

“So Long, Robot Reader!”

Summary: There is much more to reading fluency than just words read per minute. A literacy teacher and a second grade teacher from Roosevelt Elementary in Park Ridge, Illinois create Poetry Power Man and a super hero gang of friends to combat Robot Readers and fight for fluency including addressing rate, expression, accuracy and learning.

Practical Applications:

History of Fluency Movement: In 2000, a National Reading Panel Report named fluency as a key element of reading. One minute fluency assessments became all the rage among primary teachers, often stressing words read per minute over learning that occurred while reading. There was an over emphasis on word rate and accuracy and an under emphasis on expression and learning.

Fluency Development Lesson: This is a procedure that can take place over a week, a few days or all in one day. (Rasinski 2010)

- a. Introduce a short passage (our authors recommend a poem)
- b. Read aloud
- c. Discussion of content
- d. Choral reading
- e. Paired reading
- f. Word study
- g. Home practice
- h. Performance
- i. Final reading (preceding the introduction of the next passage)

Super Heroes to the Rescue: The teacher authors used bad guy figures such as Robot Reader, Choppy Boy, Alien Dude and Flat man to teach students the “don’ts” of reading aloud. They then countered every villain with a hero to save the day! Poetry Power Man , Super Scooper, Expression Man and Captain Comprehension. Teachers created visuals for each hero and encouraged students to battle robot reading habits with rate, accuracy, expression and learning.

Common Core Correlation:

Students will need more strategies for diving deep into complex text and these super hero friends could be just the thing some children need to connect with text on a deeper level than just a surface read. Additionally, the exemplars listed in Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards list poems for Kindergarten-First Grade and Second-Third Grade. These poems would be a great place to start when selecting appropriate poetry to teach fluency in primary classrooms.

Conclusion and Citation

Rate and accuracy are just 2 steps to being a truly fluent reader. The authors of this article include expression and learning as key aspects of fluent readers in a way that combats “robot” reading.