Progress Monitoring Guidance for Improving Student Outcomes

A Complement to Oregon's Literacy Frameworks

April 2026

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Acknowledgements

We extend our sincere gratitude to the school, district and education leaders who generously shared their time, insights and questions during the development of this guidance with the Oregon Department of Education. Your knowledge, lived experiences and openness are deeply appreciated. Your commitment to centering all students, especially those who represent our focal groups, and your thoughtful, probing questions, have helped clarify what is needed to create the conditions that allow educators to focus on progress monitoring practices that accelerate student learning.

This work aligns and is in direct support of Oregon's Assessment Theory of Action found in the Right Assessment for the Right Purpose.

*"**If** Oregon educators increase appropriate uses and decrease inappropriate uses of assessments and assessment data by increasing assessment literacy, **then** Oregon educators will make better instructional decisions that increase student learning."*

This guidance reflects your contributions and is stronger because of them.

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This guidance document provides Oregon educators with a structured approach to progress monitoring that emphasizes student strengths and opportunities for growth, aligning with the Oregon Department of Education's (ODE) Equity Stance and both the Early and Adolescent Literacy Frameworks. Throughout the document, educators will find concrete examples of how to leverage student performance data to ensure inclusivity, enhance instructional effectiveness and promote positive outcomes for all students.

Purpose and Goals of Progress Monitoring

In the 2023-24 school year, an ODE inventory of district-required academic assessments revealed that measuring student progress was the primary purpose of assessments used in Oregon classrooms. Since classroom teachers are the primary users of assessment data, a consistent statewide approach ensures alignment in setting goals, monitoring progress and making data-informed instructional decisions. Effective progress monitoring is a proactive and continuous process that allows educators to:

- Recognize and build upon student strengths.
- Identify students who may benefit from more specific, differentiated instruction.
- Adjust instructional strategies to meet diverse learning needs.
- Promote equity by ensuring fair and asset-based assessment practices.
- Foster collaboration with families and communities to support holistic student development.

Progress Monitoring Methods

There are two primary approaches to progress monitoring that support student-centered learning:

- **Skill-Specific Measurement (SSM):** Recognizes student progress in developing specific skills, celebrating milestones as they achieve mastery. The term "Mastery Monitoring" is used throughout research literature. However, within this manual, this term will be replaced with the term **Skill-Specific Measurement (SSM)** as it more clearly conveys the meaning of the term.
- **General Outcome Measures (GOM):** Tracks broader skill development over time, ensuring that all students have the support they need to reach their full potential.

Educators typically use both approaches based on instructional goals. Data collected from these measures can be used with decision-making tools, such as the Four-Point Rule and Trend Line Analysis, to refine strategies that build on students' strengths and support their ongoing growth. The Four-Point Decision Rule helps educators recognize students' progress toward learning goals, while Trend Line Analysis provides insight into long-term learning patterns to inform responsive and supportive

instruction. It emphasizes the importance of disaggregating data by student groups to address inequities and ensure all students receive responsive support.

Selection and Implementation of Progress Monitoring Tools

To foster success for all students, especially those who comprise Oregon's focal groups, progress monitoring tools should:

- Align with the standards they are measuring and student learning goals.
- Be valid, reliable and culturally responsive.
- Be easy to administer and provide real-time, actionable insights.
- Support multilingual learners by leveraging their linguistic assets.

Challenges and Solutions in Progress Monitoring

While progress monitoring is crucial, its effectiveness depends on addressing common challenges:

- **Bias in Assessment:** Select measures that are culturally and linguistically inclusive and that honor students' diverse backgrounds. These are ideally developed and reviewed by people from diverse cultural groups.
- **Misalignment of Tools:** Choose progress monitoring tools that match curricular scope and sequence and related instructional goals.
- **Teacher Training Needs:** Provide ongoing professional development to promote accurate data interpretation and informed instructional decision-making.
- **Resource Constraints:** Leverage technology for efficient data collection and analysis.

Role of Families and Community Engagement

Engaging families in the progress monitoring process strengthens student support systems. Educators should:

- Communicate assessment results in language (and in *a language*) that is accessible and easily understood by families.
- Provide visual aids to illustrate student progress and potential.
- Incorporate family insights into student learning plans, building from the funds of knowledge that all students bring to the classroom.

Conclusion

Progress monitoring is a vital strategy for advancing equitable and effective instruction in Oregon's schools. When educators, families, and communities work together, students benefit from a supportive educational experience that builds on their strengths and promotes success. Through ongoing use of progress monitoring, Oregon moves toward a more responsive and inclusive assessment system, one that uplifts every learner.

Purpose of the Guidance Document

The *Progress Monitoring: Guidance for Improving Student Outcomes* document provides clear guidance on a comprehensive, instructionally embedded assessment approach, along with practical tools and resources for culturally responsive monitoring of student learning throughout the school year. This document complements Oregon's Right Assessment for the Right Purpose Guidance Document and reinforces the role of assessment in both Oregon's Early Literacy Framework and the Responsive Assessment and Instruction section of the Adolescent Literacy Framework.

This guidance challenges the status quo when using assessments that frame students as having "gaps" to be filled or deficits to be remediated. Instead, it centers an asset-based approach, positioning the assessment process as one way to recognize and build upon students' existing knowledge, skills, backgrounds and lived experiences, as well as determining potential areas for growth. Also, by integrating assessment as a key part of the teaching and learning cycle, educators can use timely data (both qualitative and quantitative) to inform, adjust, and strengthen instruction in ways that support each student's growth.

This document also supports school teams in designing equitable systems that reflect ODE's Equity Stance, enabling more responsive teaching and deeper student engagement. When educators systematically collect and interpret data as part of instruction, they can tailor strategies to build on students' strengths and address emerging needs, enhancing the overall effectiveness, efficiency and equity of the education system.

In 2023-24, ODE conducted an inventory of district-required academic assessments. The HB 4124 Legislative Report identified "measuring student progress" as the top purpose, and classroom teachers as the primary users, of assessment results, highlighting a strong statewide investment in progress monitoring to support instruction. A shared understanding of effective progress monitoring practices will promote consistency across districts, enabling ODE to provide targeted support based on local contexts and needs. This guidance document also addresses:

- The role of progress monitoring within a comprehensive assessment system, emphasizing how it informs and enhances daily teaching and learning by helping educators respond to students' individual needs in real time.
- Potential challenges in implementing progress monitoring systems and suggested strategies to overcome those challenges, with a focus on ensuring that instructional adjustments remain timely, equitable and student-centered.

- Ethical considerations associated with progress monitoring, including ensuring that data is used to support student growth and improve instruction, rather than to label or limit student potential.

Purpose and Goals of Progress Monitoring

A great deal of research has taken place on progress monitoring over the last 40 years (e.g., Fuchs & Fuchs, 1986; Jung et al., 2018; Klute, Apthorp, Harlacher, & Reale, 2017). Recent meta-analyses suggest that progress monitoring has a positive effect on academic performance compared to business-as-usual instruction (Fuchs, Radkowitsch, & Sommerhoff, 2025), and students who participate in formative assessment perform better on measures of academic achievement than those who do not (Klute, Apthorp, Harlacher, & Reale, 2017). Additionally, research by Pyung-Gan et al. (2018) supports the use of Data Based Individualization (DBI) to enhance student outcomes across academic areas.

Although this guidance document focuses on progress monitoring in reading, progress monitoring can be used across subject areas such as math, writing and behavior to support student growth. Progress monitoring can be used with all students, including students in general education, students experiencing disabilities, students who are multilingual, and other students with diverse learning needs. For example, students who experience significant cognitive disabilities can benefit from progress monitoring, using tools such as observational data, daily tracking sheets, or rubrics to capture progress in ways that are responsive to the student's learning profile and instructional context.

While progress monitoring is a valuable practice for all students in the core classroom, it is often used when educators seek to tailor instruction more intentionally and intensively to support student learning. The reiterative process of 'instruction–assessment–instruction' through data-based decision making helps educators understand the effectiveness of their strategies and make responsive adjustments. This may take place with a small group of students to deepen learning in the core classroom, to guide initial and ongoing intervention supports or to enhance specialized supports such as high-dosage tutoring.

The following table summarizes why school districts in Oregon should be actively using effective, equitable progress monitoring systems:

Purpose	Rationale
Assessment for Student Learning	The primary reason for progress monitoring is to highlight student learning over time. Educators can determine if students have made expected gains in skill development and determine goals for improvement.

