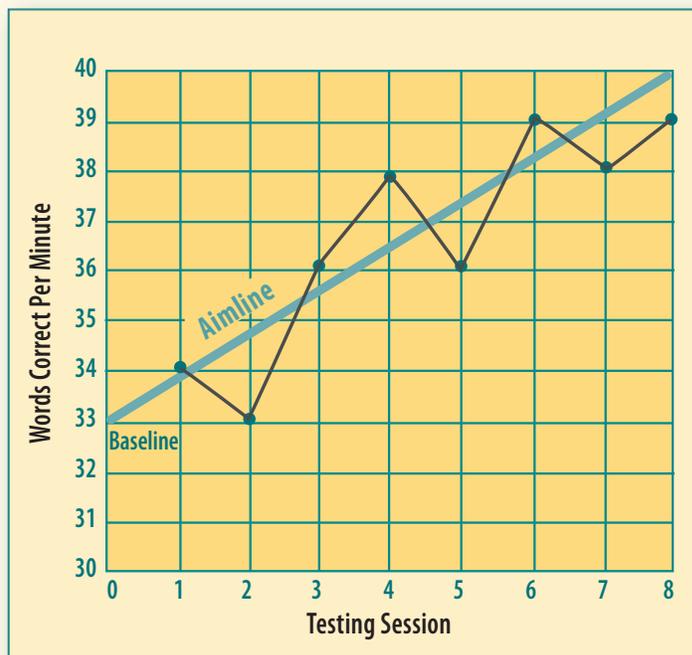


Formative Assessment: Monitoring the Progress of Students Who Have IEPs

Progress monitoring is the ongoing process of collecting and analyzing data to determine student progress toward attainment of educational goals. It can be used to determine progress on specific skills or general outcomes when compared to grade-level norms for all students in the school population. It can also be used to determine progress on individualized education programs (IEPs) for students who receive special education services.

The process begins by setting goals for each student, based on where the student is presently functioning (present level of academic achievement and functional performance) and projected level of skill attainment over time. Connecting the baseline (current performance level) and the target performance provides an aimline (i.e., expected rate of progress across a time period). Student performance on regularly administered probes is compared with the aimline to determine if the student is progressing toward the goal at an acceptable or expected rate (see Figure 1). When necessary, instructional interventions are designed and implemented to improve student progress.

Figure 1. Progress Monitoring Graph



The Seven Steps of Progress Monitoring

1. Write Annual Goals and Objectives

Teachers must provide a clear basis for monitoring student progress by writing precise and measurable goals. The goals estimate what progress can be expected in a set period of time based on where the student is presently performing. A student who receives special education services has measurable annual goals and may have short-term objectives. The annual goals estimate what outcomes can be expected in an academic year based on the student's present level of performance. The objectives provide steps for meeting the goal. Each goal and objective should include:

- The condition under which the behavior is performed
- The student's name
- Clearly defined, observable behaviors
- The performance criterion (i.e., the number of times the behavior is performed at criterion level, and the frequency of assessment)

2. Make Data Collection Decisions

Data collected on a regular basis provides the information needed to determine student progress toward

goals and objectives and serves as a guide for making instructional adjustments. Data must be collected often enough to allow for timely intervention decisions that maximize student progress. The following questions can guide decisions:

What type of data will be collected?

- Frequency or rate
- Percentage
- Duration
- Latency
- Quality of product or performance
- Level of assistance
- Fluency

Where will data be collected?

- Classroom
- Cafeteria
- Playground
- Job-site

How often will data be collected?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly

Who will collect data?

- Classroom teacher
- Parent
- Job coach
- Student
- Paraprofessional
- Other

3. Determine Data Collection Tools and Schedule

Data collection tools must be selected or designed and a schedule to review the data must be established. The type, location, and frequency of data to be collected, as well as who will collect the data, affect which data collection tools or methods should be selected. Commonly used data collection tools/methods include:

- Structured interviews or surveys
- Reading or math probes
- Observations
- Teacher-made tests
- Rubrics
- Assessment checklists
- Rating scales
- Task analytic recording
- Event or frequency recording
- Portfolio assessment
- Curriculum-based assessment
- Anecdotal records

4. Represent the Data Visually

Using a visual display to represent collected data provides an easy-to-interpret picture of a student's progress. Visual displays such as graphs, charts, or checklists help clarify when instructional adjustments or interventions may be needed.

5. Evaluate the Data

Data collection provides information used to drive instruction. Collected data must be reviewed regularly and on a predetermined basis.

The data must be evaluated to determine if the student is making progress toward the goals and objectives, and to determine how well the student is responding to any interventions being implemented.

Decision rules should be applied when analyzing the graph. For example, a decision to intervene should be made if four consecutive data points are below the aimline or four of the last six data points are below the aimline.

6. Make Instructional Adjustments

When the data patterns indicate the need to make instructional adjustments, simple instructional interventions should be used first. If these adjustments

do not yield desired results, more intensive interventions should be implemented. When instructional interventions still do not result in acceptable progress, the IEP team may need to reconvene to reevaluate the goal and objectives.

Examples of data patterns and suggestions for interventions include:

- If the data patterns show that the student is making adequate or better progress, the program is working, and the teacher should continue the present instructional program.
- If the data patterns show that the student's progress has stalled, and the student can do some but not all of the task, the teacher could provide more direct or intensive instruction on difficult steps.
- If the data patterns show that the student's progress is at or near zero, the task may be too difficult. The teacher should teach prerequisite skills.
- If the data patterns show that the student's progress has stalled close to the goal, the teacher should provide increased repetitions and frequent opportunities for practice.
- If the data patterns show that the student's goal has been accomplished, then the instructional program is successful, and the student should move on to a new goal.

7. Communicate Progress

Communication about student progress should actively involve the parent and the student. Such communication is a motivational tool for the student and strengthens rapport with parents. The IEP team determines how and when progress will be communicated. The method and schedule is noted on the IEP. Progress on IEP goals must be reported at least as frequently as progress is reported for students who do not have disabilities. Ways to keep lines of communication open include:

- Communication books and data logs
- Parent/teacher conferences
- Progress reports and report cards
- Phone calls