Human Read Aloud Support for Spring 2015
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Read aloud support for students who take Dynamic Learning Maps alternate assessments will be limited to the use of human read aloud for the Spring test window. 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 only on a limited number of operational and 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.

3. Anecdotal feedback about DLM-enrolled students having difficulty with synthetic read aloud and preferring human read aloud because of familiarity of the voice.

After careful consideration of these issues, the Spring 2015 testlets also will not be delivered with synthetic TTS enabled. Students who need this 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

As of **March 13, 2015**, any student whose Access (PNP) Profile in Educator Portal is identified as **Spoken Audio**, **DLM will change to Human Read Aloud automatically.**

For any student who is **newly enrolled** in Educator Portal after March 13, 2015, test administrators will select **Human Read Aloud manually** when completing the Access (PNP) Profile.

Selecting the Human read aloud option does not change how the testlet is presented, but it provides accurate records for states and DLM about accessibility supports provided during the Spring 2015. The information is used for compliance monitoring in states and to support DLM research.

**Deliver Human Read Aloud Support**

When human read aloud is needed for English language arts and/or mathematics, test administrators should follow this guidance to ensure fidelity in the delivery of the assessments:

- 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.
- Avoid facial expressions and body language that may cue the correct answer.
- Use exactly the words on the screen. There are limited exceptions to this guideline, such as the use of shared reading strategies on the first read in ELA testlets.
- Answer choices should always be read in the correct order as presented on the screen.
Protocol for Providing Human Read-Aloud

- When answer choices are in a triangle order, the correct order to read them is (as shown below):

  a. Top center
  b. Bottom left
  c. Bottom right

Which is a circle?
- When answer choices are in a vertical order, the correct order to read them is (as shown below):

  a. Top  
  b. Middle  
  c. Bottom

- When answer choices are part of the passage (select text items), read the choices in the order in which they appear in the passage.
• When answer choices are part of a sorting task, read them in order from top to bottom.

![Diagram of a sorting task](image_url)

**Alternate Text: Descriptions of Graphics**

In most cases, test administrators may 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 graphics and images in each testlet is included in the Testlet Information Pages (TIPs), as attachments after the main TIP information. Test administrators who need to read alternate text will need to have both the KITE system open and the TIPs in front of them while testing so they can accurately read the alternate text provided on the TIPs with the corresponding screen while the student is testing.

• **ELA (Reading):** Each testing screen is represented as an image. The verbal descriptions of images are printed below each and labeled "Alternate Text." For students who require verbal descriptions of the images, read the "Alternate Text" description exactly as it appears on the TIP, after reading the text on the screen.

• **Math:** The alternate text for each stem and answer option are listed in bullet format.

• If N/A is indicated on the TIPs page, this means there is no alternate text available.

• "Do not describe" is indicated on the TIPs page when the Test Administrator should NOT provide or make up any description of the graphic.

• Alternate text should be read at a consistent pace, as when reading the other parts of the assessment.
• On the engagement activity, test administrators should read the content and then the alternate text (if available).

• On an item screen, read the information in this order:
  a. Stem text
  b. Stem alternate text (if available)
  c. Answer choices
  d. Alternate text for each answer choice (if available)

**DLM/KITE Help Desk**

For questions regarding the online testing system or for additional assistance, please contact the Help Desk at 1-855-277-9751 (toll-free) or DLM-support@ku.edu.

• The Help Desk is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Central Time.

• During your state’s spring testing window the Help Desk is open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Central Time.

• The Help Desk is closed in observance of the following holidays:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holiday</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labor Day</td>
<td>Monday, September 1, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veterans Day</td>
<td>Tuesday, November 11, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thanksgiving Day</td>
<td>Thursday, November 27, 2014 &amp; Friday, November 28, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christmas &amp; New Year’s break</td>
<td>Wednesday, December 24, 2014 (half day) through Thursday, January 1, 2015</td>
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<td>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</td>
<td>Monday, January 19, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memorial Day</td>
<td>Monday, May 25, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independence Day</td>
<td>Friday, July 3, 2015</td>
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