



# NCCCSAD

National Collaborative Center  
on Standards & Assessment  
Development



UKY, NCEO, UNC-Charlotte, CAST, UI-UC



Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan,  
North Carolina, New Hampshire, New Mexico, South Carolina



# Collaborative Partners

- National Center on Education Outcomes
  - NCEO
- University of North Carolina – Charlotte
  - Diane Browder
- CAST
  - Universal Design
- University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign
  - Evaluation



# Federal Priority Requirements

- Convene and support expert work groups to summarize extant data and other information,
- identify and discuss critical issues,
- identify promising and best practices,
- produce reports and recommendations on specific topics, and
- produce guidelines and procedures aimed at ensuring the technical quality of alternate assessments.



# Priority Requirements

- Convene on an annual basis an advisory committee representing key perspectives and stakeholder groups,
  - including professionals working in special education, assessment, and
  - Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended; and
  - parents and individuals with disabilities.
  - The primary purposes of this advisory committee are to review and advise on the plans for activities 3 through 5 and to provide liaison with significant stakeholder groups.



# Priority Requirements

- Coordinate with other technical assistance and dissemination resources to provide technical assistance and information to States in improving and implementing
  - (1) alternate achievement standards aligned to grade-level achievement standards,
  - (2) alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards and on grade-level achievement standards, and
  - (3) approaches to using alternate assessments in improving educational outcomes and access to the general curriculum.



# Priority Requirements

- Conduct research on the characteristics of alternate achievement standards and alternate assessments implemented in States, and their impact on student learning and access to the general curriculum.



# Priority Requirements

- Conduct development and demonstration projects with a small number of States on improving and implementing
  - (a) alternate achievement standards aligned to grade-level achievement standards,
  - (b) alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards and on grade-level achievement standards, and
  - (c) approaches to using alternate assessments in improving educational outcomes and access to the general curriculum.



# Priority Requirements

- (a) Maintain regular communication with staff of the U.S. Department of Education to obtain input and approval of project plans.
- (b) Budget for a two-day Project Directors' meeting in Washington, DC during each year of the project.
- (c) If the project has a Web site, include relevant information and documents in an accessible form on the project's Web site.





## 3 Research & Demonstration Areas


### ■ Alternate Assessments

#### □ Define Technical Quality

- Alternate Achievement Standards (AA-AS)
- Grade-level Achievement Standards (AA-GLS)

#### □ Alignment with Grade-level Content Standards

#### □ Determine Effective Practices Assessment Development



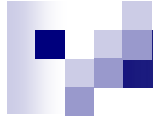
# NCCSAD Technical Assistance & Dissemination

- develop technical assistance materials for use by states in the design and redesign of alternate assessments
- disseminate research findings.



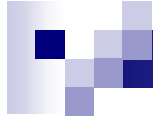
# Model Demonstration

- State Partners will participate in research and Model Demonstration Projects
  - New Hampshire
  - Massachusetts
  - Colorado
  - New Mexico
  - Kentucky
  - Kansas
  - North Carolina
  - Michigan
  - South Carolina
  - Iowa



# Features

- Prestigious Technical Experts
- Diverse Advisory Panel
- Multiple research methods
- Team of Investigators
- Theory Driven



# Assumptions

- No single type of alternate assessment design is best.
- Validity (so what happens to instruction and learning?) is of prime importance.

