Evaluating and Improving Online Asynchronous Focus Groups Conducted via Learning Management Systems

AND

Utilizing Online Technologies to Effectively Facilitate Data Gathering in Large-Scale Qualitative Research

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CE+HD
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION + HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

E-Learn

AMERICAN EVALUATION ASSOCIATION

National Center on Educational Outcomes
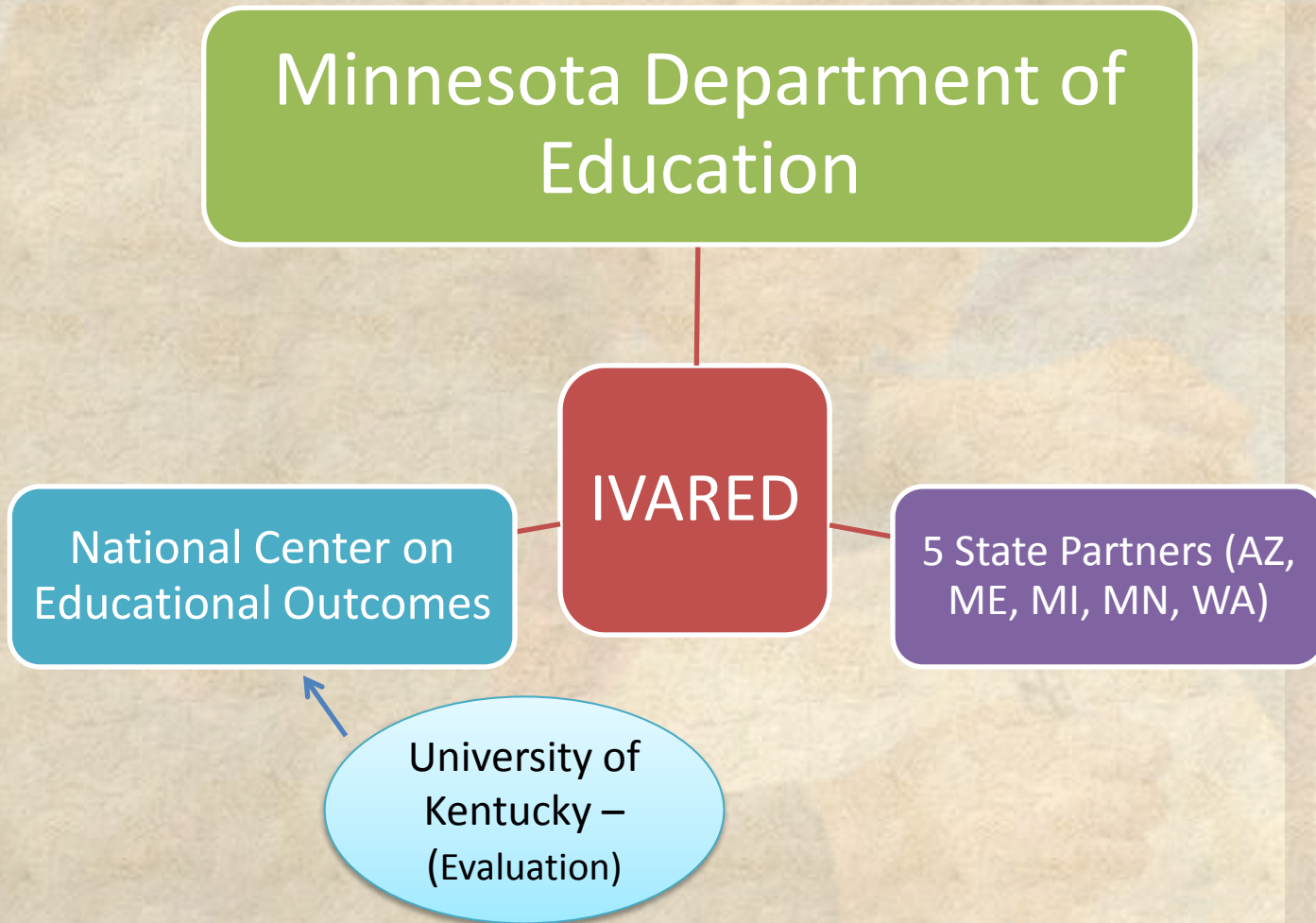University of Minnesota, USA

IVARED
Improving the Validity of Assessment Results for E.L.L.s with Disabilities

PROJECT OVERVIEW

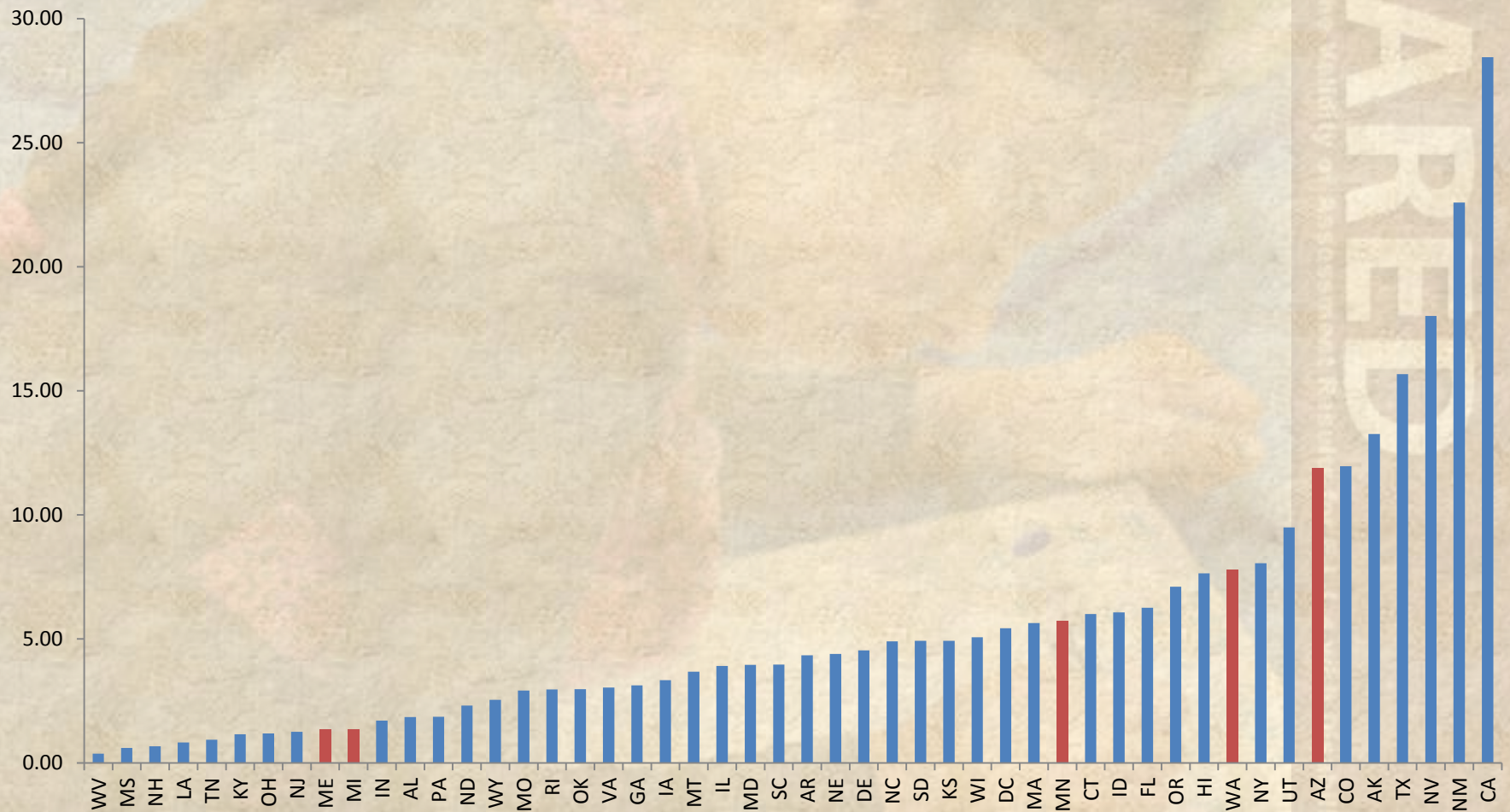# IVARED Enhanced Assessment Grant (United States Department of Education)

Minnesota Department of Education

IVARED

National Center on Educational Outcomes

5 State Partners (AZ, ME, MI, MN, WA)

University of Kentucky – (Evaluation)

Who are ELLs with disabilities?

Percent of Special Education Students Receiving ELL Services (Fall 2007)

The <u>benefits</u> of participating in state accountability assessments

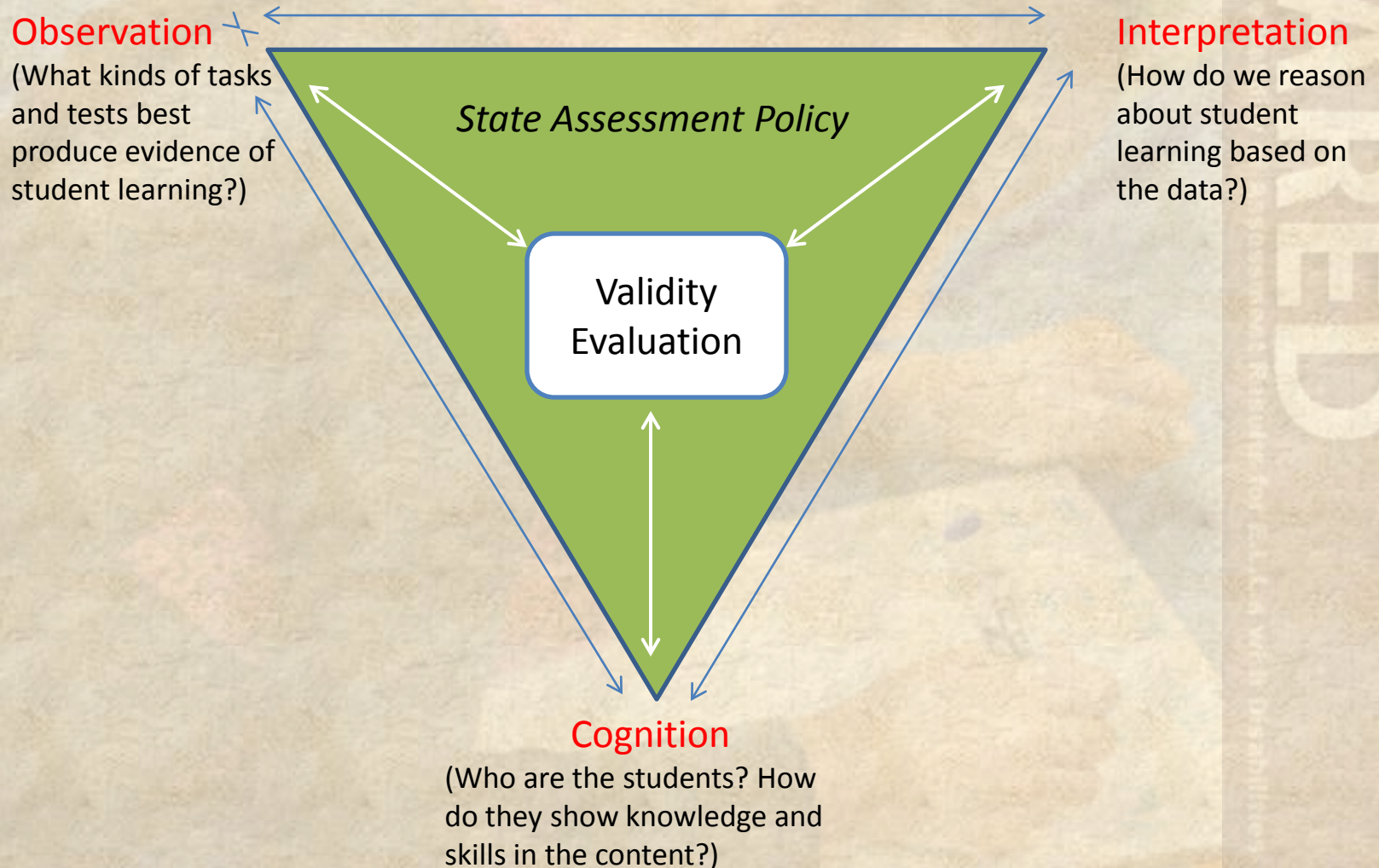| Higher Expectations | → | Improved instruction | → | Access to general education curriculum | → | Improved achieve-ment |

