



Progress Monitoring with Acadience[®] Reading K–6¹

Progress monitoring is the practice of testing students briefly but frequently on the skill areas in which they are receiving instruction, to ensure that they are making adequate progress.

Two types of testing

Acadience Reading K–6 provides two types of testing, benchmark assessment and progress monitoring. Benchmark assessment refers to testing all students three times per year for the purpose of identifying those who may be at risk for reading difficulties and may need additional instructional support to reach subsequent reading goals. Once students are identified as in need of support, they should receive progress monitoring assessment more frequently to ensure that the instruction they are receiving is helping them make adequate progress to attain the benchmark and/or their reading goals.

The purposes of progress monitoring are to:

- provide ongoing feedback about the effectiveness of instruction
- determine students' progress toward important and meaningful goals
- make timely decisions about changes to instruction so that students will meet those goals

¹Portions of this document are reprinted from the Acadience Reading K–6 Assessment Manual and the Acadience Reading Survey Manual.



Why monitor progress

Monitoring student progress toward instructional objectives is an effective and efficient way to determine if the instructional plan is working. Ongoing progress monitoring allows teachers to make data-based decisions about the effectiveness of their instruction. Instruction can be modified or changed in a timely manner instead of waiting months to find out whether the student reached the goal. When teachers use student progress monitoring data to inform instruction, students' learning improves (Fuchs, Deno, & Mirkin, 1984).

Acadience Reading and Progress Monitoring

Acadience Reading was designed specifically for screening and progress monitoring. The Acadience Reading measures are designed to be used frequently and are sensitive enough to detect student learning and growth over time. The skills that are measured by Acadience Reading are the essential early literacy and reading skills—those skills that should be the emphasis of reading instruction. Essential early literacy and readings skills are predictive of future reading outcomes, are teachable, and when students acquire these skills their reading outcomes improve.

Using Acadience Reading for progress monitoring is efficient because the same assessment can be used for both progress monitoring and benchmark assessment. After conducting a benchmark assessment

with Acadience Reading, a great deal is known about the skills on which a student may need instructional support. Progress monitoring on the skills that are the focus of instruction provides teachers with an indicator of the effectiveness of that instruction.

Progress monitoring is an important component of a Response-to-Intervention (**RtI**) or Multi-Tiered System of Support (**MTSS**) databased decision-making model. RtI and MTSS models, such as the Outcomes-Driven Model described in the *Acadience Reading K-6 Assessment Manual*, are used to improve student outcomes by matching the amount and type of instructional support with the needs of the individual students.



When conducting progress monitoring with an Acadience Reading measure, the same administration and scoring procedures that are used for benchmark assessment are followed.

Unlike the benchmark assessment materials, which are arranged by grade, the progress monitoring materials are arranged by skill and measure.

Twenty (20) alternate forms for each of the following measures are available:

- **FSF** First Sound Fluency
- **PSF** Phoneme Segmentation Fluency
- **NWF** Nonsense Word Fluency
- **ORF** Oral Reading Fluency (Level 1)
- **ORF** Oral Reading Fluency (Level 2)
- **ORF** Oral Reading Fluency (Level 3)
- **ORF** Oral Reading Fluency (Level 4)
- **ORF** Oral Reading Fluency (Level 5)
- **ORF** Oral Reading Fluency (Level 6)

 **Note:** For ORF, while three passages are administered during benchmark assessment, a single passage is sufficient for progress monitoring, given that instructional decisions are based on the pattern of performance over at least three test administrations over time.

Maze progress monitoring materials are organized similarly. In the Acadience Learning Online and paper-and-pencil download version of Acadience Reading, 20 alternate Maze forms are available per grade. In the published version of Acadience Reading, the first 10 Maze progress monitoring worksheets are provided in a Maze Progress Monitoring Student Booklet. The other 10 worksheets per grade are available for download.

Maze progress monitoring materials are available for:

- **MAZE** Maze (level 3)
- **MAZE** Maze (level 4)
- **MAZE** Maze (level 5)
- **MAZE** Maze (level 6)

ORF and Maze “levels” correspond to the grade level of the passages. The ORF and Maze progress monitoring materials use the term “level” rather than “grade” because some students may be monitored on out-of-level or out-of-grade materials.

Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) does not include progress monitoring materials because letter naming is not considered an essential early literacy and reading skill. While letter naming fluency in preschool and kindergarten is a strong predictor of future reading skills, for students who are struggling to learn to read, it is their knowledge of letter *sounds* and the ability to apply that letter-sound knowledge to decode words that is most highly related to reading outcomes.



1 Selecting Students for Progress Monitoring

We recommend that students who score below the benchmark on one or more measures and who are determined to need additional instructional support to achieve early literacy and reading goals receive progress monitoring in the targeted areas that are the focus of instruction or intervention. Teachers may also choose to monitor other students if there are concerns regarding their skills and/or progress. For example, if a student has met the benchmark but has highly variable performance, poor attendance, or behavioral issues, the teacher may choose to monitor that student, particularly if the student's score is just barely above the benchmark.

Any student whose essential early literacy and reading skills are not on track for attaining future reading outcomes is a potential candidate for focused, differentiated small-group instruction, the intensity of which should match the need for support. When teachers provide additional targeted instructional support on essential early literacy and reading skills, we recommend that they use progress monitoring to gauge the effectiveness of the instructional supports provided.

If many students within a classroom or grade score below or well below the benchmark, it may be more beneficial to focus first on analyzing and improving the core reading instruction that all students receive rather than expending resources on progress monitoring all those students.

Decisions about the number of students to monitor at one time are based on local needs, resources, and priorities.

2 Selecting Acadience Reading Materials for Progress Monitoring

In most cases, progress monitoring will be conducted using one measure at a time, which should represent the student's instructional level of the skill area targeted for instruction. In some cases, it may be appropriate to monitor a student using more than one Acadience Reading measure, in particular for students who are monitored in out-of-grade materials. For example, a second-grade student might be monitored once per week with NWF and once per month with first-grade ORF as a way to track acquisition of the alphabetic principle and the application of those skills to connected text.

Selecting Acadience Reading Materials for Progress Monitoring (*continued*)

Students should be monitored in material that matches the skill area targeted for instruction. For example, students with low scores on Nonsense Word Fluency Correct Letter Sounds (NWF CLS) should receive instruction focused on becoming accurate and automatic with basic phonics skills (e.g., matching sounds to letters) and should be monitored with NWF CLS. As another example, when a student has sufficient accuracy and fluency, but their Maze score suggests difficulty with reading silently for meaning, monitor with Maze. Kindergarten and first-grade students typically would be monitored on grade-level materials unless they are not producing measurable behavior on those materials. Grade-level materials for kindergarten include FSF, PSF, and NWF and for first grade include PSF, NWF, and ORF. Students in grades 2–6 may be monitored in grade-level or out-of-grade-level materials.

Progress monitoring forms should be administered in order (e.g., Form 1 first, Form 2 second, etc.).

Out-of-Grade Monitoring

Careful consideration should be given to selecting an optimum level of progress monitoring material for each student.

The optimum level should simultaneously illustrate:

- the student's current level of skills
- an instructional goal that the student needs to attain
- and progress toward the goal

To be able to illustrate progress, the material must be at a level in which changes in student skills will be apparent. In particular, if the measurement material is too difficult, progress will not be apparent, and the student and teacher or interventionist may become discouraged. Material that is too difficult may also result in inaccurate decisions about student progress. The progress monitoring level may be the same as the instructional level. However, when monitoring progress in out-of-grade materials, use the highest level of material in which change can be shown in skills targeted for instruction. For example, when targeting phonemic awareness for instruction any time after the first half of kindergarten, PSF should be used for progress monitoring instead of FSF. If PSF is too difficult or frustrating for the student, then FSF should be used. For ORF, the optimal progress monitoring material is the highest level of material where the student reads with at least 90% accuracy and has an ORF Words Correct score above 20 in first-grade material, 40 in second-grade material, or 50 in third- through sixth-grade materials.

