

# Progress Monitoring with DIBELS Next®

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Portions of this document are reprinted from the DIBELS Next Assessment Manual and the DIBELS Next Survey Manual.

Progress monitoring is the practice of testing students briefly but frequently on the skill areas in which they are receiving instruction, to ensure that they are making adequate progress.

DIBELS Next provides two types of testing, benchmark assessment and progress monitoring. Benchmark assessment, or screening, refers to testing all students three times per year for the purpose of identifying those who may be at risk for reading difficulties. Once students are identified as at risk for reading difficulties, they can receive progress monitoring testing more frequently to ensure that the instruction they are receiving is helping them make progress.

The purposes of progress monitoring are:

- to provide ongoing feedback about the effectiveness of instruction,
- to determine students' progress toward important and meaningful goals, and
- to make timely decisions about changes to instruction so that students will meet those goals.

## DIBELS Next and Progress Monitoring

DIBELS Next was designed specifically for screening *and* progress monitoring. The DIBELS Next measures are designed to be used frequently and are sensitive enough to detect student learning and growth over time. The skills that are measured by DIBELS Next are the *basic early literacy skills* – those skills that should be the essential components of reading instruction.

Using DIBELS Next for progress monitoring is efficient because the same assessment can be used for both progress monitoring and benchmark assessment. After conducting a benchmark assessment with DIBELS Next, a great deal is known about the skills on which a student may need instructional support. Progress monitoring on the skills that are the focus of instruction provides teachers with an indicator of the effectiveness of that instruction.

Progress monitoring is an important component of a Response-to-Intervention (RtI) data-based decision-making model. RtI models, such as the Outcomes-Driven Model described in the *DIBELS Next Assessment Manual*, are used to improve student outcomes by matching the amount and type of instructional support with the needs of the individual students.

### DIBELS Next Progress Monitoring Materials

When conducting progress monitoring with a DIBELS Next measure, the measure follows the same administration and scoring procedures that are used for benchmark assessment.

Unlike the benchmark assessment materials, which are arranged by grade, DIBELS Next progress monitoring materials are arranged by measure. A Progress Monitoring Scoring Booklet contains 20 alternate scoring forms for a measure, as well as a cover sheet on which the scores are recorded and graphed. Progress Monitoring Scoring Booklets are available for:

- First Sound Fluency (FSF)
- Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)
- Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)
- DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) Level 1

#### Why monitor progress?

Monitoring student progress toward instructional objectives is an effective and efficient way to determine if the instructional plan is working. Ongoing progress monitoring allows teachers to make data-based decisions about the effectiveness of their instruction. Instruction can be modified or changed in a timely manner instead of waiting months to find out whether the student reached the goal. When teachers use student progress monitoring data to inform instruction, students' learning improves (Fuchs, Deno, & Mirkin, 1984).

- DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) Level 2
- DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) Level 3
- DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) Level 4
- DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) Level 5
- DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) Level 6

Daze progress monitoring materials are organized similarly, with the exception that students fill out the Daze worksheets themselves, rather than the assessor marking a scoring form. In the download version of DIBELS Next, 20 alternate Daze worksheets are available per grade, and can be produced as individual worksheets or in a booklet. In the published version of DIBELS Next, the first 10 Daze progress monitoring worksheets are provided in a Daze Progress Monitoring Student Booklet. The other 10 worksheets per grade are available for download. Daze progress monitoring materials are available for:

- Daze Level 3
- Daze Level 4
- Daze Level 5
- Daze Level 6

DORF and Daze "levels" correspond to the grade level of the passages. The DORF and Daze progress monitoring materials use the term "level" rather than "grade" because some students may be monitored on out-of-grade materials.

Note that for DORF, while three passages are administered during benchmark assessment, a single passage is sufficient for progress monitoring, since instructional decisions are based on at least three test administrations.

Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) does not include progress monitoring materials because letter naming is not directly related to one of the basic early literacy skills, and is not a primary focus of instruction. LNF is included during benchmark assessment because it is a strong predictor of future reading skills, but targeting letter naming as a primary focus of instruction does not appear to help progress toward later reading outcomes.

