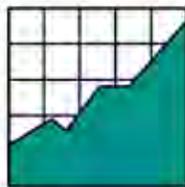




The Focused Approach Planning Guide: Tools to Improve Student Access



**NATIONAL
CENTER ON
EDUCATIONAL
OUTCOMES**

In collaboration with:

Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)

National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)

Supported by:

U.S. Office of Special Education Programs

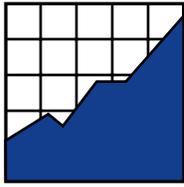
The Focused Approach Planning Guide: Tools to Improve Student Access

Kim S. Beloin • Sandra Berndt
Consultants

September 2012

All rights reserved. Any or all portions of this document may be reproduced and distributed without prior permission, provided the source is cited as:

Beloin, K. S., & Berndt, S. (2012). *The focused approach planning guide: Tools to improve student access*. Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.



**NATIONAL
CENTER ON
EDUCATIONAL
OUTCOMES**

The Center is supported through a Cooperative Agreement (#H326G110002) with the Research to Practice Division, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. The Center is affiliated with the Institute on Community Integration at the College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota. This report was funded with partial support from the Multi-state GSEG Toward a Defensible AA-MAS. This project is supported by General Supervision Enhancement Grants (#H373X070021) from the Research to Practice Division, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Education or Offices within it.



NCEO Core Staff

Martha L. Thurlow, Director
Deb A. Albus
Manuel T. Barrera
Laurene L. Christensen
Linda Goldstone
James Hatten
Christopher J. Johnstone
Jane L. Krentz
Sheryl S. Lazarus

Kristi K. Liu
Ross E. Moen
Michael L. Moore
Rachel F. Quenemoen
Rebekah Rieke
Christopher Rogers
Miong Vang
Yi-Chen Wu

National Center on Educational Outcomes
University of Minnesota • 207 Pattee Hall
150 Pillsbury Dr. SE • Minneapolis, MN 55455
Phone 612/626-1530 • Fax 612/624-0879
<http://www.nceo.info>

The University of Minnesota shall provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

This document is available in alternative formats upon request.



This tool was developed by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction as part of the Multi-state GSEG Project Toward a Defensible AA-MAS.

National Center on Educational Outcomes

and

State Members of Consortium

Alabama Department of Education

Hawaii Department of Education

South Dakota Department of Education

Tennessee Department of Education

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Multi-state GSEG Consortium Toward a Defensible AA-MAS

Consortium members share a common interest in investigating the characteristics of the students who may qualify to participate in an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards. The overall goals of the project, which began in October 2007, are to explore: (1) how student data can be used to improve student assessment and instruction; and (2) the intended and unintended consequences of various assessment options.

Acknowledgments

The authors of this report received assistance from others in developing this tool, and in planning and carrying out the workshops. For their support, special thanks go to:

- **Eva Kubinski**, School Administration Consultant, Special Education Team, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, for her assistance and support in making this guide become a reality; and for providing overall coordination of the Multi-state GSEG project in Wisconsin.
- **Edie Holcomb** (Consultant), **Paula Kluth** (Consultant), and **Sarah Bolt Witmer** (Associate Professor, Michigan State University) for their assistance in developing Tool 2: Assess.
- **CESA staff in Regions 5 and 6** for their assistance with the workshops and the follow-up interviews.
- **Sheryl Lazarus** assisted in writing and preparing this publication.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	iv
Background Information	1
The Tools	2
Tool 1: Share and Compare	2
Tool 2: Assess.....	4
Tool 3: Analyze	6
Tool 4: Review & Refine.....	8
Tool 5: Plan a Next Step	10
Tool 6: Network	12
Conclusion	12
References	14
Appendix A: Follow-Up Interviews and Surveys	15
Appendix B: Focused Approach Planning Guide	19

This publication describes an activity conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to refine and pilot a set of planning tools that can be used to improve access of all students, including low-performing students with disabilities, to grade-level content. Wisconsin conducted this work as part of the *Multi-state GSEG Consortium Toward a Defensible AA-MAS*.

Background Information

Federal regulations require that all students participate in the accountability system. Most students with disabilities participate in the regular test with or without accommodations. A few students with the most significant cognitive disabilities participate in the alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS). In 2007, federal regulations gave state departments of education the option of developing an alternate assessment based on modified achievement standards (AA-MAS) for low performing students with disabilities.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction sought to learn more about the characteristics of students who might potentially be candidates for an AA-MAS if the state offered the option (Berndt & Ebben, 2008). In 2008 and 2009, the Department held three focus groups with general and special educators, school administrators, parents, and other stakeholders. The focus group participants identified commonly held misperceptions about who could participate in an AA-MAS, and recognized that many low performing students with disabilities may not have had access to grade-level instruction. As a result of these focus groups, the Department identified a need for further professional development (Berndt, Ebben, Kubinski, Sim, Liu, Lazarus, Thurlow, & Christensen, 2011). These tools were developed to help address this need.

