



Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Read-Aloud Support for the Operational Spring Window

Synthetic text to speech (TTS) will not be an available support for students assessed through Dynamic Learning Maps during the Operational Spring Window that opens March 16. Students can still be provided read-aloud support through the use of a human reader for all subject areas. This memorandum provides additional background, describes how the correct type of read-aloud will be recorded in the student's Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) profile, and highlights the expectations for delivering assessments with human read aloud support. Additional resources are listed at the end.

BACKGROUND

During fall 2014 and winter 2015 testing windows, synthetic text to speech (TTS, or computer read-aloud), was available on a limited number of operational, instructionally embedded testlets. Implementation of synthetic TTS was limited for several reasons, including:

1. Concerns about the necessary bandwidth in school networks to deliver high-quality audio files, versus delivering compressed files that work well on school networks but contain some distortion that could be distracting or detrimental to student performance;
2. Ongoing technology development that impacts the audio tagging feature in the content management system, which occasionally creates quality control problems in tagged testlets this year; and
3. Anecdotal feedback about DLM-enrolled students having difficulty with synthetic read aloud and preferring human read aloud because of familiarity of the voice. (As an aside, there is evidence emerging that students with high-incidence disabilities also may not benefit from synthetic TTS).

After careful consideration of these issues, the spring operational DLM testlets also will not be delivered with synthetic TTS enabled. **Students who need read-aloud may still use human read-aloud delivered by the test administrator.** DLM will be evaluating the use of synthetic read-aloud further in the next year.

APPROPRIATE PNP SELECTIONS

Students who need read-aloud support during the spring assessment window should have the correct PNP selections made **no later than one week before the start of the assessment window**.

- By March 13, DLM will clear the Spoken Audio setting in the Access (PNP) Profile from all student records and add Human Read Aloud in its place.
- Test administrators will need to **select Human Read Aloud manually for students who are newly enrolled in DLM after March 13**.

PROTOCOL FOR HUMAN READ-ALoud SUPPORT

See the TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL for additional information.

When test administrators provide human read-aloud, they should follow this guidance to ensure fidelity in the delivery of the assessment:

- Use typical tone and rate of speech. It is important to avoid emphasizing the correct answer or important information that would lead the student to the correct response.
- Use exactly the words on screen. There are limited exceptions to this guideline, such as the use of shared reading strategies on the first read in ELA testlets.
- Be familiar with the order in which answer choices should be read, and always read them in the correct order as they are presented on screen.

Test administrators may also describe graphics or images to students who need those described. Typically, this additional support would be provided to a student with blindness or a visual impairment. Alternate text for each testlet is included in the Testlet Information Pages (TIPs).

- ELA (Reading): Each testing screen is represented as an image, with the alternate text listed below.
- Math: The alternate text for each stem and answer option are listed in bullet format.

The TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL provides more explanation of alternate text.

RESOURCES

For more information about selecting and providing human read-aloud, see the following documents available on the DLM website (www.dynamiclearningmaps.org).

Document Title	Key Section	Availability
Guide to Practice Activities and Released Testlets	Demo accounts have been modified to remove the computer read-aloud support	Published with updates 2/4.
Accessibility Manual	Enter Data in Access (Personal Needs & Preferences) Profile	Published with updates 2/16.
Test Administration Manual	Complete Access (Personal Needs And Preferences) Profile Demo accounts have been modified to remove the computer read-aloud support	Published with updates 2/25.
Assessment Coordinator Manual	Monitor And Support Test Preparations And Administration	Published with updates 2/25.