Selecting Acadience Reading Materials for Progress Monitoring (*continued*)

If grade-level material does not fall within these optimal progress monitoring levels, consider “back-testing” to identify the student’s appropriate progress monitoring level. Acadience Reading Survey² provides testing materials and procedures for this process.

Testing Forms

Progress monitoring forms should be administered in order starting from the first form. Note that for ORF, while three passages are administered during benchmark assessment, a single passage is administered each time for progress monitoring. The progress monitoring forms for one measure or level are of approximately equal difficulty. Instructional decisions are based on at least three test administrations. For example, if a student is being monitored weekly, instructional decisions would be based on three assessments given over three weeks.

3

Setting Progress Monitoring Goals

A progress monitoring goal must include the score to aim for in the selected material, as well as the timeframe for achieving the selected goal. We recommend setting meaningful, ambitious, and attainable goals. There are two frames of reference that may be considered when monitoring a student in grade-level materials: **(a)** the Acadience Reading benchmarks and **(b)** Pathways of Progress™.

First, consider the standard benchmarks and the standard timeframe in which those benchmarks should be reached, illustrated in *Figure 1*. The *Acadience Reading Benchmarks and Composite Score* document can be found at www.acadiencelearning.org. The benchmarks are the same for all students in a grade, regardless of their starting skill level and represent the **lowest score** for which a student is likely to still be on track to reach future reading outcomes. Some students with scores in this range, especially those with scores near the benchmark, may require monitoring and/or strategic support on specific component skills. Alternatively, the Above Benchmark level represents a higher level of performance. While all students with scores in this range will likely benefit from core support, some students with scores in this range may benefit from instruction on more advanced skills.

²For more information on Acadience Reading Survey, visit www.acadiencelearning.org

Setting Progress Monitoring Goals (continued)

A second frame of reference to consider along with the benchmarks is Pathways of Progress. When used in conjunction with the benchmarks, Pathways of Progress further empowers educators to set individual student goals that are meaningful, ambitious, and attainable. Pathways of Progress allows teachers to use a normative context, in addition to the benchmarks, when setting goals and evaluating progress. Pathways of Progress clarifies what rate of progress is Typical, Above Typical, or Well Above Typical for students with the same beginning Reading Composite Score. Pathways of Progress also informs educators when the rate of progress is Below Typical or Well Below Typical compared to students who have the same beginning Reading Composite Score.

Figure 2 shows how the Pathways of Progress can contribute important information in addition to the Acadience Reading benchmark for a sample third-grade student, Alistair. As illustrated in Figure 2, Pathways of Progress can be helpful for determining if reaching the grade-level end-of-year benchmark might be unrealistically ambitious. Teachers can use the Pathways of Progress goal-setting utility available in Acadience Learning Online (<https://alo.acadiencelearning.org>) to see the target scores for each pathway and set end-of-year grade-level goals for students.