As part of this project, teams from Wisconsin school districts in two Cooperative Education Service Agencies (CESAs) met for two days in September 2011 to explore the area of differentiated instruction. At the workshop an expert on inclusive education (Paula Kluth) presented on differentiated instruction. Workshop attendees used the *Focused Approach Planning Guide* to develop a better understanding of their current practices and to identify next steps in designing a plan for implementing one or more of the ideas from the workshop in their school or district.

Follow-up interviews and surveys were conducted with CESA staff and the school/district teams. The purpose of the interviews and surveys was to learn more about how the teams were recruited, why the team members chose differentiated instruction as the area to explore, and how the planning guide helped their organizations improve access for all students. A question was also asked about recommendations for future workshops. Representative responses are presented in Appendix A.

The guide was originally developed by Dr. Alison Ford as an *Action Planning Process Guide* for Wisconsin's annual State-wide Institute on Best Practices in Inclusive Education. The original guide was revised by Dr. Kim Beloin for use with the school teams who attended the Improving Student Access to Academic Content conferences that were held throughout the state of Wisconsin in 2011 and 2012.

The tools in the planning guide can be used by other schools and districts with teams of educators in a workshop setting for school improvement efforts. The workshop could open with presentations on relevant topics (i.e., using data, differentiated instruction, accommodations). Each team then could use the tools in the *Focused Approach Planning Guide* to move their school or district forward. The planning tools can also be used for planning by individual educators.

The Tools

The *Focused Approach Planning Guide* is presented in Appendix B. Each of the six planning tools in the planning guide is described below. We recommend that these tools are used in the order in which they are presented in the guide. The first four tools (Share and Compare, Assess, Analyze, Review and Refine) provide valuable information needed to complete the fifth tool, Planning a Next Step. Networking is the final planning tool and it can be used at any time in the planning process.

Tool 1: Share and Compare

The Share and Compare planning tool is a simple graphic organizer that will help an educator or group of educators consider new concepts, ideas, and strategies that may effectively impact instruction and learning at any grade level. Colleagues will find different concepts and strategies to be useful. This planning tool helps them come together to share their ideas and to consider the implications of using these ideas to improve education at all levels.

Tool 1 Directions. This planning tool is designed to capture key concepts, information, and strategies learned from the expertise of collegial presenters. During the workshop presentations, in the boxes on the left side of this graphic organizer, session participants should jot down the key concepts, critical information, or effective strategies that have relevance for use with a specific student, classroom, content area, school building, or school district. At the end of the presentation, participants should get together as a content-area team, grade-level team, school-based team, district leadership team, or even as an individual educator, and consider the implications of using the information gathered in the tool (in the boxes on the left) for your student(s), parents, school-based community, or district-level community. Questions to consider include: How will knowing and using this information impact our learning community? Learning environment? Approach to teaching? Approach to evaluating learning?

Tool 1: Share and Compare

Share and Compare ...ideas, strategies, and information that team members gathered from workshop presenters. Discuss the implications for your school.

What ideas and strategies have we gathered?

Implications for our school?

The form is enclosed in a large rectangular border. At the top left, the title 'Share and Compare' is written in a bold, sans-serif font and is enclosed in an oval. To the right of the title, a short paragraph explains the tool's purpose. Below this, the question 'What ideas and strategies have we gathered?' is followed by four vertically stacked, empty rectangular boxes. A large, solid black arrow points from the right side of these four boxes towards a single, larger empty rectangular box on the right side of the page, which is positioned under the question 'Implications for our school?'. In the bottom right corner of the main form area, the number '2' is printed.

Tool 2: Assess

The Assess tool is designed to assess or evaluate current practices in the areas of effective accommodations, differentiated instruction, data-driven decision-making, and evaluation of accommodation use. The first segment is on effective accommodations. It is fairly general as it pertains to team teaching and decisions that are made amongst team teachers with regard to student accommodations. The next section of the Assess tool is on differentiated instruction. The third section focuses on data-driven decision making. This section seeks to have individuals and teams look at the data that is collected (or not collected, but needs to be collected). It also encourages purposely collecting and using data that will drive effective instructional practices. The final section is on Evaluating Accommodation Use and Decision-Making. This section enables individuals and teams to take a more detailed look into the decisions made regarding which accommodations are most effective for individual students and how those accommodations can be appropriately evaluated for future instructional decision-making.

Tool 2 Directions. The Assess planning tool provides short descriptions of typical practices in each of these areas: accommodations, differentiated instruction, and data-driven decision making. The descriptions below Column 1 list practices that are typically at a beginner stage. The descriptions under Column 2 list practices that are progressively more advanced than Level 1 practices. The practices listed under Column 3 are more advanced than Level 2 practices. Each individual or team should read through each row of Level 1-3 descriptors and assess current practices. Some professionals find that they are between Level 1 and 2 or between Level 2 and 3 practices.

