

# Accommodations Manual

How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate  
Use of Accommodations  
for Instruction and Assessment  
of English Language Learners

First Edition

*Produced by:*  
English Language Learners  
State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (ELL SCASS)



## THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

### ACCOMMODATIONS MANUAL HOW TO SELECT, ADMINISTER, AND EVALUATE USE OF ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

First Edition

COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

Christopher Koch (Illinois), President

Gene Wilhoit, Executive Director

### English Language Learners State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (ELL SCASS)

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Council of Chief State School Officers  
One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20001-1431  
Phone (202) 336-7000  
Fax (202) 408-8072  
[www.ccsso.org](http://www.ccsso.org)

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## **[State Name Department of Education] Contacts**

[Address and Contact Info. for Your State’s Department of Education]

- **For ELLs Taking ELP Assessments**

- ELL Policies—[Name and title of person]  
[Phone number and email of person]
- ELL Accommodations—[Name and title of person]  
[Phone number and email of person]

- **For ELLs Taking Content Assessments**

- ELL Policies—[Name and title of person]  
[Phone number and email of person]
- ELL Accommodations—[Name and title of person]  
[Phone number and email of person]

# Note to States

The Council of Chief State School Officers' *Accommodations Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of English Language Learners* was first developed to establish guidelines for states to use for the selection, administration, and evaluation of accommodations for instruction and assessment of English language learners. This manual should be customized by states to reflect current state level policies and practices for English language learners.

This manual is intended to be a companion to the Council of Chief State School Officers' *Accommodations Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of Students with Disabilities*.

With Race to the Top (RTTT) initiatives, many states have joined consortia to work together on common assessment systems using technology-based testing platforms. New policy and implementation issues with regard to accommodations for English language learners underscore the need for states to update accommodations policies.



Throughout this edition of the *Accommodations Manual*, attention has been given to addressing issues related to providing accommodations on technology-based platforms. Often, these issues have been marked with the symbol of a computer mouse.

*Accommodations Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of English Language Learners* represents the best thinking of 2011. We continue to learn more about the effective education of English language learners every day, and we expect these materials to evolve and improve every year.

# Introduction

The *Accommodations Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of English Language Learners* presents a five-step process for general and ESL/bilingual teachers, administrators, and assessment staff to use in selecting, administering, and evaluating the effectiveness of the use of instructional and assessment accommodations by English language learners.

The guidance in this manual applies to English language learners who participate in large-scale assessments and the instruction they receive. The five steps are:

1. Expect English language learners to achieve grade-level academic content standards.
2. Learn about accommodations for instruction and assessment.
3. Select accommodations for instruction and assessment of individual students.
4. Administer accommodations during instruction and assessment.
5. Evaluate and improve accommodation use.

# STEP 1

## Expect English Language Learners to Achieve Grade-Level Academic Content Standards

### Federal and State Laws Requiring Participation by English Language Learners

Education is a basic right for all children in the United States, including English language learners. English language learners (ELLs), also referred to as Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, are students whose native language is not English and who do not yet possess sufficient English language proficiency to participate fully in regular education classes. Current legislation focuses on accountability of all students, including ELLs, and guarantees them the right to equal educational opportunities. ELLs' rights for equitable inclusion in instruction and assessment processes are outlined in a number of federal laws and regulations as well as certain legal decisions in conjunction with the Office of Civil Rights. These educational protections and supports for ELLs include the Elementary and Secondary Educational Act as well as the Supreme Court Cases *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) and *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981).

[Insert your state definition of an English language learner here.]

### Elementary and Secondary Education Act (also known as No Child Left Behind) (2001).

Title III of the ESEA mandates that all ELLs receive quality instruction for learning both English and grade-level academic content (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). According to the ESEA act, ELLs are required to participate in statewide assessments that measure students' English language and academic progress. States are allowed to choose flexible programs of instruction and assessment tools in order to increase accountability for ELLs' academic achievement.

ESEA requires that states develop standards for English language proficiency in the context of each state's Academic Content Standards. Schools and districts must ensure ELLs' participation in their state's accountability system and provide for:

the inclusion of limited English proficient students, who shall be assessed in a valid and reliable manner and provided reasonable accommodations on



assessments administered to such students under this paragraph, including, to the extent practicable, assessments in the language and form most likely to yield accurate data on what such students know and can do in academic content areas, until such students have achieved English language proficiency (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. 27).

The following are some other ESEA provisions for ELLs:

- all ELL students' English language proficiency must be tested at least once a year;
- all ELLs have to take state academic achievement tests in language arts and math, except that ELL students who have been in the U.S. for less than one year do not have to take the language arts test for that first year; if available from the state, ELL students can take these language arts and math tests in their native languages;
- ELL students should be assessed in a valid and reliable manner and provided reasonable accommodations; (Title I, 115 STAT. 1451)
- Students may be assessed in their native language, if necessary, for three years with or without additional accommodations. After that time, all assessments must be conducted in English unless the school district determines, on a case-by-case basis, that assessments in the student's language would likely yield more accurate and reliable information for a period not to exceed two additional years; (Title I, 115 STAT. 1451)
- ELL students as a group must meet specific annual targets of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP); schools, districts, and states will be held accountable for ensuring that they meet these targets;
- curricula must be demonstrated to be effective; language instruction curricula used to teach ELL children are to be tied to scientifically based research and demonstrated to be effective;
- local entities have the flexibility to choose the method of instruction to teach ELLs;
- states must establish standards and objectives for raising the level of English proficiency that are derived from the four recognized domains of speaking, listening, reading and writing, and that are aligned with achievement of the challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards. (Title III, 115 Stat.1694)

Some research points to both educational and technical challenges posed for ELLs by the ESEA Act (Abedi & Dietel, 2004). These challenges include:

1. Historically low ELL performance and slow improvement – ELL performance results are significantly lower than those of other students and they show little improvement across many years.

2. Measurement accuracy – language demands of tests may negatively influence measurement of ELLs’ performance.
3. Instability of the ELL student subgroup – highly achieving ELLs are redesignated and exit the ELL subgroup, while new ELLs tend to perform at lower academic levels.
4. Factors outside of a school’s control – schools are unable to control all factors related to student achievement.