Figure 1. Illustrates Acadience Reading Standard Benchmark and Timeframe

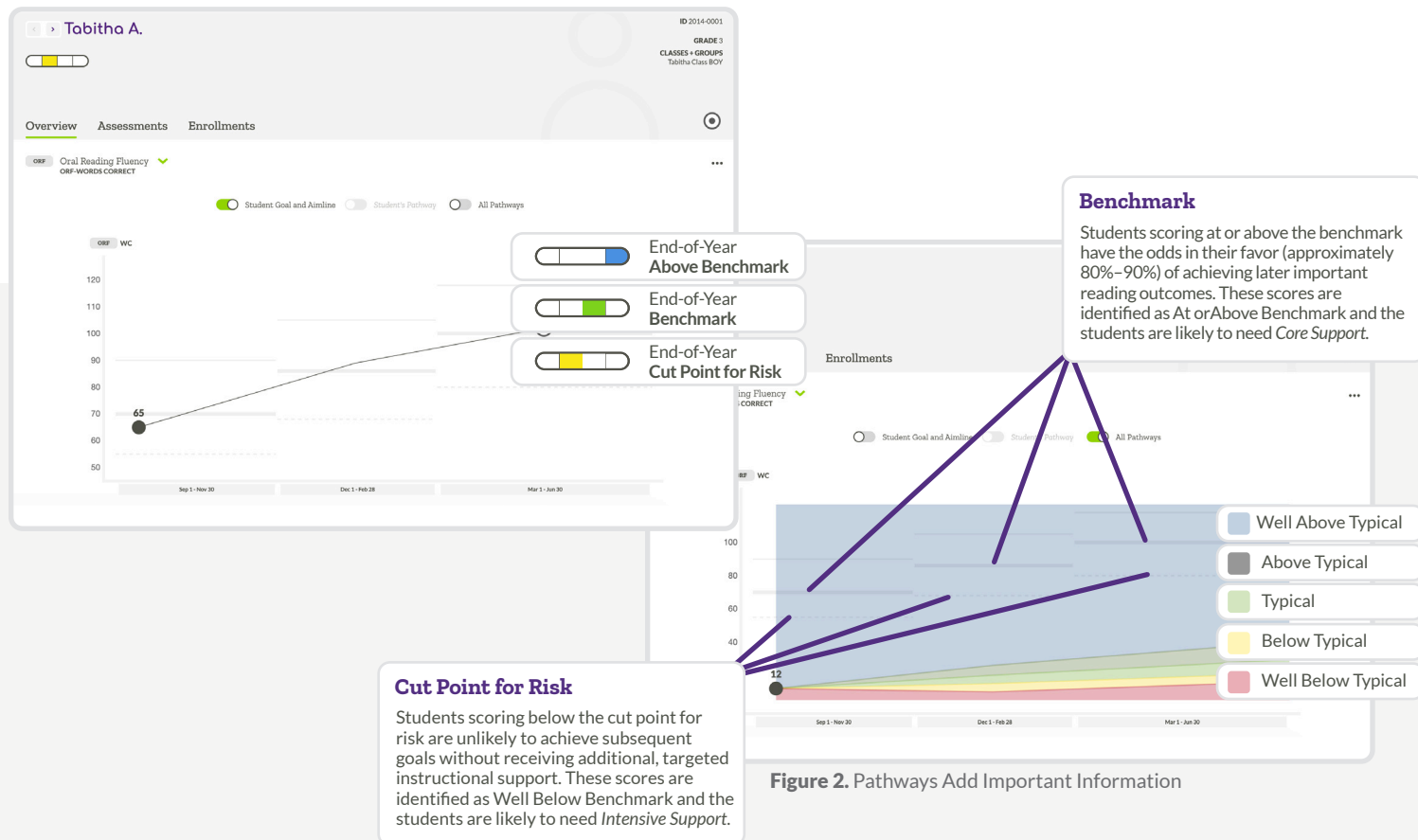


Figure 2. Pathways Add Important Information

Setting Progress Monitoring Goals (*continued*)

A sample graph showing the goal, aimline, and Pathways for a third-grade student, Tabitha, is shown in *Figure 3*.

When monitoring a student in below-grade materials, the following steps are recommended:

- Step 1** Determine the student's current level of performance.
- Step 2** Determine the score to aim for based on the end-of-year benchmark for the level of materials selected for monitoring.
- Step 3** Set the timeframe so that the benchmark is achieved in half the time in which it would normally be achieved (e.g., move the end-of-year benchmark to be achieved by the mid-year benchmark date). The intent is to establish a goal that will accelerate progress and support a student to close the achievement gap between them and their grade-level peers.
- Step 4** Draw an aimline connecting the current performance to the goal.

Sample graphs illustrating this kind of goal are provided in *Figure 4* and *5*. Alistair's out-of-level goal is: When presented with an NWF form, Alistair will use basic phonics skills and understanding of the alphabetic principle to identify at least 65 correct letter sounds and read at least 18 whole words in 1 minute by the middle of the year. Acadience Reading Survey was used to develop this goal. More information about Acadience Reading Survey may be found at www.acadiencelearning.org.

