

# Improving reading fluency: focus on successes or on failures? Practical implications of children's reading instability

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## Introduction

- Remedial practices often focus on reading errors.
- Reading errors are not made consistently however (Steenbeek-Planting e.a., 2007).
- If reading errors are not made consistently, why train on the errors?

## Research questions

- Is a training focusing on failures more effective than a training focusing on successes?
- What is the impact of being informed about the training focus?

## Method

### Participants

- 79 dyslexic readers with a reading percentile < 10%.
- Participants allocated to one of four training groups:

	Focus	
	Failures	Successes
Information		
Informed	Training on errors Informed about focus	Training on successes Informed about focus
Non-informed	Training on errors Not informed about focus	Training on successes Not informed about focus

Participants were matched on

- reading skills (all pretest measures)
- years of reading instruction
- age
- gender

### Procedure: Pretest – Training - Posttest

Pre- and Posttests (One-minute tests)

- CVC words
- (C)CVC(C) words
- Pseudowords

## Training

- Training sessions of 100 words out of 861 Dutch CVC words
- Focus on failures: words read incorrectly returned to training set
- Focus on successes: words read correctly returned to training set
- Computerized 'flashcard' training
- Presentation duration adapted to maintain a 66% accuracy level
- Participants read words aloud
- Feedback on accuracy
- 11 Sessions of 20 minutes

## Results

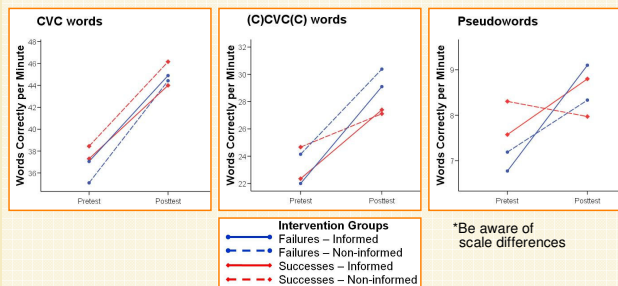
Factors in GLM

- Within Subjects: Time (Pretest / Posttest)
- Between Subjects:
  - Focus (Failures / Successes)
  - Information (Informed / Non-informed)

## Reading Fluency

Is improvement related to Focus and Information?

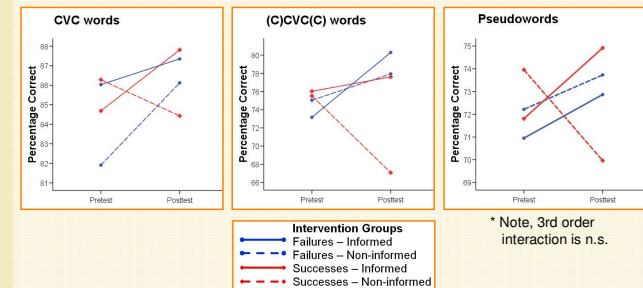
- All children improve their word readings, especially CVC word reading ( $\eta_p^2 .53$ ).
- Yes, training on Failures improves (C)CVC(C) word reading marginally more than training on Successes.
- Yes, pseudoword reading improves more for the Informed group training on Failures than for the Non-informed group training on Successes.



## Reading Accuracy

Is improvement related to Focus and Information?

- Yes, reading accuracy of (C)CVC(C) words improves more for the Informed group training on Failures than for the Non-informed group training on Successes.
- Yes, Informed groups improve their accuracy of pseudoword reading more than the Non-informed groups ( $p = .058$ ).



## Reading Speed

Is improvement of words read per minute related to Focus and Information?

- No, all groups improve equally.

## Conclusions

- Training focus does not differentially influence reading speed.
- However, a training focused on errors improves reading accuracy of harder words more effectively than a training focused on successes.
- Informing children about what they are practicing, enhances reading fluency.

## Practical Implications

- Inform children about what they are practicing.
- When training short words, focus on errors. Improvement will transfer to more difficult words!

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