Progress Monitoring

What Will This Chapter Tell Me?

Progress monitoring is the regular collection and review of targeted student data. In the PRIME Model, progress-monitoring data are critical to understand if the intervention being is sufficiently implemented and if the student is making progress as a result of the intervention. This chapter describes progress monitoring, provides resources for progress monitoring measures, and explains key parts of how to progress monitor. After reading this chapter, you will be able to identify progress-monitoring resources and will understand the process of progress monitoring. This chapter offers an introduction only; additional resources will be necessary to be prepared to progress monitor the student intervention implemented within the PRIME Model.

What is Progress Monitoring?

Progress monitoring is the frequent, ongoing assessment of a student's progress toward the goals of the intervention. Progress monitoring data should be collected for any intervention. The primary purpose of progress monitoring is to document changes in student outcome(s) to measure goal attainment. If the intervention is being implemented as planned and the student outcome data

show an improvement, it is likely the intervention is effective. How-
ever, a different situation arises when student outcome data are not
improving or are improving too slowly for the student to meet their
goal within the recommended time period. In these situations, prog-
ress-monitoring tools can also be used to inform when it is neces-
sary to modify the intervention plan and when the consultant should
provide additional implementation support to the implementer (see
Chapter 9 and Appendix I).

Progress Monitoring Resources

Specific progress monitoring tools vary by the student outcome tar-
geted in the intervention, supporting research, and what is feasible
for the implementation context. Progress monitoring tools should
be brief and feasible to administer on a regular basis with minimal
disruption to classroom instruction. Common progress-monitoring
tools for academic goals include curriculum-based measures while
tools for behavior goals include direct observation and direct be-
havior ratings.

Several national databases have been established on the Internet
to help educators find and use progress-monitoring tools. A list of
some of the databases is provided in the table below. These resources
provide basic information (e.g., technical adequacy, implementation
requirements) about numerous progress-monitoring tools. We sug-
gest that consultants and other stakeholders use these and other ev-
idence-based resources to identify appropriate progress-monitoring
tools to monitor a student's response to intervention.

Website	Detail
www.aimsweb.com	Information and resources for AIMSweb, a progress monitoring system that includes direct assessment measures and a data management system
http://dibels.uoregon.edu/	Information and resources for Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), brief literacy and reading fluency measures, and a data entry system
www.interventioncentral.org	Information on available curriculum-based measures and other resources for implementing progress-monitoring systems, such as data collection forms and graphing
http://www.studentprogress.org/	Information on progress monitoring and links to progress monitoring methods; maintained by the National Center on Student Progress Monitoring, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs
http://www.rtinetwork.org/	Information and resources for implementing Response-to-Intervention, including ongoing student assessment areas of universal screening, progress monitoring, and data-based decision making
http://www.intensiveintervention.org/	Information and resources for implement Response-to-Intervention, including information on progress monitoring and a progress monitoring methods chart
http://www.directbehaviorrating.org/	Information and resources on Direct Behavior Ratings (DBR), including sample measures

How to Progress Monitor

The follow section introduces key parts of how to progress monitor, including (a) defining the issue of concern, (b) choosing an assessment measure, (c) collecting baseline data, (d) setting an intervention goal, and (e) administering the measure regularly.

Define Issue of Concern

Before you can choose a particular assessment measure, it is necessary to develop an initial definition of the issue of concern. That is, what is the specific academic or behavioral issue that needs to be addressed by an intervention? The issue of concern should be defined as specifically as possible. For instance, the specific issue of concern for a student might be "reading fluency" as opposed to simply "reading." In another example, the specific issue of concern for a classroom might be "following directions the first time during transitions" as opposed to simply "transition difficulty." Tentatively define the topography (i.e., what it looks like) of the issue of concern, using observable and measurable terms (e.g., frequency, rate of correct responding, duration, latency, and topography). To do so, interview the implementer, review previously collected products or data, and observe, if necessary. When interviewing the implementer, use questions from problem-solving consultation to identify what the issue "looks like" (see Prerequisite Guide for additional information). That is, ask the implementer when the issues take place, what they look like, and what happens after the issues. Review previously collected products that provide data, such as academic screening measures, completed assignments, or report cards, to identify information that might further support the definition of the behavior. If interviews and data review are not sufficient for defining the issue of concern, complete brief observations of the student(s) to define the behavior appropriately.

