

Implementing Alternate Achievement Standards and Maintaining High Expectations in Inclusive Settings



Session Objectives

1. Identify key drivers of maintaining high expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
2. Understand the purpose of the Course of Study and the Alternate Achievement Standards.
3. Describe how the Alternate Achievement Standards can be unpacked to identify target skills and increase access to academic content.

Agenda

1. High Expectations and Inclusive Mindset
2. Course of Study, Alternate Achievement Standards, and Curriculum
3. Meaningful Access, Including Unpacking Standards
4. Wrap-Up and Next Steps



Engagement Tools



**Engagement
Guide**



Discussion



Resource






Poll

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https://www.polleverywhere.com/multiple_choice_polls/Geb1w0l4QXsaaa7q88hb

Keys to Success for Students With Significant Cognitive Disabilities

- Structures are in place to support transitions (visual schedule, social stories, Velcro, etc.).
- Teachers and paraprofessionals are trained on strategies.
- Communication is addressed:
 - Immediately to reduce behavior, and
 - Longer term using augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).
- Sensory needs are recognized and met.
- Accommodations are provided (e.g., response options).
- Speech therapy is integrated and aligned to needs.
- Peer support is leveraged.
- Parents/family are involved.
- Principal/administration is supportive.
- Adults are collaborative.

High Expectations and Inclusive Mindset

Building Blocks of an Inclusive Mindset

**High
Expectations**

≠

**Unreasonable
Expectations**

**Presumed
Competence**

≠

**Ignoring
Reality**

**Least Dangerous
Assumption**

≠

**Challenges
Cease to Exist**

Flawed Assumptions



1. Intelligence is something that can be reliably measured. **FALSE**
2. Students determined to have significantly subaverage intelligence cannot learn much of the general education curriculum, and if they could, why would they need to? **FALSE**
3. Students who cannot learn much of the general education curriculum will not benefit from having access to standards-aligned curriculum and should be taught functional skills instead. **FALSE**
4. When students cannot effectively communicate, assumptions are based on what they currently know, and what they might be able to learn is based on whatever communication abilities they have or lack. **FALSE**

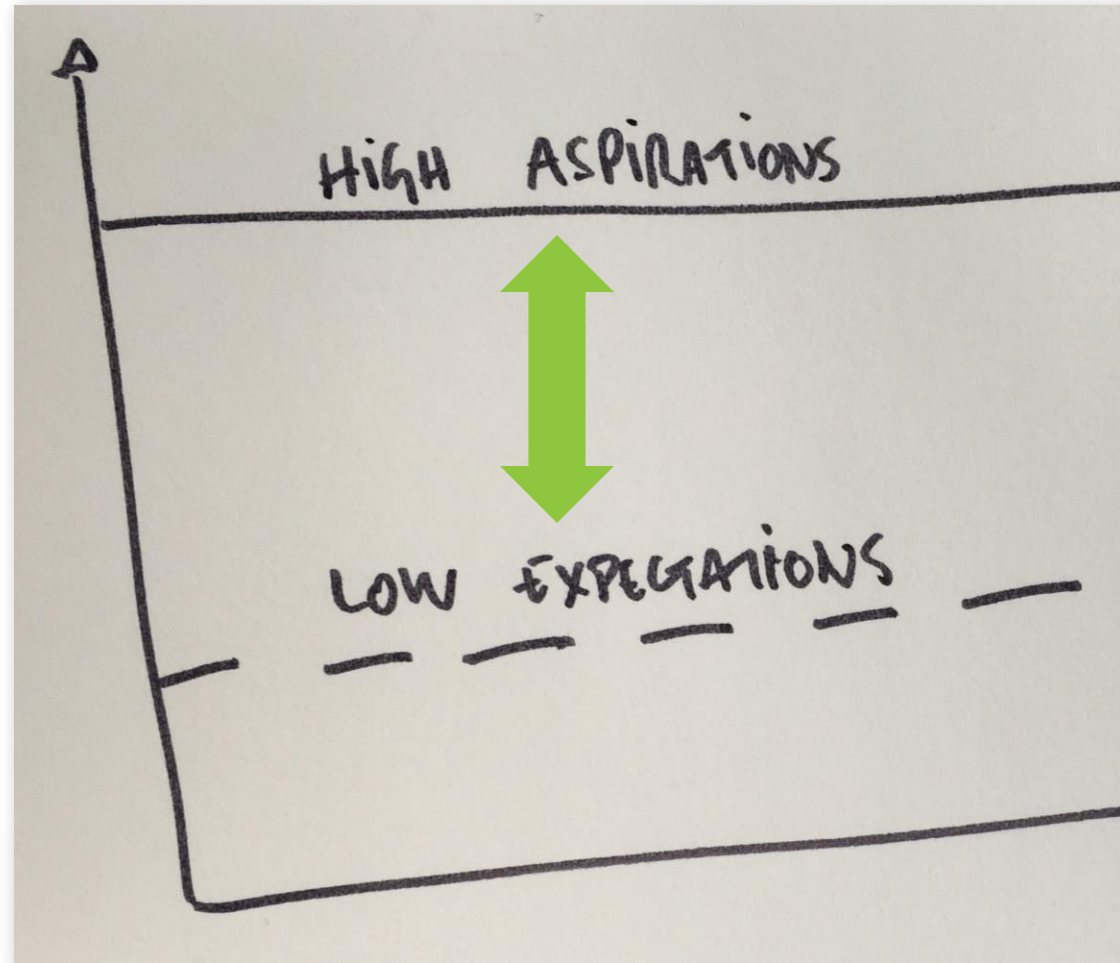
New Assumptions



1. Intelligence is not a single measurable characteristic.
2. All students have different talents and skills.
3. Students learn best when they feel valued, when people hold high expectations for them, and when they are taught and supported well.
4. When students cannot currently communicate that they are smart (whatever that means), presume that they are and develop their educational programs accordingly.

