

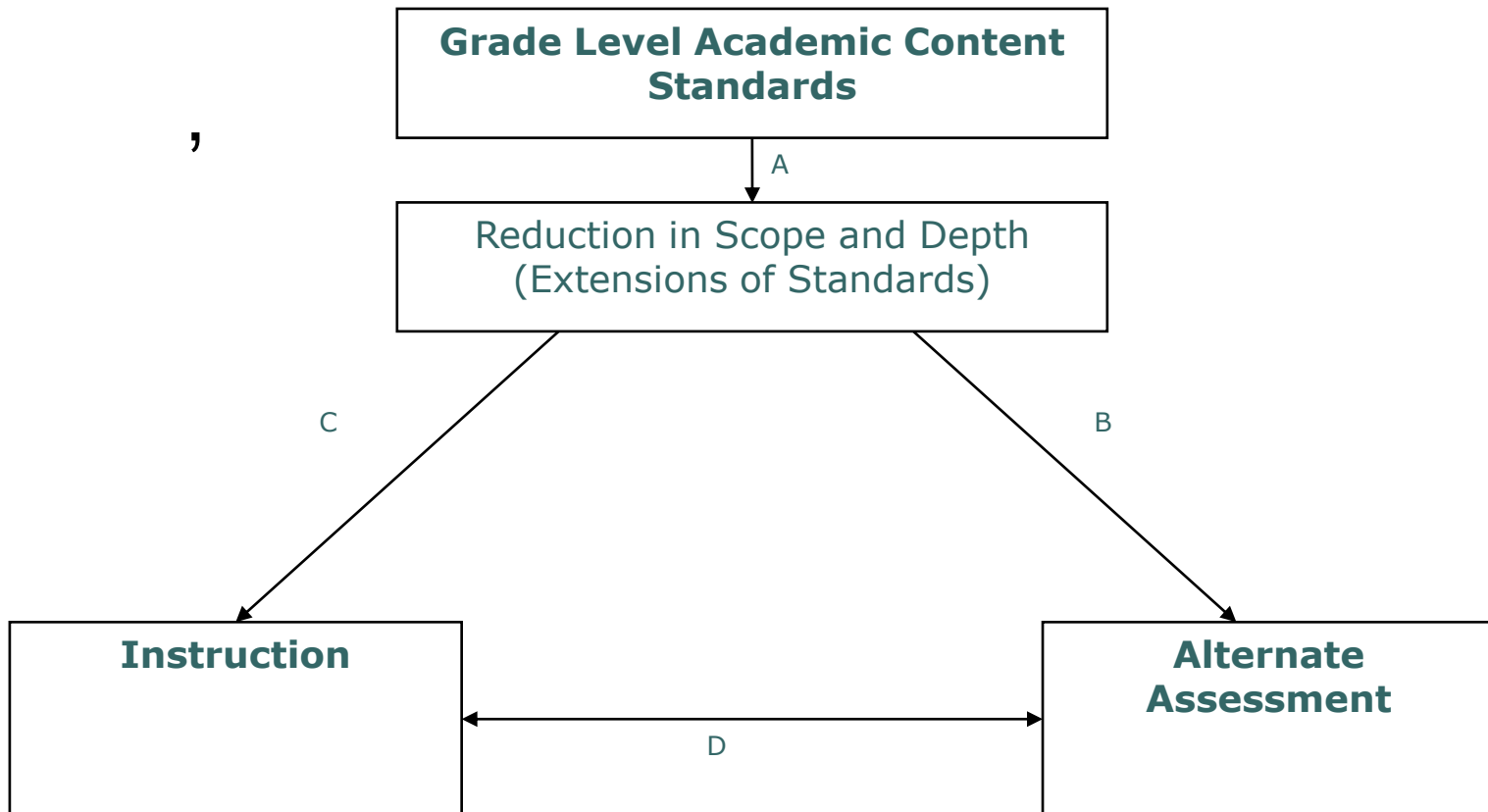


Linking Instruction and Assessment to Grade Level Content Standards

Diane M. Browder, PhD

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

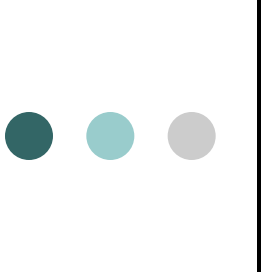
What Needs to Align





What Is Access to General Curriculum Content?