Purpose	Rationale
Acceleration of Learning	Effective progress monitoring systems within schools help monitor students who may benefit from additional support. Research highlights the importance of addressing learning needs early, as doing so creates a strong foundation and improves student outcomes (Torgesen et al., 2001).
Determine if Instructional or Intervention Changes are Needed	Progress monitoring reveals students' areas of strength and opportunities for growth. By analyzing trends and patterns in student learning, teachers can adjust their teaching strategies and provide timely instruction to accelerate student growth.
Continuous Improvement	By monitoring student progress toward an identified skill, educators and administrators can evaluate the impact of instructional practices, curriculum, and other educational interventions. Data can be analyzed at class, group or demographic levels to ensure all students have equitable learning opportunities.
Communication With Families and Partners	Open communication about assessment practices creates a shared language for educators, students, parents/caregivers and educational partners to discuss student growth. Regular updates foster collaboration, promote accountability and support a culture of continuous improvement.
Dismantling Systemic Inequities and Empowering Historically Underserved Students	Progress monitoring can play a crucial role in addressing systemic inequities and empowering historically underserved students by providing targeted, data-driven insights to guide equitable practices.

Additionally, progress monitoring is a fundamental component of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) frameworks, as well as professional learning communities. Research highlights its role in identifying and addressing issues at an early stage, which, in turn, can prevent academic challenges from escalating (Al-Otaiba et al., 2010; Scammacca, et al., 2015).

The research on progress monitoring and English learners is more nuanced. Hall et al. (2022) suggest that while progress monitoring using curriculum-based measurement is an efficient system for students from the dominant culture and language, it is also necessary to consider students' English language proficiency levels when making decisions for English learners. Gonzales et al. (2022), in a synthesis of articles on MTSS for linguistically diverse students and the importance of screeners and progress monitoring tools, recognized two important themes across the research. First, English language proficiency plays a big

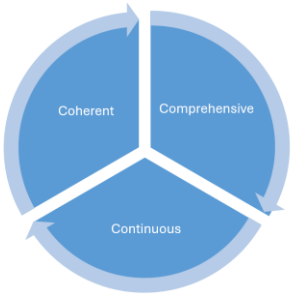
Progress monitoring tools should never be used to label students, assign grades, or place them into fixed, stagnant groups.

role in how students respond to interventions taught in English; and second, we need progress monitoring tools that are tested and proven to work for students from diverse cultural and language backgrounds. Additionally, the language of instruction holds important relationships to performance on screeners and ongoing progress monitoring measures.

Defining Assessment – The Bigger Picture

An effective assessment system should be coherent, comprehensive and continuous (NRC 2001).

- **Coherent**: All aspects of literacy assessment and instruction align with Oregon's language arts standards. The assessment system provides clear information about learning, so educator instructional practices align with what students need to learn next.



- **Comprehensive**: The approach taken to literacy assessment provides multiple types of tests (universal screening as required by ORS 326.726, informal diagnostics, progress monitoring, interim tests, and summative tests) and is rooted in robust formative assessment practices. Informed decisions can be made in the moment, periodically throughout the year, and annually to drive improvement of literacy curriculum and instruction.
- **Continuous**: Literacy assessment allows for assessment practices that drive the collection and review of the evidence of reading and writing learning that connects to prior learning and identifying the next steps across the school year.

The 3Cs establish the basic conditions for educators to use data and evidence from multiple sources to improve practice and make informed decisions about student learning. When assessment practices are clearly aligned to the full depth, breadth and complexity of Oregon's content standards, coherent responses to test data become possible. When coherence, comprehensiveness, and alignment are missing, however, assessment components function like pieces from different puzzles and fail to form an accurate picture of student learning.

> *"An instructionally useful assessment provides substantive insights about student learning strengths and needs relative to specific learning targets that can positively influence the interactions among the teacher, student, and the content… If the assessment doesn't lead to changes in the interactions between students and teachers that improve student learning, we have difficulty considering the assessment, no matter what it does outside of the classroom, to be instructionally useful"*
>
> (Evans, C., Marion, S., 2024).

Properly used, assessment accelerates student learning, contributes to student efficacy and engagement, helps identify areas for further support and deepens the partnership between teacher

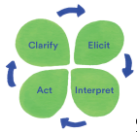
and learner. Care should be taken to understand the place, purpose and limitations of each form of assessment. While this document explores progress monitoring, the table below offers a summary of different types of assessments used in classrooms across Oregon.

Assessment Type	Description
Screeners	Screeners are short, easy-to-administer tests that capture high-level, broad information and may serve as an indicator of student strengths, instructional needs and opportunities for acceleration, guiding further exploration through an informal diagnostic evaluation process.
Screener for Risk Factors of Dyslexia	ORS 326.726 requires that each school district ensure every student is screened for dyslexia risk factors using a department-approved test in kindergarten if they first enroll in a public school at that level, or in first grade if they first enroll at that level. This screening requirement does not exist in other grades. However, administering screening assessments is the first step in the academic assessment process and encourages educators to explore student learning strengths and areas for growth to support acceleration. In Oregon, the screener risk factors of dyslexia must assess: Phonological Awareness, Rapid Naming Skills, and Sound-Letter Correspondence.
Diagnostics	In the assessment context, diagnostics are designed to identify students' strengths and areas for growth in a narrow skill area pursuant to areas of concern identified by screening. These diagnostics can be informal, like observational tools or error analysis, or more formal assessments; they are used to guide instructional decisions, such as adjusting core instruction or forming groups. A spelling inventory is an example of a diagnostic tool that helps pinpoint specific skill areas for targeted support. It's worth noting that diagnostic assessments can also refer to evaluations used by school psychologists and educational diagnosticians to identify disabilities, a separate and equally important use.
Curriculum-Embedded Assessments	Curriculum-embedded assessments take place in classrooms during instruction and are closely aligned to standards and topics that serve as the focus of student learning. Examples of these would be focused questions tasks, Socratic seminars and end-of-unit tasks.
Observational & Classroom-Based Tools	Observational and classroom-based tools include methods used to observe and record student behavior, interaction, and learning process over time within authentic instructional settings.
Interim Tests	These are periodic, standards-based tests that focus on specific groups of standards in specific content areas. District and school leaders use information from interim tests to gauge system-level information about student progress toward Oregon's content standards. Interim tests are most valuable in the classroom, where teachers use results

Assessment Type	Description
	to adjust instruction, provide support and implement targeted strategies based on performance data.
Benchmark Tests	These are typically norm-referenced or common tests selected or developed by educators, schools or districts. These include unit tests, school-or district-created assessments and educator team-developed tests; they are administered at key points during the school year (typically fall/winter/spring). The data from these tests can be aggregated across classrooms, schools or the district to help understand what students have learned.
Summative Assessments	Summative tests are provided to students at the end of the school year. Summative tests provide administrators and teachers with insights into curricular and instructional effectiveness. Summative tests answer broad questions about student group mastery of the entire breadth, depth and complexity of grade level content standards.

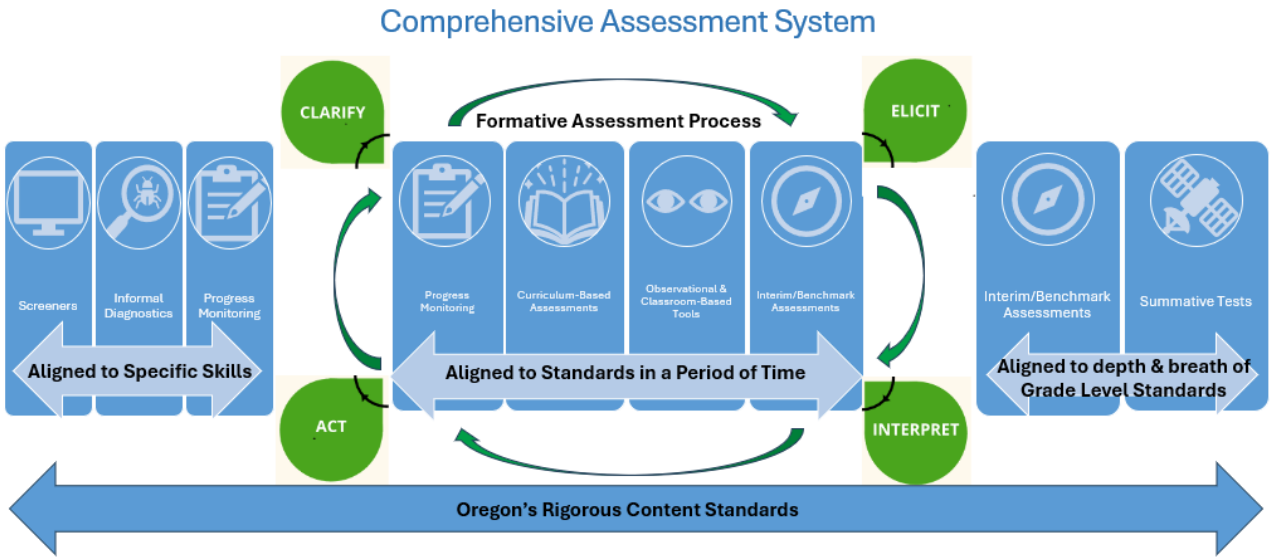
[1]Formative Assessment

[1] Not listed as an assessment type in the table above is formative assessment practice. This is because formative assessment is a system of high-leverage instructional practices that empower students to take charge of their own learning. It is not a test. The evidence of learning collected is often student-specific, making comparison impossible. Formative assessment practices cannot be used within an accountability system and simultaneously maintain their intended instructional purpose (ODE 2019). The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) defines formative assessment as *a planned, ongoing process used by all students and teachers during learning and teaching to elicit and use evidence of student learning to improve student understanding of intended disciplinary learning outcomes and support students to become self-directed learners* (CCSSO, 2018). It is used to promote fairness, inclusivity, and student ownership of learning. It uses both formal and informal methods to gather a comprehensive understanding of student performance.



