

Neurological Impress Method 2

Description

This version of Neurological Impress Method (NIM) is a complement to [Neurological Impress](#) activity offering an alternate perspective on things. This version is based more closely on the original work by Heckelman in the 1960's (see below).

Introduction: Beginning readers, whether children or adults, need to develop fluency, the ability to read smoothly with appropriate intonation.

Students need to read at least 100 words per minute in order to read fluently, and most students reach this reading speed by third grade. Students reading speed continues to grow, and by the time they are adults they will read from 250 to 300 words per minute. Fluent readers are better able to comprehend what they read because they can identify words easily. Students who are not fluent readers spend too much time and energy in identifying words, and tend to read in a word-by-word manner. As a result of using most of their energy to identify words, the less fluent readers have little energy left to focus on comprehending what is read. Beginning readers also need to develop an ever increasing sight vocabulary because it is impossible for them to analyze every word they encounter when reading. Sight words are words that readers recognize instantly and automatically.

Using the NIM with the type of learners described above could be a way to help them improve their oral reading fluency, and increase their word recognition.

The Neurological Impress Method was explained by Heckelman (1962). It can be used with students who are experiencing difficulties in reading. The steps in using the Neurological Impress Method are presented below:

Instructions:

1. The student sits slightly in front of the adult. The reading material is held by both the student and the adult.
2. The student and adult read aloud in unison. The voice of the adult is directed toward the ear of the student.
3. The adult slides his or her finger under the words that are being read. The finger-guide should be at the precise location of the word being read.
4. The unison reading should be as fluent as possible. Pauses are allowed only as the text dictates. The adult should not pause for mistakes by the student. Any word that the student does not know should be immediately pronounced by the adult, thus leaving no time to struggle with pronunciation. The student's reading should become similar to the adult model in rate, pauses, and intonation.
5. The adult should cover as many pages as possible without causing undue discomfort to the student.

6. At no time should the adult attempt to teach the sounds of the word or any form of word recognition. No attention should be given to accompanying pictures. After the unison reading is completed, the adult should not ask questions about the reading material. The adult should comment on the student's success and newly acquired fluency in reading.

7. Eventually, as improvement is noted, the student is permitted to use his or her finger to point to the words as they are being read aloud. Finger sliding by the adult may have to be maintained for some students.

8. The ultimate goal of the process is to condition the student to take over the vocal lead from the adult. This is done subtly and by slight degrees. Over the course of the sessions the adult gradually lowers the volume of his or her voice, while the student's voice becomes more prominent. At any point in which the student's voice falters, the adult increases his or her voice volume accordingly.

9. Sessions should range from 10 to 15 minutes per day, for three to five days per week.

According to Heckelman (1962)

- a frequent mistake made by teachers using the Neurological Impress Method is spending too much time reading material written at low levels of difficulty because the teacher does not expect the student to learn rapidly.
- if a student is started at a first grade level, he or she might be expected to be reading material at a third grade level after an accumulated total of two hours.
- one of the reasons for the success that students often experience with the neurological impress method is that the student is exposed to many words, many times, in a relatively short period of time. For example, according to Heckelman (1962), a student reading for a period of approximately 15 minutes may be exposed to 1,000 to 2,000 words.

See: Heckelman, R. G. (1962). A neurological impress method of reading instruction. CA: Merced County School Office

Category

1. VISUAL SIGNAL ACQUISITION / VSA

Tags

1. reading

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Author

drb