Paying More Attention to Phrasing in Fluent Reading

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Looking at Phrases
Read aloud the following phrase:

The hungry giant…

That phrase is a unit of meaning about a very tall character from traditional literature who happens to have an appetite. Given your exposure to fairy tales, you also know that any hungry giant will most likely cause problems in the story. If you are a Reading Recovery® teacher, that phrase additionally calls up Joy Cowley’s (1980) book — a book that so many children have enjoyed reading.

That noun phrase, the hungry giant, is also a unit of language structure. It contains a determiner (the) that is followed by an adjective (hungry) that is describing the noun, giant.

We must also recognize that phrase as a unit of printed language that is comprised of sublevels of information such as three words, two of which are made up of two syllables, various onsets and rimes, and multiple letter-sound relationships.

You probably read aloud those three words, The hungry giant, in a phrased manner. Harris and Hodges (1995) defined phrased reading as “reading in which the unit of meaningful recognition is larger than a word but smaller than a sentence” (p. 187). Your “meaningful recognition” of the phrase the hungry giant involved the complex, effortless interplay among different sources of information such as prior knowledge, word meanings, language structures, and print information.

When you read this sample phrase, you might have been anticipating, “What about this hungry giant?” Read aloud the following summary sentences as possible answers:

The hungry giant terrorized the townspeople.

The hungry giant in the story bellowed for bread, butter, and honey.

You likely read these summaries with an appropriate rate and word accuracy, two important but insufficient aspects of oral reading fluency (Alt & Samuels, 2011). You probably paused at the end of each sentence. Perhaps you stressed the word bellowed. You most likely paused after each comma in the second summary sentence. In short, you used juncture, pitch, and stress (Clay & Imlach, 1971), what Schreiber (1987, 1991) termed the supra-segmentals of oral language, and what the reading teacher would listen for in the child’s oral reading expression.

Read aloud again those two summary statements, above, but this time pay attention to your voice after the word giant.

We want children in Reading Recovery to read with phrasing that reflects the language structures and the comprehension of the author’s messages. In order to select an appropriate prompt or procedure, we need to first think what the child needs at any point where we will teach for phrasing.
In the first summary sentence, you might have paused ever so slightly after the word giant but you most likely didn’t pause after that word giant in the second sentence. In the latter sentence you probably lingered after the word story, and you did this without any print signals, such as a comma.

Finally, read aloud the following sentence, paying attention to what your voice sounds like:

_The hungry giant hit the beehive with his bummy-knocker._

You probably read this two-line sentence without any pause at the end of the first line, even though there was plenty of white space at that point to suggest that you should stop. Rather, your eyes quickly scanned to the start of the second line, without pausing while you maintained the appropriate phrasing.

Appropriate reading rate, punctuation use, intonation, pausing — you did it all as you read aloud the sample sentences in a phrased manner, and it was done without deliberation. Your conscious focus was ultimately on the meaning and memories of a hungry giant and the trouble he causes.

Schreiber (1987) reported that “even during the babbling stage children produce prosodic contours [intonation, stress, pausing] like those of their target language” (p. 243). Each child enrolled in Reading Recovery brings the “prosodic contours” of their oral language to each lesson, yet how often do we observe in our lessons or behind the glass the following:

- His reading is choppy.
- She’s reading word-by-word.
- He’s using his finger to point.
- Listen to how slow she’s reading.
- He’s ignoring the periods.

Two questions that beg to be answered at these times are, “What happened to the child’s prosodic contours of his oral language which he brought to his Reading Recovery lessons, and how can we help him use his oral language phrasing when he reads his books?”

In answer to the first question, many researchers (Downhower, 1991; Schreiber, 1987, 1991; Rasinski, 2010) suggest that the culprit is a lack of consistent print signals that a child can use during oral reading which activates his oral language abilities. For example, in the sample sentence you read aloud—_The hungry giant in the story bellowed for bread, butter, and honey_—the commas signaled you to pause after each item in the list. But in that same sample sentence, the ever-so-slight pause you most likely made after story was not marked with any punctuation.

