Assessment accommodations for English learners with disabilities: What do we know and what do we need to know?

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Annual Statewide Assessments (Every Student Succeeds Act)

- Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics in grades 3-8 and high school
- Science once in each grade span
- English language proficiency for all English learners (ELs) in grades K-12
“Practices and procedures in the areas of presentation, response, setting, and timing/scheduling that provide equitable access during instructions and assessments for students with disabilities”

Council of Chief State School Officers
Accommodations Manual (2005)
Examples from one state

**Students with disabilities**
- Alternative responses (e.g., signing)
- Extra time
- Adaptive devices
- Human read aloud
- Auditory amplification device
- Braille

**English learners**
- Audio CD in English *(not for reading)*
- Small group or individual administration
- Familiar test examiner
- Written version of test directions in English or native language
- Word-to-word bilingual dictionary
Considerations when Selecting Accommodations for ELs/ELs with disabilities:

(1) **Effectiveness** in making an assessment more accessible
(2) **Validity:** should not alter the focal construct
(3) **Differential Impact:** sensitive to student’s background characteristics, and their academic standing
(4) **Relevance:** appropriate for the recipients
(5) **Feasibility:** logistically feasible to implement

(Abedi & Ewers, 2013)
What does the research literature tell us about effectiveness? NOT MUCH

• 2 published studies
  ✓ Abedi, Kao, Leon, Sullivan, Herman, Pope, Nambiar & Mastergeorge (2008) – segmented text
  ✓ Lin & Lin (2013) – small group/low distraction environment

• ELs with disabilities only a portion of the samples (30%, 0.63%)

No effect of the accommodations!
Technology-Based Assessments Shift: ACCESSIBILITY for All

Accessibility

Developing English
Newer Definition of Accommodations

- Changes in procedures or materials that ensure equitable access to instructional and assessment content and generate valid assessment results for students who need them.

(Council of Chief State School Officers, 2016)
Accessibility Features and Accommodations for All Students

- Universal Features
- Designated Features
- *Accommodations
What do states allow in policy?

- 31 state policies on accessibility and accommodations currently mention application to ELs with disabilities

- **Majority** only mention that students may have accommodations for students with disabilities and those for ELs. (Accessibility features are for anyone)

- 1 state breaks out accessibility features and accommodations an EL with a disability may have but not specific to this group
Accessibility Features and Accommodations Can Differ By...

- State
- Test
- Format of test (online vs. paper)
- Subtest
- Grade
What Data Can Reveal about Accessibility Features and Accommodations Received by Students
Data type

• State-level data
  – Annual performance data
  – State Consolidated report
  – Public reporting
  – % of students with IEPs receiving accommodations

• Student-level data
  – Receiving or not (required)
  – Specific accommodations delivered (received):
    29/50 states (2007 state survey)
  – Specific accommodations used
  – Instruction or in the IEP
State-Level Data
Map for G3 Math

Map for G3 Reading

Maps to Show Changes

- Trend
  - Trend by year
  - Trend by grade
Percentage of Students with IEPs Receiving Accommodations for 2007-08 to 2015-16 by Grade level and Content Area

Trends for grade

Student-Level Data
Student level -- Trend by groups

Distribution of Accommodations and Designated Supports Received—Students with IEPs (14-15 vs. 15-16)

Challenges in Provision of Accessibility Features and Accommodations

Results are presented for 40 of the 50 regular states and eight of the 11 unique states.


Note. Thirty-eight regular states and eight unique states answered this question. State respondents were able to select multiple responses.
Challenges Associated with Provisions in ESSA Related to Accommodations

- **ELs**
  - Ensuring that ELs receive the supports and accommodations to which they are entitled
- **ELs with disabilities**
  - Ensuring that ELs receive the supports and accommodations to which they are entitled and developing an alternative assessment for the ELP
  - Identification issues around language and disability