CHAPTER 2
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What Is Fluent Reading?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What are the components of reading fluency?
- How does automaticity contribute to comprehension?
- How does prosody contribute to comprehension?
- How does fluent reading differ between kindergarten, first, second, and third grades, and beyond?
- In what ways is fluency important for the CCSS?

As we mentioned in Chapter 1, our definition of fluency includes three critical components: accuracy, automaticity, and prosody (Kuhn et al., 2010; see Figure 2.1). While you may be more familiar with the first two components, all of them make distinct contributions to both fluency and comprehension of text. Our goal for this chapter is to explore the role of automaticity and prosody in this relationship. We will also provide an overview of effective fluency instruction and discuss how such instruction can contribute to student success with the CCSS. Most importantly, we will show you that understanding fluency deeply will help you to address it more quickly and directly. We will start with some technical descriptions of fluency and then move on to its instructional implications.

What Is Fluent Reading?:
The Role of Automaticity and Prosody

As a skilled reader, when you read out loud, your reading is generally smooth, effortless, and expressive (Kuhn et al., 2010). You are able to recognize the vast majority of words you encounter accurately and automatically and are able to

Accuracy—the degree to which a reader can identify words in text with precision

Automaticity—the instantaneous recognition of words in text without conscious effort or attention

Prosody—the stress, emphasis, and phrasing that create an expressive rendering of a text
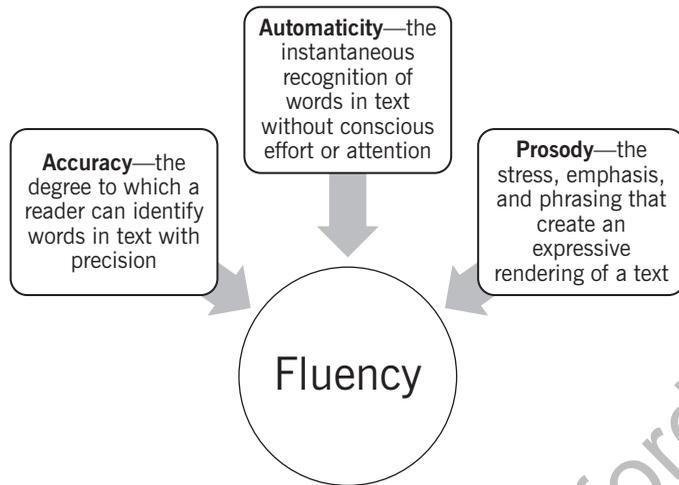
Fluency

FIGURE 2.1. Components of fluency.

determine appropriate phrasing and intonation. In other words, your reading is fluent. Being fluent not only ensures automaticity and expression, it contributes to comprehension. We focus on fluency, not for its own sake, but because it helps children construct meaning from text. So how does fluency contribute to comprehension? The answer involves both automaticity and prosody, and our discussion of these components should lead to a fuller understanding of fluency than can develop from a focus on automaticity alone (Applegate et al., 2009; Kuhn et al., 2010; see Figure 2.2). Before we begin this discussion, however, we need to mention that while a base of accurate word recognition must be established before students can become fluent readers, we will not cover decoding instruction in this book (see Hayes & Flanigan, 2014, for effective phonics and word recognition instruction). Instead, we will concentrate on a range of best practices that allows students' word recognition to become automatic and their reading to incorporate appropriate intonation.


Automaticity ➕ Prosody ➖ Fluency's contribution to comprehension
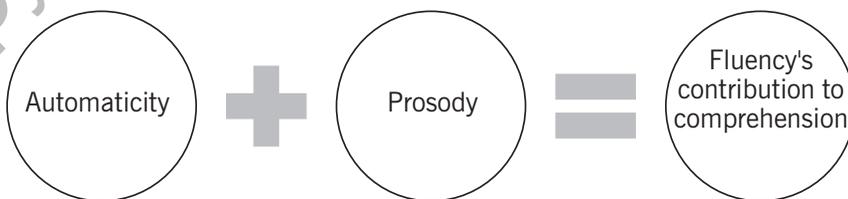
FIGURE 2.2. The relationship between fluency and comprehension.

