



“AT A GLANCE”

NWEA/MAP TERMINOLOGY

- **NWEA** – The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to helping all children learn. NWEA provides research-based educational growth measures, professional training, and consulting services to improve teaching and learning.
- **MAP** – MAP is a criterion-referenced, nationally normed computerized adaptive assessment in reading, math and language usage for grades 2-8. Also offered in Science, which is a single adaptive assessment that measures students in two critical areas: General science and concepts and processes. MAP is not a “mastery” test. Students are not expected to get every question right. In fact, the best assessment measure is one where a student gets 50% of the questions right and 50% of the questions wrong.
- **MAP Primary Grade Assessment (PGA)** – MAP for Primary Grades are diagnostic and computerized adaptive assessments in reading and mathematics, specifically tailored to the needs of early learners (k-1 grade).
- **Proficiency** – A student is considered “proficient” or “at grade level” on NWEA MAP test when s/he scores at the 50th percentile or higher on a given test.
- **Growth** – Change in student achievement over time.
- **RIT (Rasch Unit)** – is a growth measure for students. A RIT score is not related to a student's grade (grade independent). The RIT score is used to determine the instructional level of students. The RIT scale is an equal interval scale much like a ruler or meter stick. All of the test items are placed on the scale according to their level of difficulty.
- **Lexile Range** – A Lexile is a unit for measuring text difficulty and reader comprehension. Students are considered to be at an appropriate level when they can comprehend approximately 75% of the material they read. This ensures students are neither frustrated nor bored, thereby stimulating their learning processes while rewarding their current reading abilities. A resource that allows teachers to use the student's RIT score to find appropriately challenging books, periodicals, and other reading material.
- **DesCartes** – A Continuum of Learning translates test scores into skills and concepts students may be ready to learn. It orders specific reading, language usage, mathematics, and science skills and concepts by achievement level. DesCartes contains separate sections for each subject (mathematics, reading, language usage, and science). The goal strands are broken down into ten-point RIT bands. Within each band, sub-categories, which further divide the content within the goal area, break down the skills and concepts found in the NWEA item banks. Uses for DesCartes include: Targeting and individualizing instruction, creating instructional grouping, monitoring student progress, sharing resources, conferencing with students and parents, partnering with parents and support staff for enrichment.

NWEA
MAP
MAP (PGA)
Proficiency
Growth
RIT
Lexile Range
Median
Mean
DesCartes
PG Instructional Data
Typical Growth
Equal Interval
Norm Group
Percentile
Triangulation
Rigor
Instructional Level

- **Primary Grade Instructional Data** – A Continuum of Learning that translates student scores from MAP PGA into concepts and skills in Reading and Mathematics that are critical to kindergarten and first graders. Similar to DesCartes, it helps guide instruction and focus on individual student learning needs. Uses for Primary Grades Instructional Data include: monitoring student progress, developing individual education plans, facilitating parent conferencing, tracking continual growth and tracking specific skills.
- **Median** – The middle score in a list of scores; it is the point at which half the scores are above and half are below.
- **Mean** – The average of a group of scores.
- **Typical Growth** – Norms are used to help define the “typical” amount of growth commonly experienced by students. Typical growth is best thought of as the average amount of growth attained by students with the same starting RIT value, grade, and subject. Students attaining the same amount of growth as their NWEA typical growth values have demonstrated growth equal to the average of students in the norming sample under the same conditions (starting RIT, grade, subject). The terms “typical” and “average” are preferred over “expected” and “target,” which ignore how typical growth values are calculated. Teachers and students should work together to set goals for growth that are greater than those measured as typical by norms.
- **Equal Interval** – The RIT scale is infinite, but most student scores fall between the values of 140 and 300. Like meters or pounds, the scale is equal-interval, meaning that the distance between 170 and 180 is the same as the distance between 240 and 250.
- **Norm Group** – In 2008, NWEA completed its most recent norming study designed to describe student achievement status and growth along the RIT scales shows the mean and median achievement values for students in the study at each grade level (grades K-11) for both fall and spring. The study included over 2 million students across the states.
- **Percentile** – A value used to describe how well students performed relative to others by giving the percent of students scoring below the value. For example, if a student scores at the 20th percentile, then 20% of the students in the norming group scored below that value.
- **Triangulation** – Using at least three data points when making critical decisions about students. One assessment does not give educators an overall picture of a student's achievement, nor does it address every purpose. It is imperative that we use data from multiple, appropriate sources when making decisions about students.
- **Rigor** – Rigor is defined by the difficulty of the content of instruction and the amount of cognitive work being completed by the students. Thus, rigorous instruction is that which requires the students to deeply engage with challenging content.
- **Instructional Level** – The items associated with the RIT score achieved by the student indicate the student's instructional level. The RIT score represents items that a student gets right about half of the time. Therefore, the data is relative to the student's current learning and is not representative of “mastery” of the items. The instructional level is a starting point which informs the teacher where to begin.

