

April 7, 2020

The focus of this outreach is to take a moment to update you, our partners, on how STEP is modifying operations to provide support during this unprecedented time.

STEP continues to remain passionately dedicated to improving educational outcomes for students. As regions of the U.S. mandate public closures and self-quarantine, we know many of our partner schools have temporarily, if not indefinitely, moved to virtual learning. We know that you, like so many other educators and schools, are seeking solutions and advice for how best to instruct, support, and measure the progress of your students while in a distance learning capacity. Everyone wants to do right by their students and all are worried about regression and lack of data on student progress.

Rather than attempting to assess students using STEP in a virtual setting, we are instead currently recommending a focus on instruction and progress monitoring through the use of the STEP level progress monitoring checklists. The STEP Assessment is not validated for virtual administration, in addition to the fact that this is something that most schools are not yet equipped to do from a technical standpoint. There are many variables that would currently cause uncertainty in data resulting from a virtual assessment round. These include, but are not limited to: difficulty accessing, sharing and or referencing text during reading record, retell and comp conversations; allowing students to independently read the text and respond to written comprehension questions when the teacher has the text and the student cannot easily submit their responses; challenges tracking what student behaviors are or are not being exhibited through the virtual space, etc. In addition to the attachments noted below, please visit steptool.org which will post blog updates with the most current information and any additional free resources from STEP to utilize during this time.

We are providing a variety of resources that are temporarily open to all and linked to our website, including the following:

1. Instructional & assessment guidance/advice from STEP
2. STEP progress monitoring checklists, which have just undergone a very light set of updates and revisions, in which the highest leverage skills and behaviors aligned to STEP Bottom Lines are now highlighted in yellow.
3. STEP Parent Guides: Pre Reading through STEP 12
4. Links to the STEP Instructional Tips typically accessed via steptool.org
 - a. Links to Instructional Tips:
 - a. <https://stepdmssupport.wordpress.com/step-pre-reading-instructional-tips/>
 - b. <https://stepdmssupport.wordpress.com/step-1-instructional-tips/>
 - c. <https://stepdmssupport.wordpress.com/step-2-instructional-tips/>
 - d. <https://stepdmssupport.wordpress.com/step-3-instructional-tips/>
 - e. <https://stepdmssupport.wordpress.com/step-4-instructional-tips/>
 - f. <https://stepdmssupport.wordpress.com/step-5-instructional-tips/>
 - g. <https://stepdmssupport.wordpress.com/step-6-instructional-tips/>
 - h. <https://stepdmssupport.wordpress.com/step-7-instructional-tips/>
 - i. <https://stepdmssupport.wordpress.com/step-8-instructional-tips/>
 - j. <https://stepdmssupport.wordpress.com/step-9-instructional-tips/>
 - k. <https://stepdmssupport.wordpress.com/step-10-instructional-tips/>
 - l. <https://stepdmssupport.wordpress.com/step-11-instructional-tips/>
 - m. <https://stepdmssupport.wordpress.com/step-12-instructional-tips/>

In the coming weeks, our colleagues on the STEP Data Management Team will also be providing guidance on how you might consider addressing your assessment and data needs in the fall, assuming schools are back in session. We know that you will be thinking about growth targets, stale data, etc. We are already working through options and potential alternate solutions. Any schools wishing to discuss considerations related to their use of STEP during the 2020-21 school year, please connect with step@uchicago.edu.

We firmly believe people are our greatest asset. We remain grateful for your partnership and appreciate all that you continue to do each and every day to support teachers and students.