

Instructor's Resource Manual

for

**Assessing Learners with Special Needs:
An Applied Approach**
Seventh Edition

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Chapter 1

Chapter Focus

This introductory chapter presents an overview of the assessment process in general education in today's educational environment, reflecting current emphasis on inclusion and accountability in education for all children. The evaluation of student progress in general education occurs regularly. Teachers employ a problem-solving process incorporating intervention strategies in the classroom setting as well as screening and assessment of students who, even with appropriate interventions, require additional support. Various types of assessment are presented along with considerations of assessment of the child as a whole.

Case Study

#1: Jaime

1. According to the Contemporary Assessment Model, what steps have been taken by Mrs. Johnson?
 - Mrs. Johnson learned a bit about Jaime's family prior to instruction.
 - Mrs. Johnson began reading instruction by teaching early, basic skills—phonemic awareness.
 - Mrs. Johnson measured progress using CBMs and evaluated those assessments determining that Jaime was not making expected progress.
 -
2. List the steps that should happen before Mrs. Johnson consults with the problem-solving team.
 - Mrs. Johnson needs to document what instructional strategies and assessments she is using with Jaime and the effects these strategies and assessments have on her progress.
 - Mrs. Johnson needs to clarify the components of phonemic awareness in which Jaime is not successful (i.e., rhyming, initial sound fluency, etc.).
 - Mrs. Johnson needs to utilize additional instructional methods and assessments to determine if it is the instructional delivery model that is not effective for Jaime.
 - Mrs. Johnson needs to continue to collect data on individual skills to determine in what areas Jaime is not successful.

3. What other information may be helpful in determining interventions?

- A more in-depth family case study may be needed.
 - Why did Jaime not go to preschool?
 - Why the delay in enrolling in K?
- Determining Jaime's language needs could prove helpful.
 - Is Jaime an ELL or does Jaime have other speech/language considerations?
- Phonemic awareness is an umbrella term that covers a great deal of sub-skills. Determining which sub-skills Jaime is experiencing difficulties with is important, as is ensuring that Mrs. Johnson's instruction and assessments are congruent.

Check Your Understanding

Activity 1.1

1. According to the Traditional Assessment Model, what usually happened when a student was referred to a multidisciplinary team?

Answer:

- KEY POINT: Little to no intervention was required prior to referral.
 - Teacher noticed a student was having difficulty.
 - Specific deficits that appear to be the cause of a student's difficulty were identified.
 - Student was referred to a multidisciplinary team, who evaluated the student.
 - Eligibility was determined.
 - An individualized education program (IEP) was put in place for eligible students.
2. Research studies of the referral and assessment process found many indications of bias in the process. What are some examples of this bias?

Answer:

- Culturally, linguistically and ethnically diverse students were represented in disproportionate numbers in special education.
 - American Indians and Alaskan natives were 2.89 times more likely to receive special education and related services for developmental delay.
 - Deficit skills were a primary reason for teachers to refer for services—with no remedial intervention provided.
 - There is wide variety in the referral process.
 - The historical model of referral and assessment has led to a significant increase in the number of students identified for special education services.
3. Under the 2004 IDEA, the emphasis shifted from the traditional model with prereferral strategies to early intervening services. Why did the 2004 IDEA include this change?

Answer:

- Prereferral interventions were intended to address bias in the referral process and prevent unnecessary additional assessment. Early intervening services address the student's needs within the general education classroom and prevent additional assessment.

Although the nuances between these two concepts are subtle, the reason IDEA 2004 included this change was because NCLB mandated that all students be held accountable to the general education curriculum (via state level testing). Consequently, IDEA 2004 needed to account for this mandate in its regulations, therefore emphasizing the least restrictive environment mandate, requiring students with disabilities be provided services in the general education classroom with appropriate supports and services.

The change in terminology happened because *prereferral strategies* only required the elimination of bias in the assessment and referral process. The use of *early intervening services* required teachers to utilize and document a variety of interventions and assessments used with students to determine deficiencies so that those problems could be remediated early. The research supports that many students are referred for special education services due to deficits; if these deficits are remediated early, students are likely to not need special education services.

Apply Your Knowledge

Read the case study to begin thinking about how to look for solutions for the student's difficulties. Refer to the Contemporary Assessment Model to list possible steps in the problem-solving process.

