



Supplementary Lessons: Increasing Literacy Skills

The following four lessons can be used as supplements to the lessons designed for use with the African American Registry.

These lessons are suggested for use particularly with students who have deficiencies in the areas of reading fluency, reading decoding, vocabulary and writing fluency.

Lesson One: Reading Fluency

Introduction: Good readers are fluent readers. In order to comprehend printed material, the rate of reading is crucial. When students read slowly, no matter how accurately, they often fail to understand the text. The following lesson is designed to increase reading fluency.

Instructional Goal:

Students will improve their reading fluency as measured by words per minute on a particular passage and on similarly difficult reading passages.

Materials Needed: Internet access, printer, stopwatch (preferred) or watch/clock with a second hand. Optional: graphing material

Preparation:

Print (or have students print) copies of the passages from the African American Registry that students are using as part of their completion of a Registry lesson.

Procedures:

1. Before the students have read a selection from the Registry, print and make five copies of the first page of that selection.
2. Using a stopwatch or watch/clock with a second hand, individually time students for one minute. Mark on a printed copy the errors they make while reading, including omissions, improperly inserted words, words read incorrectly and punctuation that is ignored. Write the word "baseline" at the bottom of the page and write the number of words read/errors.

Note: Individual timings can be difficult to manage in a large classroom. If your students are able to work independently you should be able to time a classroom of thirty students in forty five minutes. If you have volunteers, student teachers or teaching assistants you could assign them to join you in this task. Another option is to teach students how to time each other or time themselves.

2. Supplying students with any error corrections, assign them to practice independently or in pairs reading the passage at least five more times.
3. Time the students again. Record at the bottom of the page, words per minute/errors. Label this score "second timing."
4. Repeat number two.
5. Repeat number three but label the score "third timing."
6. This can be repeated as many times as you wish. Students should be able to read a one-minute passage at a rate of 140-200 words per minute. Errors should be minimal (more than five errors - and sometimes more than three, depending on type of errors - lowers comprehension significantly)

Evaluation Procedures:

Using the same passage, evaluation can be based on mastery (145 to 200 words per minute) and/or improvement rate. Calculate the words gained from the baseline to the highest score to measure words gained per minute.

A more accurate way of measuring progress is to record (and graph - or have student's graph) their progress from different passages used in the Registry lessons.

Lesson Two: Reading Decoding

Introduction: Some readers in middle school have not mastered reading decoding skills, which are necessary to becoming a fluent reader who comprehends the written word. Those students may need intensive remediation if their skills are very low in this area. The following lesson can be used as a supplement to a reading-decoding program for less skillful readers.

Instructional Goal:

Students will improve their reading decoding skills. Students will achieve automaticity in the patterns selected and practiced.

Materials Needed: Internet access, printer, card paper for flashcards

Preparation:

Contact the remedial teacher for any of your students that are receiving decoding instruction. Find out what particular patterns of decoding that each student is working on (e.g., words with: short vowels, long vowels, silent e, double vowels, diphthongs, prefixes and suffixes). You could also include patterns that were previously taught and/or mastered.

Print copies of the passages from the African American Registry that students are using as part of their completion of a myCareer lesson.

Procedures:

1. Assign students to examine the printed page from the Registry and circle the words that contain the decoding pattern they are learning.
2. Check these over (remedial teacher can assist you, if needed) to cross out any words that don't fit the pattern and are irregular. For example the word "love" does not fit the silent e pattern where the O would be the long sound.
3. Assign students to make a list of the words circled (or a flashcard for each word) that fits the pattern they are learning. If there are less than ten words from this pattern in a given passage, supplement the list with more words with this pattern.
4. With their remedial teacher or in your classroom, have students read the list to the teacher and record the number of words read correctly (fluently and without the need to "sound it out.")
5. Students can practice reading these words during their remedial reading time and/or in your classroom individually or in pairs.
6. Before the student moves to a new pattern and repeats the process above, check for mastery of the words selected.

