

THE STRANGER TEST & THE DEAD MAN'S TEST IEP GOALS & OBJECTIVES

THE STRANGER TEST

The Stranger Test refers to goals and objectives for students that are described in a fashion that a person unfamiliar with the student could read the description and understand it. Because various persons involved in the implementation of a student's educational plan may interpret a construct such as "hostility" differently, it is necessary to describe student behavior in terms that would pass the Stranger Test. For example, if a student's goal was to decrease "hostility," a stranger might interpret it as hits, kicks, bites others while the student's team may have meant verbal threats or profanity directed toward peers. On the other hand, the stranger might interpret "hostility" as any instance of hitting, whether or not it was provoked, while the teacher might have meant only unprovoked hits. If the teacher had defined "hostility" for the stranger as "each instance of an unprovoked hit," where "unprovoked" means that it was not in retaliation for a physical or verbal attack from a peer, both the stranger and the teacher would be likely to obtain the same results, since they would both be looking for the same thing.

THE DEAD MAN'S TEST

The question posed by the dead man's test is this: Can a dead man do it? If the answer is yes, it doesn't pass the dead man's test and it isn't a fair pair; if the answer is no, you have a fair pair. For example, suppose that you wanted a fair pair target behavior for "swears at peers." Let's say that you came up with the target behavior "does not swear at peers." Does this pass the dead man's test? No. A dead man could refrain from swearing at peers. What would be better? How about "speaks to peers without swearing"? This passes the dead man's test because a dead man does not have the power to speak.