Though Schreiber (1987) reported that “even during the babbling stage children produce prosodic contours [intonation, stress, pausing] like those of their target language” (p. 243). Though Ella was certainly beyond the babbling stage of oral language acquisition, her intonation, stress, and appropriate pausing during her reconstruction were helping her to do what Schreiber calls “demarcating the boundaries of syntactic constituents” (p. 243).
pay attention to a novel system of how sounds in our language can be represented (Clay, 1993). For example, in Reading Recovery, consider the importance of a child establishing one-to-one correspondence early and effectively. When a teacher says, “Point to each word while you read,” in the earliest book levels, she is slowing down the child in order for him to observe that any word coming out of his mouth corresponds to a unit of print on the page that is separated from other units with white spaces. Yet a child doesn’t speak word by word, hesitating between each word. But with his teacher, his attention is now on looking and speaking word-by-word. He is learning to look at print.

Print conventions aren’t going to change, i.e., new marks to indicate needed intonation or pausing, for example, aren’t going to be part of our written code in the near or far futures. Beginning reading instruction will also continue to slow down children’s reading, so that any child has a fighting chance to learn to look at print and take on the demands of an alphabetic language. But what is imperative for a child’s progress in Reading Recovery is the recapturing of his oral phrasing ability during oral reading. Why?

Over 110 years ago in his landmark book, *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading* (1908), Huey defined phrasing when reading:

> The visual recognition of a familiar phrase as a phrase [is a process in which] the recognition of constituent words as well as of letters in this case being partially inhibited in favor of the total recognition of a larger unit. (p. 114)

Huey concluded why this occurs:

> Meaning, indeed, dominates and unitizes the perception of words and phrases … and … the reader’s acquisition of ease and power in reading comes through increasing ability to read in larger units. (p. 116)

Clay and Imlach (1971) reported a similar conclusion in their study of the differences between high-progress and low-progress early readers:

> [F]or fast accurate sequential decoding of texts a hierarchy of reading responses places the linguistic cues from larger stretches of structure and meaning in the most facilitating position, or top gear as it were with the other level of cues available if there is a need to drop gear. (p. 139)

Schreiber (1987), cited earlier, also pointed to the instructional necessity for teaching for phrasing early on if Huey’s “reading power” is to be achieved by the child:

> It is clear that, in order to attain reading fluency, a beginning reader who has (at least partially) mastered decoding skills must minimally learn to group words into appropriate phrases. (p. 264)

Schreiber’s instructional direction to reading teachers was still being emphasized over 20 years later in Rasinski’s (2010) compilation of oral reading fluency techniques.

> [S]ome scholars argue that the phrase is the key component in gaining meaning through written text. And a considerable amount of research has demonstrated that helping students learn to read in phrases will improve their reading fluency and overall reading achievement. (p. 106)

In their comprehensive review of phrasing and fluency’s contribution to a child’s progress in Reading Recovery, Briggs and Forbes (2002) summarized Clay’s emphasis on phrasing and fluency as this emphasis impacted a child’s reading progress:

> The young reader develops a network of competencies through experiences with reading and writing. The network continues to grow in power and generate further learning the more the learner engages in reading continuous text. Phrased and fluent reading is not only the product of this network of competencies but is also an important contributor to developing the network from early on. (p. 1)

Later in that same article, Briggs and Forbes state, “Appropriate phrasing provides access for using language structure and meaning in order to predict a response” (p. 2). And Clay (2001) adds, “We pull words together for literacy acts constrained by invisible relationships and roles which words have within a simple sentence” (p. 102), i.e., the reader uses more information than known words or letter-sound relationships when reading orally.

In the first edition of *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals* (2005) in the section on phrasing procedures, Clay also emphasized phrasing as the fast pick-up of visual information that is integrated with the meaning and structure the child is monitoring: “Fluent reading has quite as much to do with rapid looking as it has to do with language” (p. 154).
In *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals* (2016) this emphasis on the importance of fast looking is retained: “Everything we do in mature reading and writing will rely on fast accurate perception of language sounds (captured by the ears) and visual symbols (captured by the eyes) as we read and write” (p. 40). Furthermore, from the 2005 edition of the *Literacy Lessons* text, Clay reminds teachers:

> But there is more to fast and fluent reading than just rapid action from a brain that recognizes letters and words and patterns fast. We have to think about phrasing in reading. (p. 150)

Given this select overview of research, the following points summarize a case for phrased reading in any child’s series of lessons:

- Over time there has been a persistent research emphasis that highlights phrased reading as an important contributor to a child’s development of the beginnings of a self-extending processing system when first learning to read.
- Phrasing in oral reading uses both the eye and ear for fast pick-up of visual information on the page and should not be considered only as an expressive outcome to listen for in a child’s oral reading.

