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eBook

Using MAP Growth data to inform instruction

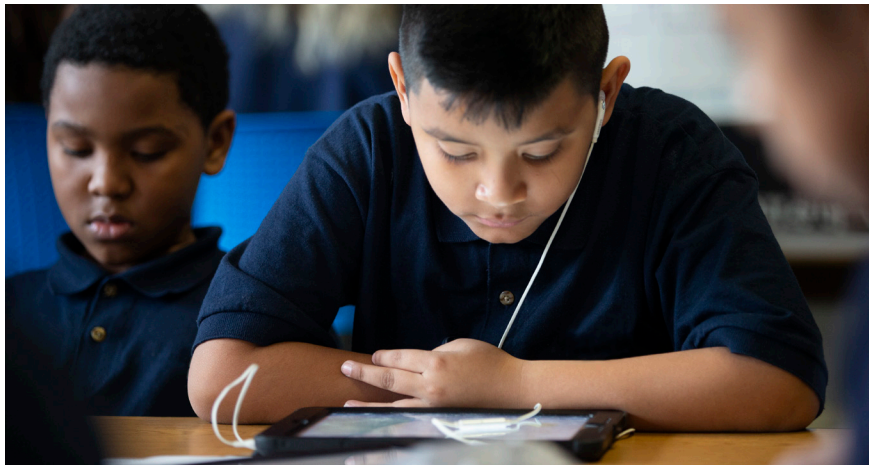
There is a wide middle ground that exists between teachers' day-to-day formative assessment of student learning and the formal protocols of state summative assessment. This middle ground offers opportunities—captured under the umbrella term interim assessment—to gather information about many things that are relevant to the teaching and learning process, including:

- individual and collective student growth
- effectiveness of teaching practices, programs, and initiatives
- projection of whether a student, class, or school is on track to achieve established proficiency benchmarks
- instructional needs of individual students

Another purpose of interim assessment is to help teachers make decisions around differentiating instruction. If the assessment is adaptive, those decisions can better serve all the students in the class—not only those who are ready to learn at grade level. Within any given classroom, teachers will have students who are ready to go deep with concepts, be challenged, and apply and expand their learning. Conversely, there will be other students who need to learn foundational concepts and skills before they're prepared for grade-level concepts and skills. Interim assessment can help identify gaps so that all students have the opportunity to grow—no matter where they are starting.

MAP® Growth™ K–12 interim assessments can measure student growth, project proficiency on state accountability tests, and inform how educators differentiate instruction, evaluate programs, and structure curriculum. They can reveal precisely which academic skills and concepts a student has acquired and what they're ready to learn. They are grade independent and adapt to each student's instructional level. At the heart of all this is the data the MAP Growth assessment provides.

MAP Growth data is powerful and can be put to great use to improve instruction and accelerate student learning. Here are six examples of how teachers can use the data to inform instruction:



01. **To compare and predict student achievement.** Using exclusive normative and growth information, MAP Growth assessment data can be accurately used to compare and predict student achievement.

02. **As a universal screener/RTI placement.** MAP Growth assessments adapt beyond grade level to find the true level of a student's performance, helping educators identify at-risk students and build a learning plan. MAP Growth assessments have received the highest possible rating for classification accuracy, and high ratings in all other categories, from the National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI).

03. **For differentiated instruction.** Students within the same grade often perform at different levels, and educators face the challenge of ensuring that all students—from highest to lowest achievers—continue to grow. MAP Growth data make it easy to identify learning levels, so teachers can engage in differentiated instruction and skill-based grouping that lead to positive results for every child.

04. **For student goal setting.** Students become more committed to the learning process when they can set goals and see results. Using the Student Goal-Setting Worksheet and other MAP Growth tools, it's easy for teachers and students to build an action plan together and for parents to become engaged in the process.

05. **To predict proficiency.** MAP Growth provides information on where students are performing on individual state and Common Core standards, so test results can be used to project proficiency on summative tests. MAP Growth includes technology-enhanced item types and features that allow for deep assessment of reading, language usage, and mathematics comprehension as well as increased cognitive complexity, or Depth of Knowledge, enabling students to demonstrate evidence of their learning.

06. **For parent communication.** MAP Growth helps parents see where students are starting from and track their growth over time.

This best of Teach. Learn. Grow. eBook will explore three examples from NWEA® experts and customers:

- **Kathy Dyer**, Manager of Professional Learning Design at NWEA, writes about how to put MAP Growth assessment data to work in the classroom
- **John Wood**, Consultant for Education Strategy at NWEA, will then share how the learning continuum within MAP Growth can help teachers make informed decisions
- We will wrap it up with practical strategies from MAP Growth users at the **Beaufort County School District** in South Carolina on how to make the most of assessment data

3 ways to put assessment data to work

Getting data into the hands of teachers and school leaders to inform instructional decisions is what gives assessment its power. Timeliness is key, as is structuring opportunities for application of the data. Using actionable assessment data can help all stakeholders—teachers, administrators, and students—advance learning.

