

Telepractice and the DRA

The telepractice information in this document is intended to support professionals in making informed, well-reasoned decisions around remote assessment. This information is not intended to be comprehensive regarding all considerations for assessment via telepractice. It should not be interpreted as a requirement or recommendation to conduct assessment via telepractice.

Professionals should remain mindful to:

- Follow professional best practice recommendations and respective ethical codes
- Follow telepractice regulations and legal requirements from federal, state and local authorities, licensing boards, professional liability insurance providers, and payors
- Develop competence with assessment via telepractice through activities such as practicing, studying, consulting with other professionals, and engaging in professional development.

Professionals should use their judgment to determine if assessment via telepractice is appropriate for a particular examinee, referral question, and situation. There are circumstances where assessment via telepractice is not feasible and/or is contraindicated. Documentation of all considerations, procedures, and conclusions remains a professional responsibility.

The second and third edition of the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) measures can be administered in a telepractice context via are multiple options based on preference and access to technology. Note that examinees who are assessed at DRA Level 28 or higher will need to be provided with a hard copy of the response booklet to complete their written responses.

Testing Scenarios

Web Meeting + Paper

In this scenario, the examiner prints the observation guide in advance. The examiner and examinee join a web meeting and the examiner uses screen-sharing to present the book to the examinee. The examiner takes notes while the examinee is reading. At a later time, the examiner may enter the assessment information into the applicable online platform for scoring/reporting.

If the meeting tool allows the examiner to record the session then the examiner can listen to the recording at a later time to track the miscues. Note, the web meeting recording cannot be posted to the DRA online platform.

Web Meeting + DRA Online Platform

One Examiner on Platform and One Examiner to Turn Pages

In this scenario, two examiners join the web meeting to complete the assessment with the examinee. One examiner uses screen-sharing to present the book to the examinee and gives the verbal instructions for the assessment. The second examiner scores the assessment in real time, using either a paper Teacher Observation Guide or the applicable online platform. This approach allows one examiner to focus on managing the web meeting (e.g., turning pages, interacting with the examinee) while the other examiner focuses on note taking and scoring. Note, the DRA3 online platform will record the examinee during a live administration which can be reviewed later.

Districts may also choose to use the DRA Progress Monitoring and Word Analysis measures for remote administration. In this case, the examiner can share the PDF of the Progress Monitoring reading passage or the Word Analysis examinee stimulus during the web meeting.

Conducting Telepractice Assessment

Conducting a valid assessment in a telepractice service delivery model requires an understanding of the interplay of a number of complex issues. In addition to the general information on Pearson's telepractice page, examiners should address five factors (Eichstadt et al., 2013) when planning to administer and score assessments via telepractice:

1. [Telepractice Environment & Equipment](#)
2. [Assessment Materials & Procedures](#)
3. [Examinee Considerations](#)
4. [Examiner Considerations](#)
5. [Other Considerations](#)

1. Telepractice Environment & Equipment

Computers and Connectivity

Two computers with audio and video capability and stable internet connectivity—one for the examiner and one for the examinee—are required. A web camera, microphone, and speakers or headphones are required for both the examiner and the examinee. A second computer screen or split-screen format on a large computer monitor for the examiner is helpful to allow a view of the digital administration and scoring manual, but the examiner can also use the paper format manual or a Pearson-delivered digital version. The second computer screen or large screen also tends to make sharing test content more straightforward for the examiner.

Image/Screen Size

When items with visual stimuli are presented, the digital image of the visual stimuli on the examinee's screen should be at least 8" measured diagonally, similar to an iPad or iPad Air®. Some teleconferencing software shrink the size of images, the image size should be verified in the initial virtual meeting. It is recommended that computer screens used for teleconference assessment be at least 15" measured diagonally. Smaller screens, such as those of iPad minis, small tablet PCs, and smartphones, are not allowed for examinee-facing content, as these have not been examined empirically and may affect stimulus presentation, examinee response, and validity of the test results. Similarly, presenting stimuli on extremely large screens has not been examined, so the same precaution applies. At the beginning of the testing session, the examiner may ask for a peripheral camera or device (as described later in this section) to be aimed at the examinee's screen to ensure that the examinee's screen is displaying images in the correct aspect ratio and not stretching or obscuring the stimuli image.

Audio Considerations

High-quality audio capabilities are required during the administration. An over the head, two-ear, stereo headset with attached boom microphone is recommended for both the examiner and examinee. Headphones with a microphone may be used if a headset is not available.

The examiner should test the audio for both the examiner and examinee in the initial virtual meeting and at the beginning of the testing session to ensure a high-quality audio environment is present. Testing the audio should include an informal conversation prior to the administration where the examiner is listening for any clicks, pops, or breaks in the audio signal that distorts or interrupts the voice of the examinee. The examiner should also ask if there are any interruptions or distortions in the audio signal on the examinee's end. Any connectivity lapses, distractions, or intrusions that occurred during testing should be reported.