The dangers of not participating

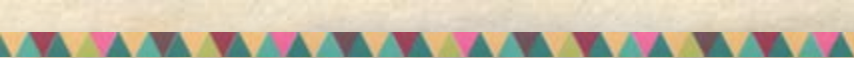| Lower expectations | → | Segregated placements | → | Alternative curriculum | → | Under achievement |

Cortiella (2006)

Test Validity for ELLs with Disabilities

(adapted from Marion, Quenemoen, & Kearns, 2006; Marion & Pelligrino, 2006)

Observation
(What kinds of tasks and tests best produce evidence of student learning?)

Interpretation
(How do we reason about student learning based on the data?)

State Assessment Policy

Validity Evaluation

Cognition
(Who are the students? How do they show knowledge and skills in the content?)

How can we support states to appropriately include more ELLs with disabilities and make sure assessments are valid for these students?

Obj.	Description	Activities
1	Identify and describe each state's population of ELLs with disabilities and relate this to assessment performance	Statewide data analyses
2	Describe inclusion of ELLs with disabilities in state assessment participation and accommodations policies.	Policy analysis
3	Identify promising practices for participation, accommodation, and test score interpretation decisions.	Policy analysis Delphi expert review Practitioner focus groups
4	Strengthen knowledge base of assessment decision-makers to improve decisions.	Web based training module
5	Disseminate project results	--

Research Questions

1. What are the characteristics of ELLs with and without disabilities?

2. What statewide content and language proficiency tests do ELLs and ELLs with disabilities participate in? How does their participation vary by test component?

3. How do ELLs and ELLs with disabilities perform on the state English proficiency test? How does their performance on the proficiency test relate to their performance on the content assessments?

Research Questions

4. Of the ELLs and ELLs with disabilities who have three years of data, which statewide tests do they take across the three years?

5. Of the ELLs and ELLs with disabilities who have three years of data, does their English proficiency assessment performance increase? Does their content proficiency (reading, math) increase?

6. For ELLs and ELLs with disabilities, what are the most commonly used accommodations on state tests of English proficiency and content?

Goal 1: Identify and describe each state's population and relate it to assessment performance

Goal 2: Describe inclusion in state assessment participation and accommodations policies

- Review 50 states' accommodation policies for ELLs with disabilities

- Work with individual state to identify some technical assistance for each state in terms of accommodation policies

Goal 3: Identify promising practices for participation, accommodations, and test score interpretation decisions

- Delphi study

- Practitioners decision making study (focus groups)
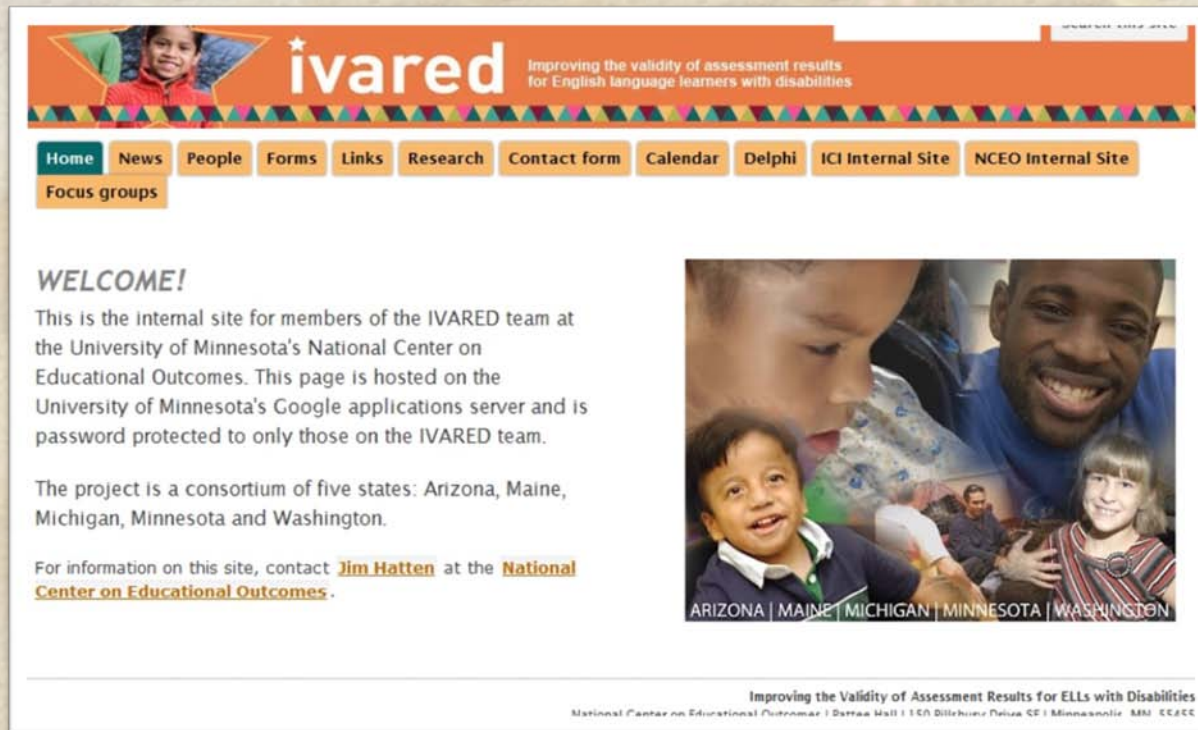
Goal 4: Strengthen the knowledge base of assessment decision makers to improve decisions

Online training module

Goal 5: Disseminate project results within states and nationally

IVARED online environments

- **Focus groups**
  - 232 participants
  - 35 focus groups
  - Non-assessment coordinators & assessment coordinators
  - Moodle platform
  - http://www.ivared.info/focusgroup
- **Delphi**
- **Training module**
- **Website**
  - http://www.ivared.info

Using Google Apps for effective qualitative research data collection

ONLINE **DELPHI** ENVIRONMENT

IVARED

IVARED Delphi Online Environment

- **Combination of Google apps**
  - University of Minnesota server space
  - Google Sites
  - Google Forms
  - Google Documents
- **Password protected**
- **One address was desired by research team**
  - https://sites.google.com/a/umn.edu/delphi/

IVARED Delphi Online Environment

- **Positives of Google Apps for methodology:**
  - Quick data collection
  - Anonymity (pseudonyms)
  - Data viewable and shareable within IVARED team
  - Data collection automatic
  - All-in-one instructions, examples, questionnaire, and resources
  - FREE!

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Improving the validity of assessment results
for English language learners with disabilities

WELCOME DELPHI PARTICIPANTS!

This is a password-protected internal site for participants of the IVARED Delphi expert team at the National Center on Educational Outcomes. This page is hosted on the University of Minnesota's Google applications server and is password protected to invitees only.

The Delphi survey questionnaire is located on this site. You will also see a link to an example survey and explanation of the Delphi research methodology.

The project is a consortium of five states: Arizona, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota and Washington.

For information on this site, contact **Jim Hatten** at the **National Center on Educational Outcomes**.

ARIZONA | MAINE | MICHIGAN | MINNESOTA | WASHINGTON

Improving the Validity of Assessment Results for ELLs with Disabilities
National Center on Educational Outcomes | Pattee Hall | 150 Pillsbury Drive SE | Minneapolis, MN, 55455

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Delphi Questionnaires

IMPORTANT NOTE: Round 3 of the Delphi summarizes all of the brainstormed ideas from rounds 1 and 2. These data are based on experts' input but some of the wording has been changed to be concise and to incorporate related ideas.

In this round you will first see all of the ratings of items done in Round 2 and a selection of actual comments in controversial areas. (If you would like to see all of the comments from participants in rounds 1 and 2, please click on the links to the corresponding round below.)

After you review the Round 2 ratings and selected comments you will have further opportunities to comment on the data as well as a chance to answer some specific questions. Please put your concerns and issues in these comment boxes. The research team is analyzing every comment. Everything you say is important to us.

Round 3

Round 3: Topic 1 -- Participation Decision-Making

Round 3: Topic 2 -- Accommodations

Round 3: Topic 3 -- Content Standards

Round 3: Topic 4 -- Test & Item Development

Round 3: Topic 5 -- Bias & Sensitivity

Round 3: Topic 6 -- Score Reporting

Rounds 1-2 summaries

- Round 1 comment summary
- Round 2 comment summary

Previous questionnaires

- Round 1 questionnaires
- Round 2 questionnaires

NOTE: You must read the consent form and directions before beginning your participation in the Delphi questionnaires!

Round 1
(Paragraph responses)

Round 2
(ratings & comments)

Round 3
(review ratings & comment)

Search this site

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Home | Delphi Directions | Delphi Questionnaires | Delphi Questionnaire Example
Delphi Resources | IVARED internal website

Delphi Questionnaires >
Round 3: Topic 4 -- Test & Item Development

http://www.apple.com/

Directions: Please review the summary of responses from Round 2 of this topic. At the end of the summary there is one question for you to answer.