Instructional and assessment accommodations, therefore, are incorporated in the instructional process for ELLs to facilitate their education and measure their performance adequately by leveling the playing field.

***Lau v. Nichols (1974)***. The Office of Civil Rights established a policy for the provision of equal educational opportunities for ELLs. This policy was described in a memorandum in 1970:

Where the inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national origin minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to these students.

This memorandum does not tell districts what steps they must take to ensure the equal opportunities for ELLs. However, it does state that the law is violated if:

- students are excluded from effective participation in school because of their inability to speak and understand the language of instruction;
- national origin minority students are inappropriately assigned to special education classes because of their lack of English skills;
- programs for students whose English is less than proficient are not designed to teach them English as soon as possible, or if these programs operate as a dead end track; or
- parents whose English is limited do not receive school notices or other information in a language they can understand.

This law was tested in the Supreme Court Case, *Lau v. Nichols*. In 1974, the Supreme Court upheld this law, supporting the premise that if students cannot understand the language of instruction, they do not have access to an equal opportunity education. The Supreme Court said the following:

There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.

All students in the United States, regardless of native language, have the right to a quality education. An equal education is only possible when students are able to understand the language of instruction.

***Castañeda v. Pickard (1981)***. On June 23, 1981, the Fifth Circuit Court issued a decision that is the seminal post-Lau decision concerning education of language minority students. The case established a three-part test to evaluate the adequacy of a district's program for ELL students:

1. Is the program based on an educational theory recognized as sound by some experts in the field or is considered by experts as a legitimate experimental strategy?
2. Are the programs and practices, including resources and personnel, reasonably calculated to implement this theory effectively?
3. Does the school district evaluate its programs and make adjustments where needed to ensure language barriers are actually being overcome?

## **Assessing the English Language Proficiency of English Language Learners**

ESEA Title III, in conjunction with Title I subgroup accountability targeting all students, added a requirement that states must develop or adopt standards for English language proficiency (ELP) for ELLs and annually assess progress of all ELLs toward these standards. By 2006, all states had developed ELP standards, ELP assessments, and accountability measures for monitoring progress of ELLs. Title III requires that the ELP standards be aligned with the state content and academic achievement standards to ensure that ELLs are learning the type of academic English necessary to make progress in the content areas of reading, mathematics, and science. For Title III, district and state progress is evaluated against annual measurable achievement objectives (AMAOs), and all districts receiving Title III funds are to be held accountable for meeting state-established AMAO targets each year.

## **Including All English Language Learners in State Accountability Assessments**

Both federal and state laws require that all ELLs be administered assessments intended to hold schools accountable for the academic performance of students. Schools and teachers must actively engage in a planning process that addresses:

- assurance of the provision of accommodations to facilitate student access to grade-level instruction and state assessments, and
- use of different assessment formats assessments to assess the achievement of beginner ELLs; these assessments are tailored specifically for ELLs at varying developmental, language proficiency, and academic levels and are aligned with content and achievement standards, curriculum, and instruction.

## **Equal Access to Grade-Level Content**

Inclusion of ELLs in large scale assessments and grade-level Content Standards is mandated by both federal and state laws. Similarly to their general education counterparts, ELLs face educational targets outlining what they are expected to learn at each grade level. Educators ensure that students work toward grade-level content standards by using a range of instructional strategies based on the varied strengths and needs of students. For ELLs, accommodations are provided during instruction and assessments to guarantee equal access to grade-level content. To meet this goal of equal access, educators of ELLs must be familiar with content standards and accountability systems at the state and district levels as well as locations of these standards and their updates. Additionally, to secure successful student access to grade-level content, ESL/bilingual educators must collaborate with their general education colleagues.

ELLs can work toward grade-level academic content standards while they are improving their English proficiency. ELLs will be able to achieve these standards when instruction is provided by teachers who are qualified to teach in the content areas addressed by state standards and who know how to differentiate instruction for diverse learners. Meaningful access of ELLs to grade-level content is also made possible by appropriately selected accommodations.

## **Current Practice and Beyond**

Supported by ongoing educational reform efforts, such as Race to the Top (RTTT) and other initiatives passed by states, the use of assessments for accountability purposes will likely continue in the future, supported by other legislative initiatives passed by states in their efforts to implement educational reform.

## Resources

National Clearinghouse on English Language Acquisition ([www.ncela.org](http://www.ncela.org))  
Office of Civil Rights ([www.ed.gov/ocr](http://www.ed.gov/ocr))

Abedi, J., & Dietel, R. (2004). Challenges in the No Child Left Behind Act for English language learners. Retrieved November, 2010, from:  
[http://www.cse.ucla.edu/products/policy/cresst\\_policy7.pdf](http://www.cse.ucla.edu/products/policy/cresst_policy7.pdf)

Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, P.L. 108-446. Retrieved November, 2010, from: [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=108\\_cong\\_bills&docid=f:h1350enr.txt.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=108_cong_bills&docid=f:h1350enr.txt.pdf)

U.S. Department of Education. (2002). Public Law 107-110—Jan. 8, 2002. Retrieved November, 2010, from: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/107-110.pdf>

CURRENT STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS TO MEET GRADE-LEVEL ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS COULD BE INSERTED HERE.

CURRENT STATE WEBSITE FOR ALL CONTENT STANDARDS COULD BE INSERTED HERE.

CURRENT STATE-SPECIFIC POLICIES ABOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF ELLS IN STATE ASSESSMENT COULD BE INSERTED HERE.

# STEP 2

## Learn about Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment

### What Are Accommodations?

Accommodations are practices and procedures that provide equitable access during instruction and assessments for ELLs and provide a valid means for ELLs to show what they know and can do. Accommodations are designed to support each student's access to instructional or test content, interactions with content, and response to content. Oftentimes, language teachers may be providing instructional accommodations without necessarily calling them accommodations.



Modern technology allows educators to introduce computer-based instruction and assessment accommodations that facilitate ELL-responsive educational processes. The purpose of accommodations, including those that are administered through the use of computers, is to reduce or eliminate the effects of a student's limited knowledge of the English language. ELLs may be provided with instruction and assessment accommodations; the accommodations do not reduce expectations for learning.

