

CogAT[®] Next-Step Planning Tool

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

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About This Guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide educators with clear information on how to use the CogAT[®] Next-Step Planning Tool to connect data from the *Cognitive Abilities Test[™]* (CogAT) to instructional planning. It explains the tool's core functions, intended uses, and best practices so that educators can make the most of CogAT data in their classrooms.

This guide is designed for classroom educators, specialists, and interventionists who would like to use CogAT results to inform instruction and differentiate learning. It outlines what the tool can do, how it supports instructional planning, and where to go for additional resources.

For additional support, visit the [CogAT Next-Step Planning Tool webpage](https://www.riversideinsights.com/cogat-next-step-planning-tool), reach out to your assessment consultant, or contact Riverside Insights[®] Customer Service at (800) 323-9540 or via chat at [riversideinsights.com](https://www.riversideinsights.com).



What Is the CogAT Next-Step Planning Tool?

The CogAT Next-Step Planning Tool was created to answer the questions many educators ask after testing: “What’s next? How can I effectively use CogAT data in my classroom?”

By pairing CogAT’s measures of verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal (figural) reasoning with practical strategies, grouping suggestions, and activity ideas, the CogAT Next-Step Planning Tool translates ability data into actionable steps educators can use to advance student outcomes.

Specifically, the tool uses students’ standard age scores across CogAT’s three reasoning domains to suggest:

- student groupings informed by the intersection of CogAT results and academic standards,
- instructional strategies aligned to reasoning abilities and standards, and
- activities that are differentiated to meet diverse learners’ needs.

In this way, the CogAT Next-Step Planning Tool integrates the long-standing purpose of CogAT—providing a fair and comprehensive view of reasoning abilities—into the daily work of instructional planning.



Why Use CogAT Data for Instruction?

CogAT measures reasoning abilities across the verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal (figural) domains, which gives educators a richer view of student potential than measurement by achievement alone. Ability data helps expose when a student’s potential outpaces their current performance, enabling earlier and more targeted instructional support.

Because achievement tests reflect what has already been learned, they may underrepresent multilingual learners, students from historically underserved backgrounds, and others whose

achievement scores don't fully capture their potential. Ability tests like *CogAT* can fairly identify strengths that might be hidden by language, opportunity, or content gaps.

Profiles of strengths and areas of opportunity in reasoning abilities help educators to differentiate goals, methods, and materials for diverse learners so that instruction can better match how students learn, not just measure what they've achieved. This makes *CogAT* a valuable tool not only for identifying gifted students, but also for supporting all students, including multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and others who benefit from targeted instructional approaches.

Using *CogAT* data in planning supports differentiated instruction and targeted small-group learning that meets students where they are, thereby helping to accelerate growth in critical thinking and reasoning across the curriculum.

This is where the *CogAT* Next-Step Planning Tool comes in: it translates *CogAT* data into practical, classroom-ready groupings, strategies, and activity ideas so that educators can immediately act on these insights.



What Educators Can Do with the *CogAT* Next-Step Planning Tool

With this tool, educators can:

- **Employ *CogAT* data directly**
 - Upload student *CogAT* standard age scores (Verbal, Quantitative, and Nonverbal) so that the tool can turn ability data into actionable plans.
 - Save up to five rosters/classrooms for easy reuse throughout the year.
- **Plan instruction**
 - Select a specific standard for a lesson, which grounds all generated strategies and activities in the required learning goal.
 - Generate student groups based on how students' reasoning abilities interact with a given standard/objective.
 - View group profiles with descriptions that highlight reasoning strengths and needs.
 - Access instructional strategies aligned to both standards and reasoning abilities.
 - Explore activities that support the standard and reasoning strengths of each group. *These activities are designed to be adaptable, giving educators a starting point that can be modified for their classroom context.*
- **Adapt activities with flexibility**
 - Use the embedded assistant to refine activities, adjust difficulty, add materials, or translate content, tailoring plans to classroom realities.
 - Ask the assistant for targeted support or support tools and instructional activities—for individual students, unique cases, or Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions—drawing on a rich knowledge base of strategies that connect ability data to instruction.
- **Share and apply lesson outputs and activities**
 - Export lesson overviews, task cards, and exit tickets in ready-to-use formats.
 - Save time on preparation while increasing differentiation for all students.

