

**UNIVERSAL SCREENING FOR SOCIAL EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES: IS
DIBELS AN OPTION?**

by

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ABSTRACT

To be successful in school and in life students need to possess academic as well as social emotional competencies (Bridgeland, Bruce, & Hariharan, 2013; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Zins & Elias, 2007). Academic skills include the ability to read, write and count whereas social and emotional competencies refer to skills that allow an individual to get along with others by being in control of their own behaviors (Zins & Elias, 2007). For social emotional and academic programming to be effective, schools need to have a data-driven system to facilitate and monitor student progress. A screening and progress monitoring system allows educators to pinpoint students who require targeted social emotional and/or academic learning opportunities and would inform on the effectiveness of intercessory programming. Such a system would ensure that students' learning opportunities are optimally effective. Whereas academic assessments are plentiful, a stumbling block has been the lack of measurement tools for social emotional competencies, necessary for the identification of students in need of intervention (Maras, Thompson, Lewis, Thornburg, & Hawks, 2014; Nese et al., 2012). This study investigates the viability of utilizing an established measure of literacy skill, which is widely used in school systems, to provide insight into students' social emotional competence. The author suggests that a reading fluency assessment may lend itself to inform on social emotional competence because both domains are processed in a similar area of the brain.

The statistically significant results of the hierarchical regression analysis used in this study suggest that further research into measures of affective skills should explore the correlation between academic skills and social emotional competency.

Key-words: social emotional competence; social emotional competency assessment