

Going Virtual

Considerations for Adjusting Data-Based Individualization Implementation in Response to COVID-19



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Introduction

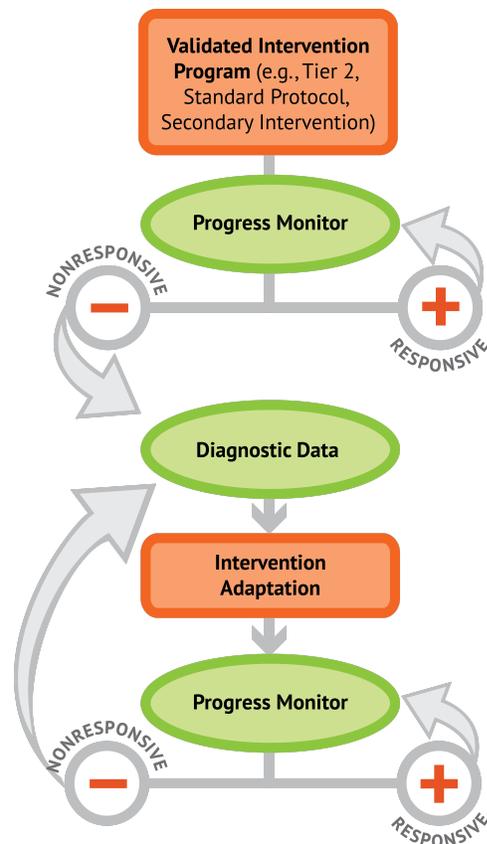
During spring 2020, educators quickly adapted to providing interventions and collecting data virtually despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Parents were critical partners in supporting opportunities for students with intensive needs to practice and receive feedback and sharing what was working and when changes were needed.

During fall 2020, educators provided virtual, in-person, and hybrid intervention with an ongoing need to engage with and support parents and families. As noted by Jones, Vaughn, and Fuchs (2020), evidence-based teaching strategies used in traditional face-to-face instruction are applicable in virtual settings as well. This includes scheduling frequent sessions (3–5 times per week), collecting data, and delivering small group or individualized instruction. Although the context and environment may have changed, the focus on providing high-quality interventions with validated practices, monitoring student progress, and adapting and intensifying supports based on student data as outlined in the data-based individualization (DBI) process continues to be applicable across virtual, in-person, or hybrid models.

This document presents considerations for implementing DBI in light of COVID-19 with an emphasis on delivery in virtual settings.

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DBI Process



Step 1: Validated Intervention Program

The Foundation

Guiding Principles

The DBI process builds on the implementation of an evidence-based and standardized intervention delivered with fidelity. At this step, teachers consider:

- Does the intervention target the student's academic and behavioral needs?
- Is the intervention based on the best available evidence?
- Does the intervention align with core instruction?
- Has the intervention been shown to work with most students?
- Are procedures in place to ensure the intervention is delivered as planned?

Considerations for Implementation During COVID-19



Ensure feasibility of intervention delivery

- The [Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity](#) and the [Academic Intervention](#) and [Behavior Intervention](#) Tools Charts can assist educators in designing and selecting virtual interventions. When selecting interventions, consider any technology requirements and group sizes that are necessary for implementation.
- Identify and implement the core components of an evidence-based, standardized intervention (and then monitor implementation fidelity of the core components). Consider core components to be those that build fluency, are delivered explicitly, and allow students to practice skills and receive feedback.
- Review how intervention sessions are structured to introduce new content, review older content, and monitor progress. If implementing in a hybrid setting, determine which portions to deliver in person or virtually. For example, view [Evidence-Based and Promising Practices to Support Continuity of Learning for Students With Disabilities: Practices and Resources to Support Teachers](#) and [Virtual Lesson Example: With Me New, At Home Review](#).
- Monitor implementation fidelity of the intervention being implemented.



Communicate with and engage parents and families

- Provide [parents/family members with strategies](#) they can use in the home environment to increase their child's engagement and/or to minimize nonproductive behavior (e.g., student self-monitoring and goal-setting, checklists, organizers, verbal or visual cues).
- Check in with parents to discuss technology requirements, overview intervention plans, and what is or is not working for the student.
- Offer [tips and guidance](#) for parents to support additional practice opportunities.