**ABSENCE OF
EVIDENCE IS NOT
EVIDENCE OF
ABSENCE.**

High Expectations



High Expectations in Practice

Reflecting HIGH Expectations

Provide **more** wait time

Ask **more challenging** and/or specific questions

Use **more complex** modes of presentation and evaluation

Call on **more** often

Ask probing questions to **follow up** on yes/no answers

Reflecting LOW Expectations

Provide less wait time

Ask less challenging and/or specific questions

Use simpler modes of presentation and evaluation

Call on less often

Accept surface level answers

High Expectations in Practice

Reflecting HIGH Expectations

Make more **eye contact**

Engage in more **playful or light** dialogue

Physically closer to students

Smile more

Display **supportive and interested** disposition

Reflecting LOW Expectations

Make less eye contact

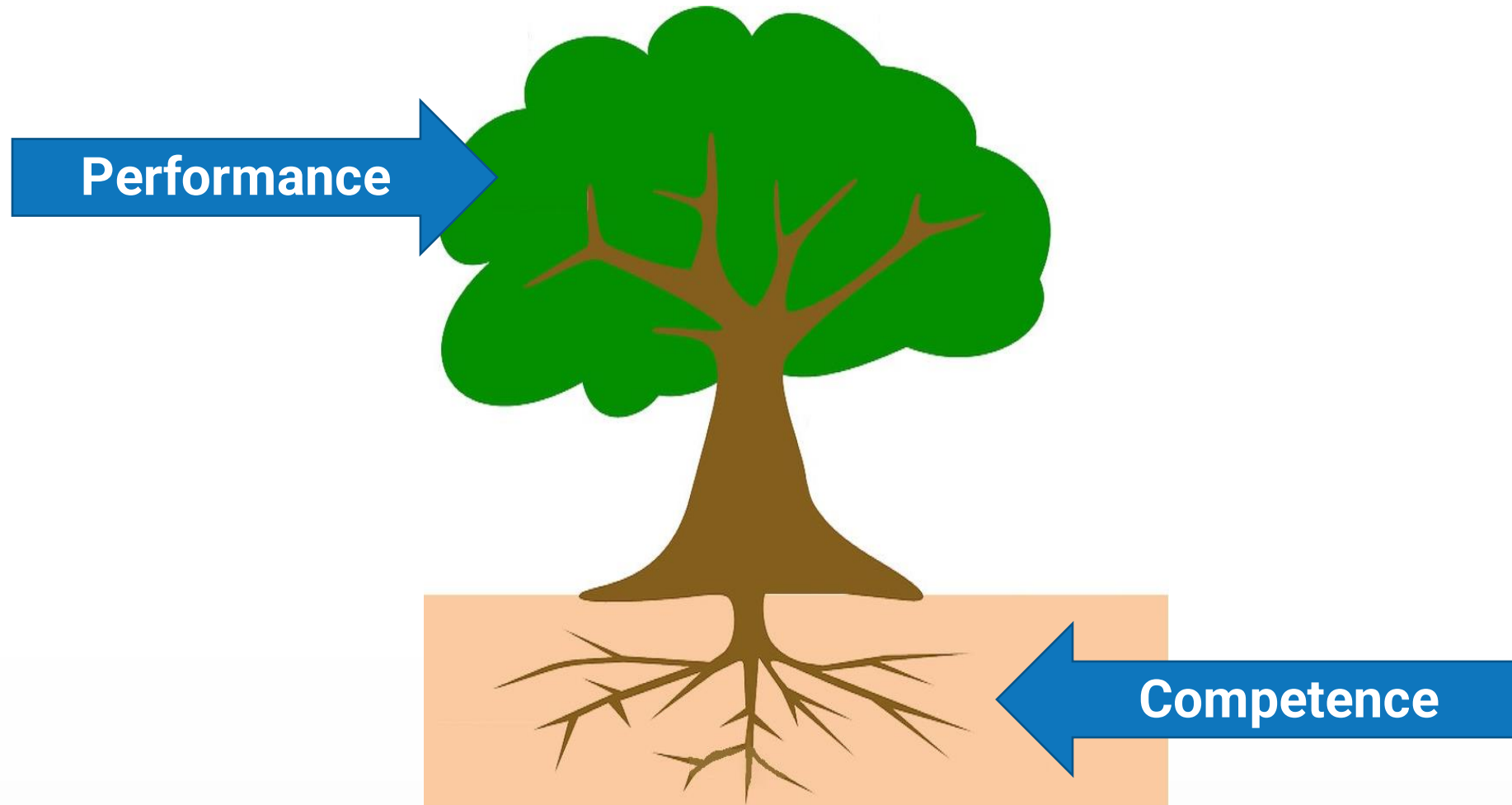
Engage in more serious or monotone dialogue

Physically farther from students

Smile less

Display annoyed or uninterested disposition

Presumed Competence



How do you presume competence in your students?



Least Dangerous Assumption

“The criterion of least dangerous assumption holds that in the absence of conclusive data, educational decisions ought to be based on assumptions which, if incorrect, will have the least dangerous effect on the likelihood that students will be able to function independently as adults.” (Donnellan, 1984)

Video: [Least Dangerous Assumption](#) (2:02) 

Least Dangerous Assumption

What if we assume students can learn, so we give them every opportunity, and it turns out they can't?

vs

What if we assume students can't learn, so we don't give them every opportunity, and it turns out they can?

The least dangerous assumption is to have high expectations for all students.

What About Functional/ Independent Living Skills?

