

## GOLD and IGDIs...Unique and Complementary

Building awareness for how GOLD and IGDIs can be used *together* as part of a comprehensive assessment system has been challenging. To increase understanding how GOLD and IGDIs complement one another, one must understand the different purposes that each assessment can serve. Assessments are built to serve specific purposes. Because of this, they often work better for some things than they do for others. In reality, the same assessment might have some utility for more than one purpose. The key is that it is important to know what purpose you have when you look at the data – what decisions you are going to be making with the data. What follows is a comparison of IGDIs and GOLD for the primary purposes of assessment.

| Purpose              | GOLD                     | IGDIs                |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Screening            | NO                       | YES                  |
| Diagnostic           | Potentially <sup>1</sup> | NO                   |
| Formative Assessment | YES <sup>2</sup>         | NO                   |
| Progress Monitoring  | NO                       | Not yet <sup>3</sup> |
| Summative            | YES <sup>4</sup>         | YES                  |

Notes:

<sup>1</sup>While not necessarily designed as a comprehensive diagnostic test, informal analysis of child documentation can lead to an understanding of strengths and weaknesses.

<sup>2</sup>This would be appropriate only if GOLD is used as an ongoing portfolio of child learning and development, including reflection on child progress and if changes in instruction were made based on interpretation of complete information in GOLD.

<sup>3</sup>There is work in progress to validate IGDIs measures for progress monitoring but the evidence of the effectiveness of IGDIs for progress monitoring is not there yet.

<sup>4</sup> GOLD may be used as an interim summative assessment for measuring growth from fall to winter, winter to spring, or fall to spring.

**GOLD:**

- Screening: The test was not designed for screening. In fact, the authors have explicitly stated that GOLD is not meant as a screening measure.
- Diagnostic: While not intended as diagnostic by the publisher, results can indicate areas of strength and weakness through careful interpretation processes.
- Formative Assessment: When GOLD is fully implemented, teachers can upload documentation of what children demonstrate on an ongoing basis and use that documentation to plan small groups and plan individualized scaffolding. Under full implementation, it is the primary intended purpose to use GOLD for formative decision making.
- Progress Monitoring (PM): GOLD can't work for progress monitoring. The GOLD assessment itself was not designed by the publisher for frequent monitoring of progress, nor has it been validated for this purpose.
- Summative: GOLD's progress checkpoints may also be used to summarize children's status compared to reasonable expectations for development and learning at 3 times during the year.

## IGDIs:

- Screening: Tests have been validated for use in screening. This means that specific research and development was done to make sure the tests do a good job of efficiently identifying children predicted to be on track for success vs. those who may be at risk.
- Diagnostic: Individual tests may indicate strengths and weaknesses, but were not designed as diagnostic inventories. Items on each test were selected to screen effectively, not to sample all relevant skills.
- Formative Assessment: The IGDIs tests are not administered frequently enough to inform ongoing instruction.
- Progress Monitoring (PM): There is work in progress to validate IGDIs measure for PM but the evidence of the effectiveness of IGDIs to monitor progress is not there yet.
- Summative: Screening results can answer summative questions about universal instruction (e.g., How effective was instruction and learning opportunities provided to all children? Did most children meet the target score/benchmark? Do we need to change instruction and learning opportunities provided to all children?)

In an *assessment system* for early childhood, GOLD plays the role of providing summative data about young children's growth on curriculum-based objectives across areas of development from fall to winter and from winter to spring. GOLD is meant to be used on a regular basis, *i.e.*, documentation frequently uploaded for each child on a variety of objectives, with reflection on progress or lack of progress. If GOLD is used as intended, it may be useful to help make decisions about changes to improve curriculum and instruction or supports for groups or individual children.

In an *assessment system* for early childhood, IGDIs *complements* GOLD by serving the purpose of universal screening for emerging literacy for all children. Benchmarks identified based on research allow for decision making up to three times a year about a child's need for additional opportunities for learning beyond what is provided to all children. IGDIs data may also be used summatively, e.g., in the spring to address, for example:

1. Did the kids who were at risk get better by spring?
2. Did all children improve? In all measured domains? As a group, in which domains are the strengths and weaknesses? How might I use this information to improve classroom instruction, routines, and opportunities?

GOLD is a developmental comprehensive classroom assessment; IGDIs specifically addresses emerging literacy. It is also important to recognize that GOLD serves assessment purposes that IGDIs cannot (*i.e.*, formative assessment), and IGDIs serves assessment purposes that GOLD cannot (*i.e.*, screening). In conclusion, while GOLD and IGDIs serve unique purposes, they are complementary of one another. Both contribute to a comprehensive early childhood assessment system.