Students and educators use the collected data to improve understanding of learning and develop self-directed learners. Effective use of the formative assessment process embeds the following practices in a collaborative and respectful classroom environment:

- *Clarifying* learning goals and success criteria within a broader progression of learning
- *Eliciting* and *analyzing* evidence of student thinking
- *Engaging* in self-assessment and peer feedback
- *Providing* actionable feedback
- *Using* evidence and feedback to move learning forward by adjusting learning strategies, goals, or next instructional steps



As part of a comprehensive assessment system, formative assessment is a dynamic and ongoing process, not a test (Heritage, 2011). According to the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (2022), "The Formative Assessment Process is a deliberate process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides actionable feedback that is used to adjust ongoing teaching and learning strategies to improve students' attainment of curricular learning targets/goals.". Students are active participants through self- and peer-assessment, which deepens their awareness of their own learning and contributes to a more collaborative classroom environment. Oregon's Early Literacy Framework emphasizes feedback loops, including conversations between learners and teachers, that build mutual trust and support co-construction of next steps. Feedback is most effective when it is asset-based—holding students to high expectations, affirming their ability to meet those expectations and providing clear, actionable guidance. Such practices benefit all students and are especially critical for those historically underserved.

Case Study: Stefanie's Story

Stefanie, a multilingual first-grader at May Roberts Elementary in the Montario School District, joins Ms. Smith's English-instruction class. Stefanie, whose mother spoke to her in a Spanish dialect before kindergarten, is assessed with an English literacy screener measuring phoneme segmentation. Ms. Smith notices Stefanie's confidence in the task at hand. Stefanie uses both English and Spanish sounds. According to the screener (completed in English), Stefanie's score indicates she would benefit from additional support with segmenting words into discrete sounds.

Ms. Smith, trained in best practices for multilingual students, administers a Spanish reading screener, revealing Stefanie's emerging foundational reading skills in Spanish. Recognizing Stefanie is using phonemes in Spanish, Ms. Smith plans to use a Spanish foundational literacy measure designed to

assess Stefanie's strengths and areas for growth in phonological awareness of syllables, which is more authentically aligned to the Spanish language.

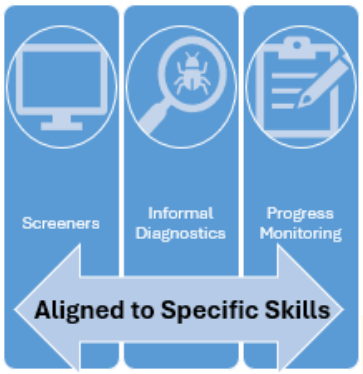
Using formative assessment practices, especially discourse and feedback loops, Ms. Smith adjusts instruction based on Stefanie's progress through small group activities and whole group practice. She monitors progress through informal observations and formal phoneme segmentation measures, continually engaging Stefanie in discussions about her progress and providing explicit feedback. This approach strengthens their relationship and fosters Stefanie's sense of efficacy and engagement, promoting continuous improvement in literacy instruction.

Ms. Smith's culturally and linguistically responsive practices became a model for institutional change for students who are multilingual. After successfully using two different tools that focused on foundational reading skills and not on language proficiency to support Stefanie's learning, Ms. Smith shared her approach with her school. This led to the adoption of similar practices across the school, benefiting multilingual learners and fostering equity-focused systemic change.

Complementary Roles of Formative Assessment and Progress Monitoring

As mentioned above, Dr. Margaret Heritage describes formative assessment as a process that takes place during instruction. In this process, educators clarify learning goals, elicit evidence of student understanding, interpret that evidence, and work with students to make timely adjustments that support learning. Progress monitoring offers a complementary approach. While it typically occurs outside of daily instruction and uses standardized tools to track growth over time, it provides valuable insights into student learning patterns and progress. Unlike formative assessment, which offers immediate feedback in the classroom, progress monitoring helps educators see trends and evaluate the effectiveness of instructional supports and interventions. Both processes are powerful in their own ways: formative assessment empowers educators and students to make in-the-moment adjustments, while progress monitoring helps ensure that instruction and interventions are working over time. Together, they strengthen a comprehensive assessment system by giving educators multiple, reinforcing ways to understand and respond to student learning.

Two Types of Progress Monitoring Measures



Progress monitoring assessments are brief intentional approaches that are (1) aligned to specific skills where students have received targeted instruction and (2) administered at regular intervals to measure student growth over time. The two primary types of progress monitoring tools include skill-specific measurement and general outcome measurement.

Skill-Specific Measurement (SSM) is an effective tool to discern a child's understanding or proficiency with a certain target skill (Iris Center). The discrete skills of measurement build upon each other; once proficiency is attained in one skill, a new skill is introduced. However, this does not mean that the student's entire learning program focuses solely on that single skill. Instead, the student continues to engage with all the other skills and topics being taught in the classroom. For example, if a student needs extra support with decoding multi-syllabic words, the teacher will provide targeted instruction in that area. At the same time, the student will still take part in the full range of core reading activities, including those that focus on developing comprehension. For students like Stefanie, this means that her teacher, Ms. Smith, goes beyond simply addressing isolated areas of need. While Stefanie receives focused instruction on a targeted skill essential for learning to read and write in both Spanish and English, she is also fully immersed in the richness of the classroom experience. Ms. Smith ensures that Stefanie engages with the full depth and breadth of Oregon's standards, accelerating her growth rather than narrowing her experience.

This approach reflects a belief in Stefanie's potential to thrive when challenged and supported. She isn't pulled aside and left out of engaging activities—she is uplifted, included and propelled forward. Through purposeful instruction and meaningful learning opportunities, Stefanie remains an active participant in her classroom community. Her engagement is deepened as she explores complex texts, shares her ideas with classmates and sees herself reflected in what she learns. In this way, acceleration and inclusion go hand in hand.

General Outcome Measures (GOMs) evaluate and track progress across an entire learning progression by using progress monitoring measures that span the entire school year. For example, reading fluency is a skill that is measured across the school year in certain grade levels. As students improve individual skills across the instructional year, reading fluency measures will reflect overall growth across time.

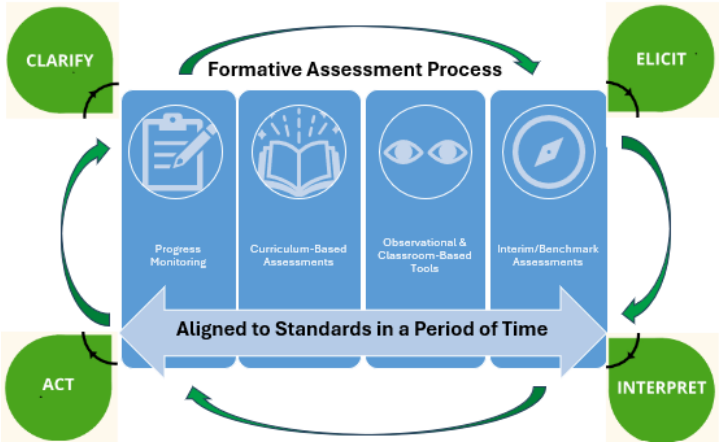
The table below is adapted from Vanderbilt University's Peabody College IRIS Center and Equity in Data (Knips et al., 2023) and summarizes the key differences between SSM and GOMs.

