Foundational Facts

Letter Naming Fluency

Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) assesses students' ability to identify individual letters and say letter names. The assessor marks letter names read incorrectly or skipped from an arrangement of randomly ordered upper and lower-case letters. This measure is a strong predictor of later reading success, however, *studies have failed to show that the actual teaching of letter names to students enhances reading ability*. **LNF is an indicator of risk, rather than an instructional target** (Acadience Reading K-6 Technical Manual, p. 20).

Successful learning of *letter-sound correspondence* leads to reading acquisition. Reading acquisition can occur without knowledge of letter names (Mann & Wimmer, 2002). LNF **is not** a high leverage instructional target, therefore benchmark goals are not provided. However, LNF measures are often included in standardized early literacy assessments because it is a strong **predictor** of future reading achievement.

During Assessment

Assessing letter naming fluency provides an indicator of risk of later reading success.

During Instruction

Deliberate, sequenced instruction connecting letter naming with letter-sound correspondence enhances student reading ability.

Good Idea

Three-Part Drill strategy along with Blending Board activities to practice letter-sound correspondence

Shanahan on LNF (2018)

"Training in PA *and* the alphabet together… (the inclusion of letters in a PA curriculum) has a multiplier impact on its outcome."

Not So Great

Focusing primarily on letter names without connection to letter sounds.

Sheets of letters for practice or PMing

Focus on Letter Naming Fluency Can Lead to…

- Confusion for learners that do not have strong letter-sound relationships. Some students may try to "sound out words" using letter names. (Ex: *what* |duh-| from "double-u")
- Confusion for language learners who are trying to make sense in a new language. Language learners are already having to learn new vocabulary and for some, new sounds. Misuse of letter naming as an instructional target, isolated from PA and Phonics, just makes that process more difficult.
- Interference with assessment validity. If we allow students to practice LNF daily, it can be questioned: Are students genuinely learning the automaticity associated with letter naming that goes with deliberate teaching of phonological awareness and phonics as measured by appropriate progress monitoring?

So we should provide...

- Struggling readers a variety of daily opportunities to learn letter sounds *through* the use of a structured PA curriculum.
- English learners a variety of daily opportunities to listen and see letter-sound relationships.
- All early readers a variety of daily opportunities to explore and manipulate phonemes and letters as part of a structured PA curriculum and practice.