Item	Panelist ranking of each sub-item (5=important)	Avg.
1. Representation on Test and Item Development Committees		
a. Students	5141143443	3.0
b. Parents	5141124423	2.7
c. Special Education Teachers	5455555554	4.8
d. General Education Teachers	4455554554	4.6
e. Second Language Experts (including ELL teachers)	5455555555	4.9
f. Speech Language Pathologists	4152355552	3.7
g. Cultural Representatives	4354253553	3.9
h. Language Interpreters	5355114553	3.7
i. Language Support Teams	5355555554	4.7
2. Understanding and Inclusion of the Target Population		
a. Student disability type	5553555535	4.6
b. Student level of English proficiency in each modality	5553545554	4.6
c. Student level of Native language proficiency in each modality	4553335544	4.1
d. Interrelationship of a student's disability and English proficiency	5553535555	4.6
e. Student's classroom performance	4143353555	3.8
f. Student responses to a range of classroom tasks and task types	4443553555	4.3
g. Student's learning process	5442354545	4.1
h. Task characteristics and presentation	5545554554	4.7
i. Student accommodation needs	5545555555	4.9
3. Design Considerations		
a. Use item templates that include variables used to match item features with student characteristics	4455545535	4.5
b. Use universal design principles	4555355555	4.7
c. Reduce the linguistic complexity of items	5553545545	4.6
d. Field testing that includes a representative sampling of the full range of students being administered the assessment	5535455555	4.7
e. Consider the educational impact of significantly reducing the linguistic complexity on assessments for ELLs with Disabilities	4525455555	4.5
f. Simultaneously develop test items and test accommodations	4545533555	4.4
g. Create accessible digital formats for tests	3555553555	4.6
h. Develop items that are culturally neutral	3524554555	4.3
i. Focus on creating access to content without changing the construct	4555455555	4.8
j. Test items have high discrimination power at the lower levels of the ELP distribution	4555245531	3.9

Content Summary

Home | Delphi Directions | Delphi Questionnaires | Delphi Questionnaire Example | Delphi Resources | IVARED internal website

Search this site

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Round 2 summary

The following is a summary of every comment submitted in Round 2 of the IVARED Delphi study:

Topic Area 1: Participation Decision Making

· It is extremely important that a team of experts (not an individual) decide which state tests ELLs with disabilities should take. The team should include special education teacher, ELL teacher, English language proficiency experts and content experts. It is also important not to involve too many individuals in the decision making process since it would be difficult to come up with a decision when different people with different backgrounds are involved.

· no comment

· The involvement of students depends upon the age of the student. Younger students, perhaps through grade 5, would not necessarily be in a position to make decisions about assessment. In general, one would also need to determine the 'weights' given to each person's judgment even if only in an informal sense. Who has the final say if there are disagreements? Parents truly do have veto power, even though they may not have the expertise necessary to make a strong technical decision. That should not change, but we need to ensure that those with the technical expertise are able to communicate all options, along with the pros and cons associated with them, to parents in whatever language the parents are most comfortable with. The involvement of cultural represntatives and interpreters depends on the nature of the student's needs. The language support team should include some of those mentioned in the other items. I don't think rather than two separate teams, ELs with disabilities should be served by IEP teams whose membership is augmented to include those who address the student's language development needs.

· Students should be involved as they are able to help make decisions about their education. Most folks on this page do not truly understand the importance of participation as it relates to accountability. Folks will make decisions on kids needs or skills not for accty

· Parents and students should have some input, but may not have enough information or background to be critical decision makers. The most essential decision makers should be those individuals with knowledge of students with special education needs who are ELLs. Special educators and regular educators also are important in this decision making process. Cultural representatives and interpreters may be able to contribute specific information that is helpful in the process.

· NA

· 1a-Parents' input should be included in the process and brought to the decision-making team, but not required as part of the decision-making team. Parents need to be kept informed and given opportunity for feedback on the decisions. 1b- Students are important in making determinations, and as possible/appropriate should be given opportunity to provide input to e.g., type of test to be taken, which accommodations

NCEO

ONLINE FOCUS GROUPS

Iterations, recruitment, registration, consent, demographics & participation
PROCESS OF IVARED'S FOCUS GROUPS

Conducting online focus groups

- Focus group methodology
  - Characteristics of focus groups
    - **Involve people (5-10)**
    - **The people possess certain characteristics**
    - **They can provide quality data**
    - **Focus groups have a focused discussion (using questions that are carefully predetermined and sequenced)**
   - **Are used to help understand the topic of interest**

From Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research (4th Ed.), by Richard A. Krueger & Mary Anne Casey (2009)

Conducting online focus groups

- Uses of focus groups
  - Help with decision-making
  - Guide product or program development
  - Provide insight on organizational concerns/issues
    - **Organizational development**
    - **Needs assessment**
    - **Planning and goal-setting**
    - **Understanding concerns**
    - **Quality movements**
    - **Policymaking and testing**

From <u>Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research</u> (4th Ed.), by Richard A. Krueger & Mary Anne Casey (2009)

Conducting online focus groups

- Focus groups work best when participants feel comfortable, respected, and free to give their honest opinion without being judged

- ***Is this scientific research?***
    - "It is scientific research because it is a process of disciplined inquiry that is systemic and verifiable." (Krueger & Casey, p. 199)

From Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research (4th Ed.), by Richard A. Krueger & Mary Anne Casey (2009)

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Conducting online focus groups

- Qualities of focus group data analysis:
  - Analysis is systemic
  - Analysis is verifiable
  - Analysis is sequential (a sequential process)
  - Analysis is continuous

- In analysis, researchers are looking for:
  - Frequency (how often people said something)
  - Specificity
  - Emotion
  - Extensiveness (how many different people)

From Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research (4th Ed.), by Richard A. Krueger & Mary Anne Casey (2009)

Communication model
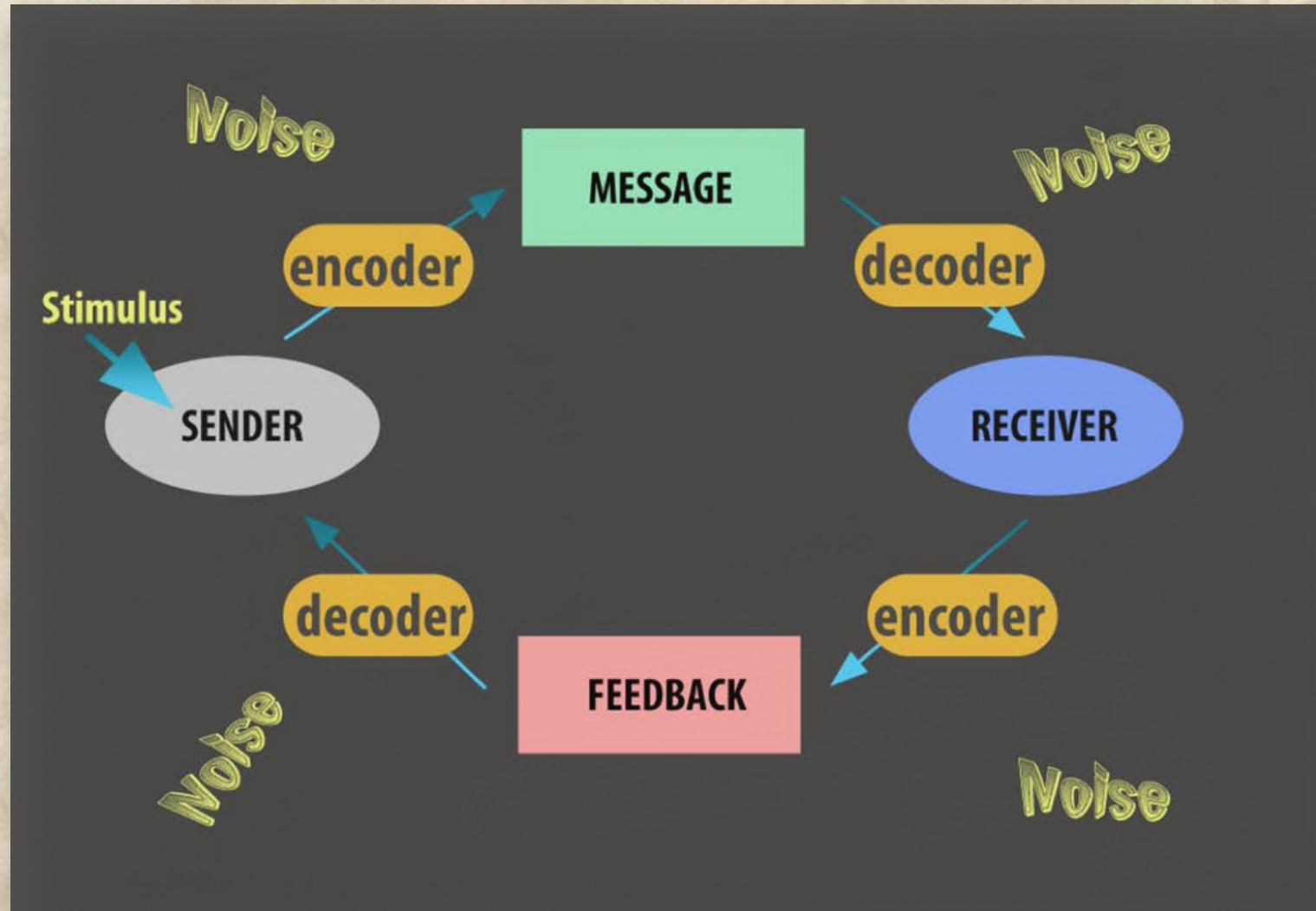
Types of focus group environments

- Face-to-face
  - Most common
  - Often used in marketing and academia
  - Involves a moderator, recording device, and gathering in a location at the same time
- Synchronous via technological tool
  - Synchronous = "immediate"
  - Conference call (telephone)
  - Video conference
  - Internet-based (video, audio, text "chatroom")

Types of focus group environments

- Asynchronous via technological tool
  - Asynchronous = "delayed"
  - Email
  - Discussion board
  - Blog
  - Social network
  - Wiki (wiki or Google document)

IVARED's online focus groups

- Initial iteration was face-to-face focus groups with contracted **local moderators**

- Then, **conference call** or video conferencing

- Finally, decided on **online** asynch discussion
  - Participation increase
  - Good plan for educators' schedules
  - Consistency of moderator; consistency of data
  - Depth of data
  - Transcription time