- Browder, D., Wakeman, S.Y., Flowers, C., Rickelman, R.J., Pugalee, D., & Karvonen, D. (2007). 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, 41*, 2-16.
- Seven Criteria for Access to the General Curriculum
 - Four derived from federal policy
 - Three based on needs of population
- *Links for Academic Learning*
 - Revised based on stakeholder feedback- now 8 criteria

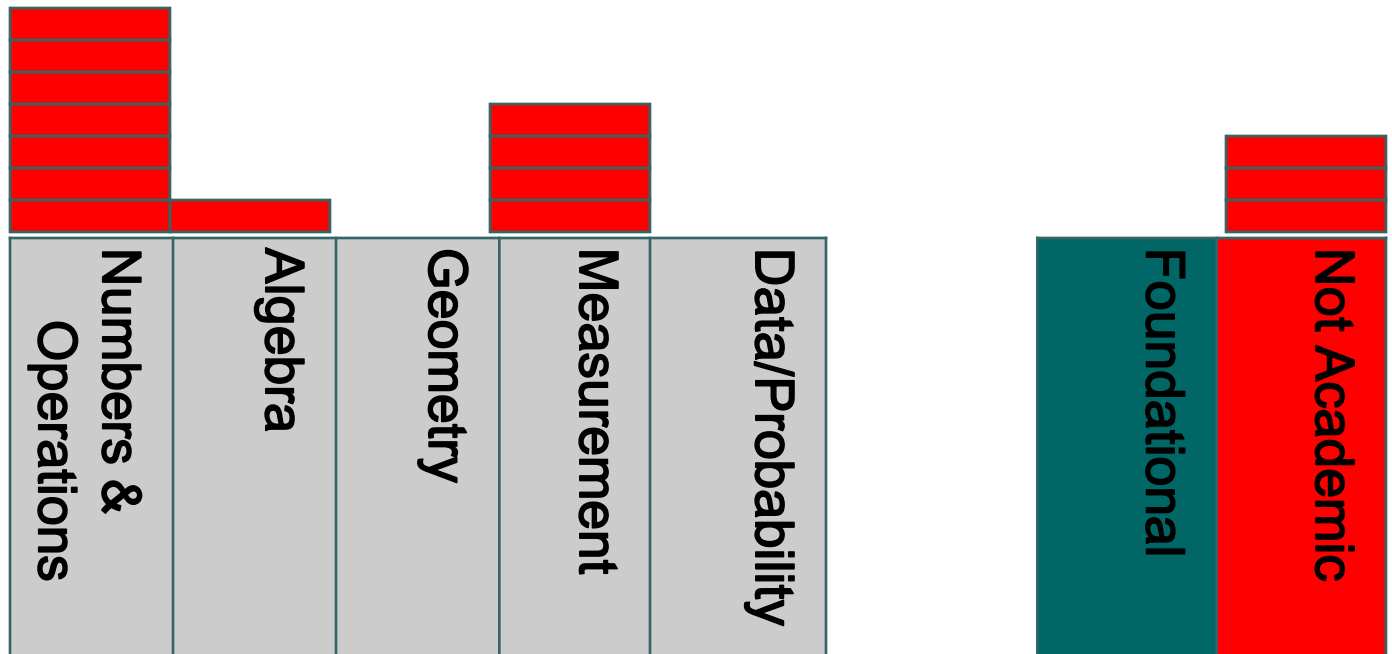


Criterion 1: *Is it really academic?*

- Can the skill be located within one of the domains of the major content areas for LA, math, science as defined by national content experts?
 - National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
 - Strands of Science from National Science Foundation
 - National Council for Teachers of English
 - Also National Reading Panel components of reading

