

ACCESS BY DESIGN

LEARNER + EDUCATOR / DESIGNING ACCESS TOGETHER



Access by Design

Assessment Practices that Let Learning Show

ACCESSIBILITY • IEPs • 504s • USABLE EVIDENCE

SHOW
WHAT
YOU KNOW

Choose the question before you open the resource

This shelf is organized by the decision a district team is trying to make.

WHY THIS MAP

Effective curation points them to the source that might best inform the next design, validity, implementation, procurement, or system decision.

The profiles that follow name the resource's argument, the decision it helps with, and the link to open it.

FIVE QUESTIONS / ONE LEARNER-CENTERED PATH

01	NAME THE SUPPORT	NCEO / Smarter Balanced
02	DESIGN THE TASK	CAST / SRI-PADI
03	PROTECT SCORE MEANING	Center / ETS
04	MAKE IT ROUTINE	CCSSO / IDEA / OCR
05	CHOOSE THE PRODUCT	DAPP / CAST

the question selects the source

NCEO turns “access” into a usable taxonomy

The first question is not “which accommodation?” It is “which level of support fits the barrier?”

WHAT IT ARGUES

NCEO separates universal features available to all, designated features selected for a documented need, and accommodations for eligible students. This lets teams name the barrier, preserve the construct, and choose the right support.

USE IT WHEN

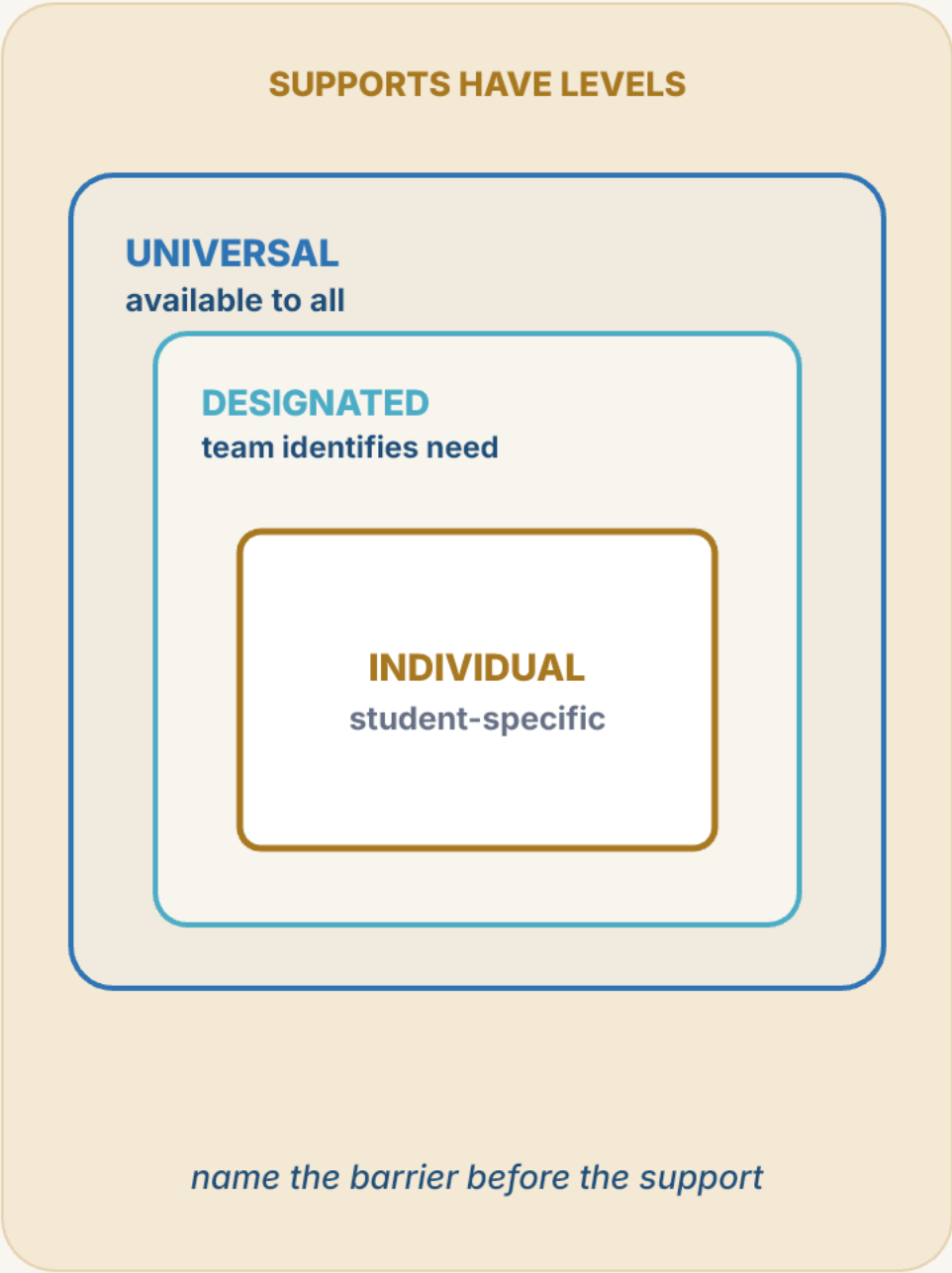
A district policy uses “supports” as a catch-all—or teams need a common vocabulary across instruction and assessment.

