NATIONAL ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT CENTER

NAAC – Student /Program Observation Tools

With the advent of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) amendments of 1997, its subsequent reauthorization in 2004 and 2008, and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, access to the general curriculum for all students has been clearly identified as an important educational component for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Additionally, NCLB requirements reinforce the inclusion of specific academic content (reading, math, and science) for all students. The purpose of this set of tools to gauge the extent to which students with significant cognitive disabilities are learning academic content and the extent to which their individual needs for daily living and social interactions continue

Validity Evaluation

This set of tools is designed to investigate important questions of consequential validity regarding intended and unintended consequences of alternate achievement standards assessments and the provision of access to the general curriculum. Specifically, we are interested in 1) the extent to which students are currently engaged in academic content curriculum and instruction and 2) the extent to which students continue to receive instruction in skills that are critical to participating in school or community contexts. In addition, these tools look at the extent to which instruction appropriately links to the student's level of communication. Further, the skills and services required to enhance a student's independent performance are considered part of a high quality instructional program.

Purpose and Use

This instrument contains a student profile concerning the student to be observed and four tools: 1) a student/classroom observation tool, 2) a student work analysis, 3) an IEP analysis, and 4) a teacher interview. These tools allow researchers to examine and describe the extent to which an individual student (particularly a student with significant cognitive disabilities) is provided with a range of instructional targets, supports, and practices which allow appropriate access to the general curriculum. The tools were developed to report the presence of specific indicators of effective practices that may be observed in a single visit. The tools are designed to be used concurrently in the validity evaluation as part of a triangulated approach. Data from the four coordinating instruments used concurrently provide a more valid picture of instructional practices than any of the

instruments used singly. Although many elements of effective practice and program quality are included in the indicators, these tools should not be used to evaluate teacher competence or student performance.

Using the Tools

1) Read all the supporting materials and indicator definitions prior to conducting the observation.
2) All the tools must be completed for each student observed. Observations that do not include all tools completed for a single student should not be used in a validity evaluation for an alternate achievement standards assessment.
3) Fully disclose the purpose of your visit, the tools, and the results following the visit. Human Subjects Clearance and permissions will be necessary.
4) Participate in the on-line training (currently under development)

Student Profile

The student profile uses a previously developed Learner Characteristics Inventory (Kearns et. al. 2006) to develop a profile of characteristics that may influence the student's responses or ability to respond. The evaluator will have to seek teacher input in the administration of the Student Profile. It would be helpful to send the profile in advance of the student observation.

Student Observation Protocol

The Student Observation Tool contains three components 1) Classroom Environment, 2) Learning Activity, and 3) Student Response/Task. There are approximately X items on the three components. We recommend that the observation target at least one student. The following parameters should be observed:

1) The student should be observed for a minimum of 20 minutes or until the task/activity has been completed.
2) While either an academic activity (the tools are specifically designed to be used within the content areas of reading, math, and science) or a life-skills activity can be observed or both, we do not recommend observing personal care routines that may invade the student's privacy. The observer may note on the instrument that a student is engaged in a personal care routine.

3) We also recommend that if the student is experiencing difficulty with behavior or health issues that the observation be rescheduled for a time to observe a typical or even optimal performance.

4) Other than courtesy interactions with the student (e.g., greeting) before or after the observation, the observer should not influence or attempt to engage the student during the observation.

Activity/Task

We are interested in the type of activity, type of group arrangement, and who is delivering the instruction. For these indicators, check the best description.

Type of Activity/Task refers to either an academic task or a life-skills task. An ***academic task*** should clearly focus on reading, math, science although it may have an authentic or real life context (i.e, writing to advocate a position). A ***life-skills*** task may include some academic skills (i.e., using a calculator) but the context and outcome is clearly life-skills related (i.e., grocery shopping). It is here where personal care routines may be noted.

Grouping describes the type of group in which the student is participating. Large group refers to a typical general education classroom arrangement with an average ratio of student to teacher at 22:1. Small group refers to 2-5 students instructed by one teacher or paraprofessional; while one to one instruction refers to one student and one teacher. Students may also be participating in cooperative learning groups or may work independently.

Instruction may be provided by the general educator, special educator, related service provider, para-professional or a peer tutor. Collaborative teachers may deliver instruction jointly.

Student Observation: Student Response

Indicators for the Student Response Component characterize the student's response to the task/activity. They are designed to indicate the extent to which the student responds to the instruction.

