Classroom Assessment (Part 1): An Introduction to Monitoring Academic Achievement in the Classroom

1. List three advantages of progress monitoring over annual achievement tests.

Annual achievement tests do not allow time to re-teach material that the students missed on the test because the results are not received until long after the test has been administered. Progress monitoring also offers regular feedback of a student’s progress which can be easily gathered for use in an IEP meeting or parent teacher conference as concrete evidence of how the student is performing. Another great advantage of progress monitoring over annual achievement tests, is that it track student growth over an entire curriculum which allows the teacher to make individualized goals for students.

2. List two key differences between mastery measurement and CBM.

With mastery measurements, skills are broken down into sequential sub skills and each skill is assessed one by one throughout a unit of study. In CBM, skills are taught in any logical order, and assessed over the entire year. The items on the mastery measurement assessments test only one skill, therefore prior knowledge is not tested. In CBM, questions from the entire curriculum are given and prior skills are assessed.

3. Name three ways CBM can be used to help at-risk students.

CBM can aid at-risk students by identifying the skills with which students are having the greatest difficulty, by comparing the effectiveness of different instructional strategies and
identifying students who are not making adequate progress in the general education setting and might need special education services.

4. What are the six steps in the CBM process?

The six steps in the CBM process are: 1) create or select appropriate tests, also known as probes, for the student’s grade and skill level; 2) administer and score probes at regular intervals; 3) graph the scores to visually see progress; 4) set expectancy goals to be met at by end of the school year; 5) Make instructional decisions based on CBM data; and 6) communicate progress by providing the students, parents and administrators using the CBM data and graphs.

5. How would you use CBM when teaching multiplication fact families (e.g., times tables for 2, 3, 4)? Describe what you would do for each of the six steps.

To use the CBM process to teach multiplication facts, the first step I would engage in is deciding what I wanted to test, in this case, ability and memorization of multiplication tables. I would create a probe to administer every week. Each probe would include all the multiplication tables covered in the entire academic year. I would then administer the timed probes and score them. Based on the number of questions answered correctly, I would chart the points on a graph for all probes taken. Based upon the data in the graph, I would set an expectancy goal on the chart, for example, if there were 20 questions on each probe, I would expect that at the end of process, the points on each student’s chart should be between 18-20 questions correct. Based upon the evidence I the graph, I would then make decisions about whether students were understanding the concepts, if I was moving too fast instructionally for them, if some students needed extra help, or if some students were consistently getting low scores, refer them for special education services.
At the end of the process, I would share the graphs with the students, parents and administrators so that each individual would have a sense of the student’s strengths or weaknesses. I could also use this data for updating a student’s IEP.

6. Create a CBM implementation plan for your classroom.

In my ELA classroom, I will use CBM to monitor my student’s abilities to recognize and use the different parts of speech. I will administer a combination of fill in the blank, word matching and multiple choice probes once a week for ten weeks. Each probe will consist of 20 questions including all the information learned since the beginning of the school year, and be worth 1 point each. I will create a line graph, example below, to plot each student’s progress based on the number of questions the student answered correctly. By the end of the 10 weeks, the students should have a nearly perfect understanding of the lesson concepts and be scoring 20 out of 20 on the last 5 probes. I will use the data to decide whether or not the scores meet the goals I have set for the students. If most of the class is meeting the goals, I will continue with my instruction and offer extra help for those who are struggling. If most of the class is greatly exceeding the goals, I will increase the goal expectancy. If most of the class is receiving below expected grades, I will slow down or modify the way in which I am presenting the material to the students.
Classroom Assessment (Part 2): Evaluating Reading Progress

1. List three benefits of using CBM to monitor students' reading progress.

CBM scores identify students who are better at decoding, identifying sight words, and comprehending. The process also indicates to teachers which students are at risk for reading failure and in need of extra support and services. The data gathered from CBM can be used to create a database to track student reading progress. The information from the database can be used to relay information to students, parents, and other professionals and can assist in IEP meetings for those students with learning disabilities.

2. List the six steps of the CBM process.

The six steps in the CBM process are: 1) create or select appropriate tests, also known as probes, for the student’s grade and skill level; 2) administer and score probes at regular intervals; 3) graph the scores to visually see progress; 4) set expectancy goals to be met by end of the school year; 5) Make instructional decisions based on CBM data; and 6)
communicate progress by providing the students, parents and administrators using the CBM data and graphs.

3. Describe two ways that graphs of CBM data can help a teacher to discuss a student's progress with her or his parents.

The graphs generated from CBM data can illustrate how a child has improved academically over the academic year, can show how the student is performing as compared with fellow students, and indicate what goals the student is expected to meet by the end of the year.

4. Ms. Begay has one student whose scores on the weekly probes have been falling consistently below the goal line for several weeks. At the same time, she has another student whose scores have been consistently above the goal line for the past several weeks. For each student, describe what the graphs are indicating and explain what Ms. Begay should do in each case.

In the case of the student who is consistently scoring above the goal line, Ms. Begay should increase the goals for that child until the student is performing just above or at the goal so that the child is constantly challenged. For the student who is falling below the goal line, instruction delivery must be modified and extra help offered.

5. In January, a new student, Mario, joined Ms. Begay's class. Mario has a learning disability and his former grades indicate that he has been struggling academically, especially in classes that require reading. Ms. Begay has been tracking the reading progress of her students since November using CBM. She would like to track Mario's reading progress as well. How should she proceed? Include a minimum of three of the CBM procedural steps in your explanation.
Ms Begay needs to decide which probes will be appropriate to administer to Mario. To do this, she needs to administer a preliminary passage reading fluency test at the grade level to which she expects Mario to achieve at the end of the year. Based on Mario’s median score, she will have to administer word identification fluency tasks as a way to track the student’s progress, or re-administer the reading fluency test at a higher or lower grade level until she has found the appropriate grade-level for administering probes.

With Mario being a struggling reader, he will most likely take the word identification fluency probes. Ms. Begay should then administer and score the probes as she would for any other student, and track his data on a chart. This data can not only be used to track Mario’s reading abilities, but to aid in any IEP meetings than may happen as a result of his learning disability.