



Screening and Progress Monitoring Question and Answer

Question: Can the same tool be used for screening and progress monitoring?

Answer: Some tools can be used for both screening and progress monitoring. On the Center's screening tools chart (<http://www.rti4success.org/chart/screeningTools/screeningtoolschart.html>) and progress monitoring tools chart (<http://www.rti4success.org/chart/progressMonitoring/progressmonitoringtoolschart.htm>) you can see that some tools appear on both charts. In these cases they have been evaluated under both sets of standards. Since the goals of screening and progress monitoring are different, it is important to look at the ratings a tool has received in both categories in order to see if it fits your needs. If a tool is only on one chart, you can contact the vendor to find out more information on their approach and evidence base for both forms of assessment.

Question: What is the difference between screening and diagnostic assessments?

Answer: Screening tools are typically a type of formative assessment that is administered to all students at least twice during the school year with the goal of identifying at-risk students, whereas a diagnostic is generally administered to some students once with the goal of identifying specific deficits in student learning and planning an intervention. Screening is a type of assessment that is characterized by providing quick, low-cost, repeatable testing of age-appropriate critical skills (for example, identifying letters of the alphabet or reading a list of high frequency words) or behaviors (for example, tardiness, aggression, or hyperactivity). In the RTI model, screening is used to identify students who might be in need of closer monitoring in their general education curriculum or of a more intense intervention. To learn more about screening, see the NCRTI's website page on screening http://www.rti4success.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=613&Itemid=2 and the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities' publication, "School-Wide Screening" <http://www.rti4success.org/images/stories/pdfs/rtimanualsection1.pdf> . For information on how to select a screening tools, see NCRTI's Screening Tool Chart. <http://www.rti4success.org/chart/screeningTools/screeningtoolschart.html>

Question: Who should be progress monitoring?

Answer: Anyone who is interested in improving results for children should be implementing progress monitoring. Whether you are a regular educator, special educator, related service provider, administrator, or family member, you should be interested in implementing research-based progress monitoring practices.



Question: What is the difference between progress monitoring assessments and state assessments?

Answer: Standardized tests of achievement or high stakes tests, are summative assessment typically given once a year and provide an indication of student performance relative to peers at the state or national-level. These tests are assessments of learning and measures of what students have learned over a period of time. The assessments are typically used for accountability, resource allocation, and measures of skill mastery. They are often time consuming and are not valid for individual student decision making. Conversely, progress monitoring assessments are formative assessments that occur during instruction and are brief, efficient measures of students' performance on an ongoing basis. With formative assessment, student progress is systematically assessed to provide continuous feedback to both the student and the teacher concerning learning successes and failures. These assessments are used to inform instruction and can be used to identify students who are not responsive to instruction or interventions (screening), to understand rates of student improvement (progress monitoring), to make curriculum and instructional decisions, to evaluate program effectiveness, to proactively allocate resources, and to compare the efficacy of instruction and interventions.

Question: I have some questions regarding the use of the TEL (AIMSweb tests of early literacy). Are you familiar with those?

Answer: We can't answer product related questions but recommend that you visit the screening and progress monitoring tools charts to view information on AIMSWeb or contact the vendor directly with specific questions,

Question: For students that are being progress monitored with the oral reading fluency probes, should they be progress monitored probes or with instructional level probes?

Answer: Students should be progress monitored at whatever grade level you expect them to reach by the end of the year. This may or may not be the grade level that they are in, depending on their beginning proficiency. Teams should examine data to determine an appropriate goal for the students, and progress monitor them at that grade level. Survey level assessment may be needed if the current grade level is not appropriate for the student. Survey level assessment is a process that determines the appropriate grade level to monitor students by testing students beginning with their current grade level, for example 4th grade, and testing at each subsequent grade level, 3rd and 2nd and so on until the student is successful as determined by grade level norms. For more information on determining a grade level for progress monitoring, see the Iris Center Module: Classroom Assessment (Part 2): Evaluating Reading Progress at <http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/rpm/chalcycle.htm> . See the section on



“Perspectives and Resources” for specific guidance “Determining the Appropriate Type and Level of CBM Probes (Step 1)—Students Not Reading at Grade Level.”

