

Preparing Technical Documentation in Connecticut: One State's Experience

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Connecticut's History

- Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT)—1985
- Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) –1995
- Out of Level testing –1990
- Alternate Assessment based on alternate achievement standards (CMT/CAPT Skills Checklist)--2000

History, con't.

- Began the alternate assessment development process in 1998
- Assessment Guidelines in place since 1986
- Two tiered system
 - Out-of-level testing
 - Skills Checklist
 - 80-15-5% participation rule

CMT/CAPT Skills Checklist

- Rating Scale in quantitative and communication domains
- Grades 4,6,8,10
- “Aligned” to the CT Curriculum Framework
- Represent academic skills with a more functional application
- Added a science scale in 2003 for grade 10

PROBLEMS

- Out-of-level testing was prohibited by USDE
- Grades 3-8 +10 testing required in 2005-06
- USDE Guidance issued –Dec. 03
- Out-of-level testing eliminated--Jan. 04
- Large Scale pre-conference--July 04
- Peer Review Meeting--Nov. 04

Solutions

Rachel Quenemoen--July 04

- Direction
- Clarification
- Support

Coordinator of Peer Review Process

- Direction
- Clarification
- Support

Solutions, con't

- Peer review guidance provided explicit information about expectations
- Technical adequacy had been a major concern— hired Peter Behuniak
- Using Peer Review evidence requirements, we rebuilt the alternate assessment – CMT/CAPT Skills Checklist
- SERVED AS A BLUE PRINT

Content Validity

- Selected content through a modified process proposed by Douglas Reeves, Center for Performance Assessments, to identify the “power standards” from the CT Curriculum Framework
- Items developed by CT general and special education teachers and curriculum specialists in a process through which the standards were “unwrapped” and downward extensions of the skills were written

Content Validity, con't

- Items and their downward extensions were systematically aligned vertically and horizontally
- Each grade level test reviewed and approved by “content experts” (i.e., CSDE curriculum consultants)
- Independent alignment study conducted

Content Validity, con't

- Alignment study results: “The content standards and the assessment items are very well aligned with respect to all four alignment criteria”.
- Additional content validation study was conducted to determine the match between test items and content strands. Results indicated: “In every case the test items matched the content strands that they were supposed to match.”

NAAC Meeting January 2005

- Skills Checklist was set to be administered in March for the first time
- Benefits:
 - Challenged our/my thinking
 - Generated new ideas/ approaches to technical questions
 - Confirmed that traditional methods would not work with this population of students and type of assessment

NAAC Meeting, con't

The NAAC Technical Manual prototype

- The table of contents served as a blueprint for additional activities
- Reorganized existing documentation in a new way
- Answered the question: Everything you want to know about the CT Alternate Assessment

Other Validity Questions

Two of the goals of the Skills Checklist are:

- 1) to change the nature and quality of the instruction for students with significant cognitive disabilities, and
- 2) to achieve greater inclusion of these students in general education settings

Instructional Validity

Our hypothesis is that improving scores on the CMT/CAPT Skills Checklist will be positively correlated with the amount of time spent in the general education classroom with non-disabled peers.

“The Checklist did not influence student participation in general education, rather general education influenced their success on the Checklist”

Relationship with Other Variables

- All of the Checklist students were rated by their teachers on the **Learning Characteristics Inventory**.
- Teachers were asked to complete the LCI well in advance of completing the actual Checklist.
- The Checklist ratings support the findings of the LCI.
- Checklist students scored as one would expect them to score given their learning characteristics.

Consequential Validity

- In an effort to get at intended and unintended consequences, focus groups were held with teachers
- Focus Group topics:
 - Student academic progress
 - Access to the general education curriculum
 - Student performance in nonacademic real life situations

Results-Highlights only

- The Skills Checklist had an impact on increasing the exposure to grade level content:
- Through lesson development (31.1%)
- Understanding the general education content (38.1%)
- Expectations of higher level standards (36.0%)