Accommodations provided to a student during state assessments must also be provided during classroom instruction, classroom assessments, and district assessments; however, some instructional accommodations may not be appropriate for use on certain statewide assessments. It is critical that educators become familiar with state policies about the appropriate use of accommodations during assessments. **In the age of technology-mediated educational practices, many computer-based accommodations facilitate instruction and assessment of ELLs effectively if they are selected and utilized properly.**

Typically, accommodation use may not begin and end in the school setting, but this may vary depending on the individual. As ELLs become more proficient in English, their need for accommodations will decrease. Accommodations for instruction and assessment are integrally intertwined.

### Who Is Involved in Accommodations Decisions?

Accommodations for ELLs should be used for instruction and assessment. When accommodations are made for assessments, their decision-making process may be

more formal. Educators of ELLs must make accommodation decisions for students based on individual need in accordance with state and federal guidelines. ELLs must be provided accommodations based on individual need as long as the accommodations do not interfere with the content being learned or the construct being measured. According to the George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education (2005) most states designate more than one individual who make decisions about ELL-responsive accommodations ensuring that more than one perspective be considered in such decisions. Policies in many states, however, do not specify how these individuals should execute the decision-making process. In some states, these individuals are grouped into teams, while in other states, policies do not articulate whether these individuals should make decisions together or independently.

The following are types of accommodation decision makers that may be specified in state policies:

- language educators (ESL/bilingual teacher(s), another ESL/bilingual/migrant teacher or ELL administrator, language acquisition specialist, language professional)
- assessment officials (test administrator(s), guidance counselor, reading specialist)
- general education teachers (classroom/content teacher(s))
- school administrators (principal, school/district official(s))
- parents (parent(s)/guardian(s))
- students

States should regulate policies that result in meaningful collaboration among classroom teachers, school administrators, assessment officials, parents, and students to guarantee beneficial instruction and assessment of ELLs.

## **Accommodations and Universal Design**

Universal design principles address policies and practices that are intended to improve access to learning and assessments for all students. Universal design principles are important to the development and review of assessments because some assessment designs pose barriers that bar ELLs from showing what they know. When universal design techniques are employed, educators can gain a more accurate understanding of what students know and can do. Universal design techniques can be applied from the beginning of test development through to the point when students engage in assessments.

Universally-designed general assessments may reduce the need for accommodations and alternate assessments; however, universal design cannot eliminate the need for accommodations or alternate assessments. Universal design CAN provide states with

more cost-effective assessments, and universal design CAN provide educators with more valid inferences about the achievement levels of ELLs, as well as the achievement of their general education peers.



Universal design of assessments does not simply mean that tests are administered on computers. As assessments move toward becoming more consistently administered on computers, thinking about accommodations and universal design may change. Traditionally, we have thought of universal design as coming first, and accommodations being applied during testing. With current technology, we can build some accommodations into the design of the test itself. Some of these features may be accommodations (available to ELLs) and others may be good testing practices (available to all students). Some ELLs will have a need for accommodations beyond those that can be built into the testing platform.

## Description of Accommodations Categories

According to the George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education, accommodations for English Language Learners are categorized into two types: direct linguistic support accommodations (these accommodations are further classified into English language accommodations and native language accommodations) and indirect linguistic support accommodations.

Direct linguistic support accommodations are those accommodations that involve adjustments to the language of the assessment. English language accommodations are employed for ELLs receiving instruction in the content being tested in English. These accommodations are classified according to three categories:

1. simplification accommodations (e.g., directions simplified; items read aloud in simplified/sheltered English; simplified/sheltered version of the test provided);
2. repetition accommodations (e.g., directions/items read aloud in English; directions repeated in English; key words and phrases in the test highlighted); and
3. clarification accommodations (e.g., directions explained/clarified in English; words on the test clarified; spelling assistance, spelling dictionaries, spell/grammar checker provided).

Native language accommodations are employed for ELLs who are literate in the native language but in early stages of learning English. These accommodations are classified according to four categories:



1. written translation accommodations (e.g., word lists (mono or dual language); written directions provided; translation version of the test provided);
2. scripted oral translation accommodations (e.g., oral directions provided in the native language; audio-taped test directions provided in the native language; audio-taped test items provided in the native language);
3. sight translation accommodations (e.g., directions translated into the native language; directions explained/clarified in the native language; test items read aloud in the native language); and
4. response accommodations (e.g., student responds in the native language).

Indirect linguistic support accommodations are accommodations that provide additional support to the conditions upon which students are able to show what they know and can do, but do not involve changes to the language of instruction or the assessment (e.g., allowing extended time).

## **Good Practices for Instruction and Assessment: Allowable Resources**

For both instruction and assessment, there are resources and strategies that should be allowable for all students, and therefore not classified as accommodations. These good practices, such as reading the directions aloud for an assessment, should be used whenever possible for all students. Allowable resources are those strategies and tools that may be used by all students for an instructional task or an assessment. Examples of allowable resources may be highlighters or sticky notes. These practices should be available to all students, for both instruction and assessment (when determined to be appropriate for the assessment). Their use should not be considered an accommodation.

## **Accommodations and Modifications**

Accommodations do not reduce learning expectations. They meet specific goals of ELL-responsive instruction and assessment and allow for educators to know that measures of a student's work are valid.

Modifications refer to practices that change, lower, or reduce learning expectations. Modifications are not appropriate for ELLs as they invalidate instruction or assessment results by their potential to change the underlying construct of an assignment or test. Examples of modifications include:

- requiring a student to learn less material (e.g., fewer objectives, shorter units or lessons, fewer pages or problems);
- clarifying or translating assignment or test items;
- answering questions about assignments or tests, even without giving the answers;
- reducing assignments and assessments so a student only needs to complete the easiest problems or items;
- defining words for an ELL;
- using dictionaries with definitions;
- using an accommodation that invalidates the intended construct;
- revising assignments or assessments to make them easier; or
- giving a student hints or clues to correct responses on assignments and tests.

Typically, reducing the quantity of assignments or test items is not considered to be a modification. Such reduction attributes to the fact that ELLs may require additional time to complete each instruction or assessment item. However, changing complexity or content depth of instructional or assessment materials is, indeed, a modification.

If the teacher changes grade-level instruction to be less demanding based on the perceived skills of the student prior to teaching the content the teacher may be reducing the student's opportunity to learn and thereby reducing the student's ability to demonstrate that knowledge on a state test. If students have not had access to critical, assessed content, they may be at risk for not meeting graduation requirements. Providing a student with a modification during a state accountability assessment may constitute a test irregularity and may result in an investigation into the school's or district's testing practices.