The Role of Automaticity

If students are to make sense of what they read, they need to accurately and automatically identify written words (e.g., Chall, 1996; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). Initially, this involves students becoming comfortable at recognizing words that can be easily decoded and high-frequency (sometimes phonetically irregular) words. However, when students are first learning to read, this process often requires them to focus on each word they encounter, resulting in reading that sounds stilted and uneven. In fact, it is often the case that students at this stage of development spend so much time figuring out every word in a sentence, they are unable to focus on the meaning of the sentence as a whole. Instruction in word recognition, in a variety of formats (e.g., Pear et al., 2011; Hayes & Flanigan, 2014; Trachtenburg, 1990), will help students build their sight vocabulary and make the generalizations needed to become skilled readers. However, decoding instruction is necessary but insufficient to ensure that students become fluent.

The inability of students to focus on meaning while learning how to decode can best be explained through automaticity theory (e.g., LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Logan, 1997; see Figure 2.3). This theory posits that we have a limited amount of attention available for any complex task. As a result, when we encounter new activities that incorporate multiple components, it is difficult for us to concentrate on all aspects simultaneously. Think about individuals first learning to play a sport or a musical instrument. Novices need to learn the various steps in order to be successful, whether this means learning to dribble or practicing scales. At the


Attentional demands for beginning readers

Comprehension
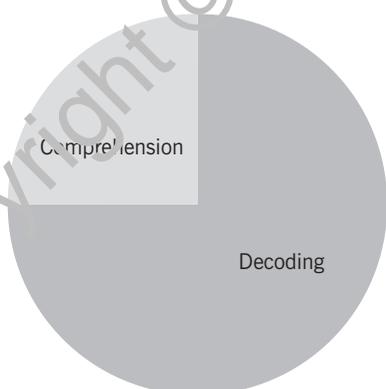
Decoding

Attentional demands for skilled readers

Decoding
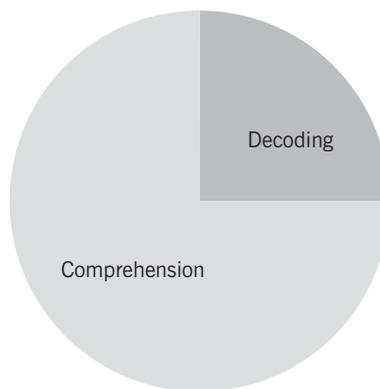
Comprehension

FIGURE 2.3. The division of attention between decoding and comprehension for beginning and skilled readers.

same time, if we are to move past the basics, certain aspects of these tasks need to become effortless or automatic. In the case of reading, since comprehension should always receive the bulk of our attention, it is our decoding that needs to become automatic.

For teachers, one of the most important questions at this stage of development is, "How does decoding become automatic?" The answer is simple. Practice. This means ensuring that students have extensive opportunities to figure out words, both in guided instruction and independent practice (e.g., Bear et al., 2011). Such opportunities allow them to develop comfort with the spelling patterns, or orthography, that comprise written English.

However, while word study of all types is an essential component of the literacy curriculum, if students are to become fluent readers, it is also critical that they have plenty of opportunities to apply their developing knowledge to reading (Kuhn, 2004–2005; Reutzel et al., 2008). This reading can involve books, magazines, poetry, or material from the Internet. Without this additional step, however, students are likely to become very good at recognizing words in isolation, but not nearly as likely to become fluent readers. In other words, it will be difficult for them to transfer what they are learning to connected text—in the same way that those who are adept at playing scales will never become great musicians unless they practice playing actual songs. On the other hand, when you provide students with abundant opportunities to read a wide selection of material—with appropriate support where necessary—the likelihood that they will develop automaticity increases significantly.

The Role of Prosody

While automaticity provides insight into certain aspects of fluency's relationship to comprehension, prosody also plays a critical role. Prosody itself consists of several elements: intonation, stress, pacing, and the rhythmic patterns of language (e.g., Benjamin & Schwanenflugel, 2010; Erekson, 2003; see Figure 2.4). When reading,
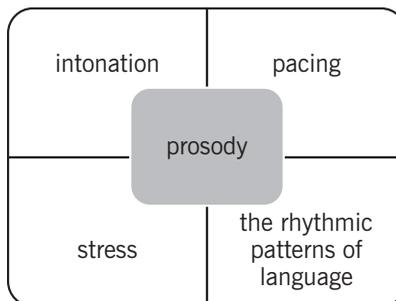

FIGURE 2.4. The components of prosody.

these elements work together to provide shades of meaning and help us determine appropriate expression and phrasing. To some degree, prosodic elements are represented by punctuation like commas, periods, semicolons, and the use of italics. This can be seen in the title joke of Lynn Truss's (2003) *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*:

