

## January 27 NCEO teleconference: Thurlow materials

### EXAMPLE: How universal design elements and accommodations determinations fit with BIG BOPPER constructs and test items

See Roger Farr examples, pp. 19-29 in Popham, Farr, & Lindquist, 2002. The specific example used below is on pages 22-23, “Specifications for an assessment using a FUNCTIONAL text.”

NOTE: Key passages from the Farr examples are attached to this document (pp. 3-7) with summary excerpts below.

#### I. Farr’s Big Bopper Example: Purposeful reading

All readers read for a purpose both in school and outside of school.

“If the assessments designed to measure purposeful reading comprehension across types of texts are to effectively guide instruction, they need to clearly identify the evaluative criteria to be used in judging successful completion of the assessment activity. . . The assessment plan needs to provide a careful description of what is meant by success.” p. 21 in Popham, Farr, & Lindquist; attached pp. 4-5

“Thus, evaluation of student responses to indicate the success of their use of needed reading strategies could be evaluated using these evaluative criteria:

Does the reader accurately report the information in the texts?

Does the reader select information that is relevant to complete the purpose/task?

Is the extent of what the reader provides sufficient?”p. 21 in Popham, Farr, & Lindquist; atch pp. 4-5

#### II. Using Farr’s Functional Text example (attached, pp. 6-7), what are additional questions to pose regarding options for accommodations in instruction and assessment, as decisions are made about universal design options?

Have we reviewed the basic elements of universally designed assessments to be sure we have not introduced extraneous difficulty or limited accessibility? (Thompson & Thurlow, 2002.)

Have we carefully and thoughtfully defined the constructs that are to be taught and assessed? Are there ‘embedded’ constructs within the Big Bopper we need to articulate, e.g., is decoding required for success?

Does “success” require a visual mode of print interaction (typically defined as “reading”)?

Could tactile, auditory or multi-modal print interaction be used to assess accuracy, relevance and sufficiency?

#### **Modes of Print Interaction**

<b>Mode of Print Interaction</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Visual (viewing print with eyes)	Print material in large or regular font
Tactile (feeling print)	Braille and Nemeth Codes
Auditory (listening to printed messages)	Books on tape, screen readers, human readers
Multi-modal (using any combination of the above modalities)	Computer-based “assistive” reading programs where students can see and hear messages at once.

III. If these modes can be used without changing the construct, then the Farr example on Functional Text could be considered using the following accommodations.

**Example 1: Specifications for an Assessment Using a Functional Text**

Use a particular basketball team’s schedule and the basketball league standings to determine whether the basketball team has a chance of winning the conference basketball championship.

Information needed – basketball schedule and standings.

<b>Mode of Print Interaction</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Visual (viewing print with eyes)	Printed schedule and standings – on paper or computer screen
Tactile (feeling print)	Schedule and standings in Braille and Nemeth Codes
Auditory (listening to printed messages)	Listen to description of schedule and standings (e.g., in an authentic situation you might call a number for a schedule, listen to it on the radio or TV)
Multi-modal (using any combination of the above modalities)	Computer-based “assistive” reading programs where schedule and standings can be seen and heard at the same time – (e.g., digital talking news)

Farr’s example continues with a list of assessment activities, all of which can be successfully completed based on information gained through one of the above modes of print interaction.

Using this information, a student could:

- Tell how good the school’s chances are for leading the conference at the at the end of the season
- Figure out which other schools in the conference stand a chance of winning the championship
- Decide which remaining game on the schedule is apt to be the most important

Assuming that the constructs are carefully defined, and these accommodations are determined to be appropriate, instruction and assessment using multiple modes of print interaction does not water down the construct or its evaluation, but may serve to strengthen it.

This example does not suggest that “reading” as traditionally defined should not be taught to students or assessed. IEP teams need to consider carefully the balance of time spent teaching traditional reading skills vs. time spent developing skills in other modes that can be used lifelong, while mastering other content areas while in school, but also as a worker and citizen in adult life. This relative balance of time will probably shift from more focus on traditional reading when the student is young and more on alternate modes as the student gets older, depending on the nature of the disability. Similarly, a state may elect to focus more on assessment of traditional reading skills at younger grades; more on purposeful reading, using individualized modes at older grades.

# Appendix A

## Purposeful Reading

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Reading is a purposeful activity. Teachers help students learn to read as a process of gaining meaning from text—and then applying what has been comprehended to complete an activity of some sort. This instructional focus is not surprising because all readers read for a purpose both in and outside of school.