IVARED Focus Group Decision-Making Process

```
                          ┌─────────────────┐
                          │  Focus Group    │
                          │  interviews     │
                          └─────────────────┘
                    ┌──────────────┴──────────────┐
            ┌──────────────┐              ┌──────────────────┐
            │ Face-to-Face │              │ Technology-aided │
            └──────────────┘              └──────────────────┘
    ┌────────────┬──────────────┬──────────────┐
┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
│NCEO staff│ │Sub-      │ │ NCEO + sub-  │
│moderated │ │contractor│ │ contractor   │
│          │ │moderated │ │ moderated    │
└──────────┘ └──────────┘ └──────────────┘
```

```
                ┌──────────────┐                      ┌──────────────┐
                │ Synchronous  │                      │ Asynchronous │
                └──────────────┘                      └──────────────┘
        ┌───────────┬──────────────┬──────────┐
    ┌───────┐   ┌───────────┐   ┌──────┐
    │ Voice │   │Audio-video│   │ Text │
    └───────┘   └───────────┘   └──────┘
 ┌──────────┬──────────┐  ┌──────────┬────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
┌─────────┐┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐┌────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
│Telephone││Internet- │ │Video-    ││Internet-   │ │Internet-based│
│         ││based     │ │conference││based       │ └──────────────┘
└─────────┘└──────────┘ └──────────┘└────────────┘   ┌──────────┐
                         Google Hangout               │"Chat room"│
                                                       └──────────┘
                         Skype®
```

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        ┌──────────────┐                          ┌──────┐
        │ Video and    │                          │ Text │
        │ voice        │                          └──────┘
        └──────────────┘
        VoiceThread™    ┌──────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────┐ ┌─────┐ ┌──────┐
                        │email │ │Discussion│ │ Blog │ │ SNS │ │LMS or│
        Video blogs     └──────┘ │board     │ └──────┘ └─────┘ │CMS   │
                                 └──────────┘                  └──────┘
        Videowall                  Forums        Ning™         Moodle