Evaluation Procedures:

To most accurately measure progress measure the improvement in number of words read aloud from the first time read through (baseline) to the final recording.

Lesson Three: Vocabulary Building

Introduction: Understanding the meaning of words read is crucial in reading comprehension. The following activities are for teachers wanting to specifically work on increasing student's knowledge of word meanings and usage. These activities can be used with students at any reading level.

Instructional Goal: Students will increase their ability to comprehend and use words previously unfamiliar to them.

Materials Needed: Card paper, markers

Activities:

1. Have all students select two or more words from the passages they read on the Registry website that are words they are unfamiliar with. Using card paper and markers write these words and create a bulletin board or other place on a wall in the classroom of these words. Students can then look up the words and consult with the teacher or other adult and present an explanation of the word to the class at large. The presentations should include several ways of using the word in sentences. Also an active demonstration (pantomime or skit) that gives life to the word could be included. Once presentations have been made, periodically in whole class sessions or individually ask students to use the word correctly in a sentence.
2. Collect and write a list of words that are used in the subject area of any particular lesson. For example, in the myCareer lesson you could list the following: employee, employer, employment, vocation, salary, wages, benefits, application, etc. Follow the procedures suggested in activity one using the words you list.
3. Select one word per day from passages read by students in the Registry that may be unfamiliar to many of the students in your class. Follow the procedures suggested in activity one with these words.
4. Develop a game show type lesson using the words selected in any of the ways above.
5. Offer incentives to encourage students to use the words selected in "spontaneous" conversation.

Evaluation Procedures

At the end of each lesson develop and present a matching words- to-meaning quiz of the words studied or assign students to write a good sentence using the

words correctly.

Lesson Four: Written Expression

Introduction: Students need to be fluent, competent writers. The following lesson is designed to increase writing fluency and ability to write with correct usage, capitalization, punctuation and spelling.

Instructional Goals:

Students will increase the number of words they generate given a timed exercise. Students will improve usage, punctuation, capitalization and spelling skills.

Materials Needed: Writing paper and or word processor, stopwatch or clock/watch with a second hand, graph paper

Preparation: Look through the particular Registry lesson you are using and choose a topic that relates to the lesson that could be used as a story starter. For example, in the Opinion Poll Lesson you might use the question of the week and/or a question related to that question.

Each day you will need to pick out three sentences from different student's writing and write the sentences on the board or overhead for the next day's lesson.

Procedures:

1. Write the question or story starter on the board or an overhead.
2. Discuss the question and ask students to name words (nouns) that they may want to use when they write about the question or subject. Write these words on the board or overhead.
3. Give all students three minutes to write about the topic. Instruct students to make their best guess when confused about spelling. Give no assistance during the timing. Have students count and if you choose, graph the number of words they write in three minutes.
4. During your preparation time, select three sentences from three different students that need editing. Write these on the board or overhead for the next day's lesson. Vary whose writing you choose from and be conscious of avoiding embarrassing students. Once per week or every other week circle and count the correctly spelled words on each student paper. The next day, ask students to record this number on a graph or calendar.

Note:

It is important to discuss with students the need for all writers to make corrections to their original drafts.

5. Day two: As a class, make corrections in the sentences on the board or overhead (usage, capitalization, spelling and punctuation.) Students can volunteer or be chosen to find errors that need correction.

6. All students will write the corrected sentences when the corrections are complete.

7. Follow procedures 1,2,3, as part of the lesson on the second day. From day two forward you will always end the lesson with the three-minute timing. Remember to prepare (4) for the next day's lesson.

Note:

On day two and the days following you will begin with making corrections to the sentences on the board or overhead (5) and continue with procedures 1,2, and 3.

Evaluation Procedures:

By graphing words written and words written correctly in three minutes you and your students will have a record of words gained per week (or however often your recordings are made.) Students are often motivated to succeed when they graph results and can see their progress.