Infuse functional activities with academic skills:

- Cooking → Measurement, fractions, reading
- Weather → Graphing, reading thermometer
- Schedule → Reading, sequencing

Are You Balanced?



With a partner, use the guiding questions on **page 4** of the Engagement Guide to review the balance of academic and functional instruction in your classrooms.

[Are You Balanced? Analysis of Academic and Functional Skill Instruction, Part 1 \(Slide 22\)](#)

Part 1: Instructions

1. With a partner, discuss a typical week in your classroom. Use the following questions to guide your discussion as you consider what student tasks, activities, and actions occur each day:
 - How is direct instruction for the day/week structured for the student?
 - What direct instruction occurs at the beginning, middle, and end of the day?
 - What skills are targeted during direct instruction with the student?
 - What support services (speech, OT, PT, etc.) does your student receive during the week?
 - What mode(s) of communication does your student use most often?
 - What tasks do they prefer? What tasks are a challenge?
 - What type of reinforcers are used and for what type of instruction or tasks?
 - How is data collected for the student? What data is collected?
2. Next, organize the items discussed into specific student actions and determine whether it is an academic task or a functional skills task. If you believe it is both, choose the category it best fits. Record the task in the table below.

Academic Tasks	Functional Tasks

3. Review the completed table. Are your tasks balanced, or is one area heavier than the other?

Course of Study, Alternate Achievement Standards, and Curriculum

Course of
Study

Alternate
Achievement
Standards

Curriculum

Individualized
Education
Programs
(IEPs)

- Each of these play a part in what students with significant cognitive disabilities learn; however, they are *not* interchangeable!
- An IEP is not the student's curriculum. The **general education curriculum, routines, and the IEP** comprise a ***student's educational program***.
- All students are **general education students first**. Special education services are **supplementary** to the grade level, general education curriculum and routines.
- Special education services support learning priorities to enhance a student's independence or interdependence across school, home and community.

Course of Study

- What students are **expected to learn** in each subject in each grade.
- Set by **individual states**, not the federal government.
- For **all** students – no student is exempt from state standards, *including those with significant cognitive disabilities*.



How familiar are you with Alabama's alternate achievement standards (AAS)?

- 1** – I am vaguely familiar with the alternate achievement standards (AAS).
- 2** – I know where to find the AAS and sometimes use them to plan lessons or write IEP goals.
- 3** – I refer to the AAS often and usually use them to plan lessons or write IEP goals.
- 4** – I am very comfortable with unpacking and prioritizing the AAS to design aligned instruction and write aligned IEP goals.

Alternate Achievement Standards

- Condensed versions of academic standards within the Course of Study
- Highlight the knowledge and skills necessary for students with significant cognitive disabilities to reach learning targets at each grade level

Watch: [Standards-Based Instruction for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities](#) (TIES; 5:44-8:26)

Curriculum	Standards
Day to day outline of strategies teachers use to help students learn.	Knowledge and skills students need at each grade level for success in college, careers, and community participation.
Curriculum involves textbooks, homework assignments, classroom activities, and assessments.	What students should be able to know and do at each grade level.
Districts and schools make their own decisions about curriculum, instructional strategies, materials, and textbooks.	Standards are established at the state level.
Teachers adjust the curriculum to reach or go beyond the standards.	Provide a foundation for school districts to develop curriculum.

Standards vs. Curriculum



- How would you describe the difference between **standards** (including alternate achievement standards) and **curriculum**?
- Is it more important to: A) follow the scope and sequence of your curriculum, or B) to ensure that all standards are addressed in your instruction over the course of the school year?
- How can you make sure you cover all the required standards during the school year?

Curriculum Discussion



- Share what curriculum(s) you use in your classroom.
- What do you like about the curriculum?
- What gaps still exist?

Meaningful Access,
Including Unpacking Standards

IMPORTANT

“Under the IDEA, in order to make **FAPE** available to each eligible child with a disability, *the child’s IEP must be designed to enable the child to be **involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum.***”