As Clay emphasized in 2005, “We have to think about phrasing in reading” (p. 150), and it is to that challenge I turn next by first reviewing teaching practices that work against the child’s oral reading phrasing; then I will follow up with a summary of procedures that will assist the child to speed back up after we have slowed him down in his early learning.

**Working Against a Child’s Phrasing**

Earlier in this article I cited research that maintained that children bring an intuitive sense of oral language phrasing to their beginning reading instruction and that as teachers, we slow down that oral language as we teach children to look at print. Since the inception of Reading Recovery, Clay has also cautioned against teaching practices that work against a child’s reintegration of his oral language phrasing, once the child has begun to learn to look at print. Such unproductive teaching practices, Clay wrote, “lead children to think that reading means word reading” (2016, p. 125):

- We over-rely on procedures and prompts that ask the child to work out letter-sound relationships, parts of words, or emerging sight words. As Clay warned as far back as 1998, “Over attention to these levels of language will displace, in the child’s mind, the idea that there are meaningful stretches of language” (p. 52).
- We interrupt too much during the reading of text, insisting that the child is either getting every word accurately read or that the child is always using some part of the visual information that we have previously observed he could use. (p. 125)

These two practices are also recognized as detrimental overall to a child’s flexible use of a primitive, emerging processing system — a system that allows him to self-monitor and integrate multiple sources of text information on the run.

There are two additional teaching practices Clay (2016) warned against that directly and negatively impact phrased reading in oral reading:

- We allow the child to read orally word-by-word, even after one-to-one matching is secured. (p. 125)
- We allow the child’s finger pointing, long after it’s needed. (p. 54)

Though *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals* (Clay, 2016) highlights the importance of observation and judgment on the part of the teacher as to when a child could be speeded up to read with more phrasing, without his finger, Clay is just as clear in stating, “As soon as control of directionality and one-to-one matching is firmly established begin to call for flexible use of that control” (p. 125).

When do we observe and teach for a child’s firm control of the early behaviors of directionality and one-to-one matching? Though there is no rule or text level, both of these early reading behaviors align with the need for the child to learn to look at print, and that begins in the earliest book levels. Further, if we are still teaching for directionality and one-to-one matching when a child is reading beyond, say, Levels 3 or 4, we have a bigger problem than the child’s phrasing, i.e., the child has not begun to effectively look at print.

Why might we allow the child’s finger to remain in the text, pointing, or allow the child to persistently read word-for-word without his finger? I have thought or heard the following:
• He needs to have so many sight words before I remove his finger.

• She is just starting to use the first letter of unknown words. Her finger focuses her.

• If he isn’t pointing, he’ll just use his memory of what the book says.

• How can I be sure she’s looking at the print if she isn’t pointing?

• I wasn’t paying attention to phrasing now. That comes later.

Whether you or I have thought one or more of these reasons as sufficient rationales for allowing word-by-word reading, we shouldn’t be surprised then in subsequent running records when a child makes substitutions that are visually similar to the word on the page but ignores the meaning or structure of what is being read. And at the point of frustration when we say, “Why isn’t he listening to himself? Doesn’t he know that what he said doesn’t make sense or sound right?” There certainly should be finger-pointing at that point of teacher angst, and the finger should be pointed back at us.

The listed teacher excuses, above, also diminish if not ignore many aspects of Clay’s literacy processing theory, such as these:

• Teaching props are retired when they have outlived their usefulness; and if they remain they could actually impede a child’s progress. (The finger is a prop.)

• Phrased reading is not an outcome that is taught for after the child has reached some undetermined level of decoding or word identification ability.

Yet the teacher excuses, listed above, also reveal an unstated responsibility. If we are to slow down the child to begin to pay attention to the demands of an alphabetic language, then we want to be confident that the child’s early attention to print will hold and be built upon. Clay (2016) recognized this concern and provides a way to address it:

How to pay attention to detail in a slow, careful manner is learned from the teacher, but as soon as detail is easily recognized she should lead the learner back to fast processing. Too often teaching practice perpetuates slow processing. (p. 40)

I now turn to effective teaching practices that will, in part, promote faster processing through phrased oral reading as well as caution to those practices that could impede a child’s flexible use of phrased reading.