                                                 Facebook      Blackboard™

                                                 Drupal

                                        WordPress/BuddyPress
```

Note: These are not all the technologies discussed or all the viable alternatives available. It is a good sampling of the major technological entities and structures discussed by IVARED researchers.

Why online focus groups?

- Burton and Goldsmith (2002) researched asynchronous text discussions online:

  - participants in the asynchronous discussion felt comfortable in the setting

  - described speaking more freely online than when in-person

  - found there is some attrition of participants online

  - moderator involvement was an important factor.

Why online focus groups?

- Atkinson et al. (2006) declared online focus groups successful at gathering information in the manner as described by Krueger and Casey (2004, 2009)

  - two major affordances:

    - **(1) the cost-effectiveness of bringing together subjects from a wide-ranging background (physical distance and cultural differences)**

    - **(2) the immediacy of having the transcription done for them (by printing the screen) and the ability to code in a timely manner**

Recruitment

- Initial contact through state offices

- Interested participants emailed Linda

- Linda sent consent form

- Required to fill out a Google form

IVARED Focus Groups

IVARED ADMIN	PARTICIPANTS
Send out email to find participants	
Send out 2nd email to find participants	
Send out 3rd email to find participants	
	Email to ivared2012@gmail.com expressing interest in particpating
Email consent form to participant	
	Initial/sign consent form; scan, send back
Print off consent form. Email participant link to Google form	
	Go to Google form link; Fill out form
Take information from Google doc/form Input information into "Users" on Moodle	
Create "class" for focus group (eg. Arizona Assessment Coordinators 1)	
Enter appropriate participants in proper focus group	
Send email to participants with Username and password; include when the focus group is meeting	
	Log on to the Moodle; change password
One day before focus group begins, send out reminder that it is beginning	
Begin focus group. Send out reminder	
	Begin focus group participation
Complete focus group. Print off transcript	
Add signifiers to usernames for coding	
Send out gift cards via certified mail	

Decision-making matrix

Recruitment

- Assigned to a focus group
- Given login and password
- Change password
- Check-in
- Discussion
- Completion; thank-you email with request to volunteer to fill out anonymous survey
- Survey via Google forms

Registration form for participants

IVARED Participant Demographic Questionnaire

This form is to be filled out by participants in the IVARED (Improving the Validity of Assessment Results for ELLs with Disabilities) project. This survey is for the Practitioner Decision Making Project.

Please type in the information below. This information is for data analysis purposes only. It will not be shared outside of the IVARED internal research team.
* Required

State *
[Arizona]

Gender *
○ Male
○ Female

Race/Ethnicity *
Please choose one of the following based on the 1997 standards for race and ethnicity by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget:
[American Indian or Alaska Native]

Languages fluent in (other than English) *
[   ]

Job title(s) *
Please list your job title(s) (ie. teacher, assistant principal, paraprofessional, speech pathologist, etc.)
☐ Special Education teacher
☐ ESL/bilingual teacher
☐ General Education teacher
☐ Paraprofessional
☐ Speech-Language Pathologist
☐ Assessment coordinator
☐ Administrator (principal, superintendent, etc.)
☐ Other: [   ]

License area *
[   ]

Are you an assessment coordinator? *
○ Yes
○ No

If you are an assessment coordinator, are you:
○ District
○ Building
○ Both
○ Other: [   ]

Number of years of experience with ELLs with disabilities: *
[0]

Grade levels you work with: *
Check appropriate box or boxes
☐ Entire district (all grade levels)
☐ Early Childhood and Family Education
☐ Pre-K
☐ Kindergarten
☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ 6
☐ 7
☐ 8
☐ 9
☐ 10
☐ 11
☐ 12
☐ Other: [   ]

Number of years at your current school or district *
Select from the drop-down list
[1]

School type *
○ Public
○ Private
○ Charter
○ Other: [   ]

School size *
Choose one
[under 100]

District size *
Estimated or actual size of the entire school district
[   ]

School locale *
○ Urban
○ Suburb
○ Rural
○ Other: [   ]

IVARED Participant Demographic Questionnaire

* Required

IVARED Gift Card Mailing Information
Please type in the appropriate information below for the gift card to be mailed to you. This information is only to be used for the purposes of sending you a gift card for your participation in the IVARED project. NOTE: Gift cards will be sent by certified mail t the address you give below.

First name *
[   ]

Last name *
[   ]

Mailing street address *
[   ]

Apt. or unit number
[   ]

City *
[   ]

State *
[   ]

Zip code *
[   ]

(« Back) (Submit)

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Participant demographics

Gender
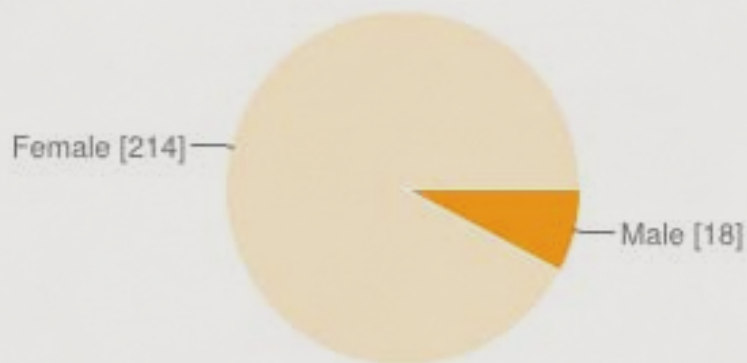
Female [214]

Male [18]

Male	**18**	8%
Female	**214**	92%

Participant demographics
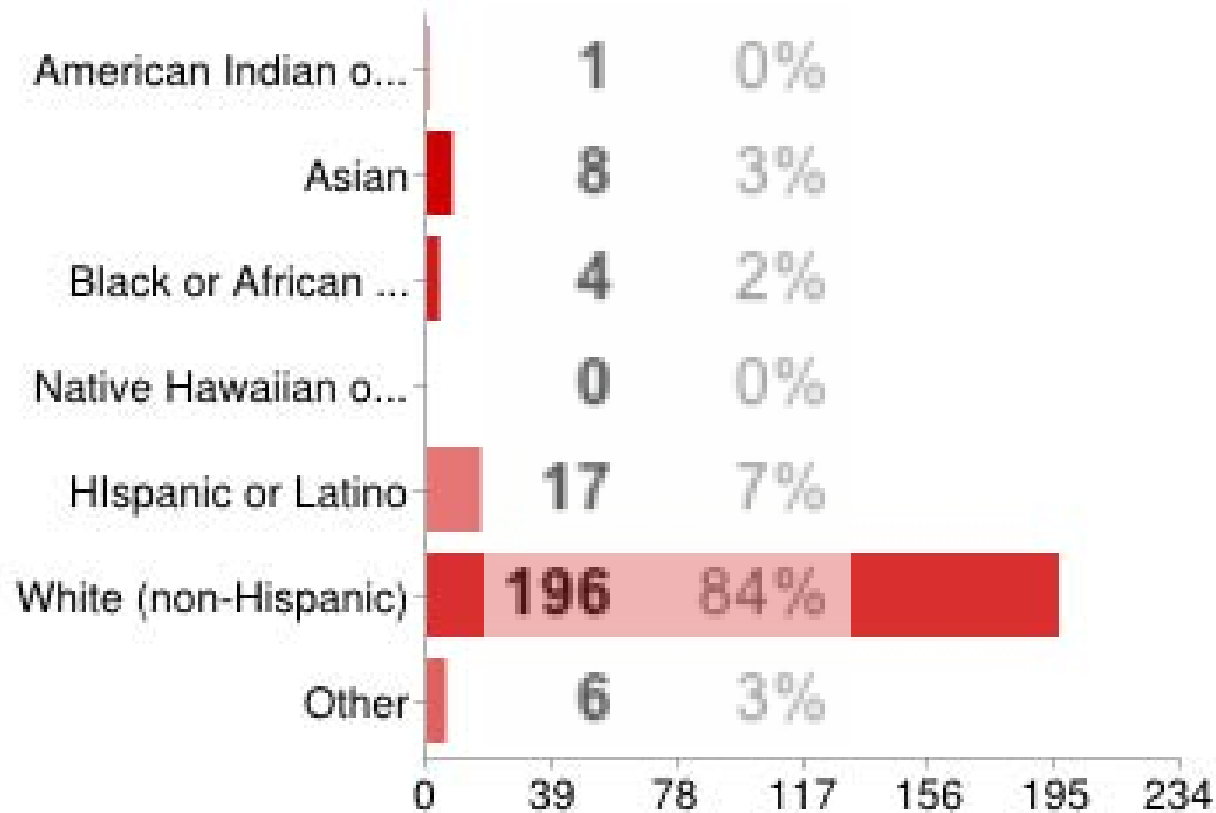
Participant demographics

State
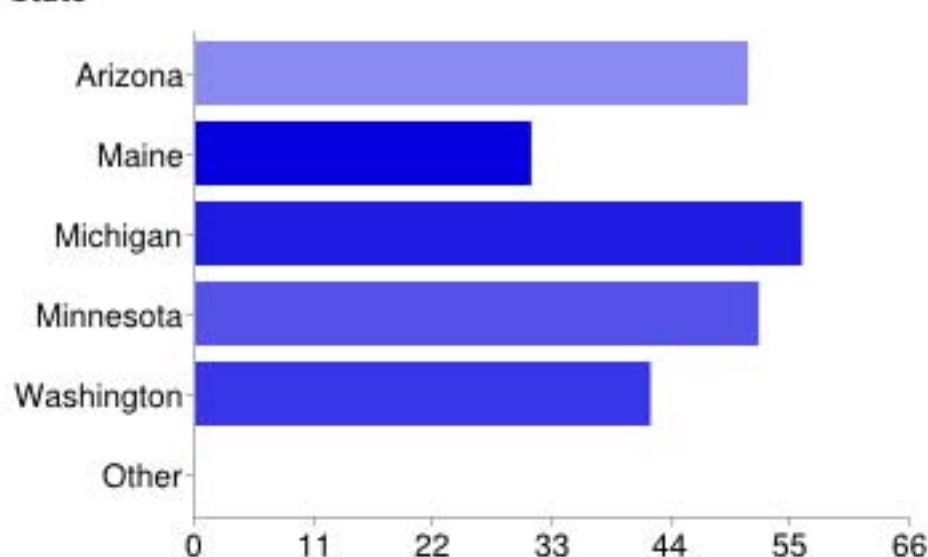
State	Count	Percent
Arizona	51	22%
Maine	31	13%
Michigan	56	24%
Minnesota	52	22%
Washington	42	18%
Other	0	0%

School locale
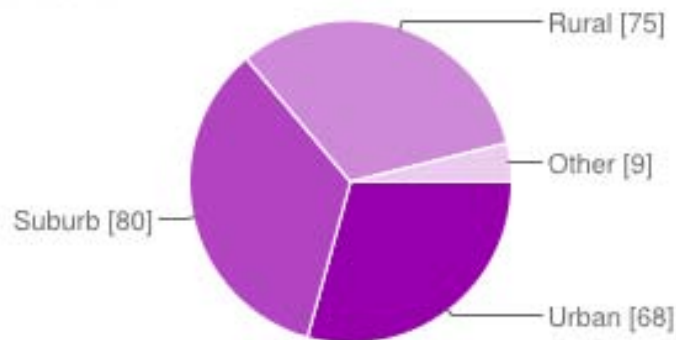
Locale	Count	Percent
Urban	68	29%
Suburb	80	34%
Rural	75	32%
Other	9	4%

Rural [75]
Suburb [80]
Urban [68]
Other [9]

Participant demographics

School type
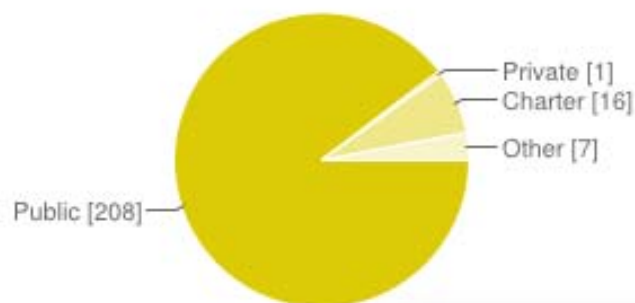
Public	**208**	90%
Private	**1**	0%
Charter	**16**	7%
Other	**7**	3%

School size
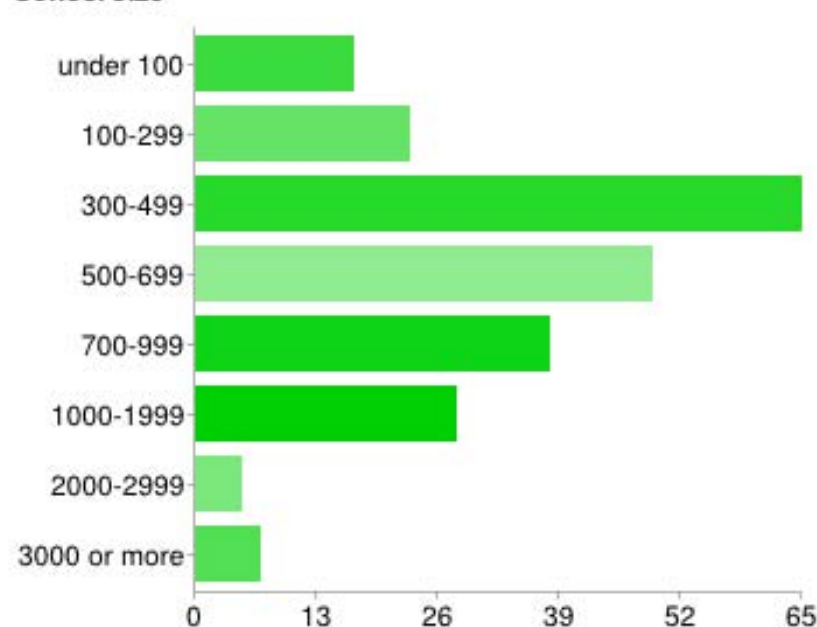
under 100	**17**	7%
100-299	**23**	10%
300-499	**65**	28%
500-699	**49**	21%
700-999	**38**	16%
1000-1999	**28**	12%
2000-2999	**5**	2%
3000 or more	**7**	3%

Participant job titles
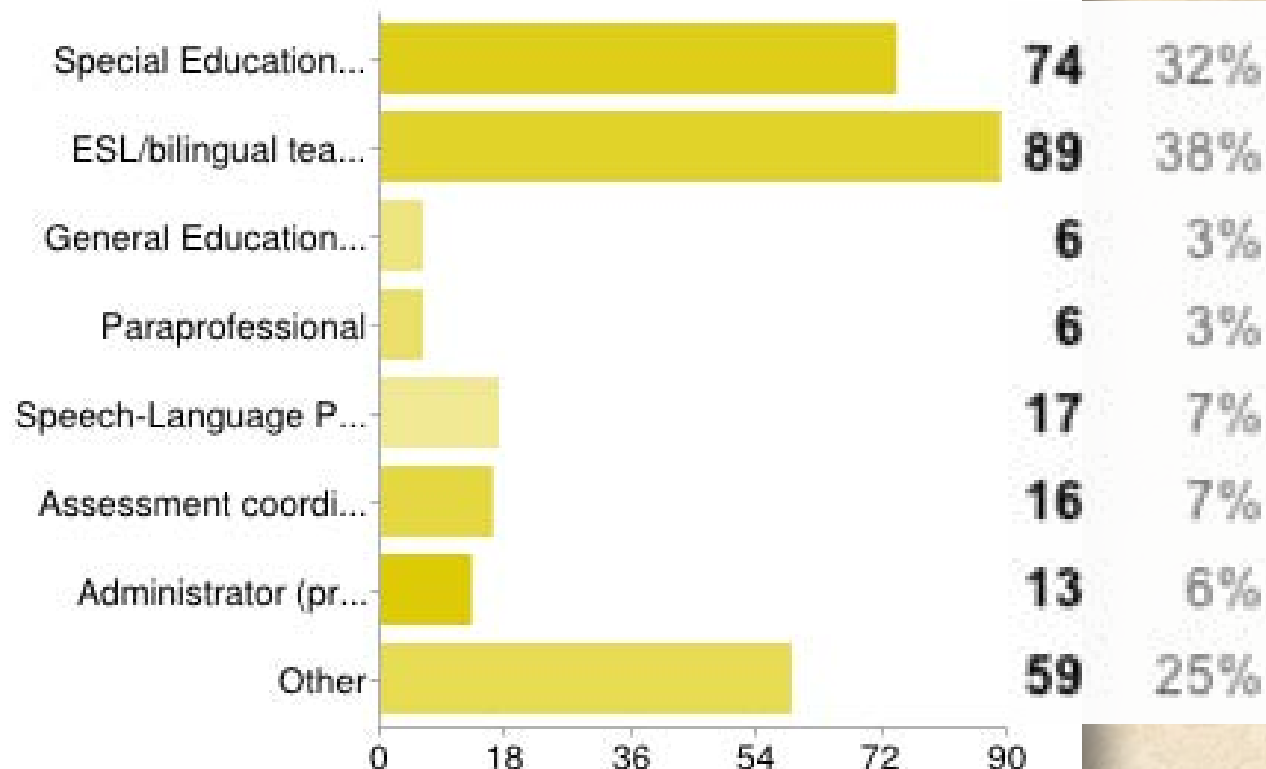
Participant assessment status

Are you an assessment coordinator?
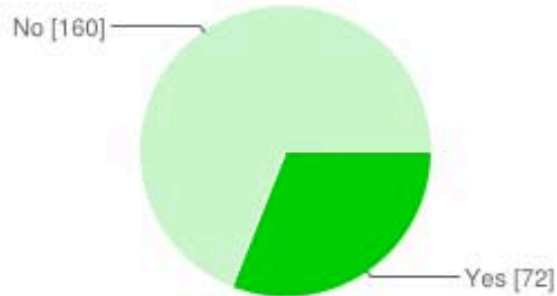
No [160]

Yes [72]

Yes	**72**	31%
No	**160**	69%

If you are an assessment coordinator, are you:

Other [169]

District [22]
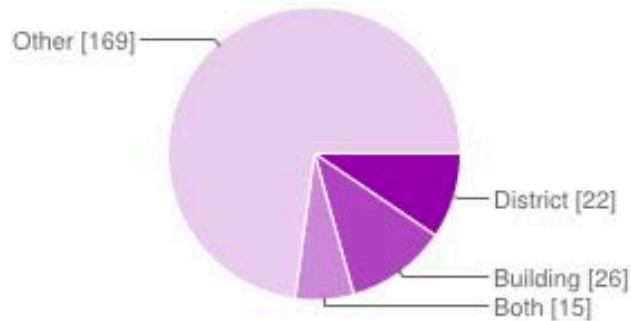
Building [26]

Both [15]

District	**22**	9%
Building	**26**	11%
Both	**15**	6%
Other	**169**	73%

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Participant language fluency

- **232** total respondents
- 153 fluent in English only
- 79 multilingual
  - **68 bilingual**
- 21 fluent languages represented

English 239	German 4	Romanian	Finnish	Greek
Spanish 49	Arabic 2	Dutch	Mandarin	Javanese
French 11	Urdu 2	Albanian	Gaelic	Hmong
ASL 9	Italian 2	Russian	Hindi	Filipino
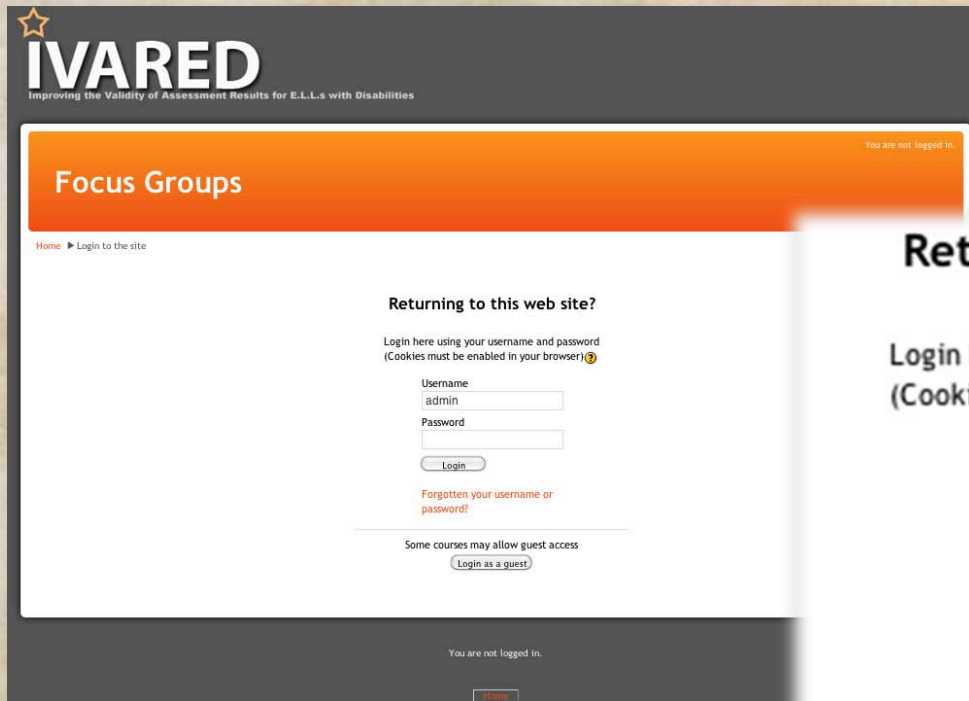
Online focus group environment

- Moodle-based
  - Modified design
  - "Stripped down"
- Hosted on secure, professional server
- Password protected
- Pseudonyms
- Assigned initial password
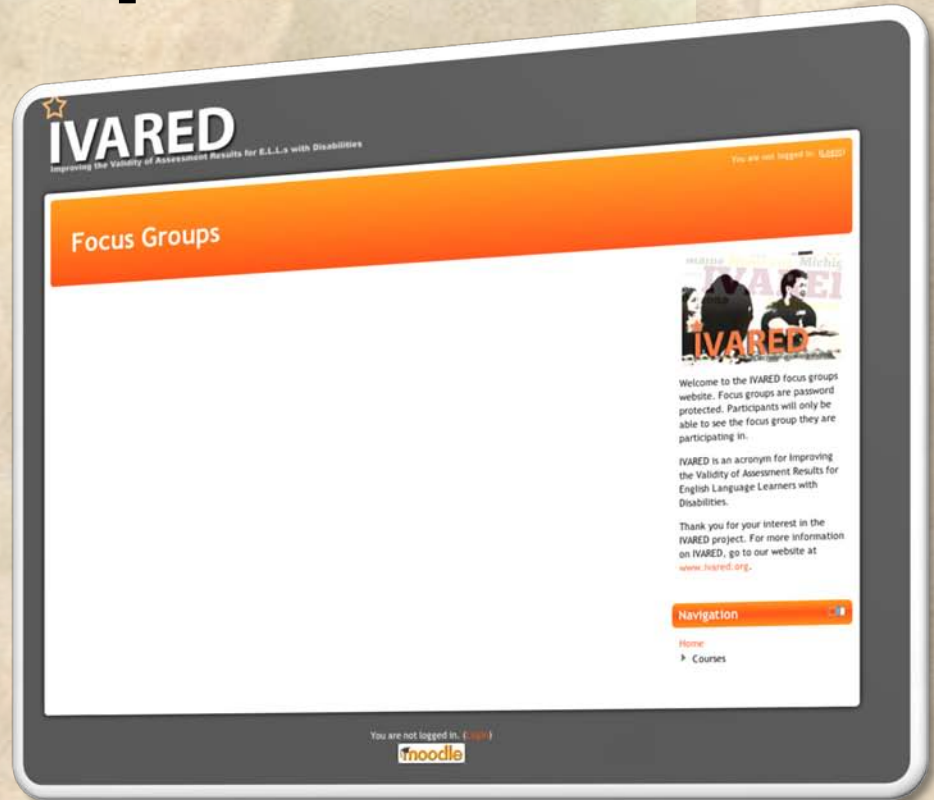
www.ivared.info/focusgroup

Participant view

Participant view

Participant view

Participant view

Maine 2

Home ▶ My courses ▶ ME2 ▶ General ▶ Maine 2 Focus Group Discussion ▶ Day 4

Re: Day 4
Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply

by Pagoda Dogwood2 - Thursday, 16 February 2012, 07:01 PM