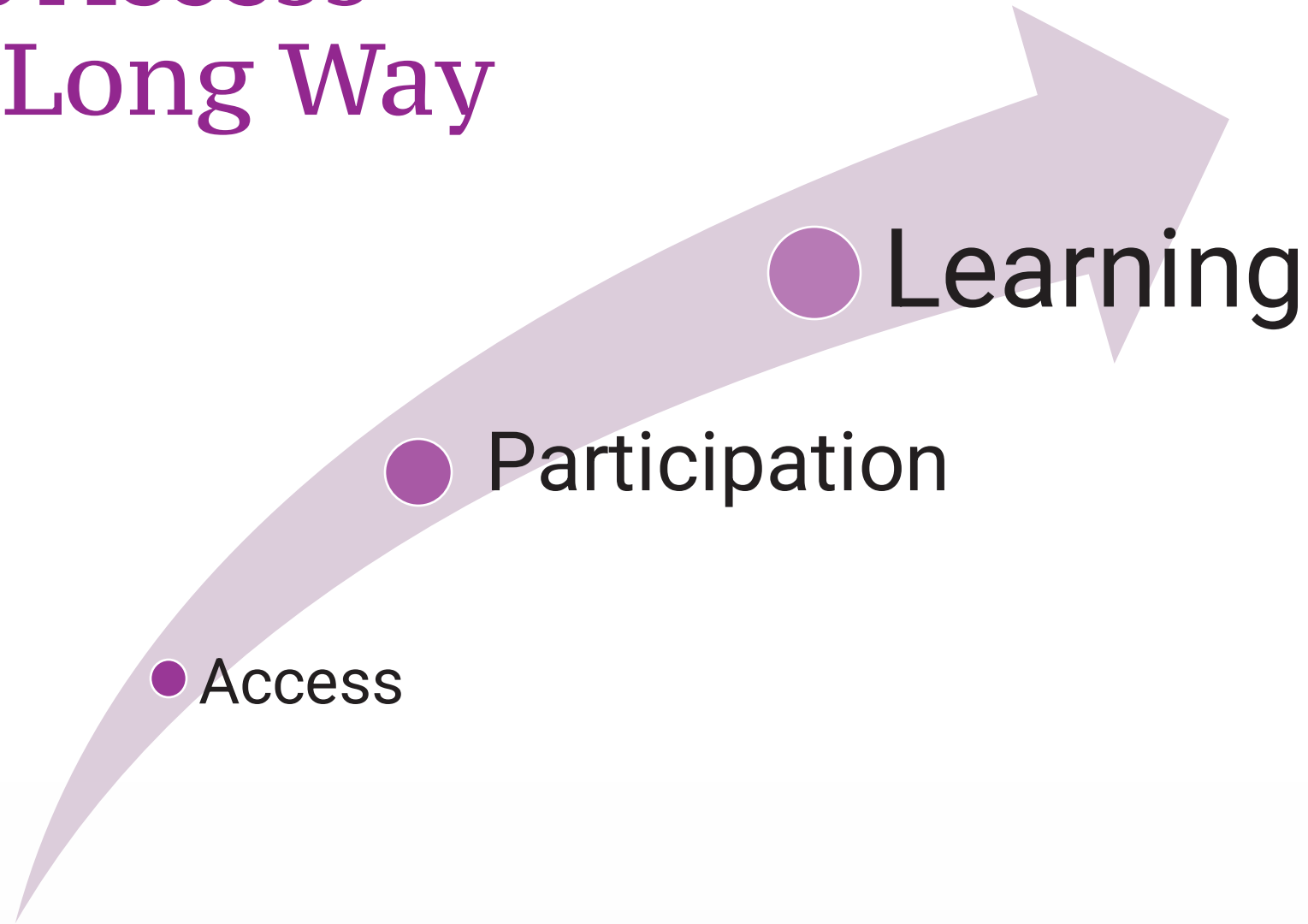
Dear Colleague Letter, US Department of Education,
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 11/16/15

IDEA = Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

FAPE = Free Appropriate Public Education

IEP = Individualized Education Program

A Little Access Goes a Long Way



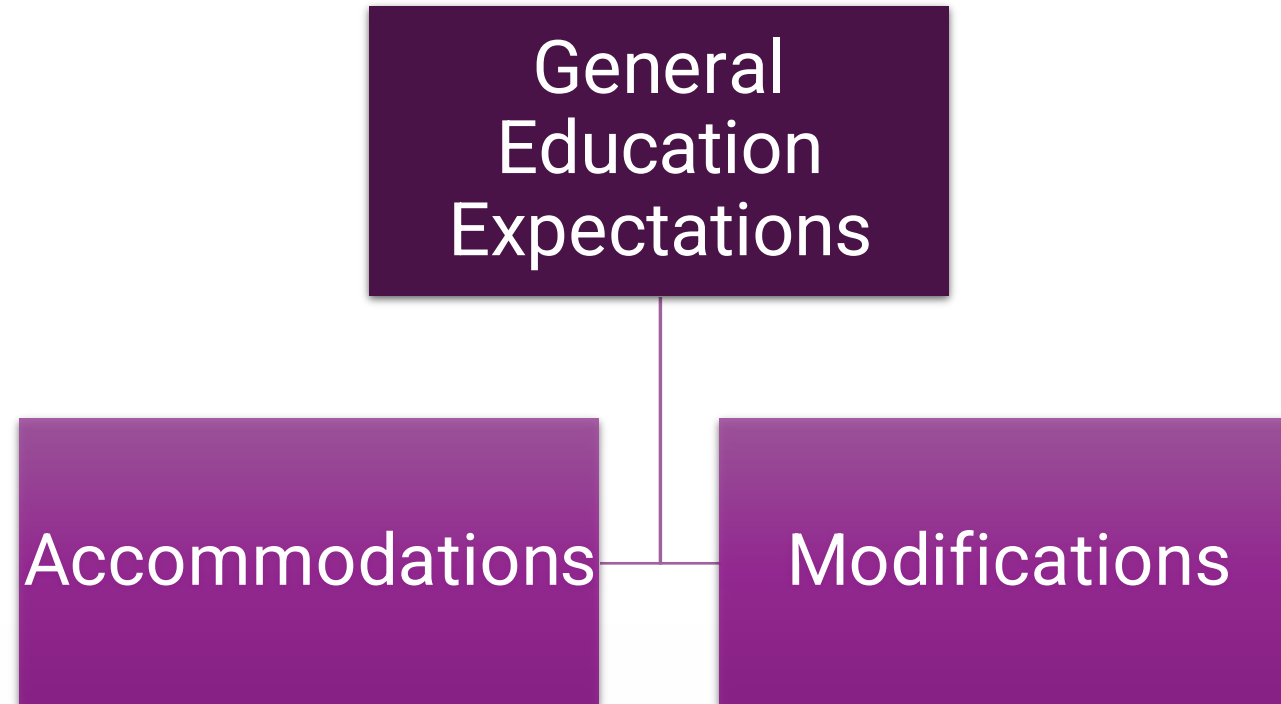
Exposure vs. Mastery

Exposure *
to grade level
general education content

Mastery
of skills at/near
ability level

* *for students with the most significant disabilities*

Meaningful Access to Grade-Level Content





Accommodation

Same learning outcomes as peers

Happens in general education classroom and other settings

Grading is the SAME

Changes how content is taught, accessed, and assessed

Used to help students ACCESS the general education curriculum

Modification

Different learning outcomes from peers

Can also happen in general education classroom

Grading is DIFFERENT

Changes the expectation of mastery

Used to help students EXPERIENCE the general education curriculum

Meaningful Access: Example 1

General Education Expectations	Potential Accommodations
1. Write unfamiliar word in vocabulary journal.	1. Select unknown word paired with picture symbol and glue in journal.
2. Write the sentence in which the word was found.	2. Match the word to the sentence in the text.
3. Write the definition of the word.	3. Match the printed word to the picture symbol.
4. Use the word in a new sentence (in writing).	4. Use the word in a new sentence (verbally or fill in the blank).

