Two Excellent Behavioral Progress Monitoring Tools
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In my 16-plus years at SESA as an Emotional Disabilities Specialist, behavioral data collection is often a challenging topic. The reasons for this are varied. Sometimes it isn't easy to know precisely what and how to measure and monitor a student's progress. One recurrent problem is the overuse of running records by teams. Running records requires a team member to sit in the classroom and generate a continuous narrative of student behavior and the instructional environment. A little bit of qualitative data can be helpful, but running records often become very subjective, laborious for the staff member, and challenging and unhelpful. Running records often get in the way of educating, supporting, and intervening with a student's challenging behaviors. All of the SESA Specialists can help teams with monitoring a student's progress in ways that support a student's IEP. Given my training and experience, the measurement of behavior is my area of expertise. Whether it be a problem behavior or pro-social behavior, I frequently help teams set up progress monitoring systems to measure student behavior. Specialists can support teams with technical assistance and how to measure and monitor target behaviors. For example, they can let teams know if they should measure a student's behavior using frequency, rate, latency, intensity, or percent of opportunity and how to collect, organize and make sense of the data systematically. Training resources are often recommended that address progress monitoring, such as the free [online training](#) by the National Center on Intensive Interventions (NCII).

The ideal progress monitoring plan typically involves collecting objective, accurate data. Moreover, the ideal approach allows teams to generate a line graph for those problem behaviors (i.e., targeted for reduction) and line graphs for adaptive, pro-social behaviors (i.e., targeted for increase). Two excellent progress monitoring methods for teams in many situations are the individualized Behavior Rating Scale Tool (IBRSS) and Direct Behavior Ratings (DBRs). Both approaches can be implemented using a hardcopy or digital format with a secure online survey system.

The IBRST Method
The [IBRST](#) (i.e., previously called the Behavior Rating Scale (BRS) and still often referred to as such) is an excellent progress monitoring tool and can monitor the progress of students who require intensive behavior interventions and support. The IBRST/BRS method is an evidence-based, relatively easy way to monitor a student's progress because it uses a perceptual rating scale approach. Educators use operational definitions of behavior and baseline data to develop five-point anchored ratings. The number of educators using this perceptual rating approach gained much usage after the publication of [Prevent-Teacher-Reinforce (P-T-R)](#) by Dunlap, Iovannone, et al. in 2009. The P-T-R model of school-based PBS relies heavily on the BRS approach. Click [here](#) for further explanations on how to set up the IBRST/BRS and some examples.

The DBR Method
Another handy progress monitoring tool is Direct Behavior Ratings (DBR). Similar to the BRS/IBRST, it is a perceptual rating scale and combines characteristics of direct observations and behavior rating scales. However, DBRs use a 10-point rating scale rather than a five-point scale like the IBRST/BRS. The DBR process involves rating student behaviors following a specified observation period, often naturally occurring routines or school periods, during the target student's school day. Then, the observer rates the target student(s) using the standard [core DBR behaviors of academically engaged, respectful behavior, and disruptive behavior](#) or

create one or more [DBR Single Item Scales (DBR-SIS)](). The DBRs are easy to implement and can quickly be done by a general education teacher or paraprofessional. DBRs provide educators a means to connect [assessment](), [intervention]() (e.g., DBR linked to a reinforcement or self-management system), and progress monitoring activities. The DBR approach is a simple, inexpensive method to monitor student progress and facilitate stakeholder communication. The DBRs method works best when raters are trained to accuracy. The great news is that this can be easily accomplished with about 45 minutes of training time using DBR's free [online training portal]() for those teachers and paraprofessional staff members who will be rating a student. Special education administrators, coordinators, and case managers can learn more about implementing DBRs by clicking on the hyperlinks in this paragraph and by accessing the [DBR forms and materials library](). There are even DBR graphing templates available in the form library!