

Read Naturally® Strategy

Rationale &

Research *Brief*

Rationale for the Read Naturally Strategy

This brief describes the evidence-based instructional strategies and relevant reading research that form the powerful Read Naturally Strategy.

Fluency and the Struggling Reader

Fluent readers are able to read orally with appropriate speed, accuracy, and proper expression.¹

Forty years of research studies indicate that fluency is one of the critical building blocks of reading. Many researchers have found that fluency:

- Highly correlates with reading comprehension.²
- Strongly predicts later reading achievement.³
- Causally contributes to improved comprehension.⁴

When a student reads fluently, that student is likely to comprehend what he or she is reading. Consequently, teachers need to find ways to intentionally develop their students' fluency. While some students learn to read fluently without explicit fluency instruction, many students need more support than provided in the course of normal classroom instruction.

Students become fluent by reading. However, research analyzed by the National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, NICHD, 2000) found that just encouraging students to read independently is not the most effective way to improve reading fluency. In fact, during independent reading time, many at-risk students do not read at all, will not or cannot independently read the books in classroom libraries, pretend to read, or just look at the pictures.

As a result, poor fluency is a self-perpetuating problem. Struggling readers read so few words during their instructional and independent reading time that the gap between the number of words they read compared to their peers continually widens. These readers need targeted and intensive instruction in order to achieve fluency. Read Naturally intervention programs are developed to help teachers meet this need.

Evidence-Based Strategies

Research provides evidence that teacher modeling,⁵ repeated reading,⁶ and progress monitoring⁷ are effective instructional strategies to involve struggling readers in the act of reading and improve their fluency. These methods also enhance understanding and accelerate reading achievement.

Teacher Modeling

In this strategy, a striving reader reads along as a proficient reader models correct pronunciation, rate, and expression. Teacher modeling helps students learn unknown words, practice difficult words, and use proper pronunciation and expression.

Repeated Reading

In this strategy, a student reads a short story or passage many times until able to read it fluently. Repeated reading helps the student learn to recognize some words, master others, and increase fluency. The student then transfers knowledge of the words learned and mastered to subsequent texts.

Progress Monitoring

In this strategy, a teacher works with a student to set goals and expectations, provide feedback, and track progress over time by graphing data. Progress monitoring has been shown to increase student involvement in the learning process, improve student performance, develop higher student self-efficacy (the student's belief he or she will have success on similar future tasks), reward student effort, and increase student motivation to keep reading. It also promotes teacher awareness of each student's progress.

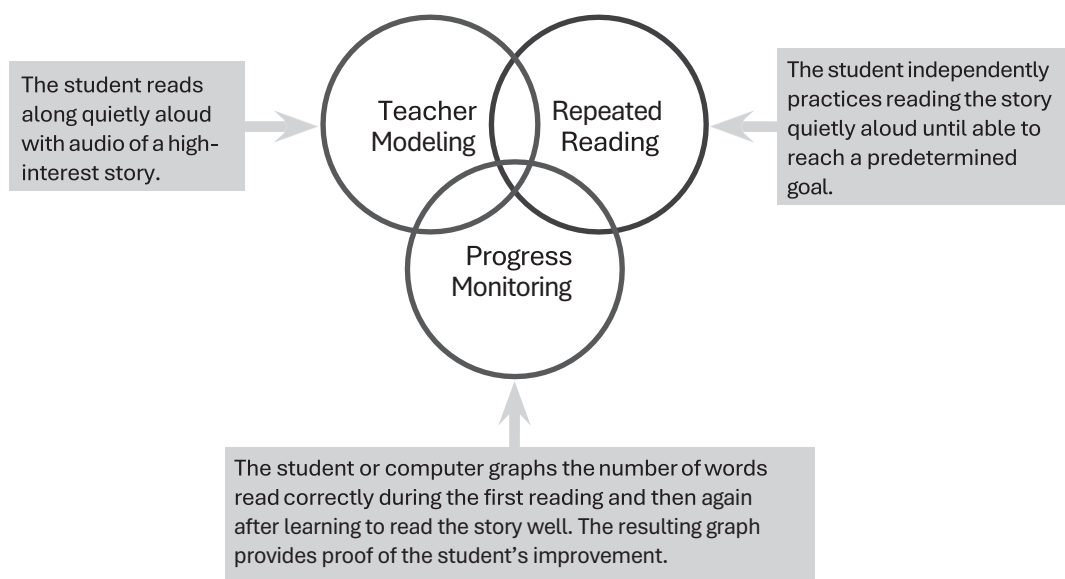
The Read Naturally Strategy combines these three powerful, evidence-based strategies—teacher modeling, repeated reading, and progress monitoring—to improve reading proficiency.