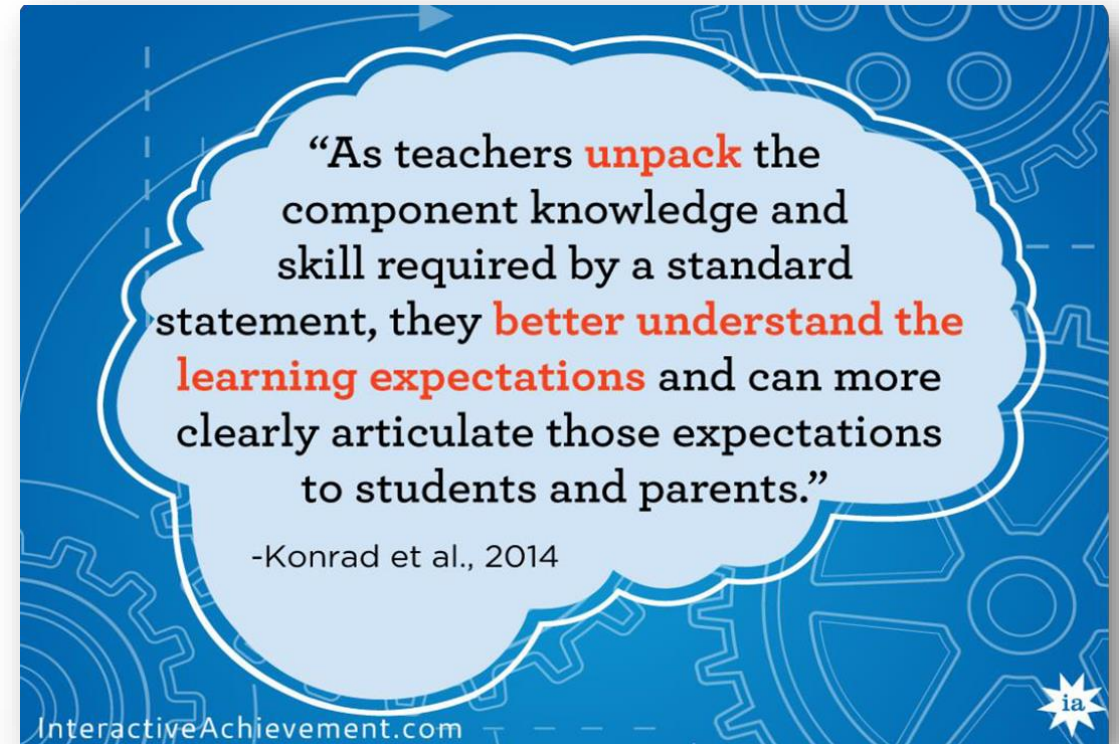
Meaningful Access: Example 2

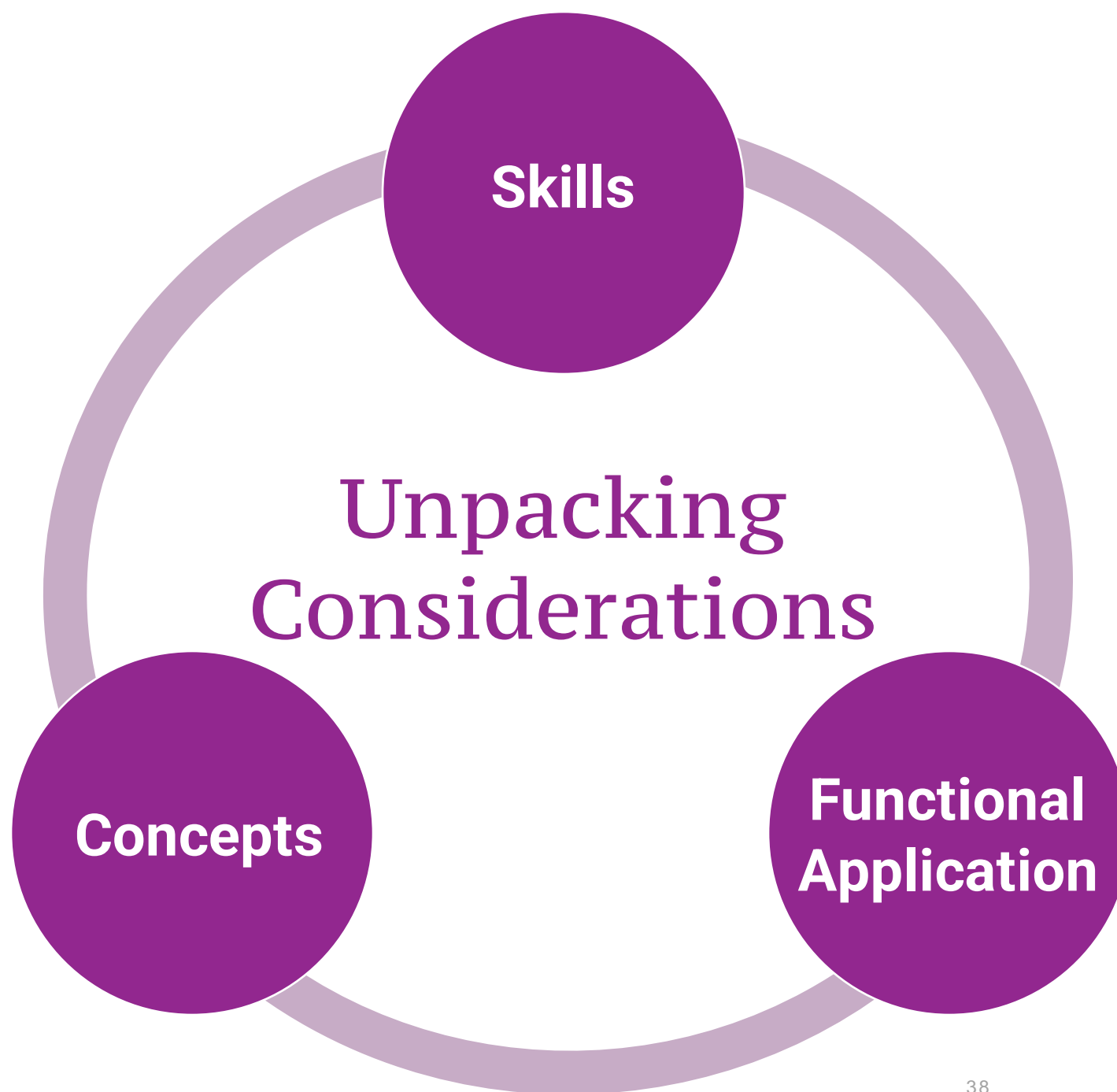


General Education Expectations	Potential Modifications
1. Compare and contrast information related to topic.	1. Identify similarities and differences.
2. Paraphrase resources.	2. Retell sentences read aloud by someone else.
3. Organize details into cohesive essay.	3. Choose relevant details from given selection.
4. Read essay aloud to the class.	4. With a peer, sequence the story using visuals.

Benefits of Unpacking Standards

- Determine core knowledge and key skills.
- Identify student barriers and gaps in knowledge.
- Prioritize expectations for students.