Intended Use

The *CogAT* Next-Step Planning Tool is designed as a thought partner to save educators time during instructional planning, inspire new ideas grounded in *CogAT* data, and enhance student learning experiences and outcomes.

- **Purpose**
 - The *CogAT* Next-Step Planning Tool does not replace lesson planning.
 - Instead, it saves educators time by turning *CogAT* data into practical applications they can use directly in the classroom.
- **Key Values**
 - **Save educators time.** By instantly generating student groups and highlighting reasoning strengths and areas of opportunity, the *CogAT* Next-Step Planning Tool reduces the time educators spend determining how best to group students and what instructional content to generate for each group.
 - **Support effective differentiation.** Targeted instructional strategies give teachers practical guidance to adapt lessons and better meet diverse student needs.
 - **Provide adaptable resources.** Activity starters and the embedded assistant give educators the ability to adjust outputs to fit their classroom content, ensuring that recommendations are practical and usable.

The *CogAT* Next-Step Planning Tool extends the reach of *CogAT* data beyond the identification of gifted students to drive growth in all learners, including those who are multilingual or members of special populations.

- **Ability data provides a fairer view of potential.** Because achievement scores may underestimate multilingual learners' abilities, using *CogAT* scores ensures that reasoning strengths are recognized and incorporated into planning.
- **Diverse needs are supported.** By surfacing reasoning strengths and needs, the *CogAT* Next-Step Planning Tool can help educators design instructional approaches that provide access points for students from a variety of backgrounds and learning profiles.

Ways to Apply the *CogAT* Next-Step Planning Tool

Educators can use this tool to:

- **Reteach or reinforce standards** by grouping students with similar reasoning strengths and tailoring activities to their needs.
- **Plan small-group lessons for extension** by identifying students who are ready for enrichment and using strategies that push their reasoning further.
- **Differentiate existing lesson plans** by layering in strategies that align with reasoning profiles, ensuring that instruction meets a wider range of learners.
- **Create or supplement activity sets** for differentiated learning centers or stations, giving students varied opportunities to engage with content in ways that match their reasoning strengths.

- **Support multilingual learners** by recognizing reasoning strengths that achievement scores may not fully capture and adapting activities to provide multiple entry points.
- **Design activities aligned to individual goals** (e.g., practice exercises for students working on a targeted skill or receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports).
- **Iterate on instructional materials** by using the embedded assistant to adjust difficulty, add scaffolds, or generate alternative approaches.



Using the CogAT Next-Step Planning Tool with the CogAT Screening Form

- Data resulting from administration of the CogAT Screening Form alone are not compatible with the CogAT Next-Step Planning Tool. The CogAT Screening Form provides a single composite score without the separate Verbal, Quantitative, and Nonverbal standard age scores that are required by the CogAT Next-Step Planning Tool for deep analysis and content generation.
- To fully unlock the functionality of the CogAT Next-Step Planning Tool, we recommend that CogAT Screening Form users also administer the **Post-Screener** option or the **complete CogAT** to obtain the full suite of scores required by the tool.



AI Use Guidance

For responsible use of AI features, please review the [Terms of Use](#) and follow your district's AI policies and procedures.



Support and Resources

Riverside Insights is committed to collaborating with our valued partners to make adoption easy.

- The [CogAT Next-Step Planning Tool webpage](#) is continuously refreshed with resources for using the tool effectively.
- Reach out to your assessment consultant for support on approaches for adoption and implementation.
- For technical support, contact Riverside Insights Customer Service at (800) 323-9540 or chat with us at riversideinsights.com.

