

Glossary of Terms

A

Accreditation: The evaluation process by which a district receives accredited status from the Wyoming Department of Education and the Wyoming State Board of Education. (See Figure 11: Summary of Evidence Required for District Accreditation p. 32).

Accommodation: Accommodations are practices and procedures in the areas of presentation, response, setting, and timing/scheduling that provide equitable access during instruction and assessments for students with disabilities.

Alignment: In the broadest sense, it is the core idea that in a standards-based system, all parts of the system (i.e., curriculum, assessments, teaching strategies, instructional materials, professional development) work together to ensure student learning of the content standards. The alignment of a district's assessment system must ensure that there is **adequate sampling** of the standards and benchmarks being measured in each content area. Alignment is a least a **two way process** to ensure that the assessments sample the major elements of the standards and that the assessments elicit what is asked for students to know and be able to do as stated in the standards. A well aligned system will have a process or procedure in place to make sure that the appropriate **cognitive demand** of the standards is reflected in the assessment system.

Alternate Assessment: An alternate assessment is a different or altered assessment. For Body of Evidence purposes “alternate assessment” means a different format of the same assessment task(s). An alternate assessment should not change, lower, or reduce learning expectations by requiring a student to learn less material, or by making the assessment easier.

Assessment: Assessment is a process designed to measure students' progress toward meeting the content standards at specific benchmarks. There are many types of assessments such as state, district and classroom assessments and each type of assessment serves different purposes.

Assessment System: An assessment system is a well-articulated set of assessments, each of which contributes toward supporting inferences related to the identified purposes of the system. The most important characteristic distinguishing an assessment system from a simple collection of tests is that a system is designed to provide a cohesive array of information on student performance (p. 5).

B

Body of Evidence: The Body of Evidence is a collection of assessments in a district system used to determine student performance levels in each of the nine content areas in grades 9-12.

Glossary to Wyoming Assessment Handbook

Bloom’s Taxonomy: Bloom’s Taxonomy is a multi-tiered model of classifying thinking according to six cognitive levels of complexity.

C

Chapter 6: This Chapter of the Wyoming Education Rules and Regulation requires districts to have a comprehensive K-12 delivery and assessment system for the Wyoming State Content and Performance Standards and the Common Core of Skills (See Appendix B of the Wyoming Assessment Handbook).

Chapter 31: This Chapter of the Wyoming Education Rules and Regulation requires districts to have a Body of Evidence System. (See Appendix C of the Wyoming Assessment Handbook or view at <http://soswy.state.wy.us/RULES/5218.pdf>).

Cognitive Demand: Cognitive demand is the complexity or “rigor” specified in the performance standards, standards and benchmarks. In Wyoming, most districts use Bloom’s Taxonomy or Webb’s Depth of Knowledge to analyze performance standards, standards, benchmarks and assessments in terms of cognitive demand.

Common assessment approach: A common assessment approach for a BOE system implies that “common” or the same assessments are embedded in courses offered in a content area in grades 9-12.

Comparability: Comparability is one of the five design principles of a BOE system. Comparability is the guarantee that students regardless of classroom, school or district, or year receive equal educational opportunities (p. 23). Also see Appendix M: Body of Evidence Peer Review Rubric.

Compensatory Approach: In a compensatory model of a district assessment system or Body of Evidence system, students DO NOT have to demonstrate proficiency on every standard to be considered proficient in the content area. Low performance on one or more standards within a content area may be compensated by high performance in others. (p.37).

Conjunctive Approach: In a conjunctive model of a district assessment system or Body of Evidence system, students have to demonstrate proficiency on every standard to be considered proficient in the content area.

Consistency: Consistency is one of the five design principles of a Body of Evidence Assessment system. Districts must provide evidence of procedures to ensure internal consistency reliability on closed ended assessments and inter-rater reliability on open-ended assessments and teacher judgment components of the plan. Additionally, data should be present to support implementation of the stated procedures (p. 18). See Appendix M: Body of Evidence Peer Review Rubric.

Glossary to Wyoming Assessment Handbook

Content Standards: Content standards define what students should know and be able to do as a result of instruction in the common core of knowledge and skill areas. In Wyoming these are the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards (p.2).

Course-based approach: A course-based approach for a Body of Evidence system identifies courses (or at least certain key courses) that are clearly tied to standards; the grades in those courses are based on achievement of the standards, and then the Body of Evidence consists of course grades from these “standards” courses (p. 44).

D

Depth of Knowledge: Depth of Knowledge is a classification of standards and assessment items created by Norman Webb from the Wisconsin Center for Education Research. The depth of knowledge is the degree of cognitive depth or complexity that knowledge standards or assessments require. Assessments should be as demanding cognitively as the expectations/standards that are set for students (p. 16).