Student Communication describes the student's communication during the observed activity.

Student Work Protocol

The student work protocol is designed to consider indicators of student work that are similar to those in the observation. However, it should be noted that this tool is not designed to score student work, merely look for the extent to which the indicators exist. To complete the student work protocol,

the evaluator should review 3 to 5 work samples within a single content area. Indicators should be applied to the total sample and not to the individual pieces.

Teacher Interview

The teacher interview is designed to confirm the student performance observed in the activity/task observation, and obtain teacher feedback on the student's expected performance level. In addition, we are interested in the extent to which the teacher has received training, technical assistance, or other support in assisting access to the general curriculum and the influence of accountability assessments (reading, math and science) upon IEP development. This interview is designed for specifically for special education teachers. Another version is in development for general education teachers who may be providing services for a particular student.

IEP Analysis

The IEP Analysis is designed to investigate the extent to which academic content objectives/goals/benchmarks occur in student IEP's and the presence or absence of selected effective practice indicators. Two types of objectives may be evaluated: content objectives and life-skills objectives. For each objective indicate the type of objective using the coding system. Content objectives are coded R = reading, M=math, and S = science. Other content objectives (i.e., social studies) are coded as O=other. Life-skills objectives are coded C= communication, self-care = SC, B = social behavioral, V= vocational. The coding for the IEP analysis is similar to the other instruments in that each objectives/goals/benchmarks are rated by (+) if observed, a (-) if not observed. Additional pages may be used as necessary.

Part II: Student Profile

Student ID_____ Age_____ Grade _____
Teacher _____ Observer _____
School _____ Date_____
Observation Time: Begin_____ End_____

Part I: Student Profile

1. **<u>Expressive Communication</u>** (check one answer that best describes your student)

O Uses symbolic language to communicate: Student uses verbal or written words, signs, Braille, or language-based augmentative systems to request, initiate, and respond to questions, describe things or events, and express refusal.

O Uses intentional communication, but not at a symbolic language level: Student uses understandable communication through such modes as gestures, pictures, objects/textures, points, etc., to clearly express a variety of intentions.

O Student communicates primarily through cries, facial expressions, change in muscle tone, etc., but no clear use of objects/textures, regularized gestures, pictures, signs, etc., to communicate.

1a. Does the student use an augmentative communication system in addition to or in place of oral speech?

O Yes O No

1b. For students using augmentative communication systems, **choose the item below that best** describes the student's use of the augmentative communication system:

O Uses only one symbol or sign at a time and uses only a few symbols in total to express simple or early intents (e.g., drink, eat, toilet, greet, refuse, more).

O Combines two symbols together to express broader intents (e.g., express social exchanges, greeting with peer name, personal interests)

O Combines mostly iconic symbols (clear representations) or signs sequentially to express intents and respond consistently (e.g., wants/needs, social exchanges, academic concepts and skills, personal interests)

O Uses multiple abstract symbols, signs, or print in sentences or phrases on the augmentative communication system to express a variety of academic, social, self-initiated interactions.

2. **Receptive Language** (check the best description)

O **Independently follows 1-2 step directions** presented through words (e.g. words may be spoken, signed, printed, or any combination) and **does NOT need additional cues**.

O **Requires additional cues** (e.g., gestures, pictures, objects, or demonstrations/models) to follow 1-2 step directions.

O **Alerts** to sensory input from another person (auditory, visual, touch, movement) **BUT requires actual physical assistance** to follow simple directions.

O Uncertain response to sensory stimuli (e.g., sound/voice; sight/gesture; touch; movement; smell).

3. **Vision** (check the best description)

O Vision within normal limits.

O Corrected vision within normal limits.

O Low vision; uses vision for some activities of daily living.

O No functional use of vision for activities of daily living, or unable to determine functional use of vision.

4. **Hearing** (check the best description)

O Hearing within normal limits.

O Corrected hearing loss within normal limits.

O Hearing loss aided, but still with a significant loss.

O Profound loss, even with aids.

O Unable to determine functional use of hearing.

5. **Motor** (check the best description)

O No significant motor dysfunction that requires adaptations.

O Requires adaptations to support motor functioning (e.g., walker, adapted utensils, and/or keyboard).

O Uses wheelchair, positioning equipment, and/or assistive devices for most activities.

O Needs personal assistance for most/all motor activities.

6. **Engagement** (check the best description)

O Initiates and sustains social interactions.