## **ELL Team Considerations for Instructional Accommodations**

To ensure that ELLs are engaged in standard-based instruction, every educator of an ELL needs to be familiar with state policies. Whenever possible, a team approach should be used. The ELL team should consider:

- Student characteristics (see Tool 4 in Appendix);
- Instructional tasks expected of students to demonstrate proficiency in grade level content in state standards;
- Consistency between accommodations selected for ELLs that is used for classroom instruction and those used on assessments;
- Use of an ELL-responsive framework that organizes accommodations and guides appropriate selection of accommodations for ELLs;
- Appropriateness of accommodations for particular content areas; and

- Use of accommodations that are supported by research.

ELL team members should ask: Does the student really need any accommodation? A student may not be receiving an accommodation he or she really needs or may be receiving too many. Research indicates that more is not necessarily better, and that providing students with accommodations that are not truly needed may have a negative impact on performance. The better approach is to focus on a student's identified needs within the general education curriculum.

## Resources

George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education (2005). Accommodations. Retrieved November, 2010, from: <http://ceee.gwu.edu/AA/Accommodations.html>

# Step 3

## Select Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of Individual Students

To ensure that ELLs are engaged in standards-based instruction and assessments, every ELL team member must be knowledgeable about the state and district academic content standards and assessments. Effective decision-making about the provision of appropriate accommodations begins with making good instructional decisions. In turn, making appropriate instructional decisions is facilitated by gathering and reviewing good information about the student's language proficiency and academic performance in relation to local and state academic standards.

Decisions should be based on individual characteristics and needs. Making blanket decisions for groups of students at particular language acquisition levels would not be appropriate. When ELL-responsive accommodation decisions are made thoughtfully, they can advance equal opportunities for students to participate in the general education curriculum.

### Documenting Accommodations for ELLs

For ELLs served under ESEA, determining appropriate instructional and assessment accommodations should not pose any particular problems when teachers and teams follow good educational practices. Under Title I, ELLs are one of the mandated subgroups whose test scores are used to determine whether schools and districts are meeting the goals for AYP based on state standards. With the exception of ELLs who have been in the U.S. less than a year, all other ELLs are held to the same expectations as other subgroups regarding participation and performance on state assessments. Under Title III, ELLs must also demonstrate progress in attaining English language proficiency.

State policies generally delineate assessment policy criteria that should be used to identify students eligible for accommodations. Language proficiency is probably the most important criterion that should be considered when making ELL-responsive accommodation decisions. However, other academic-related criteria, such as ELP test results, students' oral proficiency in English and other languages, literacy levels in English and native language, the kind of education students have received before coming to the U.S., e.g., evidence of limited or interrupted formal education, the time students have spent in English speaking schools, the time students have spent in your state, students' performance on other assessments, the resources available to students

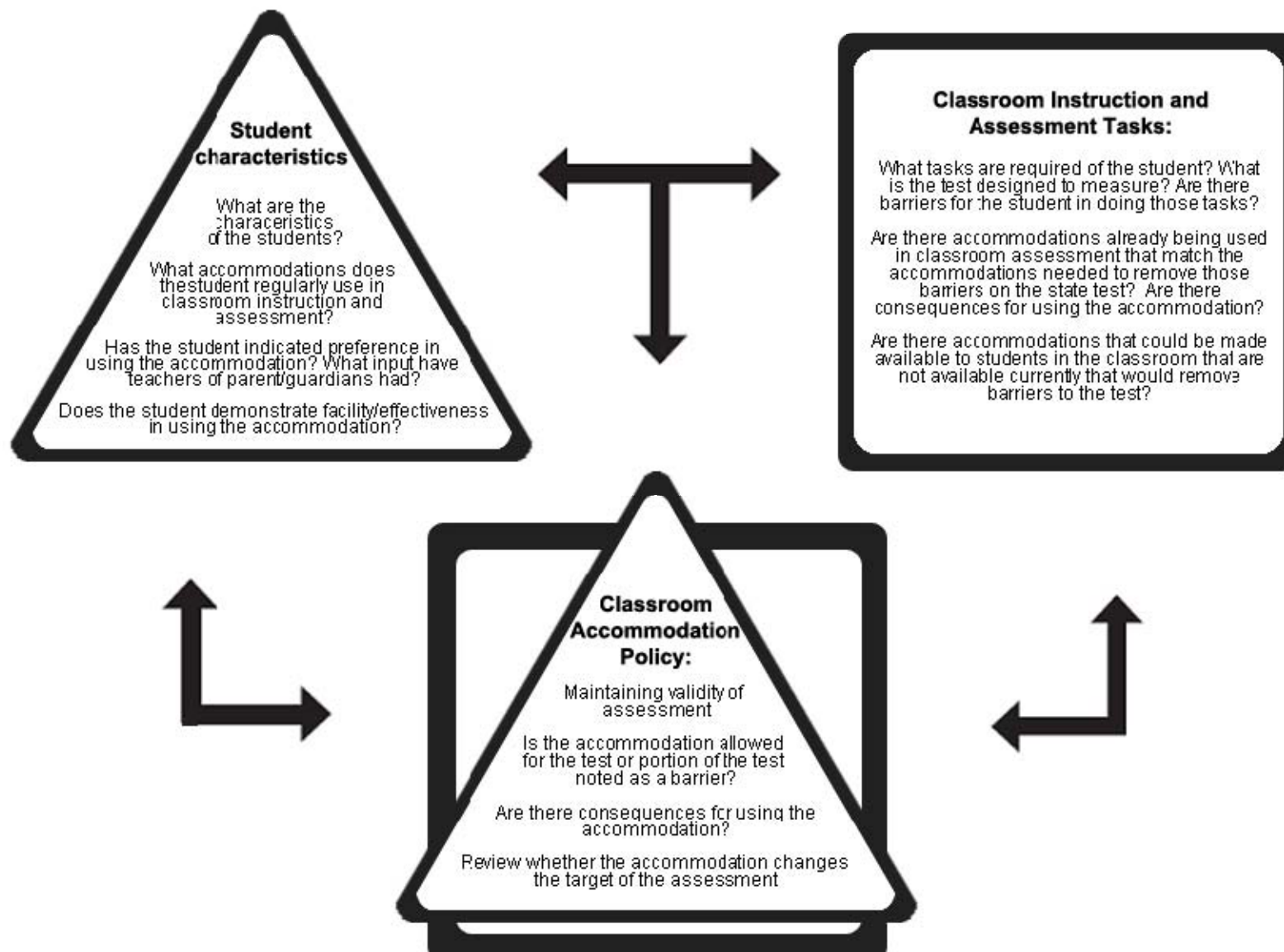
in their native languages, or students' cultural backgrounds may also help ELL team members to determine which accommodations should be utilized if any (see Tool 5).