> A panda walks into a café. He orders a sandwich, eats it, then draws a gun and fires two shots into the air.
>
> "Why?" asks the confused waiter, as the panda makes towards the exit. The panda produces a badly punctuated wildlife manual and tosses it over his shoulder.
>
> "I'm a panda," he says, at the door. "Look it up."
>
> The waiter turns to the relevant entry and, sure enough, finds an explanation.
>
> "**Panda.** Large black-and-white bear-like mammal, native to China. Eats, shoots and leaves." (back cover)

Unfortunately, many aspects of prosody that exist in speech cannot be represented by punctuation. For example, it is usually clear where phrasing exists in spoken language, but this is less apparent in writing (e.g., Miller & Schwanenflugel, 2006); and while some phrases are identified through commas, others are not. Look at this sentence from Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*:

> From a little after two o'clock until almost sundown of the long still hot weary dead September afternoon they sat in what Miss Coldfield still called the office because her father had called it that—a dim hot airless room with the blinds all closed and fastened for forty-three summers because when she was a girl someone had believed that light and moving air carried heat and that dark was always cooler, and which (as the sun shone fuller and fuller on that side of the house) became latticed with yellow slashes full of dust motes which Quentin thought of as being flecks of the dead old dried paint itself blown inward from the scaling blinds as wind might have blown them. (2012, p. 3)

Another writer might have used a comma after the words *September afternoon* to indicate a dependent clause and assist the reader in identifying a phrasal boundary. In Faulkner's case, it is left to the reader to determine where the grouping of words, or parsing, needs to occur. While skilled readers may initially read through this passage with few breaks, they are likely to reread in order to construct a more nuanced sense of the author's intended meaning.

Although young readers are not going to encounter text of this complexity, the fact that they often read word-by-word or in two- or three-word phrases creates comparable difficulties in their attempts to determine meaning in the selections they *are* reading. Importantly, a series of studies (e.g., Casteel, 1988; Cromer, 1970; Weiss, 1983) demonstrated that disfluent readers across a range of ages

actually improved their comprehension when the text was organized into appropriate phrase units for them.

Similar problems occur with expression (e.g., Benjamin & Schwanenflugel, 2010). It is often the case that the location of the stress or intonation affects the meaning of the words or sentences; so, for example, if you were driving in the country, got a flat tire, and responded by saying, "That's just great," it would be clear to a listener that you were not happy. However, when reading this sentence, that sense of irony is not visible in the words on the page. Instead, you need to understand the situation in order to understand how to interpret the comment. Again, this is something skilled readers are able to do fairly readily. Unfortunately, given the multiple tasks young learners need to coordinate as they read, such nuances may be lost on them, causing them to draw incorrect conclusions.

While the above examples illustrate our point, you can imagine how readers' inability to apply aspects of oral language to text can contribute to misunderstandings. On the plus side, not only are these skills that learners can develop through their own reading, they can also be taught. And, helping children to become prosodic readers also helps them develop better comprehension as well (Kuhn et al., 2010). Therefore, when considering fluency's overall contribution to comprehension, we feel it is important not only to ensure that your students are reading relatively accurately and at a reasonable pace, but also with the expressiveness that replicates oral language.

What Does Effective Fluency Instruction Look Like?

An understanding of fluency that includes prosody as well as automaticity has important implications for instruction. Rather than simply teaching your students to read as quickly as possible, a process that can actually distract from the construction of meaning, it is important to teach them to read with appropriate pacing and expression (e.g., Kuhn et al., 2010; Samuels, 2007). In fact, there are several principles that underlie effective fluency instruction (Rasinski, 1989, 2004a); these are: modeling, providing extensive opportunities for practice, ensuring sufficient support or scaffolding, and incorporating prosodic elements in your instruction (see Figure 2.5).

