

Ensuring Fidelity of Assessment and Data Entry Procedures



Successful implementation of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) and, specifically, intensive intervention through the data-based individualization (DBI) process, demands the collection and analysis of data. As teams consider data collection, challenges may occur with assessment administration, scoring, and data entry (Taylor, 2009). To ensure data about risk status and responsiveness accurately represent student performance, minimize measurement errors by preventing the following.

Inconsistent Assessment Administration



What is it?

Errors introduced due to changes in administration, including incorrect or variable instructions, inappropriate assistance, altered assessment protocols (e.g., increasing assessment time), or changes to the environment.

Why does it happen?

- Educators are unfamiliar with the assessment or its purpose.
- Educators, who are familiar with the assessment, depend on memory versus written procedures to conduct the administration.
- Environmental changes (e.g., loud classroom one day and a quiet library the next) can impact how the student responds.

How can it be avoided?

- Provide ongoing training and coaching to familiarize educators with test details and objectives.
- Utilize an administrative checklist during testing.
- Provide approved accommodations consistently.
- Ensure testing environment is quiet and free of distractions and note any variability.

Errors in Scoring Assessments



What is it?

Errors introduced when an educator incorrectly scores or interprets a student's response or is more lenient in scoring certain responses.

Why does it happen?

- Educators interpret or score data based on their assumptions about the students, not the data.
- Inconsistency in scoring due to lack of written procedures or inadequate training.

How can it be avoided?

- Train educators in scoring procedures, especially those that include rubrics.
- Establish written protocols prior to evaluating assessments.
- Periodically check for consistency.
- If scoring procedures are adjusted to student dialect or speech abilities, note the change and score consistently moving forward.
- Use multiple data points to increase accuracy of interpretation.

Data Entry Errors



What is it?

Errors introduced while inputting student data in a database or interpretation errors introduced when educators mix data from more than one measure or different grade levels into one data system or graph.

Why does it happen?

- Educators make unintentional errors when entering or transferring scores from paper copies.
- Inconsistent procedures for data entry that can lead to disagreements in processes.

How can it be avoided?

- Minimize the necessity to enter data through use of computer-based systems.
- Periodically check data with more in-depth data review if data entry is identified as an issue.

Efforts to increase fidelity of administration, scoring, and data entry will increase stakeholders' confidence in the assessment system and reduce preventable classification errors. Establishing a system that minimizes error requires sufficient and ongoing training of staff members and review of assessment procedures to ensure implementation fidelity over time. To learn more, visit www.intensiveintervention.org.



This resource provides an updated version of the National Center on Response to Intervention's Screening Brief Series–Brief #4: Ensuring Fidelity of Assessment and Data Entry Procedures and includes considerations from the National Center on Intensive Intervention's video featuring Dr. Devin Kearns, an Assistant Professor of Special Education in the Department of Education Psychology at the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut, "[What should educators avoid doing when collecting progress monitoring data?](#)"

References

Taylor, R.L. (2009). Assessment of exceptional students: Educational and psychological procedures, 8th Ed., New Jersey: Pearson.

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