Characteristics	SSM	GOM
Skills assessed are aligned with curriculum, minimizing risk of bias	X	X
Tests are easy and quick to administer while balancing speed of collection process and the accuracy of information	X	X
Student skills are assessed frequently; data is used to adjust instruction to accelerate student learning	X	X
Results are available immediately to plan for instruction	X	X
Tests are cost-effective; already part of the adopted curriculum or teacher-created	X	X
Information is used to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction so teachers can create better instructional programs	X	X
Alternate tests of equivalent difficulty are available	X	X
Tests include standardized measures, administration guidelines, and scoring procedures	X	X
Tests are based on a sequenced curriculum that build on previous skills	X	
Tests are administered multiple times within a unit of study for each set of skills	X	
Tests monitor acquisition of a specific skill	X	
Tests monitor growth across the year		X

Tests, whether teacher-created or purchased through a vendor, are not perfect and have bias. It is important to carefully review tests that claim to predict performance on standardized achievement tests. It's also important to ensure that tests have been through rigorous review for alignment to standards and include bias and sensitivity guidelines, such as those created by Smarter Balanced (Smarter Balanced, 2023), (Truckenmiller, A., Cho, E., Bourgeois, S., Friedman, E., 2024). Educators can use progress monitoring to identify students' strengths and pinpoint areas for intentional support—allowing them to tailor instruction that builds on what students know while guiding them toward their next learning goal.

Selection of Progress Monitoring Tools

Process for Selecting Progress Monitoring Tools



Progress monitoring tools should *never* be used to label students, assign grades, or place them into fixed, stagnant groups. Instead, these tools must be used in partnership with formative assessment practices as instruments for growth, providing insights that support responsive and inclusive instruction. Progress monitoring tools should reflect and respect the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students, minimize bias and promote fairness. Most importantly, they should foster a sense of belonging, reinforcing that every student is capable, valued and supported on their learning journey.

Progress monitoring tools must be specific, ongoing, and measure a select skill or set of skills. When selecting these tools, keep the following process in mind:

1. **Define your Objectives**. Clearly outline what it is you want to measure and why. Is it to measure a single skill? Is it to measure a set of skills over a longer period? What is the purpose of the measurement tool?
2. **Assess Available Resources**. Do you have tools already within the classroom/school/district to measure this skill or set of skills? Have the resources been validated with diverse populations? If not, can a valid teacher-created tool be developed to match the skill being taught? How will the available resources be used in partnership with one another to create a complete picture of student learning?
3. **Evaluate Quality, Usability, and Other Considerations**. See guidelines below for these considerations.
4. **Select Progress Monitoring Tool.** The right progress monitoring tool depends on your specific context, goals and available resources. For all students, and especially those in dual language programs, it is essential that progress monitoring tools monitor the intended content or skill rather than a student's language proficiency.
5. **Reflect.** Determine if the progress monitoring tool selected is producing the type of information the teacher needs to measure progress on the targeted skill(s) and inform instruction. If not, consider the use of another tool that meets the needs of the teacher.

Essential Considerations Within Tool Selection

When choosing a commercially-made product, educators should examine the tool carefully for cultural or linguistic bias and ensure that the tool will measure the desired skill. Avoid assessment tools that are likely to conflate language barriers with opportunity or learning gaps.

Keep the following factors in mind to enhance equity and reduce bias when selecting assessments.

- **Diverse Representation -** Select assessment materials that have been validated with a diverse population of students. Use scales that have learning progressions or are criterion-referenced for making comparisons. If norm-referenced scales are needed, ensure the normative sample includes students from various backgrounds, including different ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses and languages.
- **Cultural Sensitivity** - Assessment materials should respect and reflect the cultural backgrounds and experiences of the students being assessed. Ideally, the representation (examples, scenarios and contexts) used in the assessment should reflect the diversity of the population being assessed.
- **Bias and Fairness -** Identify and eliminate potential biases in the assessment items or administration procedures (this is less feasible with many commercially available products). Provide clear guidelines and instructions for administration. Educators should address their own potential implicit biases in administering or scoring assessments. Minimize personal bias through objective scoring criteria that are consistently applied.
- **Language -** Prioritizing tools that reflect and honor students' linguistic abilities across both languages supports their growth and success.
- **Accessibility** - Provide appropriate accommodations for individuals with disabilities, such as extended time or assistive technologies. Use principles of Universal Design for Assessment (UDA) (Lazarus et al., 2022) to ensure assessments are accessible to the widest range of students.
- **Multiple Measures -** Use more than one measure and multiple methods to capture student progress, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative information. Interpret data with an understanding of the contextual factors that may influence performances across different subgroups.

Evaluate Quality, Usability and Other Considerations

When selecting or developing a progress monitoring tool, it is essential to consider a range of factors that ensure the tool provides meaningful, equitable and instructionally useful data. The considerations outlined below are intended to guide educators, school leaders and teams in evaluating the quality and appropriateness of tools used to monitor student progress.

Consideration	Comments
Informative Feedback	The tool should provide information on instructional effectiveness and suggest potential instructional improvements.
Validity and Reliability	The tool should have evidence that supports its validity and reliability. *Validity* is the degree to which accumulated evidence and theory support a specific interpretation of test scores for a given use of a test. If multiple interpretations of a test score for different uses are intended, validity evidence for each interpretation is needed. *Reliability* means the degree to which test scores for a group of test takers are consistent applications of a measurement procedure and hence are inferred to be dependable and consistent for an individual test taker. More formal progress monitoring measures will have validity and reliability evidence available. For less formal measures, educators should be consistent and adhere to the principles of validity and reliability in their approach. Developing standardized administration procedures will aid in supporting reliability.
Alignment with Goals and Standards	A progress monitoring tool should align closely with selected standards/goals.
Sensitivity to Change	The tool should be able to detect meaningful changes in the targeted skill or behavior over time.
Norms* and Benchmarking	Establish targets against which you will measure your data, such as standards, rubrics, and examples for student performance. Set clear goals/expectations for performance before looking at the data. *Norms are defined as "Statistics or tabular data that summarize the distribution or frequency of test scores for one or more specified groups, such as test takers of various ages or grades, usually designed to represent some larger population, referred to as the reference population" (American Educational Research Association, 2014).
Ease of Administration	Consider factors such as length of time required for administration, training needed for test administrators, and ease of scoring.
Bias	Avoid tools and methods that may be biased. The key types of bias that may occur during the assessment process include: **Cultural Bias**. Reading passages reflect the cultural experiences, values, or knowledge of the dominant culture rather than all cultures. **Implicit Bias**. Bias in scoring and interpretation occurs due to implicit, unconscious biases about student's abilities based on race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status.

Consideration	Comments
	Language Proficiency Bias. Screeners may conflate difficulties in reading comprehension with language barriers, leading to inaccurate conclusions about a student's reading skills.

Case Study: Serena's Story

Serena is a bright and capable 4th grade student in the Western Hills School District. At the beginning of the school year, her school conducts a universal reading screening for all K-5 students, with follow-up screening assessments at mid-year and year-end. These assessments, General Outcome Measures (GOM), provide a snapshot of overall reading skills. One of the measures for 4th grade is Oral Reading Fluency.

Serena's fluency score, while reflecting her effort and potential, falls below the goal for 4th graders, with an accuracy rate of 83%. To better understand Serena's learning needs, her teacher conducts informal diagnostic assessments, including a phonics screener. The data highlight Serena's strong proficiency with consonant-vowel-consonant patterns and sight words, and it also identifies opportunities for growth in vowel teams, syllable types, and reading multisyllabic words. Recognizing the importance of these skills for Serena's progress, her teacher prioritizes instruction on vowel teams within real words and places her in a small group with peers working on similar skills. This additional intervention, scheduled during a designated reading support time ("second scoop"), supplements (rather than replaces) Serena's core reading instruction, ensuring she continues to develop across all areas of reading, including vocabulary and comprehension.

To track Serena's progress in a way that aligns with her current skill development, the school team selects a GOM progress monitoring tool at the second-grade level. This bi-weekly assessment is more sensitive to the goal of increasing Serena's reading accuracy with vowel teams in context and provides a clearer picture of her growth. In addition, the team uses Skill-Specific Measurement (SSM) assessments for specific skills to ensure systematic progress. The teacher's initial focus is on vowel combinations. Serena's teacher creates multiple 6x6 assessment grids of consonant-vowel-vowel-consonant (CVVC) words targeted for instruction. In addition to using the formative assessment process, the teacher administers a one-minute assessment to determine how many CVVC words Serena can read correctly. The teacher uses these multiple forms of the CVVC grid to monitor Serena's growth on this skill on a daily basis. This type of SSM helps Serena's teacher determine when she has mastered the skill of reading CVVC words, and when she is ready to exit the small acceleration group or move on to another skill.

