Universal Design Solutions in Instruction and Assessment: Explore the Opportunity of Accessible Technology-based Assessment

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Linnie Lee, Kentucky Dept. of Education

Preston Lewis, IHDI, University of Kentucky
IDEA and Universal Design

“the state educational agency shall, to the extent feasible, use *universal design principles* in developing and administering any assessments under this paragraph” (IDEA- PL 108-446, Section 612,16E, 2004)
“the use of **universal design principles** holds great promise for designing and aligning standards, curriculum, instructional materials and strategies. Assessments that are designed to be valid and accessible for the **widest range of students** may help all students struggling to achieve, particularly students with cognitive disabilities...
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) www.cast.org

Universal Design for Learning provides a blueprint for creating flexible goals, methods, materials, and assessments that accommodate learner differences.
A universally-designed curriculum or assessment offers the following:

- **Multiple means of representation** to give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge.

- **Multiple means of expression** to provide learners alternatives for demonstrating what they know, and

- **Multiple means of engagement** to tap into learners' interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to learn.

www.cast.org
Students in Need of Alternate Assessment

- Truly represent the “widest range”
- Tend to have “print disabilities” and are in need of presentation and expression in alternate formats
- Benefit from and require universal design for learning (UDL) to access the general curriculum and assessment
UDL Initiative in Kentucky: 2001 to Present

- Computerized literacy supports (text readers) in every school
- Availability of accessible digital curriculum
- Accessible electronic state assessment
Computerized Literacy Supports: Building the Technology Infrastructure for Use of Digital Text

- Since 2001 over 1300 KY schools (95%) have acquired a Texthelp Site license (i.e., Read & Write Gold) @ 50% discount

- Software includes text to speech, speaking spell check, dictionary, word prediction, etc.

- Inclusive reader (reads in window)
Districts with textreader site license

The number next to a district indicates the number of schools with a site license as of June 04.
Accessible Digital Curriculum

- Increasing number of states requiring publishers to provide accessible digital copies of textbooks
- Federal law (IDEA) requires all publishers provide accessible digital textbooks by December, 2006 (NIMAS)
Increasing Numbers of States Requiring Publishers to Provide Textbooks in Accessible Digital Format

- Kentucky
- Arizona
- Texas
- New York
- Florida
- Georgia
- California
Accessible Digital Textbooks in KY

  - Set state standard for digital textbooks
- KY Accessible Materials Consortium (KAMC)
  - Digital text repository and distribution center
- KY Accessible Materials Database (KAMD)
  - Schools can view & request digital textbooks online
- Kentucka-Tools for Low Incidence Students
National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS)

- Development supported by Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), USDOE
- Included in Part D & B of Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA-2004)
- NIMAS TA Center at CAST
  - http://nimas.cast.org/
National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS)

- NIMAS establishes a standard file format for digital textbooks
- Required that all publishers comply by December, 2006
- Publishers to provide digital copies to NIMAC for distribution to states
  - National Instructional Materials Access Center @ American Printing House for the Blind
  - http://www.nimac.us/
Accessible Assessment

Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS)

An accommodation for Ky. Core Content Test (grades 4,5,7,8,10,11,12)
Use of “Reader” as an Assessment Accommodation

- Annually approximately 15,000 (40% of those tested) KY students with disabilities require a “reader” as a state assessment accommodation

- Significant number of KY students moving from dependency on “human” reader supports to independence using computer reading supports (i.e., textreader)
Which Students are Eligible for CATS Online?

- Students with an IEP, PSP (LEP), or 504 Plan which includes the need for a “reader” or assistive technology as an instructional and assessment accommodation

- Students who routinely use textreader or screenreader technology to access printed material in classroom instruction and assessment

- Students who have accessed and used the CATS Online Practice Area
KY Experience to Date with Online Accessible Assessment

- Two online pilots tests in 2002
- Spring 2003 — first full online assessment
  - 16 districts—29 schools—204 students
- Spring 2004 — second full assessment
  - 36 districts—74 schools—510 students
- Spring 2005 — third full assessment
  - 54 districts - 147 schools - 1235 students (35 LEP)
Online Accessible Assessment for 2006

- District pre-count projected numbers:
  - 69 districts – 220 schools – 3800 students

- Changes for 2006
  - Addition of NRT grades/NCLB requirement
  - Two online assessment systems:
    - Continuation of Kentucky Core Content Test delivered by eCollege
    - Norm-referenced tests delivered by CTB/McGraw-Hill
CATS Online
Basic Design/Accessibility Issues

• Digital text readable with textreader or screenreader
• Choice/variety of screen presentation modes
• Setup for blind, low vision, or sighted user
• One question/answer per screen
• Reading passages presented in choice of formats
• Optional alternative text for graphics
• Headphones for privacy and engagement
Student View:
Log in with user ID
Student View:
Welcome screen

Welcome, Jill Flatt
Main Menu

- Enter Practice Area
- Enter Assessment
- Set Your Preferences
- View Help Information

Leave CATS Online

[Image of Welcome screen]
CATS Online & Universal Design: Multiple Means of Representation

- Student chooses font, color preferences
- Student choices of screen presentation (e.g., full screen, dual frame)
- Student control of voice type, speed, pitch and volume
Set Your Preferences