Feel free to use the 1-3 scale to best show or describe your current practices for each area. Once you have assessed your current practices for each row and in each of the four overall sections, you can use the Level 2 or 3 descriptors as best practices and goals to strive toward implementing on a consistent basis. For example, if you assess your current practices at a Level 1 in a specific row or area, then your planning priority or goal for instructional improvement would be to consistently strive for the practices described in Level 2. Likewise, if you assess your current practices as a Level 2 in a specific row or area, then your planning priority or goal for instructional improvement would be to consistently strive for the practices described in Level 3.

Once you have assessed the level of your current practices, use the boxes on the right side of the page to list or briefly describe your planning priorities for the next quarter, semester, or year. Take your top four planning priorities and list them under “Summary Planning Priorities” on page 5 of the Focused Approach Planning Guide. On the right side of Page 5, decide how much time will be spent discussing, implementing, and evaluating this planning priority over the course of a quarter, semester, or academic year. There is space at the bottom of this page for any additional and critical notes that are important to keep track of throughout the Assess

process. For example, key stakeholders could be listed who need to be involved in this on-going process or need to be informed of progress that is made in each of the areas of Accommodations, Differentiated Instruction, and/or Data-Drive Decision-Making.

Tool 2: Assess

ASSESS ...your school's practices and set priorities.

Where are we in terms of.....

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Effective Accommodations</div> <div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">1</div>	<div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">2</div>	<div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">3</div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • majority of instruction is delivered to whole class: lecture format • parallel & alternative activities used extensively; accommodations are not routinely made • no mechanism in place for planning and sharing information about accommodations needed for individual students • assessments inappropriate for measuring student growth and/or not used to improve instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - variety of instructional modes used, although not always sure that the full range of learners are meaningfully engaged - accommodations are made - mechanism in place for planning and sharing information about accommodations - variety of assessments used to measure student progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rich, accommodating curriculum in place that allows for active/meaningful engagement of a diverse group of learners - accommodations are made routinely, including individualized expectations; students become more accountable for own learning & modifications. - effective/efficient mechanism for communicating adaptations needed for individual students including how students with IEP's will be graded - multiple measures are used (i.e., portfolios, performance assessment) to chart student progress and improve instruction

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Differentiated Instruction</div> <div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">1</div>	<div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">2</div>	<div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">3</div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We focus primarily on student IEP objectives when we set goals for a student's participation in inclusive classes. • General educators plan and deliver instruction & special educators adopt primarily a support role. • Some teachers provide a range of lesson formats, teaching strategies, and instructional materials throughout the year. • Learning in most classrooms is fairly Traditional/didactic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In some subject areas, we set academic goals for students based both on IEP objectives and on grade-level standards. - Some teachers co-plan and co-teach some of the time -Many teachers provide a range of lesson formats, teaching strategies, & instructional materials throughout the year. -Learning in most classrooms is sometimes active: students often Seem engaged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We set rigorous academic goals for students based both on IEP objectives and on grade-level standards. -In general, educators use a wide range of collaborative teaching structures & view themselves as members of a common team. - Most all Teachers provide a wide range of lesson formats, teaching strategies, & instructional materials across the days, weeks, and months of the year. - Teachers use a rich array of games, activities, & active learning structures; students often seem excited about learning.

Tool 3: Analyze

The Analyze tool is designed to analyze how a team, school, or district is managing forward progress as it relates to improving student access to academic content. This planning tool challenges users to look at the critical components (e.g., vision, skills, incentives, resources, focused plan) that are needed for forward progress to occur in instructional and evaluative practices.

Vision refers to having a clearly articulated and written vision statement in place. **Skills** refer to having instructional staff who are skilled in the areas in which they are expected to teach or work. **Incentives** refer to a range of items including, recognition, encouragement, planning time, materials, and money. **Resources** refer to space, equipment, adequate staffing, curriculum, materials, and so on. Finally, a **Focused Plan** refers to having a clearly articulated and written focused plan of action that involves, and is communicated to, all stakeholders.

The Analyze framework that this tool uses was developed to enable individuals and teams to take a close look at the components that are in place and to identify those that are missing. The purpose is to remove barriers and expedite forward progress by minimizing anxiety, confusion, frustration, and false starts.

Tool 3 Directions. The first row across the top lists all five components: vision, skills, incentives, resources, and focused plan. When all components are in place, forward progress is being made on your planning priorities. The second row shows what occurs when the vision is missing, but the skills, incentives, resources, and a focused plan are in place. When the vision component is missing, this leads to confusion. Row three shows what happens if the skills are missing, but the vision, incentives, resources, and a focused plan are all in place. When skills are missing, the result is anxiety. The fourth row shows what happens when the incentives are missing, but the vision, skills, resources, and a focused plan are all in place. Without incentives, progress will occur, but it will be slow. Row five shows what occurs when resources are missing, but a vision, skills, incentives, and a focused plan are all in place. Missing resources can lead to frustration. The last row shows that if a focused plan is missing, but vision, skills, incentives, and resources are all in place, that false starts occur. The individual or team will keep starting over and over, and will not be able to make progress. Time and energy will be used up by these false starts. Consequently, all five components must be in place in order for steady forward progress to occur.

