

Case 2: Does the worksheet show what Dec knows?

Dec can explain a circuit out loud but gets lost on a crowded worksheet, so the crew asks what the task measures.

On your own Read What happened. Underline what Dec can do out loud and where he gets stuck. About 6 minutes.

Your role: You're the one who reads the goal line before anyone decides what Dec knows. **New skill:** Check what a task is meant to measure.



Dec points to a small light circuit on the table while Anika watches.

What happened

Anika, 16, and Dec, 17, are at the study table twenty minutes before theater rehearsal. They are building a light circuit for a school set. Dec can explain out loud how the current travels through the circuit. On the written practice sheet, he loses his place in the instructions.

The sheet has six dense paragraphs and one small diagram. Anika's first idea is to run the same timed practice sheet again. Then she draws a larger sketch, and Dec traces the whole circuit correctly.

Mari, 19, is on her break from the bookshop. She does not assume she knows why Dec is stuck. Dec wants help with this task, but he does not want a diagnosis from the group chat.

Your question: Does the practice sheet show what Dec knows, and what should Dec ask his teacher?

Key terms

On your own Read each key term and its example. Then write your first guess in the box. About 6 minutes.

Learning goal A learning goal is the knowledge or skill that a task is meant to show.

En español: meta de aprendizaje

In this case: The practice brief names one goal: explain how a simple circuit works. It does not list speed or reading six dense paragraphs.

Evaluation An evaluation is a school's formal process for learning about a student's needs, using more than one measure.

En español: evaluación

In this case: Dec's practice sheet is not an evaluation. It is one observation the crew can describe to a teacher.

Eligibility Eligibility is meeting the requirements for a particular service or program.

En español: elegibilidad

In this case: A practice sheet cannot show whether Dec is eligible for special education. Under IDEA, no single measure can be the only basis for that decision.

Who is involved



Dec

Theater crew, working on the circuit sheet

"I can show you where the current goes. Then I get halfway through the written question and lose my place."



Anika

Studying the circuit with Dec

"I kept pointing at the page and saying 'it's right there.' I never looked at how the question was written."

Before you look at the evidence, why do you think Dec gets stuck on the worksheet?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines, resembling notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Reading passage

The circuit Dec can explain

On your own Read the passage. At each Stop and think box, pause and answer the question in your head or with a partner. About 5 minutes.

Words to know

- **Learning goal:** A learning goal is the knowledge or skill that a task is meant to show.
- **Evaluation:** An evaluation is a school's formal process for learning about a student's needs, using more than one measure.
- **Eligibility:** Eligibility is meeting the requirements for a particular service or program.
- **Context:** Context is the information around an event or a quote that you need to understand what it means.

The story: Twenty minutes before rehearsal

Anika and Dec are at the study table twenty minutes before theater rehearsal. They are building a light circuit for a school set. Dec can explain out loud how the current travels from the battery, through the switch and the LED, and back.

The written practice sheet is a different story. It has six dense paragraphs and one small diagram. Halfway through a question, Dec loses his place. He says it is like a cue sheet with no numbers.

Anika's first idea is to run the same sheet again with a timer. Then she tries something else. She draws the circuit bigger, and Dec traces the whole path correctly. Mari, on her break from the bookshop, asks Dec to walk her through it first. She does not guess why he is stuck.

Dec wants help with this task. He does not want a diagnosis from the group chat. "Say what happened," he tells his friends, "not that you've figured out what's wrong with me."

❓ Stop and think. Why do you think Dec can explain the circuit out loud but gets lost on the page?

What is the sheet checking?

In Case 1, you learned to go back to the original source. Here, the original source is the practice brief itself. Its goal line says: "Explain how a simple circuit works."

A **learning goal** is the knowledge or skill that a task is meant to show.

What is the sheet checking?, continued

The goal does not mention speed. It does not mention reading six dense paragraphs either. So when Dec gets lost on the page, the sheet may be testing reading and layout as much as circuits.

This is a lot like the cropped clip in Case 1. One written answer, without **context**, can give the wrong picture. Dec's spoken explanation is the missing context. Together, the two answers tell you more than either one alone.

The crew also knows what it cannot decide. An **evaluation** is a school's formal process for learning about a student's needs, using more than one measure. **Eligibility** is meeting the requirements for a particular service or program. Anika says it plainly: "We're not an evaluation team." Dec decides whether to ask his teacher, Ms. R, how that process starts.