Question Font Size | 12 |
Question Font Type | verdana, arial, geneva |
Question Font Color | Black |
Question Background Color | White |

Answer Font Size | 12 |
Answer Font Type | verdana, arial, geneva |
Answer Font Color | Black |
Answer Background Color | White |

Save Preferences

Go to Practice Area
Return to Main Menu
Student View: New Preferences

Set Your Preferences

Below are your new preferences:

For Questions

Sample Question: This is how the text for a question will appear on the screen

For Answers

Sample Answers: This is how the text for the answers will appear on the screen

Change Preferences Again

Go to Practice Area
Return to Main Menu
CATS Online & Universal Design: Multiple Means of Expression

- Student in control of pace and selection of text to be read or re-read
- Student can listen to open response text being read back to make decisions on needed revisions
- Possible use of word prediction to facilitate completion of open response
José created a game using two number cubes of different colors. The green cube had ODD multiples of 3 and the red cube had EVEN multiples of 3.

a. What was the color of the cube that had the number 6?

b. List SIX numbers that could be on the OTHER cube.

c. Could José design the same game using multiples of 4? Explain your answer.
CATS Online & Universal Design: Multiple Means of Engagement

- Headphones provide auditory engagement and reduce distraction
- Dual-color highlighting of text increases student focus and attention
- Positive student perception of a computer-based accommodation vs. a human accommodation
- Student independence and control increases student efficacy
CATS Online 2005 Post-Test Survey: Student Data

- 78% said they preferred taking the test on computer
- 83% said they could concentrate better reading the test on computer
- 91% of students thought they scored better
- 84% said they re-read passages/questions/answers
CATS Online 2005 Survey: Administrator Data

- 84% said that students were more engaged with the online assessment than with paper version
- 75% said text reader was preferable to human reader
- 65% said students took more time to complete the test on computer using their text reader
- 73% said students re-read test questions more often online than vs. use of human read-aloud
“I liked it alot, because you got to hear them read to you and see what they were reading.”  -Gr. 11

“i like being on the computer and not having someone read to me like a kid”  -Gr. 10

“It was easy and I liked it because I could do it by myself.”  -Gr. 4

“It was better than listening to an adult read and I could go at my own pace.”  -Gr. 7
“I think things went very well and am excited to allow more students to take advantage of this opportunity next year.”

“I am sold on CATS online and use of textreaders. We at [   ] Middle will participate again next year. This can only help our students and increase our test scores.”

“The students like the fact that the total control over the test is in their hands and that they can work independently and at their own pace.”

“The students seemed to like the fact that they did not have to ask for help to read. The students also seemed to go back and re-read questions more without a human reader.”
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mild Mental</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>36</td>
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# 2005 CATS Online Assessment Student Disabilities Summary

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1 each of Deaf/Blind, Functional Mental and Orthopedic
### 2005 CATS ONLINE ASSESSMENT SUMMARY OF PARTICIPATION BY GRADE

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<tr>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
<th>Grade 7</th>
<th>Grade 8</th>
<th>Grade 10</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>21.67</td>
<td>23.08</td>
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| Total tested with disabilities | 1,200 |
Impact of a computer-based universally designed assessment on the scores of students with disabilities

- Participating schools reporting improved student test scores
- Longitudinal data analysis of larger student numbers still required to verify impact on student performance
- Issue of determining if improvement in scores is due to accessible test design and or increased student access to general curriculum (UDL)
Computerized accessible assessment appears to offer a more personalized and user friendly (i.e., UDL) means for students to demonstrate what they have learned.

Use of computerized literacy supports (e.g., text read aloud/platform design) reduces construct-irrelevant barriers (e.g., decoding, multiple questions per page, finding choice on answer sheet).
Lessons learned

- Technology tools must be available school wide and for all students
- Include all stakeholders in process
  - Technology coordinators, special education teachers, ESL/LEP consultants, parents, students, administrators, assessment, instruction, ..........
- Plan big, start small
- Plan for support and follow-up
Other Possible Technology Supports: Representation

- Use of video or audio clips for background or to provide mental models to supplement meaning of selected text
- Hyperlinks to additional information or examples
- Live simulations of tasks (e.g., math operations)
Other Possible Technology Supports: Expression

- Response by selection of symbols/pics or audio
- Use of symbol to text systems for inclusive expression
- Use of speech to text for response instead of scribe
Other Possible Technology Supports: Engagement

- Electronic prompting systems for attending and task completion
- On screen visual and audio reinforcement for correct responses or attending
- Scaffolding of questions and or cues to promote student success
Preview of Kentucky’s Online Assessment

- Visit KY Dept of Education web site: www.education.ky.gov
  Enter “CATS Online” in search box
  Use sample student login IDs to preview accessible test items online
- CTBS/McGraw-Hill iKnow
  - http://www.ctb.com/
    - Online and Software Solutions
For more information:

Linnie Lee, Assistive Technology Consultant
Division of Curriculum Development
Kentucky Department of Education
Linnie.Lee@education.ky.gov

Preston Lewis, Universal Design Specialist
Human Development Institute
University of Kentucky
Preston.Lewis@uky.edu