Universal Screening Key Terms

**Benchmark.** A standard or point of reference against which things may be compared or assessed.

**Common Formative Assessment (CFA).** A collaboratively designed measure used to monitor the attainment of essential learning targets or skills through the instructional process.

**Criteria Measure.** A specific, observable, and quantifiable indicator used to evaluate whether a standard has been met. Criteria measures are clearly defined so that everyone understands what is being measured and are aligned to a goal or skill.

**Criterion Referenced Assessment.** An approach to the measurement of student performance in relation to a specific standard, typically used to identify a student’s strengths and weaknesses in relation to a grade-level standard. Does not compare students to other students.

**Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBA).** An evaluation process selected directly from the material taught and used to assess how students are progressing in basic academic areas by testing each student briefly to inform teachers of student progress over time and learning challenges.

**Curriculum-Based Measure (CBM).** A form of frequent, brief assessment that measures a student’s progress toward mastering of skills being taught.

**Cut Scores.** Refers to the minimum score or threshold that a test taker must achieve on an assessment to be considered as passing or meeting a specific standard.

**Diagnostic Assessment.** A tool that can be used to collect information about a student’s strengths and weaknesses in a skill area. These assessments can be formal (e.g., standardized achievement tests) or informal (e.g., work sample analysis).

**Direct Behavior Rating (DBR).** A tool that involves rating a target behavior immediately following a specified observation period. This rating is then used as the data to monitor student progress and response to behavior interventions to determine whether intervention changes are needed.

**Norm Referenced Assessments.** Standardized tests that are designed to compare and rank test takers in relation to one another based on the performance results of a statistically selected group of test-takers, typically of the same age or grade level, who have already taken the exam.

**Practicality.** How feasible a particular assessment or intervention is to administer or implement.

**Progress Monitoring.** The process of evaluating progress toward a performance target, based on rates of improvement from frequent (typically weekly or biweekly) assessment of specified skills.

**Reliability.** Refers to the degree to which an assessment tool produces the same repeated result under the same conditions.

**Sensitivity.** Refers to how correctly an assessment tool identifies students who possess a specific skill, knowledge, or learning difficulty.

**Serviceable Base Rate.** The percentage of students a team can feasibly support, based upon existing resources and personnel.

**Simple Functional Behavioral Assessment.** A streamlined process used to understand the purpose or function of a specific behavior. It helps identify why a behavior is occurring so that effective interventions can be developed.

**Specificity.** Refers to how accurately an assessment identifies students who truly do not exhibit the targeted learning difficulty or characteristic.

**Standardized Assessment.** An evaluation tool with established statistical reliability and validity that requires all test takers to answer the same items/questions in the same way. It is scored in a standard or consistent way, thus making it possible to compare the relative performance of individuals or groups of individuals

**Tier 1 Core Instruction (all students).** High-quality, research-based core curriculum and universal support that is provided to all students in a district. It is designed to meet the academic and behavioral needs of the majority of learners, with the goal of being effective for at least 80% of the student population.

**Tier 2 Targeted Supplemental Interventions (some students).** Researched-based supplemental targeted instruction for small groups of students. Tier 2 is provided in addition to Tier 1 core instruction, to students for additional academic or behavior support.

**Tier 3 Intensive Interventions (few students).** Individualized intensive interventions, occurring with smaller student-teacher ratios, more frequently, and usually for a longer duration of time.

**Universal Screening System.** A structured process used to assess all students within a school or district to identify those who may be at risk for academic or behavioral challenges. It is a key component of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS).

**Validity.** Refers to how consistently and accurately an assessment measures the skills and abilities it is designed to measure.

**References** (adapted from)

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