Alternate Assessments' Contributions to Better Classroom Instruction & Testing

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Alternate Assessment Approaches

- **Portfolio Assessment** is an organized collection or documentation of student-generated or student-focused work typically depicting the range of individual student skills.
- **Performance Assessment** is a task or series of tasks requiring a student to provide a response or create a product to show mastery of a specific skill or content standard.
- **Comprehensive Rating Scales of Achievement** are rating scales anchored by descriptive rubrics for quantifying teacher judgments of students' knowledge and skills based on repeated direct and indirect observations situated in a number of school settings.
- **Modified Multiple Choice/Constructed Response**

AA's Facilitate Inclusive Practices

- Today, nearly 100% of students are participating in large-scale assessment and accountability systems.
- All students are being given significantly more access to learning and more is being expected of them.
- More academic instruction is being expected from all teachers.
- Reliable and valid evidence is required that students with disabilities are achieving.
- More PD & collaboration among teachers has been needed to achieve sound inclusive practices.

Better Instruction – Point #1

- **Extended Content Standards in Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science**
- **Opportunity to Learn the Intended and the Assessed Curriculum**
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Better Instruction – Point #2

- Evidence of student learning and achievement is everywhere in your classroom.
- Evidence must be aligned to state’s curriculum frameworks/content standards.
- Collect and organize evidence to “point a picture” of student performance and use this to communicate with others.

Better Instruction – Point #3

- **Cognitive Load Theory**
  - Reduce extraneous load
    - Reduce instructional content & activities that are irrelevant to the learning goal.
  - Increase germane load
    - Increase instructional content & activities that benefit the learning goal.
  - Manage intrinsic load
    - Break down complex tasks into a series of prerequisite tasks and supporting knowledge.

Better Measurement – Point #4

- Use rubrics to evaluate student work and to communicate with students, other teachers, & parents about student achievement!

Better Measurement – Point #5

- **3 Sources of Influence**
  - **Item Development Research**
  - **Cognitive Load Theory**
  - **Universal Design Principles**

Elliott & Kettler / CEC 2010
Inaccessible Item

Twenty-five students are enrolled in Mr. Wilson's class. Not every student is in the class every day. Today, 2 girls and 3 boys are absent from the class. What percent of Mr. Wilson's class is absent today?

A. 80%
B. 30%
C. 20%
D. 90%

Accessible Item

Mr. Bell has 25 students in his class. Today, 5 students are absent.

What percent is absent?

A. 20%
B. 30%
C. 80%
Your Observations About AAs

- Alternate assessments have helped to improve instructional practices for students with disabilities by ____________________________ .
- Alternate assessments have helped to improve testing practices for students with disabilities by ____________________________ .
- Other observations about AAs: ____________________________ .

Conclusions

- Practices critical to the development and validation of alternate assessments have some important positive benefits for classroom instruction and evaluation of students' academic progress.
  - Expectations for learning have been raised and clarified.
  - Emphases on tangible evidence for documenting learning is prevalent.
  - Use of scoring rubrics to evaluate evidence improves reliability and communication with students and parents.
  - Application of universal design and cognitive load theory to the design of both classroom instructional materials and assessments should facilitate greater access.

Overall, access to learning and testing has resulted for more students!

Thank You!

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