 **Stop and think.** What is the learning goal on the sheet, and what else does the sheet seem to test?

What real schools and laws say

A federal law called IDEA says a public school must use a variety of tools in an evaluation. No single measure can be the only basis for deciding eligibility (U.S. Department of Education, IDEA regulations, 34 CFR 300.304). Design guides for teachers also suggest giving students more than one way to show what they know (CAST, Universal Design for Learning Guidelines 3.0, 2024).

Your role in this case is to read the goal line before anyone decides what Dec knows. That habit, checking what a task is meant to measure, is the new skill you will carry into later cases.

 **Stop and think.** Why should Dec, and not his friends, decide what his teacher hears?

Sources

Real source | U.S. Department of Education | No date listed

IDEA regulations, 34 CFR § 300.304 (evaluation procedures)

Real source | CAST | 2024

Universal Design for Learning Guidelines 3.0

Look at the evidence

On your own Read each document. For each one, write what it shows and what it leaves out. About 12 minutes.

Evidence A | Practice brief, handed out Monday

The assignment

Goal: Explain how a simple circuit works. Read the six paragraphs below before you answer. Use the diagram to trace the path of the current from the battery through the switch and the LED and back. Answer questions 1–4 in complete sentences.

Look closely: Which skill does the goal line name, and which does it leave out?

What it shows

One question I still have

Evidence B | Study-table notes, Wednesday 3:40 p.m.

Dec's explanation

Out loud, with the larger sketch: traced the whole path, battery to switch to LED and back. Correct. Written sheet: skipped a line in the instructions and answered a different question from the one asked. Dec: the layout is hard to follow.

Look closely: What did Dec get right out loud that the sheet did not record?

What it shows

One question I still have

What is still missing from the evidence?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has rounded corners and a thin black border around the edges.

Key idea: learning goals

On your own Read the key idea and the code of ethics. Then answer the question in the box. About 8 minutes.

Dec's written answer and his spoken explanation give the crew different information. A **learning goal** is the knowledge or skill that a task is meant to show. The practice brief names one goal: explain how a simple circuit works. It does not list speed, and it does not list reading six dense paragraphs. So the next question is what the sheet was meant to measure and what got in the way.

CAST's Universal Design for Learning Guidelines encourage giving learners more than one way to take in information and show what they know. For Dec, a larger diagram is a practice option to test. It is not a diagnosis, and it does not change an official test. Ask Dec what helped, and check that he can still explain the circuit.

An **evaluation** is a school's formal process for learning about a student's needs, using more than one measure. Under IDEA, a federal law, a public school must use varied tools in an evaluation. No single measure can be the only basis for deciding **eligibility**. Eligibility is meeting the requirements for a particular service or program. A study session is not an evaluation, so Dec decides whether to ask his school how that process starts.

Professional standards

Real source | Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

CEC Ethical Principles and Practice Standards: Special Education Standards for Professional Practice: Teaching and Assessment

“Use culturally and linguistically appropriate assessment procedures that accurately measure what is intended to be measured”

In plain words: Special educators who follow CEC's standards use assessments that measure the skill the task is meant to measure.

Question: The goal is explaining a circuit. Which parts of the sheet test something else, like reading six dense paragraphs?

Professional standards, continued

Your answer

The part that tests something else is ____.

In the news



Real source | Education Week | October 13, 2025

Does Extended Time on Tests Actually Help Students With ADHD?

Asks the case’s question in real life: does a test accommodation help students show what they actually know?



Real source | K-12 Dive | December 3, 2025

IDEA at 50: How the landmark law changed education

Explains where IDEA, evaluations and IEPs came from and why schools must plan around each student’s needs.

Notes

Sort the evidence

On your own Read each decision in the diagram. Write who decides it in each blank box. About 8 minutes.

Sort who can decide each question. Which decision belongs to the teacher, which to a formal school process, and which only to Dec?

Try a clearer practice format for the circuit goal

Who decides

The teacher, who sets the practice format and the learning goal

Under which rule

Who lives with it

Dec, who decides what to share and whether to ask

Your way in

Start a formal IDEA evaluation or a Section 504 conversation

Who decides

The school's evaluation process, with a parent or guardian for a student under 18

Under which rule

IDEA evaluation rule: varied tools, no single measure as the sole basis

Who lives with it

Your way in

Whose view is missing from these documents? What would you ask them?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines, resembling notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Practice: choose a response

On your own Choose what the crew should try and explain why. Then fix the two marked lines. About 8 minutes.