### Progress Monitoring Procedures

<p>Selecting Students for Progress Monitoring</p>	<p>Students who are below the benchmark goal on one or more measures may receive progress monitoring in targeted areas that are the focus of instruction or intervention. Teachers may also choose to monitor other students if there are concerns regarding their progress. For example, if a student has met the benchmark goal but has highly variable performance, poor attendance, or behavioral issues, the teacher may choose to monitor that student, particularly if the student's score is just barely above the benchmark goal.</p> <p>Any student whose basic early literacy skills are not on track for attaining future reading outcomes is a potential candidate for focused, differentiated, small group instruction, the intensity of which should match the need for support. When teachers provide instruction in a way that is designed to target basic early literacy skills, we recommend that they use progress monitoring to gauge the effectiveness of the instructional supports provided.</p> <p>If many students within a classroom or grade score below or well below the benchmark goals, it may be more beneficial to focus first on analyzing and improving the core reading instruction that all students receive.</p> <p>Decisions about the number of students to monitor at one time are based on local needs, resources, and priorities.</p>
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Selecting DIBELS  
Next Materials for  
Progress Monitoring

In most cases, progress monitoring will focus on one measure at a time, which should represent the student's instructional level of the skill area targeted for instruction. In some cases it may be appropriate to monitor a student using more than one DIBELS measure, in particular for students who are monitored in out-of-grade materials. For example, a second-grade student might be monitored once per week with NWF and once per month with first grade DORF as a way to track acquisition of the alphabetic principle and the application of those skills to connected text.

Students should be monitored in material that matches the skill area targeted for instruction. For example, students with low scores on Nonsense Word Fluency - Correct Letter Sounds (NWF-CLS) should receive instruction on accurately and automatically matching sounds to letters and should be monitored with NWF-CLS. Kindergarten and first grade students typically would be monitored on grade-level materials unless they are not producing measurable behavior on those materials. Grade-level materials for kindergarten include FSF, PSF, and NWF, and for first grade include PSF, NWF, and DORF. Students in grades two through six may be monitored in grade-level or out-of-grade-level materials.

Progress monitoring forms should be administered in the order they appear in the booklet.

Out-of-Grade Monitoring

Careful consideration should be given to selecting an optimum level of progress monitoring material for each student. It should simultaneously illustrate: (a) the student's current level of skills, (b) an instructional goal that the student needs to attain, and (c) progress toward the goal. To be able to illustrate progress, the material must be at a level in which changes in student skills will be apparent. In particular, if the measurement material is too difficult, progress will not be apparent and the student and teacher or interventionist may become discouraged. The progress monitoring level may be the same as the instructional level. However, when monitoring progress in out-of-grade materials, use the highest level of material in which change can be shown in skills targeted for instruction. For example, when targeting phonemic awareness for instruction any time after the first half of kindergarten, PSF should be used for progress monitoring instead of FSF. If PSF is too difficult or frustrating for the student, then FSF should be used. For DORF, the optimal progress monitoring material is the highest level of material where the student reads with at least 90% accuracy and has a DORF Words Correct score above 20 in first grade, 40 in second grade, or 50 in third through sixth grades.

If grade-level material does not fall within these optimal progress monitoring levels, consider "back-testing" to identify the student's appropriate progress monitoring level. DIBELS Next Survey, available from Cambium/Sopris at <http://www.soprislearning.com/dibelsnextsurvey/>, provides testing materials and procedures for this process.

Testing Forms

Progress monitoring forms should be administered in the order they appear in the booklet, starting from the first form. The progress monitoring forms for one measure or level are of approximately equal difficulty. Instructional decisions are based on at least three test administrations.

<p>Setting Progress Monitoring Goals</p>	<p>We recommend setting ambitious but realistic goals. A progress monitoring goal must include the score to aim for in the selected material as well as the timeframe for achieving the selected goal. When monitoring a student in grade-level materials, use the standard DIBELS benchmark goals and the standard timeframe in which those goals should be reached. Benchmark goals for DIBELS Next can be found on the Dynamic Measurement Group website at <a href="http://dibels.org/">http://dibels.org/</a>.</p> <p>When monitoring a student in below-grade materials, the following steps are recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Step 1. Determine the student's current level of performance.</li> <li>Step 2. Determine the score to aim for based on the end-of-year goal for the level of materials selected for monitoring.</li> <li>Step 3: Set the timeframe so that the goal is achieved in half the time in which it would normally be achieved (e.g., moving the end-of-year benchmark goal to be achieved by the mid-year benchmark date). The intent is to establish a goal that will accelerate progress and support a student to catch up to their peers.</li> <li>Step 4: Draw an aimline connecting the current performance to the goal.</li> </ul>
<p>Determining the Frequency of Progress Monitoring</p>	<p>Students receiving progress monitoring should be monitored as frequently as needed to make timely decisions about the effectiveness of the instructional support. The frequency of progress monitoring should match the level of concern about the student's skill development and need for support. Students who need more support should be monitored more frequently.</p> <p>If monitoring in grade-level materials and the student's scores fall into the <i>Below Benchmark</i> level, then monitoring one or two times per month is likely sufficient.</p> <p>If monitoring in grade-level materials for students whose scores fall into the <i>Well Below Benchmark</i> level, then progress monitoring once per week is ideal, though once every other week may be sufficient.</p> <p>Any time you are monitoring a student in out-of-grade materials, progress monitoring once per week is ideal, though every other week may be sufficient.</p> <p><i>A note about the Daze measure:</i> Scores for Daze increase more slowly than they do for other DIBELS measures, so more frequent monitoring may not be as informative. For students who need to be monitored on Daze, we recommend monitoring once per month.</p>

