

Alignment

Inclusive Assessment
Seminar

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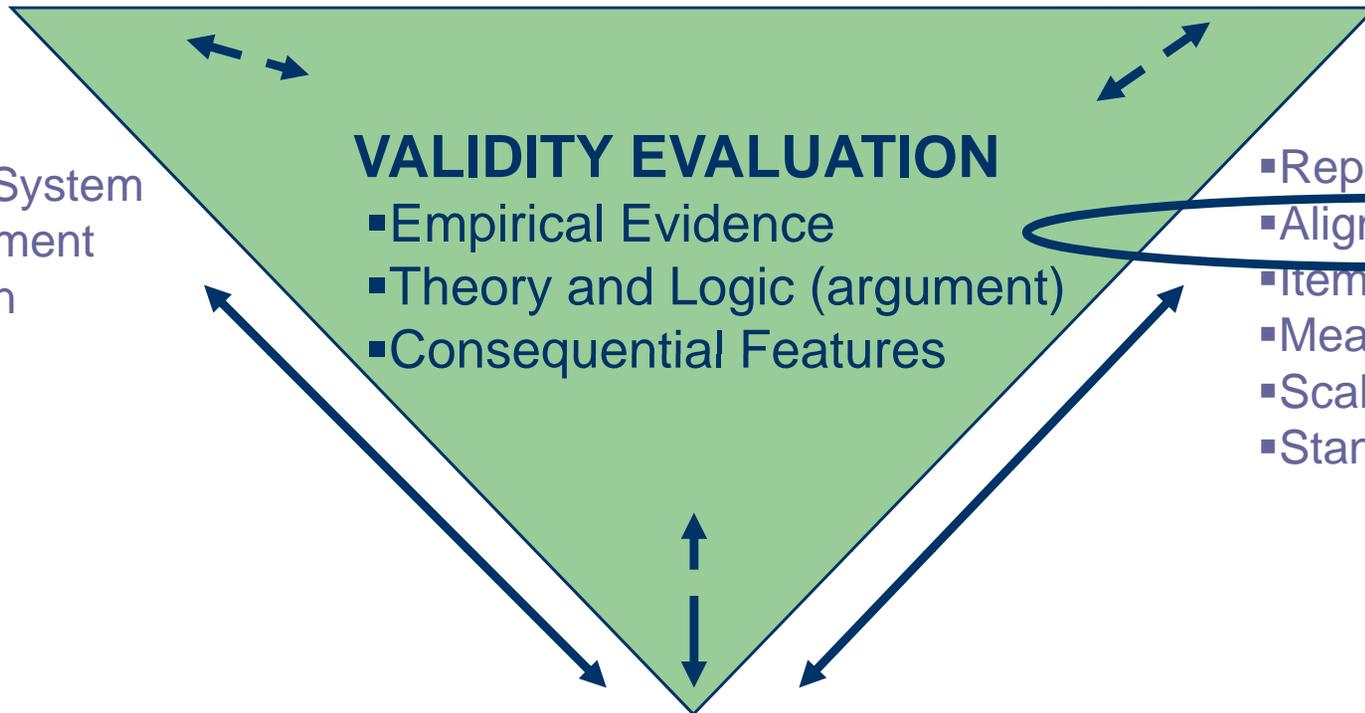
NHEAI

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
- Alignment

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

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

COGNITION

- Student Population
- Academic Content
- Theory of Learning

- Assessment System
- Test Development
- Administration
- Scoring

What is Alignment?

- Degree of overlap between content standards and assessment
- Traditional methods of examining alignment (Webb, Achieve, Survey of Enacted Curriculum, & others)
 - Content coverage
 - Depth of knowledge

Alignment of Alternate Assessments

- "...should be clearly related to grade-level content, although it may be restricted in scope or complexity or take the form of introductory or prerequisite skills" (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p.26).
- ...clear *link* to the content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled.

Link for Academic Learning

Table 1: *Criteria for Instruction and Assessment that Links to Grade Level Content*

1. The content is academic and includes the major domains/ strands of the content area as reflected in state and national standards (e.g., reading, math, science.)
2. The content is referenced to the student's assigned grade level (based on chronological age).
3. The achievement expectation is linked to the grade level content, but differs in depth or complexity; it is not grade level achievement. It may focus on prerequisite skills or those learned at earlier grades, but with applications to the grade level content. When applied to state level alternate assessments, these priorities are accessible to IEP planning teams.
4. There is some differentiation in achievement across grade levels or grade bands.
5. The focus of achievement promotes access to the activities, materials, and settings typical of the grade level but with the accommodations, adaptations, and supports needed for individualization.
6. The focus of achievement maintains fidelity with the content of the original grade level standards (content centrality) and when possible, the specified performance (category of knowledge).
7. Multiple levels of access to the general curriculum are planned so that students with different levels of symbolic communication can demonstrate learning.

Browder, D.M., Wakeman, S.Y., Flowers, C.P., Rickelman, R.J., & Pugalee, D. (In press). Creating access to the general curriculum with links to grade level content for students with significant cognitive disabilities: An explication of the concept. *Journal of Special Education*.