Design virtual intervention delivery to encourage engagement

- Use multiple strategies and tools (e.g., video, chatbox, polling, breakouts, annotate features) to engage students. Before a session, model and practice how to use the tools with students to ensure success.
- Spread out practice opportunities throughout the day or week (e.g., 10 minutes/day vs. 30-minutes in one day) to provide more engaging, direct instruction opportunities.
- Involve other professionals to help you monitor and reinforce student behavior and encourage engagement during sessions with groups and/or individual students.



Support students with lack of access to technology

- Send home a student workbook that aligns with intervention sessions and offer additional practice opportunities (e.g., student worksheet). Partner with parents (see above) to encourage extended practice.
- Develop a consistent schedule for delivering the intervention via phone/app.
- After each session, have the student/parent/family text a picture of any completed student work and provide feedback via text.

Step 2: Progress Monitoring

Did the Intervention Work?

Guiding Principles

At this step, staff regularly collect and analyze progress monitoring data to determine if the student is responding to the validated intervention. Teachers consider:

- Does the tool meet technical standards for progress monitoring and match the desired academic or behavioral outcome?
- Were data collected regularly and with a consistent approach?
- Were progress data graphed?
- Was the goal set using a validated approach?
- Was the intervention effective for most students?

Considerations for Implementation During COVID-19



Determine the feasibility of collecting progress monitoring data virtually

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, educators and administrators need to rethink how they collect and analyze progress monitoring data in a virtual setting. Vendors of tools available on the [Academic Progress Monitoring](#) and [Behavior Progress Monitoring](#) Tools Charts have provided resources to support virtual administration (see [Frequently Asked Questions on Collecting Progress Monitoring Data Virtually](#) question 2). As they consider the feasibility of collecting and using progress monitoring data virtual, educators and administrators should ask:

- Can my tool be used virtually?
- Will the data be valid?
- Will it be feasible?
- Will it be useful?
- What are the benefits/limitations to conducting virtual progress monitoring?
- Can I still use the published rates of improvement and end-of-year benchmarks to set goals and compare progress?



Plan for administering progress monitoring virtually

- Create [structures for virtual implementation](#), such as developing a schedule and sign-up process for students.
- Be flexible with the method for data collection based on the needs of the student and family. Options may include:
 - Conducting a progress monitoring session using [screen share](#) or [breakout rooms](#) or via a phone call (when technology does not allow for shared screens)
 - Having students record themselves completing a task from a progress monitoring tool (e.g., passage reading, solving a mathematics word-problem) and score the recording
 - Having students/parents take a picture of a completed progress monitoring probe (e.g., showing work on a mathematics fluency problem) to aid with scoring.
- Collaborate with parents and families during virtual screening and progress monitoring administration.
- To the extent possible, ensure fidelity of assessment, scoring, and data entry procedures for students throughout the year using the same format (e.g., virtual, in-person) as used during the fall benchmark to support the reliability of the scores over time. Note when necessary if there were administration changes that may impact student response (e.g., home environment distractions, technology challenges).



ANALYZE DATA

Do data indicate that the intervention is working?



If no, move to Step 3



If yes, move back to Step 1 and continue to provide validated intervention and monitor progress

Step 3: Diagnostic Data

Why Didn't the Intervention Work?

Guiding Principles

At this step, staff use diagnostic data to develop a hypothesis about why the student is struggling. Teachers consider:

- Do multiple data sources confirm slow progress?
- Have both academic and behavioral considerations been explored?
- What do these data suggest about what needs to be changed?

Considerations for Implementation During COVID-19



Collect and review student data

- Review student work samples submitted during synchronous or asynchronous instruction.
- Use a picture or recording of a student completing a progress monitoring probe or diagnostic data tools to identify how the student is arriving at solutions to help identify specific strategies to practice and reinforce (see Step 2 considerations).
- Conduct an error analysis of progress monitoring probes to identify error patterns.
- Partner with a colleague to monitor student responses during virtual learning lessons.



Gather information from students and parents

- Conduct a learning interview with a student to understand their learning process and determine what is working well and what is not working well for them.
- Communicate with the student, parent, or family to determine if there are any external circumstances related to virtual instruction/intervention (e.g., attendance, student engagement level, recent losses, internet outages) that may be impacting student progress.



Review implementation data

- Review the schedule of instruction/intervention to determine potential impacts on student exposure to concepts being assessed (e.g., technical issues, attendance).
- Determine if the core components of an intervention (see Step 1 considerations) were delivered with fidelity.
- Consider how engaged the student was during virtual lessons.