Data Collection and Recording

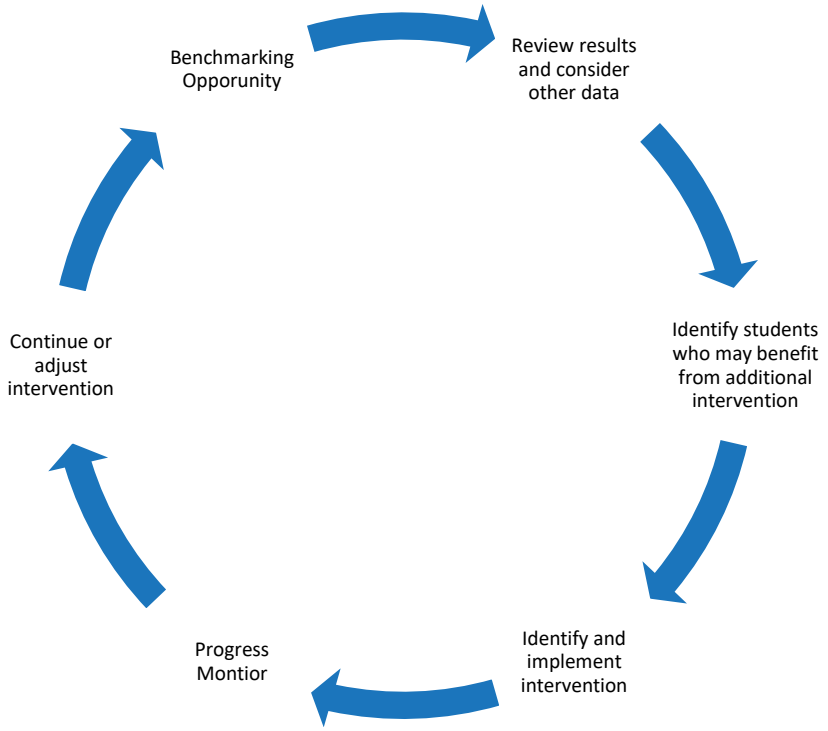
Careful Considerations for Progress Monitoring Logistics

Each school or school district should develop a plan for how and when progress monitoring data will be collected. For large-scale progress monitoring, for example with all students in a grade or school, that plan should include who collects the data, where data collection takes place and a schedule for when testing will take place. Standard administration of the tool helps avoid bias and yields better data for instructional decision-making. During the administration of any progress monitoring tool, the teacher should reflect on their own potential biases, including confirmation bias, and ask themselves if data were collected and interpreted in a standardized way to support equitable interpretation and goal setting for the learner (Knips, A. et al, 2023).

Who Can Assist with Data Collection?

- For GOMs, each district should have a cadre of personnel who have been trained to administer and score the measures.
- This could include grade-level teachers, educational assistants, special education and Title I personnel and others the district selects to train.
- For SSM, the person who collects the qualitative and/or quantitative data is also the person instructing the student. The idea is that the teacher uses the formative assessment process and other forms of data to guide their teaching practices. By doing so, teachers can quickly adjust instructional strategies, address misconceptions and continue to provide targeted instruction. This person should have a positive relationship with the child, be aware of their own biases and be able to provide in-time decisions about instructional next steps.

Life Cycle of Progress Monitoring



Recommendations for How Often Progress Monitoring Should be Administered

Evidence of Student Learning	Frequency & Who	Purpose
Performing Grade Level or Above Goal	Three times per year – usually including nearly all students	Part of school-wide benchmarking system to identify students who may benefit from additional intervention support and additional progress monitoring.
Performing Slightly Below Grade Level or Goal	Two times per month for small groups and/or individual students receiving intervention support	To help educators adjust instruction and support continued growth.
Performing Significantly Below Grade Level or Goal	One time per week for students receiving concentrated intervention support	To provide more timely data to help determine how an educator can change their instructional approach for continued growth.

As the table indicates, nearly all students are part of schoolwide benchmarking three times per year (e.g. the 2025 Education Accountability Act interim testing requirements). For students whose data suggest they are still developing specific grade-level skills, more frequent progress monitoring,

typically, one to two times per month, can help educators tailor instruction to support continued growth. Students whose data indicate they are having significant difficulty acquiring grade-level skills or meeting goals should be assessed weekly so the teacher can more timely determine how they should change their instructional approach.

Technology Tools to Assist the Data Collection and Recording Process

Proper data collecting and recording helps users keep track of progress toward a goal. Educators can analyze the data more quickly using technology (Gustafsson-Wright, E. 2022), choosing user-friendly tools that can track goals over time, sort by trend, create powerful visualizations (see below) and efficiently disaggregate data.

Analyzing and Interpreting Data

Progress monitoring data are used to determine the effectiveness of, and to adjust, instruction. Teachers who engage in data-based decision making (DBDM), a type of progress monitoring with similarities to SSM, show greater growth across academic areas compared to teachers who do not (Stecker et al., 2005; LaLonde et al., 2023; Knips, Lopez, Savoy, & Laparo, 2022). Assessing patterns in data and making data-based instructional decisions is complex and demanding. Educators need time and professional training to properly collect, interpret and act on progress monitoring data. When the instruction is not meeting the intended outcome, educators should also be provided time to collaborate with other school staff such as coaches, special education specialists, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists and paraprofessionals to brainstorm other instructional strategies that would best lead to the desired outcome.

Case Study: Ms. Cortez's Story

Ms. Cortez has been teaching fourth grade for over five years in the Benson School District. During that time, she has administered numerous tests to her students and has meticulously analyzed the data for trends and patterns. She looks at skill deficits in word work, a critical component to fluency in reading and writing. Ms. Cortez uses her adopted curriculum to teach decoding multisyllabic words. In past years, Ms. Cortez continued the program without adjusting her instruction. Each year, students from the same demographic groups accelerated while students from other groups did not.

During this particular year, Ms. Cortez had coaching support from the literacy specialist, Mr. Johnson. Because looking only at general trend deficits risked confirming her bias in the progress monitoring data, Mr. Johnson suggested that Ms. Cortez disaggregate the data by identity markers. As she looked at the data with curiosity, Ms. Cortez asked herself: Who is making the gains? Are Black students

outpacing gains made by multilinguals? Are students who identify as girls outpacing the proficiency of non-binary children? Mr. Johnson contended that when teachers can identify what inequities are happening in the classroom, then it is easier to determine next steps to address these inequities. In her progress monitoring analysis, Ms. Cortez noticed that her females from English speaking homes were outperforming her other students.

Ms. Cortez invited Mr. Johnson to observe her instruction during word work time. Mr. Johnson took data on how often students were called to answer questions either chorally or individually. After the lesson, Mr. Johnson left the data with Ms. Cortez. After school, Ms. Cortez noticed the data indicating she called on her female English-speaking students to answer questions almost twice as often as any other group. This meant that those students had more opportunity to practice and get feedback, which could help explain their progress over all other groups of students.

The value of progress monitoring data stems from its use in making instructional decisions. Curiosity about the data helped Ms. Cortez seek answers as to why many students from vulnerable groups were not making the expected gains, even though they had been provided instruction.

Furthermore, Ms. Cortez decided to share her discovery with her principal to pursue professional learning on equitable questioning strategies in hopes of implementing more methods to ensure all students have opportunities to engage, not just the students who raised their hands first or those who were in proximity.