Criterion 1

15 Items/Task





Self Assessment: Do I-

- ✓ Know my state's standards
- ✓ Understand the major strands of math, science, language arts/ reading
- ✓ Collaborate with general educators who have deep knowledge of the content
- ✓ Develop standards-based IEPs
- ✓ Plan for balance between new academic content and other priorities (functional, therapy, or social/behavioral goals)

Finding the Balance



- Life Skills are still important but NOT a prerequisite to academic learning...students can learn both
- Finding the balance in the daily schedule
 - Embedding academics in functional routines
 - Using functional applications within academic lessons
 - Finding naturally occurring times to teach functional skills and having academic lessons
 - All of the above!

Goal for Teaching to the Standards

- Real academic learning
 - Skills content expert would agree are “really” math, LA, science
- Foundational skills that build towards this learning





Foundational Skills vs. “Something Else”

- Foundational skills: not academic per se, but can promote academic learning
 - Orients and opens book
 - Puts items in bins to help solve math problem
 - Hits switch to ask “What is it?” in science experiment
 - Looks at mixture during experiment
- Something else: not academic and not clearly linked to learning academics
 - Increases time in seat
 - Enjoys science lesson
 - Passes materials
 - Aware book is being read

**FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS
ARE BETTER THAN
PASSIVE, VAGUE, OR
PURELY MOTOR
RESPONSES!**

Criterion 2: Grade Referenced

- The content is referenced to the student's assigned grade level (based on CA)





What is the Grade Level Content?

- Grade Level Content (8th Grade):

- Explain how weather is the most significant source of erosion and can affect the shape of rocks and create landscapes.

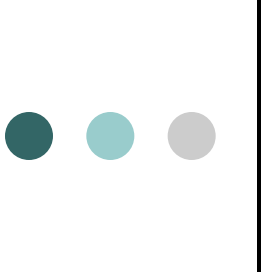
- Grade Level Achievement shown by:

- Creating visual model of erosion (project)
- Written report on erosion
- Multiple choice test



Self Assessment: Do I-

- Plan for students based on their assigned grade level
- Have access to materials, activities, lesson plans of general educator
 - And better yet- collaborate for universal design of lessons!



Criterion 3: Content and Performance Centrality

- The focus of achievement maintains fidelity with the content of the original grade level (content centrality) and when possible, with the specified performance in the original state standards (category of knowledge)
 - Content match is near, far, none for AA items and extended standards
 - Performance match is all, some, or none



Planning the Closest Link

- State Standard:
- Explain how weather is the most significant source of erosion and can affect the shape of rocks and create landscapes
- *Content?*
 - *Weather in erosion of rocks/ creation of landscapes*
- *Performance?*
 - *Construct an explanation*
- *Nick will hold a rock*
 - Content? No
 - Performance? No
- *Nick will select pictures of landscape shaped by weather*
 - Content? Yes
 - Performance? Far link
- *Nick will sequence 3 pictures to show how landscape formed*
 - Content? Yes
 - Performance? Stronger link



Self Assessment

Do I-

- Teach to the content reflected in a standard
 - Know where to find more information if I don't understand this content
- Know how to identify the performance in a standard
 - Adapt performance for individual student learning staying as close as possible to original

Criterion 4: Pinpoint the Alternate Achievement vs. Grade Level Achievement

- Alternate achievement
 - May have narrower content
 - May focus on fewer objectives per standard
 - May have decreased depth of knowledge
 - But still promotes high expectations
 - Not overly narrow
 - Student has opportunity to show learning across full range of depth of knowledge (no artificial ceiling on learning)



Alternate Achievement: Example for Comprehension of Middle School Novel

- Students hear chapter summaries read and participate using pictures, repeated story lines, and controlled vocabulary.
- Students select pictures for fishbone diagram after hearing story.
- Students use pictures to answer simple yes/no questions about characters in the story (e.g., Was Phillip a boy?)
- Students compare events from their own life to events in Phillip's life in the story using a yes/no chart, and a Venn diagram.