Figure 3. Illustrates Goal, Aimline, and Pathways for Third Grade

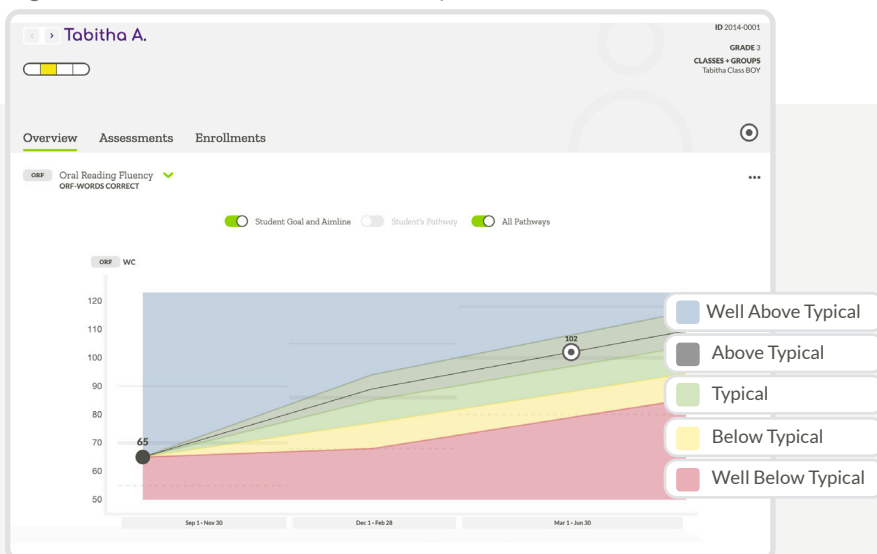


Figure 4. NWF CSL Out-of-Level Progress Monitoring for Frequent Assessment with Instructional Level Material

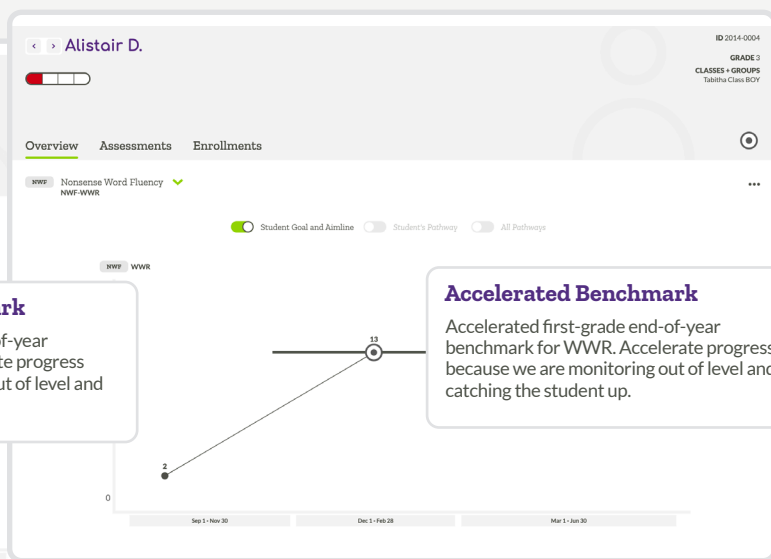
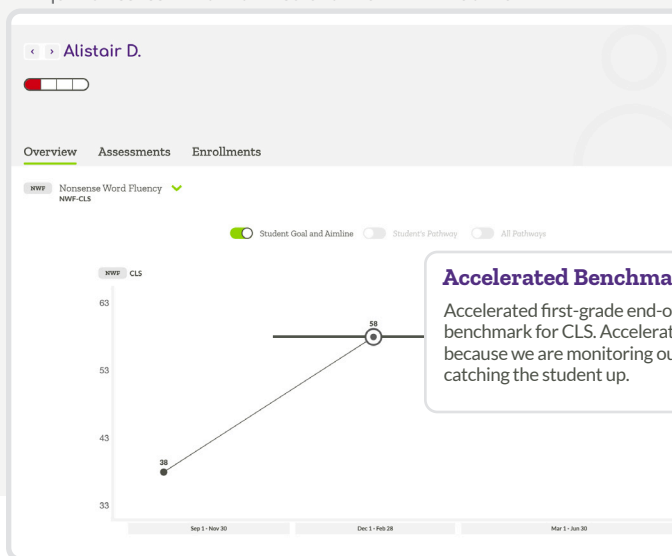


Figure 5. NWF WWR Out-of-Level Progress Monitoring for Frequent Assessment with Instructional Level Material

4 Determining the Frequency of Progress Monitoring

Students receiving progress monitoring should be monitored as frequently as needed to make timely decisions about the effectiveness of the instructional support. The frequency of progress monitoring should match the level of concern about the student's skill development and need for support. Students who need more support should be monitored more frequently. As such, the frequency of monitoring should match the level of concern for the student and the intensity of intervention support needed.