O Responds with social interaction, but does not initiate or sustain social interactions.

O Alerts to others.

O Does not alert to others.

7. **Classroom Setting** (check the best description)

O Special school

- O Regular school, self contained classroom for almost all activities
- O Regular school self contained classroom except for homeroom, lunch and “specials”
- O Self contained (children go to some general education academic classes but return to special education (61% or more of school day in special education classes)
- O Resource room (e.g. children come for services and then go back to their general education classroom (at least 40% of the school day in general education classes)
- O Inclusive/Collaborative – students based in general education classes, special education services delivered in the general education class (at least 80% of the school day in general education classes)

Observation Information (Collect prior to observation.)

Content Area Observed

Content Standards Addressed

Expected Targeted Student Performance

- **What activities are planned for the lesson?**
- **What are other students doing?**
- **What will the targeted student be doing?**
- **What supports will be in place for the targeted student?**
- **Other**

Part III: Activity Observation (Check the best description)

8. Instructional Setting

O General Education Class

O Special Education class with non-disabled peers

O Special Education class students with disabilities only

O Homebound/hospital

9. Activity Type (Chronologically age-appropriate content standards refer to grade level standards specific to the chronological grade level of the observed student. For example, if the student is 10 years old or appropriately categorized as a "fifth grader", the chronologically age-appropriate content standards would be those standards from the fifth grade.) While students should engage in similar activities to their age peers participating in the 5th grade curriculum, appropriate adaptations and modifications that maintain a strong link to the curriculum content standards should be evident.

O Academic activity (represents chronologically age-appropriate content standards)

0 Reading 0 Math 0 Science

Describe:

O Academic activity (but <u>does not represent</u> chronologically age-appropriate content standards)

0 Reading 0 Math 0 Science

Describe:

O Life skills activity (represents a routine skill, critical for the development of independence in daily living)

Describe:

10. **10a. Instructional Group Arrangement** (Indicate all those observed.)

O Large group instruction

O Cooperative group instruction

O Independent work

O Small group instruction

O 1:1 instruction

10b. Check the best description

O Instruction delivered by general education teacher

O Instruction delivered by special education teacher

O Instruction delivered collaboratively by general and special education teachers

O Instruction delivered by paraprofessional

O Instruction delivered by peer/peer tutor

O Instruction delivered by related service provider

11. Instruction is

0 a. on the **chronologically age appropriate /grade level general curriculum** (i.e., the same curriculum as other typical students of that age and grade level).

0 b. linked to the chronologically age appropriate /grade level general curriculum but may be at a lower grade level

0 c. delivered in the context of the chronologically age appropriate /grade level general curriculum but on different, non-academic skills (i.e., student uses the same materials in the same activities as other students but the expectations for learning are about something else – social, motor, etc.)

0 d. not linked to or delivered in the context of chronologically age appropriate/grade level general curriculum

Observation Indicator	+/-	Notes
12. Classroom activities are reading, math, or science tasks in which age appropriate, **general education peers** are involved.		
13. Target student uses **chronologically age appropriate materials** (i.e., materials look substantively **similar to the materials being used by age appropriate, general education peers** while allowing for accommodations to meet the accessibility needs of the student and engage the student in reading, math, or science**).**		
14. The instruction allows appropriate **option(s)** for the student **to demonstrate** what they know or are learning **about the grade level content** (e.g., eye gaze, pointing, switches, adapted keyboards, custom overlays, drawing, dictation, word prediction, etc.).		

15. The instruction provides various appropriate options for the student **to have access to the instruction on the grade level content** (e.g., tactile cues, symbol based text, simplified syntax, text reader, concrete objects, etc.).		
16. The instruction provides various options **to interest** student **and maintain the participation** in the instruction/learning **about the grade level content** (e.g., positive behavior supports, consideration of personal interests and preferences in terms of look, feel, personal space, goal setting, self-assessment, etc.).		
17. Traditional "functional" skills (i.e., communication, social/behavioral, motor, self-care) are **embedded as needed within naturally occurring classroom routines** (e.g., academic activities, transition activities, daily class routines etc.).		
18. Instruction requires student to perform at **more than one** level of depth of knowledge. Check all that are observed: 0 recall/routine task 0 discriminate similarities/differences 0 application 0 strategic 0 extended		
19. Instruction and activities facilitate the student's **interactions with chronologically age appropriate, general education peers** (must be more than provision of the opportunity: the student must interact or be facilitated to interact).		