MAP Growth interim assessments give students, parents, and educators more than just a score—these assessments deliver data that can actually be used in real time to make a difference in education. That's why it's so crucial that assessments provide actionable and timely data. Data from MAP Growth tests helps educators differentiate instruction based on student readiness, set academic goals with students, and evaluate programs, including professional learning programs. Here are three ways that assessment data can be used in the classroom, along with examples of how to do it.

1. Differentiate instruction by student readiness

Good interim assessment data lets teachers know exactly where each student is compared to their classmates and national-level peers. This data allows a teacher to meet students within their zone of proximal development (ZPD), the optimal spot where instruction is most beneficial for each student—or just beyond his or her current level of independent capability. The ZPD is not about a student's ability to learn, but rather about what skills and understanding the student is ready to develop with targeted assistance or scaffolding. With our MAP Growth assessments, this is done via a grade-independent RIT score that measures academic growth much like a yardstick might measure physical growth. This actionable assessment data help teachers inform instructional decisions for flexible groupings, supporting differentiation based on student readiness.

How? Here's an example.

Ms. Ramirez is teaching a 4th grade lesson on the topic of perimeter. Using MAP Growth data in the Class View, she determines three manageable flexible groups, the students associated with each group, and what learning statements are pertinent for each group.

The learning statements support teachers, like Ms. Ramirez, in scaffolding instructional activities, effectively accessing each student's ZPD. Using content from the school's curriculum, along with MAP Growth resources such as MAP® to Khan Academy, teachers like Ms. Ramirez can build responsive lesson plans in alignment with learning statements. Pairing MAP Growth data with formative assessment practices, teachers can then adjust instruction in the moment based on student feedback.

2. Set academic goals

Including students in setting their academic goals is important. With MAP Growth assessments, teachers can use the growth projection data and learning statements to develop individual academic learning goals with students. Going beyond the individual student level, teachers and school leaders can identify strengths and areas for improvement in goal performance areas for classrooms, schools, or entire districts. Creating a data-centric school culture, engaging students and parents in the goal-setting process, and celebrating student progress will help instill a culture of goal setting that has a lasting impact.

RIT range	Students	Learning statements
171–200	J.A. Cambridge E.H. Horton L.L. Wojnarowski A.H. Frisino D.H. Engles	Determines perimeters of basic polygons with all sides labeled
201–210	J.L. Russell L.E. Kong J.B. Dotson D.A. Patel	Determines perimeters of basic polygons in which not all sides are labeled
211–220	R.N. Sandoval M.G. Moyer B.O. Esteban	Counts to find perimeters of complex figures

How? Here's an example.

Mr. Waller reviews all of his 3rd grade class' growth projections for math. He notices Louis has a projected growth RIT score of 183, and based on his state's cut score ranges, Louis needs a score of 195 to meet proficiency. In a goal-setting conference, Mr. Waller and Louis dig deeper into the data using the Student Goal-Setting Worksheet and uncover goal areas of strength and opportunity. Agreeing on a mid-year RIT goal of 190 and an end-of-year RIT goal of 195, they choose a few learning statements from the learning continuum to develop into specific student goals. Throughout the year, they track progress toward the goals.

Going beyond the individual student level, teachers and school leaders can identify strengths and areas for improvement in MAP Growth goal performance areas for classrooms, schools, or entire districts.

3. Evaluate programs and target professional learning

Schools and districts can use data to evaluate curricula and intervention programs, inform changes in instructional practice, and target professional development. Status and growth data, when using the MAP Growth assessment, can help identify what's working and point to successful programs that can be scaled up. It helps answer questions like:

- Did the students in our new math program experience higher rates of growth than other students?
- Where do our teachers need to focus instructionally?
- What kind of professional development will assist our district in targeting areas of concern?

How? Here's an example.

The Shaw School District implemented a new 4th grade reading program that emphasizes future readiness shifts in reading, including more focus on informational texts and eliciting evidence from texts. Analyzing MAP Growth data from fall to spring revealed that the majority of individual students made significant gains, even though most of the students stayed within their achievement level (i.e., needs improvement, proficient, etc.). Instead of abandoning the reading program, the district decided to continue its use for 4th grade and extend it to the incoming 5th graders in order to chart its effects on longitudinal growth. Disaggregating the data presented specific goal areas that experienced lower rates of growth than other areas. The district targeted teacher professional learning to address these areas in which students were exhibiting insufficient growth.

Using student growth data to inform instruction can be a valuable and efficient tool for driving students' academic gains. When you make data actionable, you make assessment matter. To fully benefit from assessment, students and teachers need to use the data to invoke meaningful change. This keeps the focus where it should be—on student learning.

Using assessment data to make informed decisions isn't always easy, but the learning continuum tool within MAP Growth can help, and John Wood shares some ways to use it.