DISTRICT MOVE

Name the barrier → name the support level → document how it will be used.

[OPEN NCEO](#)

nceo.info / Accessibility & Accommodations



NCLD puts learning disability inside the design brief

Innovation is not new technology unless students can enter, participate, and use the result.

WHAT IT ARGUES

Keep subgroup performance visible for accountability. Then make innovation useful: for students with learning disabilities, align to grade-level standards, work with accommodations and assistive technology, and give families and educators actionable information.

USE IT WHEN

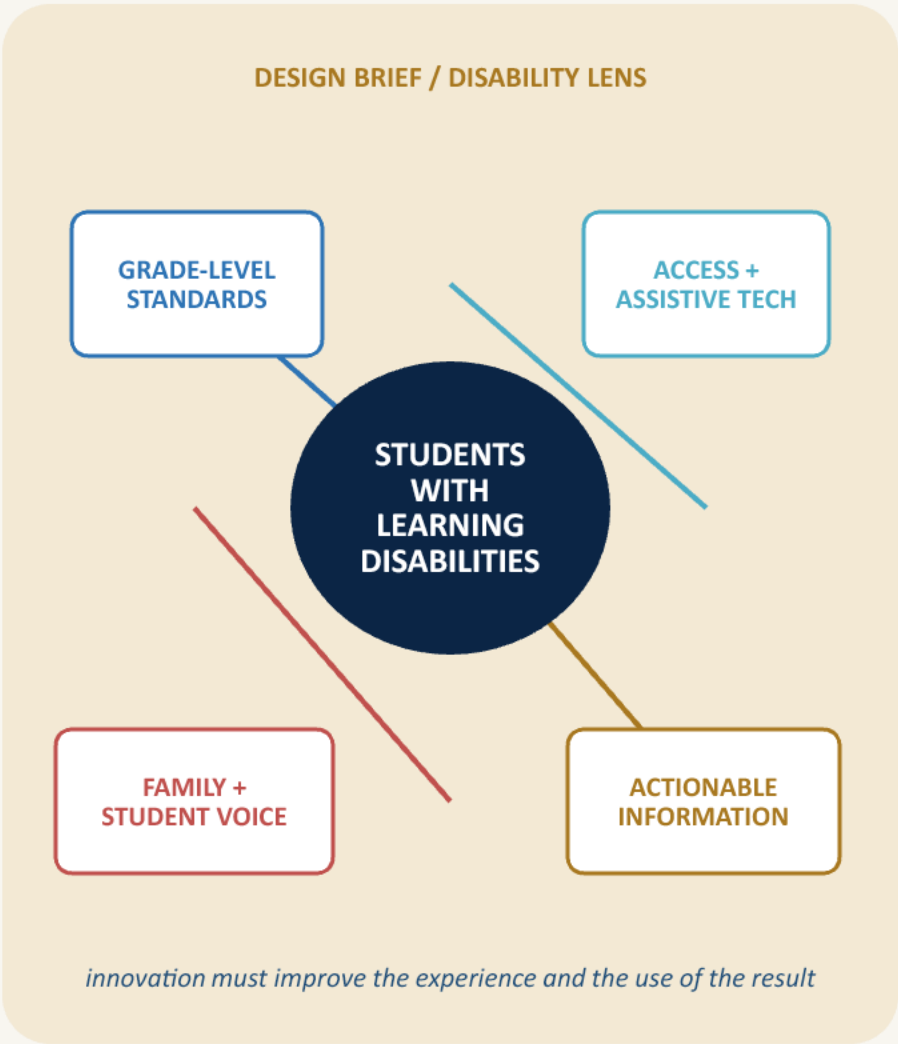
A proposal is called “innovative” but the student experience, subgroup visibility, or usefulness of the result is still an afterthought.

