

# Assessment Population and the Validity Evaluation

Inclusive Assessment  
Seminar  
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## NHEAI

New Hampshire Enhanced Assessment Initiative:  
Technical Documentation for Alternate Assessments

# The Assessment Triangle and Validity Evaluation

(Marion, Quenemoen, & Kearns, 2006)

**OBSERVATION**

**INTERPRETATION**

**VALIDITY EVALUATION**

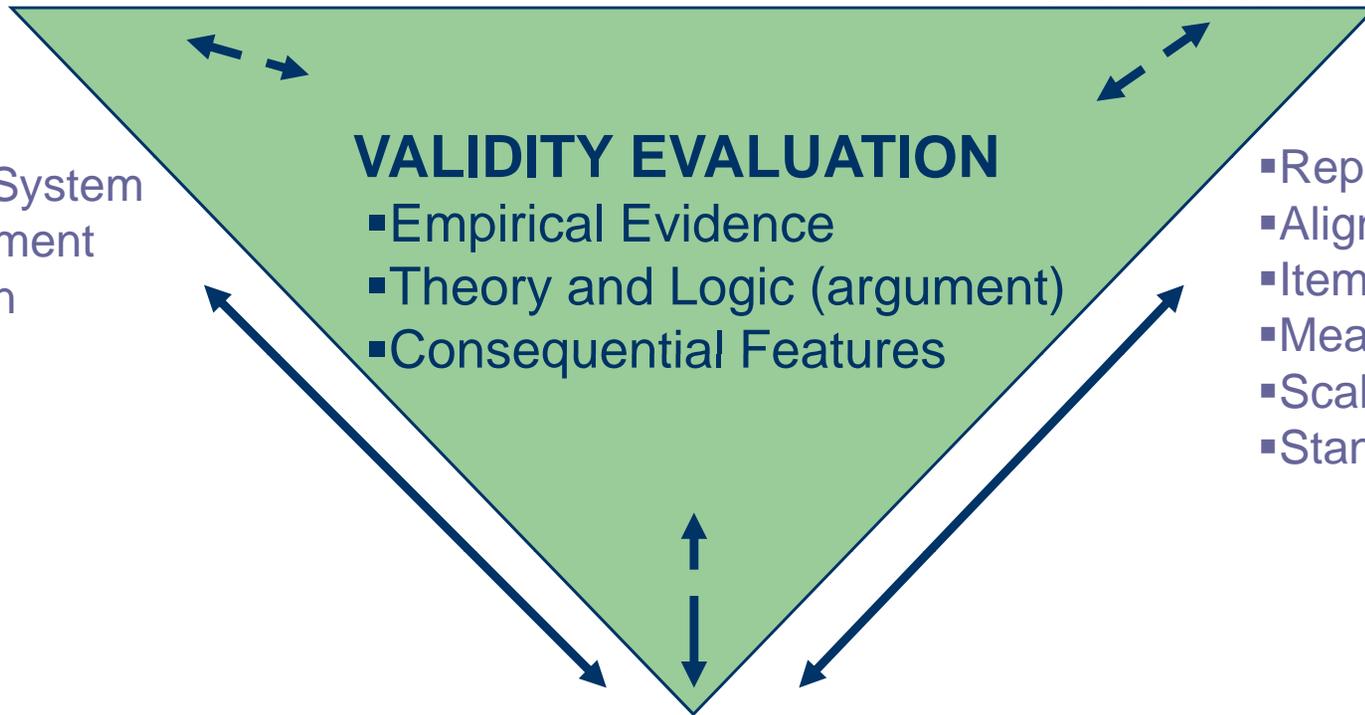
- Empirical Evidence
- Theory and Logic (argument)
- Consequential Features

- Assessment System
- Test Development
- Administration
- Scoring

- Reporting
- Alignment
- Item Analysis/DIF/Bias
- Measurement Error
- Scaling and Equating
- Standard Setting

**COGNITION**

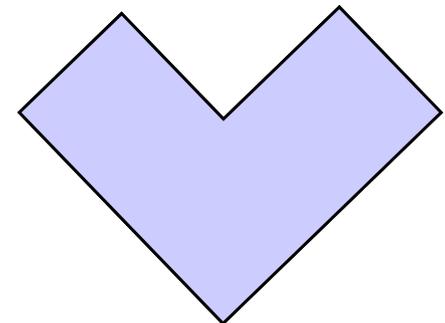
- Student Population
- Academic Content
- Theory of Learning