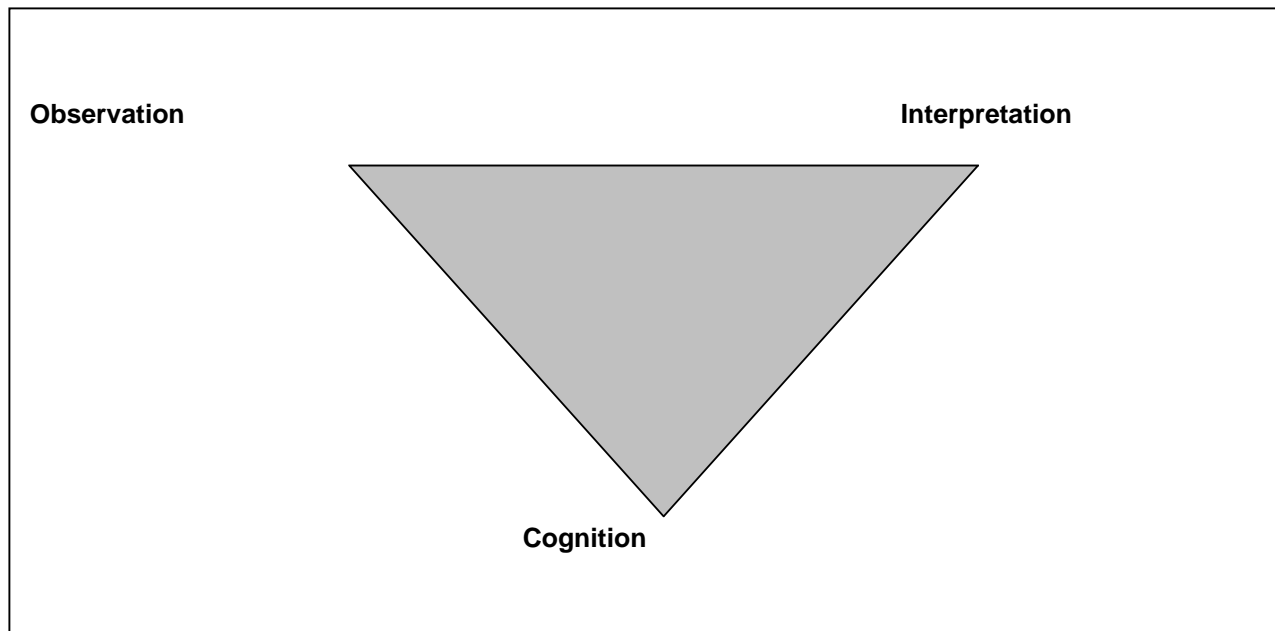


# Research Focus 1

- *Define technical quality for the four major types of alternate assessment as to the impact on student learning and access to grade-level content*
  - *portfolios,*
  - *performance events,*
  - *checklists,*
  - *multiple choice tests*
    - *based on*
      - *a) alternate achievement standards and*
      - *b) grade-level achievement standards*

# Research Focus #1: What we know...

- Validity is the most important technical criterion
- A theory of learning for students AA is not articulated
- Learning characteristics are not well defined





## Research Focus 2:

- *Identify grade-level content alignment methodologies and principles for alternate assessments based on grade-level achievement standards and alternate achievement standards.*





## Research Focus 2:

### What we know....

- Alignment can be a powerful tool for focusing instruction, curricula, and assessment.
- Alignment methodology as applied to AA is limited.
- Most alignment models applied to general education assessments consider
  - categorical concurrence,
  - depth-of-knowledge consistency,
  - range of knowledge correspondence, and
  - balance of representation.
- Findings from 1 study suggest weak alignment to reading and mathematics content in AA-AS



# Research Focus 1:

## What we plan to do

- Articulate the assessment triangle for AA-GLS and AA-AS
  - Confirm the learner characteristics of students who take alternate assessments
- Develop a prototypical technical manual
- Develop state case studies
- Develop Technical Quality Rating Instrument
- Technical Quality Teacher Survey
- Develop Technical Considerations Report



## Objective Two...

- Identify grade-level content alignment methodologies and principles for alternate assessments based on grade-level achievement standards and alternate achievement standards.

