Tips for Administering the
KCM Fluency Assessments

Remember that your goal in administering these assessment interviews is to find out what the *child* knows and/or understands at any given moment. This is an assessment just as certainly as if it were presented as a paper/pencil test. Just as you would not coach a student during the act of taking a paper/pencil test, do not coach them through these assessments. Interviewing a child gives greater insight into their understanding than does a simple numeric answer written on a sheet of paper. Take advantage of the opportunity to really get at what the student understands and let it guide your instruction. Do not take a student’s lack of understanding as an indictment about the quality of your teaching. Rather, it is an opportunity to provide instruction targeted at student need. Accurate monitoring of student progress using the Fluency Assessments is only possible when you are not “guiding the witness” and are capturing authentic evidence of internalized student learning. Although one-on-one clinical interviews are time-consuming, assessing even a few students frequently can open your eyes to how students think and learn, thereby benefitting all your students.

**Technical Advice**

Have all materials out and ready to go before you begin. Place them on the table in the order in which you will need them. Keep cards face down so students don’t have a preview as to what they may be asked. Keep manipulatives out of the reach of students and instruct them not to bother with items until they are invited to do so. Some choose to use a dry erase board for written answers. This eliminates a pile of paper on the table, but doesn’t allow for record keeping if the student is in the referral process. If this is the case you may want to video record the session for the purposes of documentation beyond what is written or kept in computer files. Parents often benefit from seeing how their children perform on interview assessments as well. Video recordings may also be used for research purposes with the written consent of the parties involved.

Video recording an assessment is often uncomfortable for a teacher in the beginning. Even so, it is critical that the camera be positioned in such a way as to show the entire work space. Remember that this is about the child, not the teacher. The video recording can serve to help the teacher reflect on questioning and technique, but the teacher is not the one being assessed. Video recording often works best if the teacher is seated beside the student with the camera facing the workspace. The camera should be positioned 4-5 feet from the teacher and placed on a tripod set at a height of about 5 feet. Angle the camera downward in such a way as to capture the entire workspace, the teacher and the student. You can zoom in close enough to help with the issue of reading what a child writes or points to in certain tasks. Using white paper and markers (or a dry erase board) can also lead students to write larger making their written answers easier to see. If the student is looking at cards that are small or have small writing on them you can always ask the student to read their choice aloud so as to have a verbal record of his or her answer on the video. If the student writing is too small to be seen by the camera, you can pick up the paper or white board and turn it to the camera so the answer is documented.

If a camera with tripod is not available, make do with what you have, positioning the camera as closely to the description above as possible. If your video recording device is a tablet or smart phone, make sure the main button (the one you use to open the home screen) is on the right or bottom—otherwise your video may appear upside down. Also, keep in mind that children’s voices may be too quiet to produce audible playback, meaning you may need to use an external microphone or a supplemental recording device, such as a smart phone. And, repeating of student words and reading aloud the student writing will assist in understanding the child’s responses during playback.

**General suggestions for administering tasks**

Accept the child’s first response on any given item if you are certain the task is understood. If you are not certain the task is understood state it in words that the child may be more familiar with, but only do this once…more than once may be considered coaching. A familiarization with vocabulary should become a part of *instruction*. If the child is grasping the vocabulary during instruction it will become apparent in subsequent assessments.

Verbal counting sequences should carry forward to the number being assessed in order to carry out the entire assessment in a timely manner. For example, when giving the FA5, a student is asked to start at 3 and count forward. If he asks, “How far?” simply say, “I will tell you when to stop.” Don’t give him the endpoint beforehand. Ask him to stop when he gets to 5. Do likewise for the FA 10, and so on. Lengthier counting sequences can be assessed in a different setting.

Be cognizant of the need of some students to “play” with the materials. Using materials that are new to a student may confound the diagnoses of student understanding and skill. For example, one student, when asked to show or tell a way to make 8, might draw fingers on the dry erase board rather than using the fingers she had on her hands. Writing and drawing on the dry erase board may be fun, but it isn’t necessary (or efficient) for determining the student’s ability to decompose 8. Exposing students to similar materials and settings alleviates the novelty effect.