MTSS/RTI Hot Topic: Validated Goal Setting Strategies

Your goal setting strategies can make a huge difference in accurately assessing students' responses to instruction. This handout summarizes the goal setting process and three validated goal setting strategies that will increase your confidence in setting realistic expectations, assessing response, and making instructional decisions.

For effective decision making, team members must know…

- ❖ **How** the goal was set
- ❖ **Why** the goal was set that way
- ❖ The **intensity** of the intervention provided to meet the goal

STEP I. Select Appropriate Progress Monitoring Level

- ❖ Should be based on logical practices
- ❖ The goal should be set where you expect the student to perform at the end of the intervention period
- ❖ Survey level assessment may be used with student's performing above and below grade level

STEP II. Establish Stable Baseline

- ❖ Establish student's initial knowledge level or baseline knowledge through systematic process
- ❖ Use the median scores of three probes or average of three consecutive probes
- ❖ Ensure a stable baseline before implementation

STEP III. Select Appropriate Goal Setting Strategy

1. Using Benchmarks

- ❖ Description: Identify the grade level winter or end-of-year benchmark and use for goal.
- ❖ Advantages:
  - ➢ Easy-to-use when progress monitoring tool provides benchmarks.
  - ➢ Tracks progress toward grade-level expectations.
  - ➢ Efficient for setting goals for large numbers of students
- ❖ Considerations:
  - ➢ Not appropriate for those students significantly below or above benchmark. To determine appropriateness, ensure that the expected weekly growth is also realistic (e.g., no more than twice average growth, at least average growth)

2. National Norms for Rate of Improvement (ROI)

- ❖ Description: Identify average growth per week (ROI) for grade and number of weeks left in the instructional period (when we want the goal to be reached). Use the following to calculate a realistic goal.

ROI × # Weeks + Baseline Score = GOAL

- ❖ Advantages:

- ➢ Provide more realistic goal when using benchmarks are not appropriate
- ❖ Considerations:
  - ➢ If a student is behind, matching the ROI norm will maintain the same level of achievement gap.
  - ➢ Some progress monitoring tools provide recommendations for "ambitious" ROIs.
  - ➢ When national norms are not available, consider using local norms or estimating ROI by dividing growth between benchmark periods by the number of weeks of instruction.

3. Intra-individual Framework

- ❖ Description: Uses an individual growth rate based on past performance instead of a national normed growth rate.
- ❖ Advantages:
  - ➢ Provides valid goal setting strategy in situations where students are performing far below grade level and typical growth rates are not appropriate.
- ❖ Considerations:
  - ➢ Use three most recent data points to calculate baseline score.
  - ➢ Calculate student's ROI (SROI) based on at least eight data points:

$$\text{SROI} \times 1.5 \times \text{\# Weeks}$$
$$+ \quad \text{Student's Baseline Score (mean of 3 most recent scores)}$$
$$\overline{\text{GOAL}}$$

  - ➢ **Why 1.5?** Since the current SROI is insufficient to close the achievement gap, we want to increase current growth by at least half (x 1.5).
  - ➢ A more ambitious goal may be set if appropriate (e.g., if after several weeks of progress monitoring, the current SROI exceeds the goal SROI).

STEP IV: Monitor Progress Frequently

- ❖ As the number of data points increases, the effects of measurement error on the trend line decreases. Six to nine data points are recommended before determining response.
- ❖ Frequency should not result in a delay of referral or change in instruction. One to two times weekly is highly recommended.
- ❖ Continually evaluate appropriateness of goals and students' response

Resources

Using Academic Progress Monitoring for Individualized Instructional Planning. This module focuses on academic progress monitoring within the context of the DBI process and addresses: (a) approaches and tools for academic progress monitoring, and (b) using progress monitoring data to make instructional decisions for individual students. (See www.intensiveintervention.org)

Monitoring Student Progress for Behavioral Interventions. This module focuses on behavioral progress monitoring within the context of the DBI process and addresses: (a) methods available for behavioral progress monitoring, including but not limited to Direct Behavior Rating (DBR), and (b) using progress monitoring data to make decisions about behavioral interventions. (See www.intensiveintervention.org)