

What is curriculum-based measurement of reading?

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Statement of the problem

Most reading tests are insensitive to small changes in reading progress and should not be used too frequently because of practice effects. Educators need to monitor the reading progress of low-progress readers on a very regular basis however, in order to make instructional decisions well before the conclusion of a program or the end of a school year.

Proposed solution/intervention

Curriculum-based measurement (CBM) is a method of assessing growth in basic skill areas. One skill area where this has been widely employed is that of reading. Several curriculum-based measures of reading exist (non-word fluency and word identification fluency for example), but perhaps the most widely used is oral reading fluency (ORF). ORF is measured by a passage reading test, which requires students to read aloud from a passage of text for 1 minute, to determine the number of words read correctly per minute.

The theoretical rationale

An essential feature of this assessment method is that test materials are drawn from the students' curriculum, sometimes taken directly from a basal reading series, and sometimes consisting of a set of generic passages that represent the students' curriculum. By reading a passage of text, the whole skill of reading is measured, rather than component sub-skills. Low-progress readers are closely monitored on, say, a weekly or fortnightly basis, using a set of curriculum-based passage reading tests. This information is then used to make instructional decisions such as increasing the intensity or frequency

of instruction, and can be used within a Response to Intervention (RtI) model.

What does the research say? What is the evidence for its efficacy?

Research on CBM of reading dates back to the early 1980s, and continues to the present day. As such, CBM of reading has a large and very sound research base. Many studies have provided evidence of the reliability and validity of CBM of reading. ORF has been found to be a valid indicator of general reading ability including reading comprehension. Research has also demonstrated that CBM of reading is an effective means of monitoring reading progress, particularly that of low-progress readers.

Conclusion

CBM is a quick, reliable, valid and cost effective method of tracking progress in reading. It provides valuable information which enables educators to monitor progress regularly and to make appropriate instructional decisions in order to maximize the reading progress of their students.

Key references

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