# Tennessee TSC
## Tiered Supports Center

# The Drill-Down Process

## Conduct Universal Screening

### Steps

- Administer a universal screener to all students.

- Gather additional data, including drill-down assessments if necessary.

- Use all gathered data to begin to identify students at risk of academic failure, who may need intervention, and their broad areas of need.

### Do:

- Administer a nationally normed, skills-based universal screener in reading, math, and written expression and collect other sources of data for grades K-8.

- Use one of the seven board approved screeners for K-3 reading screening.

- Collect multiple sources of data including the areas of attendance, behavior, and academic competency for all students to incorporate into an Early Warning System (EWS) for grades 9-12.

- Complete screening three times per year for grades K-6, three times per year for students at risk for grades 7-12, and annually for students not at risk for grades 7-12.

### Don't:

- Rigidly apply risk thresholds to identify students for intervention.

- Use a universal screener alone to identify students for intervention.

- Stop collecting data after universal screening.

## Gather and Analyze Existing Data

### Steps

- For any student identified as at-risk, gather other existing data that provides more information.

- Summarize the data, listing skills the student has mastered, skills that are emerging, and skills that are unmastered.

- Use the data and summarized list to make hypotheses regarding the root cause of the problem for the at-risk student. Root causes are often prerequisite skills to unmastered skills.

- Reference standards to trace back and identify prerequisite skills covered in earlier grades that may be a root cause.

- Identify areas where data has not been gathered and additional assessments need to be administered.

### Do:

- Analyze data with a data-based decision-making team.

- Stick to essential, teachable skills when making hypotheses regarding the root cause.

- Conduct records reviews, including grades, attendance, and behavior patterns, to gain an understanding of the whole student.

- Gather classroom assessment data, including teacher-made tests, benchmark assessments, and common assessments aligned with broad area(s) of need.

- Discuss areas of concern with the student's current/previous teachers, family, and the student themselves to gather more information.

### Don't:

- Gather data but fail to analyze it.

- Only consider emerging or unmastered skills when generating a root cause.

- Continue collecting and analyzing data without a plan to move to the next step of the process.

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# Select and Administer Drill-Down Assessments

## Steps

- Select drill-down assessments according to the hypothesis made regarding the root cause of the problem for the at-risk student.

- If the results of the drill-down assessment support the hypothesis, then use the data to plan intervention.

- If the results of the drill-down assessment do not support the hypothesis, return to the previous step, reanalyze data, and readminister assessments as needed.

## Do:

- Link each drill-down assessment to a potential root cause.

- "Test back" until the simplest mastered skill is identified.

- Administer additional, grade-appropriate assessments in rapid automatized naming, decoding, and/or encoding to students who are identified at risk in reading to screen for characteristics of dyslexia.

## Don't:

- Administer assessments without purpose. For example, don't administer the phonics and word reading survey to a student without the hypothesis that the student has a deficit in decoding contributing to reading difficulties.

- Limit drill-down to one area without considering related and underlying skills.

# Plan Intervention

## Steps

- Use the results of the drill-down assessments to plan intervention.

- Select an intervention that provides instruction in the skill(s) the student is missing.

## Do:

- Consider all the skills the student is missing when planning intervention. Students may have multiple areas of need and require multiple interventions.

- Consider how interventions can be connected to grade-level content to prepare for transfer of skills to the general education setting.

## Don't:

- Practice skills in isolation only. For example, only practice decoding lists of words and not apply the skill to decoding words in passages.

- Fail to align interventions for students with complex needs. For example, students with academic and behavioral interventions or English Learners in math or reading interventions.

# Examples of Drill-Down Assessments

| Reading | Writing | Math |
|---|---|---|
| Phonological Awareness Skills Screener | Written Expression CBM Analysis | Error Analysis |
| Phonics and Word Reading Survey | Primary Spelling Inventory * | Mathematics Assessment Supplement |
| Phonics Inventory | 4-12 Encoding Guidance * | |

\* Resource provided by the Tennessee Department of Education

For more information on the drill-down process, see our module Responding to the Data: Planning Reading Interventions and case studies for practice applying the process.