Once the analysis has taken place and the missing component(s) have been identified, the planning priorities, as indicated by the missing components, can be delineated. Step two of this tool asks you to list the planning priorities with regard to the component or components which are currently missing and in need of being developed. For example, do you need to develop and communicate a clear vision? Do you need to hire or re-allocate staff in order to have the skills in place to develop and implement a focused plan? Decide on the planning priorities based on the components that are in place and those that are missing.

Step three of this tool focuses on the identification of specific resources and incentives that are missing or that could be added in order to speed up progress.

Tool 3: Analyze

Analyze

...how your school is managing forward progress related to improving student access to academic content.

1. Identify the scenario which best describes the level of forward progress in your school:

Managing Forward Progress

Vision	+	Skills	+	Incentives	+	Resources	+	Focused Plan	= FORWARD PROGRESS
		Skills	+	Incentives	+	Resources	+	Focused Plan	= CONFUSION
Vision	+		+	Incentives	+	Resources	+	Focused Plan	= ANXIETY
Vision	+	Skills	+		+	Resources	+	Focused Plan	= GRADUAL PROGRESS
Vision	+	Skills	+	Incentives	+		+	Focused Plan	= FRUSTRATION
Vision	+	Skills	+	Incentives	+	Resources	+		= FALSE STARTS

2. List one or two focused actions your team will take to improve student access to academic content.

3. List the resources and incentives available to you (or those that you can reasonably secure) as you move forward with your plans to improve access to academic content.

6

Tool 4: Review & Refine

The Review and Refine tool provides a means of collecting and using information for making changes that will help staff more effectively in provide access to academic content. This tool is used to get a clearer picture of the factors that are helping or hindering student access to academic content. The purpose of this tool is to review the current instructional practices and decisions that have guided instruction and evaluation. This tool is also referred to as the “Continue-Stop-Start” tool. It is based on the original work of Douglas Fleming and Barbara Fleming (Fleming & Fleming, nd)

Tool 4 Directions. Practices, ideas, and decisions should be listed in the left column under the corresponding headings of data-driven decision-making, differentiated instruction, or effective accommodations. Once the current practices have been listed, the individual or team should review each instructional practice, belief, or decision to discern which ones should be continued because they are effective, which should be stopped because data has shown that they are ineffective, and which new practices, beliefs, and ideas should be started because they show promise. Under the “continue” column, describe each of these practices, beliefs, or ideas that the individual or teams decides should be continued. Under the “stop” column, describe each of these practices, beliefs, or ideas should be stopped because they are not working well. Under the “start” column, describe each of these practices, beliefs, or ideas that show promise and should be started or tried.

The process utilized by this tool is meant to be an ongoing cyclical system by which new ideas, beliefs, and strategies are continually reviewed and refined. Once a new initiative is identified, discuss and describe what you are aiming to accomplish by implementing this initiative. Then, implement the new initiative for a pre-determined length of time. Next, review the data or evidence you have collected to show that this initiative did or did not work effectively. Be sure to use data to drive your decision-making and to review the initiative. Then, based on the evidence, determine which practices you should continue to implement, which should be stopped, and if any new ideas, strategies, or initiatives should be started.

This planning tool utilizes one approach to strategic and reflective inquiry with regard to instructional decision-making. Page 8 of the *Planning Guide* shows another set of considerations that could be used to discern effective educational practices. You may choose to use either set as you work toward reviewing and refining your current educational practices. The alternate guiding considerations are: (1) This is what we assumed would work; (2) This is what we learned; and, (3) Here is what we will do based on what we learned. These considerations accomplish the same goal of reviewing and refining educational practice.

Tool 4: Review and Refine

<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; margin-right: 10px;"> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Review and Refine</h2> </div> <div> <p>...progress on data-driven decision-making, differentiated instruction, effective accommodations.</p> </div> </div>			
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> Improving Student Access to Academic Content </div>			
	Continue	Start	Stop
Data-driven Decision-Making			
Differentiated Instruction			
Effective Accommodations			
			7

Tool 5: Plan a Next Step

The Plan a Next Step tool is the most comprehensive tool in the set, and is designed to pull the information from all of the previous tools together in order to develop a comprehensive plan for implementation. Some of the information entered on the previous planning tools is requested on this tool.

Tool 5 Directions. The first step is to describe “What is Next.” This is the information you already determined when you set your planning priorities. You also may have incorporated some new ideas and strategies that have been presented and learned.

Next is a description of “Why These (Planning Priorities) Are Important.” This step is asking you to describe the critical implications of using this new information or instructional practice in your classroom, school, or district. Remember that you described some implications on Tool 1: Share and Compare.

The next step is “Here’s How it Looks Now.” Go back to Tool 2. Assess by looking at how you rated your current educational practices. Use your current practice ratings (and associated descriptors) to describe your current educational practices in each of the three areas: accommodations, differentiation, and data-driven decision-making.