The Read Naturally Strategy

By combining the three evidenced-based strategies above into one easily learned, highly structured process, the Read Naturally Strategy lays the groundwork for individualizing instruction and providing motivating opportunities to read. It provides the support, structure, and motivation that striving readers need in order to become proficient readers.

The process begins when the student selects and reads an unfamiliar, high-interest, nonfiction story. The student or computer graphs the number of words read correctly per minute—the first step in progress monitoring. Then, the student benefits from the support of teacher modeling by reading the story quietly aloud along with the teacher or a carefully paced recording. Next, the student reads the story repeatedly and unassisted until able to read it accurately and with expression at a goal rate. Finally, the student or computer completes the progress monitoring by graphing the number of words read correctly per minute on the final reading. The resulting graph provides concrete proof to the student of improved performance and serves to motivate the student to begin the process again.

The Read Naturally Strategy



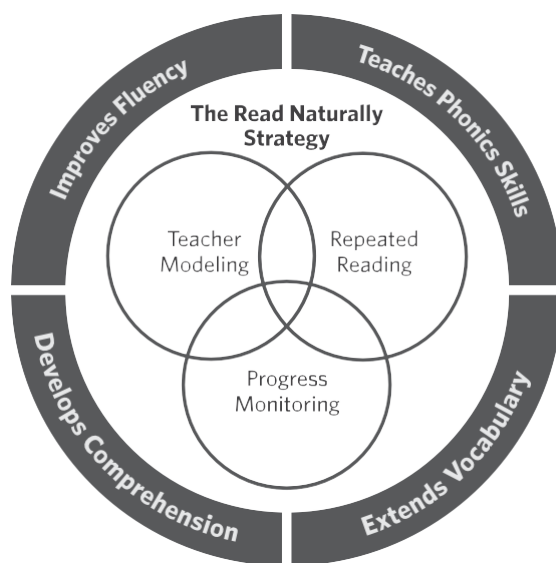
Read Naturally Strategy Programs

The Read Naturally Strategy is the core of Read Naturally intervention programs. The structure and content of Read Naturally programs broaden the scope of this powerful strategy by integrating phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, and vocabulary with strong fluency instruction, including sufficient practice opportunities that lead to mastery. Programs not only address these essential components of reading instruction but also improve students' attitude and motivation. The result is effective and efficient reading programs for struggling readers.

The Strategy Plus the Components of Reading

In 2000, the National Reading Panel identified five essential components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Read Naturally intervention programs present opportunities for each student to acquire vocabulary, develop comprehension, and learn phonics skills while improving fluency.

Read Naturally Intervention Programs



Read Naturally interventions based on the Read Naturally Strategy include the following:

- **Read Naturally Live (RNL)**
cloud-based software; students work mostly independently at their own level and pace
- **Encore II (EncII)**
print with audio; students work mostly independently at their own level and pace
- **GATE+**
print and display materials for use with groups

Students using the above interventions benefit from evidence-based practices incorporated in each. The tables below, one for each of the five components of reading, indicate the activities that employ evidence-based practices and in which Read Naturally intervention(s) they exist.

Phonemic Awareness

Activity <i>for developing and mastering phonemic awareness</i>	RNL	EncII	GATE+
Listening for specific sounds in words.			X
Blending sounds and syllables into words.			X
Segmenting words into sounds.			X

Phonics

Activity <i>for developing and mastering phonics skills</i>	RNL	EncII	GATE+
Learning featured letter(s) and their sounds.			X
Learning featured letter pattern(s) and their sounds.	Phonics series	Phonics series	X
Decoding words with featured patterns.	Phonics series	Phonics series	X
Spelling (writing) words with featured patterns.	Phonics series	Phonics series	X
Decoding one-syllable words.	Phonics series	Phonics series	X
Decoding two-syllable words.	Phonics series	Phonics series	X
Learning common endings/suffixes.	Phonics series		X
Decoding words with common endings/suffixes.	Phonics series		X
Spelling words with common endings/suffixes.	Phonics series		X
Learning common prefixes.	Phonics series		
Decoding words with common prefixes.	Phonics series		
Spelling words with common prefixes.	Phonics series		
Learning regular and irregular, high-frequency words.	Phonics series		X
Learning to read and write/spell irregular, high-frequency words as spell-out words/words to learn by heart.	Phonics series		X
Reading decodable sentence(s).	Phonics series		X
Reading a story and word list along with teacher modeling (recorded audio or teacher) to learn and practice words with the featured pattern and the words in the story.	Phonics series	Phonics series	X
Repeatedly reading a story and word list independently until able to read them well.	Phonics series	Phonics series	X
Using words with the featured pattern to answer questions about the story.	Phonics series	Phonics series	X

