Measuring Oral Reading Fluency

Oral reading fluency (ORF) assessments are a commonly used tool for assessing accuracy and rate. Your student reads a grade-level passage aloud for one minute while you note any errors they make to determine their total words correct per minute (WCPM). There are a number of good reasons to use ORF assessments:

- They are quick and easy to administer (typically, they only take one minute).
- They can be used as a screening or progress monitoring tool.
- You can compare student scores to national norms to get a better idea of how they’re doing.
- Not only does an ORF assessment provide a quick measure of automaticity, it’s also predictive of overall reading skill. Research shows that ORF is a good predictor of future reading performance.

What does ORF tell you? ORF is a measure of accuracy and rate, expressed as words correct per minute (WCPM). It can tell you whether a student is at risk for reading difficulties because it is a good predictor of future reading performance. You can also use ORF as a progress monitoring measure to determine if a student is making adequate growth. Fluency expert Jan Hasbrouck has likened ORF to a thermometer ... it can tell you something is wrong, but it won’t tell you much about what is causing the problem. Further diagnostic assessment is needed for that.

What does ORF administration look like?
Watch this short video of the DIBEL ORF task:

mCLASS with DIBELS 8th Edition: Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)
What do we expect at different points in development?

Recall that fluency expectations change as children develop as readers. We would expect a fifth grader to read a grade level passage at a faster rate than a first grader. If you are using a commercial ORF CBM (like DIBELS), the assessment will likely provide expected rates for each grade level. For example, you can see expected scores for DIBELS [HERE].

Keep in mind that these norms give expected reading rates for ORF passages. That does not mean I would necessarily expect my student to read at that same rate in every situation. How do you think your reading rate would change in each of these scenarios?

A. You are reading for pleasure about a topic you know a lot about.
B. You are reading about an unfamiliar topic and know you will be tested on the material afterwards.

Chances are, your reading rate would be much faster in scenario A, which isn't necessarily a bad thing! In fact, it can be an important strategy to teach kids to slow down when they are reading something important or challenging.

**Oral Reading Fluency Practice**

Directions: Choose one of the following recordings of an ORF assessment. Use the score sheet to follow along and determine correct words per minute for the student. Use the DIBELS goals linked [HERE] to determine whether your selected student is at risk for reading difficulties. Use
the NAEP scale for prosody linked HERE or Rasiniski’s rubric linked HERE to assess your student’s prosody.

Grade 1 End of Year: Our Pond
Score sheet: Our Pond Score Page
Recording: Our Pond Recording
Total Words Read: _______
Total Errors: _______
Total Words Correct: _______
Accuracy (Words Correct/Total Words Read x 100): _______
Prosody Score: _______

Grade 2 End of Year: Puppy Love
Score sheet: Puppy Love Score Page
Recording: Puppy Love Recording
Total Words Read: _______
Total Errors: _______
Total Words Correct: _______
Accuracy (Words Correct/Total Words Read x 100): _______
Prosody Score: _______

Grade 3 End of Year: Trees
Score sheet: Trees Score Page
Recording: Trees Recording
Total Words Read: _______
Total Errors: _______
Total Words Correct: _______
Accuracy (Words Correct/Total Words Read x 100): _______
Prosody Score: _______