Monitoring & Measurement

“I am not discouraged, because every wrong attempt discarded is another step forward.”

Thomas Edison

The Dilemma

Questions related to monitoring and measuring student performance have been discussed in the field of education for decades. It appears that the newest question related to this topic, is not whether we should assess student performance, but how to do it effectively? Current literature and research advocate the use of direct, authentic and on-going methods of measurement. This issue of the Special Educator discusses a variety of methods for monitoring and measuring that work in Utah’s classrooms.

Monitoring Student Progress in General Education Classrooms

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In recent years, the increasing number of students qualifying for special education services and the move to serve more students with mild/moderate learning and behavior problems in general education classrooms have challenged educators to find efficient ways for classroom teachers to implement and monitor special education programs in their classrooms (Jenkins, Pious, & Jewell, 1990; Will, 1986). Although many districts are adopting resource/consultant models to provide classroom teachers with the technical support to achieve this, many resource/consultants report that their biggest challenge is to find ways for teachers to collect ongoing progress data after interventions have been developed and implemented (Glomb & Morgan, 1991; Glomb, 1992).

Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) is one procedure that can be used by classroom teachers to help evaluate a pupil’s performance in specific curriculum content areas (see Deno and Fuchs, 1987). CBM data that is collected and graphed on a regular basis can serve as an effective vehicle for resource/consultants and classroom teachers to discuss student progress (continued on next page)
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and make data-based instructional decisions. Specifically, this data can be used to
determine specific goals for individual stu-
dents within the classroom curriculum
(Fuchs, Fuchs & Hamlett, 1989a), evaluate
improvements in a student’s performance
and any instructional modification that may
be needed (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Hamlett,
1989b), and slice back or step back within
the curriculum (see Casey, Deno, Marston,
& Skiba, 1988). Current research shows
that teachers who use curriculum-based
measurement systems can more accurately
describe the individual growth of students
with learning and behavior problems in
their classrooms and can make more mean-
ingful adaptations to students’ curriculum
activities and materials (Deno, 1985, 1986;
Shinn, 1989). Fuchs et.al. (1984) found
that teachers with background and training
in the use of curriculum-based measure-
ment systems (a) noticed increased levels
of student performance, (b) had a greater
awareness of the individual needs of the
students, and (c) had better control of in-
struction.

The purpose of this project was to assess
the effects of a CBM procedure on teachers’
attitudes about collecting data in their class-
room. A second grade and sixth grade
teacher were selected to participate in the
study, and were trained to use a curriculum-
based measurement system that was de-
signed to transfer data immediately and
simply on to a times series graph. Both of
these teachers were serving several stu-
dents with learning and behavioral disor-
ders in their classrooms for the entire year,
with consultation services provided by the
resource teacher. The teachers were asked
to complete a questionnaire that assessed
their attitudes about collecting daily per-
formance data on students with special needs
in their classrooms. After completing the
questionnaire, the teachers were asked to
collect daily data for two weeks on three
students who were using adapted programs
in their classrooms. At the end of the two
week data collection period, the teachers
were asked to complete another question-
naire to assess whether using the curricu-
ulum-based measurement system changed
their attitudes about data-collection.

The results of this project were consis-
tent with several aforementioned studies
that use of the procedure resulted in teachers’ increased awareness of their stu-
dents’ actual performance in the curricu-
um. The two teachers felt that the pro-
dure was effective for use with up to six
students, but felt that it would be too time
consuming for use with more than that.
They also reported that, after using the
procedure, they felt that collecting this type
of data on students with learning and be-
havior problems in their classrooms was
very important. They also reported that
they would like to receive more training in
the use of curriculum-based measurement
techniques. This results support the idea
that inservice training efforts for classroom
teachers need to focus on helping them to
develop the skills and knowledge nec-
 essary for serving students with special needs
in their classrooms, and specifically how
to develop and use efficient ways to
monitor student progress.

Note: This project was conducted in
Mr. Brey’s senior thesis. For complete
procedures and a list of references, please
contact the authors.