

1 VERBAL REPETITION

2 DRILL FOR ACCURACY AND SPEED

3 FLEX IT. DRILL ONE WAY AND THEN THE OTHER

4 WORKOUTS: FROM HIGH FREQUENCY TO SPACED REVISITS

5 INCREASE THE RANGE; BUILD UP THE ELEMENTS

Fluency is the idea that students can recall from memory with minimal effort and a level of automaticity. Being able to do and say things, retrieving them with relative ease, reduces the burden on students' working memory. Fluency building applies to many scenarios: sports, playing an instrument, retrieving facts and learning a new language.



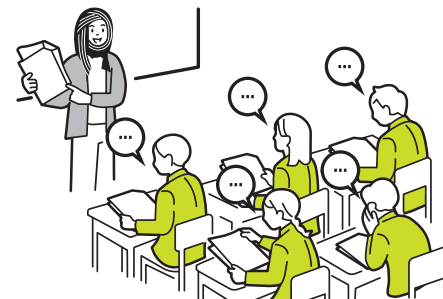
Five Ways to Build Fluency



Where we lack fluency it can seriously inhibit our capacity to engage with newer knowledge.

1 VERBAL REPETITION

The quickest way to get students to say new words is to have the whole class say them in unison. Make choral repetition a feature of students' daily learning diet. Have the whole class say the words and then follow up by selecting a row or group of students before cold calling a few individuals. Use call and response when trying to connect ideas; this can be paired or teacher-led. In science, this might be: *Speed? Distance over time.*



2 DRILL FOR ACCURACY AND SPEED

Drilling is the idea of doing the same thing repeatedly in quick succession. If you find the term drilling hard to digest, think of it as intensive practice. Examples include playing piano scales, hitting a forehand shot in tennis, touch typing, reciting timetables and saying *j'aime jouer au foot*, *le steak est bien cuit* – with accurate pronunciation and a good accent. The key is to have students use the knowledge accurately and then increase the speed.



3 FLEX IT. DRILL ONE WAY AND THEN THE OTHER

Students must learn how to flexibly apply their knowledge. Fluency-building needs to work towards this explicitly by drilling the same concepts in related but different ways. For example, in languages, students translate from English to French and French to English. With concrete examples, *which of these words is a verb?* and then also, *what type of word is "walked" an example of?*



4 WORKOUTS: FROM HIGH FREQUENCY TO SPACED REVISITS

Rehearsal focuses on building fluency of small knowledge elements to construct connected knowledge chunks. But to use these chunks requires students to retrieve them. Therefore we need to space retrieval opportunities over time. So, for fluency in most areas, we need to start students with high-frequency repeated rehearsal and then revisit at intervals over weeks and months. Learning to play a musical instrument and formal language fluency are good examples of this strategy.

5 INCREASE THE RANGE; BUILD UP THE ELEMENTS.

First, students fluently learn individual elements to form chunks. Schema building involves students building fluency with these chunks. For example, students first become fluent with a set of words and phrases, then a set of sentence structures and finally with an expanding range of vocabulary and grammar.