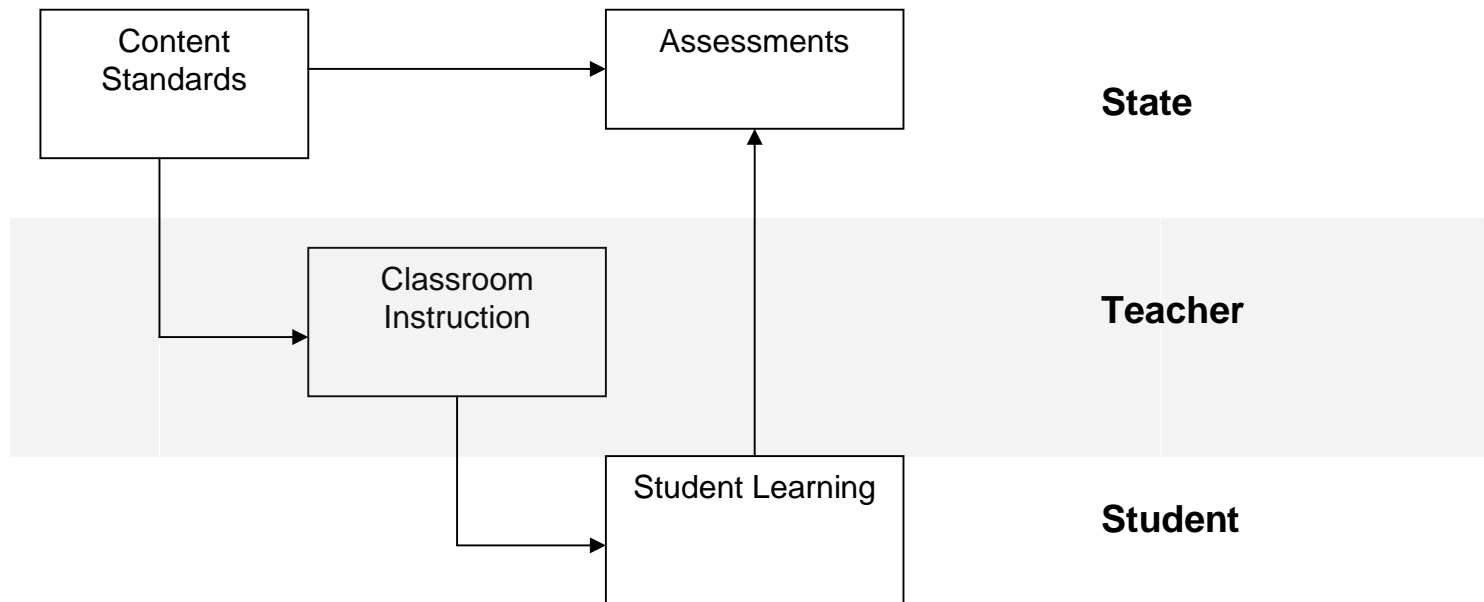


# Terms to Understand

- Content Standards
  - Specify what students should know or be able to do (Language Arts, Mathematics...)
  
- Achievement Standards
  - How good is good enough (Level of proficiency)
    - Grade-level Achievement Standards
    - Alternate Achievement Standards (1% rule)

# What is Alignment?

Match between the written, taught, and tested curriculum





# Statutory and Regulatory Requirements for NCLB

## ■ The Assessment should....

- cover the **full range** of specified state academic content standards
- measure the **content** and **process** aspects of the academic content standards
- reflect the same **pattern of emphasis** as the academic content standards
- reflect the full range of **cognitive complexity** and level of difficulty as the standards
- assessment results should represent all **achievement levels** specified in the academic achievement standards (or alternate achievement standards)



# Previous Research Findings

- Teacher, administrators, and parents perception of alternate assessment
- What do we know about students with significant cognitive disabilities access to the general curriculum?
- Research on Academic Interventions
- Alignment studies



# Special Education Teacher

## ■ Agree

- Students have high expectations set by the state
- Benefits to having students included in accountability system

## ■ Disagree

- Students have greater access to the general curriculum
- Teacher has greater knowledge of general curriculum

Flowers, Ahlgrim-Dezell, Browder, & Spooner (submitted). *Teachers' Perceptions of Alternate Assessments*





# Administrators Survey

## ■ Agree

- AA helps teachers track student progress
- AA beneficial to student learning outcomes

## ■ Disagree

- Special education teachers have greater knowledge of gen ed curriculum
- AA has raised special education teachers expectations for students

Ahlgrim-Delzell, Flowers, & Browder (submitted). *School Administrators' Perceptions of the Impact and Consequences of Alternate Assessments*



# Parents Perception

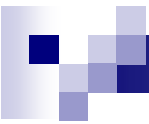
## ■ Agree

- Important for child to learn basic academic skills

## ■ Disagree

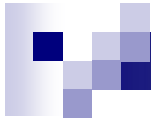
- Child participates in more general education curriculum
- State sets high expectation for my child

Ahlgrim-Delzell & Browder (2003). *Parent Survey—Unpublished*.