Fluency

Activity <i>for developing fluency (rate, accuracy, and prosody)</i>	RNL	EncII	GATE+
Reading an unpracticed story and graphing the number of words read correctly per minute (for progress monitoring).	Sequenced & Phonics series	Sequenced & Phonics series	X
Reading the story along with teacher modeling accurate reading at an appropriate pace with prosody (recorded audio or teacher).	Sequenced & Phonics series	Sequenced & Phonics series	X
Repeatedly reading the interesting, nonfiction story independently until able to read it well.	Sequenced & Phonics series	Sequenced & Phonics series	X
Reading the story for the teacher and graphing the results.	Sequenced & Phonics series	Sequenced & Phonics series	X

Vocabulary

Activity <i>for acquiring a better understanding of new words</i>	RNL	EncII	GATE+
Reading and/or listening to definitions of key words in a Key Words step.	Sequenced series	Sequenced series	X
Using key words to write predictions.	Sequenced & Phonics series	Sequenced & Phonics series	X
Encountering more targeted vocabulary words in the context of the story and reading and/or listening to their definitions.	Sequenced & Phonics series	Sequenced & Phonics series	X
Utilizing a student-friendly glossary or clicking on vocabulary words to learn their definitions.	Sequenced & Phonics series	Sequenced & Phonics series	
Reading stories that in themselves define terms and concepts (e.g. What Is Sap?, What Are Mimes?, What Are Glaciers?, Trains, Winter, and Leap Year).	Sequenced & Phonics series	Sequenced & Phonics series	X

Comprehension

Activity <i>for developing comprehension and thinking skills</i>	RNL	EncII	GATE+
Thinking about the story before reading and/or writing a prediction.	Sequenced series	Sequenced series	X
Writing a sentence about the story.		Phonics series	X
Retelling or summarizing the story (with increasing complexity as appropriate for students).	Sequenced series	Sequenced series	
Deepening understanding as a result of repeated readings (and improved fluency).	Sequenced & Phonics series	Sequenced & Phonics series	X
Building background knowledge reading nonfiction stories which help develop overall comprehension.	Sequenced & Phonics series	Sequenced & Phonics series	X

Answering questions about the story using words with the featured pattern.	Phonics series	Phonics series	X
Answering a variety of question types about the story including main idea, detail, vocabulary, inference, etc.	Sequenced series	Sequenced series	
Discussing the story with the rest of the group to increase understanding (or with just the teacher).	<i>if time allows at pass step...</i>	<i>if time allows at pass step...</i>	X
Record and track scores for answering questions.	Sequenced & Phonics series	Sequenced & Phonics series	X
Graphing questions answered correctly/incorrectly by question type.	Sequenced series	Sequenced series	
Analyzing strengths and weaknesses with teacher support.	Sequenced & Phonics series	Sequenced & Phonics series	X

Additional Benefits of Read Naturally Live, Encore II, and GATE+

In addition to significant improvement in their students' reading, teachers have noted several other benefits of Read Naturally Live, Encore II and GATE+. Students often:

- Experience increased confidence and self-esteem.
- Take responsibility for their successes.
- Verbalize that immediate and frequent feedback motivates them to keep reading.
- Express pride in their reading achievements and hope for their academic futures.

Read Naturally Live and Encore II also help to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners by assigning each student to the series and level of material that will maximize the student's progress in reading. This individualization makes it possible for students working in different series and levels of material to participate in the program at the same time. In addition, making an adaptation based on the age and first language of each student is an easy way to accommodate the diverse needs of students. Analyzing student data on each student's story and graph pages offers a concrete way to monitor student performance in order to refine the student's level or goal. Making recommended adjustments is another way to differentiate instruction in order to meet the changing needs of the student.

Once students have been taught how to follow the steps in Read Naturally Live and Encore II, their time on task is very high, and they spend most of the instructional time engaged in the act of reading. Moreover, the intervention's structure allows students to work independently most of the time. Teachers can thus give more individualized time to students.

