Writing Testlets

There are two types of writing testlets:
- **Emergent writing** testlets are used for students who do <u>not</u> yet have or are working on early symbolic understanding.
- **Conventional writing** testlets are used for students who have symbolic understanding and can use writing tools to communicate.

The DLM system uses information from the First Contact Survey about the student to determine which type of writing testlet the student should receive.

The DLM alternate assessment writing testlets are designed to measure student ability for between two and six Essential Elements. The Initial and Distal Precursor levels are combined in an emergent writing testlet. The Proximal Precursor, Target, and Successor levels are combined in a conventional writing testlet. Emergent and conventional writing testlets are available for every grade.

In both types of writing testlets, students use the orthography-based tools that they use for writing in everyday instruction. Many students taking DLM alternate assessments will need the support of a test administrator to assist them in accessing a writing tool. The tools must offer students access to all 26 letters of the alphabet. The following writing tools are always allowable for use in writing testlets:
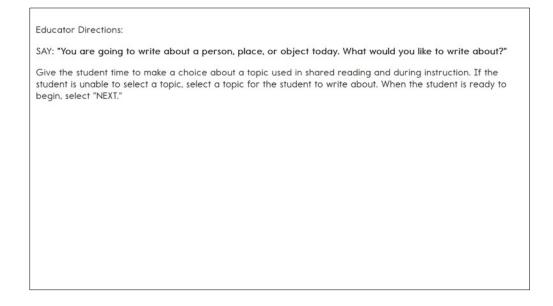- pens or pencils
- white boards
- traditional keyboards using word processing software
- adapted keyboards that include all 26 letters of the alphabet
- tablet computer keyboards using word processing software
- any keyboard using word-prediction software
- alternate pencils, including alphabet flip charts, talking word processors, eye gaze displays of letters, and letter-by-letter dictation of any sort
- a test administrator acting as a scribe, provided that the student is dictating letters in order to construct words.

The DLM writing testlets assess a student's ability to communicate using writing and the precursor skills that lead to writing. Because these skills focus on understanding letters,
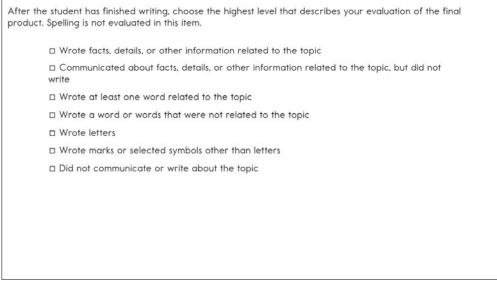
words, and the expression of ideas through words, picture or word selection is not an appropriate method of composing text for the DLM alternate assessment writing testlets. When the testlet response options refer to "writing" or "the student wrote," this can include any method the student uses for writing.

During both types of writing testlets, the test administrator and the student participate in an engagement activity related to choosing a topic on which to write. In emergent writing testlets, students often choose from a list of topics that they have been exposed to during instruction. Students taking conventional writing testlets also write about familiar topics. The Kite system does not pre-select topics for writing assessments. If able, the student should independently select a subject on which to write. The subject should focus on an informational topic that is relevant to instruction and familiar to the student.

With writing testlets, the test administrator delivers a structured writing activity to the student. The test administrator follows a series of onscreen instructions that guide the activity. The activity assesses the student's abilities to use writing to communicate about information at an appropriate level given the student's symbolic understanding.

Educator Directions:

SAY: "You are going to write about a person, place, or object today. What would you like to write about?"

Give the student time to make a choice about a topic used in shared reading and during instruction. If the student is unable to select a topic, select a topic for the student to write about. When the student is ready to begin, select "NEXT."

The test administrator is given prompts to ask the student to engage in writing tasks. The test administrator answers questions in Kite Student Portal to evaluate the student's response after each prompt.

After the student has finished writing, choose the highest level that describes your evaluation of the final product. Spelling is not evaluated in this item.

☐ Wrote facts, details, or other information related to the topic

☐ Communicated about facts, details, or other information related to the topic, but did not write

☐ Wrote at least one word related to the topic

☐ Wrote a word or words that were not related to the topic

☐ Wrote letters

☐ Wrote marks or selected symbols other than letters

☐ Did not communicate or write about the topic

The student's writing product must be kept on file at the district for a period of one year following test administration.

For more information on administering writing testlets, please visit:
https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/erp/videos#WritingTestletVideo

For additional professional development on emergent and conventional writing instruction please visit the modules associated with writing found at:
https://www.dlmpd.com/