Design Principles: The primary design principles of a Body of Evidence system are: alignment, consistency, fairness, standard setting and comparability.

District Assessment System: A comprehensive set of assessments K-12 in all nine content areas. See Appendix B in the Wyoming Assessment Handbook.

District Assessments: District assessments are those that are common throughout the district within specific grades or courses and should be administered and scored using uniform procedures (p. 28).

District-Based Approaches: A district-based approach to a Body of Evidence system relies on stand-alone assessments at key checkpoints in a student’s high school career. These assessments can be at the end of specific courses or grades. The results from these assessments comprise the Body of Evidence system as long as the set of assessments used are able to measure all of the standards appropriately as documented through the alignment evidence (p. 46).

E

Evaluation Criteria: The evaluation criteria refer to the required components of a BOE system found in the BOE Peer Review Rubric.

Evaluation Process: The evaluation process is a review of a district’s BOE system through peer evaluation.

F

Glossary to Wyoming Assessment Handbook

Fairness: One of the five design principles of a BOE system. Fairness is documented through the process of analyzing the assessment system and individual assessments to ensure they are not unfair to certain subgroups of the student population (p. 20).

G

Graduation Requirements: Graduation requirements are state statutes, rules, and regulations specifying what are required for a student to earn a high school diploma. See Appendix C, Wyoming Department of Education Rules and Regulations (2008): Chapter 31.

H

High School Diploma Endorsements: A high school diploma shall provide for one of the following endorsements, which shall be stated on the transcript of each student: advanced, comprehensive or general. An advanced endorsement requires a student to demonstrate advanced performance in five of nine content areas and proficient performance in the remaining areas. A comprehensive endorsement requires a student to demonstrate proficient performance in all nine content areas. A general endorsement requires a student to demonstrate proficiency in five of the nine content areas (p.75).

I

Inter-rater reliability: This is also called inter-rater agreement or concordance. It is the degree of agreement among raters. There are a number of statistics to determine inter-rater reliability. (See Appendix M: Body of Evidence Peer Review Rubric)

J

K

L

M

Multiple Measures: Multiple Measures refers to multiple formats and opportunities for a student to demonstrate proficiency. The district assessment system must provide students with multiple opportunities, using multiple formats to demonstrate their knowledge and skills related to the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards. In other words, the system should allow *students the opportunity to show what they know*, but the system should be designed in such a way so *that students who have not mastered the standards should not be able to pretend to know (e.g. not “pass” the assessment p. 5-6)*.

Multi-District Approach: A multi-district approach to designing and implementing a BOE system may be used for small districts that wish to collaborate with other districts.

Glossary to Wyoming Assessment Handbook

Mixed Model Approach: A mixed-model approach to designing a BOE system, allows districts to rely on the best features of the different approaches for different content areas. A district does not have to choose a single approach for every content area (p.48).

N

NCLB: NCLB is the No Child Left Behind Act, a federal law passed in 2002 reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

O

P

Performance Standards: Performance standards describe the characteristics of students at various levels of performance. They describe “how good is good enough?” These should clearly differentiate what students “look like” at various stages of learning the content, and the performance standards should be clearly measurable (p. 2).

Primary Design Principles: The primary design principles guide the development of districts’ Body of Evidence systems in order to make sure the system fulfills the stated purposes. The primary design principles for a BOE system are: alignment, consistency, fairness, standard setting and comparability.

Q

R

Results: The term refers to the information or data the assessment(s) are providing the district.

S

Sampling: Sampling is the process where a district gets a representative sample of student knowledge by collecting data at critical points and intervals throughout the K-12 continuum (see p. 28).

Standards-based Education: Education reform in the United States since the late 1980’s has largely been driven by the setting of academic standards of what students should know and be able to do. A standards-based system measures each student against the concrete standards instead of measuring how well the student performs compared to others. Curriculum, assessments and professional development are aligned to the standards.

Standard Setting: One of the five design principles required in a BOE system. Standard Setting is the process of determining the scores that divide various performance levels (i.e. cut scores) on an assessment and/or collection of assessments (p. 22).

Glossary to Wyoming Assessment Handbook

T

Test Blueprint: A test blueprint is a process or tool used to analyze the coverage of standards and the cognitive demand of the tasks represented in an assessment (p. 18).

U

V

Validity: Validity is often defined as the degree to which a test measures what it is intended to measure. But is not the test that is valid or not, it is the inferences—in the context of a particular use—that are valid or not (p. 13).

W

X

Y

Z