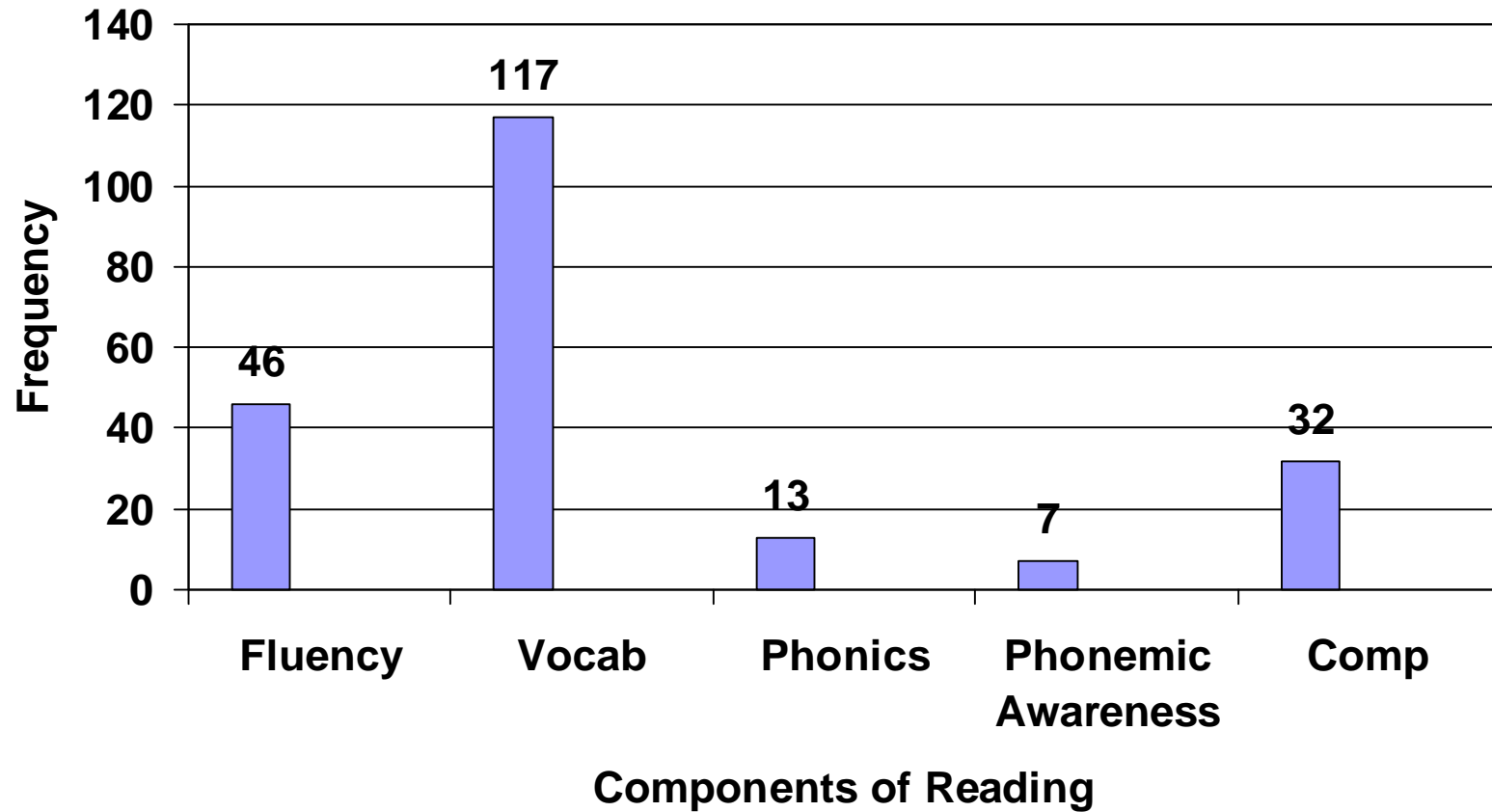


# Research on Academic Interventions

- We are conducting comprehensive literature reviews on acquisition of academic skills by students with moderate and severe disabilities
- Have found 190 studies to date; 47 with students with severe cognitive disabilities
- There is emerging evidence that this population can acquire academic skills
- Limitation in types of academic skills addressed- mostly sight words and money