It is hard to tease out these four principles completely because they are very much intertwined, but we will begin with modeling. In this case, modeling occurs by demonstrating good fluent reading—so that students know what their goal is. This is especially important as they make the transition from stilted beginning reading to reading that is smooth and expressive. Your oral reading provides them with a sense of what their reading should (and will!) sound like. Modeling can also help create a sense of community within your classroom and instill a love of reading among your students.
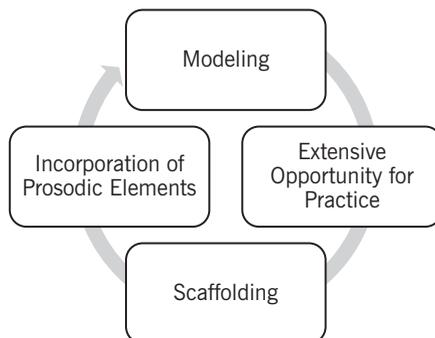
FIGURE 2.5. Principles of effective fluency instruction.

Further, there is a variety of material that is best presented orally. Think about the joys of listening to poems, plays, highly descriptive narratives, and gripping pieces of nonfiction read aloud (e.g., Rasinski, 1989). Using such a broad selection of reading material is especially important for two reasons (e.g., Kletzien & Dreher, 2004). First, since not all learners are enamored by fiction, reading from a broad variety of texts increases the likelihood that you will validate the interests of all your learners, not just some of them. Second, by introducing your students to genres that they might not otherwise encounter, you may kindle an interest in an entirely new category of reading. We know of one student who only wanted to read fantasies, but ended up enjoying biographies and history once his teacher read several of them to the class. Ultimately, you may find that reading aloud serves as a motivator for your students' independent reading and broadens their knowledge and interests.

Despite the positives of modeling fluent reading through read-alouds, there are certain cautions we feel are worth considering (e.g., Kuhn & Schwanenflugel, 2007). If students are to become fluent readers, they need to spend the majority of their literacy period developing their own reading skills, not listening to their teacher read. So while reading to your learners can be enjoyable and motivating, it should not last for a significant period of time. Five to ten minutes of teacher read-aloud time during reading instruction seems to be reasonable, although you may extend that time if you use a read-aloud as a part of your shared reading period or during your social studies and science instruction. However, careful use of your time is especially important when dealing with challenging material. And while reading aloud to your learners or the use of some form of round-robin reading may seem to be an effective way of providing them with access to such texts, it is far better that you provide them with enough scaffolding to read the text themselves. We will provide you with effective approaches to such student reading in Chapter 4.

Modeling, like word recognition, is necessary but not sufficient to ensure fluent reading. Instead, you need to both provide your learners with extensive

NOT ALL FLUENCY PRACTICE IS EQUAL
(OR THE *DON'TS* OF FLUENCY INSTRUCTION)

. . . .

Unfortunately, not all "fluency practice" makes for effective instruction. Below we present several practices that we strongly believe should be kept out of your literacy curriculum. After reading through them, we hope you will agree.

1. *Don't focus on speed or word recognition in isolation*. If students are to become fluent readers, they must develop automaticity. However, developing automatic word recognition—in text or in isolation—does not necessarily lead to fluent reading. Rather than focusing simply on reading quickly, effective fluency instruction must involve reading connected text in ways that emphasize not only accurate and automatic word recognition but also the appropriate use of expression and phrasing.

2. *Don't rely on short passages or repeated readings*. Unfortunately, when using repeated readings with short texts, students may develop the notion that good reading is fast reading. Further, brief passages and short poems do not provide readers with nearly enough time actually reading connected text to develop their fluency. As we emphasize throughout this book, if students are to become skilled readers, they need to spend substantial amounts of time reading texts that are both challenging and of sufficient length.

3. *Don't overuse Readers' Theatre*. We have witnessed "Readers' Theatre" being used as a surrogate for round-robin reading. In these cases, each student was assigned a small section of text that she or he was required to read aloud. As a result, they only had the opportunity to read a few lines each. To make matters worse, much of the period was spent determining which reader should read which part. If you use this approach, we suggest that you use it sparingly, make sure everyone has the opportunity to read a substantial amount of text, and assign the parts quickly so students can spend most of their class time actually reading.

4. *Don't use easy texts for instruction*. We have seen students who are accurate but slow readers assigned to easier texts in the hope that their reading rate would improve. If your students are reading such selections with high levels of comprehension, your goal should be developing their automaticity with these texts rather than providing them with easier material. Such a focus should allow them to increase their reading rate while continuing to work with the type of challenging texts they are capable of comprehending.