DISTRICT MOVE

Ask whose access, whose evidence, and whose decision the innovation improves.

[OPEN NCLD PDF](#)

nclld.org / Inclusive, Innovative Assessments



CAST and SRI/PADI connect learner variability to the claim

Flexible routes are defensible when the intended learning is explicit.

WHAT IT ARGUES

CAST says: set clear goals, remove barriers unrelated to them, anticipate variability, and offer flexible ways to engage and express learning. SRI/PADI adds the ECD spine: define the claim, evidence, and task features together; test whether variants support the same inference.

USE IT WHEN

A team is revising a task or platform and needs to decide what may vary—and what must stay fixed.

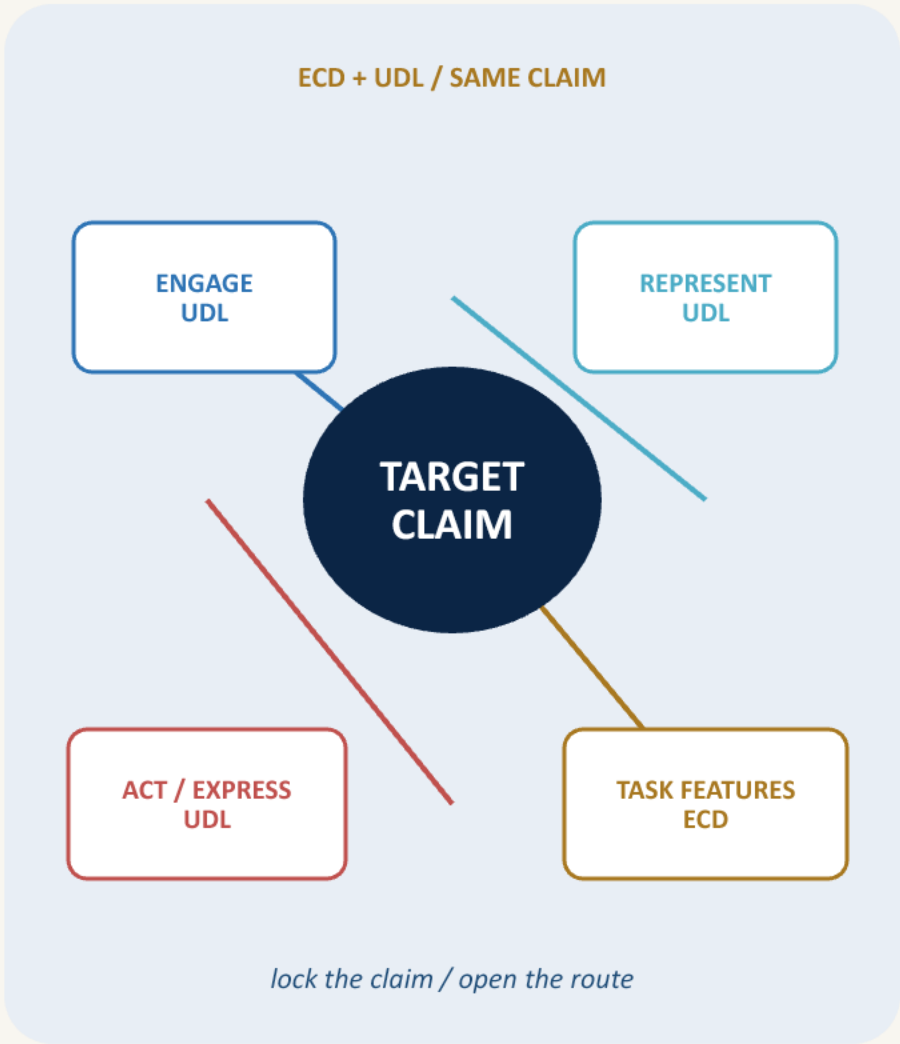
DISTRICT MOVE

Lock the claim first; open the route to evidence second.