## Literature Review Categories 170 articles (184 experiments)

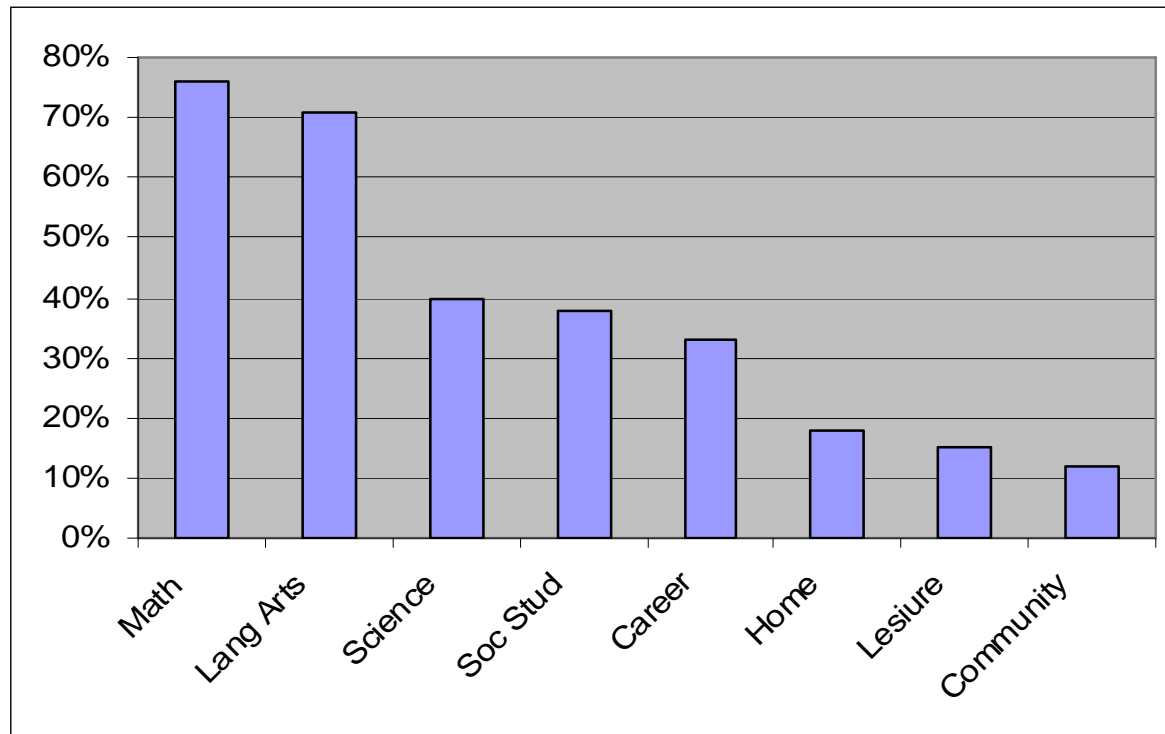





# UNC Charlotte Research on Alternate Assessment Alignment

- What curricular domains are used?
- Are the performance indicators within reading and math aligned with standards for this content?
- What type of tasks and contexts are used in alternate assessments that are clearly aligned?
- To what extent are states with strong general curriculum focus aligned with grade level content standards?