Answer: Accept answers that may include the following:

- Mrs. Johnson needs to document what instructional strategies and assessments she is using with Jaime and the effects these strategies and assessments have on her progress.
- Mrs. Johnson needs to clarify the components of phonemic awareness in which Jaime is not successful (i.e., rhyming, initial sound fluency, etc.).
- Mrs. Johnson needs to utilize additional instructional methods and assessments to determine if it is the instructional delivery model that is not effective for Jaime.
- Mrs. Johnson needs to continue to collect data on individual skills to determine in what areas Jaime is not successful.

Activity 1.2

1. A teacher wants to determine why a student who can multiply single-digit numbers cannot multiply double-digit numbers. The teacher asks the student to verbally describe the steps she is using in the process of multiplying double-digit numbers. This is ____.

Answer: error analysis

2. The spelling series used in one classroom contains tests that are directly tied to the spelling curriculum. When the teacher uses these tests, ____ is being used.

Answer: curriculum-based assessment

3. A teacher collects class work, quizzes, book reports, and writing assignments to determine the students' strengths and weaknesses in language arts. This is known as ____.

Answer: portfolio assessment

4. When a teacher assesses a student's potential to learn a new math skill by prompting or cuing the student, ____ has been used.

Answer: dynamic assessment

5. For a teacher to determine a student's understanding of the solar system, the student is required to create a project that demonstrates the Earth's position relative to designated planets. This is ____.

Answer: performance assessment

6. A classroom teacher along with a team of other educational professionals determined that John, who has multiple disabilities, is not able to participate in the statewide assessment. The team develops ____ to assess John's attainment of educational goals.

Answer: alternative assessments

7. A student is not progressing as the teacher believes he should for his age expectancy. The teacher uses teacher-made tests, observation, and criterion-referenced tests to gather information about the student. This teacher is using different methods of ____ to discover why the student is not making progress.

Answer: assessment

8. To determine whether a student has mastered a specific skill or objective, the teacher uses a ____.

Answer: checklist

9. A first-grade student has difficulty with fine motor skills. The teacher is concerned that the student may not have the developmental ability to learn manuscript handwriting. The handwriting series lists skills a student must master before writing letters. Using this device, the teacher has employed a ____.

Answer: criterion-related assessment

10. Assessment devices in a school's language arts series provide skills and objectives for each level of English, creative writing, and literature. These are ____.

Answer: criterion-referenced assessment

11. Each year the Mulberry Elementary School tests students to determine which students have mastered state curriculum standards. This testing is known as ____.

Answer: high-stakes testing

Apply Your Knowledge

Analyze the following sentences written by Roberto. Identify the spelling errors.

1. The yellow kat is very big.
2. The oshun has big waves.
3. The kan was bent.

Your error analysis is that Roberto. . . .

Answer: Roberto's spelling errors include:

kat	(cat)
oshun	(ocean)
kan	(can)

Error Analysis: Accept answers that may include the following:

- Roberto is able to spell sight words correctly.
- Roberto is spelling words phonetically.
- Roberto knows that the first word of a sentence is capitalized.
- Roberto knows that sentences end with punctuation (in this case, declarative sentences end with a period).
- Roberto is able to write complete, simple sentences.
- Roberto uses adjectives correctly.

- Roberto can use the verbs of being correctly.
- Roberto needs to build spelling skills for words other than sight words.
- Roberto needs to vary the beginnings of his sentences.
- Roberto needs to write sentences other than declarative sentences.

Activity 1.3

1. If a teacher wants to determine the types of mistakes a student is making on written expression tasks such as sentence writing, the teacher may use ____.

Answer: error analysis

2. IEP team members are concerned that a student may be functioning within the range of mental retardation. In order to determine where the student's abilities are compared with other students his age, the team members determine that a ____ should be included on the assessment plan.

Answer: norm-referenced test

3. The Teacher Assistance Team of a middle school receives a referral regarding a student who seems to have behavioral difficulty in only one of his classes during the day. In order to determine what is happening in this one classroom, the team decides that an ____ should be conducted.

Answer: observation

4. In order to measure student progress against a standard set for all students in the same grade, ____ tests may be used.

Answer: criterion-referenced

5. When a teacher is concerned about a student's mastery of a specific math skill, the teacher may decide to use several measures, including ____.

Answer: curriculum-based assessments

Think Ahead

The steps of the evaluation process are structured by both federal and state laws. The federal mandates are presented in Chapter 2. Why do you think it is necessary to have laws that regulate the assessment process in education?