There are many purposes for reading: enjoying the intrigue of a mystery, understanding how to solve a problem, reading the directions for setting up a new computer, gathering information needed to perform some repair, taking part vicariously in an adventure, learning about interesting characters, or gaining new knowledge about science or history or the contribution of someone who made a difference in one of those fields.

Good reading instruction focuses the attention of readers by teaching them what to expect from different kinds of texts, how those texts can fulfill their needs (their purposes for reading), *and* the strategies for constructing the meaning they need from particular kinds of texts. Students learn that different purposes require different kinds of reading and involve different types of texts. To know if they are reaching this goal, teachers need assessments designed to reveal their students' abilities to comprehend the types of texts related to typical and reasonable purposes that readers may have.

### Different Types of Texts

If valid reading purposes are served by different types of texts, both instruction and the assessment of its effectiveness, must be based on the kinds of texts that readers read to accomplish purposes. There are three basic types of texts that students will encounter both in school and in everyday life:

*Functional Texts:* These texts include reading materials such as directions, schedules, maps, diagrams, and explanations for doing something or getting somewhere. They provide basic information that readers need to accomplish day-to-day tasks. Overriding strategies for making the most effective use of such texts are to skim, looking for information that serves a specific need, *or* to read carefully, considering and evaluating the usefulness of all details as in following directions.

*Expository Texts:* These texts include such things as textbooks, encyclopedias, biographies, scientific explanations, and historical and political analyses. These are usually read to learn new information that increases a reader's understanding of some topic.

*Narrative Texts:* These texts include stories, poems, novels, plays, and essays that are read to learn about people, to vicariously experience the characters and settings, to escape to imaginary places and times, and to become absorbed in adventure and fictional events, and various problems and solutions that structure the plots of these texts.

## **Purposes for Reading**

If reading is done to accomplish specific purposes, then assessments are needed to help teachers plan instruction, and the assessments need to cover a reasonable range of those purposes. Because functional, expository, and narrative types of text are read for different purposes, assessments will ideally cover a reasonable number of the reader's purposes and, therefore, they will necessarily include a variety of text genres.

The following list of purposes for reading is not meant to be comprehensive. Indeed, it would probably be impossible to develop such a list. This list, however, can guide the development of assessments and, consequently, classroom instruction:

### **Functional Texts**

- Purpose 1: Read to determine the relevance and importance of functional information.
- Purpose 2: Read to select and apply relevant information for a given task.

### **Expository Texts**

- Purpose 1: Read to understand a text's major points and supporting details.
- Purpose 2: Read to understand the text's organizational exposition and how that organization serves the writer's purpose.
- Purpose 3: Read to understand how the information in the text fits into broader topics and issues.

### **Narrative Texts**

- Purpose 1: Read to recognize and understand an author's development of character, setting, and mood as basic story elements.
- Purpose 2: Read to understand how the plot of a story develops as a series of high points and/or how it can be depicted as a problem and its solution.
- Purpose 3: Read to understand the theme of a story and how the author develops it.

## **Criteria for Evaluating Student Responses**

If the assessments designed to measure purposeful reading comprehension across types of texts are to effectively guide instruction, they need to clearly identify the evaluative criteria to be used in judging successful completion of the assessment activity. If they do not do this, teachers are left with meaningless numbers that cannot be used to guide effective reading instruction.

The assessment plan needs to provide a careful description of what is meant by success. That description, of course, has obvious implications regarding the kind of classroom instruction that will improve reading as a purposeful activity. An assessment based on reading purposes would require distinctive criteria for the accomplishment of each purpose. These specific evaluative criteria are based on three general evaluative criteria. The more general evaluative criteria provide a guide to the development of more specific evaluative criteria for each purpose. These general evaluative criteria are:

- **Accuracy:** How *accurate* is the reader's grasp and use of the text?
- **Relevance:** How *relevant* is the textual detail or understanding the reader uses to fulfill the purpose?
- **Sufficiency:** Does the reader demonstrate and use a *sufficient* amount of the text to fulfill the task?

For example, if a reader has read several expository texts about global warming and is asked to report what the texts describe as "global warming," a successful accomplishment of the task would include *accurate* reporting of what the scientists quoted say about the concept; the student response would select information from the texts that is most *relevant* to the task of preparing the report, and it would use enough of the information from the texts to explain the concept—it would rely on the texts to a *sufficient* extent.

Thus, evaluation of student responses to indicate the success of their use of needed reading strategies could be evaluated using these evaluative criteria:

Does the reader *accurately* report the information in the texts?