# Cognition Vertex Validity Questions

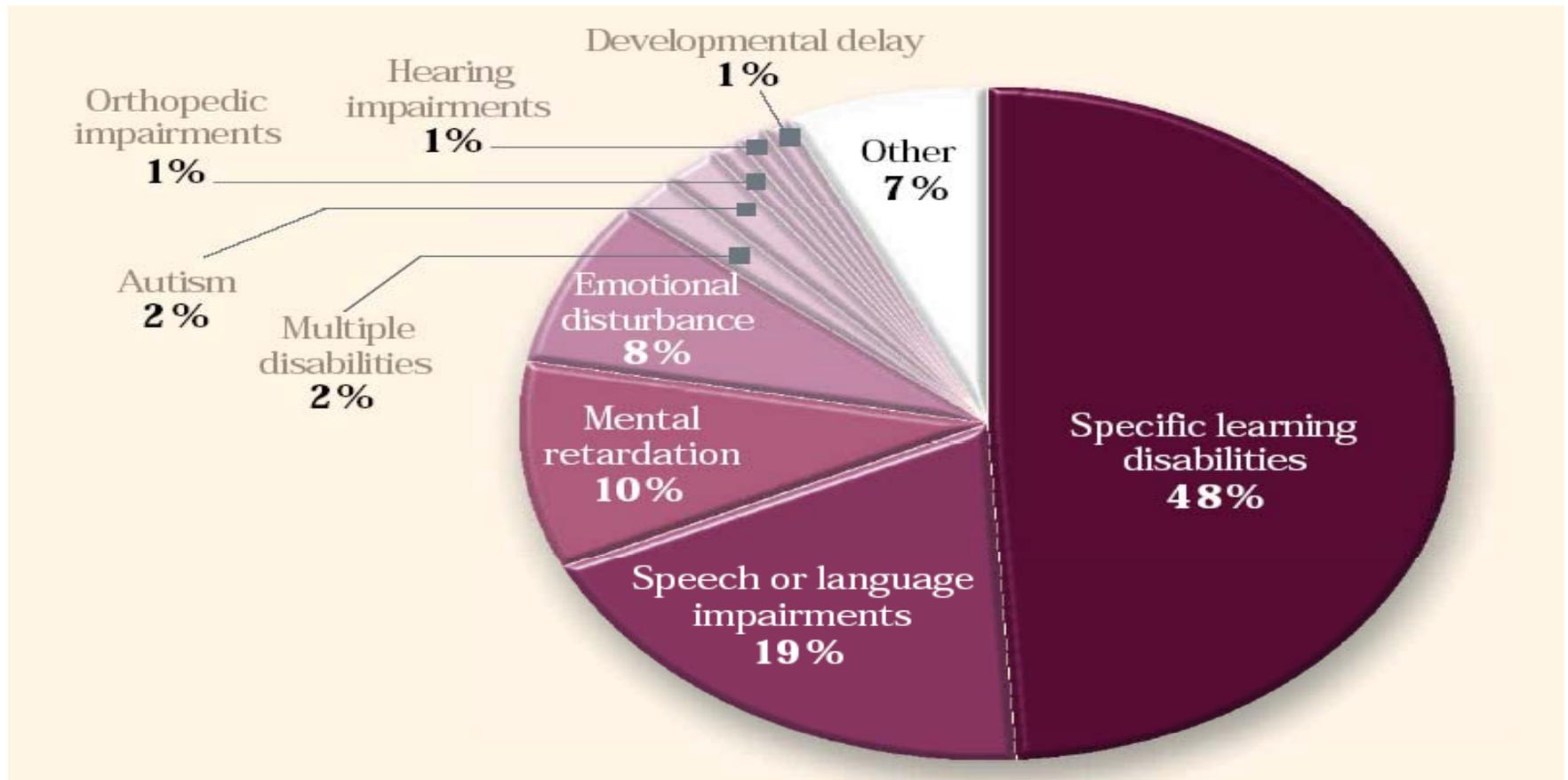
- 1) Is the assessment appropriate for the students for whom it was intended?
- 2) Is the assessment being administered to the appropriate students?