### **The Decision-Making Process**

The decision-making process for state assessment accommodations should include consideration of at least these three factors (see Figure 1):

1. Student characteristics (e.g., overall language proficiency and literacy levels, English language proficiency assessment results, accommodations used in classroom instruction/assessments to access and perform in academic standards and state tests).
2. Individual test characteristics: knowledge about what tasks are required on state assessments and ways to remove barriers to students' ability to perform those tasks.
3. State accommodation policies for the assessment or for part of an assessment and consequences of decisions.

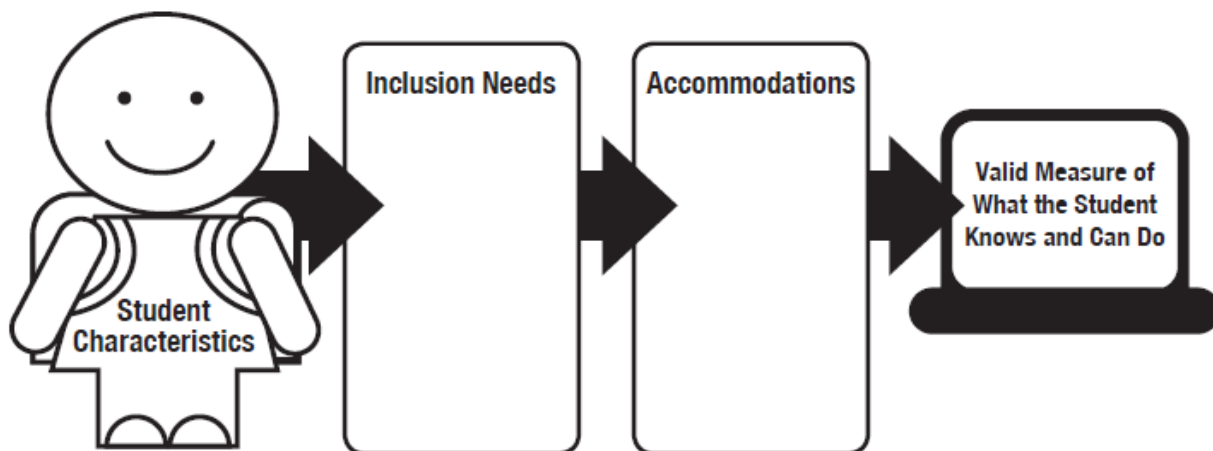
**Figure 1. Considerations when Making Decisions for Assessment Accommodations**



## Student Characteristics

Selecting accommodations for instruction and assessment is the role of a student's ELL team. Accommodations should be chosen based on the individual student's characteristics and the student's need for the accommodation (see Figure 2). After considering the student's individual characteristics, the ELL team should identify inclusion needs that require accommodations. When these accommodations are used according to the plan, the student will be able to demonstrate most validly what he or she knows and can do on for both instruction and assessments.

**Figure 2. Accommodation Selection Process**



Use the questions provided below to guide the selection of appropriate accommodations for ELL students getting assigned accommodations for the first time and for students who are currently using accommodations:

- What are the student's language learning strengths and areas of further improvement?
- How do the student's language learning needs affect the achievement of grade-level content standards?
- What accommodations will increase the student's access to instruction and assessment by addressing the student's learning needs and reducing the effect of the student's language barrier? These may be new accommodations or accommodations the student is currently using.
- What accommodations are regularly used by the student during instruction and assessments?
- What are the results for assignments and assessments when accommodations were used and not used?
- What is the student's perception of how well an accommodation "worked"?
- Are there effective combinations of accommodations?

- What difficulties did the student experience when using accommodations?
- What are the perceptions of parents, teachers, and other specialists about how the accommodation worked?
- Should the student continue to use an accommodation, are changes needed, or should the use of the accommodation be discontinued?

Of the accommodations that match the student’s needs, consider the following:


- the student’s willingness to learn to use the accommodation,
- opportunities to learn how to use the accommodation in classroom settings, and
- conditions for use on state assessments.

### **Involving Students in Selecting, Using, and Evaluating Accommodations**

It is critical for ELLs to understand their language barrier and learn self-advocacy strategies for success in school. Some students have had limited experience expressing personal preferences and advocating for themselves. ELLs are likely to have various cultural backgrounds, and speaking out about preferences, particularly in the presence of “authority figures,” may be a new role for them, one for which they need guidance and feedback. Teachers and other ELL team members can play a key role in working with students to advocate for themselves in the context of selecting, using, and evaluating accommodations.

The greater the degree to which students are involved in the selection process, the more likely the accommodations will be used. Self-advocacy skills become critical here. Students need opportunities to learn which accommodations are most helpful for them, and then they need to learn how to make certain that those accommodations are provided in all of their classes and wherever they need them outside of school.

**Prior Accommodations Use.** Students are most successful with testing accommodations when they have had a chance to use them prior to the test. ELL educators are encouraged to implement accommodations in instruction to make sure to address these concerns ahead of state assessment. Accommodations should not be used for the first time on a state test. Instead, it is important to make sure to address these concerns ahead of time:

- Plan time for students to learn new accommodations.
-  When students are taking assessments in a technology-based setting, be sure that they know how to use the accommodation when it is provided as part of the platform.
- Plan for evaluation and improvement of accommodations use (see Step 5).



**Accommodations for Instruction vs. Assessment.** Sometimes accommodations used in instruction may not be used on an assessment.

- Plan time for students to practice NOT using certain accommodations before the state assessment.
- Some instructional accommodations may alter what a test is designed to measure.