[OPEN CAST](#)

[OPEN SRI/PADI](#)

cast.org / UDL Tips · padi-se.sri.com / Technical Report 1



The accommodation decision protects the construct

An access support is only as strong as the evidence behind its use.

WHAT IT ARGUES

The Center for Assessment links implementation, impact, interpretation, and interaction. ETS's ECD/UDL work keeps the construct in view: access can widen only when the intended inference survives the mode of access.

USE IT WHEN

Someone asks whether a support “gives an unfair advantage” or whether an accommodated score can still answer the original question.

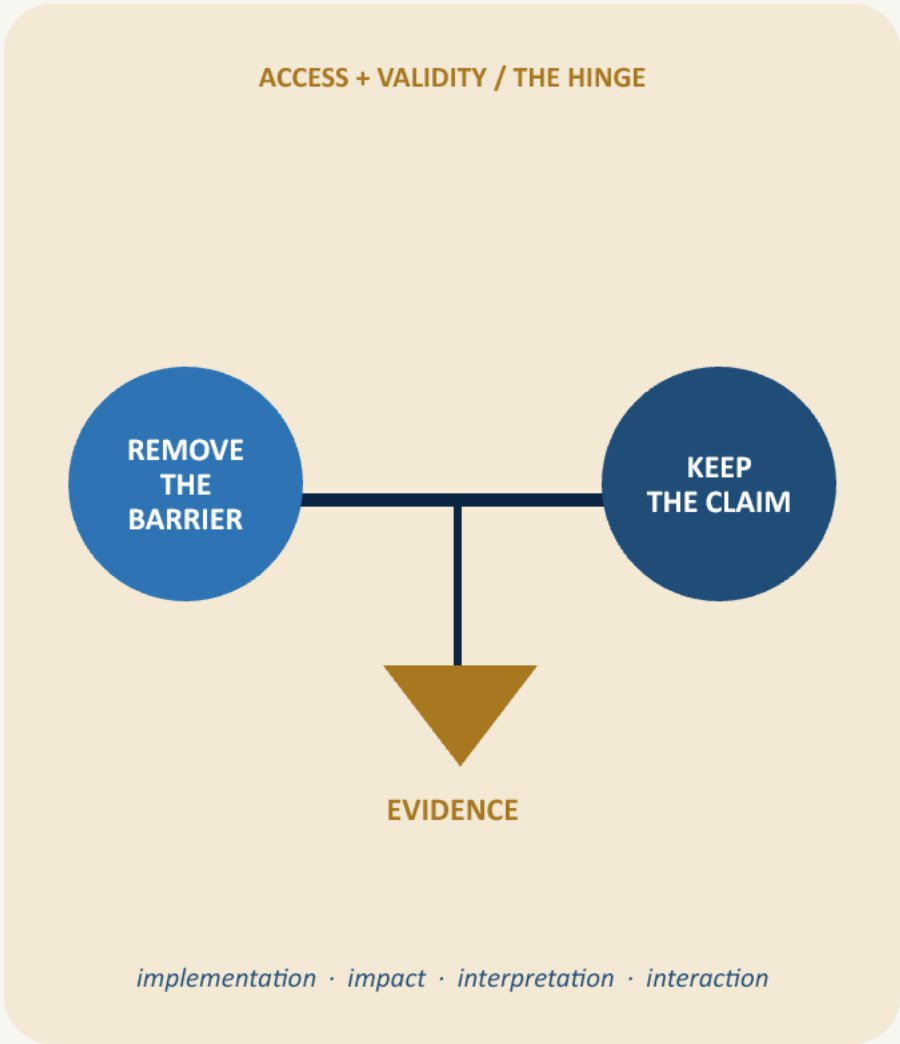
DISTRICT MOVE

For the specific construct and student need, show what barrier is removed and what meaning remains.

[OPEN FRAMEWORK](#)

[OPEN ETS PAPER](#)

[nciaa.org / Accommodations Framework](#) · [ets.org / ECD + UDL](#)



IEP and 504 decisions become access through routines

A support in a plan is a promise; a support practiced and delivered is access.

