Where do we start?
Assessing students with severe-profound multiple disabilities

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Goal of the Presentation

- Present a pilot assessment tool designed to gather data on students with severe-profound multiple disabilities levels of performance
Why did we decide to pursue this?

- Initial purpose was to find a way to be more consistent with data collection and eliminate gaps and discrepancies within the current system.

- Program focus and student population have changed.
  - Evaluate the data collection system.
## Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Paraprofessionals</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Pod</td>
<td>4 teachers</td>
<td>2 per classroom (8)</td>
<td>5 average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Pod</td>
<td>4 teachers</td>
<td>2 per classroom (8)</td>
<td>6 average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Pod</td>
<td>2 teachers</td>
<td>2 per classroom (4)</td>
<td>7 average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Pod</td>
<td>4 teachers</td>
<td>2 per classroom (8)</td>
<td>6 average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related Arts/Special Services</td>
<td>Music, Art, Physical Education, Computer Lab</td>
<td>Paraprofessionals accompany their students to related services</td>
<td>Classrooms have anywhere from 4 – 9 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 18 Teachers 28 Paraprofessionals 90 students
## Related Arts/Special Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>All students participate for an hour each week; at least one classroom staff member accompanies students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>All students participate for an hour each week; at least one classroom staff member accompanies students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Lab</td>
<td>All students participate for an hour each week; at least one classroom staff member accompanies students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snoezelen</td>
<td>All students participate for an hour each week; at least one classroom staff member accompanies students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>All students participate daily for ½ an hour; 2 paraprofessionals are assigned to the PE teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessments for students with limited abilities are much less common (Van Tubbergen et al., 2008)

Research evidence indicates that assessments for students with severe to profound intellectual and multiple disabilities are rather mixed in results (Siegel & Allinder, 2005)

Lack of assessment connection for these students to IEP goals and state assessments (Siegel & Allinder, 2005)
A theme of uncertainty exists in how to make decisions based on data (e.g., Farlow & Snell, 1989; Sandal, Schwartz, & Labroid, 2004; Snell & Lloyd, 1991)

Systematic data collection is vital to better understand student’s progress or lack of, identify individualized assessments, determine instructional goals, adaptations, and to hold teachers accountable for students overall educational programs (Merbler & Harley, 1976; Snell & Loyd, 1991)
Research Questions

1. What does the research suggest when assessing students with severe-profound multiple disabilities?
2. What type of method of data collection will best demonstrate students progress?
3. Will a school-wide data collection system increase reliability on student’s performance within and across classrooms?
4. Does a structured professional training on data collection increase knowledge and ability to gather objective and reliable data on student's performance?
5. Can a school-wide data collection system and assessment tool be created to meet the needs and objectively evaluate students with severe-profound multiple disabilities?
Procedures-Phase 1

HHAC

While focusing on student assessments we realized the current Harris-Hillman Abilities Checklist (HHAC) was not accurately addressing student needs and abilities; we realized modifications were needed because students were being penalized for their disabilities.
Procedures-Phase 2

**HHAC**
Reviewed the assessments for 50% of student population; we noticed an excessive number of discrepancies and gaps

**Data Collection**
Formal meeting with teachers to brainstorm on collecting data to eliminate lack of consistency among classrooms; created data sheet, operationally defined levels of participation
Procedures-Phase 3

HHAC

Gathered all school-wide assessments (100%) from May 2010

Considered the need for multiple assessments based on age and skill level

Data Collection

Formal training on data sheet and provided teachers with data collection notebooks; ongoing data collection and teacher support

Follow up with teachers, modified data sheets to align with portfolio graphs, ongoing collaboration with teachers regarding functionality
Procedures-Phase 4

**HHAC**

HHAC Design and create new HH abilities assessment, review and evaluate other curriculum and assessment tools for students with severe and profound multiple disabilities

**Data Collection**

Follow up with data collection, make any modifications at end of school year.
Where we are now?

**HHAC**
- Created a database to analyze students’ performance data and consider the need for multiple assessments

**Data Collection**
- Teachers are using school-wide data collection forms
- Data sheets will be evaluated at the end of the school year
Goals and Directions...

**HHAC**
- Design school-wide assessment tool
- Evaluate assessment tool
  - Reliability and objectivity
  - Ease to use, procedures, operational definitions
- Compare students performance (previous vs. new)

**Data collection system**
- Evaluate data collection forms (reliability within/across classrooms)
- Survey teachers on data collection system
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References