***Both are important for the validity evaluation!***



# Categorical Data Source

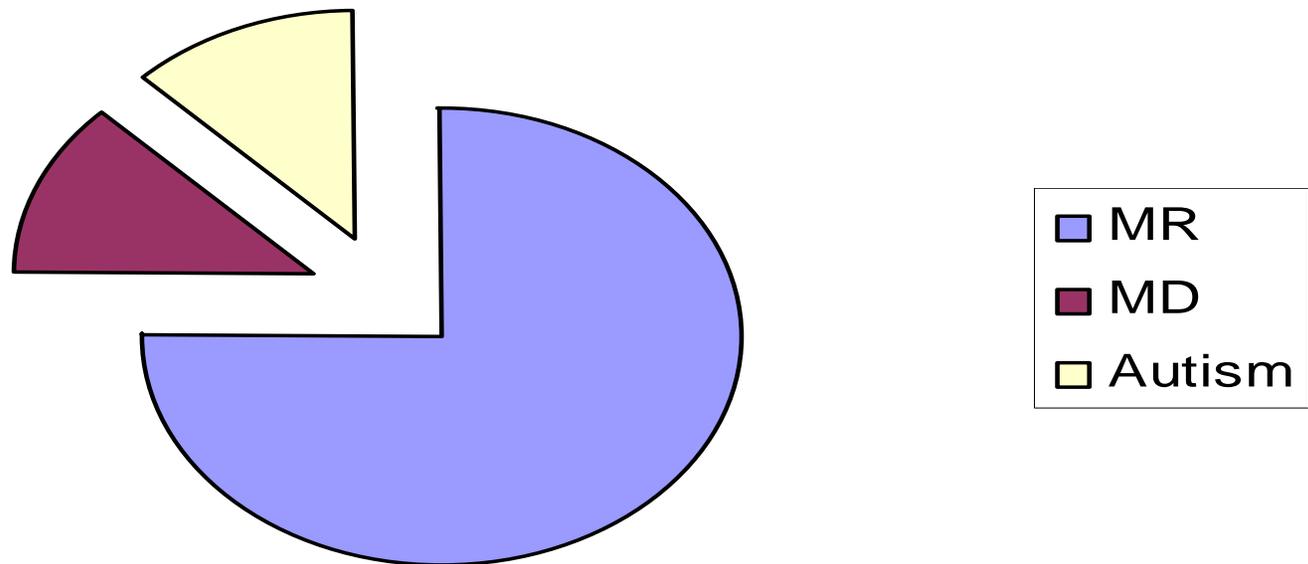
The total student population receiving special education services broken down by disability category



SOURCE: Education Week analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Data Analysis System, 2002-03.

# Alternate Assessment Participants

**Alternate Assessment Participants**



# Problems with Typical Population Data Sources AA-AAS

## ● Data source

- Disability Category demographic
- Participation Guidelines
- IEP team monitoring
- IEP Analysis
- Special Tool/instrument

## ● Problem

- Insufficient information
- Accuracy of information
- Difficult to document
- Labor and time intensive
- Design & field-test new instrument

# Theory of Learning

- Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities present problems with learning in these areas (Kleinert, Browder, & Towles-Reeves, 2005):
  - Expressive and Receptive Language
  - Attention to salient stimuli
  - Memory
  - Generalization
  - Self-Regulation
  - Limited motor response repertoire
  - Meta-cognition and Skill Synthesis
  - Sensory Deficits
  - Special Health Care Needs

# Key to Academic Content: Communication

- Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities can acquire generalized use of objects (or object selection) to **communicate** preferences (Hetzroni, Rubin, Konkol, 2002).
- Language learners must use symbols repeatedly, interactively, and generatively during meaningful and ongoing activities in language-rich environments (Goossens', Crain, & Elder, 1992; Cafiero, 1998; Goossens' et al., 1992; Romiski & Sevcik, 1996; Miller & Eller-Miller, 2002; Mirenda, 2003).
- Competent use of language for multiple purposes, audiences, and contexts facilitate the meta-linguistic skills required for reading comprehension (Rankin, Harwood, & Mirenda, 1994).
- Use of graphic symbols for communication may facilitate specific components of print and word awareness, but the overall impact on beginning reading and reading comprehension may be minimal (Bishop, Ranking, & Mirenda, 1994; Rankin, Harwood, & Mirenda, 1994).

# Academic Domains

(Browder, Wakeman, Spooner, Ahlgrim-Dezell, & Algozzine, manuscript submitted for publication)

## ● What We Know Most

- Vocabulary acquisition
- Reading fluency
- Reading comprehension
- Numeracy
- Measurement
- Operations
- Personal safety
- Weather\* **not included in formal studies**

## ● What We Know Least

- Phonemic awareness
- Phonics
- Algebra
- Geometry
- Spatial awareness
- Most of Science

# More alike than different

- It is *not* our purpose to develop a separate theory of cognition for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, but rather to:
  - understand within the context of our current literature, what might be problematic for students with significant cognitive disabilities, within this most important vertex of the assessment triangle as it is defined for all students (Kleinert, Browder, & Towles-Reeves, 2005)

# Cognition Vertex: Validity Evaluation Essential Questions

- Who is the population being assessed?
- How do we document and monitor the population?
- What do we know about how they learn (theory of learning) academic content?
- What does our performance data tell us about how the population is learning academic content?
- Are our data about the population and theory of learning **consistent** with student performances on the assessment?
  - If not, what assumptions are challenged?
  - What adjustments should be made:
    - Participation
    - Theory of Learning
    - Student Performance