Choose Assessment Measure

Assessment measures to progress monitor can be found on the websites listed in the above table. Although we do not suggest particular progress monitoring methods, we suggest a number of factors to consider when selecting a progress monitoring measure. First, consider how the data will be used in a problem-solving process. Some types of assessments were designed for particular purposes and can only be administered at certain time intervals that would not allow for frequent measurement of a behavior or skill. Second, consider the match between the issue of concern and the dimension measured during progress monitoring (e.g., frequency, rate of correct responding, duration, latency, and topography). The method that is selected should be able to provide relevant information for the dimensions of interest on the target outcome. Third, make sure the progress-monitoring method has been previously validated with students who are similar in demographics and school context to the target student(s) who will be monitored. For instance, if the intervention is academic, whether the issue of concern is at instructional level or grade level, should also be taken into account. Fourth, account for the resources that will be available to collect progress-monitoring data with the student (e.g., time, training, cost). Remember, progress-monitoring measures should be feasible to use over the entire implementation period and have minimal interruptions to instructional time. Finally, progress-monitoring measures should be valid, reliable, and sensitive to changes that might result from implementation of the intervention. Technical adequacy is key to making appropriate data-based decisions.

Collect Baseline Data

Once an assessment measure for progress monitoring is identified, collect baseline data. The specific type of assessment measure may have a specific suggested number of times that baseline data should be collected. In general, between three to five data points are

an appropriate number of data points for baseline. Overall, it is most important that baseline data are stable. That is, the student's performance is consistent across the baseline data. Consistent data will ensure you have an accurate understanding of the student's performance and will be able to compare the baseline data to progress after the intervention is put in place.

Use these data to further refine the issue of the concern, as appropriate. That is, make the definition of the issue of concern precise using baseline data. For instance, instead of "reading fluency" the issue might be defined as "reading at a rate of X words per minute." In another example, "following directions the first time during transitions" could be defined as "following teacher directions within 15 seconds of their delivery during transitions."

Set Intervention Goals

An intervention goal is the level of student performance expected at end of the progress-monitoring period. To set an intervention goal, the consultant and implementer collaboratively determine how the student should be performing after implementing the intervention for a period of time. What is the desired level of progress? Several pieces of information can be used to set an intervention goal including (a) the student's baseline data; and (b) national norms for a specific measure, local norms, a criterion level of performance, a grade level goal, and/or peer comparison data, which inform what level of performance should be expected.

To set an intervention goal, identify (a) the student's current level of performance, (b) a desired level of performance for the student, and (c) the date by which the student should reach or exceed that level of performance. The inclusion of a date for intervention goal attainment is necessary to determine the rate of improvement (i.e., an aim line) the student needs to maintain to achieve his/her goal. During progress monitoring, this rate can be compared to the student's actual rate of progress to determine the most appropriate

intensity of intervention. How to graph and review the expected and actual rates of progress is described in Chapter 8.

Write the intervention goal as a measurable statement. That is, the goal should be worded as a way to measure improvement toward a goal level for the student. Indicate what the student will gain during this period, rather than describing what will decrease. A written intervention goal that is measurable will help with the next step in preparing for progressing monitoring, that is, selecting an assessment measure. Once an assessment measure has been chosen, it may be appropriate to revise and specify the intervention goal so that the goal and measure are directly linked.

Administer Assessment Regularly

Once an intervention goal is written and a progress-monitoring measure is selected, the measure should be regularly administered. To make sure this task is done consistently, identify the logistics and a schedule for regular data collection. Similar to treatment integrity assessment, planning for progress-monitoring data collection includes (a) training an individual responsible for collecting the data; (b) determining the frequency of data collection; and (c) establishing regular data review. Make sure the person responsible for regular collecting progress-monitoring data has experience with the progress-monitoring measure and is prepared to accurately administer the measure. Provide any training necessary. Decide how frequently data will be collected. As with treatment integrity assessment, it may be appropriate to more frequently monitor interventions that are intensive (e.g., student is out of the classroom often, intervention requires substantial resources). Last, create a plan for regular data review. The specifics of this review are described in Chapters 8 and 9. In particular, make sure to decide when progress-monitoring data will be reviewed. These steps should ensure that progress-monitoring data are collected and evaluated regularly.

What Did I Learn About PRIME?

Progress monitoring is the frequent, ongoing assessment of a student's progress toward the goals of the intervention. In the PRIME Model, progress-monitoring data can be integrated with treatment integrity data to make decisions about intervention effectiveness, and when to provide additional support to the implementer. This chapter provided an introduction to progress monitoring, but educators will need to consult other resources to be prepared to progress monitor. The chapter included several resources for additional information, as well as described the general process for how to progress monitor.

Chapter 6 Key Terms

Progress Monitoring