7. I am not sure what the school can or cannot do, considering the way the state "penalizes" schools if they don't have enough kids participate, never mind make the cut off score. (I was disappointed that Maine did not receive a waiver from No Child Left Behind...but considering I am noth thinking we applied....I digress.) I think that the state assessments are not flexible enough for many kids....with disabilities, without disabilities, ELL, etc. Being in a school where lots of teachers do their own thing, I do wish that there was more consistency in assessing students and evaluating those assessments in general. On the other hand, I wish that there was the flexibility for teachers who know those kids the best, to allow them to make appropriate accommodations. I know, I know, "we" don't want that because "we" will have too many people changing the tests and the scores will go up and there goes education as we know it.... My 5th grader, M, who I spoke of yesterday knows that he does well in math. He also knows that he needs lots of help with reading (he reads on a 1st grade level). His frustration grows everytime he has to take either the NWEA on which our district has opted out of allowing us to read it to him. His attitude and his score is much better on the NECAP, where we can read the math part to him. I hate to see him get so frustrated and feel bad about himself in the one area that is his academic strength.

8. As for other assessment decisions regarding ELL students with disabilities, I just wish it was easier to identify them for services. Yes, I know, we don't want to over identify based on cultural norms or misidentify, but some times I can't get the kids the help they need as we can't get through the first hoop.

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply

Re: Day 4

by Linda Goldstone - Friday, 17 February 2012, 06:

Pagoda Dogwood, are there any current discussions

Re: Day 4

by Pagoda Dogwood2 - Thursday, 16 February

The only discussions are between the ELL teac

Re: Day 4

by Rock Maple2 - Thursday, 16 February

State assessments in my opinion are too b

Re: Day 4

by Rock Maple2 - Thursday, 16 February 2012, 11:

It is a big tricky to get some students identified an

Re: Day 4

by Pagoda Dogwood2 - Friday, 17 February 20

Yes, I find that is true whether the kids are ELL their behaviors are such that the teachers just

Re: Day 4

Re: Day 2
Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply

by Pagoda Dogwood2 - Tuesday, 14 February 2012, 04:44 PM

I guess I would like to know what district assessments other people are involved in. We used to have a district wide writing prompt, but no longer. We also used to have to complete DRAs and/or PM Benchmarks for all kids at the elementary level (excluding life skills or severe behavior) but no longer. Our district wide testing is solely the NWEAs at this point, and different schools require different school wide assesments, but with lots of accommodations...

Again, just wondering.

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply

Re: Day 2
Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply

by Rock Maple2 - Tuesday, 14 February 2012, 06:17 PM

We have the NECAPs and a district-wide writing prompt. At the end of the year of the first trimester we have the ACCESS for Ells only.

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply

Re: Day 2
Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply

by Linda Goldstone - Tuesday, 14 February 2012, 07:34 PM

Pagoda Dogwood, could you spell out DRA and PM Benchmark and describe what the are? Were reasons provided why these and the writing prompt were discontinued?

You mention lots of accomodations, is the a source available that teachers can refer to for guidance? If so, what is it?

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply

Re: Day 2
Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply

by Pagoda Dogwood2 - Tuesday, 14 February 2012, 08:11 PM

Yes, DRA is the Developmental Reading Assessment and PM Benchmark is a Rigby assessment. Both are methods of assessing reading using a running record, noting errors and self corrections while students are reading, as well as a quick comprehension check on the short stories the students have read.

I think the reason given why these reading assessments were discontinued (mind you, certain schools in the district still require them, but it is no longer a district requirement) were three fold. One, they can be very time consuming and require classroom managment skills to administer the tests at a younger age while the rest of the class works on other activities independently. Two, it was thought that there was too much teacher discretion in scoring - what one would consider an error, another would consider as a dialect and not an error. And, lastly, it was thought that the NWEAs (Northwest Evaluation Association - NAPS - Measures of Academic Progress) was more standardized and would provide the necessary data in a reliable and valid method. (Please note, although the NWEAs allow for students to be read the math portion, our district has taken the stance that no child will be read the test, no matter how poorly the student reads.)

As for the writing prompt, I am not sure why it was discontinued. I think, in part, it was because our status in No Child Left Behind was based on reading and math, not writing, so the distritct opted to spend their time and monies elsewhere.

With regards to accommodations, I pull from different sources depending on what the evaluation is. Again, just because the test allows it (like with the NWEAs) doesn't mean I am free to use it....

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply

Re: Day 2
Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply

by Rock Maple2 - Tuesday, 14 February 2012, 05:52 PM

(3) Describe the process your building uses to decide which state assessments (reading, math, science) ELLs with disabilities should take.

In my observation there really isn't a process for which assessments students in my building take, it is more a question of which accommodations they need to have with each assessment. At the elementary level where we have the NECAPs, and the ACCESS (Ells only) students take reading and math, embedded in reading can be science.

(4) Tell us how it is decided which accommodations should be used for ELLs with disabilities for state content (reading, math, science) and English proficiency assessments.

In general, all the Ells are automatically given extra time for each assessment if they are part of a "pull-out" program or if they get reading, math or science with an Ell teacher and not the regular classroom teacher. For math, the questions can be read for those students mentioned above but not numbers (state rule), and the reading component of the test cannot be read at all to Ells.

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply

Re: Day 2
Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply

by Linda Goldstone - Tuesday, 14 February 2012, 07:45 PM

Rock Maple, for question 3: Could you spell out NECAP as our data analysts may not be familiar with all these tests and acronyms? Do you feel there is a need for a process on deciding which state assessments students should take? Could you elaborate what you mean "embedded in reading can be science content?"

Re: question 4, please clarify, don't the questions have numbers in them? Does this mean questions are parsed into fragments leaving out the numbers? How is it decided which accommodations to use for state assessments versus English proficiency tests? Are there other accommodations available, if so how is it decided which other ones are used?