Teaching for Phrasing

In Literacy Lessons (Clay, 2016) procedures are listed for teaching for phrasing, with the added imperative, “Select as appropriate” (p. 123). In order to select an appropriate prompt or procedure, we need to first think what the child needs at any point where we will teach for phrasing. Perhaps the child needs a clear teacher model or demonstration, and Clay lists possibilities for this such as “Read a story to the child to give him a sense of what fluent reading sounds like” (p. 125). Perhaps the child needs specific prompting that keeps him in control of his reading but brings to his attention something that he is ignoring. One such example from the procedures is, “Read to the end” (p. 124). Or perhaps the child needs a chance to assess how his oral reading is sounding, using a prompt such as “Is that story sounding interesting?” (p. 124). Selecting an appropriate teaching response at a point when the child should be more phrased comes only after a teacher decides what will be the most effective level of support at that point, and that level of support can ebb and flow within the same book, across the lesson, and across a period of time in the child’s series of lessons.

Another way to think about the prompts and procedures when teaching for phrasing is to consider how the options from which you select support the use of the child’s oral language structures (through his ear) and the child’s fast pick-up of visual information (through his eyes). Such a consideration of all the listed prompts aligns with Clay’s (2016) emphasis on phrased reading being just as much about looking as listening (p. 126). My valued colleague, Mary Fried, got me thinking about Clay’s emphasis on a visit a few years ago when she pointed out that I was over-using prompts such as “How would you say that?” or “Make it sound like (favorite book).” She helped me determine that I was over-relying on prompts that focused on the child’s use of language structures
(through his ears) to the exclusion of prompts that allowed the child to use both his ears and his eyes.

This is not to suggest that any listed prompt or procedure that favors the child’s ear should be avoided. Rather, we must always be vigilant to observe that the child is also looking at the print as well as listening to himself.

In summary, in order for us to select appropriately from the prompts and procedures when teaching for phrasing, we must first think about what the child needs and then reflect on the balance of teaching responses that engage both the child’s ears and eyes. Next I turn to the specific points in any child’s series of lessons when we start calling for more phrased reading.

Text segmenting or marking has a long history of inclusion in procedures for teaching children to be phrased in fluent reading (Downhower, 1991; Rasinski, 1989, 2010). Rasinski (1989) states, “Research has shown that marking phrase boundaries in student texts with a penciled slash or vertical line may aid fluency” (p. 692). Reading Recovery procedures do not suggest placing marks in text to support the child in visually recognizing phrase boundaries, but in the section entitled ‘Demonstrate phrasing on text,’ Clay (2016) wrote: “Occasionally cover the text with a card or thumb, exposing a few words at a time and ask the child to read it all [or] read it smoothly” (p. 124). Figure 1 illustrates the procedure. Note that the masking card, at first, exposes a two- to three-word phrase in an early book level. When initially using this procedure, it is useful to demonstrate what is expected, i.e., you will mask all but a small phrase and perhaps say, “Read it all, like this” (Demonstrates)” (p. 124). As soon as the child demonstrates the desired phrasing, expose the next small phrase and repeat.

As with all assisted procedures, text masking or any of the other listed procedures and prompts can be unthinkingly applied or over-done in a child’s progress with phrased oral reading. A noticing, responsive teacher will do the following:

- Focus the child first on small phrases. We have slowed down the child considerably when helping him establish one-to-one correspondence, getting him to read and speak word-by-word. We know we can’t suddenly expect him to read smoothly in long phrases or sentences.
- Use the masking card flexibly. After a few opportunities employing the masking card, we should unobtrusively remove it and listen for any shifts in the child’s phrasing.
- Not allow reading in small phrases for too long. Many published fluency rubrics over the last 30 years (Allington, 1983; NAEP, 1995; and Zutell & Rasinski, 1991) position this type of beginning phrasing just above word-by-word reading. We look for chances to quickly up the ante, revealing longer or natural phrases of varying lengths for the child to take on.
- Listen for oral phrasing from line to line. Though some book series such as Rigby PM often arrange lines of text in phrases on any page, many other publishers do not. If we are noting more errors at the start of subsequent lines, that might indicate the child anticipated meaning and structure but wasn’t looking closely, at speed, at the visual information on the subsequent lines. One procedure from Literacy Lessons (Clay, 2016) could be employed to promote phrasing line to line: “After phrasing has been established, you might slide a card from left to right, covering the text and forcing the child to speed up so he processes a little more fluently without breaking down. This can encourage him to make his eyes work ahead of his voice” (p. 124).
- Daily assesses how the running record sounded, putting into words not only how fast or expressive the child read but also describing the pattern of

![Figure 1. Masked for Phrased Reading — Early Teaching](https://example.com/image)
Teaching

Phrasing the child exhibited (Clay, 2013, p. 63).