Self Assessment

Do I-

- Teach to the full range of depth of knowledge
 - Recall, comprehension, application, synthesis, evaluation
- Prioritize within grade level content
 - Know my state's priorities for alternate assessments
 - Rely on IEP team planning and ongoing collaboration with general educator to set priorities

Criterion 5: Differentiation Across Grade Levels/ Bands



- There is some differentiation in **CONTENT** across grade levels or grade bands



Longitudinal Curricular Planning

○ Elementary

- Children's picture books provide support for comprehension
- Stories have simpler themes and story lines
- Answers can more often be found on the page (matching)

○ Middle School

- Chapter books; student follows along in own book
- Books may have picture symbol supports; objects may still be used to support comprehension
- Themes are more mature
- More content from which to glean answer



Self Assessment

Do I-

- Coordinate with teachers across grade bands to set priorities for what students will master
- Study state curricular resources to understand how content builds across grades



Criterion 6: Alternate Achievement Standards

- The expected achievement is for the student to show learning of grade referenced academic content
- Inferences student has learned can be strengthened through-
 - Measuring unprompted responding (or more credit for less prompting)
 - Having more than one it

Criterion 6: Student Achievement vs “Something Else”

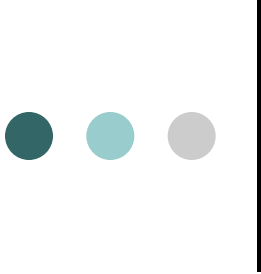
- Student achievement
 - Select picture for main idea
 - Full credit- eye gaze, point
 - Find main idea across stories
 - More credit for more complex text
- “Something Else”
 - Select picture with model prompt-point where I point
 - Student works with peer who selects the picture
 - Student did not select picture, but could check “not my best work”



Self Assessment

Do I-

- Target skills students will be able to do with little to no assistance
 - Active vs. passive student learning
- Use methods to fade teacher prompts
- Teach students to generalize skills across materials and activities



Criterion 7: Barriers to Responding

- The potential barriers to students demonstrating what they can do are minimized in the assessment
 - Can students with various sensory, physical, communication challenges show what they know?
 - Are modifications and supports specified?
 - Are there ways for students who use nonsymbolic communication or who have limited intentional communication to show what they know?

Differentiating Instruction

Standard- *Design and Implement a Survey*

- Ss with Abstract Symbolic Use:
 - Design survey from menu of picture/word options; address envelopes for mailing; tally outcomes as bar graph
- Ss with Concrete Symbolic Use:
 - Fill in survey stem questions using picture options; apply address labels; divide responses in categories for pictorial tally
- Ss Beginning Symbol Use:
 - Make two choices about survey (e.g., survey boys or girls?); use voice output device to interview; use counting jig for object graph



Self Assessment

Do I-

- Differentiate instruction for students?
 - Promote increased use of symbols by students at all levels?
 - Adapt for sensory impairments or physical challenges?

Criterion 8: Instructional Alignment

- The instructional program promotes learning in the general curriculum





Best Practice is Still Important

- Self determination
- Opportunities to learn with peers who are nondisabled
- Assistive technology
- General education contexts
- Functional applications



Self Assessment

- What best practice indicators are being emphasized well in my current practice?
 - What needs to be restored or developed?



For More Information on Teaching to State Standards

- Browder, D.M., Spooner, F., Wakeman, S., Trela, K., & Baker, J.N. (2006). Aligning instruction with academic content standards: Finding the link. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 31, 300-321.



Resource for Alignment Studies for AA-AAS

- Flowers, C., Wakeman, S., Browder, D., & Karvonen, M. (2007). *Links for academic learning: An alignment protocol for alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards*. Charlotte, NC: National Alternate Assessment Center at University of North Carolina at Charlotte. @