Drive Growth with MAP: Six Powerful Approaches

Educators use MAP assessment data to better understand the learning needs of every student. Here are six ways MAP data is commonly used to promote a positive educational experience—and significant student growth—throughout the year.
Differentiating Instruction

Students within the same class often perform at different grade levels, and educators face the challenge of ensuring that every child—from the highest to the lowest achievers—continues to grow. MAP data make it easy to identify learning levels so teachers can engage in differentiated instruction and ability grouping that leads to positive results for every student.

Instead of teaching to the whole class, the teachers are able to challenge them at the appropriate level within that skill set. And MAP scores form the baseline. It’s the first of several data points used to determine where they are instructionally on that skill.

Frank Reliford
Principal
Dee-Mack Intermediate School, Illinois

Using MAP as a Universal Screener/RTI Placement Tool

A foundational component to an RTI system is the use of universal screening tools that can be used to both identify those students at risk of academic failure and inform a learning plan. MAP fills that need by adapting beyond grade to find the true level of a student’s performance. MAP assessments received the highest possible rating for classification accuracy and high ratings in all other categories from the National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI).

Before using MAP, we were missing the full picture of how to teach kids who were gifted and talented, or struggling to learn, or were English language learners....But now that we know what our students are ready to learn before we even begin teaching them, growth is inevitable—even for our gifted and talented and Title I students.

Linda Foote
Instructional Technology Specialist
Poway Unified School District, California

Read the case study, Using Data to Focus Curriculum on Improvement and Differentiation.

Read the case study, Using MAP Scores as a Key Data Point for RTI.
Evaluating Programs

With tightening budgets and expanding student populations, MAP data have become a key component in assessing the impact of specific programs. MAP scores contribute to understanding what works, so when special programs are instituted, educators can see precisely how much growth has occurred with participating students.

“...It’s refined what we’re doing. We are doing a better job of looking at what makes a difference with students. And if we have a program that’s not showing results on MAP, then we’d get rid of it. It helps us utilize our resources better.”

Dr. Lewis Holloway
Superintendent
Bulloch County Schools, Georgia

Setting Student Goals

Students become more committed to the learning process when they can set goals and see results. Using the Student Goal Setting worksheet and other NWEA tools, it’s easy for teachers and students to build an action plan together and for parents to become engaged in the process.

“...Students can see how much they need to grow in each area, and that adds a lot to the ownership. After a child finishes, they can see their MAP test results immediately; so that in turn helps that student take part in the whole process. It’s right there for them.”

Marlin Baker
Principal
Brooklet Elementary School, Georgia

Read the case study, Reversing Low Performance with an Innovative Approach to Instruction and Measurement

Read the case study, Using Data to Turn Around School Performance and Accelerate Growth for Every Child.
**Predicting College Readiness**

To help educators build an educational foundation for college success—years in advance—researchers from the Kingsbury Center at NWEA created the NWEA College Readiness Linking Study. The study conclusively shows high predictive relationships between students’ scores on MAP assessments and the college readiness benchmarks of the EXPLORE®, PLAN®, and ACT® achievement tests.

> You can do a lot of good work in the primary grades. But if the students don’t do well on the ACT, then what was the point? The NWEA College Readiness Linking Study really helped us make the connection between what we were doing in the classroom and how we expected students to do on the ACT. That has been a great resource.

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> Dr. Cade Douglas  
> Director of Student Learning  
> Sevier School District, Utah

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**Projecting Proficiency on State Tests**

MAP assessments are closely aligned to the Common Core and individual state standards, so test results can be used to project proficiency on high-stakes tests. Common Core MAP includes technology-enhanced and multiple-choice item types and features that allow for deep assessment of reading, language usage, and mathematics comprehension and increased cognitive complexity, enabling students to demonstrate evidence of their learning.

> If we didn’t have MAP, we’d have no idea what to expect from and how to prepare for ISTEP+ [the Indiana state-mandated test]. Teachers gain valuable insights into the way students learn, so they can best support them in meeting growth targets and passing important tests.

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> Barbara Campbell  
> Staff Development Coordinator  
> Mt. Vernon Schools, Indiana

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> Read NWEA partner case studies on these topics and more.