For students whose scores fall into the Below Benchmark level in grade-level materials, monitoring one or two times per month is likely sufficient. Of the students who have scores at this level, those who are closer to the benchmark would likely be monitored less frequently (e.g., once per month), while those who are closer to the cut point for risk would likely be monitored more frequently.

For students whose scores fall into the Well Below Benchmark level in grade-level materials, progress monitoring once per week is ideal, though once every other week may be sufficient.

Any time you are monitoring a student in out-of-grade materials, progress monitoring once per week is ideal, though every other week may be sufficient.

 **A note about the Maze measure:** Scores for Maze increase more slowly than they do for other Acadience Reading measures, so more frequent monitoring may not be as informative. For students who need to be monitored on Maze, we recommend monitoring once per month.

Who should collect progress monitoring data?

Any educator who has been trained on the administration and scoring procedures for Acadience Reading can collect progress monitoring data. The person who is providing the instruction is the one who needs the progress monitoring information and is the most likely person to collect the data. However, it can be just as effective for someone other than the instructor to collect the data, as long as the data are shared in a timely fashion. For example, students who are receiving speech therapy might have their progress monitored by the speech therapist. Special educators and reading specialists might monitor progress of the students on their caseload and share the results with the classroom teacher. Classroom teachers might progress monitor the small group of students with whom they are meeting daily because they are the ones who are most in need of support. It can be helpful to share the task of collecting progress monitoring data. It is important that the data be easily and frequently accessed by the student's instructor(s).

When should progress monitoring assessment be conducted?

Progress monitoring should be conducted so as to minimize time taken from reading instruction. Consider the amount of assessment time needed based on the number of students, frequency of monitoring, and the materials on which students are being monitored. For example, if the decision is to monitor progress weekly for a small group of five students on ORF, one student could be assessed on Monday for 2 minutes at the end of small group time. The second student could be assessed on Tuesday, and so on for the remaining students. Each student would then be monitored weekly, but only a single student per day. Decisions such as these will be based in part on available resources and personnel.

Progress monitoring data should be graphed and readily available to those who teach the student. The scoring forms themselves should also be available, in order to examine the student's response patterns.

The front cover of each Acadience Reading Progress Monitoring Scoring Booklet includes a graph to record the scores.

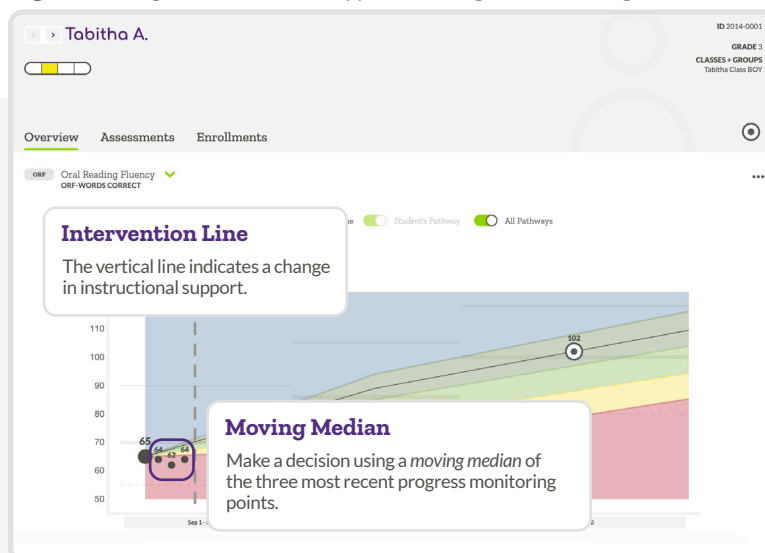
Components of an effective progress monitoring graph include:

- current level of performance
- a target goal at a future point in time
- a place to record ongoing progress monitoring scores
- an aimline

An aimline provides a visual target for the rate of progress the student needs to make to meet the goal on time. The aimline is drawn from the student's current or initial skill level (which is often the most recent benchmark assessment score) to the goal. Progress monitoring scores can then be plotted over time and examined to determine whether the student is making adequate progress in reference to the aimline.

