Using Rapid Recognition Charts

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I was first introduced to a Rapid Recognition Chart (RRC) during my initial-level Orton-Gillingham training. It is a tool that can be used during the fluency portion of a lesson; a way to add variety.   During my advanced-level training, I used RRCs to improve my student's oral reading fluency and words read correct in their decodable texts.

As I started to see the benefits of the RRC when working one on one with students, I began to use them in my reading intervention groups with exciting results. Student motivation increased and students seemed to be recalling orthographic patterns quicker. Instead of using them just once within a "lesson", like I did when working with one student at a time, I used the same RRC every day with my small groups. This provided students opportunities to continue practicing the skill they had just been taught and gave me a chance to monitor how their new skills were progressing.

What is a Rapid Recognition Chart?
A Rapid Recognition Chart is a fluency tool that can be used with:

- **Decodable words** that contain <u>the same orthographic pattern and syllable type</u>
  When students use a RRC with decodable words, they read the words and build a memory of a frequent, reliable orthographic pattern.
- **High-frequency irregular words** (trick words, heart words, etc.)
  When students use a RRC with trick words, it builds instant recognition of those words.
- **Words in an upcoming text**
  When students use a RRC to preview words in a passage before reading, it keeps the words in memory for students while they are reading.

> Evidence also indicates that rapid reading of single words can improve speed and comprehension of text reading.

> <u>The Goal:</u> For the student to do a little better than they did the day before.   It should never be a competition between students. This should be talked about with your students before starting.

How do I Make One?
A Rapid Recognition Chart is a table containing up to five rows of six words. These words are repeated at random throughout the chart and are intentionally chosen by the teacher.

In the example below, the new concept taught was *digraph sh in closed syllable words.* I also wanted this group of students to continue practicing all short vowels and therefore chose one word with each vowel.

shed	dish	gush	rash	mesh
rash	dish	mesh	shed	gush
shed	rash	dish	mesh	rash
gush	shed	rash	dish	shed
mesh	gush	dish	shed	shed
rash	dish	rash	gush	mesh

Make adjustments to your RRC as you see fit for your particular students. A chart to practice digraphs *wh, sh, th, ch* for first grade struggling readers may look like this:

Notice:
- It has fewer rows and fewer words.
- Print is bigger and bolder.

when	**dish**	**bath**	**much**
bath	**much**	**dish**	**when**
bath	**when**	**much**	**dish**

What is the Teaching Routine?

RRCs can be used with one student or in a small group.

Step 1: Teacher points to each word and says the word. Student(s) echoes the word.
Do this for every word across the top row.

Step 2: Without timing, the student(s) practices the words across the top row independently. If they want to practice the entire chart, that is fine. Options include: having them read them to a partner, whisper read or read silently.
*If the student needs to stop and decode the word, that is fine. If the student needs you to help them, that is fine too. The goal is to make it 'easy' for the student. Encourage them to ask for help when needed.

Step 3: When you and the student agree they are ready to be timed, you can decide on the method:
- Student reads the entire chart for 1 minute, going back to the beginning and rereading if they have more time. Count the number of words read and write that down as a words correct per minute (wpm) score.

- Student reads the chart for 30 seconds, going back to the beginning and rereading if they have more time. Count the number of words read and *multiply by 2* to get words correct per minute score. Write that down.
- Student reads the chart only 1 time. Stop the timer on the last word. Record the *time*.

> In a small group setting, use your discretion on how you want to spend your time. The best use of time with my groups was to have them quickly read it to themselves when they arrived and then I went around and timed them one time. They would write their time on the RRC so they would have it as a goal for the next day. The entire routine took approximately 3-5 minutes.
> TIP: Laminate the RRC and have students use a dry erase marker to write their name and time.

Step 4 (Optional): Do another timed reading of the RRC if you are working one on one with a student and you will be starting a completely new concept/lesson the following day.
Celebrate their higher number of words read or their faster time!
Step 5 (Optional): Record or graph student data. I recommend using a words correct per minute score instead of their time.

When a Student Makes an Error

Feedback must be *immediate and corrective*. Point to the error and if the student is not able to correct it independently, tell them the word and the student continues reading.
When students make an error, or need to stop and decode, I keep the clock running. The next time they attempt the RRC, they likely will not make that error again and they will see their success in their improved score.

How Often Should I Use a RRC?

Like with most things, use your professional judgment. With my small groups, one 'lesson' or new concept taught could take 1-2 weeks to complete, depending on how much time we had together and how quickly they mastered the concept. I would introduce the RRC after I had explicitly taught a new concept and students had completed their multisensory phoneme/grapheme mapping activities, word list reading, and dictation. We used the same RRC at the start of every day while we did other activities to practice and master that concept. This short activity is a great diagnostic tool to help you decide what your students still need or are ready to move on from. I used RRCs for most new concepts I taught because my students loved the challenge and it gave me great daily feedback.

Rapid Recognition Charts, when used within a comprehensive structured literacy lesson, are a great tool

for a teacher's toolbox that can yield some great results. In addition to improvements in my student's overall fluency, I saw a decreased dependence from students with phonological memory issues; they did not need as much support to remember the new orthographic pattern.   I saw higher student engagement and motivation with the new words and concept. Students could see in a concrete way that their hard work was paying off and therefore, their overall confidence and emotions around reading improved.

References

Birsh, J.R. & Carreker, J. (2018). *Multisensory teaching of basic language skills*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.