

Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) assessments use a measurement scale that has proven to be exceptionally stable and valid over time. Their scale is based on the same modern test theory that informs the SAT, Graduate Record Exam, and Law School Admission Test. The benefit of this test theory is that it aligns student achievement levels with item difficulties on the same scale.

NWEA placed all of their test items on the RIT scale according to their difficulty. Each increasing RIT is assigned a numeric value, or RIT score, that indicates a higher level of difficulty. As a student takes a MAP test, s/he is presented with items of varying RITs, or levels of difficulty. Once the MAP system determines the difficulty level at which the student is able to perform and the system collects enough data to report a student's abilities, the test ends and the student is assigned an overall RIT score.

Since the MAP test only presents questions that your child can reasonably attempt to answer, the results are an excellent indicator of those skills and concepts that will appropriately challenge him/her. With this information, his/her teacher can ensure academic growth.

The characteristics of the RIT scale provide several benefits to educators:

- \* **Grade-independent:** Because the tests are adaptive and the test items displayed are based on student performance, not age or grade, a score means the same thing. For example, a third grader who received a score of 210 and a fourth grader who received a score of 210 are learning at the same level. This allows growth to be measured.
- \* **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 182 is the same as the distance between 240 and 252. This allows educators to apply simple mathematical equations to the scores to determine information such as the mean and median scores in a class or grade.
  - **Stability:** More than twenty years after it was first implemented, scores along the RIT scale mean the same thing. As a result, educators can confidently measure growth over many years.

The enclosed report summarizes reliability and validity studies used to support NWEA instruments.