- Expect to teach for phrasing on the variety of books the child reads. Though Clay (2016) stipulates that we should “select texts to support fluent reading,” that stipulation is to support shifts in phrasing in fast and fluent reading (p. 125). Clay did not mean that these are the only type of books in which we expect phrasing.

- Look for opportunities across any lesson where a child’s phrasing could be expected. It is to these daily echoes of phrasing throughout the lesson I turn to next.

Phrasing Opportunities Throughout the Lesson

DeFord (1991) reminds Reading Recovery teachers that Clay developed daily opportunities in the lesson for the child to successfully problem solve with manageable challenges in reading and writing, while also reading large swaths of texts in a phrased and fluent way:

…[T]he framework itself is intended to develop the child’s growing [self-extending system] and to provide ample opportunity to build both fluency and problem-solving ability. The teacher works with the child across and within lesson components…to facilitate the development of fluency and problem-solving. (p. 205)

Phrased oral reading is an important aspect of fluent responding that must be encouraged within and across the lesson components. Earlier in this article, I detailed ways we can teach for phrasing within a book. I now turn to components of the daily lessons where phrased reading can be encouraged. Each lesson component’s description will be followed with questions I have found useful when reflecting on whether my teaching for phrasing is producing results.

Familiar reading

This opening lesson opportunity is where we first begin to expect faster, phrased reading from the child. Once directionality and one-to-one correspondence are firmly established, we begin to encourage the child to use just his eyes and not to point when he reads his familiar books. It is also the part of the lesson where we will begin to teach hard for phrased reading. Consider the following questions when determining how to promote the child’s phrasing during this time:

- Does the child have regular opportunities to read a familiar book in a phrased way without your interruptions or prompting?
- Does the child also have regular opportunities to read a newer book that provides a few opportunities to speed up in a phrased way with your assistance?
- Do you keep at hand a book that the child has read with phrasing and which you can refer to during this time: “Read your next book like you read that book.”
- Do you remind the child not to use his finger before he starts to read a familiar book? And if that finger creeps back in at some point, do you quietly remind him to remove his finger as he’s turning the page if you determine he doesn’t need it?”

Running record

I have already referred to the importance of the running record as the daily opportunity to think about how the reading sounded, including how phrased the child was. We should be persistent in assessing how our teaching for phrasing is paying off on a daily basis as well as over time. Often those notations at the end of the running record are signaling the teacher as to how the child’s oral reading phrasing needs to shift.

We should also think about that running record as a familiar book, albeit one that was introduced by the teacher and read once by the child in the previous lesson. Given that stance, do you return to a page or two after the running record where you determine the child was reading accurately with little or no problem solving needed, but also was reading with little or no phrasing? Do you consider improved oral reading phrasing a valued teaching point after the running record?

Writing

It is rightly argued that given the purposes of the writing part of the lesson and the slowed-up attention required of the child as he takes on the sound-symbol relationships of our alphabetic language, opportunities to read in a phrased way are minimized. But consider the following:

- During the composing portion of the writing, does the child have a chance to formulate his own oral language structures
for his desired story? At this point, he is most likely trialing his emerging composition in a phrased way.

• If the child is not using his finger during familiar reading, then during the rereading of his emerging story, is his finger (or marker) pointing at his composition? It shouldn’t be.

• Do you look for opportunities for the child to reread his emerging story in a phrased way? At the point his phrased reading meets up with white space for the next word to be written, there is the improved chance that he is already anticipating what he expects to hear and see next.

Assembling cut-up stories
Review the bullets in Literacy Lessons (Clay, 2016) on p. 106 that list accelerative outcomes for the child during the daily reconstruction of the cut-up sentence. Two of those outcomes seem quite similar: (a) “one-to-one correspondence of spoken and written words” and (b) “breaking oral language into segments” (p. 106).

If you focus on the second outcome, above, and think about phrased reading, then what first might appear to be a redundancy is a distinctive awareness for the child, since a written phrase represents a segment of oral language. This understanding can be confirmed on p. 109 when Clay writes that when the child is reconstructing the cut-up sentence he is mirroring what he must do in reading: “[H]e gives attention to a word’s placement among other words in the context of a phrase in a way that no activity of studying words in isolation ever does” (2016, p. 109).