# *Prior to NCLB, most states' alternate assessments included academic domains*



Browder, D., Ahlgrim-Delzell, L., Flowers, C., Karvonen, M. Spooner, F., & Algozzine, R. (2005). How states define alternate assessments. *Research and Policy in Developmental Disabilities, 15* (4).



# *Do the performance indicators in states' AA align with reading and math standards?*

## ■ Examples from strongly aligned states

### □ Math

- Compare volumes of more and less
- Use strategies such as counting, measuring, to determine possible outcomes in problem solving

### □ Reading

- Answer questions related to story
- Identify pattern in familiar story

## ■ Examples from weakly aligned states

### □ Math

- Replace rollers in beauty parlor
- Measure growth of fingernails

### □ Reading

- Show anticipation on roller coaster
- Attend to visual stimuli

Browder, D., Flowers, C., Ahlgrim-Dezell, L. Karvonen, M. Spooner, F. , & Algozzine, R. (2004). The alignment of alternate assessment content to academic and functional curricula. *Journal of Special Education, 37*, 211-224.



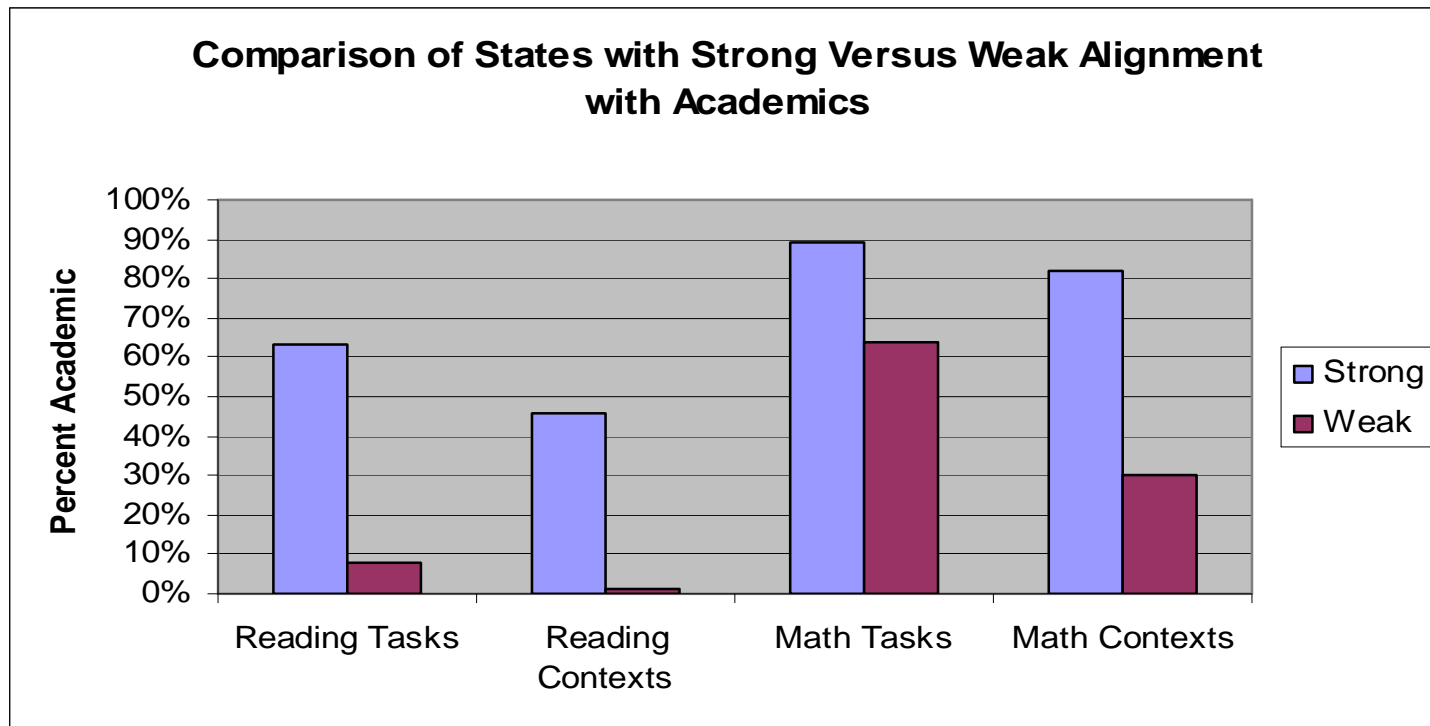
## *What type of curriculum is reflected in states' alternate assessments?*


