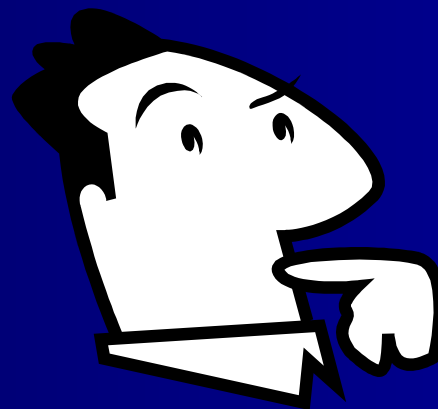




NATIONAL ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT CENTER

Step 3: What is Alternate Assessment?



The National Alternate Assessment Center is supported through a cooperative agreement through the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (Grant Number H324U04001). However, the contents of this presentation do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Office of Special Education or the US Department of Education, and participants should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

Some FAQ's about assessment systems

- Should all students with disabilities participate in state and district assessments?

Some FAQ's about assessment systems

- Legal requirements aside, why is it important to include students with disabilities in the general accountability system?

Some FAQ's about assessment systems

- Who should decide about the participation of a student with disabilities in an assessment?

Some FAQ's about assessment systems

- How should participation decisions be made?

What is alternate assessment?

- Alternate assessment is the primary mechanism through which students with the most significant cognitive disabilities participate in educational assessment and accountability.

What is alternate assessment?

- An alternate assessment is a way to measure the performance of students with disabilities who are unable to participate in general large-scale assessments used by districts or states, even with appropriate accommodations or modifications.

Assessment Participation Options or Types

- Assessment options for students with disabilities:
 - Regular State Assessment
 - Regular State Assessment with Accommodations
 - Alternate Assessment Judged Against Grade-Level Achievement Standards
 - ***Alternate Assessment Judged Against Alternate Achievement Standards
 - Alternate Assessment Judged Against Modified Achievement Standards

Participation Types at a Glance

Assessment Option	Foundation for Content	How Performance is Evaluated	Who Can Participate
Regular State Assessment	State's Academic Content Standards	Grade-Level Achievement Standards	Any student, including students with disabilities
Regular State Assessment with Accommodations	State's Academic Content Standards	Grade-Level Achievement Standards	Any student with a disability

March 31, 2006

Assessing Students with the Most Significant
Cognitive Disabilities

Participation Types at a Glance

Assessment Option	Foundation for Content	How Performance is Evaluated	Who Can Participate
Alternate Assessment Judged Against Grade-Level Achievement Standards	State's Academic Content Standards	Grade-Level Achievement Standards	Any student with a disability
Alternate Assessment Judged Against Alternate Achievement Standards	State's Academic Content Standards	Alternate Achievement Standards	Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities

March 31, 2006

Assessing Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Alternate Assessment Approaches

- In general, there are 3 approaches.
 - **Portfolios:** Student portfolios are a purposeful and systematic collection of student work that is evaluated and measured against predetermined scoring criteria.
 - **Performance Events:** These assessments are direct measures of a skill, usually in a one-on-one assessment. These can range from highly structured one-on-one assessments similar to traditional pencil/paper test, to a more flexible approach that can be adjusted based on student needs.
 - **Checklists:** This method relies on teachers to remember whether students are able to carry out certain activities. Scores reported are usually based on the number of skills that the student was able to successfully perform.

Portfolio Approach

- Teacher determined content or combination of teacher determined/state defined
- Observations conducted during instruction
- Multiple pieces of evidence
 - Systematic data charts
 - Work samples
 - Video tape
- Evidence collected over time (i.e., school year)

Portfolio Approach

- Teachers score them or a scoring center scores them
- Scorers are trained
- Each portfolio is scored 2 times with a 3rd resolution score for discrepancies
- Table leaders monitor scorers
- Inter-rater agreement is checked

Portfolio Approach

- Achievement Descriptors:
 - 1) Incomplete
 - 2) Awareness
 - 3) Emerging
 - 4) Progressing
 - 5) Needs improvement
 - 6) Proficient
 - 7) Advanced

March 31, 2006

Assessing Students with the Most Significant
Cognitive Disabilities

Performance Event Approach

- Content provided to administrator (typically teacher)
- Teachers rate structured performance
- Activity-based protocol
- Five level performance scaffold (system of least prompts)
- Conducted during testing window
- 1:1 administration

Performance Event Approach

- Achievement Descriptors:
 - Inconclusive
 - Exploring
 - Emerging
 - Developing
 - Novice

Checklist Approach

- Content provided to teachers
- Teacher administers the task
- Teacher rates the task
- Completed during a testing window

Checklist Approach

- Ratings include:

- (0) = Does not demonstrate
- (1) = Demonstrates/Supported
- (2) = Independence/Mastered

- Ratings tallied for level of achievement:

- Basic
- Proficient
- Advanced

Some FAQ's about alternate assessments

- Why provide alternate assessments?
 - To ensure educational accountability
 - Requirements of federal legislation

Some FAQ's about alternate assessments

- Who should participate in alternate assessments?

Some FAQ's about alternate assessments

- What are some sample guidelines?

Some FAQ's about alternate assessments

- What should be included in an alternate assessment?

References

- Browder, D. (2005). *Instruction and learning for students with alternate and modified achievement standards*. Presentation at the Office of Special Education Programs Project Directors' Conference. Washington, DC.
- National Center on Educational Outcomes.
<http://education.umn.edu/nceo/TopicAreas/Participation/participationFAQ.htm>
- National Center on Educational Outcomes.
<http://education.umn.edu/nceo/TopicAreas/AlternateAssessments/altAssessFAQ.htm>
- Roeber, E. (2002). *Setting standards on alternate assessments* (Synthesis Report 42). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes. Retrieved [March 22, 2006], from the World Wide Web:
<http://education.umn.edu/NCEO/OnlinePubs/Synthesis42.html>



Checkpoint

- Does anyone have any questions at this time?

Time to Share

- In your small group of 3 from the last activity, please take the next 5 minutes to discuss:
 - What alternate assessment approach is used in your state?
 - Does your state approach vary from others in your group with the same approach?
 - Do you have a contact within your state that you would go to for more information on the alternate assessment?