5. *Don't forget that the ultimate goal of reading is comprehension*. Finally, while fluency is important, how quickly the students read or how well they sound when reading aloud is only useful in the service of understanding the text they are reading. If you emphasize the construction of meaning in all your lessons, your students will learn not only to be fluent readers, but readers who comprehend as well.

opportunities to practice reading themselves and ensure that you give them enough support, or scaffolding, to experience success. Such practice allows students to consolidate what they are learning. We know that for a large number of students the opportunity to read is still limited (Hiebert & Martin, 2009; Kuhn & Schwanenflugel, 2007). Ultimately, unless students are provided with such opportunities, they are far less likely to develop the ability to read fluently.

It is also the case that, when readers encounter challenging material (selections at the top end of their instructional level or the beginning of their frustration level), the provision of scaffolding can allow them access to the text. This is especially true for texts that contain new vocabulary or concepts. It is also the case that the more difficult a text is, the greater the amount of support that is required. Nor are reading levels stagnant. A child who is interested in space exploration will likely be able to read more challenging material on that topic than, say, on colonial history. And while *Junie B. Jones and the Stupid Smelly Bus* (Park, 1992) and *A Chair for My Mother* (Williams, 2007) may be labeled at the same level of difficulty, the latter is more conceptually challenging than the former.

The final instructional principle for building fluency involves incorporating prosody (Kuhn et al., 2010; Rasinski, 1989). As we mentioned earlier in the chapter, when children fail to use prosodic elements, comprehension can suffer. By teaching students to apply appropriate phrasing and expression, through modeling, explanation, and direct instruction, you are linking the characteristics of oral and written language. We believe it is particularly important to highlight this principle given the emphasis on reading rate that has occurred in recent years. To a large extent, this focus has arisen in response to a misuse of screening measures designed to measure rate without correspondingly measuring prosody. Unfortunately, this practice can have negative consequences, causing learners to focus on rate at the expense of their understanding.

Rather than attempting to increase your students' reading rate per se, we would argue that a more effective approach involves a focus on improving their pacing. In other words, you should encourage your children to read at a reasonable rate with appropriate phrasing and expression and emphasize the goal of comprehension. Not only does this better match our understanding of what it means to be a fluent reader, it also matches our broader goal of creating skilled, engaged readers who are able to deal successfully with a wide range of texts. Luckily, these principles are integrated into the fluency routines that we will present to you throughout this book.

Where Is Fluency in the CCSS?

Fluency is an essential component of the CCSS. First, fluent reading is a distinct goal for the elementary grades (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012);

we presented the fluency standards by grade level in Chapter 1. Second, fluency underlies the broader skills that are critical to success with these standards, what E. D. Hirsch (2003) calls "knowledge of words and the world." While we agree with the CCSS's highlighting of fluency goals by grade level, we feel it is important to think about these standards in a slightly more nuanced way; this understanding connects to the developmental view we presented in Chapter 1.

The CCSS for Fluency

For kindergarteners, the CCSS state that students should "read emergent-reader texts with purpose and understanding" (see Figure 2.6). Since learners at this stage are usually pretend reading, it is important that you afford them opportunities both

Kindergarteners	Grade 1 Students	Grade 2 Students
Read emergent-reader texts with purpose and understanding	Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.	Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
	1. Read on-level text with purpose and understanding. 2. Read on-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings. 3. Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.	1. Read on-level text with purpose and understanding. 2. Read on-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings. 3. Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
Grade 3 Students	**Grade 4 Students**	**Grade 5 Students**
Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.	Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.	Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
1. Read on-level text with purpose and understanding. 2. Read on-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings. 3. Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.	1. Read on-level text with purpose and understanding. 2. Read on-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings. 3. Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.	1. Read on-level text with purpose and understanding. 2. Read on-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings. 3. Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.

FIGURE 2.6. CCSS reading standards: Foundational skills, K–5. From Common Core State Standards Initiative (2012, pp. 16–17). Copyright by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. All rights reserved.

to listen to and to read or reread books and other material themselves (e.g., Hamilton & Schwanenflugel, 2011). This can occur during centers, through whole-class shared readings (including the reading of science or social studies texts aloud), and through small-group activities. Giving your students a range of experiences allows them to develop the sense of what fluent reading sounds like and will help their pretend reading transition into conventional reading. They will also develop emergent literacy skills in a cohesive way, further laying the foundation for successful reading development.

The standards for the remaining elementary grades state that learners are to "read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension" (see Figure 2.6). This involves reading grade-level text "with purpose and understanding," with "accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings," and using "context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary." These standards provide a clear overview of our goals for fluent reading. And while we have written this volume with primary-grade students and their teachers in mind, the conformity of the CCSS's standards across the grades indicate that the same understandings can be used to incorporate fluency practices in grades 3–5.