And finally, students using the Read Naturally Strategy get excited about reading. They often show an increased interest in coming to reading class. They enjoy selecting and reading the high-interest stories, learning to read with ease, and tracking their progress on the graphs.

Because students get immediate feedback that encourages them to "beat their scores," they get hooked on the program, much as they might get hooked on a video game. When students are interested and engaged, they are less likely to become disruptive. Many students also report reading books at home, and parents comment on improvements both in the amount of time their children spend reading at home and in their attitudes about reading.

End Notes

¹These indicators, as articulated by the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000), continue to be widely accepted as important markers of fluent reading. For a full review of historical and current theories and definitions of fluency and its components, see Kuhn, Schwanenflugel, & Meisinger, 2010.

²Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, and Jenkins (2001) summarize research that found oral reading fluency correlates (.91) to comprehension even more highly than more direct comprehension measures (i.e., question answering, .82; recall, .70; cloze, .72). See also Daane, Campbell, Grigg, Goodman, & Oranje, 2005; Klauda & Guthrie, 2008; Schwanenflugel, Meisinger, Wisenbaker, Kuhn, Strauss, & Morris, 2006; Wayman, Wallace, Tichá, & Espin, 2007.

³Reschly, Busch, Betts, Deno, and Long's meta-analysis (2009) of correlational evidence from 41 studies found significant, strong overall correlation (.67) among measures of fluency and prediction on state-specific and national tests. These findings were consistent across grades 1–5 and when tests were individually or group-administered. See also Kim, Petscher, Schatschneider, & Foorman, 2010; Klauda & Guthrie, 2008.

⁴Price, Meisinger, Louwerse, and D'Mello (2015) found text reading fluency (oral and silent) to account for 47% of variance in 4th grade students' comprehension. Jenkins, Fuchs, van den Broek, Espin, and Deno (2003) found text reading fluency to uniquely account for 42% of variance on 4th grade students' comprehension scores. Klauda and Guthrie (2008) found that word reading speed explained 43% of the variance in comprehension for 5th grade students, and the additional fluency components of phrasing (10%) and passage-level processing (4%) accounted for additional variance. See also Reutzel & Hollingsworth, 1993.

⁵Since the development of the first assisted reading strategies of neurological impress (Heckelman, 1969; Hollingsworth, 1978) and reading while listening (Chomsky, 1976), there have been a variety of additional repeated reading methods developed which provide students with a proficient model of the reading: paired or partner reading, shared reading, technology-assisted reading practice. Lee and Yoon Yoon's meta-analysis (2015) of 34 repeated reading studies from 1990 to 2014 found that repeated reading with a model (1.95) yields a statistically greater positive impact than interventions without a listening passage preview (0.94). See also Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler, 2002; Dowhower, 1987; Eldredge & Quinn, 1988; Morgan & Sideridis, 2006; Rasinski, Reutzel, Chard, & Linan-Thompson, 2011; Therrien, 2004.

⁶Since the development of the repeated reading strategy (Dahl, 1979; Samuels, 1979/1997) and its assisted variant reading while listening (Chomsky, 1978; Carbo, 1978), meta-analyses (Lee & Yoon Yoon, 2015; Morgan & Sideridis, 2006; Morgan, Sideridis, & Hua, 2011; NICHD, 2000; Therrien, 2004; Yang, 2006) have found both unassisted and assisted repeated reading to have significant effect sizes on fluency and comprehension for children and adolescents with or without learning disabilities who are still mastering fluency (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Padeliadu & Giazitzidou, 2018). Stevens, Walker, and Vaughn (2017) wrote in their recent updated synthesis of research on reading fluency interventions: "Findings suggest that [repeated reading] remains the most effective intervention for improving reading fluency for students with [learning disabilities]" (576).

⁷Morgan, Sideridis, and Hua's meta-analysis (2011) of 44 studies identified that students participating in interventions with goal-setting and feedback had higher levels of fluency (measured in words correct per minute) than students receiving any of the other six interventions analyzed. For more on the effects of progress monitoring on students with or at-risk of learning disabilities, see also Morgan & Sideridis, 2006; Therrien, 2004. For more on the effects of progress monitoring on student achievement, see also Althoff, Linde, Mason, Nagel, & O'Reilly, 2007; Fuchs, Fuchs, Hamlett, Walz, & Germann, 1993; Fuchs, Fuchs, Hamlett, & Whinnery, 1991.

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