



Common Questions about Supporting Students during Spring 2015 Test Administration

Please share these general principles and examples with your districts and peers.

Overview

For many teachers, delivering DLM computer-based testlets is a new experience this spring. This document provides some reminders about allowable supports and materials used to deliver assessments. It also provides examples of how students with different response modes can indicate their answers to computer-based testlets.

Flexibility in the use of Supports

The effective use of the Personal Need and Preferences profile (PNP) options allows most students appropriate access to the assessment. However educators may need to provide additional supports for a limited number of students to make the testlets accessible.

When additional supports to the assessment process are needed, educators should follow two general principles:

1. The student should be expected to respond independently.
2. Supports should be familiar to the student because they have been used during routine instruction.

Additional supports that may be used to make individualized supports may be found in the DLM ACCESSIBILITY MANUAL.

- Page 21 includes a table of common **allowable supports**.
- Page 22 summarizes **supports which are not allowed**.

Students with Blindness or Visual Impairments

Test administrators have been expecting that if they have selected “alternate form” or braille in the PNP that they will receive ONLY those forms. This is not an accurate assumption.

Not every Essential Element and Linkage Level has an alternate form (BVI) or a braille form. When the student receives a “standard” form and the test administrator may use other means to adapt the testlet to their student’s needs. They should use the guidance in the Accessibility Manual (pages 21-22).

Braille testlets were only provided at the proximal precursor, target, and successor levels. The nodes assessed at Distal Precursor (DP) and Initial Precursor (IP) levels measure emerging reading skills and while there is text as the engagement activity, it is not intended that the student is reading the text independently, regardless of whether they have sight.

Students with Individualized Response Modes

Students who take DLM assessments should be able to indicate their response through whatever means they can. Sometimes test administrators need to think creatively about how to support students with different means of expressive communication. Below are some examples based on real students.

Example #1: The student receives a computer delivered testlet and their response mode is eye gaze. This teacher is putting the answer on flashcards and spacing them further apart than the computer provides so the teacher can accurately capture the student response.

It is 100% acceptable for the answer options that appear on the screen to be written as-is on cards to place on an eye-gaze display as described. It is important that the responses match those provided on the screen. Also remind the test administrator that partner-assisted scanning is an option and may be more successful for some students.

Example #2: This student is blind and her only current mode of communication is a single switch. This student received testlets with pictures/manipulatives. The teacher indicated the TIP didn't provide alternate text to describe the pictures or guidance on how she could deliver this assessment. The student has not learned Braille so that was not chosen on the PNP. This teacher didn't preview the testlet prior, but when she administered the first item, she didn't know what to do.

When a student does not read braille but is blind or has a visual impairment that prevents the student from interacting with the on-screen content, the teacher should choose "alternate form – visual impairment" on the Access Profile (Personal Needs and Preferences) in Educator Portal. The teacher may also wish to mark "human read aloud" on the PNP and then read the content and then alternate text (if available). If N/A is indicated on the TIPs page, this means there is no alternate text available. Alternate text is not provided when it would cue the answer.

Example #3: This student usually accesses text with pictures. The teacher is providing supplemental pictures as necessary so the student can access the text, specifically with the answer options.

It is not acceptable to provide picture-supported text in the DLM assessment. The focus of most Essential Elements is on the ability to make meaning from words. The teacher can read the text aloud to the student (mark read-aloud in the Access Profile/Personal Needs and Preferences Profile), but it is not acceptable to use picture symbols to support word reading. It is also not acceptable to substitute pictures for words or pair pictures with words that appear as answer options. Many ELA answer options include adjectives or verbs that are not easily standardized to an alternate communication symbol system. Again, the teacher can read the options aloud, but may not replace or support words with pictures. If they choose to read testlets aloud, they should choose the human read aloud option on the PNP.

Example #4: The student is on homebound status and does not have internet at home, nor does the school have any type of Wi-Fi/hot spot device.

Students who need to take a test in an environment where there is no internet access should be assessed in KITE using the local caching server in "semi-offline" mode. This option allows the temporary storage of a testlet on the testing computer so it can be delivered even when not connected to the internet. After completing a testlet in a subject, the test administrator returns to school (or a place with an internet

connection) so the student's answers are transferred into KITE and the testlet assignment algorithm can choose the next testlet. For more information, contact your DLM Technical Liaison or see <http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/LCS>.

Ex #5: The student has a physical disability that results in limited mobility and the testlet requires the student to manipulate materials.

When a student with limited mobility is asked to manipulate or interact with objects, the student may use their current mode of communication to indicate direction to the test administrator to select answers and/or manipulate materials on behalf of the student.

Ex #6: The student needs special equipment for positioning (e.g., slant board) or non-computerized materials (e.g., Velcro objects on a board) to respond to questions.

The test administrator may use the equipment and materials with which the student is familiar. The student should still interact with the content on the screen but the educator may navigate and enter answers that the student has demonstrated outside the system.

Ex #7: The student uses graphic organizers, manipulatives, or other tools to complete academic work.

The test administrator may use the equipment and materials with which the student is familiar. The student should still interact with the content on the screen but the educator may navigate and enter answers the student has demonstrated outside the system. See the Testlet Information Page (TIP) for each testlet to see approved or not approved specific manipulatives.