In some cases, the accommodations used in instruction may not be allowed on a test because they would invalidate the results of the test so that the performance no longer reflects what the test was designed to measure. In these instances, teachers should be sure to allow the student ample opportunities to perform on classroom tasks and assessments without the use of the accommodation.

If the accommodation is considered a necessary step in scaffolding grade level content instruction, having some practice without the accommodation during classroom work would be an expected practice to gauge student progress independent of the accommodation and would also provide students opportunities to practice not using an accommodation before the state assessment.

### **Individual Test Characteristics: Questions to Guide Accommodations Selection**

After considering student characteristics, it is important to look at the task students are being asked to do on the various state and district assessments. Below are more questions to ask:

- What are the characteristics of the test my student needs to take? Are the test tasks similar to classroom assessment tasks or does the student have the opportunity to practice similar tasks prior to testing?
- Does the student use an accommodation for a classroom task that is allowed for similar tasks on the state or district tests?
- Are there other barriers that could be removed by using an accommodation that is not already offered or used by the student?

### **State Accommodations Policies: Maintaining Validity of Assessments**

When selecting accommodations for state assessments with a student, it is important to keep in mind both the accommodation policies set to maintain the validity of an assessment and to know the consequences of the decisions. If the ELL team determines that a student should use a certain accommodation during an assessment but the

student refuses to use the accommodation, the validity of the assessment may be compromised.

Plan how and when the student will learn to use each new accommodation. Be certain there is ample time to learn to use instructional and assessment accommodations before an assessment takes place. Finally, plan for the ongoing evaluation and improvement of the student's use of accommodations.

*Refer to tools 1 and 4 -8 for additional information in completing this step.*

# Step 4

## Administer Accommodations During Instruction and Assessment

### Accommodations During Instruction

The student must be provided the selected accommodations during instructional periods that necessitate their use. An accommodation may not be used solely during assessments. ELL-responsive accommodations should always be chosen based on the student's individual characteristics in order to help the student overcome the language barrier relative to their English language proficiency.



As states and consortia move to providing assessments on technology-based platforms, educators and ELL teams must take care to ensure that students have opportunities to become familiar with the technological aspects of the assessment process. In addition to taking practice tests using the same testing platform, it is also important for educators to provide opportunities for all students to use technology for learning as well.

### Accommodations During Assessment Planning for Test Day

Once decisions have been made about providing accommodations to meet individual student needs, the logistics of providing the actual accommodations during state and district assessments must be mapped out. It is not uncommon for members of the ELL team to be given the responsibility for arranging, coordinating, and providing assessment accommodations for all students who may need them. Thus, it is essential for all ELL team members to know and understand the requirements and consequences of district and state assessments, including the use of accommodations. It is important to engage the appropriate personnel to plan the logistics and provisions of assessment accommodations on test day.



Current designs of technology-based testing platforms may allow for accommodations to be provided on the testing platform itself. Through a process of creating a student profile, an ELL team may be able to “program” the test to provide certain accommodations, like a pop-up glossary or translated test items. Providing these accommodations through the testing platform can guarantee that the provision of accommodations is standardized from student to student and district to district. However, it is important to monitor the provision of accommodations on test day to ensure that accommodations are delivered and the technology is working as it should.

*Refer to tools 9, 10, and 11.*

Prior to the day of a test, be certain that test administrators and proctors know what accommodations each student will be using and how to administer them properly. For example, if students are allowed to use a dictionary or glossary, test administrators need to be aware so they can provide one. Staff administering accommodations, such as providing an oral translation for a student must adhere to specific guidelines so that student scores are valid.

### **Administering Assessments and Accommodations**

State and local laws and policies specify practices to ensure test security and the standardized and ethical administration of assessments. Test administrators, proctors, and all staff involved in test administration must adhere to these policies. The Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement (NCME, 1995) states that test administrators and others involved in assessments must:

- take appropriate security precautions before, during, and after the administration of the assessment;
- understand the procedures needed to administer the assessment prior to administration;
- administer standardized assessments according to prescribed procedures and conditions and notify appropriate persons if any nonstandard or delimiting conditions occur;
- avoid any conditions in the conduct of the assessment that might invalidate the results;
- provide for and document all reasonable and allowable accommodations; and
- avoid actions or conditions that would permit or encourage individuals or groups to receive scores that misrepresent their actual levels of attainment.

Failure to adhere to these practices may constitute a test irregularity or a breach of test security and must be reported and investigated according to state and local testing policies.

### **Ethical Testing Practices**

Ethical testing practices must be maintained during the administration of a test. Unethical testing practices relate to inappropriate interactions between test administrators and students taking the test. Unethical practices include allowing a

student to answer fewer questions, changing the content by paraphrasing or offering additional information, coaching students during testing, editing student responses, or giving clues in any way.

## **Standardization**

Standardization refers to adherence to uniform administration procedures and conditions during an assessment. Standardization is an essential feature of educational assessments and is necessary to produce comparable information about student learning. Strict adherence to guidelines detailing instructions and procedures for the administration of accommodations is necessary to ensure that test results reflect actual student learning.

## **Test Security**

Test security involves maintaining the confidentiality of test questions and answers, and is critical in ensuring the integrity and validity of a test. Test security can become an issue when other test formats are used (e.g., Spanish or simplified English) or when someone other than the student is allowed to see the test (e.g., interpreter, scribe). In order to ensure test security and confidentiality, test administrators need to (1) keep testing materials in a secure place to prevent unauthorized access, (2) keep all test content confidential and refrain from sharing information or revealing test content to anyone, and (3) return all materials as instructed.



Some of the same considerations for test security apply when students are taking a technology-based assessment. For example, ensuring that only authorized personnel have access to the test and that test materials are kept confidential are critical in technology-based assessments. In addition, it is important to guarantee that (1) students are seated in such a manner that they cannot see each other's terminals, (2) students are not able to access any additional programs or the Internet while they are taking the assessment, and (3) students are not able to access any saved data or computer shortcuts while taking the test.

*Refer to Tool 1 for additional considerations.*

## Resources:

The Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement (NCME, 1995):  
[http://www.natd.org/Code\\_of\\_Professional\\_Responsibilities.html](http://www.natd.org/Code_of_Professional_Responsibilities.html)

National Council on Measurement in Education. (1995). *Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement*. Washington, D.C.: Author.

