



Diagnostic Assessment: Definition of Terms

Accessibility: State and federal laws require that state assessments must allow for the inclusion of all students, including students with disabilities and English learners.

Accommodations and supports are practices and procedures that provide equitable access to grade-level content. They are intended to reduce or eliminate the effects of a student’s disability or level of language acquisition; they do not reduce learning expectations (<https://dpi.wi.gov/assessment/forward/accommodations>) (Thurlow, M. L., Laitusis, C. C., Dillon, D. R., Cook, L. L., Moen, R. E., Abedi, J., & O’Brien, D. G. (2009).

Diagnostic reading assessment: Refers to an assessment that provides detailed information about a child’s strengths, needs, and skills pertaining to a specific literacy component.

Growth measure: the measure of a student’s progress between two points in time ([from DPI](#)).

Listening comprehension: Refers to the “ability to follow, process, and understand spoken language, including comprehension of informational and narrative text” (Foorman et al., 2016).

Oral reading fluency: Refers to the “ability to read a passage of text aloud accurately, at an appropriate rate, and with expression (i.e., with appropriate expression, including appropriate pausing and oral interpretation of the text)” (Foorman et al., 2016).

Oral vocabulary: Oral vocabulary refers to “words that we use in speaking or recognize when listening” (National Center on Improving Literacy, p. 1).

Phonological awareness: Refers to a group of skills related to the ability to recognize that spoken language is made of words and words are made up of individual sounds. WI Act 20 identifies phonological awareness skills as word awareness, rhyme recognition, repetition and creation of alliteration, syllable counting or identification, onset and rime manipulation (WI Act 20, Section 11, 2023).

Rapid naming: Refers to measuring how quickly and accurately a student is able to retrieve and say the names of familiar items such as objects, colors, shapes, and letters (Birsh & Carreker, 2018).

Reading comprehension: Refers to the “understanding of the meaning of a passage and the context in which the words occur. Reading comprehension depends on various underlying components including decoding (the ability to translate words into speech), knowledge of word meanings, fluency, and the ability to understand and interpret spoken language” (Foorman et al., 2016).

Sensitivity: Refers to the probability of correctly identifying a problem (Gersten et al., 2009). Sensitivity rates help determine which tests can achieve a high rate of accurate classification. Ask: What is the proportion of individuals WITH the condition who are correctly identified as having the condition?

Specificity: Refers to the probability of correctly identifying that there is not a problem (Gersten et al., 2009). Specificity rates help determine which tests can achieve a high rate of accurate classification. Ask: What is the proportion of individuals WITHOUT the condition who are correctly identified as NOT having the condition?

Spelling: Refers knowledge of how to connect the sounds of spoken English with letters or groups of letters.

Validity: Refers to the extent to which a test measures what it intends to measure.

Vocabulary: Refers to “knowledge about the meanings, uses, and pronunciation of words” (Foorman et al., 2016).

Word recognition: Refers to “recognizing in print a word in one’s spoken vocabulary” (Foorman et al., 2016).