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply

General observations regarding IVARED's online focus groups

RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS

General observations about OAFG

- Low attrition rate
  (97% retained; 225 of 232 participants)

- Amassed rich data
  (over 2,300 pages of transcripts;
  conversations provided an
  abundance of quality text)

- Smaller groups facilitated
  stronger interactions
   (5-6 participants)

General observations about OAFG

- Moderator interaction very important to success

- Participants enjoyed the discussion

- Online asynchronous works well for educators

Reactions to the Online Focus Groups

PARTICIPANT **FEEDBACK**

Post participation survey

- Day after final participation, send a thank you email

- Include a link to a survey of participants

- Also include information about incentive ($100 Target gift card)

- Created in Google Forms

- Completely voluntary and anonymous

Google Forms survey

IVARED online focus group exit questionnaire

Please take a few minutes to give us a quick response to your experience with the IVARED online focus group website.
* Required

Where were you when you accessed the IVARED online focus group discussion?
Check all that apply

☐ Home

☐ Work

☐ Mobile (via cellular network)

☐ Other: _____

What type of device did you use to access the focus group discussion?
Check all that apply

☐ Laptop computer

☐ Desktop computer

☐ Smart phone (iPhone, Blackberry, Droid, etc.)

☐ Tablet (iPad, Kindle Fire, Android tablet, etc.)

☐ Other: _____

What hours did you most often access the IVARED focus groups site? *
Check all that apply

☐ Between 12:01 a.m. and 5 a.m.

☐ 5-7 a.m.

☐ 7-9 a.m.

☐ 9-11 a.m.

☐ 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

☐ 1 p.m.-3 p.m.

☐ 3 p.m.-5 p.m.

☐ 5 p.m.-7 p.m.

☐ 7 p.m.-9 p.m.

☐ 9 p.m.-midnight

Survey questions

- Where were you when you accessed the IVARED online focus group discussion?
- What type of device did you use to access the focus group discussion?
- What hours did you most often access the IVARED focus group site?
- On average, how much time did you spend participating in the online focus group?

Survey questions

- With respect to the incentive you will receive … how would you rank amount of time …?

- Rank your ability to log into the sytem

- Rank your ability to post a response

- Please give some feedback on the initial log-in, passwords, usernames, and instructions

Survey questions

- How would you rank the aesthetic design of the IVARED focus groups site?

- Did your school filter out or block the IVARED online focus group site?

- Please share any other comments revolving around your experience in the IVARED focus group discussion

- Would you participate in a similar project?

Survey responses

- 135 of the 225 participants who completed the FG discussion participated in survey
- 60% of participants replied to survey
  - Average >1 dropout per week (7 dropouts total)
  - Average ~1 person per week with technical issues (1 out of every 24 subjects)

Survey results

Where were you when you accessed the IVARED online focus group discussion?

Home	**110** 83%
Work	**94** 71%
Mobile (via cellular network)	**8** 6%
Other	**7** 5%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

What type of device did you use to access the focus group discussion?

Laptop computer	**98** 73%
Desktop computer	**69** 51%
Smart phone (iPhone, Blackberry, Droid, etc.)	**7** 5%
Tablet (iPad, Kindle Fire, Android tablet, etc.)	**22** 16%
Other	**0** 0%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.
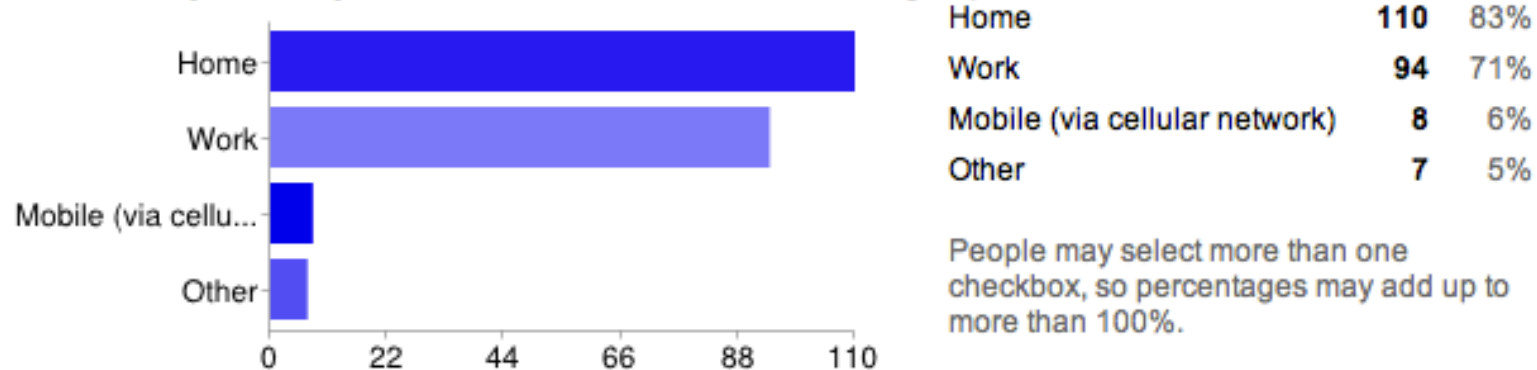
Survey results

What hours did you most often access the IVARED focus groups site?

Time	Count	Percent
Between 12:01 a.m. and 5 a.m.	1	1%
5-7 a.m.	15	11%
7-9 a.m.	43	32%
9-11 a.m.	59	44%
11 a.m.-1 p.m.	29	21%
1 p.m.-3 p.m.	31	23%
3 p.m.-5 p.m.	42	31%
5 p.m.-7 p.m.	44	33%
7 p.m.-9 p.m.	65	48%
9 p.m.-midnight	20	15%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.
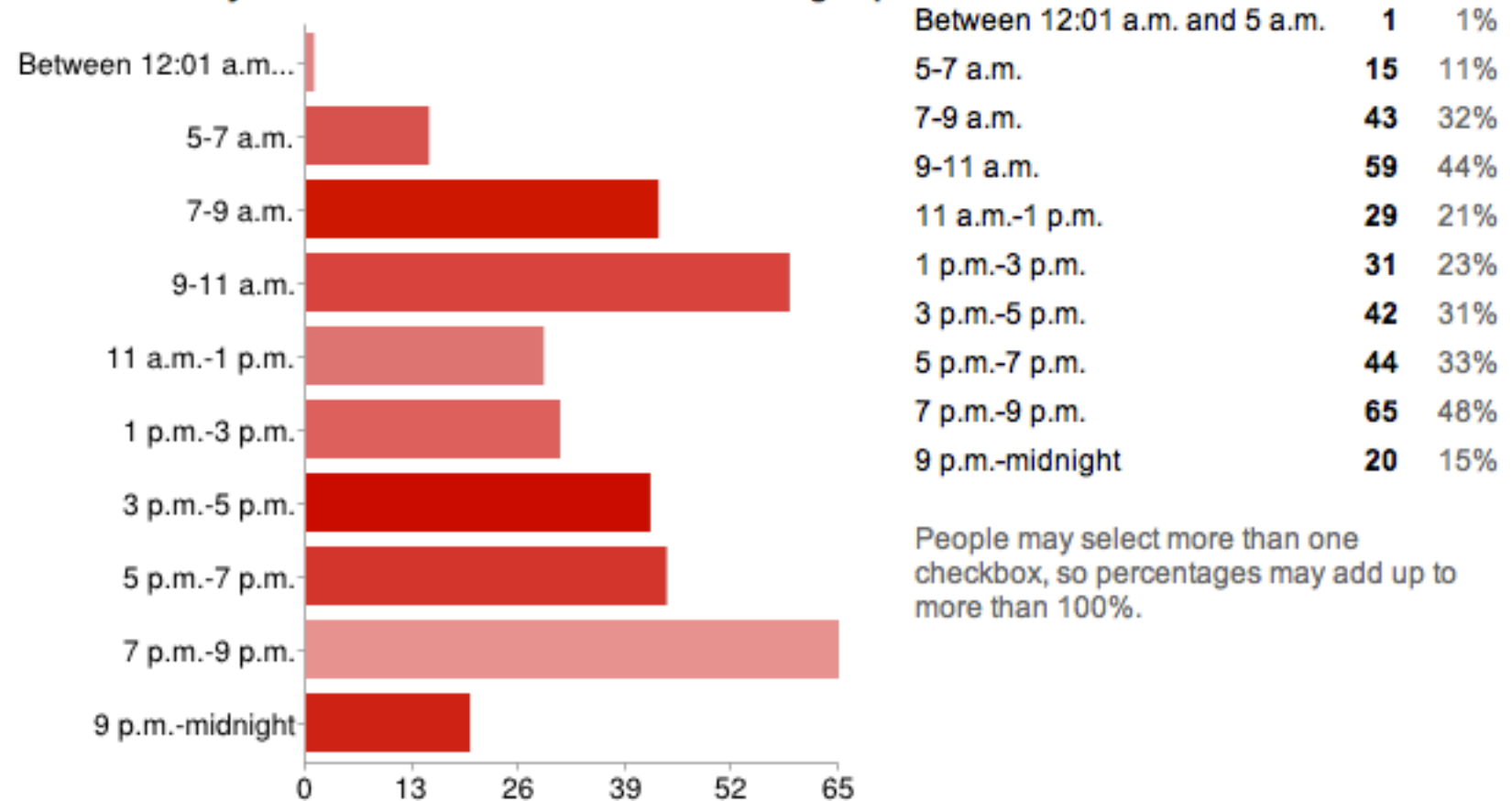
Survey results

On average, how much time per day did you spend participating on the online focus group?
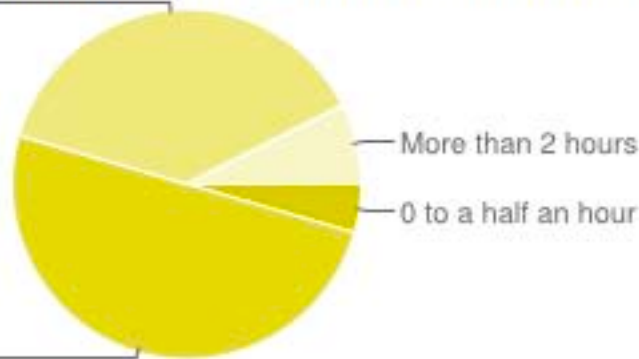
0 to a half an hour per day	**6**	4%
half an hour to 1 hour per day	**67**	50%
1-2 hours per day	**51**	38%
More than 2 hours per day	**10**	7%

With respect to the incentive you will receive for fully participating in the discussion, how would you rank the amount of time you spent reading questions, responding to others,
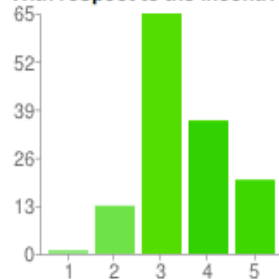
1 -It was A LOT of time for the incentive amount (the incentive was too low)	**1**	1%
2	**13**	10%
3	**65**	48%
4	**36**	27%
5 -It was very little time for me to spend considering how much incentive I earned (the incentive was generous)	**20**	15%

It was A LOT of time for the incentive amount (the incentive was too low)It was very little time for me to spend considering how much incentive I earned (the incentive was generous)

Survey results

Rank your ability to log in to the system
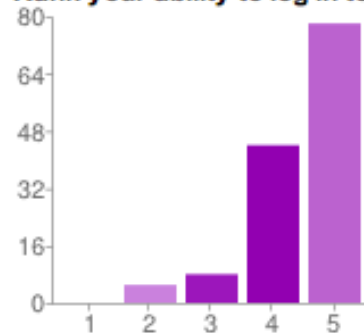
1 -Very difficult and troublesome	**0**	0%
2	**5**	4%
3	**8**	6%
4	**44**	33%
5 -Extremely easy and smooth	**78**	58%

Very difficult and troublesomeExtremely easy and smooth

Rank your ability to post a response on the website
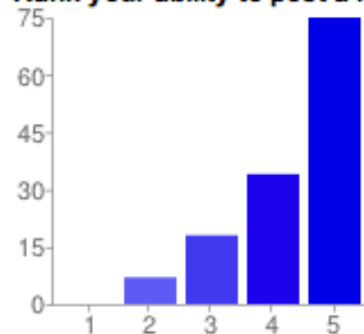
1 -Very difficult and troublesome	**0**	0%
2	**7**	5%
3	**18**	13%
4	**34**	25%
5 -Extremely easy and smooth	**75**	56%

Very difficult and troublesomeExtremely easy and smooth

Survey results

How would you rank the aesthetic design of the IVARED focus groups site?
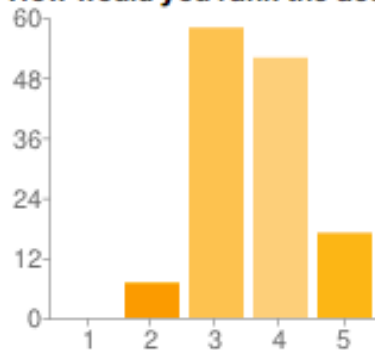
The aesthetics distracted me from the experience/tasks The aesthetics enhanced the experience/tasks

If IVARED or another project of interest to you asked you to participate in a similar online focus group discussion, would you be likely to volunteer to participate?

Yes	**134**	99.3 %
No	**1**	0.7 %

Yes (134)

No (1)

Survey findings

1. **Peer interaction is highly valued**
   A. Collaboration and connections

2. **Hope for future impact of their discussions**

1. **Having a "voice" or being considered an expert is very important**

2. **Focus group discussions led to changes in teaching practices; pedagogical decisions**

3. **Positive response to online focus group format**

Online Focus Group Survey Results

PARTICIPANT **FEEDBACK** COMMENTS

Survey finding 1: PEER INTERACTION

- "It was great to connect with other ELL facilitators around _____ State and hear their comments, opinions, how things are run in different districts. We don't often get an opportunity to do that as we are so involved within our own districts. It's good to get a more global picture of what's out there as well as **affirmation when we find commonalities** in our work with students."

Survey finding 1: PEER INTERACTION

- "As a newly retired ESL teacher, I found the discussions a way for me to still **feel connected** to the ESL world. The experience was **stimulating** and allowed for my **reflection** of some important issues, along with other ESL professionals."

Survey finding 1: PEER INTERACTION

- "This was a very interesting and **thought provoking** group. It was very informative to hear the thoughts of colleagues. It also confirmed how much we all interpret state rules differently and left us all wondering who were following the rules correctly. **It definitely pointed out a need to investigate some areas with the state for clarification**!"

