

# Chapter 6

## Assessing DHH Students: A Better Understanding of Curriculum-Based Measurement

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Schools have been tasked with ensuring students eventually become active participants in society, and with this responsibility comes increased accountability. Curriculum-based measurement (CBM) serves as an assessment tool that measures mastery of basic skills and is an efficient means for monitoring short-term and long-term progress. A significant amount of research indicates CBM procedures have been used in the content areas reading, mathematics, and writing, and demonstrates, when used correctly to inform instruction, student achievement improves. This chapter incorporates information related to using CBM with deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) learners, the characteristics of CBM, and the process for using CBM to guide instruction centered around a case study of a novice deaf education teacher's ability to use CBM over the course of her second semester.*

### INTRODUCTION

A hallmark of public education in the United States across content areas has a longstanding history of student assessment and more recently accountability (see Fitzpatrick, 2010; Fitzpatrick & Neild, 2017; Neild & Fitzpatrick, 2020). The *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* was passed in 1965, creating a role for

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-5834-1.ch006

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the federal government in K-12 policy (Fitzpatrick & Knowlton, 2009). The primary purpose of the first statutory section, known as Title I, was to support school districts in covering the costs of educating disadvantaged and high-risk students. Since the initial legislation was established, the law has been reauthorized or revised numerous times, including the *No Child Left Behind Act* (2002), *Race to the Top* (2008), and *Every Student Succeeds Act* (2015), expanding the role of the federal government and holding schools, teachers, and students more accountable for learning and achievement (Klein, 2015).

These amendments have increased and shifted the focus for education stakeholders to student performance on statewide assessments due to the predictive features of later school success, graduation, post-secondary achievement, and employment (Hernandez, 2014). It is problematic to expect annual statewide assessments, during specific grade levels to provide information required to support academic and social-emotional behavioral needs for each student for long stretches of time (Missall et al., 2019). Given the importance of reaching acceptable levels of proficiency across content areas, the increased accountability brought about seeking better solutions to gathering information about the whole student and their learning needs (Missall et al., 2019).

One option that started as a universal screening is curriculum-based measurement (CBM) which was originally created in the 1980s by Deno and colleagues at the University of Minnesota (Deno, 1985, 1992). CBM is frequently given, quick to administer, allows teacher judgment to be considered, and is reliable in collecting information related to academic progress toward long-term annual goals (Deno, 1985; Missall et al., 2019). In addition, this approach provides a standardized procedure—discussed in the *Characteristics of CBM* section—for measuring student progress in academic areas (i.e., reading, writing, math, & spelling) and social-emotional behavioral development (Deno, 1985, 1992).

One accomplishment of CBM is that it made quality assessment practices available to all students, leading to purposeful instruction, regardless of a student's educational placement (Cawthon, 2013). Since the initial use of CBM over 40 years ago, the spectrum of its use and purpose has grown much broader, and expansion of research to support its efficacy. It is currently used to screen for academic difficulties, set individual goals and benchmarks, inform eligibility decisions, and make instructional changes (Ardoin & Christ, 2009; Patton et al., 2014; Wiley & Deno, 2009).

Utilizing data has become a required part of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act* (IDEIA, 2004) and is a critical component of the individualized education program (IEP). Using data to make informed decisions led to policy makers, researchers, and educators to continue using, revising, and expanding the uses of CBM beyond progress monitoring for students with disabilities (Swain & Hagaman, 2020). With the increased presence of the federal government in K-12

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