



RESEARCH NOTES

Topic of Interest:

Understanding the Impact of Alternate Assessments Judged Against Alternate Achievement Standards (AA-AAS) *The Alternate Assessment Impact Survey (AAIS)*

Towles-Reeves, E., & Kearns, J. (2006). *Alternate Assessment Impact Survey*. Can be retrieved at: www.naacpartners.org/Products.

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of the influence of the alternate assessment on teaching and learning for students who participate in the alternate assessment judged against alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS). A survey research method was used to collect data from teachers about their perceptions of the impact of the AA-AAS on teaching and learning for students participating in the 2005-2006 administration in two states. The survey was developed by researchers at NAAC, in conjunction with expert teachers. In order to gather a range of rich data, questions investigated demographics, curriculum perceptions, and changes related to daily instruction and IEP development. The survey was piloted with ten teachers. Eighteen percent (237/1301) of teachers from State 1 and 79% (79/100) of teachers from State 2 completed the surveys. Teachers in both states rated the students' IEPs as the most influential variable in determining what was taught to students taking the AA-AAS. Teachers rated their state or district's curriculum framework or content standards as the second most influential variable. For both states, most teachers reported no changes in the way the AA-AAS influenced the development of students' IEPs in certain areas. However, teachers reported an increase in critical areas such as IEP team effort and supports available to students. In both states, teachers reported a higher degree of positive influence on instruction than IEP development. Limitations include the lack of multiple stakeholder views and the limited response rates in both states. Implications for the study include the identification of topics for teacher training particularly related to access to the general curriculum and state academic content standards.

Upcoming dates and activities:

- October 10-11:** Inclusive Assessment Seminar in Denver, CO
- October 24-25:** Inclusive Assessment Seminar in Alexandria, VA
- March 1-2:** NAAC Advisory Board Meeting in Alexandria, VA
- March 15-16:** NAAC Expert Panel Meeting in Alexandria, VA

Curriculum Indicator Survey (CIS)

Karvonen, M., Wakeman, S. Y., Flowers, C., & Browder, D. M. (2006). *Measuring the enacted curriculum for students with significant cognitive disabilities*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

The purpose of this study was to describe the process used to develop and refine the Curriculum Indicator Survey (CIS) designed to measure the enacted curriculum in ELA and math (science is in development) across grades PK-12 for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The survey research method was used. The survey contained two parts: Part I was used to obtain information about the teacher, professional development, classroom characteristics, instructional resources, use of classroom assessment, and instructional influences, and Part II has separate versions for ELA and math and is completed with one particular student in mind. The survey content included academic topics or strands and specific content within each topic. Teachers indicated intensity of content coverage and highest performance expectation (cognitive demand) for the target student during that instructional year. Seventy-five percent of teachers in the follow-up survey indicated that CIS accurately and thoroughly covered content areas. Several teachers expressed concern about teacher familiarity with academic content in Part II of the survey and individualization for students. Limitations of the study included teacher self-report (e.g., need for multiple sources of data) and the lack of exact match with any one state's contents standards in Part II of the survey. Implications for practice include: (1) use of survey responses in statewide alignment studies; (2) defining access to the general curriculum (e.g., creating a common language); and (3) use of the CIS for self-assessment purposes to create targeted professional development (e.g., teacher training in underrepresented content areas or gap areas between content standards, instruction and assessment).

SUMMARY WRAP UP: The two studies presented in this issue were implemented in order to gain feedback from teachers on the effectiveness and impact of the AA-AAS as related to teaching and learning for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The results of the AAIS provided considerations for teacher training related to access to the general curriculum and understanding of state academic content standards. In addition, the results of the CIS outlined implications for alignment, defining access to the general curriculum, and creating targeted professional development for teachers. Results from both studies help us better understand how the AA-AAS is impacting both teaching and learning for students participating in AA-AAS and provide considerations for targeted professional development activities for teachers.

IMPORTANT UPDATE: The Inclusive Assessment Seminars hosted in conjunction with the New Hampshire Enhanced Assessment Initiative (NHEAI) and the National Alternate Assessment Center (NAAC) will take place October 10-11 in Denver, Colorado and October 24-25 in Alexandria, Virginia. The purpose of these seminars is to: 1) assist participants in recognizing what aspects of their AA-AAS system should remain flexible, 2) provide participants with a framework for conceptualizing the evaluation of technical quality, and 3) provide tools for documenting the technical quality of AA-AAS. Registrations are now closed, but stay tuned to the following web-sites for updates and materials released upon the conclusion of these seminars: www.naacpartners.org and www.education.umn.edu/nceo/.