At the same time, we are mindful of the developmental nature of reading; as such, it is important to identify what is uniquely appropriate for first and second graders (e.g., Adams, 2011; Chall, 1996). Generally, we expect first graders to enter school with solid emergent literacy skills, including book-handling knowledge, alphabet knowledge, and a small number of words they can recognize automatically (i.e., certain high-frequency, phonetically regular words, such as *the* or *cat*, or highly meaningful words, like their own names). By the end of the year, we expect them to have developed a much higher level of accuracy in terms of word recognition as they take responsibility for reading a greater number of texts. As with any good literacy curriculum, there should always be a focus on comprehension, vocabulary, writing, and oral language development over the course of the year as well. However, developing accurate word recognition is a distinct focus for this age group, allowing them to make the transition from predictable books to a broader range of texts successfully.

The change in focus for word recognition can also be seen in the CWPM (correct words per minute) norms presented for first grade (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006; see Table 2.1). These norms were generated from the oral reading samples of first through eighth graders from across the country. You can see that the measurement of reading rate does not even begin until midyear in first grade. This is an indicator that first grade is a transition period in which instruction must build accuracy; the focus only shifts to automaticity toward the second half of the year. In other words, your emphasis should be on consolidating your students' knowledge of sound–symbol correspondences and expanding their recognition of high-frequency words, and assisting them in applying these understandings to connected text.

TABLE 2.1. CWPM Ratings at the 50th Percentile for First, Second, and Third Graders at Three Time Points during the School Year (Fall, Winter, Spring)

	Fall CWPM	Winter CWPM	Spring CWPM
First grade/50th percentile		23	53
Second grade/50th percentile	51	72	89
Third grade/50th percentile	71	92	107

As we mentioned in Chapter 1, you may find your first graders' reading to be choppy and stilted since they are still trying to figure out many of the words; and they are also likely to have difficulty constructing meaning as a result (e.g., Chall, 1996). As your learners continue to develop their word recognition skills over the course of the year, you may want to integrate more of the strategies discussed in the chapters that follow. However, while you will notice that even though your learners are becoming increasingly fluent (their reading rate increases; they shift from word-by-word reading to more frequent use of two- or three-word phrases), first grade is still a time when word work remains the primary focus for foundational skills for most learners.

As you focus on decoding, however, there are several instructional strategies that allow you to integrate effective fluency-oriented instruction into the first-grade literacy curriculum (Dougherty Johnson & Kuhn, 2013). One approach involves having your students reread a passage. This procedure differs from traditional repeated readings insofar as the focus is not increasing reading rate per se; instead, the goals are to help students confirm their decoding and improve their comprehension. As was mentioned in the first chapter, another effective approach involves the use of reading material that reinforces the phonics elements being taught (Stahl, 1992; Trachtenburg, 1990). For example, if you are focusing on the long *o* sound, you could first highlight it through a particular text (*The Giant's Toe* [Cole, 1986] or *The Snowy Day* [Keats, 1976]), then have students work with the concept, and finish by reading an additional text to illustrate the contextualized concept again (e.g., *Why Is It Snowing?* [Williams, 2005] or *Maps and Globes* [Knowlton, 1985]). It is also important that you continue modeling for them by reading aloud from a wide variety of material.

In general, grade two, and to a lesser degree grade three, are the years in which learners traditionally become fluent readers (Chall, 1996; Kuhn & Stahl, 2003). This means that, while some decoding instruction should still occur, your focus should be on developing automaticity and integrating prosodic elements into most of your students' oral reading. The strategies discussed throughout the remainder of this book provide a range of examples for effective instruction. It is at this point,

rather than in first grade, that we believe the CCSS expectations for fluency begin to stand on their own in terms of learners' literacy development. And, while the fluency standards remain the same over the remaining elementary grades, your focus on fluency per se should be lessened as students develop as independent readers.

Before leaving this section, we want to emphasize that our presentation of students' literacy development in terms of grades is meant to provide you with a general sense of your learners' growth (e.g., Chall, 1996; McKenna & Stahl, 2009). It is not meant as a lock-step approach. Children are individuals. Their learning will develop at different rates, and it is important for you to adjust your instruction accordingly. Just as you would not spend time teaching phonemic awareness to a student who can already decode, if some of your students are already reading a selection fluently, they can focus on reading material that is different from that of their peers. Similarly, students who are having difficulty making the transition to fluency may benefit from repeated readings even if it is not a necessary instructional approach for most of the class.

