

The Future of MI-Access: An Assessment Development Update

Throughout the 2005/2006 school year, the MI-Access team has continued to engage in the assessment development process first described in the August 2005 edition of *The Assist*. The Assessment Plan Writing Teams (APWTs) met in September and October specifically to carry on their efforts related to developing sets of extended grade level content expectations (EGLCEs) and extended benchmarks (EBs). These sets of EGLCEs and EBs will form the basis for new MI-Access assessments in the content areas of English language arts and mathematics (for Participation and Supported Independence) and science (for Participation, Supported Independence, and Functional Independence).

To help broaden APWT members' perspectives on the Participation and Supported Independence student populations, a field trip to Wing Lake Developmental Center (www.winglake.bloomfield.org) was taken. Wing Lake is a center-based program in Oakland County that serves many students, the majority of whom have severe cognitive impairments (SCI) or are severely multiply impaired (SXI). Students from fifteen districts attend Wing Lake, which provides year-round, full day programs for students ages three through twenty-five.

Following is an update on the progress the APWTs have made in each content area.

English Language Arts and Mathematics

Draft sets of EGLCEs and EBs were completed for both the Participation and Supported Independence student populations. For alternate assessments, states may choose to develop content standards or expectations by grade level or by grade clusters. After hearing input from the APWT regarding the various student populations and considering the current observational format of the Participation and Supported Independence assessments, it was decided that grade clusters would be most appropriate. Therefore, the draft EGLCEs and EBs for Participation and Supported Independence were compiled into elementary (grades 2-5), middle school (grades 6-8), and high school (grade 11) sets. Due to budget constraints, item writing and finalization of the drafts will not begin until fall 2006.

Science

A draft set of science EBs was completed for the Functional Independence student population, and work on a set for Participation and Supported Independence students has begun. Once that work is completed, the APWT will look across the extensions for all three populations to ensure consistency of content and appropriateness of complexity for each group.

Assessment Development Table

The table below shows where the MI-Access program is currently and what assessments are on the horizon. It is organized by the grade level at which the assessments are or will be administered. The column labeled “Currently Administered” lists the MI-Access assessments that are operational at this time; the column labeled “Under Development” includes the English language arts, mathematics, and science assessments described in the preceding paragraphs; and the column labeled “Future Development” indicates the assessments that need to be developed at some point in the future.

Assessment Development Table

Grade	Currently Administered				Under Development								Future Development		
	P	SI	FI-ELA	FI-M	SI-ELA	SI-M	P-ELA	P-M	P-SC	SI-SC	FI-SC	P-SS	SI-SS	FI-SS	
3	X	X	X	X	U	U	U	U							
4	X	X	X	X	U	U	U	U							
5	X	X	X	X	U	U	U	U	U	U	U				
6	X	X	X	X	U	U	U	U				F	F	F	
7	X	X	X	X	U	U	U	U	U	U	U				
8	X	X	X	X	U	U	U	U	U	U	U				
9												F	F	F	
11	X	X	X	X	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	F	F	F	

KEY

P - Participation	ELA - English Language Arts	X - Currently Administered
SI - Supported Independence	M - Mathematics	U - Under Development
FI - Functional Independence	SC - Science	F - Future Development
	SS - Social Studies	

Several APWT members provided comments on their meeting evaluation forms from September and October. In general, they indicated satisfaction with the quality of the meeting facilitation, and found the discussions professionally beneficial. Several mentioned feeling highly challenged and somewhat overloaded by the task they were asked to accomplish and with the large amount of documentation they were asked to consider in their decision-making efforts.

The visit to Wing Lake seemed particularly helpful. One member indicated that it was “the most useful step in the process. That visit made things very clear and gave us a great, fresh understanding of the level of functioning that Participation students are working on.” Another member echoed that sentiment, indicating that it was valuable “both as an individual and for the group.”

The science APWT met in January and again in March. Look for updates on the progress made at these two meetings in the next issue of *The Assist*.