- Plan specially designed instruction for students with disabilities.





Unpacking Considerations



Skills (Verbs)

- Related
- Embedded

Concepts (Nouns)

- Core vocabulary
- Academic vocabulary

Functional Application

- Independent living
- Community participation

Core Vocabulary

Small set of simple words used frequently and across contexts

Includes various parts of speech (*prepositions, pronouns, adjectives, etc.*)

Not very good picture producers

Examples: I, me, know, you, go, want, more, not, have, good, on

Fringe/Academic Vocabulary

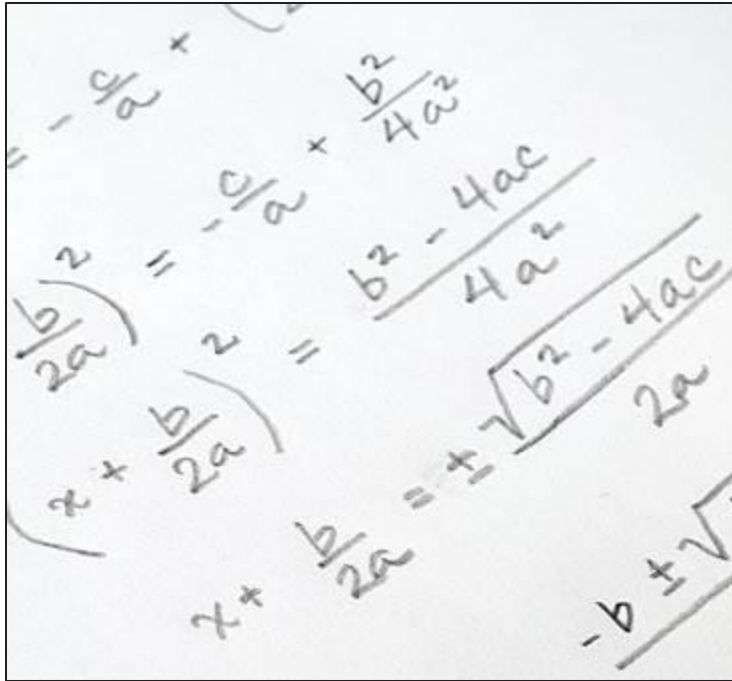
Larger set of words used less frequently and in more specific contexts