Use multiple data sources to create a hypothesis

- When possible, conduct virtual team meetings to collaborate with other educators when developing the hypothesis.
- Ask clarifying questions related to intervention design, intervention delivery/fidelity, and learner needs and characteristics to create a hypothesis.
- Consider the dimensions of the Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity (dosage, alignment, attention to transfer, comprehensiveness, and behavior and academic supports).

Step 4: Intervention Adaptation

What Change is Needed?

Guiding Principles

The hypothesis, along with educator expertise, is used to develop an individual student plan for modifying or adapting the intervention to better meet the student's individual needs. Teachers consider:

- Does the adaptation address the hypothesis?
- Does the plan address both academic and behavioral concerns when needed?
- Are procedures in place for implementing and monitoring the adapted intervention?
- Are only a few adaptations made at one time?

The [Intensification Strategy Checklist Handout](#) includes suggestions for intensifying the intervention aligned with the Taxonomy domains.

Considerations for Implementation During COVID-19



Plan for intensification

- As part of [virtual team meetings](#) used to develop the hypothesis, use the hypothesis to intensify the intervention.
- Document adaptations in an individual [student intervention plan](#).
- Ensure the adapted intervention can be [implemented with fidelity](#).
- Revisit intervention planning and implementation considerations for virtual implementation documented in Step 1.



Intensify intervention in virtual settings

Use the hypothesis and dimensions of the [Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity](#) to guide intensification. Based on student needs, consider:

- Spreading out practice opportunities throughout the day or week (e.g., 10 minutes/day vs. 30-minutes in one day).
- Decreasing group sizes.
- Increasing opportunities for practice and corrective feedback (NCII has developed sample lessons to support intensification in [reading](#), [mathematics](#), and [behavior](#). See a [video and tip sheet](#) for implementation of a reading lesson in a virtual setting).
- Focusing intervention sessions more narrowly on discrete skill instruction within the target skill.
- Sharing a video demonstration of a specific strategy with students so they have it to reference as they work independently.



Engage parents and families to extend practice opportunities

- Encourage [parents/family members](#) to deliver additional practice opportunities using structured lessons (e.g., NCII sample lessons in [reading](#), [mathematics](#), and [behavior](#)).
- Share an example and directions to show parents or grandparents how they can implement [reading and mathematics lessons](#).

Step 5: Ongoing Progress Monitoring

Did the Change Work?

Guiding Principles

Continue to collect, graph, and analyze progress monitoring data to determine if the student is responding to the adapted intervention. Teachers consider:

- Are data collected according to the plan?
- Does the graph indicate when adaptations were made?

For Considerations for Implementation During COVID-19, See Step 2

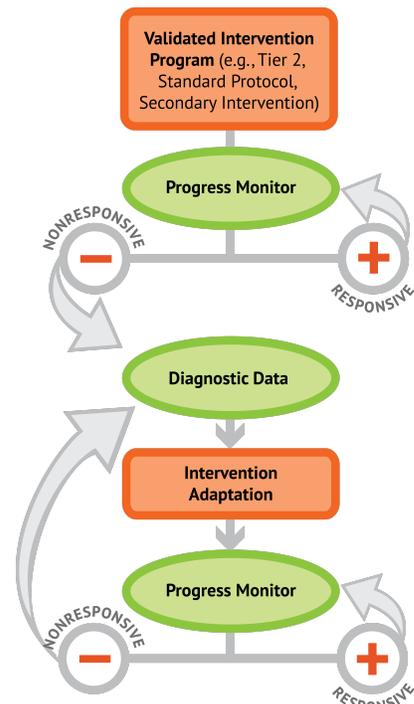


Conclusion

The DBI process integrates intervention delivery with data collection and intensification through an iterative process to support students with severe and persistent learning and/or behavioral needs. Educators, administrators, parents, and students have shown that with adequate training, time, infrastructure, collaboration, and flexibility they can deliver the intervention, collect data, and intensify and adapt intervention during COVID-19 restrictions.

As noted in Returning to School: Considerations for Students With the Most Intensive Behavioral Needs: A Guide to Supporting Student With Disabilities, Their Families, and Educators During the 2020-21 School Year, "Given the challenging context, we recommend going back to basics by: (a) focusing on a small number of evidence-based, culturally relevant, intensive intervention practices across social, emotional, behavioral (SEB), and academic domains and (b) using them well, consistently, and with fidelity (pg. 5)."

For additional tools and resources to support intervention delivery, data collection and use, implementation planning, and family engagement, visit the NCII webpage for COVID 19 resources at Supporting Students With Intensive Needs During COVID-19.



Interested in learning more about what NCII has to offer? Connect with us!