- Across all 6 states for TASK
  - 54% academic
  - 18% functional
  - 11% social
  - 4% early childhood
- Across all 6 states for CONTEXTS
  - 63% functional
  - 25% academic
  - 9% social
  - 1% early childhood

Browder, D., Spooner, F., Ahlgrim-DeLzell, L., Flowers, C., Karvonen, M., & Algozzine, R. (2004). A content analysis of curricular philosophies in states' alternate assessment performance indicators. *Research and Practice in Severe Disabilities*, 28, 165-181.



# *States with clear alignment used more academic tasks and contexts*





## *To what extent do alternate assessments align with grade level content standards?*

- Overall alignment strong
  - 78-94% of alternate assessment items in three states could be directly linked with one of their grade level academic content standards for reading & math
- Less breadth and depth than recommended for general education assessments
  - Fewer objectives sampled; fewer items per standard; less balance across objectives than recommended for general education
  - Depth of knowledge at all levels, but skewed to more basic levels of knowledge

Flowers, C. Browder, D., & Ahlgrim-DeLzell, L. (In press). An analysis of three states' alignment between language arts and mathematics standards and alternate assessments. *Exceptional Children*.



# Research Conclusions

- Teachers and administrators do not report access to the general curriculum
- Most states are focused on aligning their alternate assessments with academic content standards
- Some of these alternate assessments have clear alignment with academic content; others weak alignment
- Even states with strong alignment with grade level content standards face challenges in determining breadth and depth of the state standards to sample



# What we proposed to do:

- Year 1 (Focus on How to Align)
  - Evaluation of States' Alignment and Recommendation Criteria (content analysis)
  - Alignment expert panel will produce the critical issues, identify best practices, and recommendations for aligning alternate assessments, content standards, grade-level and alternate achievement standards



# Year 2 (What to align)

- Develop the guidelines for setting challenging learning standards for students with significant disabilities.
  - Work groups of curriculum content specialists and experts on students review 1<sup>st</sup> years work
  - Content Mapping to identify enacted curriculum and underrepresented academic areas
  - Conceptualize challenging learning standards across grade levels




# Year 3 (Implement)

- Implementation and evaluation of alignment procedures
  - Develop professional development material
  - Pilot study with use of alignment procedures



# Year 4 (Effectiveness)

- Student Access to General Curriculum through Alternate Assessment
  - Conduct study to examine the effectiveness of alignment procedures (control & experimental groups)



# Year 5 (Final Recommendations)

- Acceptability and Feasibility of Recommendations
  - Expert review
  - Focus groups (parents, teachers, and self-advocates)
  - Feasibility survey





# Outcome

- Framework for alignment that is
  - Developed by experts
  - Validated by teachers
  - Validated by states
- Development of model demonstration that can be used by teachers using portfolio assessments



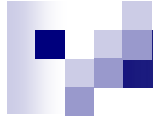
# Outcome

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# Your Help

- Year 1 (How to align)
  - Suggestions about who should be involved
  - Suggestions on methods to use
  - How involved would you like to be?
- Year 2 (What to align)
  - Suggestions on what is challenging learning standards
  - Suggestions on methods
  - How involved would you like to be?