Answers may vary and may include the following reasons:

- To establish standards by which students qualify for services.
- To eliminate utilizing special education as a placement for students who need alternative teaching methods to be successful.
- To hold teachers accountable for all students' success.
- To eliminate bias in assessment.
- To reduce disproportionality and overrepresentation within the special education population.
- To ensure that monies allotted for special education services are spent on the students who actually need those services.

Part I

1. Concerns regarding the ___ of students from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds emphasize the need for collecting assessment data in a variety of ways.

Answer: V. disproportionality

2. In order to assess all areas to obtain a view of the whole child, the ___ is designed for each individual student.

Answer: G. individual assessment plan

3. When a teacher wants to determine how a student solved a problem incorrectly, the teacher completes a(n) ___.

Answer: D. error analysis

4. When a child from a different linguistic background is assessed by providing cues or prompts, a form of ___ has been employed.

Answer: The answer would be *accommodation*, but it is not on the list.

5. As a result of the ___, an IEP or an alternative plan would be developed for a student.

Answer: J. eligibility meeting

6. ____ must be given in a specific manner as stated by the publisher, whereas informal tests include a variety of methods and strategies for collecting data.

Answer: S. standardized tests

7. If ____ prove to be unsuccessful, the team may conclude that the student requires additional assessment to determine if additional services are needed.

Answer: K. early intervention services

8. A test that compares a student's performance with a national sample of students of the same age or grade is known as a ____.

Answer: H. norm-referenced test

9. A student found to be eligible for services who is between the ages of 6 and 21 will have a personalized IEP written, whereas a(n) ____ will be designed for a student younger than school age.

Answer: T. Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP)

10. Teachers who design assessment instruments from classroom materials are using ____.

Answer: E. informal assessment

Part II

1. One way to document that strategies have been attempted before referral is to use

Answer: Response to Intervention. This technique is used to document instructional strategies and assessments used in order to help students be successful with the general education curriculum.

2. Why are statewide tests called high-stakes tests?

Answer: Statewide tests are called high stakes tests because they are used to determine the effectiveness of educational programs and are used to monitor the progress of individual schools and school systems. Schools are required to show AYP in order to demonstrate that students are mastering the curriculum in the general classroom or risk sanctions imposed by the government.

3. How might high-stakes testing improve the education of all students?

Answer: Because all students are required to take the statewide tests (i.e., high-stakes tests), more students, especially those with disabilities, are being included in the general education curriculum. Due to all students being exposed to the same curriculum, all students have the opportunity to improve their educational performance and more students are graduating with regular high school diplomas.

4. The 2004 Amendments to IDEA emphasize that more than 30 years of research indicates that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by

Answer: providing incentives for whole school approaches and prereferral intervention to reduce the need to label children as disabled in order to address their learning needs.

5. Summarize the best-practice procedures that include early intervening services and RTI and when an appropriate referral for special education may be made.

Answer: Accept answers that include the following details:

- Progress in core academic subjects of *all* children should be monitored routinely.
- Students who experience difficulty when compared to their peers are considered to be at risk of academic or behavioral problems and then receive tier-two interventions, such as remedial assistance or tutoring using research-based interventions.
- Students not successful with tier-two interventions receive intensive intervention through the teacher assistance team that is specifically designed to address areas of difficulty.
- If a child continues to struggle, the child may be referred for consideration of an evaluation for possible special education eligibility.

Chapter 1 Test Bank

True and False

1. IDEA 2004 and NCLB place more emphasis on assessing *all* students in attaining the standards, leading to more students being included in the general education classroom and more students who receive special education services to receive a regular diploma.
2. All students, regardless of disability, are required to take statewide exams.
3. Pre-referral interventions are intended to address bias in the referral process and prevent unnecessary assessments.
4. Children who fail to make academic progress through ESL services are eligible for special education services.
5. An outcome of the use of the historical model of assessment was a large number of students being referred for special education services who did not require them.
6. When administering a standardized test, the individual giving the test may give the test in any manner they wish.
7. All students who are eligible for special education services are required to have an alternative planning document in place.
8. An IEP differs from an IFSP in that an IEP includes family needs as well as the child's needs.
9. Research confirms that, traditionally, a teacher's decision to refer may have been influenced by the student having a sibling who has had school problems.
10. It is important to establish firm standards for a student's progress and readiness to exit special education.

