



## Classroom Assessments

What types of things can be done to help struggling students and bring them to grade level quickly? It is very important to identify reading problems at an early stage. Students are often able to “get by” in large classrooms and not develop essential reading skills at expected levels of performance. This is why continuous classroom assessment is crucial. Although state or local assessments provide a “slice” of students’ knowledge and skills, they may not provide information for identifying individual students’ problems. Teachers need to observe students in small groups, listen to them read individually, and engage them in discussions on a regular basis.

Dr. Archer used a variety of strategies that (1) involved and engaged all students in active participation in class activities, and (2) provided her with information to diagnose and assess her students’ abilities. Some of these strategies included the following.

### **Use of Thumbs-up Signal**

The use of the thumbs-up signal to let Dr. Archer know when they had identified the word provided a visual picture of the students who were “getting it”.

### ***Observation of Choral Response***

Having students give the sounds or words after Dr. Archer pointed to them provided a way for her to see and hear whether they were “catching on”. This not only kept all students engaged, but also allowed opportunities for her to see and hear the responses of her students.

### ***Partner Work***

This activity kept all students engaged, as Dr. Archer moved around the room checking on various individuals.

The above techniques can give you a general idea of when your students are succeeding and where they are having problems. It may be important, however, for you to work with individual students periodically to identify specific problems. Commercial assessments are available for some purposes, but an experienced teacher can normally gain general information by checking out the following areas with struggling readers

### **Decoding Abilities**

Have the student read a passage or passages from texts. Start with a simpler one and move to slightly more challenging text to determine general decoding abilities.

## Comprehension

Can the student retell the main points of what they have read? Can they answer questions about the text?

## Fluency

Measurement of fluency provides a general measure of decoding and word recognition. The fluency rates of students reading appropriate-level books varies. Hasbrouck and Tindal (1992) have developed the following oral fluency rates for grades 2 through 5.

### Oral Fluency Rates, as Measured by Correct Words per Minute

	Fall	Winter	Spring
Grade 2	53	78	94
Grade 3	79	93	114
Grade 4	99	112	118
Grade 5	105	118	128

Hasbrouck, J., and Tindal, G. "Curriculum-based Oral Reading Fluency Norms for Students in Grades 2 Through 5", *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 24 (3), pp. 41 – 44. 1992.