Audiovisual Distractions

As with any testing session, the examiner should do everything possible to make sure the examinee's environment is free from audio and visual distractions. If the examiner is unfamiliar with the examinee's planned physical location, a visual tour of the intended testing room should be given during the initial virtual meeting. The examiner can then provide a list of issues to address to transform the environment into one suitable for testing. For example, remove distracting items, silence all electronics, and close doors. The examiner should confirm that these issues have been addressed at the time of testing. If possible, the examinee should be positioned facing away from the door to ensure the examiner can verify through the examinee's camera that the door remains shut and can monitor any interruptions. Ensure that the examinee does not have access to study or other materials at their location during the test. The examiner should confirm that all other applications on the computer, laptop, or peripheral device are closed, the keyboard is moved aside or covered after the session is connected, and alerts and notifications are silenced on the peripheral device. Radios, televisions, other cellular phones, fax machines, smart speakers, printers, and equipment that emit noise must be silenced and/or removed from the room.

Lighting

Good overhead and facial lighting should be established for the examiner and examinee. Blinds or shades should be closed to reduce sun glare on faces and the computer screens.

Teleconferencing Software

Teleconferencing software is required. Screen-sharing capability is required if anything other than items with verbal stimuli and responses are administered.

Video

High-quality video (HD preferred) is required during the administration. Make sure the full faces of the examiner and the examinee are seen using each respective web camera. The teleconferencing software should allow all relevant visual stimuli to be fully visible to the examinee when providing instruction or completing items; the view of the examiner should not impede the examinee's view of visual test stimuli.

Peripheral Camera or Device

A standalone peripheral camera can be used to provide a view of the session from another angle or a live view of the examinee's progress. Alternately, a separate device (e.g., a smartphone with a camera or another peripheral device) can be connected to the teleconference and set in a stable position to show the examinee's pointing or written responses. The device's audio should be silenced and microphone should be muted to prevent feedback.

In a typical remote assessment session, it is more feasible to make a document or moveable camera available in the examinee's location. However, while social distancing is necessary, the only camera available may be a stationary camera integrated into the examinee's laptop or computer screen. It is unrealistic to expect examinees to have document cameras within their homes. It may be necessary for examiners to think creatively about how to use a smartphone in the examinee's location to gain a view of the examinee's progress in a response booklet or when pointing at a screen. Prior to attempting this with an examinee, the examiner should work to become fluid and competent at directing examinees in these methods, which can require extensive practice with varied individuals and types of smartphones. In addition, this requires planning and practice in the initial virtual meeting to prevent technical difficulties, and so the examinee feels confident doing this when it is time.

Online instructional videos (e.g., [here](#)) demonstrate how a smartphone may be used with common household objects (e.g., a tower or stack of books, paper weight, ruler, and rubber band or tape) to create an improvised document camera for use during tasks involving the response booklets. Typically, devices provide the best view of the examinee's screen and pointing responses when positioned in landscape format. While using a smartphone as the peripheral camera is not optimal or an optimal solution for remote assessment, it can be functional if executed well.

Screen-Sharing Digital Components

When screen-sharing digital resources that an examinee will read, ensure that the page is viewed in full screen in presentation mode and that the font size is appropriate for the age level. Always use full screen (i.e., presentation) mode for digital components viewed by the examinee. This provides the cleanest presentation of test content without on-screen distractions (e.g., extra toolbars). The DRA digital benchmark books are available online. It is not permitted to copy paper benchmark books or present them to the examinee via web cam or document camera.

2. Assessment Materials & Procedures

Test Item Security

The examiner is responsible for ensuring test item security is maintained, as outlined in the Terms and Conditions for test use. The examiner should address test security requirements with the examinee (and facilitator, if applicable) during the informed consent process. The examiner should make it clear to the examinee/caregivers that the video should not be captured, photos should not be taken, and stimuli should not be copied or recorded, as this is a copyright violation. The examinee must agree that they will not record (audio or visual) or take photos or screenshots of any portion of the test materials or testing session, and not permit anyone to observe the testing session or be in the testing room (except for a facilitator, when necessary). Any test-related materials used in the testing session must be returned to the examiner.

Disruptions

The examiner should record any and all atypical events that occur during the testing session. This may include delayed audio or video, disruptions to connectivity, the examinee being distracted by external stimuli, and any other anomalies.

