An Alternative Approach to Assessment

Performance Assessment

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Traditional Method

• A child’s performance on a standardized test is compared with the typical performance of other children of same age and gender utilizing the discrepancy model.

• Discrepancy model: A significant discrepancy between actual and expected performance can result in a diagnosis of a developmental disability
Individual with Disabilities Education and Improvement Act (IDEIA)

- In addition to use of the discrepancy model, IDEIA also encourages alternative methods of assessment when identifying children with a Learning Disability

- IDEIA requests to consider one’s culture and primary language, prior opportunities to acquire skills and motivation to perform.
What is Performance Assessment?

• An alternative form of assessment that requires students to construct rather than select responses; it measures students’ higher order thinking skill, deep understanding of concepts, and general inquiry strategies.

• Involve authentic, real world problems that help students demonstrate their ability to apply academic knowledge (theory) to practical situations. (Ryan, 2006)
Theoretical Framework

Social Constructivist Approach:

- Emphasizes the social and cultural nature of mental activity.

- Children actively construct their own development and learning within culturally defined activities.

- Performance assessment requires student to construct knowledge rather then select a response. It also focuses on tasks that have meaning within the child’s daily life experience.
Theoretical Framework

**Ecological Approach:**
- Stresses the interconnection among diverse environments
- Home influences school; school influences home
- Performance assessments use documentation to connect what happens at home and school
Six Key Components

1. **Basic knowledge:**
   determine what facts and detail the students already knows

2. **Inquiry:**
   observe how the students obtaining information and then applying it to form hypothesis and interpretations

3. **Explanation:**
   The student demonstrate understanding beyond basic knowledge by using factual knowledge to explain concepts and principles
Six Key Components cont.

4. **Problem Solving:**
   the student solves the problem and is able to explaining how he/she solved it

5. **Representation of knowledge:**
   the student’s ability to choose the most important ideas and communicate understanding effectively

6. **Metcognition:**
   the student’s ability to sets challenging yet attainable goals and evaluate their own progress
Vignette: Jamie

Performance-based assessments allow for accommodations and adaptations, such as:

- assistive technology or
- augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems for children with significant impairments.

This is shown in the following vignette about Jamie:
Vignette: Jamie

- Jamie, a 6-year old child with severe cerebral palsy, had just received a new wheelchair. His parents said it was important that Jamie learn to move around in it during community outings and wanted that to be one of Jamie’s IEP goals.

- How could the team and the parents collect data on progress?

- The traditional check-lists were of no use because they did not address wheelchair use.
Ms. Nagasawa, Jamie’s teacher, used:

• anecdotal notes to record how Jamie performed getting on and off the bus and going to the playground.

Because the observations would take place outside the classroom, she used:

• a small notebook that would fit in her pocket

• a larger notebook affixed to a clipboard for more extensive observations.
Vignette cont.

Jamie’s family was willing to be involved.

• His parents had a camcorder and could videotape Jamie during visits to the grocery store and to his grandmother’s house on Sundays.
Models/Applications

Project Approach

A project is an in-depth study, conducted over an extended period of time by small group of students. Assessments conducted by:

- using checklists
- anecdotal notes
- work samples

Teacher documents skills and concepts learned while student participates in project.

At end of project, work samples are collected.

(Katz & Chard, 1989)
Models/Approaches cont.

Documentation Web Approach
• Includes 5 types of documentation:
  • 1. project narratives
  • 2. observations of child development
  • 3. individual portfolios
  • 4. products by individuals or group
  • 5. child self-reflections
Approaches and Methods

- Observation
- Anecdotal Records
- Videotapes
- Audiotapes
- Photographs
- Transcriptions of children’s comments and discussions
- Work samples (various media)
- Documentation (comments from teacher, family, child explaining reason, process, and meaning for each work sample)
IEP Objectives

- Performance assessment can be easily linked to classroom curriculum by designing assessment tasks that incorporate a student’s IEP objectives by using a point-based holistic scoring system to evaluate student progress.
IEP Objectives cont.

Six-point scoring rubric for evaluating writing sample:

• Scores determined according to criteria
• Score of 6 – well-developed responses; elaborate with specific details; strong organization and sequence
• Score of 1 – very brief responses; few descriptive details, lack of organizational sequence and awkwardness.

(Day & Skidmore, 1996)
IEP goals & objectives
Some Assessment forms used are:
• Performance Assessment: IEP/IFSP Objectives Individual Observation Form
• Performance Assessment: IEP/IFSP Objectives Data Collection Form
• Performance Assessment: Things My Child Can Do at Home
Performance Assessment: IEP/IFSP
Objectives Individual Observation Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Observer</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Product/work samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/28/00</td>
<td>R.N.</td>
<td>Strung 5 large beads</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/5/00</td>
<td>M.L.</td>
<td>Built five-piece tower with Lego</td>
<td>Photograph of construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/20/00</td>
<td>R.N.</td>
<td>Strung 8 large beads &amp; 5 small beads</td>
<td>Necklace for display</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implementation

- Start slowly.
- Focus on one area, one IEP goal, or one activity.
- Identify developmental goals.
- Use different types of performance methods:
  - Children’s work
  - Photographs
  - Checklists
- When recording notes, provide a clear description of specific events.
- Generate hypothesis for further observations.
- Set aside time to meet with team.
Advantages

• Focuses on a child’s strengths
• Takes place in a meaningful context
• Allows for collaboration and communication between professionals and families
• Involves non-intrusive data collection
Limitations

• Lack of standards for scoring and therefore should be used in combination with other methods of assessment
• Requires planning time
• Resources required to effectively conduct assessment
References