Includes proper names, most nouns, and academic vocabulary

Easier to label

Examples: angle, chair, umbrella, basketball, pizza, teacher, movie

Functional Application



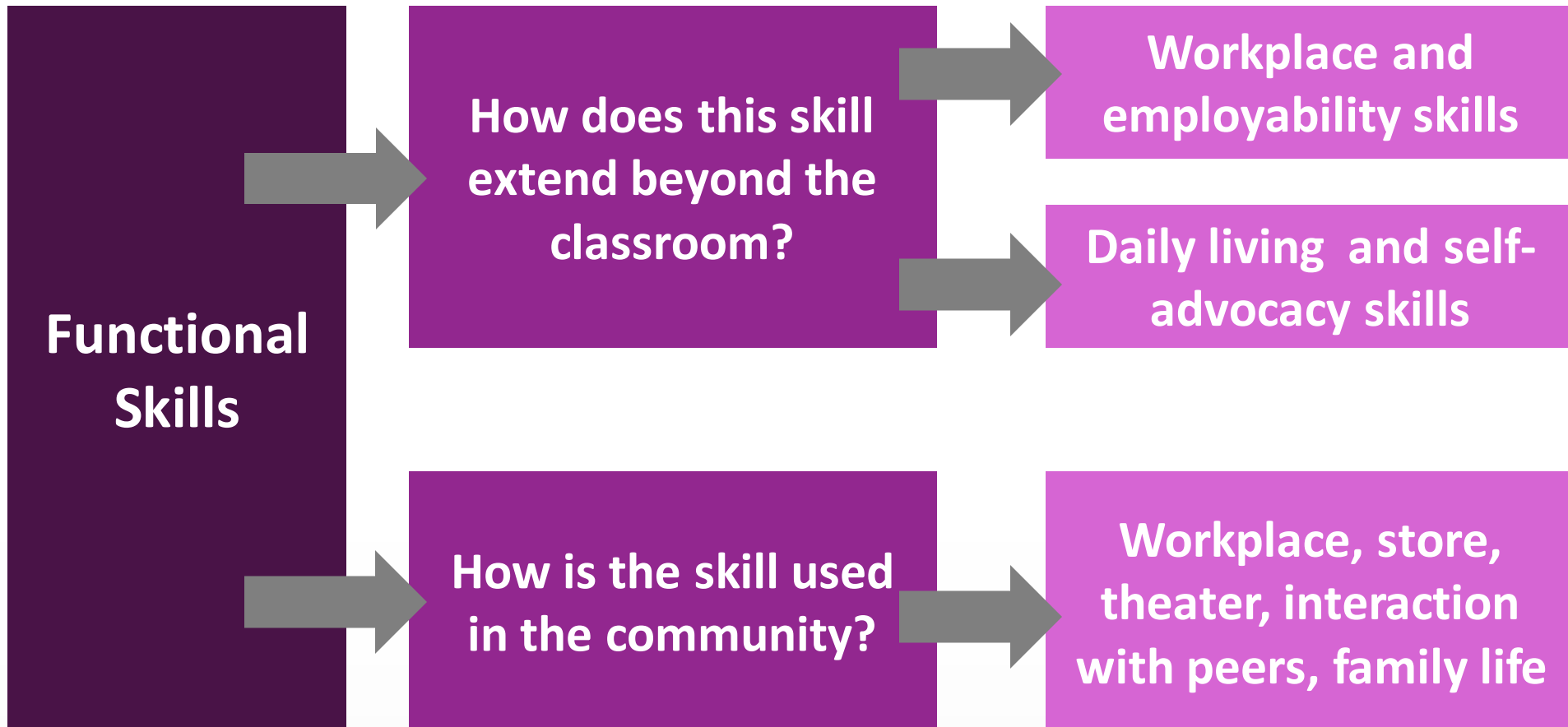
Handwritten algebraic derivation of the quadratic formula. The steps shown are:

$$\left(x + \frac{b}{2a}\right)^2 = \frac{b^2 - 4ac}{4a^2}$$
$$x + \frac{b}{2a} = \pm \frac{\sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$$
$$x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$$



Algebra doesn't have to "look like" algebra!

Identifying Functional Skills and Application



Unpacking Template

Alternate Achievement Standard:	
SKILLS: What should students be able to do?	CONCEPTS: What should students know?
What access skills are required for <u>every student</u> to master this standard?	
Which access skills describe barriers for students' access to and progress toward this standard? (<i>varies</i>)	

Unpacking: Primary Examples

Unpacking Template

Alternate Achievement Standard:

ELA.AAS.3.3 – Identify traits or feelings of a character in a story.

SKILLS: What should students be able to do?

- Identify a character in the story (who)
- Describe a character from the story – traits or feelings

CONCEPTS: What should students know?

- WH questions: WHO, WHY
- Traits – details
- Feelings – emotions

What access skills are required for every student to master this standard?

- Mode of communication
- Listen and attend to instruction/text
- Stay in assigned area
- Know difference between people and objects
- Identify relevant details
- Categorize

Which access skills describe barriers for students' access to and progress toward this standard? (*varies*)

- Know difference between people and objects (Identify a character within a story)
- Identify relevant details

Unpacking: Secondary Examples

Alternate Achievement Standard:

ELA.AAS.11.4: Identify how an author uses characterization (i.e., physical description, action, point of view) and figurative language to convey meaning in a variety of texts.

SKILLS: What should students be able to do?

- Identify characterization
- Identify figurative language

CONCEPTS: What should students know?

- What is characterization (e.g., character traits, actions, and points of view)?
- What is figurative language?

What access skills are required for every student to master this standard?

- Mode of communication
- Listen and attend to instruction and the text
- Stay in assigned area
- Identify/understand synonyms for 'text' (e.g., story, paragraph, selection, etc.)
- Understand difference between people and objects (e.g., How do we know what is a character vs part of the setting?)
- Describe a character by identifying details related to the character's physical description, actions, etc.
- Understand relationship between concepts of cause and effect (e.g., How do character actions convey meaning by the effect they have on the text?)
- Select the correct character point of view from given choices
- Select the correct meaning of figurative language from given choices

Which access skills describe barriers for students' access to and progress toward this standard? (varies)

- Identify/understand synonyms for 'text' (e.g., story, paragraph, selection, etc.)

Alternate Achievement Standard:

ELA.AAS.8.2: Make inferences from the content and the structure (i.e., cause and effect, sequencing) of an informational text.

SKILLS: What should students be able to do?

- Infer

CONCEPTS: What should students know?

- What is informational text?
- What is cause and effect?
- What is sequencing?

What access skills are required for every student to master this standard?

- Mode of communication
- Listen and attend to instruction and the text
- Stay in assigned area
- Identify/understand synonyms for 'text' (e.g., story, paragraph, selection, etc.)
- Understand relationship between concepts of cause and effect
- Identify the cause of an event from given choices
- Identify the effect of an action from given choices
- Sequence pictures to show beginning, middle, and end
- Determine beginning, middle, and end of text selection
- Select correct inference from given choices

Which access skills describe barriers for students' access to and progress toward this standard? (varies)

- Identify/understand synonyms for 'text' (e.g., story, paragraph, selection, etc.)
- Identify the cause of an event from given choices

Alternate Achievement Standard:

M.AAS.8.22: Identify 3 different transformations (e.g., reflection, rotation, translation).