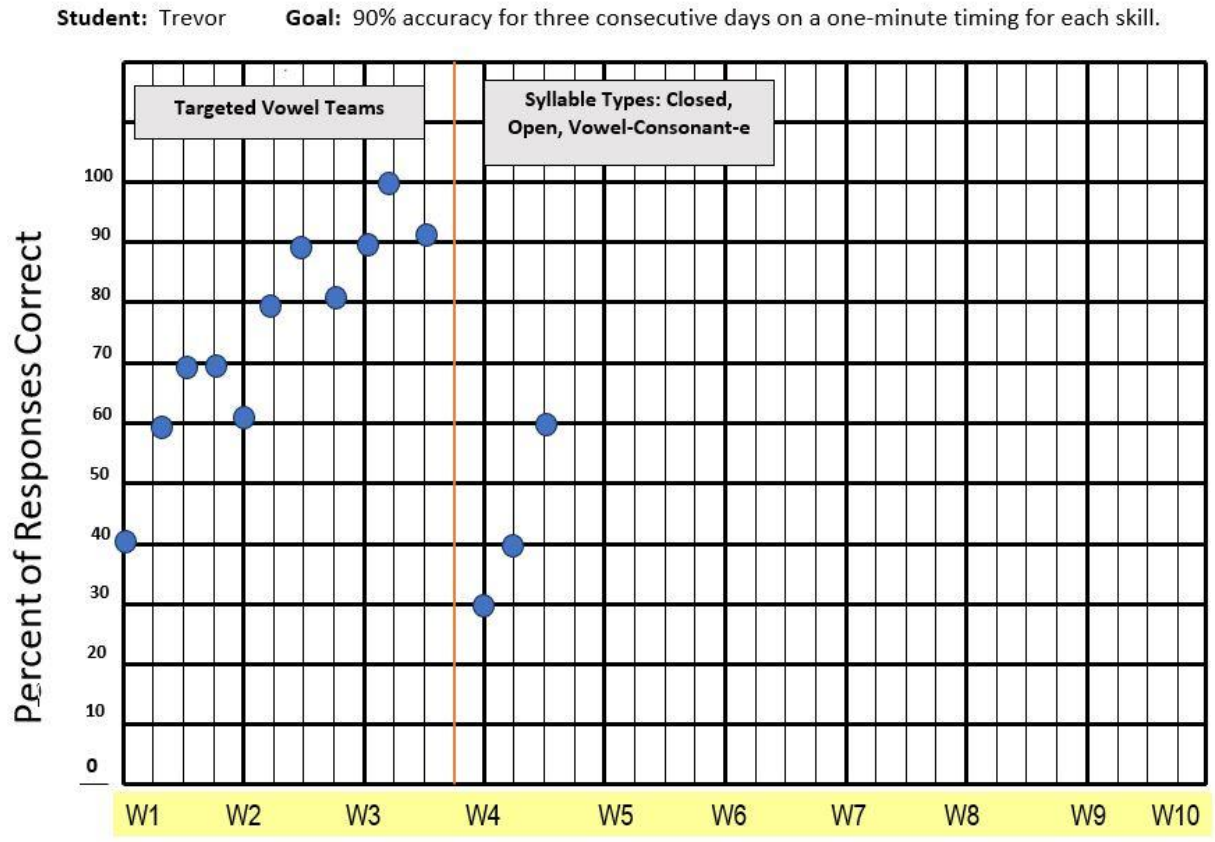
In her widely shared TedTalk, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) speaks to this and encourages us to be aware of the "Danger of a Single Story." In the case study, if Ms. Cortez had only collected data at the student level, without also understanding her instructional data, her decisions might have negatively impacted her students rather than improving their experiences. Below are some common implementation challenges that educators can think about and potential solutions to these challenges.

Skill-Specific Measurement Example

As represented in the SSM graph below for Trevor, the teacher has set a goal of three consecutive days of at least 90% accuracy before moving on to the next skill. The teacher determines that vowel teams and syllable patterns need to be directly taught during targeted instructional time. The teacher begins working with the student on decoding words with pre-selected vowel teams.

The teacher monitors progress using a one-minute assessment with a grid of 15 random words containing those vowel teams, at the end of each class period. The graph indicates data is collected daily within each week. Each of the darker colored lines represents the start of a new week (Monday) with the lighter color lines representing the other days of the school week. Data are graphed at the end of each class period. As the graph indicates, Trevor makes reasonable progress the first week, so the teacher continues the intervention into week 2. If the data indicated the student was making slower

than expected progress, the teacher would reflect on the data, consider potential barriers, and refine the approach. After the student reaches their goal, the instructor begins focusing on the next set of skills, in this case three of the six syllable types.



Decision-Making Rules for Interpreting Data with General Outcome Measures

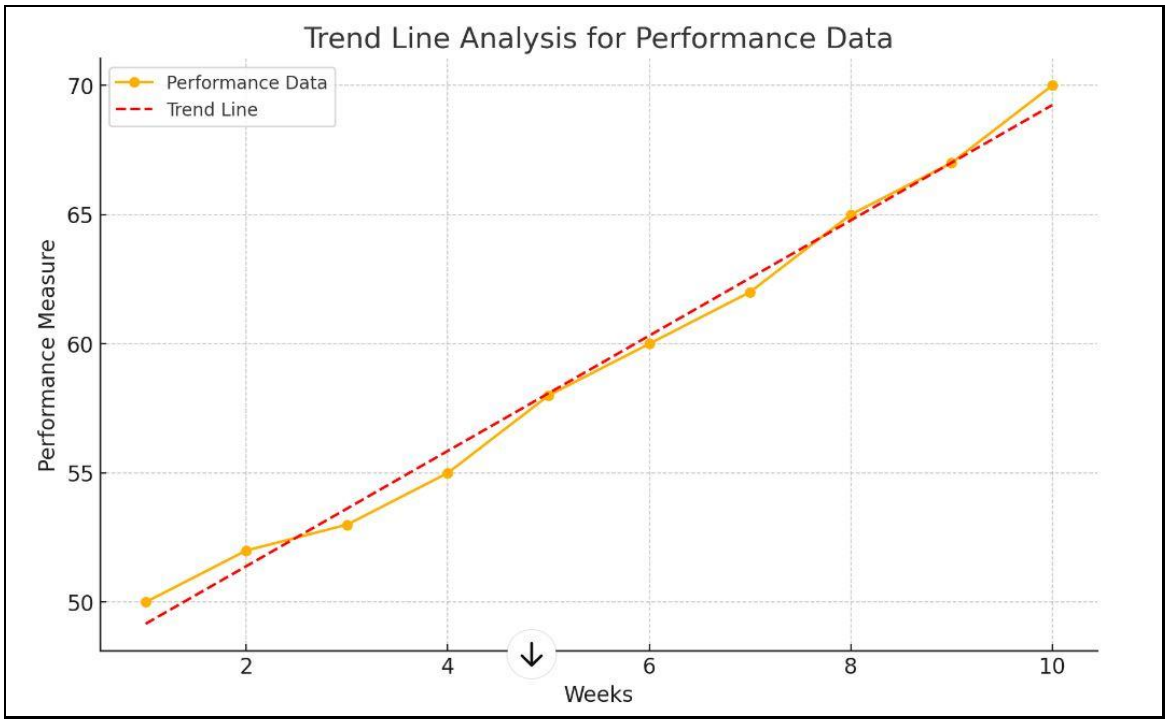
General Outcome Measures are used to measure progress on a larger set of skills such as oral reading fluency, grade level comprehension skills and other skills depending upon individual needs. Curriculum-based measurement (CBM) tools are frequently used for this purpose. When administering GOMs, data is collected at frequent intervals. Decision-making rules may prove useful when interpreting data from GOMs. Two commonly applied types of decision rules include the **four-data point decision rule** and the **trend line decision rule**.

Four Data-Point Decision Rule. This rule compares the observed rate of growth against a *goal line* (expected progress over time). The line starts at baseline performance level and ends at the performance goal.

After collecting at least 6 to 9 data points:

- If the last four consecutive data points fall below the goal line, consider making an instructional change in the student's instructional program, such as greater frequency or duration of instruction.
- If the last four consecutive data points are above the goal line, the student can likely make greater gains than originally thought. Consider changing the goal.
- If the last four consecutive data points are both above and below the goal line, the student is making adequate progress. The student's instructional program should continue.

Trend Line Decision Rule. Use of the trend line decision rule requires that the trend line be calculated mathematically and then compared to the goal line. This can be done manually; however, many online progress monitoring systems automatically calculate the trend line. The slope of the trend line is compared to the slope goal line. If the slope is greater, that means growth is better than expected. If the slope of the trend line is less than the slope of the goal line, a more intensive intervention is recommended. In the illustration below, the student's performance level starts at 50% accuracy. Data points are plotted two times per week. A trend line analysis conducted at the end of Week 10 indicates the student was on track to meet their goal.



In addition to individual student analysis, educators can also examine trend lines for small instructional groups and across demographic groups. This helps identify patterns of progress, ensuring that all students are receiving instruction that effectively supports their learning. Analyzing trends across groups can also inform equitable instructional planning and highlight where instructional strategies may need to be adjusted to better meet the needs of all learners.

For more information on both of these decision rules, consult *How can teachers determine whether students are making appropriate progress?* at the Iris Center/Vanderbilt University.

Qualitative Data and Decision Making

While trends in qualitative performance may be less immediately apparent, this type of data offers rich insight into student learning. With thoughtful approaches, qualitative information can also be organized and interpreted systematically, as shown in the following example.

Case Study: Jason's Story

Jason is a Grade 9 student working on developing his comprehension skills. His teacher is monitoring his ability to independently answer questions from text using the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy (which helps students understand different types of questions they encounter in reading and how to find answers, whether explicitly in the text or through inference). His teacher, Ms. Robinson, creates a four-point rubric to measure Jason's understanding and independent use of the strategy. Ms. Robinson uses five questions from the content of the reading lesson to monitor progress on an ongoing basis until Jason can use the strategy independently.

