

Preface

This book represents the collective work of approximately 18 research groups actively engaged in fluency-based curriculum-based measurement (CBM) work across the country and internationally. Its release coincides with two recent journal special issues on the topic of fluency-based measurement technology (Cummings & Biancarosa, 2015; Petscher, Cummings, Biancarosa, & Fien, 2013) and represents, at least a portion of, work from second- and third-generation research labs investigating the development, implementation, and interpretation of fluency-based measurement technology in schools. Though initiated as a special education technology, CBM has been both directly and indirectly part of many fundamental paradigm shifts in education since its practice was first codified during the mid-1970s through the University of Minnesota Institute for Research on Learning Disabilities (IRLD; Deno & Mirkin, 1977). Notable contributions include: (a) the shift in school psychology practice from a within-student, aptitude-by-treatment interaction (ATI) approach to one of formative assessment within the context of more effective instruction (Deno, 1990); (b) the move toward universal screening of all general education students to make early intervention more powerful and effective (NCLB, 2001; Reading First); (c) reauthorizing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004; Gersten et al., 2008); and (d) continuing the push toward data-based decision-making regarding student progress and efficacious programs through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA, 2009). For many of us, whether we loved or hated these new uses, they have left an indelible print on our landscape that is hard to ignore. As we look toward the future, with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for instruction, next generation assessments, computer-adaptive testing, and ever-growing issues with the measurement technology, some may ask what the future holds for CBM. We hope to answer some of those questions here.

The purpose of this book is to provide a comprehensive overview of fluency as construct applied through the use of CBM technology. Biancarosa and Shanley provide an introductory foundation to the text in Chap. 1 by introducing us to the concept and definitions of fluency from the perspective of three educational areas (i.e., language acquisition, reading, and mathematics), and closing with recommendations for improved clarity regarding the term “fluency” across fields. The book is then organized into sections based on the primary interest group that is targeted

by the content. In Part 1, we focus on educational professionals who use fluency-based measurement data to make decisions about their students. In Part 2, we turn our focus to the area of test development, with chapters focused on test equating and methods used to select criterion-referenced benchmark goals. As an additional focus in this section, we bring to bear important work in the areas of classical test and item-response theories, which hold critical implications for CBM test construction in the future. Part 3 of the text deals with advanced statistical methods for measurement researchers utilizing fluency data. The text as a whole is closed by Espin and Deno Chap. 13, who remind us that fluency measures (as well as educational assessment in general) must remain grounded in both the decisions we wish to make as well as the consequences, both intentional and unintentional, of those decisions. By targeting the diverse groups of fluency CBM users and researchers, we hope to paint a picture of the construct that is nuanced and relevant for the myriad decisions that fluency data are intended to facilitate. Nevertheless, as with most scientific endeavors, the true value of this book is the foundation it will provide to future work. We hope that this text, at least a small part of it, sets the stage for your own participation in the future research and development of fluency CBMs.

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Curriculum-Based Measurement Concepts and
Applications

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