Next, you will need to describe your planning priorities in more detail under the heading of “Here’s How We Want it to Look in the Future.” Remember that your planning priorities were based on stretching yourselves from your current practices in the Assess framework, into the next level of best practices in accommodations, differentiation, and data-driven decision-making.

The next step asks that you take the planning priorities and break them down further by setting short-term measurable objectives and listing those under “These are the Steps We Will Take to Get There.” For each short, measurable objective or step, decide who will take the initiative and provide the leadership needed to get this step accomplished. List that person’s name and position in this column.

Finally, set a timeline for accomplishing each of the short-term objectives or steps that will lead to the larger, measurable goal or planning priority. Using a specific timeline helps to keep individuals as well as the team accountable for making forward progress on these agreed upon planning priorities.

Tool 5: Plan a Next Step

Plan a Next Step

What's Next? (be specific when you describe your next step):				
Why is this Important?				
Here's how it looks <u>now</u> ...	Here's how we want it to look <u>in the future</u> ...	These are the steps that will get us there...	Who will initiate & take the lead on each...	Timeline

Tool 6: Network

Educators need time to share and observe effective practices with other educators. The Network tool is designed to capture information and collegial expertise across the buildings, schools, and districts.

Tool 6 Directions. You can use this planning tool to jot down the names of new colleagues, their professional expertise, and their contact information. When your planning priorities indicate the need to look outside for additional expertise for staff development, instructional modeling, or curriculum ideas, you can refer back to the collegial expertise you have gathered on this planning tool.

Conclusion ---

There is a need for teams of special education teachers, general education teachers, and administrators to learn ways they might work together to differentiate instruction to better meet the needs of all students, especially those students who are low performing and struggling in school.

These planning tools have been used by individual educators and education teams when planning for more effective access to academic content. The intent of this publication was to provide information about these tools so that other educators and planning teams can use them to develop plans that will lead to better access to academic content for all learners.

Tool 6: Network

Network ...with another school team to share information, arrange visits, coordinate a staff development opportunity

Creating a log of new contacts...

Who?	What expertise might be shared?	Other Information

10

References

Berndt, S., & Ebben, B. (2008). *Thinking about the students who may qualify to participate in an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards (AA-MAS): A tool for study groups*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Berndt, S., Ebben, B., Kubinski, E., Sim, G., Liu, K., Lazarus, S., Thurlow, M., & Christian, E. (2011). *Who are the students who may qualify for an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards (AA-MAS)?: Focus group results (Synthesis Report 79)*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Fleming, D., & Fleming, B. (no date). *School strategies and options*. Lunenburg MA: authors.

Appendix A

Follow-Up Interviews and Surveys

Table A1. Representative Responses: Follow-up Interviews with CESA Staff

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Why did CESAs' 5 and 6 decide to offer the differentiation workshop?<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This was a topic we felt was needed in our CESA. We need to know how to make lessons accessible to all.• We wanted to target general education teachers and assist them in learning how to change their instruction to meet the needs of all students.• We targeted middle schools since research shows that the largest gaps in accessibility and differentiation are during the middle school years.2. What were the steps the CESAs took to recruit the school/district teams?<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We handpicked schools. Middle schools were selected that believed they would incorporate what they would learn at the conference and actually implement the ideas in their classrooms and school buildings.• There was an open invitation to all school districts within the CESA. A personal invitation was given to select school districts which had differentiation as a school or district goal for this year.3. What support did the CESA provide their teams during the workshop?<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provided guidance to teams by asking questions about what they heard, what were they thinking, and how they might implement differentiation practices in their schools/districts.• Listened to team conversations and discussed next steps with them.• Stayed with individual school teams to assist them if they had differentiation as a school/district goal.4. What has been the follow-up provided to teams since the workshop?<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Since there was no funding from the grant for follow-up, it was not possible to follow up with the school/district teams on a formal basis.• Remained in phone contact with a few of the districts.• Developed a WIKI application for school teams to comment on, which had limited success. It was difficult for some of the teaching teams to access the WIKI.
--

5. Recommendations from CESAs' 5 and 6 for additional CESA conferences.
 - Tell school teams what is expected as follow-up. The brochure announcing the conference should have mentioned the planning process, team planning time, and follow-up expectations.
 - Avoid scheduling the conference too early in the school year. This was difficult to do in September because it was too close to the start of the school year to develop a team that was committed to the process and follow-up.
 - Require that an administrator attend with each teaching team.

Table A2. Representative Responses: Follow-Up Survey of Team Members

1. Why did your district decide to participate in the Paula Kluth Workshop on differentiation?
 - To get more ideas on how to differentiate instruction.
 - Our district continues to grow with RTI as a goal. Differentiation continues to be one of the many tools that we need to continue to move in the RTI direction. The workshop description fit our needs.
 - It was recommended by our CESA.
 - Professional development.
2. How were team participants chosen?
 - I chose a middle school team because other grade levels had more exposure to differentiation conferences. It seemed like the boost that my middle school staff needed.
 - All middle school staff were chosen by the principal to go,
 - Our principal asked.
 - The special education teachers were chosen, and then I think it was interest-based for the general education teachers. I got to go because I showed interest and wanted to go.
3. During the workshop, what were some of the “aha’s” your team had?
 - We really enjoyed the ideas because they were EASY to implement with little PREP time!
 - How easy it is to differentiate, quick games to keep kids thinking, how to get kids up and out of their desks without chaos.
 - I was very interested in how movement increases the ability to learn.

