then read it. So, of course, you're going to have to look at the needs of your students and what support they're going to need to get to that text and bring those pieces in. So, now what I do next is to graph their fluency. And you guys do have a sample graph. And you can organize this various ways in your classroom. My students have fluency folders that look like this. And on one side are the passages that I want them to be reading and on this side is their graph. So there's very little management taking place. They just grab their fluency folder and they can go read and then graph. Now I have my students graph their final reading – that's how I choose to do it. I don't make them graph every time. If they read that piece of text 3 to 5 times, at the end of reading that passage they actually graph their fluency rate for me. And that's a way that I can informally monitor their progress. Do they make mistakes? Yes. Am I worried? No. Why? Because I'm meeting with them every couple of weeks and I'm doing my own. I know if Johnny is graphing 180 words per minute it's probably not accurate. So it's not something that I stress over. If you want to put some accountability in, you can have their partner check the graph and sign – you can do some of those types of things. But it's not really something that I stress about. It's really more for the students and it's really about building that community with my kids – it's not about a certain number – it's about you meeting your goal – and not putting a lot of stress on it. And I don't publish these – I don't post them – or any of those things. That's just a preference that I have. I also can color-code my classroom seating. Some management tips, I mark them on various colors of construction paper, where if I have various levels in my classroom, you know you're going to read the ones in red, and you know you're going to read the ones in blue, and you're going to read the ones in purple. That can be a way for them to identify easily text that they should be reading – you can do that as well. Here's a student graph – that shows the student graphing. I didn't have a copy of this one – I like this one because actually write in the benchmarks on the graph so the kids can actually see when they reach that. And then this is another classroom and this is their fluency center. And this teacher actually chooses to just put it on a poster instead in the front of the center so the kids each day can record what their final rate was – she's not actually graphing. Basically, repeated reading will gradually over time in a very systematic way get your kids to be more fluent. So it's your turn now to try it. So let's go back to the Panama Canal passage in your handout. And again with your partner, I'm going to have you do like you did with Rapunzel, but this time we're going to do it several times. So, first I'm going to use you guys as my example, if you don't mind. You will read for one minute and you will time her while she does that. Once she stops, I'm going to ask you to make a little slash mark on your text, and then you'll trade, you will read for one minute, you'll time her, and slash. Then you'll repeat read again – a second time, a second time – a third time, a third time. Do it 3 times – each of you – and see if you actually increase your fluency – even as proficient readers.

All my groups in the past have. So let's see how it works here. (People Reading) First of all, when I do fluency, there's a couple of things – all my kids have timers so they don't have to watch the clock, which is really hard to do both, as you probably noticed. And the 2<sup>nd</sup> thing is that they're not all necessarily doing it at the same time. When I have independent activities, I have lists of activities that they need to complete for the day, and they do them in order, so they may hit it at different times, so there's less noise level. I also let them go to the far corners of the room for this. So I put my fluency materials far away from the area of the room where there may be more noise – great management questions. So, any other questions? No? We have about 10 seconds with a partner. Say one thing that you're going to do to address fluency in your classroom. Alright. I'd like to thank you very much for your participation today and being willing to be disfluent.

(Music)

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