

AIMSweb Progress Monitoring - Selecting the Grade Level of the Material for the Goal and Progress Monitoring

The desired goal for most at-risk students is to become proficient on-grade-level material. With appropriate supplemental or intensive intervention, students are expected to make substantial growth; however, there are limits to the magnitude of growth that can be achieved. When it is reasonable for a student to achieve grade-level proficiency by the end of the school year with appropriate intensive intervention, the goal should be defined on grade level (i.e., the enrolled grade level). When achieving grade-level proficiency could take multiple years, it may be necessary to define an intermediate performance goal. The AIMSweb rate of improvement (ROI) growth norms (described below) can be used for this purpose. If the goal requires a growth rate that far exceeds expected growth rates, consider defining an intermediate performance goal at a lower grade level. In either case, progress monitoring probes should always be selected from the grade level in which the student's performance goal is defined.

The process of determining the grade level for a performance goal should also include an analysis of the student's instructional level. As noted by Shapiro (2008, p. 48), "A student who is functioning below enrolled grade level will demonstrate little progress over time if monitored at levels that exceed his or her instructional level" and should consequently "be measured at his or her highest instructional level". An off-grade instructional level is indicated for a student who has not mastered important prerequisite skills or scores at the lower extreme on the AIMSweb screening measure. Performance at or below the **10th percentile** is recommended for this purpose.

The following process details the logical method of stepping back grade by grade until the student scores at or above a minimal level of performance (i.e., the 10th percentile for that grade).

1. Administer the screening probe(s) at the student's current grade level.
2. Determine the local (or national) percentile rank of the student's score on the screening probe. For individual student progress monitoring, the local norm (school, district, or region) is recommended. (Note: For R-CBM, use the median of the student's three screening probe scores.) If the student's score ranks above the 10th percentile, proceed with progress monitoring at grade level. If the student's score ranks at or below the 10th percentile, proceed to step 3.
3. Step back one grade level and administer that grade's screening probe(s). If the student's score ranks above the 10th percentile, proceed with progress monitoring at this grade level. If the student's score ranks at or below the 10th percentile, repeat step 3, stepping back one grade level at a time until the student achieves a score that ranks above the 10th percentile, and proceed with progress monitoring at that grade level.

Evaluating Proposed Goals Using ROI Growth Norms

Performance level percentiles and performance benchmarks are beneficial for defining meaningful performance goals for individual students. However, before deciding on a goal, it is desirable to evaluate the reasonableness of a goal for a given student. One way to do this is to compare the ROI needed to reach the goal, with the ROIs typically observed in the population of students who are starting out at about the same level of performance. If the goal ROI for the student is so high as to be rarely observed amongst his or her peers, recognize that this goal

will probably be very challenging. Similarly, a goal ROI that is commonly achieved may be insufficient for a student who will be receiving instructional intervention.

In AIMSweb, a student's rate of improvement (ROI) is the average increase in his or her raw score per week. The AIMSweb system calculates a student's goal ROI (the rate of improvement needed to reach the goal) as follows:

$$ROI = \frac{(Goal\ Score - Initial\ Score)}{Weeks\ Elapsed}$$

The initial score is the score at the start of the progress-monitoring period; often, this is the score from the fall screening. The goal score is the expected score at the end of the instructional period, which is typically one academic year (or 36 weeks). The weeks elapsed is the number of weeks between the dates of measurement.

To illustrate, assume a Grade 2 student obtained a total M-CAP raw score of 3 during fall screening, corresponding to a national percentile of 20. The student's teacher defines a spring screening goal score of 21, which corresponds to the 50th percentile on the spring norms. Therefore, the goal ROI is:

This student would need to gain 0.5 points per week on the M-CAP measure to reach the goal score of 21 by spring screening.

AIMSweb ROI growth norms convey information about the reasonableness of a goal by comparing the growth rate needed to achieve the goal to the growth rates of students in the national norm sample, thereby serving as an indicator of whether growth is about average, above average, or below average. In the above example, based on the national ROI growth norms, an ROI of 0.5 points per week for a Grade 2 student is above average and corresponds to the 75th percentile, as compared with other students whose fall screening scores were at a similar level. Such a growth rate is labeled closes the gap. Indeed, if the student is able to increase performance from the 20th percentile to the 50th percentile, the performance gap will be closed.

ROI growth norms compare each student's growth rate to students with a similar level of initial performance, performance that is typically based on the fall screening score. Initial performance is taken into account because both AIMSweb researchers and others (Silbergitt & Hintze, 2007) have observed that the average rate of growth is often related to the initial level of performance. In general, students with very low initial performance levels tend to have lower ROIs, unless they are receiving supplemental instruction. Students with very high initial scores also tend to have relatively low ROIs, partly because of regression effects and partly because their ability to demonstrate their skill may be limited by the score range of the measure. The benefit of having ROI norms that are separated by initial performance level is that they adjust for any ROI differences caused by the initial performance level. (For details regarding ROI norms development, see the AIMSweb ROI Growth Norms Overview available at www.aimsweb.com.)

After a performance goal has been defined for a student and entered into the AIMSweb system, the ROI needed to achieve said goal is calculated. Using the ROI growth norms as the basis, the AIMSweb system rates and reports the ambitiousness of the goal as follows:

Insufficient: The ROI is below average and the goal score will not improve the student's percentile rank.

Closes the gap: The ROI is above average and the goal score will improve the student's percentile rank.

Ambitious: The ROI is well-above average and the goal score will substantially improve the student's percentile rank.

AIMSweb Progress Monitoring – “Rules of Thumb”

- An “intervention” is the extra scoop of teaching/instruction you do to meet a student's needs. “Progress monitoring” is the assessment you do to see if an

intervention is working. Progress monitoring has several basic elements, including:

- deciding whom to progress monitor,
 - setting a goal,
 - collecting data (administering probes),
 - evaluating progress,
 - deciding whether progress is adequate (i.e., whether the instructional program is working) and whether the instruction and/or the goal should be modified, and
 - deciding whether the goal has been reached.
- You can use AIMSweb cut scores (targets or benchmarks), national norms, or a district's local norms to help you set goals. While AIMSweb recommends using local norms, it is always good to use several points of data when considering a goal for a student.
 - AIMSweb reports will suggest to you if a student should receive an intervention and be progress monitored. Use these “rainbow” colored reports to help you:
 - “Class Distribution by Scores and Level”
 - “Scores and Instructional Recommendations”.Watch for the scores highlighted in yellow and red, and watch for the following terms; they can help you know who needs an intervention:
 - “Tier 2” or “Tier 3”
 - “Further Assess and Consider More Intensive Instruction”
 - “Begin Immediate Problem Solving”
 - “Intensive – Needs Substantial Intervention”.
 - A student scoring below the 10th percentile on an AIMSweb assessment at his grade level is typically progress monitored using materials below his grade level. Assess these students using the attached procedure until you find a grade level where they score above the 10th percentile. Progress monitor at that level.
 - For a student performing above the 10th percentile on the benchmark assessment, a score at the 40th percentile when used as a goal will typically be sufficient to promote student success with the core curriculum.