4. During the workshop, which planning tools were used to assist the team in planning for follow-up activities back in the district? How were they used? How were the planning tools useful? What was not useful with regard to the planning tools?
 - We used with our school group and went through the grids and filled them out together. It gave us a structure and plan to follow when we returned to school. I wish there would have been a follow-up half way through the year to keep us on track.
 - We used the Plan a Next Step tool and the Network tool. All of the core teachers found a couple of activities that they could take back to the classroom and use.
5. How did you use the information on differentiation and focused approach planning when you returned to the district? (Were certain students/grades targeted for interventions?)
 - We started sharing our ideas through staff meetings and then used them in our rooms. Others then asked about what we were doing and wanted to follow what we were doing because it worked. The kids talked a lot about the different strategies and that's how the word spread. I think there's still room to do a lot more throughout the school.
 - Each teacher did two or more activities in their core subject classes. They shared activities with all staff.
 - We all shared with our grade-level teams various differentiation activities.
 - We put on a short workshop for our staff and began regularly using the activities in our classrooms.
6. How did you use the conference information on differentiation and focused planning throughout the school year?
 - Incorporated many of the ideas that were shared with us.
 - I'm also always thinking of the multiple ways I can teach a topic on the different learning styles.
 - Implemented the strategies in our classroom.
 - Information about what worked well with colleagues and they do the same.
7. What are your future plans for implementing this information?
 - I just want to implement more than what I'm doing this summer. I also want to get organized and plan ahead so I can include more of the ideas than I did this year. I want to keep building each year with more of the ideas and sharing what works and what doesn't work with others.
 - Will share the ideas with our staff members as we try more of them out.
 - Will continue to use many of these activities in my classes. For example, have really increased movement in classes and use music as much as possible.

Appendix B

Focused Approach Planning Guide

Improving Student Access to Academic Content

Focused Approach Planning Guide

What is the best way to use focused planning time?

First, decide on a:

Facilitator _____ Time Keeper _____
Recorder _____

Second, determine which focused approach activity makes sense for your team:
(check the appropriate activity)

- Share and Compare** ...ideas, strategies, information that team members gathered from Workshop presenters. Discuss the implications for your school.
- ASSESS** ...your school's practices and set priorities.
- Analyze** ...how your school is managing forward progress related to improving student access to academic content.
- Review and Refine** ...a particular initiative (data-driven decision-making; differentiated instruction, effective accommodations.)
- Plan a Next Step** ...for those teams who know what they want to do, have determined why it's a priority; and are in the position to implement and evaluate a next step.
- Network** ...with another team to share information, arrange visits, coordinate a staff development opportunity...

Third, consider using a graphic organizer to reflect your thinking, problem solving, and planning. This packet includes a graphic organizer that corresponds with each planning activity listed above.

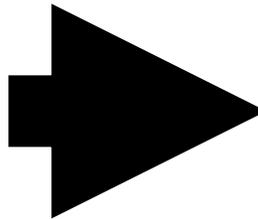
Fourth, share your ideas and plans with others by e-mailing or posting your planning sheets/graphic organizers for colleagues to see.

*These templates were originally developed by A. Ford, 1995.

Share and Compare

...ideas, strategies, and information that team members gathered from workshop presenters. Discuss the implications for your school.

What ideas and strategies have we gathered?



Implications for our school?

Assess

...your school's practices and set priorities.

Where are we in terms of.....

Effective Accommodations

Planning Priorities:

1

2

3

- majority of instruction is delivered to whole class; lecture format

- variety of instructional modes used, although not always sure that the full range of learners are meaningfully engaged

- rich, accommodating curriculum in place that allows for active/meaningful engagement of a diverse group of learners

- parallel & alternative activities used extensively; accommodations are not routinely made

- accommodations are made

- accommodations are made routinely, including individualized expectations; students become more accountable for own learning & modifications.

- no mechanism in place for planning and sharing information about accommodations needed for individual students

- mechanism in place for planning and sharing information about accommodations

- effective/efficient mechanism for communicating adaptations needed for individual students including how students with IEP's will be graded

- assessments inappropriate for measuring student growth and/or not used to improve instruction

- variety of assessments used to measure student progress

- multiple measures are used (i.e., portfolios, performance assessment) to chart student progress and improve instruction

Differentiated Instruction

1

2

3

- We focus primarily on student IEP objectives when we set goals for a student's participation in inclusive classes.

- In some subject areas, we set academic goals for students based both on IEP objectives and on grade-level standards.

- We set rigorous academic goals for students based both on IEP objectives and on grade-level standards.

- General educators plan and deliver instruction & special educators adopt primarily a support role.