Response Booklets

The response booklets should be provided in advance of the testing session, and the plan for securing and forwarding/returning materials, real-time and after testing, should be communicated. The examiner may ask for the completed response booklet to be shown on camera immediately at the conclusion of a task, so that the examiner can score it immediately and so responses are not lost or modified. One successful approach to protecting test security uses sealed envelopes (i.e., the sealed envelope method) and is described as follows. The examiner gathers response booklets and a self-addressed stamped envelope. The examiner places these materials in an envelope and signs it on the seal, then mails or delivers it to the testing location. The examiner emphasizes that the sealed envelope containing the response booklets must not be opened until the examiner asks. The response booklets are then placed in the provided self-addressed stamped envelope after completion of each subtest, sealed at the conclusion and signed on the seal on camera, and then mailed or delivered to the examiner immediately following the testing session.

Gesturing

When gesturing to the digital Benchmark Books, the examiner should display them as digital assets on-screen and point using the mouse cursor. It may on occasion be necessary for the examiner to gesture to areas of a response booklet or to show how to respond to demonstration items. In this case, screen-share a PDF of the response booklets and use the cursor to direct the examinee to areas on the response booklet.

Facilitator

If using a facilitator, the role of the facilitator must be explained to the examinee so participation and actions are understood.

Evaluating Equivalence Evidence

Pearson Clinical Assessment is tracking and aggregating the relevant equivalence evidence for our assessments, including the age range, population, direct evidence, and indirect evidence (see [Evidence for Remote Assessment](#)).

3. Examinee Considerations

Appropriateness

The examiner should first ensure that a telepractice administration is appropriate for the examinee and for the purpose of the assessment. Judgment, best practice guidance for telepractice (e.g., APA Services, 2020; ASPPB, 2013; IOPC, 2020), information from professional organizations and other professional entities (e.g., legal resources), consultation with other knowledgeable professionals, existing research, and any available federal or state regulations should be considered in the decision-making process. Consideration should be given to whether the necessary administrative and technological tasks involved in a telepractice session can be accomplished without influencing results.

Preparedness

Before initiating test administration, the examiner should ensure that the examinee is well-rested, able, prepared, and ready to appropriately and fully participate in the testing session.

Facilitator Role

If using a facilitator, the role of the facilitator must be explained to the examinee so participation and actions are understood.

Headset

It may not be appropriate or feasible for some examinees to use a headset due to behavior, positioning, physical needs, or tactile sensitivities, or if a headset is not available. Clinical judgement on the appropriate use of a headset in these situations should be used. If a headset is not utilized,

the examiner's and examinee's microphones and speakers should be turned up to a comfortable volume.

4. Examiner Considerations

Practice

During the telepractice setup, and before administering to any actual examinee, the examiner should rehearse the mechanics and workflow of every item in the entire test using the selected teleconferencing software so that the examiner is familiar with the administration procedures. For example, a colleague could be used as a practice examinee.

Standardized Procedures

The examiner must follow the administration procedures of in-person administration as much as possible.

Real-Time Troubleshooting

In order to conduct a smooth telepractice session, audiovisual needs and materials must be managed appropriately. The initial virtual meeting involves the examiner, examinee, and/or the facilitator (if used), and is the opportunity for the examiner to provide information about the audiovisual needs and materials. During the initial virtual meeting, the examiner should provide training in troubleshooting audiovisual needs that arise during the testing session, including camera angle, lighting, and audio checks. The examiner should provide verbal feedback to guide camera adjustment, checking the on-screen video shown by the peripheral camera/device to provide information about how to reposition it until the proper view is shown. The examiner should emphasize that no materials should be opened until the examiner provides instructions to do so, if applicable. The examiner should also expect to provide verbal guidance about these issues during the testing session.

Collaborating With Facilitators

If used, the facilitator is to assist with administrative and technological tasks and not to manage rapport, engagement, or attention during the testing session. The examiner should direct them not to interfere with the examinee's performance or responses. Any other roles and responsibilities for which an examiner needs support, such as behavior management, should be outlined and trained prior to the beginning of the testing session. The examiner is responsible for documenting all behaviors of the facilitator during test administration and taking these into consideration when reporting scores and performance.

5. Other Considerations

The professional should make a judgment, similar to an in-person session, about whether or not the examiner was able to obtain the examinee's best performance. In addition, it is recommended to document any and all atypical events during the testing session (e.g., delayed video or audio,

disruptions to connectivity, extraneous noises such as phone ringing or loud dog barking, person or animal unexpectedly walking into room, the examinee responding to other external stimuli). List and describe these anomalies, as well as any observed or perceived impact on the testing sessions and/or results, and consider these in the interpretation of results.

Conclusion

This test was not standardized in a telepractice mode, and this should be taken into consideration when utilizing this test via telepractice and interpreting results. For example, the examiner should consider relying on convergence of multiple data sources and/or being tentative about conclusions. Provided that the examiner has thoroughly considered and addressed the factors and the specific considerations as listed above, the examiner should be prepared to observe and comment about the reliable and valid delivery of the test via telepractice. Materials may be used via telepractice without additional permission from Pearson in the following published contexts:

- DRA manuals and response booklets via Q-global
- DRA Online Platform.

References

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