



Revised 2005

Fluency Assessment

Adapted from
Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read

Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. When fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically. They group words quickly to help them gain meaning from what they read. Fluent readers read aloud effortlessly and with expression. Their reading sounds natural, as if they are speaking. Readers who have not yet developed fluency read slowly, word by word. Their oral reading is choppy and plodding.

Fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Because fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding the words, they can focus their attention on what the text means. They can make connections among the ideas in the text and between the text and their background knowledge. In other words, fluent readers recognize words and comprehend at the same time. Less fluent readers, however, must focus their attention on figuring out the words, leaving them little attention for understanding the text.

Armbruster, B., Lehr, F., & Osborn, J. (2001, September).

Put reading first:

The research building blocks for teaching children to read.

Qualitative Fluency Assessment

Directions for Use of Fluency Rubric

For summative assessment, the following rubric, adapted from Fountas and Pinnell, (1996) is to be applied to the running record at the **instructional level of reading**. The rubric is to be applied to any oral reading sample at the instructional (90% -95% accuracy). The rubric score of 1, 2, 3, or 4 is to be recorded on the running record form using the following criteria:

Rubric Score 4 - Reading is primarily in large, meaningful phrases with only a few slow downs for problem solving of words or reading to confirm accuracy or meaning. Expressive interpretation is evident throughout the reading. Attention to punctuation and syntax is present.

Rubric Score 3 – Reading is a mixture of word by word reading, fluent, and phrased reading. There is evidence of attention to punctuation and syntax with rereading for problem solving.

Rubric Score 2 – Reading is mostly word by word but with some two word phrasing. Expressive interpretation may result in longer examples of phrasing. There is evidence of awareness, but inconsistent application, of punctuation and syntax with rereading for problem solving.

Rubric Score 1 – All reading is word by word with long pauses between words and very little fluency. There is little evidence of phrasing or awareness of punctuation. There may be two word phrases but word groupings are often awkward.

If a reader has a fluency rubric score of 1 or 2 at the instructional level of reading on the summative assessment, it is necessary to ask the child to read any selection he/she has read before with 90% accuracy into a tape recorder. Calculate the number of words read per minute and use the fluency rubric with this passage to determine if fluency needs to become a focus for instruction.

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Quantitative Fluency Assessment

Procedure for calculating words correct per minute

One-minute reading: Total words read-errors = words correct per minute

- Select two or three brief passages from a level text or other grade-level material (regardless of students' instructional levels).
- Have individual students read each passage aloud for exactly one minute.
- Count the total number of words the student read for each passage. Compute the average number of words read per minute.
- Count the number of errors the student made on each passage. Compute the average number of errors per minute.
- Subtract the average number of errors read per minute from the average total number of words read per minute. The result is the average number of words correct per minute (WCPM).
- Repeat the procedure several times during the year. Graphing students' WCPM throughout the year easily captures their reading growth.
- Compare the results with the North Carolina Fluency Rates Chart to determine whether students are making suitable progress in their fluency.

North Carolina Fluency Rates

Reading rate serve as a guideline for grade level norms. Rate may be influence by any of the following:

- ◆ Oral reading is slower than silent reading.
- ◆ Reading rates are typically established for younger students from oral reading activities while older students' rates are established from silent reading.
- ◆ Younger students may demonstrate little difference in oral and silent reading rates, while for older students that gap should be quite substantial.
- ◆ The fluency rates are based on oral reading norms.

North Carolina Fluency Targets Mean Words Correct Per Minutes			
Grade	Fall WCPM	Winter WCPM	Spring WCPM
1	10	20	50
2	50	70	90
3	75	90	110

Johns and Berglund (2005)