DYNAMIC LEARNING MAPS

WHAT IT IS

The Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment System is designed to "map" students' skills. This includes both the kinds of skills tested on traditional multiple-choice tests and also all the related skills that help students master those tested skills.

Think of a learning map like a common road map. Although students may share the same destination, they all begin their journeys from different starting points on the map. For parents and educators who hope to guide students to their destination, that road map provides a wealth of information. First, it shows where a student is starting. It also shows the main route, which is the shortest, most direct way to get there. However, a good road map does more than show a single route. It also shows several alternate routes in case the main route can't be travelled. Finally, the map shows all the places students must travel through to get to their destination.

Put simply, dynamic learning maps will help us see beyond where students should be, to focus more on where students are and how they can get to where they need to go.

HOW IT WORKS

The system will use items and tasks that are embedded in day-to-day instruction. This will help map a student's learning throughout the year. Under this system, a student may be given 50-150 individual items or tasks during the year. These small tests would be given as part of instruction, rather than separate from it. This gives teachers the chance to change their instruction to better support student learning during the year. A summative test will also be created for states that want an end of the year test as an option to the embedded model.

WHO WE ARE

The Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment System Consortium (DLM) is a 13-state consortium funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to develop an alternate assessment system for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The system will align to the new Common Core State Standards. The consortium includes Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. DLM also includes external partners and experts from a wide range of fields.

KEY COMPONENTS:

- **Dynamic assessment** selects items and tasks for a student based on that student's previous responses.
- **Instructionally Embedded Assessment** brings teaching and testing together so that tests give teachers valuable information about student learning when they most need it—during instruction.
- **Instructionally Relevant Items** do more than test concepts; they also model good instruction.
- **Universal Design and Accessibility Features** ensure that the system is designed for the students who actually use it.
- **Administration options** give states both instructionally embedded testing as well as a stand alone summative test.
- **Professional development program** helps teachers and Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams understand learning maps and choose appropriate tasks for students.

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