Multiple Choice

1. When the number of students from various ethnic or linguistically diverse groups who receive special education services is skewed from the general population, it is called
 - A. disproportionality
 - B. overrepresentation
 - C. overidentification
 - D. accountability
2. Looking for patterns of errors to provide insight into learning how a student completes a task is called
 - A. informal assessment
 - B. alternative assessment
 - C. error analysis
 - D. dynamic assessment
3. IDEA 2004 indicated that these services should be employed to address a student's needs within the general education classroom and prevent additional assessment.
 - A. Pre-referral interventions
 - B. Early intervention services
 - C. Response to intervention
 - D. Problem-solving model
4. Which of the following is not true about high-stakes testing?
 - A. It is state-driven.
 - B. Students with severe disabilities do not have to take it.
 - C. It provides the AYP score for the school.
 - D. It is mandated by IDEA and NCLB
5. This type of assessment requires that students create a product that demonstrates their skills or competency.
 - A. Dynamic assessment
 - B. Portfolio assessment
 - C. Informal assessment
 - D. Performance-based assessment
6. Mr. Kehl collects student products over the course of the year to demonstrate the progress his students make. Mr. Kehl is utilizing what type of assessment?
 - A. Dynamic assessment
 - B. Portfolio assessment
 - C. Informal assessment
 - D. Performance-based assessment
7. Ella received an 80% on her math test this week. Her teacher said she missed the cut-off by 5 points, so she will have to work on the same material next week and retake the test next Friday. Ella's teacher is employing what type of assessment strategy?

- A. Dynamic assessment
 - B. Performance assessment
 - C. Criterion-related assessment
 - D. Criterion-referenced assessment
8. Miss Morgan is collecting progress monitoring data using DIBELS and determining if she needs to change her instructional strategies in order to help her students reach their aim line. Miss Morgan is using what type of assessment strategy?
- A. Curriculum-based measurement
 - B. Curriculum-based assessment
 - C. Criterion-related assessment
 - D. Criterion-referenced assessment
9. Elisabeth's teacher gives a spelling test at the end of each week to determine student mastery of the words. This type of assessment is considered a
- A. Criterion-related assessment
 - B. Criterion-referenced assessment
 - C. Curriculum-based assessment
 - D. Curriculum-based measurement
10. Aaron's teacher noticed he was having difficulties reading in all of his classes. She referred him for special education services immediately. What model of assessment is Aaron's teacher following?
- A. Historical Model
 - B. Contemporary Model
 - C. Problem-solving Model
 - D. Response to Intervention Model
11. The process of evaluating an environment to determine if there are any influences on the learning process is called
- A. an observation
 - B. a dynamic assessment
 - C. an ecological evaluation
 - D. a performance-based assessment

12. Miss Jean, a school psychologist, administers a test on Billy, a student referred for a comprehensive evaluation. Billy's scores on an achievement test indicate that he is performing significantly below his peers in reading comprehension skills. Miss Jean administered what type of assessment?
- A. Standardized test
 - B. Performance assessment
 - C. Norm-referenced test
 - D. Criterion-referenced assessment
13. Susan was a referred for a comprehensive evaluation. It was determined at the eligibility meeting that she was not eligible for special education services but needed alternative planning in order to be successful in the general education classroom. What document will the team need to write for Susan?
- A. 504 accommodation plan
 - B. Individualized education program
 - C. Alternative instructional plan
 - D. No document is needed
14. In the event that a referred child is 3 years of age or younger and is eligible for services, the law requires this document to be written
- A. 504 Accommodation Plan
 - B. Individualized Education Program
 - C. Alternative Instructional Plan
 - D. Individualized Family Service Plan
15. According to the statistics provided by the U.S. Department of Education, what disability category is most disproportionately represented by minorities?
- A. Speech and Language Impairment
 - B. Learning Disabilities
 - C. Mental Retardation
 - D. Emotional Disturbance
16. This process is used when effective, research-based interventions are not successful in the general education classroom and document what strategies and assessments are being used to support instruction.
- A. Response to Intervention
 - B. Individualized Education Program
 - C. Individualized Family Support Plan
 - D. Eligibility Meeting