Part III (continued): Student Response

Observation Indicator	+/-	Notes
20. The student has a way to communicate that is **appropriate for his/her communication level and includes the appropriate content** (see Student Profile).		
21. Student response **demonstrating understanding of content** is appropriately tailored and specifically designed for the target student (e.g., eye gaze, pointing, switches, adapted keyboards, custom overlays, drawing, dictation, word predication, etc.). The student response expectations may be reduced in complexity but **cannot** change the intent of the performance as it relates to the intent of the content standards (e.g., the grade level content standard is "analyze an experiment to determine the accuracy of a prediction": typical students are expected to identify results of an experiment that cause a prediction to be correct or incorrect; if the student with disabilities is only required to identify a prediction, **the intent of the standard has been changed**).		
22. Student performs at **more than one** level of depth of knowledge. Check all that are observed: 0 recall/routine task 0 discriminate similarities/differences 0 application 0 strategic 0 extended		
23. The student **evaluates** his/her own performance. (This may be prompted – "check your work", "did you do better than yesterday", "make sure everything is correct"; not "this is wrong, change it" or "fix this one" or independent – student uses a checklist to evaluate task completion, corrects work independently, monitors progress, etc.)		

24. The student demonstrates **social behavior appropriate** to the task and environment.		
25. The student maintains **appropriate attention** to the instruction or task.		

26. **Most** student responses are (indicate only one):

0 correct and independent

0 correct but prompted

0 independent but incorrect

0 prompted but incorrect

0 no response or refusal

Part IV: Teacher Interview

27. Student's performance during the observation is best described as:

    0 Typical 0 Atypical high 0 Atypical low

28. Student's communication during the observation period was

    0 Typical 0 Atypical high 0 Atypical low

29. Student's attention during the observation period was

    0 Typical 0 Atypical high 0 Atypical low

30. Student's level of independence during the observation is best described as

    0 Typical 0 More independent 0 Less independent

31. How would you describe the student's reading?

    0 Reads fluently with critical understanding in print or Braille (e.g. differentiate fact/opinion; point of view, emotional response)

    0 Reads fluently with basic (literal) understanding from paragraphs/short passages with narrative/informational texts in print or Braille

    0 Reads basic sight words, simple sentences directions, bullets, and/or lists in print or Braille.

0 Aware of print/Braille, follows directionality, makes letter distinctions, tells story from the pictures that is not linked to the text.

0 No observable awareness of print or Braille.

32. How would you describe the student's math skills?

0 Applies computational procedures to solve real-life problems in a variety of contexts.

0 Does computational procedures with or without a calculator

0 Counts with 1:1 correspondence to at least 10, and/or makes numbered sets of items.

0 Counts by rote to five.

0 No observable awareness of numbers/ numeracy

33. How would you describe the student's attendance?

0 Regular attendance

0 Irregular attendance due to health issues

0 Homebound instruction due to health issues

0 Irregular or homebound instruction NOT related to health issues

34. Please check the item that best describes the extent to which the student is receiving speech/language as a related service.

0 Direct services for communication/language therapy (separate setting)

0 Direct services integrated into student's routine/classroom (collaboration)

0 Consultation services only

0 Student does not receive speech language as a related service

35. List content area classes/activities and other school routines (e.g., lunch, recess, field trips, etc.) that the student shares with chronologically age-appropriate, general education peers and number of minutes per week of each.

36. What type of support do you receive on helping students access the general curriculum? Indicate all that apply.

0 formal professional development activities
- 0 monthly
- 0 yearly
- 0 one time

0 school based activities (staff meetings, teacher work groups, etc.)
- 0 weekly
- 0 monthly
- 0 yearly
- 0 one time

0 teacher to teacher activities (planning times, scheduled or unscheduled collaboration, etc.)
- 0 daily
- 0 weekly
- 0 monthly
- 0 yearly
- 0 one time

0 technical assistance (from district or state liaison, curriculum specialist, or outside consultant, etc.)
- 0 monthly
- 0 yearly
- 0 one time

0 receive no support

NOTES

Part V: Student Work

Examine work related to the observation. If no work is required for the observed activity, data may be used instead although this will adversely impact the number of indicators observed.