Teacher-Created Rubric Example: Independent Use of QAR

4: Skillful	3: Capable	2: Developing	1: Emerging
Accurately identifies all QAR types (Right There, Think & Search, Author & Me, On My Own) Offers thoughtful, well-supported answers Uses text evidence confidently and makes strong personal or inferential connections.	Correctly identifies most QAR question types Provides mostly complete and relevant answers Uses some text evidence and personal thinking to explain responses.	Beginning to distinguish between question types Provides partial or brief answers that show initial understanding Attempts to use text evidence or personal ideas.	Engages with the questions and tries to respond Shows early signs of identifying where answers come from (text or own thinking) Open to support and modeling.

Ms. Robinson highlights what she observes in a copy of the rubric as well as writes notes on the rubric each time she monitors Jason's use of the strategy. She determines an overall score of 1-4 and then graphs the score on a progress monitoring chart. Jason's goal is to obtain a score of 4 in five consecutive sessions.

Use Multiple Sources of Data for Decision Making

While the decision rules discussed above are considered valid and reliable for identifying students who may benefit from specialized or supplemental instruction, they may offer a limited view when evaluating the overall effectiveness of an intervention or predicting future performance (Ardoin et al., 2013; Van Norman & Nelson, 2019). This may be due to factors such as misalignment between progress monitoring measures and the skills being taught, the psychometric properties of the measures, or variation in students' initial performance levels and expected rates of growth.

To ensure a more complete and strengths-based understanding of student progress, especially when making high-stakes decisions, educators are encouraged to *supplement decision-rule data with additional quantitative and qualitative indicators that reflect students' full learning profiles*. These sources can help identify how instruction might be better tailored to support each learner's growth:

- **Other Quantitative Measures**
  - SSM of specific skills being taught.
  - Curriculum-embedded assessments aligned with current instruction.
  - Student performance on reading assignments connected to the core reading program.

- **Qualitative information about the child**
  - Multilingual language development and use, which may influence learning trajectories.
  - Phonological and articulation patterns that contribute to literacy development.
  - Relevant background experiences and contexts that shape how a student engages with reading.
  - Emotional and social factors, such as confidence in reading aloud or comfort in classroom activities. (Find more information in *Oregon's Transformative Social and Emotional Learning Framework and Standards*.)
  - Cultural identities and practices that may influence communication and literacy development.
- **Formal and Informal Diagnostic Data**
  - Error analysis to determine learning patterns.
  - Review of classroom assessments and student work samples to uncover strengths and areas for targeted support.
  - Diagnostic assessments aligned to specific instructional goals.

Educators can use this additional information when making decisions about how to adapt the instruction/intervention. The National Center on Intensive Intervention offers suggestions for adopting instruction along several dimensions.

Adaption Based on Student Need	**Rationale**
Quantitative Changes (Strength and Dosage)	Provide more opportunities for a student to respond by either: • Increasing the length or frequency of the intervention while also providing access to differentiated high-quality core instruction. • Decreasing the size of the group so the student has more chances to respond.
Qualitative Changes (Alignment and Comprehensiveness)	• Adapt the way content is delivered. For example, providing more direct instruction can help build accuracy and confidence with a skill. Once the student demonstrates accuracy, instruction can shift to additional opportunities for practice to build fluency. • Incorporate instruction in foundational or enabling skills to support access to more complex learning. For instance, if a student is developing comprehension skills, it may also be helpful to provide targeted support in fluency. The teacher might scaffold comprehension instruction during core reading time, such as reading some material aloud, while also offering opportunities for fluency development during other parts of the reading block or during acceleration time. • Tailor adult feedback and error correction strategies to promote growth, build confidence and encourage reflection on learning.

Adaption Based on Student Need	Rationale
Behavioral Support	• Provide supports that nurture self-regulation, build motivation and promote positive engagement, recognizing how these areas contribute to a student's learning and overall well-being.

Adapted from the National Center on Intensive Intervention, *"What is Data-Based Individualization?"* American Institutes of Research.

Data for Instructional Grouping

Progress monitoring data can support teachers in designing responsive instruction by identifying trends in students' learning and grouping students based on shared learning goals. Unlike static ability-grouping, which often reflects bias and unvalidated assumptions (Faulkner et al., 2014; von Hippel & Canedo, 2020), data-informed grouping is dynamic and centered on growth. Data-driven grouping involves:

1. ***Gathering and Analyzing*** student data to understand learning strengths and areas of growth.
2. ***Identifying*** shared goals and grouping students with similar learning goals.
3. ***Designing*** targeted instruction that builds on what students know and can do.
4. ***Implementing*** a flexible instructional schedule to adapt to evolving student needs.
5. ***Monitoring Progress*** and **Regrouping regularly** based upon data to support continued acceleration of learning.

This is a continuous process where groups are flexible and short-term based on data. It is critical that these groups are not fixed, as doing so can unintentionally lead to tracking, limit students' opportunities and reinforce inequities. In alignment with the guidance provided in both literacy frameworks, all students must receive differentiated core instruction that is intentionally designed to meet their diverse learning needs, with appropriate scaffolds and supports provided as needed to ensure equitable access to grade-level content, active engagement and academic success. Individual students can also receive *targeted* differentiated instruction during small group instruction.

Case Study: Matteo's Story

Matteo is a cheerful 3rd grade student at Adams Elementary School in the Cherry Valley School District. The school uses an evidence-based reading program aligned with the science of reading. Oral Reading Fluency screening information from the beginning of the school year indicates Matteo is reading a third-grade passage with an accuracy rate of 89%. According to the benchmarking tool, his fluency score would be considered below benchmark. An error analysis and phonics assessment show strengths in vowel sounds, consonant blends, and vowel combinations. Matteo experiences difficulty with multisyllabic words that have two to three syllables. After the initial screening and informal diagnostic follow-up on all students in her classroom, Mrs. Fowler, Matteo's teacher, notices there are

three other students who have similar reading profiles as Matteo, all of whom would benefit from accelerated instruction with decoding multisyllabic words.

In addition to all students receiving core reading instruction with appropriate scaffolds to their needs in the morning, the school sets aside 30 additional minutes in the afternoon for small group instruction focusing on target skills for reading and math. Both third-grade classrooms take part in this acceleration time. Extra adults trained in providing instructional support aligned to the science of reading are available to help during this time. The adults include both classroom teachers, one special education teacher, the reading specialist, one trained educational aide and the school's media specialist. Seven small flexible groups are formed during this 30-minute time, with students matched to groups based upon screener and phonics assessment data.

Mrs. Fowler teaches a small group of six students, including Matteo, targeting syllable types and reading multisyllabic words. Mrs. Fowler ensures that Matteo receives extra practice in his target skill during the small group instruction using high-quality instructional materials that their school adopted for core reading group time. Each week Mrs. Fowler conducts a one-minute progress monitoring assessment. This assessment is a 5 x 5 grid of two- and three-syllable words within the grade-level reading curriculum for the school year. Students have one minute to read as many of the words they can, spending no more than three seconds per word.

Mrs. Fowler sets a goal of 25 words to be read correctly per minute for three consecutive weeks. She charts the data on a weekly basis and shares the charts with her students.

After five weeks in this small group, Matteo meets his goal. He is then assigned to work in another small group during the 30-minute intervention period. His teacher is deciding whether to place Matteo in a reading fluency group by analyzing his latest fluency scores or a group targeting comprehension with extra support on paragraph writing development in response to the reading done during core instruction.

Family Involvement and Progress Monitoring Information

Sharing a child's academic progress in an accessible manner and format helps parents understand their child's strengths and areas for growth. Families are experts with important information including the child's previous life experiences, the family's language background, the family's cultural background, daily routines used in the family and potential barriers. Cultural sensitivity to the family's background will also help to understand the types of support the family can offer their child.

Sharing data with families can assist with building strong family-school partnerships. Some general recommendations:

- Begin the conversation with strengths.

- For families whose home language differs from English, provide an interpreter.
- Use plain language to the extent possible.
- Explain the purpose and significance of each assessment. Demonstrate the target skill if helpful. Provide an explanation of what the results (including numbers) mean for future instruction.
- Use visual aids to help in understanding/interpreting the data.
- Update families when new data are available.

"STREET DATA IS ASSET BASED, BUILDING ON THE TENETS OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EDUCATION BY HELPING EDUCATORS LOOK FOR WHAT'S RIGHT IN OUR STUDENTS, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES INSTEAD OF SEEKING OUT WHAT IS WRONG."

(Safir, S. & Dugan, J., 2021).

Collecting data, analyzing data, and planning instruction based on progress monitoring takes time—especially when aiming to create inclusive learning environments. Hasty use of one data point without careful consideration of other data can harm students, particularly those from historically underserved groups.