# Your Help

- Years 3-5
  - Implementation
  - Effectiveness study
  - Final Recommendations



## Research Focus 2:

### What we propose to do...

- Evaluate recommended alignment criteria using state case studies
- Develop guidelines for setting challenging learning standards
- Implement and evaluate alignment procedures
- Evaluate student access to the general curriculum based
- Determine acceptability and feasibility of alignment procedures



# Research Focus 3

- *Identify and describe best practices for*
  - *a) developing, and designing alternate AA-AAS and AA-GLS using the principles of universal design as a guiding theory and*
  - *b) administering AA-AS and AA-GLS considering effective practices in the development and administration of materials, teacher training/communication and management of state-wide scoring of student assessment.*



## Research Focus 3:

### What we know.....

- Universal design (multiple means of expression, representation, recognition) has been applied to item development to improve accessibility.
- Most alternate assessment require administration manuals, teacher training, and scoring procedures
- Fidelity of administration, training and scoring procedures is difficult to determine
- The management of AA administration is complex.



## Research Focus 3:

### What we propose to do...

- Identify and describe administration procedures, training and scoring practices.
- Measure instructional impact via teacher survey.
- Identify design features/practices that improve fidelity of administration.
- Develop guidelines for the administration of alternate assessments
- Consider UDL practices in assessment design in terms of impact on student access to the general curriculum.
- Conduct an analysis of scoring procedures for different types of alternate assessments.
- Develop recommended practices for implementing scoring procedures.
- Develop and administer training package on effective practices in design and implementation of alternate assessments.





# NCCSAD Evaluation

- View evaluation as an integral, ongoing informative and reflective process.
  - Formative/Summative
    - Evaluation Meeting in Year II
  - Internal/External
  - Multiple Methods
  - Consumer Oriented
- Flexible to accommodate changing workscope of the project.



# NCCSAD Evaluation (continued)

- Evaluation Foci

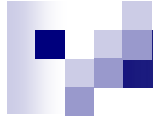
- Integrity of Work Plan
- Product Review
- Stakeholder Perception and Impact



# NCCSAD Evaluation (continued)

## ■ Data Sources

- Stakeholder Interviews
- External Review
- Survey
- Document Review
- Progress Monitoring



# NCCSAD Evaluation (continued)

- Evaluation Questions



# Accomplishments

- Developed and conducted presentation materials for NCEO Technical Assistance Conference Call on Alignment of Alternate Assessments on Alternate Achievement Standards
  - Research
  - Practice
  - Demonstration



# Collaboration with NH EAI

- New Hampshire Enhanced Assessment Initiative funded by OESE.
- Mirrors research Focus I- Technical Quality
- Convened Measurement, Severe Disabilities, and Curriculum experts to articulate a theory of learning for assessments based on alternate achievement standards.



# Results of Expert/Technical Panel Meeting on Technical Quality



# Research Focus 3: Online Teacher Survey

## ■ History of the teacher survey

- From a teacher's perspective, what degree of influence did:
  - the alternate assessment have on daily instruction
  - the alternate assessment have on IEP development
- How could we focus future training to:
  - improve instruction and alternate assessment results





# Research Focus 3: Online Teacher Survey

- Evolution of the teacher survey
  - First Year:
    - Began as one page with 21 questions
    - Three demographic questions: certification, grade level, years of teaching experience
    - Conducted in one state
  - Second Year:
    - Still 21 questions with 3 demographic questions
    - Added 5 states as participants
  - Third Year:
    - Changed the survey dramatically
    - 3 states participated



# Research Focus 3: Online Teacher Survey

## ■ Fourth Year:

- Current example of Iowa's Alternate Assessment Portfolio Teacher Survey
- Current survey is a result of multiple versions with many revisions:
  - A paper/pencil and online version of the survey
  - 2 pages of demographic questions
  - Piloted with AEA Leadership Team



## Research Focus 3: Online Teacher Survey

- Thoughts about the future survey:
  - Survey will be maintained across the life of this project; administered each year
  - Core set of questions that are common across alternate assessments
  - Other questions that are tailored to unique state alternate assessments
  - An online version on the NCCSAD website



# Research Focus 3: Online Teacher Survey

- Things to think about:
  - Accessibility:
    - Should survey be password protected for each state?
  - Dissemination:
    - When do we disseminate?
    - How do we reach population within each state?
  - Core questions:
    - What are the core questions to ask across states?
  - Your Feedback and Thoughts



# Evaluation Revisited