Many teachers have noted that over time their child will organize the cut-up sentence in more than one line, and that at the line breaks, the child will maintain appropriate phrase units from the end of the line to the start of the next line. This is an important emerging behavior to note as it evidences that the child is now mapping visual information into larger units beyond the word level — an important integration that has reciprocal benefits when reading his books. This behavior can be taught for as well. One of the suggested procedures for fostering phrased reading in Literacy Lessons on page 125 (Clay, 2016) encourages the teacher to rearrange the child’s original reconstruction into phrases she thinks the child can read and teach for phrasing at that point.

Book introduction and first reading
Clay (2016) stipulates why a new book is introduced at the end of each lesson: “Most of the neural networks the child will need to use when problem-solving will have already been activated by the preceding tasks… Using the new book, [you] will introduce something novel to his primed processing system” (p. 113).

If there have been orchestrated opportunities to read in a phrased way throughout the lesson, those opportunities contribute to this priming of his processing system which will now be engaged on a new book. This is not to suggest that the first reading of the new book should now sound like the reading of more familiar books, especially given the new challenges the child will assuredly encounter in the new book. It does suggest, though, that the child should still be reading large swaths of the new book with similar levels of phrasing that the child has been taking on when reading more-familiar books. If we observe that the first reading reverts to stilted, word-by-word reading with little or no phrasing, then we have to ask these questions:

• Was the book introduction supportive for phrased oral reading? “The teacher must
plan for the child to have in his head the ideas and the language he needs to complete the reading. The observant teacher introduces into her talk any concept, or word, or phrase structure that she has not heard this child use before.” (Clay, 2016, p. 115) [Italics added.]

• In the book introduction, do you “give the child opportunities to hear and use new structures that he will need to use in the reading?” (Clay, 2016, p. 115)

• Does the child realize that he must try to read this new book just like he has read his familiar books? If not, then teaching for phrasing at a select point in the new book firms up this awareness.

• Do we “attend to how the reading sounded” (Clay, 2016, p. 120) after the first reading? A possible, productive procedure is to return to a page in the new book that wasn’t read in the expected phrased way and teach for phrasing at that point.

In the preceding section I have described many opportunities throughout the daily lesson where we should expect or teach for phrasing.

Summary
Far too often in my own teaching and in my observations of others teaching I have realized that we are not appreciating the importance of phrased reading’s contribution to the child’s overall processing system. This article attempted to develop a better appreciation that is comprised of the following thrusts:

• A phrase is a unit of print information, just as much as it is a unit of meaning and language structure.

• The child brings to Reading Recovery an intuitive sense of phrasing that he has constructed in his oral language.

• Reading Recovery’s instruction, as in all early reading instruction, must slow down the child’s oral language phrasing in order for him to pay attention to the relationship between the many levels of oral language’s organization, e.g., phonemes, word parts, words, and phrases, and a new symbol system for representing those levels.

• Once the child has established control over directionality and one-to-one matching, we must begin to teach for phrasing. We must avoid thinking of phrased reading as just an outcome of proficient reading. We should keep the focus on oral reading phrasing as evidence of effective, fast processing of visual information.

• Phrased oral reading is as much about rapid looking as it is listening to oneself. Powerful teaching for phrasing encourages the child’s use of his ears and eyes.

• We can impede a child’s oral reading phrasing with unproductive practices that get in the way of faster responding.

• Every Reading Recovery lesson contains many opportunities for the child to read in a phrased way.

Clay (2016) articulated what is at stake when a child is reading in phrases:

When reading is phrased as in spoken language, and the responding is quite fast, there is a fair chance that the reader has grouped together the words that the author has intended to go together. In order to understand the author’s message the reader has to put several words into a grammatical phrase. If he can do this easily then he attends to letters and the words and the grammar, on the run, and as a result he can give more attention to the messages. (p. 121)

Ultimately, teaching for phrased reading is helping the child understand what he is reading. That is what is at stake, and these are high stakes, indeed, yet achievable when our teaching allows the child to increasingly pay attention to phrased reading in the construction of his self-extending system.

References


**About the Author**

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**Children’s Books Cited**


**About the Cover**

Abigail is an enthusiastic learner who came to her Reading Recovery lesson with a big smile every day. She especially looked forward to reading new books. Abigail made great progress and her lessons were discontinued in 18 weeks. Even after her lessons ended, she would stop by her Reading Recovery teacher’s reading room to pick out new books to read on her own.