Does the reader select information that is *relevant* to complete the purpose/task?

Is the *extent* of what the reader provides *sufficient*?

## Putting It All Together

If instructionally supportive assessments are to be developed following the outline described above, those who construct them must be careful to create reading tasks that validly reflect the general reader purposes presented. The assessment must include realistic reading activities for students, and they must provide the teacher with needed information that can be the foundation of instructional activities in a typical classroom.

What would such assessments look like? Each assessment activity would include the following minimal components:

1. A specific purpose for reading based on the type of text being read.
2. One or more reading text(s) that resembles realistic reading activities.
3. Assessment activities that respond to the purpose posed to the student at the beginning of the selection. These activities could be either student constructed responses (open-ended items), student selected responses (multiple-choice items), or a mix of the two.
4. Evaluative criteria for judging the reader's responses to the assessment activities.

5. Optional instructional suggestions that can help students perform better on the kinds of reading activities represented by the assessment.

Three examples of the specifications for such passages are provided below to show how such assessments could be developed. One for each general text type is presented, using one of the purposes above for that type of text.

### **ONLY FUNCTIONAL EXAMPLES ARE EXCERPTED HERE:**

#### Specifications for an Assessment Using a FUNCTIONAL Text

**Purpose:** *Read to select and apply relevant information for a given task.*

**1. Specific reading purpose:** The reader would be asked to use a particular basketball team's schedule and the basketball league standings to determine whether the basketball team has a chance of winning the conference basketball championship.

**2. Reading text:** The test would include the following two items:

- A basketball schedule for a school team. The schedule would indicate whether the games were *at home* or *away* and would give the time the games would be played and the dates. It would include scores for games already played.
- The standings of all of the teams in the school's conference. The table showing the conference standings would list the teams in order of their records to date and give their win/loss records. It would also indicate how many games each team has yet to play.

**3. Assessment activities:**

- A student-constructed response (open-ended item) would ask the student to tell how good the school's chances are for leading the conference at the end of the season and to provide the evidence from the schedule and the conference standings to support the conclusion.
- A student-constructed response would ask the student which other schools in the conference stand a chance of winning the conference championship and why the reader thinks that team could win the conference.
- A student-selected response (multiple-choice item) would ask which remaining game on the schedule is apt to be the most important in determining the conference champion.
- Other student-selected responses could (1) pose questions about details, such as dates of games, particular scores, particular school records; (2) ask which game played was the closest contest; (3) require the reporting of relevant details in the conference standings.

**4. Criteria for judging/evaluating responses:** The student-constructed responses would be judged on the basis of *accuracy*, *relevance*, and *sufficiency*. The evaluation would be based on whether the response:

- demonstrated that the reader had used information from the schedule and team standings accurately;
- demonstrated that the reader had selected information that was relevant to the task and that it was applied logically and validly; and

- whether sufficient information and details from the text had been selected to complete the task adequately and appropriately.

The student-selected responses would be written with distractors based on these same criteria.

**5. Instructional suggestions:** The scoring of the responses should lead to an indication of how the teacher can reinforce reading strategies that were relevant to the activity. The kinds of instructional activities that would follow from the results of this assessment might emphasize:

- Reading schedules, reports, and similar texts that provide information that must be synthesized to be understood.
- Identifying details in texts supporting conclusions that were stated or could be drawn from them.
- Skimming functional reading selections to synthesize or compare information across two or more texts.

<b>PURPOSE-SPECIFIC EVALUATIVE CRITERIA</b>		
<b>FUNCTIONAL TEXTS</b>		
<b><i>Purpose 1: Read to determine the relevance and importance of functional information.</i></b>		
<u>Accuracy</u>	<u>Relevance</u>	<u>Sufficiency</u>
The reader demonstrates an accurate understanding of the information.	The reader recognizes whether key aspects of the content are relevant to a reader's informational needs.	The reader cites an adequate amount of information to support conclusions about the relevance and importance of the information read.
<b><i>Purpose 2: Read to select and apply relevant information for a given task.</i></b>		
<u>Accuracy</u>	<u>Relevance</u>	<b>Sufficiency</b>
The information selected from the text to be applied is used accurately. All the details applied are the same as in the text. For example, times, places, persons (contacts), events, etc. are correct according to the text.	The information selected is appropriate to the task. It is applied logically and validly to complete the task. For example, in following directions, the reader has included all the essential steps indicated in the text.	The reader selects enough information and details from the text to complete the task adequately and appropriately.