What should the crew try at the study table?

- ☐ **A** Run the same timed sheet again so Dec gets more practice.
- ☐ **B** Let Dec explain with a larger diagram, then compare his reasoning with the sheet.
- ☐ **C** Tell Dec he probably needs an IEP.

Why I chose it

Improve a draft

A student's first draft

Hi Ms. R, Dec failed the circuit sheet again and we think the test is unfair to him. He obviously knows the material because he explained it to us perfectly. At the study table he went through the whole thing out loud with no mistakes. ① We think he might have a learning disability and should get an IEP so he can get extra time. My cousin has one and it helped her a lot. ② Can you give him an easier version? We really think this would help him pass. Thanks, Anika and Mari.

Rewrite each marked phrase so it says only what the evidence supports.

Rewrite phrase 1

Rewrite phrase 2

Grades 6—8

Your task

On your own Read the steps. Fill in the planner boxes before you start your draft.

Redesign Dec's practice sheet so it still checks circuit understanding, then explain your changes to a partner.

Use: The practice brief and Dec's study-table notes; the legal rule is summarized by the teacher.

You'll make: Annotated sketch plus 3—5 sentence explanation

Time: 45 minutes

- 1 Find the goal line in Evidence A. Say it in your own words.
- 2 List two parts of the sheet that got in Dec's way.
- 3 Sketch a new sheet with a bigger diagram and numbered steps.
- 4 Label two changes on your sketch.
- 5 Write three to five sentences in the Your draft box that explain your changes.
- 6 Check that your sheet still asks for an explanation of how the circuit works.

Show it your way

Write it: Write 3—5 sentences with the frame "The goal is __. I changed __ so that __."

Say it: Explain your redesigned sheet to a partner in one minute: the goal, two changes and why the goal stays the same.

Show it: Sketch the new practice sheet with a larger diagram and numbered steps, and label your two changes.



Prefer typing? Scan to open the online workspace.

Your task, continued

The learning goal, in my words

The goal is ____.

What got in the way: 1

What got in the way: 2

Change 1 on my sketch

Change 2 on my sketch

Your draft

Your explanation

The goal is _____. I changed ____ so that _____.

Check your work

On your own Answer the Check your work questions and mark your level in each rubric row. Then write one change you made. About 6 minutes.

Does your explanation name the learning goal?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Did you make at least two changes to the format?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Does your new sheet still ask how the circuit works?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Did you leave out any guess about a diagnosis?	☐ Yes ☐ No

How your work is scored

Mark one box in each row.

Skill	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	☐ Mentions only the score.	☐ Describes Dec's explanation vaguely.	☐ Cites the goal and two specific observations.	☐ Uses observations and notes what they cannot show.
Reasoning	☐ Concludes Dec has a disability or the test is illegal.	☐ Suggests easier content without linking to the goal.	☐ Connects a possible format barrier to the learning goal.	☐ Distinguishes classroom support from IDEA evaluation accurately.
Audience & purpose	☐ Message speaks for Dec without his input.	☐ Mentions Dec but ignores his voice.	☐ Written in Dec's voice with his permission.	☐ Respects Dec's control and gives the teacher a clear next step.

Skill	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Revision	☐ No change.	☐ Removes one problem line.	☐ Replaces the diagnosis with an observation.	☐ Explains how each change protects Dec's privacy and agency.

I changed ___ because ____.

[illegible]

Questions to discuss

On your own Write a short answer to each question. Then finish My take. About 8 minutes.

1 Is the practice sheet checking circuit understanding, reading speed or both?

2 How would you know a new format shows Dec's learning more clearly instead of giving away the answer?

My take

I think the crew should ___ because ___.

The evidence that changed my first guess is ___.

One question I still have is ___.

Talk about this case at home

Case 2: Does the worksheet show what Dec knows?

In this case, a student can explain a light circuit out loud but gets lost on a crowded worksheet. Your student compared the worksheet's goal with notes from a study session and thought about what the worksheet really measures.

Questions to talk about

- 1 Can one test show everything a person knows? Why or why not?
- 2 What makes the directions on a worksheet or a form easy to follow?
- 3 Who at a school can students ask about help with schoolwork?

Nobody needs to share personal stories or private information to talk about this case.



See the case online.