17. Which of the following describes an assessment model where an emphasis is placed on finding solutions rather than seeking alternative placement and an eligibility label?
- A. Historical Model
 - B. Contemporary Model
 - C. Traditional Model
 - D. Prereferral Intervention Model
18. Which of the following is *not* a legal consideration when developing an individualized assessment plan?
- A. Ethical standards must be upheld.
 - B. Assessments must be valid for their intended purpose.
 - C. One test may be used for eligibility determinations.
 - D. Assessments must assess areas of concern.
19. The primary outcome of the Historical Model of Assessment was
- A. an increase in the number of students identified for special education services.
 - B. a decrease in the number of students identified for special education services.
 - C. a shift in the way ELLs were evaluated for special education services.
 - D. an increase in the number of Caucasian students receiving special education services.
20. Which of the following is *not* true of ELL services?
- A. ELL services are not a special education service.
 - B. Bilingual services are a special education service.
 - C. Pre-referral strategies should promote language acquisition.
 - D. Language problems must be eliminated as a reason for referral.
21. At which tier of the RTI model does the eligibility meeting happen?
- A. Tier 1
 - B. Tier 2
 - C. Tier 3
 - D. None of the above
22. Utilizing the RTI model, the government expects to get the number of students who are referred for special education services down to
- A. 1–3%
 - B. 3–5%
 - C. 5–6%
 - D. 6–8%

23. When it is determined that a student needs an individual assessment plan, whose responsibility is it to determine which assessments to give to the student?
- A. The referring teacher.
 - B. The school psychologist.
 - C. The IEP team.
 - D. The parents.
24. Students with disabilities who are unable to participate in statewide assessments are tested using
- A. a dynamic assessment
 - B. a norm-referenced test
 - C. a criterion-related test
 - D. an alternative assessment
25. Informal assessments that can be tailored for individual students, used to identify mastery of a skill, and/or placement in a curriculum include:
- A. checklists
 - B. rating scales
 - C. observations
 - D. all of the above

Short Answer

1. Discuss the difference between testing and assessment.
2. Explain the process and purpose of Response to Intervention.
3. Discuss the components and outcomes of the historical referral and assessment model.
4. Discuss the Three-Tier Model of Intervention.
5. Describe the philosophy of the Contemporary Model of Assessment.
6. Discuss the differences between curriculum-based assessments and curriculum-based measurements.
7. Identify the four considerations that should be addressed during an ecological evaluation.
8. Discuss the legal requirements when developing assessment plans for students who may be eligible for special education services and the steps professionals should take in developing an individualized assessment plan.
9. Discuss the cultural issues that have led to the overrepresentation and disproportionality of students with disabilities from minority groups.
10. Identify three strategies that can be used to reduce disproportionality.
11. What is the purpose of prereferral interventions?
12. Discuss what grades early intervention services are available for and what grades interventions are emphasized.

Chapter 1 Test Bank Answer Key

True and False

1. TRUE.

Explanation: IDEA 2004 and NCLB place more emphasis on the assessment of all students for measuring attainment of educational standards within the general curriculum. This emphasis has increased the number of students receiving services to be included in the general education classroom and increased the percentage of students in those programs graduating with regular high school diplomas

2. TRUE.

Explanation: Students with exceptional learning needs are required to take statewide exams or alternative exams to measure their progress within the general education curriculum

3. TRUE.

Explanation: Prereferral interventions were intended to address bias in the referral process and prevent unnecessary additional assessment.

4. FALSE.

Explanation: Students who receive ESL services and fail to make academic progress are not automatically eligible for special education services. ESL and bilingual education are not special education services and language problems must be eliminated as a reason for referral as per IDEA.

5. TRUE.

Explanation: One of the unfortunate outcomes of the historical model of assessment was the increasing rates of children referred for assessment and subsequently receiving special education services.

6. FALSE.

Standardized tests must be given following the structure, format and instructions provided in the manual provided by the test developers.

7. FALSE.

Explanation: All students who are eligible to receive special education services must have an individualized education program in place. An alternative plan is used for students who are not eligible and may be a 504 accommodation plan.

8. FALSE.

Explanation: An IFSP includes the family's needs as well as the child's.

9. TRUE.

Explanation: According to research, a teacher's decision to refer may be influenced by the student's having a sibling who has had school problems (Thurlow, Christenson, & Ysseldyke, 1983).

10. TRUE.

Explanation: One of the strategies to reduce disproportionality suggested by Burnette (1998) is to establish a set of firm standards for the student's progress and readiness to exit special education.