Comparability Issues in Alternate Assessments Based on Modified Achievement Standards for Students with Disabilities

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Focus on Questions 16, 19, and 25

- How will development of an AA-MAS yield more valid inferences about the students than other assessment approaches?
- How do the performance expectations of the AA-MAS relate to those in the general assessment and the AA-AAS? Does proficient have a similar meaning for both assessments?
- How will you measure and demonstrate the degree of comparability between the AA-MAS and the general assessment?
Comparability between AA-MAS and Regular State Assessments

- Comparability is a major issue related to the validity of interpretation of assessment outcomes.
- Assessment outcomes that are not comparable cannot be aggregated.
- Establishing comparability between AA-MAS and regular assessments is essential in providing more valid inferences about the students.
Chapter 8 Key Issues: Our focus on comparability between AA-MAS and regular assessments are on:

- Content and construct
- Psychometrics
- Scale and score
- Linguistic structure
- Basic text features
- Depth of knowledge
- Accommodations
Approaches to Comparability: Content and construct

- Content experts judge the comparability between the two assessments.

- Alignment with grade-level content standards test blueprints provides evidence of the alignment between the AA-MAS and grade-level content standards.

- Comparability between AA-MAS and state regular assessments on achievement level descriptors and cutscores provides helpful information.
Approaches to Comparability: Psychometrics

AA-MAS and state regular assessments can be compared in terms of psychometric characteristics with respect to:

- Reliability
- Validity
- Standard error of measurement
- Structural equation modeling approach
- Generalizability approach
- DIF approach
Approaches to Comparability: Scale and score

- According to The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, scale and score comparability between AA-MAS and regular state assessment is required in order to provide similar interpretation of the outcomes measured by those assessments.

- Scores can be compared at the scale level or achievement level.

- Achievement level comparability involves comparability between achievement level descriptors and standard setting cut scores.
Approaches to Comparability: Linguistic structure

- Compare linguistic structures of the two assessments using features identified in the literature (e.g. passive voice, relative and subordinate clauses), to see if the level of linguistic complexity is similar across the two assessments.

- A distinction must be made between linguistic features that are related and those that are not related to the content/construct being measured.
Approaches to Comparability: Basic Text Features

• Number of Pages
• Type face change (bold, italics, underline)
• Font change (Times New Roman, Courier)
• Point size change (12 or larger)
• Visuals (table, chart/graph, other)
• Type of Passage (narrative, expository, poetry)
• Type of Item (multiple choice or constructed response)
Approaches to Comparability: Depth of Knowledge

- **Level 1: Recall**
  - Basic comprehension/verbatim recall of text

- **Level 2: Skill/Concept**
  - Mental processing beyond recall
  - E.g. Summarize, interpret, infer, predict, classify

- **Level 3: Strategic Thinking**
  - Deep knowledge
  - E.g. explain, generalize, reason and plan
Approaches to Comparability: Accommodations

Comparability in terms of:

- Effectiveness of accommodations
- Validity of accommodations
- Differential impact of accommodation
- Feasibility of accommodations
Approaches to Comparability: Summary and Conclusions

- Comparability is a major validity issue.

- Comparability may impact student academic careers including passing the high school exit exam and receiving a high school diploma.

- Assessments that satisfy most of the comparability requirement discussed above can be utilized.
Approaches to Comparability: Summary and Conclusions (cont’d)

- To establish comparability between AA-MAS and regular state assessments, a comprehensive approach must be adopted looking at different aspects of the assessments.

- Without research-based evidence on comparability of AA-MAS and regular state assessment scores, AA-MAS scores may not be used for assessment and accountability purposes.
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