An electronic data management system can store and report Acadience Reading progress monitoring data for you. One such system is Acadience Learning Online (<http://alo.acadiencelearning.org>) from the authors at Acadience Learning. A sample progress monitoring graph from Acadience Learning Online for Tabitha is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Change in Instructional Support and Progress Monitoring Median, Part 1



7

Evaluating Progress and Modifying Instruction

Progress monitoring data should be reviewed at regular intervals. This review can be done by a classroom teacher and/or a team of educators working with a student. In general, if three consecutive data points fall below the aimline, the team should meet and make a considered decision about maintaining or modifying the instruction. If the student's progress is not likely to result in meeting the goal, then instruction should be modified. Before increasing the intensity of instruction, easy explanations for lack of progress should be considered and ruled out or changed, such as student or instructor absence or lack of instructional fidelity. Additionally, interventions and the frequency of monitoring can be faded once student performance improves. The overarching goal is to make ongoing, data-based decisions regarding instruction to improve student outcomes. Illustrations of this process are shown in *Figures 6 through 10*.

Figure 7. Change in Instructional Support and Progress Monitoring Median, Part 2

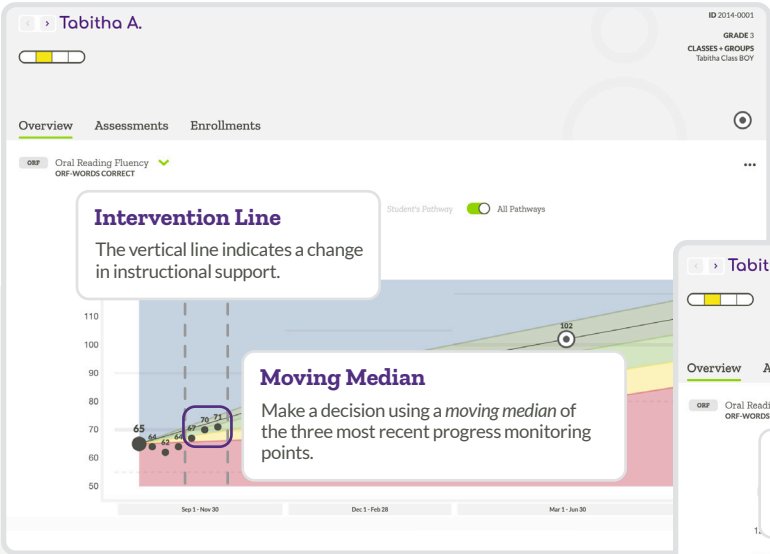


Figure 8. Instructional Support is Effective for Tabitha

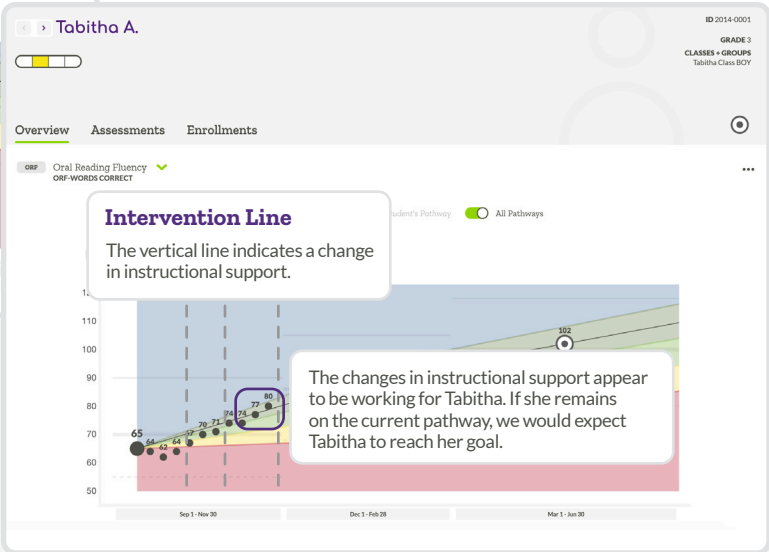


Figure 9. Data For Decision Making, NWF CLS

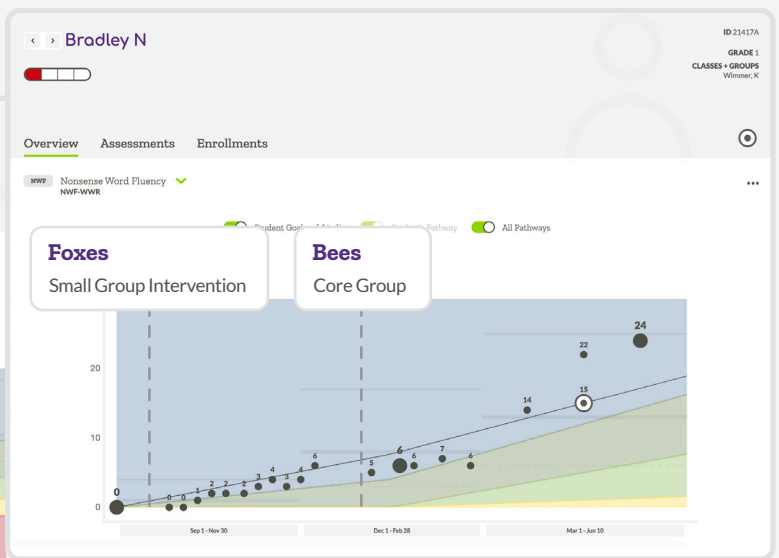
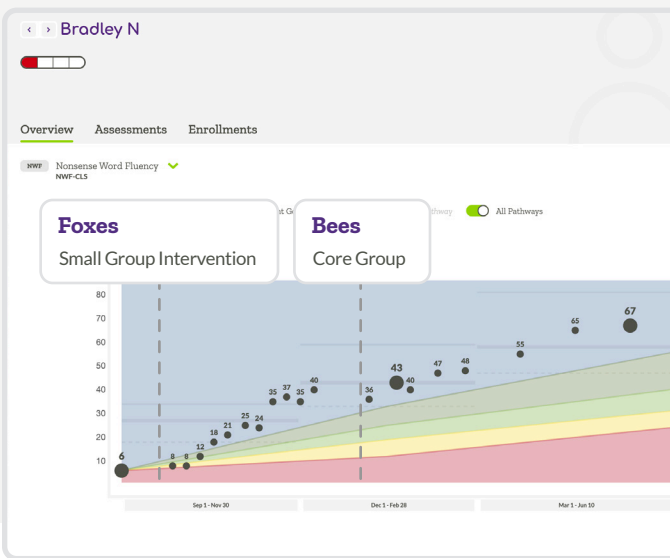


Figure 10. Data For Decision Making, NWF WWR

Sharing Progress Monitoring Data with Parents and Students

Parents and students are important partners in any educator's efforts to improve reading outcomes.

A basic progress monitoring graph conveys much of the information parents want to know about their children:

- What is my child's current level of skill?
- How different is my child's performance from the expectation?
- What is the goal for my child?
- When do we expect the goal to be achieved?
- Is my child making adequate progress toward the goal?

When progress monitoring occurs in the context of general education support, the procedures may be discussed with parents, including the educational concerns, the instructional support that is being provided, who will be collecting progress monitoring data, and how often the data will be shared. When progress monitoring is part of an evaluation for special education eligibility, appropriate informed consent procedures should be followed.

Under some conditions, sharing graphed data with a student may be appropriate if it would help to motivate the student. If the student is prone to speed-reading or is too far below the target and may be discouraged, then it may not be appropriate to share the graphed data.