WHAT IT ARGUES

Smarter Balanced makes the rhythm visible: universal tools, designated supports, accommodations, and ISAAP. CCSSO offers state guidance; IDEA names IEP assessment accommodations; OCR anchors Section 504 rights and evaluation.

USE IT WHEN

A support appears in paperwork but breaks at scheduling, test setup, staff training, or delivery.

DISTRICT MOVE

Select -> document -> practice -> deliver -> check -> adjust.

[OPEN SMARTER](#)

[OPEN CCSSO](#)

[OPEN OCR 504](#)

[smarterbalanced.org](#) · [ccsso.org](#) · [ed.gov](#) / OCR Section 504

[IDEA: IEP accommodations](#) [IDEA: participation](#)



District procurement guidance moves accessibility into the buying decision

An accessible assessment is a product requirement, not a vendor promise.

WHAT IT ARGUES

DAPP structures procurement around use, desired features, and technical quality. The Center adds accessibility success criteria, disability expertise, cognitive labs, and vendor evidence such as a VPAT. CAST shows why user testing and co-design belong in the process.

USE IT WHEN

A demo, an accessibility conformance claim, or a polished interface is doing the work of evidence.

DISTRICT MOVE

Put the access requirement in the RFP, the test plan, the cognitive lab, and the contract.

[OPEN DAPP](#)

[OPEN INCLUSIVE](#)

[OPEN CAST](#)

[nciaa.org](#) / [DAPP](#) · [Inclusive Design](#) · [CAST](#) / [Accessible by Design](#)

THE PRODUCT QUESTION

WHO CAN USE IT?

- 01 — WHAT DOES IT MEASURE?
- 02 — WHAT EVIDENCE CAN IT SHOW?
- 03 — WHAT WILL THE CONTRACT REQUIRE?

[RFP](#) · [TEST PLAN](#) · [COGNITIVE LAB](#) · [CONTRACT](#)

A complete assessment system has more than one route

The right design depends on the information need and the learners it claims to serve.

WHAT IT ARGUES

Center for Assessment warns that many interim products lack accessible routes for valid participation. A parallel version is not automatically the answer for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Smarter Balanced shows how universal design and embedded supports can serve diverse learners.

USE IT WHEN

A district wants one benchmark, one platform, or one reporting logic to serve classroom, interim, summative, and alternate-assessment needs.