- Some teachers co-plan and co-teach some of the time

- In general, educators use a wide range of collaborative teaching structures & view themselves as members of a common team.

- Some teachers provide a range of lesson formats, teaching strategies, and instructional materials throughout the year.

- Many teachers provide a range of lesson formats, teaching strategies, & instructional materials throughout the year.

- Most all Teachers provide a wide range of lesson formats, teaching strategies, & instructional materials across the days, weeks, and months of the year.

- Learning in most classrooms is fairly Traditional/didactic.

- Learning in most classrooms is sometimes active; students often seem engaged.

- Teachers use a rich array of games, activities, & active learning structures; students often seem excited about learning.

Where are we in terms of.....

Data-Driven Decision-making:

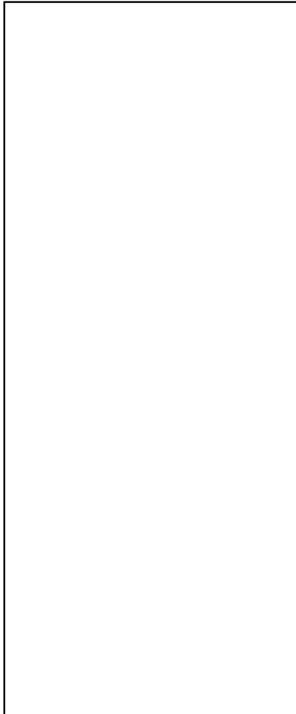
Planning Priorities



- Only state test results are used to monitor learning; Data is reviewed annually using this year's scores; general ed. staff study overall results, excluding scores of students with disabilities.
- Strategies for school improvement are chosen from packaged menu, recommended by administrators, external providers, etc.; voted on by staff.
- Leaders assume that initial training assures implementation; external processes (e.g. packaged walk-Through) monitor implementation.
- IEP goals are developed without reference to standards & benchmarks.
- Teachers rely on textbook-related tests, record grades, notify special ed. staff about SWD's struggles, and move on.
- Interventions replace regular instruction and prevent SWDs from ongoing participation with the regular curriculum.

- General & special Ed staff review state test results together & target areas for improvement; SWDs are considered the responsibility of the special Ed staff.
- Strategies are researched by study groups of staff; none considered without data to provide evidence of effectiveness.
- Leaders & staff agree on indicators of implementation and methods for gathering evidence.
- IEP goals are developed with reference to standards, but through separate process and documentation from general ed.
- Teacher teams develop assessments based on prioritized grade/ course standards/benchmarks
- Interventions supplement regular instruction & extend opportunity to learn (i.e., expand learning time.)

- Student learning data includes multiple sources, both formative & summative; trends for multiple years, progress of student cohorts, & students with disabilities.
- Strategies for improvement researched by study groups of staff; none considered without data to provide evidence of effectiveness & comparison to current context, practices, and root causes; combined strategies will affect all students, all staff
- Evidence of implementation is gathered frequently, shared with all staff; used to adjust school planning & professional development.
- IEP goals are drawn from a clearly articulated set of essential benchmarks generated through general ed. curriculum processes.
- Formative assessments are used often to assess students' progress towards proficiency on essential standards; results are used at least bi-weekly for planning.
- Teacher teams (including special ed. staff) collaboratively create & deliver interventions & enrichments to support growth of all learners.



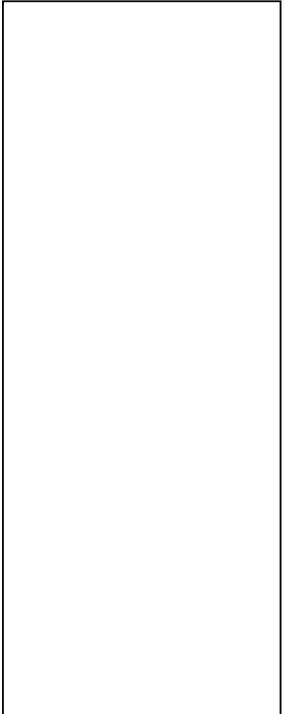
Evaluating Accommodation Use and Decision-Making



- Majority of instruction and assessment presented through one or two modes
- Students typically must respond to instruction and assessment in a particular way that is not very flexible
- Students are typically expected to be self-motivated & have limited choice of activities and projects to demonstrate their knowledge
- Instructional and assessment accommodations are rarely tailored to individual need & often based on disability type. The need for accommodations is not based on instructional/assessment goals
- Limited involvement in accommodation decision-making by one or more of the following groups: general educator, special educator, parent, student
- No clear process is evident for ensuring general educators are aware of and/or address individual student's accommodation needs

- Additional modes of presentation are available, but have limited availability; students use them sporadically
- There are additional modes in which students can respond, but have limited availability and/or students make use of them sporadically
- Some supports are available to enhance student motivation
- Some effort is made to ensure accommodations are individualized; however, they are not frequently evaluated or examined and they are determined based on specific instructional/testing goals or unique student characteristics
- General educators, special educator, parents, student are knowledgeable about the decision-made, but not active participants in the decision-making process
- A communication process is in place/available but not adequately implemented to ensure student accommodation needs are addressed