Question: What kind of screening tools can be used in high school?

Answer: Before choosing a screening tool for high school, the leadership team must meet to decide what risk they are screening for. Some secondary schools screen for low academic achievement using results from measures (such as state tests or other standardized achievement measures in reading and/or math) given at the end of eighth grade to determine the placement of students into an appropriate level of intervention at the beginning of ninth grade. Other secondary schools screen for students at-risk for dropping out by examining student records of “multiple failures”—that is, identifying students who failed one or more English and/or algebra classes. Not passing these classes is significantly correlated with dropping out. The National High School Center (NHSC) developed an Early Warning System tool to identify students at risk of dropping out. Learn more about the NHSC’s EWS tool at <http://www.betterhighschools.org/topics/DropoutWarningSigns.asp> For more detailed information about screening tools in secondary schools, see “Tiered Interventions in High School,” page 4 at http://www.rti4success.org/images/stories/hstii_lessons_learned.pdf or watch Mindee O’Cummings’ ask the expert video on screening in high school at http://www.rti4success.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1594

Question: What is a cut score?

Answer: A cut score is a score on a screening test that divides students who are considered potentially at risk from those who considered not at risk. Setting cut scores allows schools to identify an initial pool of students who may require interventions or additional assessment. For universal screeners, educators use the cut point to determine whether to provide an additional intervention. For progress monitoring tools, educators use the cut point to determine whether the student has demonstrated adequate response, whether to make an instructional change, and whether to move the student to more or less intensive services.

Question: On the Progress Monitoring Tools Chart there are both General Outcome Measures and Mastery Measures listed; what is the difference?

Answer: Mastery measures and General Outcome Measures (GOMs) are both forms of Formative Assessments. Mastery measures determine the mastery of a series of short-term instructional objectives. For example, a student may master multi-digit addition and then master multi-digit subtraction. To use mastery measures, teachers must determine a sensible instructional sequence and design criterion-referenced testing



procedures to match each step in that instructional sequence. Teacher-made tests present concerns given the unknown reliability and validity of these measures. The hierarchy of skills used in mastery measurement is logical, not empirical. This means that while it may seem logical to teach addition first and then subtraction second, there is no evidence-base for the sequence. Because mastery measures are based on mastering one skill before moving on to the next skill, the assessment does not reflect maintenance or generalization. It becomes impossible to know if, after teaching one skill, the student still remembers how to perform the previously learned skill. In addition, how a student does on a mastery measure assessment does not indicate how he or she will do on standardized tests because the number of objectives mastered does not relate well to performance on criterion measures. General outcome measures (GOMs) do not have the limitations of mastery measures. They are indicators of general skill success and reflect overall competence in the annual curriculum. They describe students' growth and development over time or both their "current status" and their "rate of development." Common characteristics of GOMs are that they are simple and efficient, are sensitive to improvement, provide performance data to guide and inform a variety of educational decisions, and provide national/local norms allow for cross comparisons of data.

Question: I have heard that letter naming is not a useful tool for progress monitoring. What do you think of this? Also, is it appropriate then for kindergarten student to be progress monitored with the letter name or letter sound probes?

Answer: Letter sound fluency and naming fluency are both appropriate measures for when these are the appropriate skills for the student to be learning (ie. beginning kindergarten). Letter naming fluency would come first followed by sound fluency. These may not be appropriate for higher grades or once the student has mastered letters and the goals of instruction have changed.

Question: How do I know if the Progress Monitoring tools and Screening tools can be used for my students?

Answer: It is important to consider your student population in selecting a tool. You should specifically determine if you have any sub populations of interest, such as different racial-ethnic groups, or students with disabilities, or English language learners. Both the screening tools chart and the progress monitoring tools chart have a column for "disaggregated data" which refers to whether or not their data have been collected and reported separately for sub-populations. If a tool has disaggregated data, you can click on the rating or text for that column which will pull up a window that includes all of the disaggregated data available for that tool or program. This is important information for consumers to see, because they want tools that have strong technical rigor for the particular populations that they are working with. The reality is that not a lot of vendors



do disaggregate their data in this way, but since we made it standard on the chart, more and more vendors have started to disaggregate to increase their tool ratings. We hope to have more disaggregated data available on the chart in the future.