Survey finding 1: PEER INTERACTION

- "It was a nice opportunity to see how various other educational institutions struggle with ELL students with disabilities."

- "It was interesting to see what other teachers with similar students were experiencing in my state. We don't get to do this very often. It would also be interesting to do this with other teachers in other states."

Survey finding 1: PEER INTERACTION

- "I appreciated reading the responses of the others because **I felt validated** in knowing that my concerns were not unique."

- "This was a great tool. I was able to give my experience and gain knowledge from others. It wasn't just a survey of my knowledge, but rather a **short term learning community**."

Survey finding 1: PEER INTERACTION

- "Talking with other professionals was very interesting. As an educator, one of the deficits I feel in our role is lack of time and opportunity to collaborate, learn from others and share good ideas. **I know that wasn't the intent of the focus group, but it was a very welcome** side benefit!! Thank you!

Survey finding 1: PEER INTERACTION

- "I found that comments were similar to mine and **validated my own experiences**.

- "**good questions** and gave me some insight as to how other schools/districts operate when testing ELLs"

- "I enjoyed reading participants responses to see how other schools are facing issues with ELL/D and **everyone was very professional** with their responses."

Survey finding 1: PEER INTERACTION

- "I enjoy learning how others are solving the same challenges that we all face. It is interesting to see how differences of rural schools vs. city schools tackle the same problems. **I enjoyed participating in the focus group**."

Survey finding 2: HOPE FOR FUTURE IMPACT

- "**I don't even remember what the incentive amounts were** and participated because I am concerned about fair evaluations for special needs students."

- "I hope all of the info gathered is used to **make a difference** in assessing ELL students with disabilities."

Survey finding 2: HOPE FOR FUTURE IMPACT

- "I would like to be informed of any changes made because of our comments. How did it influence our state?"

- "**I am really excited to see** where this goes and how ELL students with disabilities will benefit from this!"

Survey finding 2: HOPE FOR FUTURE IMPACT

- "I could tell the make up of the group was varied which I think was good to provide different perspectives. It also made me realize that it would be great if the State Department could start some kind of online discussion group or Wiki site for sharing of information and ideas because there are alot [sic] of different models taking place and things happening in this area."

Survey finding 3: HAVING A VOICE

- "I hope the time I invested will be helpful in making changes in the language used for test questions, the purpose for testing and recognition of the time taken from instruction. Tests given and data collected that does not drive changes or differentation [sic] instruction is time wasted."

Survey finding 3: **HAVING A VOICE**

- "I enjoyed it, although am equally as **interested to find out what the state(s) are going to do with the information**. Not that I don't think things will change,but..." [sic]

- "It was a wonderful experience. Educators like to feel that their opinion matters and **I was thrilled that this study was even being done.**"

Survey finding 4: IMMMEDIATE IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS' PEDAGOGY, PRACTICES

- "While not more than two hours every day, the reason I noted more time spent was because I also engaged in conversation with our largest districts ESL Coordinator about some current practices. **I became so interested I also started doing some online searches to see what some other states were doing**. I'm pleased to have had the opportunity to be part of this."

Survey finding 4: IMMMEDIATE IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS' PEDAGOGY, PRACTICES

- "This was an interesting experience for two reasons:reading the posts of others and answering the questions myself **forced me to think about the issues as well as the practices where I work**."

Survey finding 4: **IMMMEDIATE IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS' PEDAGOGY, PRACTICES**

- "I found it helpful to listen to the struggles that other schools are having regarding assessment for ELs with disabilities as well as what they are doing well. This informs my own practice.."

Survey finding 4: IMMMEDIATE IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS' PEDAGOGY, PRACTICES

- "As an ESL teacher … this focus group has drawn me to discuss more issues with the SPED teachers at my school about the ELL SPED and how they are served. The entire **daily questions and/or discussion have made me a better educator** as I work with my ELLs because they are going through the interventions prior to being referred as ELL SPED and it has made me aware of their difficulties/challenges so that I can meet their needs as they try to gain proficiency in the English language. "

Survey finding 4: IMMMEDIATE IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS' PEDAGOGY, PRACTICES

- "I think that ELL teachers and special educators are sometimes isolated by the nature of the work. It was good to discover, through our limited communication in the study, that some _____ educators in these fields feel the same about a number of things. **For me, it opened a discussion with the building ELL teacher**."

Survey finding 5: ENJOY ONLINE FG

- "This was a new experience and **I do feel this is viable avenue to get more teachers to participate or lend their views and experiences**."

- "**This was the first time i truly felt there was a discussion on an online venue** - it was easy to add to the discussion and I do feel that the facilitator played a very positive role in this by asking either clarifiying [sic] questions or asking us to expand."

Survey finding 5: ENJOY ONLINE FG

- "It was **fun**. It was all about sharing and learning. I **enjoyed** the opportunity of sharing my opinion and experience. As well as getting information from other participants. **Great**!"

- "This was a **great platform to collaborate** regarding the focus questions and issues."

- "I **liked that the group size was so small**. It made it much easier to read and respond to postings without feeling to bogged down."

Survey finding 5: ENJOY ONLINE FG

- "This was a new experience and I do feel this is **viable avenue** to get more teachers to participate or lend their views and experiences."

- "It was fun and surprisingly easy to do. I **liked the anonymity** and the unique user names and passwords. I appreciate being a part of this process. Thank-you for the opportunity to learn and grow in this area."
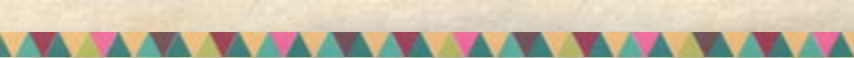
Survey finding 5: ENJOY ONLINE FG

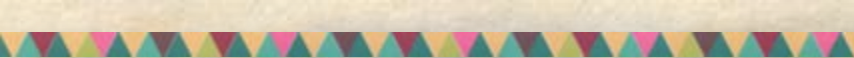- "Everything went very smoothly and **I would participate agin [sic]with no reservations**!"

- "I **like the idea of having it online** and I can access it when I want to and can."

- "I think this is a **very cost effective** means for a focus group. You are getting the **best input** from people in the field who represent a great amount of expertise. "

Online Focus Group Sources
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