SKILLS: What should students be able to do?

- Recognize/identify a reflection
- Recognize/identify a rotation
- Recognize/identify a translation

(*'Recognize'* = observe and demonstrate awareness; e.g., gesture, point, eye movement, facial expression)

CONCEPTS: What should students know?

- What is a reflection?
- What is a rotation?
- What is a translation?

What access skills are required for every student to master this standard?

- Mode of communication
- Listen and attend to instruction and the text
- Stay in assigned area
- Select correct answer given only one choice (errorless learning)
- Select correct answer given two or more choices
- Recognize/identify basic shapes (e.g., square, circle, triangle, rectangle)

- Understand *rotation* means turning around a central point
- Understand *reflection* means flipping across a central line
- Understand *translation* means sliding a shape in any direction

Which access skills describe barriers for students' access to and progress toward this standard? (varies)

- Understand *rotation* means turning around a central point

Step 1

Alternate Achievement Standard:

M.AAS.5.8: Add decimals to tenths using concrete models, drawings, and manipulatives without regrouping.

SKILLS: What should students be able to do?

-

CONCEPTS: What should students know?

-

Step 1: Example

Alternate Achievement Standard:

M.AAS.5.8: Add decimals to tenths using concrete models, drawings, and manipulatives without regrouping.

SKILLS: What should students be able to do?

- Add

CONCEPTS: What should students know?

- 'Add' means to join together
- What is a decimal?
- What is a tenth?

Step 2

Alternate Achievement Standard:

M.AAS.5.8: Add decimals to tenths using concrete models, drawings, and manipulatives without regrouping.

What access skills are required for every student to master this standard?

-

Step 2: Example

Alternate Achievement Standard:

M.AAS.5.8: Add decimals to tenths using concrete models, drawings, and manipulatives without regrouping.

What access skills are required for every student to master this standard?

- Mode of communication
- Listen and attend to instruction
- Stay in assigned area
- Select correct answer given only one choice (errorless learning)
- Select correct answer given two or more choices
- Number recognition
- Add whole numbers without regrouping
- Identify a decimal point within a number
- Identify place value (ones and tenths)

Alternate Achievement Standard:

M.AAS.5.8: Add decimals to tenths using concrete models, drawings, and manipulatives without regrouping.

SKILLS: What should students be able to do?

- Add

CONCEPTS: What should students know?

- 'Add' means to join together
- What is a decimal?
- What is a tenth?

What access skills are required for every student to master this standard?

- Mode of communication
- Listen and attend to instruction
- Stay in assigned area
- Select correct answer given only one choice (errorless learning)
- Select correct answer given two or more choices
- Number recognition
- Add whole numbers without regrouping
- Identify a decimal point within a number
- Identify place value (ones and tenths)

Which access skills describe barriers for students' access to and progress toward this standard? (varies)

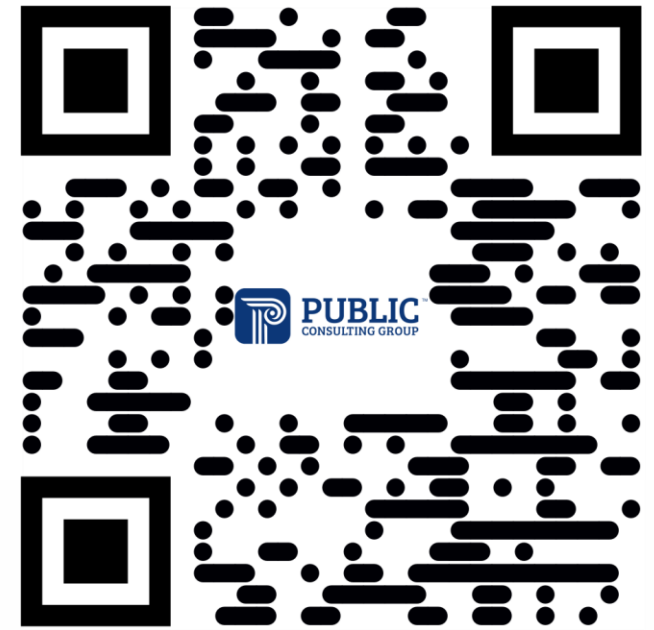
- Add whole numbers without regrouping

Wrap Up and Next Steps

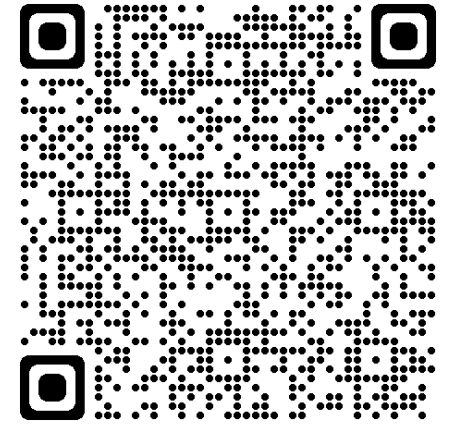
Exit Slip

Thank you for attending today's session! We value your feedback, please complete the following:

- MEGA Conference Evaluation, and
- Today's Exit Slip.



Future Session



- **Date:** Wednesday, September 13th
- **Session Topic:** Communication and Instruction Support of Students with Significant Disabilities
- **Time:** 8:30-3:30 p.m. CT
- **Location:** Montgomery
- **Power School Course 303455 | SES-PCG Onsite:**
Communication and Instruction Support of Students with Significant Disabilities