Fluent Reading and Challenging Texts

There is one other way in which fluency is important to the CCSS, and we feel it is critical to your learners' success. One of the key principles of the CCSS is the use of challenging text (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012). According to the Standards, there is a

> need for college and career ready students to be proficient in reading complex informational text independently in a variety of content areas. Most of the required reading in college and workforce training programs is informational in structure and challenging in content; postsecondary education programs typically provide students with both a higher volume of such reading than is generally required in K–12 schools and comparatively little scaffolding. (p. 4)

Several of the fluency-oriented instructional approaches presented in the remaining chapters of this book lend themselves to the use of such material. And it is also the case that the development of fluency, in its broadest sense, can create the kind of positive reading cycle that allows students to broaden their vocabulary and conceptual knowledge and can lay the basis for further reading success and increased reading stamina (Stanovich, 1986; see Figure 2.7).

Here is a recap. In order to become fluent readers, students will need to read from texts that provide some level of challenge as well as text at their instructional and independent levels (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003). The degree of challenge and the amount of support required are going to vary from situation to situation and
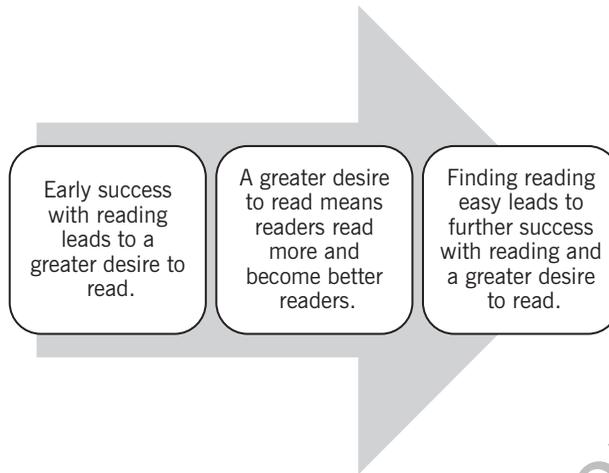
FIGURE 2.7. The positive development experienced by successful readers.

according to the skill level and background knowledge of your learners (Adams, 2010–2011; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; see Figure 2.8). As a result, it is important that you remain flexible, varying the amount of support you provide accordingly. The strategies presented throughout the book will help you find the appropriate amount of scaffolding for a given selection. And as tempting as it may be to turn to something easier when students are encountering particularly difficult material, it is critical to remember you must engage and support them, facing the challenge directly, if they are going to be able to tackle such texts independently.

Finally, remember that motivation is also a major factor in students' willingness to read (e.g., Gambrell, 2011). This can best be illustrated by the "playground buzz" that often accompanies a book or series of books that are popular among young readers. When a book takes off in terms of popularity (think about the Goosebumps, Lemony Snickett, and Harry Potter series), even your most
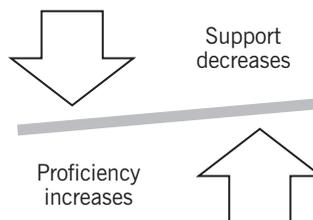

FIGURE 2.8. The amount of support you need to provide decreases as your readers' proficiency increases.

reading-averse students will likely attempt to read them since so many of their friends are clearly enjoying them. It is important to support these attempts, and we will discuss effective ways to do so in the following chapters. On the other hand, you may be able to develop your students' interest in a topic simply through your instruction. If you show enthusiasm, your enjoyment can be contagious—and students will be more likely to engage with texts as a result.

Conclusion

Ultimately, appropriate fluency instruction will be reflected in student success with the type of challenging texts required by the CCSS. Cunningham and Stanovich (1998) put it best for us:

> We should provide all children, regardless of their achievement levels, with as many reading experiences as possible. Indeed, this becomes doubly imperative for precisely those children whose verbal abilities are most in need of bolstering, for it is the very act of reading that can build those capacities. An encouraging message for teachers of low-achieving students is implicit here. We often despair of changing our students' abilities, but there is at least one partially malleable habit that will itself develop abilities—reading! (pp. 7–8)

Let's work together through the rest of this book to make this a reality.