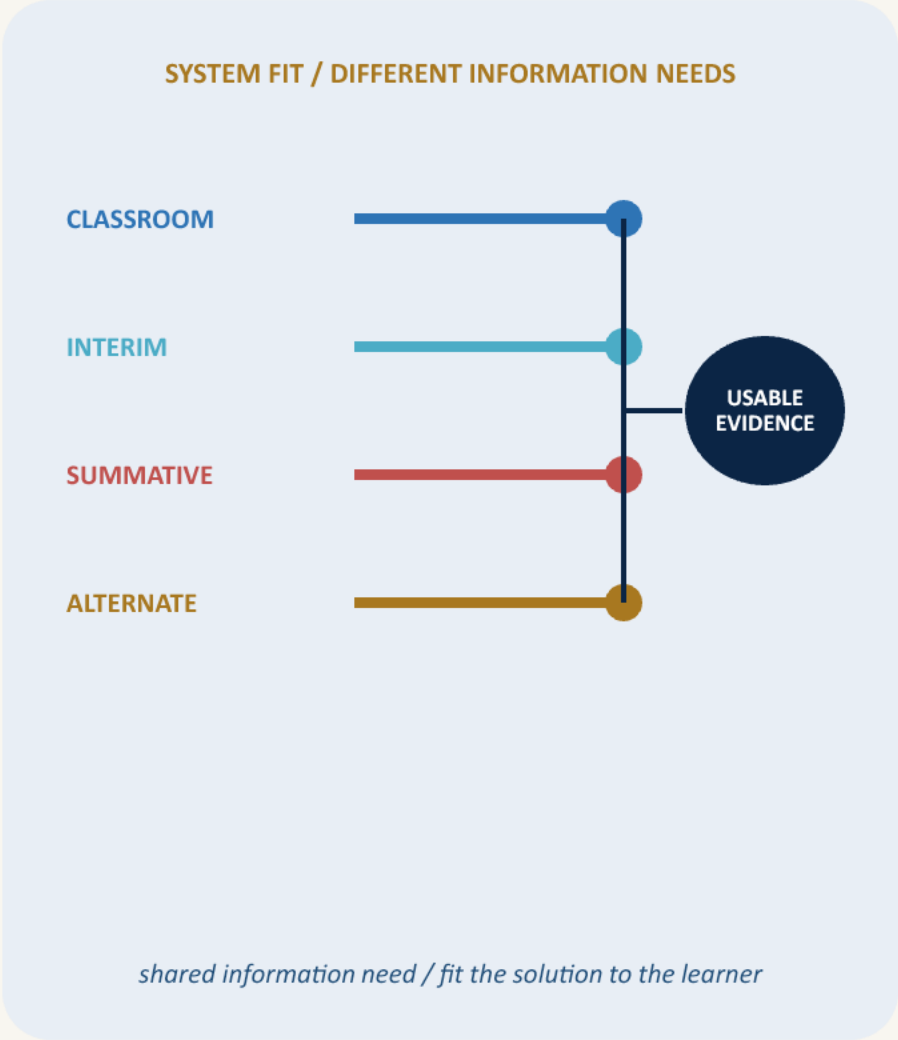
DISTRICT MOVE

Start with the shared information need; let the solution differ where the evidence or learner need differs.

[OPEN CENTER](#)

[OPEN SMARTER](#)

nciaea.org / Students with Disabilities • smarterbalanced.org / Accessibility



Four questions make the resource set shareable

Forward the question that matches the decision on the table.

A SHORT CONVERSATION GUIDE

When a district team asks a better question, the corpus becomes easier to use. Each prompt below points to a starting source.

01

What barrier is in the task?
NCEO / CAST

START: [NCEO](#)

02

What exactly is the claim?
SRI/PADI / ETS

START: [ECD + UDL](#)

03

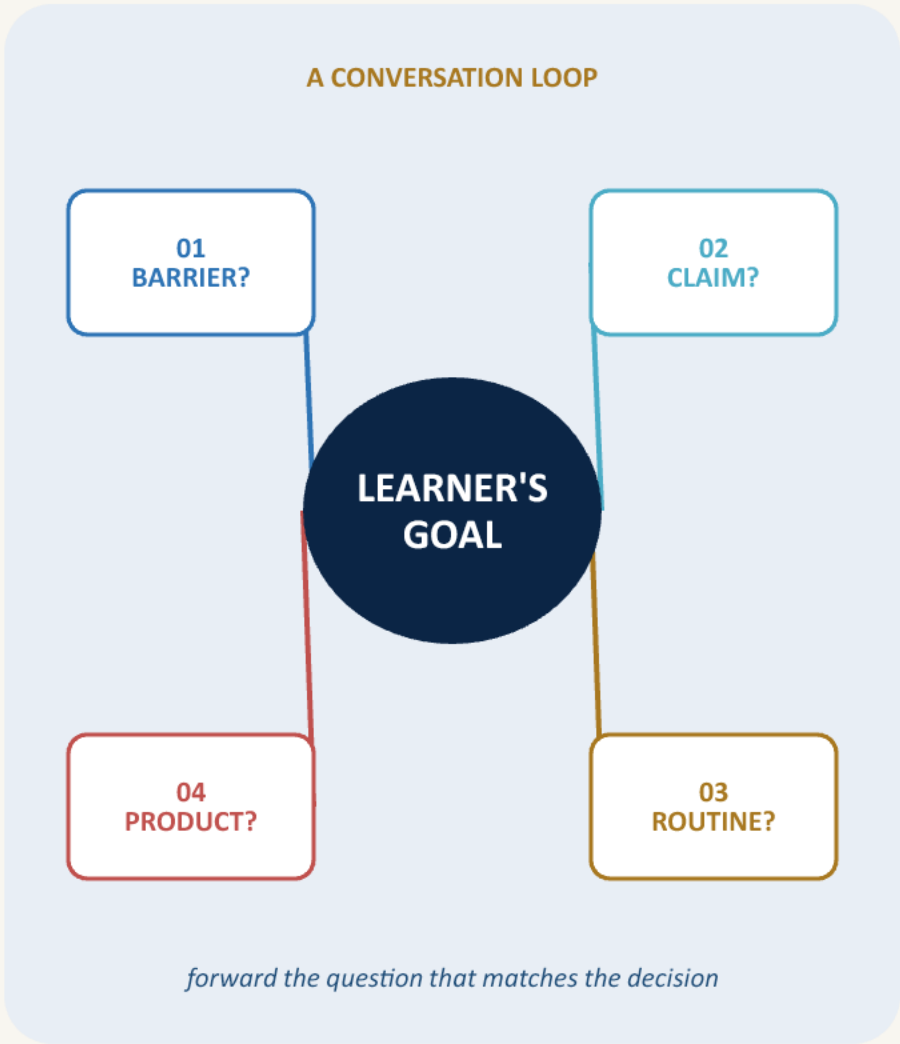
What must be decided?
Smarter / CCSSO / IDEA / OCR