Observation Indicator	+/-	Notes
37. Work sample relates to **reading, math, or science activities** in which **age appropriate, general education peers** are involved		
38. Work sample is **aligned** to the chronologically age appropriate/grade level academic **content standards** in reading, math, or science. The student response expectations may be reduced in complexity but **the performance cannot change the intent of the content standards** (e.g., the grade level content standard is "analyze an experiment to determine the accuracy of a prediction": typical students are expected to identify results of an experiment that cause a prediction to be correct or incorrect; if the student with disabilities is only required to identify a prediction, **the intent of the standard has been changed**).		
39. Materials look substantively **similar to the materials being used**		

by age appropriate, general education peers (while allowing for accommodations to meet the accessibility needs of the student) and engage the student in reading, math, or science**.**		
40. Work sample requires student to perform at **more than one** level of depth of knowledge. Check all that are included: 0 recall/routine task 0 discriminate similarities/differences 0 application 0 strategic 0 extended		
41. Work sample is appropriately tailored and specifically designed for the target student in terms of **access to the instruction on the grade level content** (e.g., tactile cues, symbol based text, simplified syntax, audio tapes, concrete objects, etc.).		
42. Work sample is appropriately tailored and specifically designed for the target student in terms of **performance on the grade level content** (e.g., eye gaze, pointing, switches, adapted keyboards, custom overlays, drawing, dictation, word predication, etc.).		
43. Work sample requires student to perform at least **one application or generalization item/activity.**		
44. Work sample includes performance on **more than one academic content standard** in reading, math, or science. Indicate how many: 0 1 0 2 0 3 0 4 0 5 or more		
45. Work sample is graded and includes **% or number of correct and independent responses related to the standard being addressed** and/or level of prompting required. (Sometimes items on work samples may not be related to the standard so those should not be considered in the % calculation.)		

46. Most work sample items are

0 a. on the **chronologically age appropriate /grade level general curriculum** (i.e., the same curriculum as other typical students of that age and grade level).

0 b. linked to the chronologically age appropriate /grade level general curriculum but may be at a lower grade level

0 c. delivered in the context of the chronologically age appropriate /grade level general curriculum but on different, non-academic skills (i.e., student uses the same materials in the same activities as other students but the expectations for learning are about something else – social, motor, etc.)

0 d. not linked to or delivered in the context of chronologically age appropriate/grade level general curriculum

IEP Analysis Tool Analyze the IEP at the most discreet level available (i.e., benchmark or short term objective).	(+) = present (-) absent (n/a) = not applicable									
	Obj. 1	**Obj. 2**	**Obj. 3**	**Obj. 4**	**Obj. 5**	**Obj. 6**	**Obj. 7**	**Obj. 8**	**Obj. 9**	**Obj. 10**
Benchmark Type (see coding system below)										
47. Is observable/measureable										
48. Is chronologically age appropriate grade level referenced (mentions general education peers, general curriculum, grade level content, etc)										
49. Is a foundational content area skill (e.g., decoding, computation, etc.) necessary for future learning in the academic content area										
50. Allows student to participate in more life environments, access new people, experiences, and environments or replace less appropriate behaviors										
51. Is necessary for learning in the current or next **chronologically age-appropriate** school, community, or vocational environment										
52. Specifies instructional strategies/techniques (e.g., using system of least prompts/time delay, given several options to choose from, in the context of cooperative learning, etc.)										
53. Specifies **chronologically age appropriate** materials/activities/strategies/techniques/settings										

54. Describes quality of performance (e.g., independently and accurately, with verbal prompts, etc.)										
55. Specifies opportunities for application or generalization (e.g., *re: math skill…* and uses to solve scientific problems, *re: reading skill…* and uses in the contexts of social studies and science texts, *re: reading and/or math skills…* apply to a novel situation, etc.)										

IEP Summary

Goal Type Coding	**% Occurrence**	**Goal Type Coding**	**% Occurrence**
S= Science **R = Reading** **M= Math** **0 = Other**		**C= Commu-nication** **B= Social behavioral** **V = Vocational** **SC = Self-care**	

56. Minutes per week in general education with chronologically age-appropriate, general education peers overall specified in the IEP

57. Minutes per week in general education reading with chronologically age-appropriate, general

education peers specified in the IEP
58. Minutes per week in general education math with chronologically age-appropriate, general education peers specified in the IEP
59. Minutes per week in general education science with chronologically age-appropriate, general education peers specified in the IEP

60. Supplementary aides and services are specified within the IEP and/or related documents as a whole.

0 Yes 0 No
If "Yes", what are they?

61. Does IEP specify need for an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards?

What is the justification?

NOTES SECTION