Culturally Responsive Data Literacy

Culturally Responsive Data Literacy (CRDL) is the skill of turning data into useful information and practical actions by collecting, analyzing, and interpreting multiple sources to guide teaching and other educational decisions. CRDL combines culturally responsive teaching practices and data literacy (Warner, S., 2021). In addition to using multiple data measures and adjusting instruction to meet students' needs, CRDL emphasizes pausing for reflection to fully understand students' context, background, interests, strengths, and other factors that contribute to their performance and behavior. It incorporates student voice when determining the next instructional move.

Confirmation Bias

As part of CRDL, educators must become intentionally aware of their own biases about students at the margins of our system and resist the urge to interpret data to confirm those biases and stereotypes. Dr. Jamila Dugan, co-author of *Street Data* challenges educators to:

- Acknowledge that our systems, practices and narratives are designed to perpetuate disparities in outcomes for marginalized students.
- Deliberately identify barriers that predict success or failure and actively disrupt them.

- Consistently examine how personal identity and biases (both personal and collective) contribute to the creation and/or reproduction of inequitable practices.
- (Re)Allocate resources (tools, time, money, people, support) to ensure every child gets what they need to succeed and thrive socially, emotionally and intellectually.
- Cultivate the unique gifts, talents and interests that every person possesses.

Implementation Challenges and Potential Solutions

Roles of Staff Members Within a Progress Monitoring System

Developing a framework and a plan of action helps staff members within a school district implement progress monitoring systems effectively and efficiently. Teachers, of course, play a critical role in conducting the progress monitoring process within a school. However, administrators can partner with their staff and provide leadership, develop a structure, and provide support to ensure that progress monitoring is implemented consistently and with fidelity. **Specifically, administrators should**:

- Provide system-level leadership by developing policies and procedures for carrying out progress monitoring and creating the conditions for success.
- Provide ongoing professional learning that builds teacher expertise in using inclusive, asset-based assessment practices, interpreting progress monitoring data and applying insights to enhance instruction for every student.
- Allocate resources for the progress monitoring process, including scheduling time for teachers to conduct monitoring, analyze data and collaborate with colleagues around instructional decisions.
- Develop a data-driven culture within a school/district by modeling the use of data in decision-making.
- Support teachers in collaboratively identifying strategies to accelerate growth and expand opportunities when data indicate that students may benefit from additional support.

Teachers, on the other hand, are the frontline implementers who instruct, collect data, analyze results and adjust instruction as needed. **Teachers' roles in progress monitoring include the following:**

- Conduct/assign the assessment process/administration of assessments with accuracy and consistency, while also affirming students' diverse strengths and backgrounds.
- Analyze data to celebrate growth, identify next steps and connect learning progress to expected goal lines, standards, and expectations.
- Adjust instruction in small groups or for individuals based upon data analysis that builds on students' strengths and provide additional support where it is most needed.
- Communicate progress to families and collaborate with colleagues during team meetings.

- Create a feedback loop that highlights progress, ensures every student gets timely, targeted support and empowers students as active partners in their learning journey.

Additionally, **Teachers on Special Assignments (TOSAs)** play a pivotal role in supporting the implementation of progress monitoring by acting as instructional leaders and collaborative partners. TOSAs help educators to:

- Establish systems to support consistent data collection.
- Analyze student data to recognize patterns of growth, highlight strengths and identify areas where students may benefit from additional support.
- Make evidence-based instructional decisions.
- Ask questions and encourage teachers to reflect on all data and consider different strategies.
- Implement best practices in data collection, interpretation and responsive instruction while guiding educators in developing differentiated lesson plans that support and extend learning opportunities.

TOSAs help foster a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement. While not all districts have the resources to fund these roles, it is important to include them here because their roles can be significant when the opportunity exists.

Asset-Based Approach

CRDL requires an asset-based approach. Rather than assigning students a label such as “low” and tracking them in ability groups (which may reduce their access to instructional opportunities), a culturally responsive data literacy educator focuses on strengths of the students (Oakes, J., 2005). Diversity, thought, culture, and traits are seen as valuable assets, and leveraged to accelerate learning. Data becomes a tool to recognize and amplify what students already know and can do, while guiding growth. In practice, this means:

- Interpreting data through context: considering factors such as language proficiency, cultural background and prior learning opportunities rather than assuming ability.
- Valuing multiple ways of showing knowledge: using observational notes, student work samples or conversations alongside formal assessments.
- Designing instruction that builds on strengths: grouping students flexibly by interest, skill or strategy use instead of fixed ‘ability levels.’
- Framing feedback in asset-based language: highlighting progress and effort while providing clear, actionable next steps.
- Engaging families as partners: using data conversations to learn more about students’ strengths and aspirations outside of school.

By leveraging students' assets in these ways, educators create equitable opportunities that honor identity, sustain engagement, and accelerate outcomes for all learners.

Considerations for Dual-Language Programs

Developing effective progress monitoring practices and tools for dual-language programs (where content is taught in a language other than English) requires identifying tools that assess both content and skills in meaningful ways. This includes measuring progress in students' home language, where applicable, as well as in the language of instruction. Data from progress monitoring tools should be used to assist in determining instructional steps. Do not limit student opportunities by confining student instruction to an identified skill for hours during the instructional week, assigning students to learning groups that are not flexible, or making exclusively large-scale decisions about student program placement.

Case Study: Mr. Ivanov

Mr. Ivanov, a middle school dual-immersion teacher in Beaver Ridge School District, has 25 students in his literacy class. Many, but not all, of his students are native Russian speakers. The district requires that educators use progress monitoring tools to measure English literacy skills using a district-adopted commercial product, and Russian literacy through a tool of the teacher's choice. Mr. Ivanov has noticed the following challenges:

1. **Limited Availability of Tools**: Few standardized progress monitoring tools exist for languages other than English, particularly for less commonly taught languages such as Russian.
2. **Alignment Across Languages**: Ensuring that these tools accurately align with the dual language curriculum is a complex task that requires careful planning and expertise.
3. **Equity in Assessment**: Many progress monitoring tools, especially commercially made, prioritize English, and then are translated into another language. This can create a disadvantage for multilingual learners and fail to capture their full range of abilities.

Mr. Ivanov is not alone with his concerns. He has voiced it at many staff meetings and is hoping for changes to address the challenges he is noticing.

To address these challenges, he is asking his school and district leadership to:

1. **Advocate for Equity-Focused Policies**: Advocate for policies that recognize and support the unique needs of multilingual learners, ensuring that assessment practices reflect the value of biliteracy and multilingualism.
2. **Develop Multilingual Assessment Tools**: Invest in the creation of progress monitoring tools that are culturally and linguistically appropriate for his students in the dual immersion program. He is asking for teams (including teachers well-versed in literacy as well as teachers who are

language experts) to create better dual-language progress monitoring tools. This would require prioritization to fund time out of the classroom.

3. **Understand the population on which the assessment tools were normed**: Examine how it compares with the strengths, cultural backgrounds, and lived experiences of students in the district. Consider how these differences may impact interpretation of results and ensure that assessments are used in ways that honor and reflect the assets students bring to their learning.
4. **Ensure Professional Development for Educators**: Equip teachers with the skills and resources needed to implement and analyze assessment data in other languages more effectively.

Conclusion

Progress monitoring is a vital tool for fostering equitable, data-driven instruction that supports all students in reaching their full potential. When integrated thoughtfully into instructional decision-making, it enables educators to create more responsive and inclusive learning environments that prioritize growth, engagement and success. The stories of Stefanie, Serena, Ms. Robinson, Jason, Matteo, Ms. Cortez and Mr. Ivanov show how effective progress monitoring can reveal student strengths, uncover hidden barriers and drive meaningful instructional shifts.

In Stefanie's case, using both English and Spanish tools and the formative assessment process allowed her teacher to build on her linguistic assets rather than misinterpreting her English-only data as a deficit. Serena and Matteo's stories illustrate how aligning assessment tools to current skill levels and analyzing specific subskills (such as vowel teams or multisyllabic word decoding) can accelerate growth through targeted instruction. Ms. Cortez's reflection on her classroom data demonstrates the power of disaggregating progress monitoring results to uncover equity gaps and adjust instruction accordingly. And Mr. Ivanov's advocacy highlights the urgent need for assessment tools that honor multilingualism and reflect the full range of students' abilities in dual-language settings.

Effective progress monitoring not only accelerates learning but also ensures that instructional practices are continuously refined to meet the diverse needs of students. It strengthens communication among educators, families and community partners by making student growth visible and actionable.
Of course, collecting progress monitoring data is just the beginning. Its true value lies in how it is interpreted and used. Through thoughtful, ongoing assessment and the courage to ask difficult questions about who is benefiting and who is being harmed, we can dismantle systemic inequities and create a future where every student can thrive.

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