Definition of Link to Grade-Level Content Standards

To be linked to grade level standards, the target for achievement **must be academic** content (e.g., reading, math, science) that is **referenced to the student's assigned grade** based on chronological age.

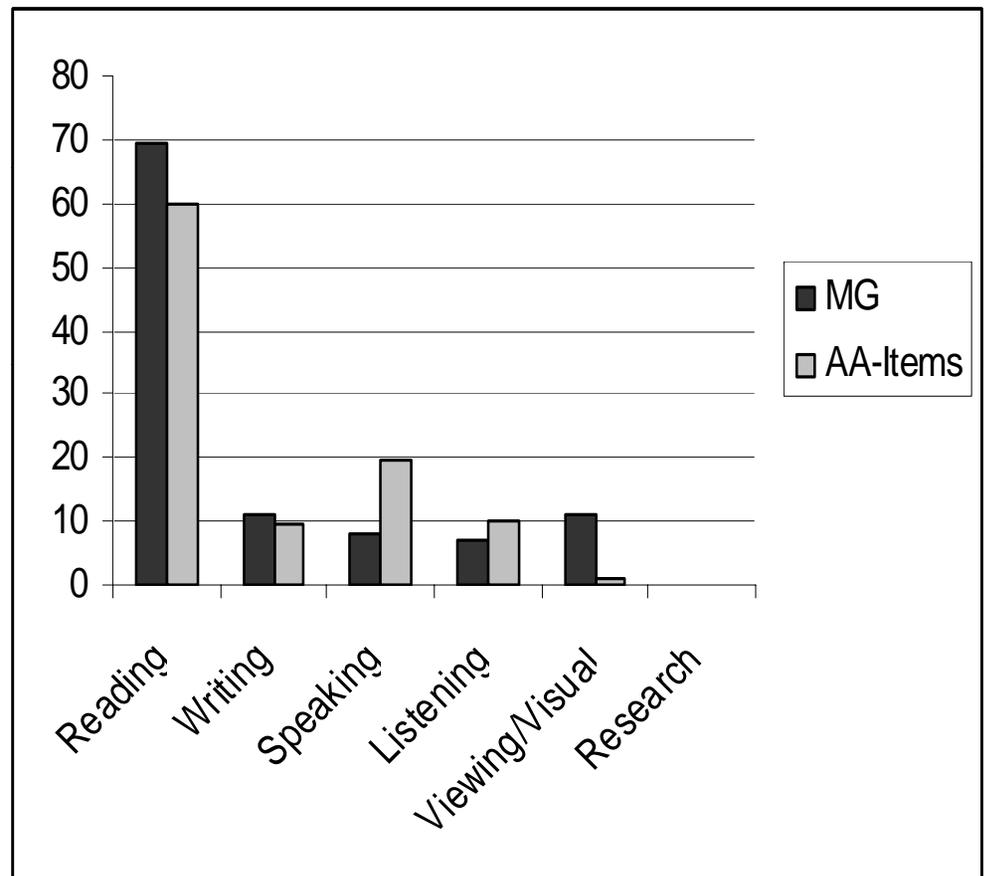
Functional activities and materials may be used to promote understanding, but the target skills for student achievement are academically-focused.

Some prioritization of the content will occur in setting this expectation, but it should **reflect the major domains** of the curricular area (e.g., strands of math) and have **fidelity with this content** and how it is typically taught in general education.

The alternate expectation for achievement may focus on prerequisite skills or some partial attainment of the grade level, but students should still have the **opportunity to meet high expectations**, to demonstrate a range of depth of knowledge, to achieve within their symbolic level, and to show growth across grade levels or grade bands.

Criterion 1 asks, *Is it Academic?*

- Do alternate assessment, any extended standards, classroom instruction/professional development focus on academic content?
- How much emphasis in each domain?



Criterion 2 asks, *Is it from the grade level/band?*

- Pinpoint the state's academic content standards for each grade level/band
- Determine if the “extensions” link to these standards
 - Judgments by academic content experts
- And then if AA link to the “extensions”
 - If no extensions, from state standard to AA

Criterion 3 asks, *Is the achievement expectation different from grade level achievement?*

- For example,
 - If depth of knowledge matches state standard overall, we assume that is grade level achievement.
 - Looking for full range of depth of knowledge but probably skewed towards lower levels for AA-AAS.
- If range, balance is different from state standards, is the narrowing intentional?
 - Are teachers given guidance on the narrowing?
 - Do teachers' priorities correspond with the same narrowing?

Criterion 4 asks, *Is there any difference in what is expected in lower vs upper grades?*

- How does the content and expectations change across grades?
- e.g., Extended standards showing different expectations in middle vs. elementary school
- e.g., If one performance assessment used across grades, able to show differential performance at upper vs lower grades?

