Script for Issues that influence Decisions DBD 060310

There are a few issues that must be taken into consideration when making a decision about student performance. The first of these is the number of items in the data set the student is working on. Let’s consider a task analysis that has 12 steps. In the baseline the student can get 1 out of 12, 1 out of 12 and 2 out of 12 making it 4 out of 36 or 11% performance rate. Let’s go to the last three data points. The student can have 2 out of 12, 2 out of 12 and 2 out of 12 making it 6 out of 36 meaning they got 2 more responses correct in the last three data points than the first three data points. That would be a 17% change. That shows that the student actually made a 6% growth from the first three data points to the last three data points simply because of the number in the task analysis we are working on.

Now let’s go to a task analysis or let’s say they had a repeated trial and they are working on 3 new vocabulary words. And we have a 1 out of 3, 0 out of 3, and 0 out of 3 on their first three data points giving us a 1 out of 9 which is an 11% performance rate. Let’s move to the last three. We get a 1 out of 3, 1 out of 3, and 0 out of 3 meaning the student only got 1 more response correct. But because it is 2 out of 9 now it is a 22% performance rate which means they have grown 11% because they got an additional one more correct! Those numbers can sometimes skew the data that we are looking at so we have to look at not only the student performance and the graph but the percentage change as well. The percentage change may not be accurate for what the student performance actually represents.

The second issue may be related to the mastery level set for the student during the benchmark review. Let’s consider a student who is working on 4 vocabulary words in a science unit. If the mastery level is set at 50%, the student is expected to master 2 of those sight words during that benchmark review time period. If the student does that (they make 50% of their goal), they are actually mastering the goal set for them during the benchmark time period. But that is not the entire goal. The entire goal is 4 sight words. So, the student would need a second benchmark time period to master those other two sight words to get to the 100% that would be the expectation of student performance over time. The mastery level influences the decision that can be made about a student’s performance during a benchmark period.