



What does Flora do?

- Flora presents students with a fast (5 minute), valid and reliable estimate of their reading proficiency. It assesses students' oral reading fluency, compared to national norms, based on the number of words they read correctly in one minute on standardized grade level texts.

What does Flora stand for?

- Flora stands for **F**luent **O**ral **R**eadng **A**ssessment.

Is Flora approved by the Colorado READ Act?

- **YES**
- The Colorado READ Act "requires use of an interim assessment to determine whether a student has a significant reading deficiency in grades K through 3." Flora uses the DIBELS-Next stories and scoring procedures to assess student's reading proficiency. DIBELS-Next assessments are on the list of assessments approved by the Colorado Department of Education.

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readdiagnosticandsummativeassessments>

How does Flora benefit me?

- It saves you time. Today, a person must administer and score DIBELS stories used to assess student's oral reading fluency. Flora does it all automatically. In addition, you receive detailed information about the student's reading performance (relative their peers nationally), and are able to listen to and make notes about individual student's recordings, and receive a history of their changes in reading proficiency over time. Flora may be especially useful for monitoring students' reading progress over the course of a school year in response to interventions.

How does Flora benefit my students?

- First, Flora is fast and it's fun. The virtual tutor Eva (pictured below) administers three stories to each student. Students enjoy interacting with Eva. Flora also benefits students by letting you track their oral reading proficiency over the course of the school year.

How do I access Flora?

- Flora is an online program. It runs on laptops and desktops. Go to <https://flora.boulderlearning.com>. You register, and then enroll each of your students. This takes about 30 seconds per student. Then you can assign students to assign your students

Can I see a demonstration of Flora?

- Yes, we are happy to oblige. **Send Email to** Rcole@boulderlearning.com

What do students do?

- Students log into Flora program using their password. Eva, a lifelike computer character, asks students to read 3 grade-level stories to her. She asks them to read naturally, like they were reading it to a friend. Eva presents each story with this countdown: “Get ready to read (3, 2, 1), start reading now! After 1 minute, the story disappears from the screen. “Get ready to read the next story.” “Get ready to read the last story.” After the third story, Eva thanks the student and says goodbye. Students should wear headphones with a noise canceling microphone when using Flora.

**Eva****Is privacy assured for all of my students?**

- Absolutely. Assuring privacy of all students’ recordings and their assessment scores is a top priority of BVSD. Flora has been officially approved for use in BVSD classrooms.

What is the best way to use Flora? FLORA has two main uses:

1. **Universal Screening**-- identifying students who are, or may be, at risk of learning to read, Flora lets you assess all students reading proficiency up to five times per year. It displays percentile scores of all students relative to national norms, and displays progress across successive assessments.
2. **Progress Monitoring**-- Flora provides a flexible and powerful interface for assessing individual student’s reading proficiency whenever you choose, and displaying their progress across successive assessments. You can assign a target you want students to achieve by the end of the school year, and monitor their progress as often as you deem necessary.

What is Universal Screening?

- “In the context of a Response to Intervention (RTI) prevention model, universal screening is the first step in identifying the students who are at risk for learning difficulties.” (<http://www.rtinetwork.org>) *It is essential to identify students at risk before third grade; students’ who do not read at grade level by end of third grade are 4 times less likely to graduate from high school. English learners living in poverty are 16 times less likely!* <http://www.aecf.org/resources/double-jeopardy/> Flora can be used as early as first grade (winter) to identify these students.

Note: If Flora’s WCPM score indicates a student may be at risk, they should be administered additional diagnostic instruments to determine if they are indeed at risk, and to inform instruction.

What is Progress monitoring?

- Progress monitoring is a key component of the RTI model. Progress monitoring is designed to answer the question: *Is the student responding to their reading intervention?* Students' WCPM scores, measured weekly, every two weeks, or every month, are widely used to monitor students' progress across the US. A teacher or reading specialist often sets a *target WCPM score* they would like a student to achieve, and then monitor their progress periodically. For example, Felicia is second grade student who is reading at the 25th percentile relative to her peers, based on the national WCPM norms. The teacher may set a target WCPM score, e.g., the 50th percentile for Felicia, and use Flora to monitor her progress towards this goal. Each assessment takes only 5 minutes, and is fully automatic.