INSERT CURRENT STATE POLICY ON TEST SECURITY AND TEST IRREGULARITIES.

# Step 5

## Evaluate and Improve Accommodations Use

Accommodations must be selected on the basis of the individual student’s needs and must be used consistently for instruction and assessment. Collecting and analyzing data on the use and effectiveness of accommodations are necessary to ensure the meaningful participation of ELLs in state and district-wide assessments. Data on the use and impact of accommodations during assessments may reveal questionable patterns of accommodation use, as well as support the continued use of some accommodations or the rethinking of others.

Examination of the data may also indicate areas in which the ELL team and test administrators need additional training and support. In addition to collecting information about the use of accommodations within the classroom, information needs to be gathered on the implementation of accommodations during assessment. Observations conducted during test administration, interviews with test administrators, and talking with students after testing sessions will likely yield data that can be used to guide the formative evaluation process at the school or district level and at the student level.



Gathering information on accommodations may be easier in a technology-based assessment platform, when the accommodations are “programmed” into the system. However, just because information *can* be collected does not automatically suggest that it is meaningful. ELL teams, schools, and districts should decide in advance what questions should be answered by the collection of accommodation data in order to apply resources efficiently.

Information on the use of accommodations can be feasible to collect when it is coded on the test form with other student information.

Accommodation information can be analyzed in different ways. Here are some questions to guide data analysis at the school and district level and the student level.

### Questions to Guide Evaluation of Accommodation Use at the School or District Level

1. Are there policies to ensure ethical testing practices, the standardized administration of assessments, and that test security practices are followed before, during, and after the day of the test?

2. Are there procedures in place to ensure test administration procedures are not compromised with the provision of accommodations?
3. Are students receiving accommodations as preselected by their ELL teams?
4. Are there procedures in place to ensure that test administrators adhere to directions for the implementation of accommodations?
5. How many ELLs are receiving accommodations?
6. What types of accommodations are provided and are some used more than others?
7. How well do students who receive accommodations perform on state and local assessments? If students are not meeting the expected level of performance, is it due to the students not having had access to the necessary instruction, not receiving the accommodation, or using the accommodations that were not effective?

### **Questions to Guide Evaluation at the Student Level**

1. What accommodations are used by the student during instruction and assessments?
2. What are the results of classroom assignments and assessments when accommodations are used versus when accommodations are not used? If a student did not meet the expected level of performance, is it due to not having access to the necessary instruction, not receiving the appropriate accommodations, or using accommodations that are ineffective?
3. What is the student's perception of how well the accommodation worked?
4. What combinations of accommodations seem to be effective?
5. What are the difficulties encountered in the use of accommodations?
6. What are the perceptions of teachers and others about how the accommodation appears to be working?

These questions can be used to formatively evaluate the accommodations used at the student level, as well as the school or district levels. School- and district-level questions can be addressed by a committee responsible for continuous improvement efforts, while the student level questions need to be considered by the ELL team. It is critical to stress that formative evaluation is not the responsibility of just one individual. The entire ELL team should contribute to the information gathering and decision-making processes.

### **Postsecondary Implications**

College and career readiness is an important educational outcome for all students. As ELLs plan for their transition to postsecondary settings, it is important for ELL teams to have documented the student's use of accommodations so that the student can



continue to use them as needed in college and career settings. Colleges and universities may allow fewer accommodations than were available in K–12 settings, so it is important for students to document their need to use accommodations. This may also be true for students who transition into vocational and other workplace settings.

*Refer to tools 8 and 12.*

# TOOL 1

## DO'S AND DON'TS WHEN SELECTING ASSESSMENT ACCOMMODATIONS

**Do...**make accommodation decisions based on individualized needs (e.g., the student's amount of time in the country).

**Don't...**make accommodations decisions based on whatever is easiest to do (e.g., preferential seating).

**Do...**select accommodations that reduce the effect of the language barrier to access content and demonstrate learning.

**Don't...**select accommodations unrelated to documented student learning needs or are intended to give students an unfair advantage.

**Do...**be certain to document instructional and assessment accommodation(s) on the ELL plan.

**Don't...**use an accommodation that has not been documented on the ELL plan.

**Do...**be specific about the "Where, When, Who, and How" of providing accommodations.

**Don't...**assume that all instructional accommodations are appropriate for use on assessments.

**Do...**refer to state accommodation policies and understand implications of selections.

**Don't...**simply indicate an accommodation will be provided "as appropriate" or "as necessary."

**Do...**evaluate accommodations used by the student.

**Don't...**check every accommodation possible on a checklist simply to be "safe."

**Do...**get input about accommodations from teachers, parents, and students, and use it to make decisions at ELL team meetings.

**Don't...**assume the same accommodations remain appropriate year after year.

**Do...**provide accommodations for assessments routinely used for classroom instruction.

**Don't...**provide an assessment accommodation for the first time on the day of a test.

**Do...**select accommodations based on specific individual needs in each content area.

**Don't...**assume certain accommodations, such as a dictionary, are appropriate for every student in every content area.

## **A Note to States about Tool 2 and Tool 3**

State policies should establish clear guidelines to distinguish among good practices, resources that may be available to all students, and accommodations. Each state must make its own decision about what adaptations will or will not violate the construct being measured by the assessment.

States should customize Tool 2 and Tool 3 to fit current state guidelines. States may want to add items to the list of Good Practices and Resources included in Tool 2. States may also want to add items to the Adaptations Grid in Tool 3.

States should plan to adjust the column headings in Tool 3 to fit individual state needs in presenting accommodation policies. For example, some states may prefer to list only those allowed accommodations, with a check in the relevant boxes. Other states may, for example, want to describe each item as Allowed or Prohibited, depending on state policies.

States should remove any items from Tool 2 and Tool 3 that are not relevant to that state's policies.

# TOOL 2

## Good Practices and Resources for All Students

In instruction, some practices of differentiating instruction or providing resources based on student needs should not be considered accommodations, but rather good instructional practices. Some of these tools and strategies apply to assessment as well.



In addition, some features of computer-based testing may be resources to be used by all students who want to use them, as long as their use does not violate the construct being measured.