START: [ISAAP](#)

04

Who can use it? What proves it?
DAPP / Center / NCLD / CAST

START: [DAPP](#)



Keep the links close

An incomplete, but best-in-class set of district assessment accessibility resources.

START WITH THE SOURCE THAT MATCHES THE DECISION

NCEO

A taxonomy for universal, designated, and individual supports
[nceo.info / Accessibility & Accommodations](https://nceo.info/Accessibility&Accommodations)

[OPEN](#)

NCLD

A learning-disability lens on innovation, equity, and useful results
[nclld.org / Inclusive, Innovative Assessments](https://nclld.org/InclusiveInnovativeAssessments)

[OPEN](#)

CAST

UDL assessment tips for goals, barriers, flexibility, and feedback
[cast.org / UDL Tips for Assessment](https://cast.org/UDLTipsforAssessment)

[OPEN](#)

SRI / PADI

Evidence-Centered Design and UDL for defensible task variation
[padi-se.sri.com / Technical Report 1](https://padi-se.sri.com/TechnicalReport1)

[OPEN](#)

Center for Assessment

Implementation, impact, interpretation, and interaction for accommodations
[nciea.org / Accommodations Framework](https://nciea.org/AccommodationsFramework)

[OPEN](#)

Smarter Balanced

Tools, supports, accommodations, and a concrete ISAAP rhythm
[smarterbalanced.org / Accessibility](https://smarterbalanced.org/Accessibility)

[OPEN](#)

CCSSO

State-level guidance for selecting, administering, and evaluating supports
[learning.ccsso.org / Accessibility Manual](https://learning.ccsso.org/AccessibilityManual)

[OPEN](#)

DAPP

A district protocol for use, desired features, and technical quality
[nciea.org / District Assessment Procurement Protocol](https://nciea.org/DistrictAssessmentProcurementProtocol)

[OPEN](#)

Center for Assessment

Inclusive design, disability expertise, cognitive labs, and vendor evidence
[nciea.org / Designing Inclusive K-12 Assessments](https://nciea.org/DesigningInclusiveK12Assessments)

[OPEN](#)

OCR + IDEA

Legal anchors for Section 504, participation, and IEP accommodations
[ed.gov + sites.ed.gov / 504 + IDEA](https://ed.gov+sites.ed.gov/504+IDEA)

[OPEN](#)

Buttons open the exact resource URLs.

Every learner deserves a route to usable evidence

The point of this shelf is to make the next assessment decision better.

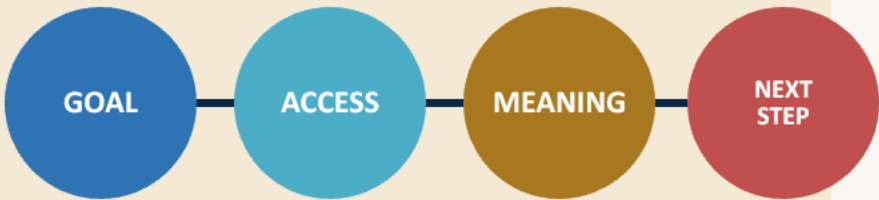
THE ARGUMENT THE SOURCES SHARE

Accessibility is not an add-on to an assessment system. It is how the system keeps its promise: the learner can enter, the evidence can be interpreted, and the result can lead to a better next step.

Start with the question you are holding. Then open the source that can change the decision.

[START WITH NCEO](#)

THE ACCESS PROMISE



access is how the assessment keeps its promise