



Handy Handouts®

Free, educational handouts for teachers and parents*

Number 525



Test-Retest Reliability

by Abby Sakovich M.S., CCC-SLP

Clinicians may decide to retest for any number of reasons. Retesting could provide information about whether a specific treatment or therapy has worked. It may be necessary to retest when an examinee's performance is subpar due to illness, behavior, etc. Some formal assessments include a section on a test-retest timeframe. Others do not. How does a clinician decide whether retesting is appropriate?

Questions to Ask

Why do I want to retest?

If you think a student performed below their ability level, retesting is an option.

Do I want to show gain?

It may be wise to wait until a treatment or particular therapy is over before retesting.

Who completed the initial testing?

If the student is new to your caseload or you did not do the initial testing and suspect the student has performed below their ability level, you might want to retest.

Factors to Consider

Content

The waiting period is typically shorter when deciding to retest articulation. Articulation is developmental, and so clinicians may expect younger children to show growth in a shorter amount of time.

Closed Set vs. Open Set Skills

A test that assesses predictable elements that do not change (i.e., think syntax or grammar) assesses closed-set skills. A test that assesses elements subject to change (i.e., think vocabulary or figurative language) assesses open-set skills. Open-set language skills continue to grow throughout a student's lifetime, and a longer time between retesting could provide more accurate results.

Follow the Rules

Defer to the retesting procedures in the examiner's manual of the assessment if there is one. If no retesting procedures are present, follow the rules set in place by your district or clinical supervisor. Some school districts have their own set of rules when it comes to retesting for eligibility. Always consult with your supervisor if unsure what they are.

Clinical Judgement

Always trust your instincts and experience when deciding whether to retest a student. If your gut is telling you that a student's score could be invalid due to external circumstances, it may be worth discussing with your team whether or not to retest, and when.

Deciding whether to retest a student can feel overwhelming. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) recommends clinicians make decisions on a case-by-case basis. In the event that a particular assessment does not provide retesting guidelines, ASHA recommends allowing 6-12 months before retesting unless the clinician feels the validity of the student's performance suffered in some way (i.e., sickness, anxiety, etc.) Finally, ASHA reminds SLPs to avoid giving assessments on the day before or after school holidays, and suggests avoiding testing if the school district is undergoing standardized state testing.

REFERENCES

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). Retrieved March 22, 2018 from <https://www.asha.org/slp/schools/school-services-Frequently-Asked-questions/>

"Test-Retest Reliability – The Good, The Bad, and the Judgment Calls!" by SpeechandLanguage.com, (2002). Retrieved 3/26/2018 from <https://www.speechandlanguage.com/clinical-cafe/test-retest-reliability-the-good-the-bad-and-the-judgment-calls>

More FREE Handy Handouts®, go to www.handyhandouts.com