6 ways to use the learning continuum

MAP Growth and MAP Growth K–2 interim assessments include our interactive teacher tool, the learning continuum. The learning continuum lets teachers see what students performing at a given RIT level on the MAP Growth assessments are typically ready to learn. Then teachers can use the learning statements within the continuum to drive their instruction. It can also be a great tool to help teachers build an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

The learning continuum can be a powerful tool and can help aid decision-making inside and outside the classroom in these six meaningful ways:

01. **Empowers teachers to maximize every student's academic growth.** It helps guide instruction for students at all levels, including Gifted and Talented, Title I, and English Language Learners (ELL).

02. **Supports personalized learning paths.** It enables teachers to easily scaffold instruction for all students.

03. **Informs instructional time and flexible grouping.** It makes it simpler for teachers to support students struggling with grade-level content and permits challenge high-performance students with new and more complex material.

04. **Aids in curriculum planning.** It serves as a resource when developing curriculum, refining pacing, or revising programs.

05. **Offers insight relevant to school improvement planning.** It informs placement, grade-level planning, content area planning, and staffing priorities.

06. **Provides discussion points for parent-teacher conferences.** It connects a student's MAP Growth test scores to concrete skills and concepts, making it easier for parents to reinforce goals.

Along with the learning continuum, teachers can tap into other MAP Growth resources that help drive personalized learning paths.

- Use an individual student's RIT score in math from MAP Growth to identify standards-aligned instructional resources from Khan Academy.

- Connect students' RIT scores to an array of instructional resources to help schools and districts get more from tools they're already using, like Dreambox® Learning, Study Island®, Learning A–Z, and many more.

No matter where your students are performing, assessment information can be a critical tool in pinpointing students' unique needs and tailoring instruction accordingly—and thereby expanding the achievement possibilities for all your students.

3 strategies for embracing assessment data

Assessment data and the tools within MAP Growth can be powerful for teachers, but the data must be embraced by the entire teaching team. As Sarah Beachkofsky, an 8th grade English language arts (ELA) teacher in the Beaufort County School District in South Carolina, said:

"The word 'data' has the potential to make even the most seasoned teacher break out in a sweat, like the kid sitting in the back who forgot there was a summative assessment today."

Despite the myriad changes to the educational landscape in South Carolina, the teaching staff and administrative team at the Beaufort County School District created an environment in which student data informs instruction, positively impacts student growth, and instills confidence in their teaching staff. Here are three strategies that helped get them there:

1. Spread the gospel of growth

Brooke Rowe is not only the district's data support coordinator—she's also a former classroom teacher with first-hand understanding of the demands of the job. "The main reason MAP Growth is valuable to me and our teachers is it allows us to focus on student growth. Not every child will perform at grade level, but the important thing we want teachers to be thinking about is making sure their students are growing… Our teachers understand that the data is not being used to evaluate them, but rather to inform their practice as an educator."

2. Make the reporting work for YOU

"Data. Driven. Analysis. Those three words have the potential to destroy any ELA teacher's day, right?" joked Beachkofsky. "[MAP Growth] has allowed me, regardless of course, section, level, or grade, the ability to pull the pertinent data about my students and their academic achievement so I can target my instruction to best meet their needs."

"The Class Report [is] a short, easy-to-read document that provides me with students' RIT levels and shows their relative strengths and growth areas. In the past two years, the information from this report pinpointed the grade-wide strand that the ELA department needed to focus on strengthening." The result? Beachkofsky's school had the highest growth in the district at the 7th grade level in 2016.

The Achievement Status and Growth (ASG) Report is also essential to the district's instructional planning. "Many teachers were initially overwhelmed with reading and analyzing the data. When the ASG Summary was introduced to them, it changed their outlook on how to use data in the classroom. This visual report allows them to immediately see where their students are and how they are progressing," said middle school instructional coach Kim Stanziola.

3. Don't leave standards to chance

When the unpredictable nature of state standards reared its head, Beaufort brought the first two strategies together, combining Rowe's guidance and support with the right MAP Growth reports and resources.

"The latest MAP to SC Ready correlation has proven incredibly valuable. I can reflect on student growth and how it is projected to impact the students' overall achievement," said Beachkofsky.

"In the past, since our state test changed numerous times, it was a bit like a hope and prayer that what we had been teaching would connect with that year's new state assessment."

Teachers depend on MAP Growth data to help them streamline teaching strategies, differentiate instruction, and create flexible grouping across the classroom. School and district leaders use MAP Growth data to evaluate programs and monitor school and student performance relative to growth, proficiency, and norms. District decision-makers rely on MAP Growth data to aid in resource management, help determine performance trends by grade and school, and compare local student achievement to a national scale. And MAP Growth data can help all of these educators make the tough decisions necessary to improve student learning.

MAP Growth assessment data can be a powerful tool for teachers looking to inform their instruction. Be sure to check out the online instructional connections that can help you get the most out of MAP Growth data. And learn more about how to turn insights into action with the MAP Suite of assessments from NWEA.

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