Question: Do you provide accommodations to student with disabilities when assessing with CBM?

Answer: You can incorporate accommodations that appear on the student's IEP, but those accommodations must be used in the exactly the same way for each and every administration. It should be recognized that the scores the student obtains cannot be compared to those of other peers who did not use this modification.

Question: What is the difference between norm referenced and criteria referenced?

Answer: Norm-referenced assessment compares a student's performance to that of an appropriate peer group. When using a norm referenced measure, a student is measured against those undertaking the test, not against any defined criteria. This permits a fixed proportion of students to pass and fail. Because there are differences in the students taking the test from year to year, the standards that are set vary. Criterion-referenced assessment measures what a student understands, knows, or can accomplish in relation to a specific performance objective or criteria. It is typically used to identify a student's specific strengths and weaknesses in relation to an age or grade level standard. It does not compare students to other students. Because the criteria typically do not vary from year to year, the standards do not change. There are multiple ways to determine the criteria that is used.

Question: How frequently should I be giving progress monitoring assessments?

Answer: Progress monitoring can be used anytime throughout the school year. Monitoring should occur at regular intervals, but the frequency of the interval can vary (e.g. weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly). At a minimum, progress monitoring tools should be administered at least monthly. While the recommended number of data points needed to make a decision varies slightly by researcher, with Shinn and Good (1989) suggesting the need for at least 7-10 data points and Christ and Silbergitt (2007) recommending between 6 and 9 data points, as the number of data points increases, the effects of measurement error on the trend line decreases. While it may be ideal to monitor students frequently, the sensitivity of the tool that is selected may dictate the frequency with which the tool can be administered. Some tools are more sensitive than others so they can be used more frequently. The Progress Monitoring tools chart provides information on each tool:

<http://www.rti4success.org/chart/progressMonitoring/progressmonitoringtoolschart.htm>



Question: How do I pick a good screening tool?

Answer: To select a tool, the leadership team should discuss the needs of the school or district and evaluate available options. When selecting a screening tool, select a tool that targets skills pertinent to the grade and time the screen is administered. It is also important to consider the tool's accuracy, validity, cost, and the technology needed to support the tool. NCRTI created a "Screening Tool's Chart" <http://www.rti4success.org/chart/screeningTools/screeningtoolschart.html> to assist the leadership team in evaluating tools. We recommend a six-step process for using the chart: 1. Gather a team, 2. Determine your needs, 3. Determine your priorities, 4. Familiarize yourself with the content and language of the chart, 5. Review the ratings and implementation data, 6. Ask for more information. See the Users Guide http://www.rti4success.org/chart/screeningTools/NCRTI%20Users%20Guide_Universal%20Screening_04-29-10.pdf for more information.

Question: For children who have received interventions last year but there is no data available, how long must they continue in interventions this year before we can determine level of progress?

Answer: 6-9 data points are typically recommended before one can confidently make decisions. How often you progress monitor – one a week versus once every other week – will determine how long you might wait. In some cases, the data clearly indicate that students are not responding (e.g., 4 data points below the line). In these cases, you may be able to make a decision more quickly.

Question: How do you set an appropriate goal for a student?

Answer: The practice of goal setting should be a logical process where it is clear **why** and **how** the goal was set, **how long** there is to attain the goal, and what the student is expected to do when the goal is met. Goals can be set using a number of different practices. These include benchmarks or target scores, rates of improvement based on national norms and rates of improvement based on individual or local norms. For more information on setting a goal, see the Iris Center Module: Classroom Assessment (Part 2): Evaluating Reading Progress at <http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/rpm/chalcycle.htm>. See the section on "Perspectives and Resources" for specific guidance around goal setting.

Question: How do we know who to progress monitor and screen?

Answer: In an RTI framework, all students should be screened to identify who may be at risk for poor learning outcomes. It is impossible for screening tools to predict with a



100% accuracy who needs additional support. Thus, screening tools tend to over-identify so as not under-identify at risk students. Because of this, schools may consider conducting additional assessment with students who were identified by the screener, such as progress monitoring, to determine if students were inappropriately identified as at risk. Progress monitoring should also be conducted for all students receiving supplemental interventions.