- Multiple modes of presentation available & used by students; advanced technologies are used and integrated within instruction and assessment
- Multiple modes of response available and used by students; advanced technologies are used and integrated within instruction and assessment
- Students can choose specific topics to investigate and there are systems of support in place to ensure they are motivated & engaged
- The unique characteristics & needs of individual students determine the accommodations; the student's unique needs are often re-examined & changes made; accommodations are based on instructional/testing goals & effects on student learning are systematically evaluated
- The student's general educator(s), special educator, parents, and the student is actively involved in accommodation decision-making
- A clear process is used to communicate & ensure full implementation of accommodations during instruction & assessment.



Summarize Planning Priorities:

Top Planning Priorities	Day/Time Allotment For Planning
1.	1. _____
2.	2. _____
3.	3. _____
4.	4. _____

Use the planning packets to address these priorities.

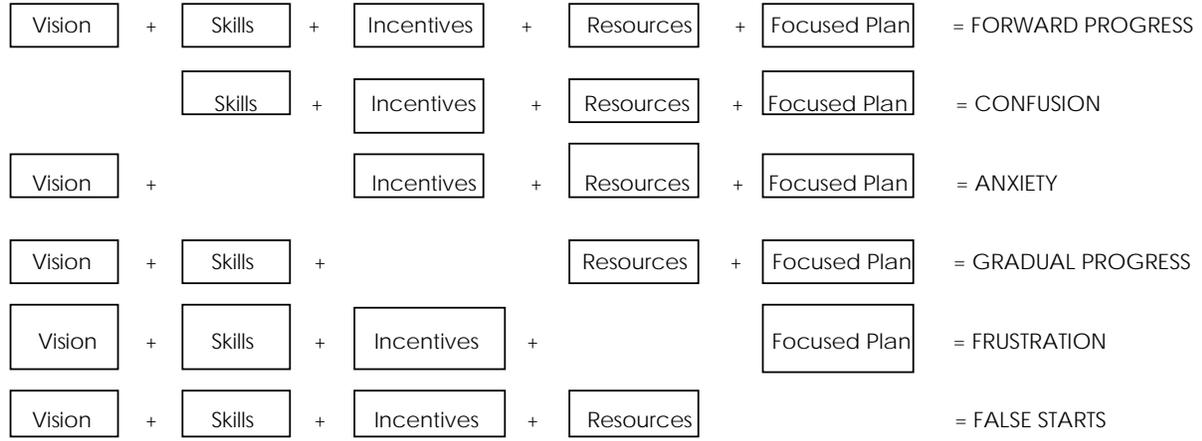
Additional notes and comments.

Analyze

...how your school is managing forward progress related to improving student access to academic content.

1. Identify the scenario which best describes the level of forward progress in your school:

Managing Forward Progress



2. **List** one or two focused actions your team will take to improve student access to academic content.

3. **List** the resources and incentives available to you (or those that you can reasonably secure) as you move forward with your plans to improve access to academic content.

Review and Refine

...progress on data-driven decision-making, differentiated instruction, effective accommodations.

Improving Student Access to Academic Content

	Continue	Start	Stop
Data-driven Decision-Making			
Differentiated Instruction			
Effective Accommodations			

Continue-Start-Stop

What is it?

The Continue-Start-Stop tool is a series of questions that teams can ask as they review their meeting, planning, problem solving, or other work procedures.

When is it best used?

Use the Continue-Start-Stop tool when you want to get clearer about factors that may be helping or hindering, and provides a means of collecting suggestions for making changes that will help you work more effectively.

How is it done?

1. Review the initiative you have identified. What did you set out to accomplish?
2. What evidence do you have to show that your procedures worked or didn't work?
3. Based on this evidence, what do you recommend that you:

Continue, doing (because our evidence shows that it is working well):

Start, or consider doing (because other evidence suggests that it will produce better results):

Stop, or cease doing (because our evidence shows that it is not working):

The **Continue-Start-Stop** technique is but one approach to strategic and reflective inquiry. Another set of questions that can be used in reflecting on a focused approach process includes:

Here is what we *assumed* would work:

Here is what we *learned*:

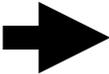
Here is what we will do based on what we learned:

Source: Douglas S. Flemming & Barbara A. Flemming, *school Strategies and Options*, P.O. Box 1705, 218 Northfield Road, Lunenburg, Massachusetts 01462. reprinted with Permission.

Plan a Next Step

What's Next? (be specific when you describe your next step):

Why is this Important?

Here's how it looks <u>now</u> ...	 Here's how we want it to look <u>in the future</u> ...	These are the steps that will get us there...	Who will initiate & take the lead on each...	Timeline

Network

...with another school team to share information, arrange visits, coordinate a staff development opportunity

Creating a log of new contacts...

Who?	What expertise might be shared?	Other Information

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
+ HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

NCEO is an affiliated center of the Institute on Community Integration