



RTI and Meeting Accountability Standards

Q&A

Q. Please describe for everyone the connection of these three types of assessments to CCSS and/or State Academic Standards. State assessments fall into the category of summative assessments.

A. **Formative assessments** measure broad basic skills, such as reading, mathematics, and writing. Students must have enrolled grade level basic skills as a prerequisite to accessing the enrolled grade level curriculum. This curriculum is based on the state Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCSS). The state assessment is one example of **summative assessment**. **Diagnostic assessments** help the teacher understand student learning needs, which lead to selection of interventions that match those specific needs.

Q. Are math chapter assessments a formative or summative assessment?

A. Neither. Summative, formative, and diagnostic assessments as discussed in this RTI webinar series can be used for comparing results across students, classrooms, schools, school districts, and states. They follow the standardization process. Math chapter assessments are graded by teachers who assign scores to students for performance.

Q. Don't both measure the degree students have made progress or learned the concepts and can demonstrate the learning at the level of Bloom's the skills the standards require?

A. Both summative and formative assessments measure student progress. Summative assessment measures progress after instruction has **happened**. Formative assessment measures progress while instruction is **happening**. Both assessments can measure skills at different levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Q. What universal screeners do you recommend?

A. An excellent resource to investigate is <http://rti4success.org/>. The Tools section provides data on reliability and validity of various progress monitoring tools. Universal screeners are considered part of formative assessment and progress monitoring tools.

Q. Shouldn't the formative assessment in the classroom present some information prior to the progress monitoring, or provide a basis for implementation of progress monitoring if the formative assessment shows a need?

A. Yes. Data teams need to analyze results from universal screening (or benchmarking) administered to all students three times per school year. These results can be analyzed as norm-referenced for resource allocation to determine which students will receive tiered interventions. These are the students who will need more frequent progress

monitoring. The results can also be analyzed as criterion-referenced to compare how these same students are doing compared to, for example, other students in the nation.

Q. How does Data Teams/PLC fit into this picture of RTI?

A. Data teams are crucial to the RTI process. They will use data to support decisions about which programs and services are provided to students.

Q. What do administrators use to monitor fidelity of instruction in an objective manner?

A. Local districts could develop rubrics to use as scoring tools that rate fidelity of instruction according to clearly stated levels of criteria. Before teachers implement a strategy or intervention, administrators would be trained in a rubric that captures what objective evidence they should observe to determine fidelity of instruction. As always, administrators should be readily present as the instructional leader. They utilize frequent "walk-throughs" in the classroom during instruction.

Q. When you describe "factors" I hope that you are talking about the adult actions that are creating the "results" which is student learning.

A. Yes. Adults certainly create the learning environment. When we refer to "factors vs. excuses" we are including the things that are outside the school setting and therefore outside the teacher's control. Such factors could include poverty and language differences. Regardless of the factors, adults must create an environment where student success is the non-negotiable result!

Q. Teachers can overcome many of the "factors" you describe.

A. Exactly. Teachers acknowledge the factors but do not use them as excuses when a student is not learning. The role of administrators is to provide appropriate professional development and support for the staff as they navigate ever-changing student "factors".

Q. Formative assessments are based upon the State Standards.

A. Yes, some formative assessments, such as AIMSweb, have success probability predictors of how well students will perform on state reading and math assessments based on their universal screening reading and math scores. Formative assessments help us measure the broader skills without which students are unable to access the curriculum and therefore master the state standards. The two are not identical but are interrelated.

Q. We tend to spend more time on Tier II & III, but feel that we need to spend more time on Tier I

A. This is common. When the RTI process was first introduced, most schools focused on struggling learners and interventions. Remember the slide during the webinar that talked about "...without an effective core curriculum, approximately the same number of students could be expected to need interventions every year." The RTI process actually begins with core instruction. Whether using acceleration, differentiation, or enrichment, they are all **supplemental** to core instruction. An administrator effectively uses resources when core curriculum/instruction meets the needs of most students consistently throughout the school year.

Q. So it would seem to me that all of the assessments are based upon the State Standards, formative is based upon the standard I am teaching at the moment seems to be the only difference.

A. Formative assessment of basic skills is curriculum independent. Students must have these prerequisite, enrolled grade level skills in order to access their enrolled grade level curriculum standards.

Q. Strategies for getting to where we'd like to be?

A. Great resources can be found at www.rti4success and www.interventioncentral.org. RTI is a process. You will need a curriculum-based measurement system for universal screening in the fall, winter, and spring of a school year and progress monitoring for struggling learners. Three critical questions need to be answered as part of a comprehensive RTI process:

1. How are the majority of students doing who receive **general education** instruction?
2. Who are the students who are **at-risk** of academic failure?
3. How are the "**advanced learners**" doing?

Q. Primary PD activities for Tier I with regular ed classroom teachers?

A. All teachers must understand the difference between administering tests and making formative assessment an integral part of the instructional process. Formative assessments are designed to be used to determine whether the teachers need to adjust what they are doing to accelerate student learning. This means that professional development must provide ongoing support, coaching, and mentoring. PD emphasizes and links the components of instruction, curriculum and assessment. Summative assessments are used to make judgments after the instruction is completed.

Q. Do you recommend using AIMSweb at High School Level 9-12?

A. Yes. High schools and course credits present challenges when implementing the RTI process. Many AIMSweb measures are scored through 8th grade. Research has indicated that if students have solid basic skills at an 8th grade level, they can learn and master high school curriculum. Some high schools use AIMSweb to strategically monitor students new to their district. Some high schools use AIMSweb to progress monitor their struggling learners. Effective use of AIMSweb as formative assessment at the high school level continues to evolve.

Q. I am having trouble getting experienced teachers to understand that Supplemental Instruction is not used on an entire class and that if they do, they are reconstructing their core and not necessarily addressing the students individual needs. Can you comment on this issue?

A. Thank you for your comment. This is not uncommon. Going back to our discussion of the administrator establishing the instructional climate throughout the school, the administrator must expect teachers to deliver core instruction with fidelity providing differentiation for specific students. The supplemental instruction must be in ADDITION to this core instruction. Struggling students must receive the same high quality instruction focusing on higher levels of thinking AND additional time focusing on interventions that match the student needs. Progress monitoring will determine if the student is responding to that intervention.

Q. Doug Reeves calls the quadrants Lucky (high achieving without knowing why, the chances of continued success low); Losing (low achieving school with no knowledge as to why, chances of success continued low achievement is great); Learning (low achieving, but understands why and will not make the mistakes again); Leading (knows why they have high levels of achievement and chances of replication of those practices are high)

A. Great information! Thank you.

Q. Shouldn't we be comparing students to the standards not how other students are achieving?

A. Formative assessments, like AIMSweb, compare an individual student's performance to a specific basic skill in the areas of reading, math, or writing. These assessments tell us at a given point in time the "academic health" of that

student's enrolled grade level skill. For school level analyses formative assessments can be scored in terms of the number or percentage of students meeting the **target**, or the number or percentage of students falling in typical descriptive categories, ranging from well below average, to average, to well above average.

Q. What would you recommend as a universal screening for kindergarten math?

A. AIMSweb provides the Tests of Early Numeracy (TEN). These four measures can be given in different combinations as universal screening during the fall, winter, and spring of a school year. The assessments measure oral counting, missing number, number identification, and quantity discrimination.

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