<p>Conducting Progress Monitoring Assessment</p>	<p>Who should collect progress monitoring data?  Any educator who has been trained on the DIBELS Next administration and scoring procedures can collect progress monitoring data. The person who is providing the instruction is the one who needs the progress monitoring information and is the most likely person to collect the data. However, it can be just as effective for someone other than the instructor to collect the data, as long as it is shared in a timely fashion. For example, students who are receiving speech therapy might have their progress monitored by the speech therapist. Special educators and reading specialists might monitor progress of the students on their caseload and share the results with the classroom teacher. Classroom teachers might progress monitor the small group of students with whom they are meeting daily because they are the ones who are most in need of support. It can be helpful to share the task of collecting progress monitoring data. It is important that the data be easily and frequently accessed by the student's instructor(s).</p> <p>When should progress monitoring assessment be conducted?  In considering when to conduct progress monitoring, first decide on the amount of assessment that is needed, based on the number of students, frequency of monitoring, and the materials on which they are being monitored. Then match that assessment to the available resources and personnel.</p> <p>Progress monitoring should be conducted so as to minimize time taken from reading instruction. For example, if the decision is to monitor progress weekly for a small group of five students on DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency, one student could be assessed on Monday for 2 minutes at the end of small group time. The second student could be assessed on Tuesday, and so on for the remaining students. Each student would then be monitored weekly, but only a single student per day.</p>
<p>Data Management and Reporting</p>	<p>Progress monitoring data should be graphed and readily available to those who teach the student. The scoring forms themselves should also be available, in order to examine the student's response patterns.</p> <p>The front cover of each DIBELS Next Progress Monitoring Scoring Booklet includes a graph to record the scores. Components of an effective progress monitoring graph include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• current level of performance</li> <li>• a target goal at a future point in time</li> <li>• a place to record ongoing progress monitoring scores</li> <li>• an aimline</li> </ul> <p>An aimline provides a visual target for the rate of progress the student needs to make to meet the goal on time. The aimline is drawn from the student's current or initial skill level (which is often the most recent benchmark assessment score) to the goal. Progress monitoring scores can then be plotted over time and examined to determine whether the student is making adequate progress in reference to the aimline.</p> <p>Electronic data management systems that store and report DIBELS Next progress monitoring data include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>DIBELSnet</b> (Dynamic Measurement Group) - <a href="https://dibels.net/">https://dibels.net/</a>  A new reporting service from the authors of DIBELS.</li> <li>2. <b>mCLASS</b> (Wireless Generation) - <a href="http://www.wirelessgeneration.com/">http://www.wirelessgeneration.com/</a>  For users of Wireless Generation's mCLASS:DIBELS Next mobile assessment solution.</li> </ol>

Evaluating Progress and Modifying Instruction	Progress monitoring data should be reviewed at regular intervals. This review can be done by a classroom teacher and/or a team of educators working with a student. In general, if three consecutive data points fall below the aimline, the team should meet and make a considered decision about maintaining or modifying the instruction. If the student's progress is not likely to result in meeting the goal, then instruction should be changed. Before increasing the intensity of instruction, easy explanations for lack of progress should be considered and ruled out or changed, such as student or instructor absence or lack of instructional fidelity. The overarching goal is to make ongoing, data-based decisions regarding instruction to improve student outcomes.
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### Sharing Progress Monitoring Data With Parents and Students

Parents and students are important partners in any educator's efforts to improve reading outcomes. A basic progress monitoring graph conveys much of the information parents want to know about their children:

- What is my child's current level of skill?
- How different is my child's performance from the expectation?
- What is the goal and when do we expect the goal to be achieved?
- Is my child making sufficient progress toward the goal?

When progress monitoring occurs in the context of general education support, the procedures may be discussed with parents, including the educational concerns, the instructional support that is being provided, who will be collecting progress monitoring data, and how often the data will be shared. When progress monitoring is part of an evaluation for special education eligibility, appropriate informed consent procedures should be followed.

Under some conditions, sharing graphed data with a student may be appropriate if it would help to motivate the student. If the student is prone to speed-reading, or is too far below the target and may be discouraged, then it would not be appropriate to share the graphed data.