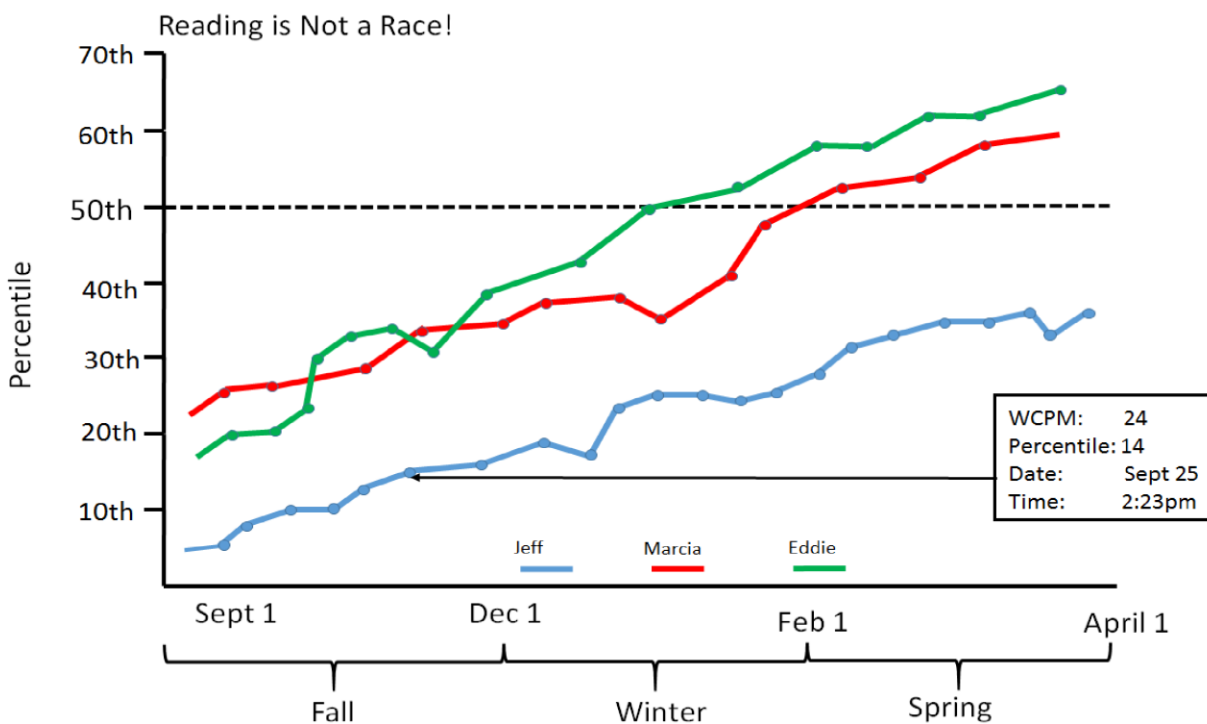


Figure 1 displays changes in 3 students oral reading proficiency over the course of a school year. It can be seen, by the points on the colored lines, which represent individual assessments, that our imaginary reading specialist assigned some students to FLORA more frequently than others (e.g., weekly, or monthly), and on different days. The progress report captures this information for each individual student, and enables the teacher to track their progress over the course of the school year.

Is there evidence that Oral Reading Fluency is a valid and reliable measure of students' reading proficiency?

- Indeed! Over 30 years of scientifically-based reading research indicates that oral reading fluency is a valid and reliable measure of students' reading proficiency. It correlates highly with assessments of the students' reading comprehension and their future academic success. Reading Rockets provides an excellent review: www.inadingrockets.org/article/understanding-and-assessing-fluency



How does Flora assess students' reading ability?

- Students read 3 grade-level texts for one minute. During our initial test of Flora during this school year, *all stories are scored by human judges*. They score each word that is misread or skipped over, and identify the last word read correctly by the student at the end of one minute. Flora then computes the Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM) score for the story. The median score of the three stories the student reads is compared to national norms. The norms are based on WCPM scores collected from thousands of students across the US reading grade-level texts, in grades 1 through 6, during the fall, winter and spring of the school year. By comparing a student's median WCPM score to the national norms, we can determine the student's oral reading proficiency percentile compared to his or her peers.

How do I know if a student is at risk?

- Students whose WCPM scores are above the *50th percentile* (based on their grade and the time of year) are scored as *Not at Risk*. Students below the 50th percentile, but within 10 WCPM of the 50th percentile, are scored as *May Be at Risk*. Student below 10 WCPM of the 50th percentile are scored *At Risk*.

How do I know that Flora is scoring student's stories accurately?

- During our initial testing of Flora, beginning January 2017, *all recorded stories are scored manually by experienced judges*. (The judges have no information about the students who recorded the stories; they simply score them.) Human scoring by trained judges is the "gold standard" used to evaluate the performance of automatic speech recognition system. We will use the stories scored by the judges to evaluate the performance of Boulder Learning's speech recognizer. In addition, *you can listen to any student's recordings*, make notes about their reading behaviors, and review the judge's scoring of the recording, since words scored as misread or skipped over are highlighted on the screen.

Do I need special equipment to use Flora?

- Students should wear headphones with an attached microphone (noise canceling if available) to assure high quality audio recordings.

What's expected of me if I use Flora?

Constructive feedback. We would like Flora to become a valued tool that will help you be more efficient and effective in helping your students' become motivated and proficient readers. In our view, this can only happen if you and your colleagues use the system, tell us what works, and let us know how it could better meet your needs. We hope you will use the "Feedback" window to make suggestions. If you are willing to answer some survey questions at the end of the school year, we will send you a \$20 gift certificate from Amazon.com in appreciation. You can also email the Flora team at Flora@boulderlearning.com.