

# ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

## EVALUATING THE CLASSIFICATION VALIDITY OF DIBELS

### AS A UNIVERSAL SCREENING MEASURE

### FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

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The purpose of this study was to evaluate the validity of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS) Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) for English Language Learners (ELLs). Previous research indicates that the DIBELS NWF may not equally predict later reading proficiency for ELLs as compared to EO students. An ex post facto methodology was used to evaluate data from 483 first grade students. Analysis included correlations of NWF and the California Standards Test, an evaluation of the classification accuracy of DIBELS NWF, and a regression analysis to determine if the addition of a measure of language proficiency. No statistically significant difference was found in the classification accuracy of DIBELS NWF between the EO and ELL group. A hierarchical linear regression indicated that the addition of California English Language Development Test (CELDT) scores to NWF for the ELL group significantly improved the predictive accuracy of NWF. Recommendations from this study include: (a) continuing to use DIBELS NWF as a screening measure with ELLs, (b) disaggregate DIBELS results by

language proficiency to improve at-risk student identification, (c) complete further specific diagnostic assessments with those identified as at-risk. Additional research is suggested to determine cut-scores which will improve the Sensitivity of DIBELS NWF with ELL populations and to determine if classification accuracy differs depending on CELDT level.