Criterion 5 asks, “*Does the AA system promote teaching in/for general education?*”

- Assessment tasks adapted from grade?
 - e.g., using adapted passage from grade appropriate textbook, using similar science activity
 - Or are the tasks grade neutral, at least?
 - vs. early childhood tasks, materials
- Any consideration of inclusion?
- Professional development materials use examples from grade level materials?

Criterion 6 asks, “*Is it plumb? Is it square?*”

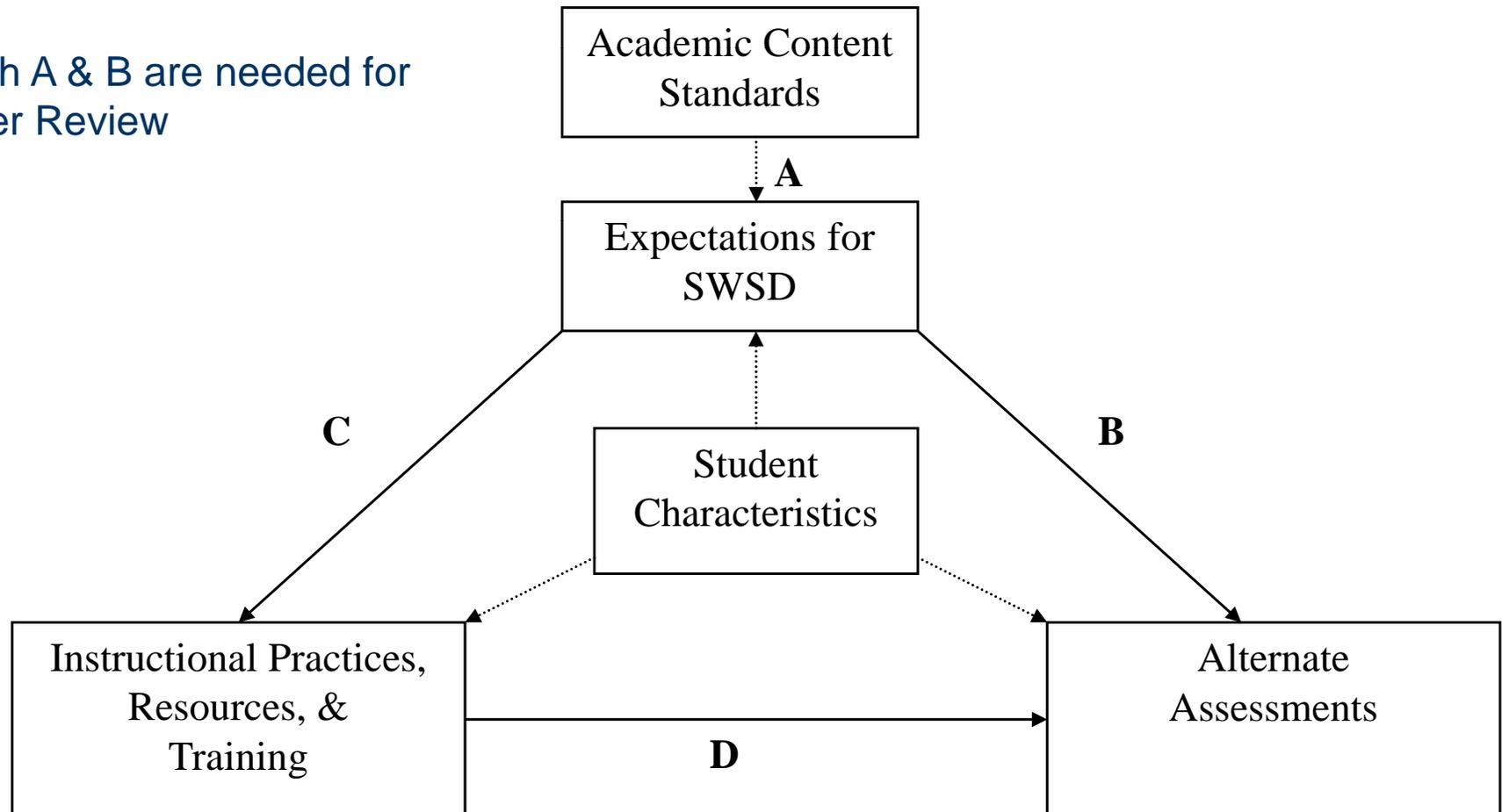
- Alternate assessment items
 - Match on content
 - Doable since professional typically presents the content
 - e.g., if the standard addresses fiction, are the materials fiction vs. survival words
 - Match on performance
 - Requires more creativity; more difficult for students with more significant disabilities
 - e.g., if standard says “evaluate” does the task have the student evaluate or simply identify

Criteria 7 asks, *Is the AA System inclusive of students who do not yet use symbols?*

- Three levels we consider
 - Abstract symbolic level
 - Concrete symbolic level
 - Presymbolic level

Educational Components of Alignment

Path A & B are needed for Peer Review



Alignment Procedures

- No consensus on acceptable level of alignment
- Flexibility – statistics for evaluating the criteria is dependent on the type of assessment
- Need content experts and special educators
- For more information:
 - <http://education.uncc.edu/cpflower>