### Some examples of good practices might include:


- ✓ Access to a clock, watch, or timer
- ✓ Allowing the student to sit where he or she is most comfortable
- ✓ Having directions read aloud prior to starting a task or test
- ✓ Increased white space
- ✓ Minimize distractions
- ✓ Use of scrap or scratch paper
- ✓ Directions are simplified or clarified \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_



### Examples of resources for all students may include:


- ✓ Highlighter
- ✓ Large diameter pencil
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_


# TOOL 3

## ASSESSMENT ADAPTATION GRID





Accommodation	Description	Type	Accommodation	Good Practice	Paper-based Resource
<b>Direct Linguistic Support: English</b>					
Plain English	<p>ELLs may need to be administered a plain version of the test in which the language load has been reduced but the construct being measured remains the same.</p> <p><b>Standardization:</b> Plain English text is characterized by linguistic structures and vocabulary that avoid ambiguity, colloquialisms, or multiple meanings. Oversimplification of text should be avoided to retain important language cues for ELL students. Plain English is also referred to in state assessment policies as “modified English,” “simplified English,” “simplification,” and “plain language.”</p>  <p>A computer-based administration of this accommodation could allow educators to select individualized readability and complexity levels of assignments and tests.</p>	Provide plain English version of test			
English language reference materials	<p>To understand instructional or test content, some students may need to look up words in a dictionary or glossary.</p> <p><b>Standardization:</b> In a paper-based environment, students are provided with standard English dictionary or glossary.</p> <p>Note: Commercial dictionaries that include explanations, definitions, pictures, or examples of terminology may give students an unfair advantage and interfere with the construct being measured. Always check to make sure commercial dictionaries are allowed.</p>	Provide commercial English dictionary			
		Provide customized English glossary			
		Provide picture dictionary			


	 <p>A computer-based content and delivery system could embed dictionary and glossary terms in the content for students to access as needed.</p>				
Scripted oral in English	<p>ELLs may need assistance accessing instructional or test content by having test items or directions read aloud in English.</p> <p><b>Standardization:</b> English-speaking readers should use even inflection so that the student does not receive any cues by the way the information is read. It is important for readers to read text word for word exactly as written. Readers may not clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance to students. Readers need to be familiar with the terminology and symbols specific to the content. This is especially important for high school mathematics and science. Readers must be provided on an individual basis – not to a group of students. A student should have the option of asking a reader to slow down or repeat text. This cannot occur when a person is reading to an entire group of students.</p> <p> In a computer-based environment, a content and test delivery system could allow students to have text read aloud while being highlighted. Students should be able to select pieces of text to have it re-read when requested. A screen reader may also be utilized to read all information on computer screen. This tool may be very helpful for instruction. Pre-recorded human voice recordings or synthesized voice recordings could be provided to play directions and test items to students. Students benefit by listening to a fully approved, standardized human voice or synthesized voice recordings that have been vetted for correct pronunciation, assuring accurate presentation of words, symbols, and equations. The system should allow students to decide when they want to hear the text read to them, and allow them to play sound clips repeatedly. All components of the delivery interface containing text, such as buttons, menu options, and directions, should have read aloud available for them.</p>	Play audio tape/CD of test items			
		Play audio tape/CD of test directions			
		Read aloud test items from plain English script			
		Read items aloud			
		Read directions aloud			
		Repeat items			
		Repeat directions			
Clarification	<p>To accurately understand the test item or task, some students need to have words or phrases defined and directions to a task or test clarified or simplified. Students can also be asked to confirm their understanding of directions or restate directions in their own words.</p>	Define words or phrase in test items			
		Provide additional examples of items or task			
		Clarify/explain			



	<p><b>Standardization:</b> In a paper-based environment, teachers may clarify directions through restatement or simplification of language or supply additional examples to assist the student.</p>  <p>In a computer-based environment, directions can be re-read to students and access to a simplified version of directions can be provided to students. Also, pre-defined examples for instructional content or test items can be programmed and accessed by the student as needed.</p>	directions in English			
		Simplify directions			
		Allow student to verify understanding of directions			
		Allow student to restate directions in own words			
Oral response in English	<p>For some ELLs, responding to instructional or test content with text interferes with the construct being measured. For example, a student may be able to correctly answer a science item, but due to insufficient English proficiency, may not be able to express the correct answer with a text response. In this case, allowing a student to respond orally may yield a more accurate measure of the student's ability. There are methods for oral response in both paper and computer-based environments.</p> <p><b>Standardization:</b> In a paper-based environment, a scribe can be used to write student answers that are communicated orally. Student answers can also be audio-recorded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scribe: A scribe is someone who writes down what a student produces orally. Much skill is involved in being a scribe, skill that requires extensive practice. A scribe may not edit or alter student work in any way and must record word for word exactly what the student has dictated. The student must be able to edit what the scribe has written. Individuals who serve as a scribe need to carefully prepare to make sure they know the vocabulary involved and understand the boundaries of the assistance to be provided. The role of the scribe is to write only what is dictated, no more and no less.</li> <li>• Audio recording: For students who have difficulty generating text in written form, a recording device may also be used to create an audio recording of a</li> </ul>	Allow student to respond orally in English; scribe response			
		Use tape recorder to record test responses			

	<p>student's narrative response. The oral response can be recorded as an analog or digital file.</p>  <p>In a computer-based environment, speech-to-text software can be used to record student answers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech-to-text software: Speech-to-text conversion or voice recognition allows students to use their voices as input devices. Voice recognition may be used to dictate text into the computer or to give commands to the computer (e.g., opening application programs, pulling down menus, or saving work). Older voice recognition applications require each word to be separated by a distinct space. This allows the machine to determine where one word begins and the next stops. This style of dictation is called discrete speech. Continuous speech voice recognition allows students to dictate text fluently into the computer. These new applications can recognize speech at up to 160 words per minute.</li> <li>• Digital recording: For students who have difficulty generating text in written form, a recording device may also be used to create an audio recording of a student's narrative response. The oral response can be recorded as a digital file by a computer-based content or test delivery system.</li> </ul>				
<b>Direct Linguistic Support: Native Language</b>					
Written translation	<p>Some students may need to access instruction and assessment content through a translated version in their native language, dual language versions, or partial translations of text.</p> <p><b>Standardization:</b> In paper-based environment, translation should be carried out so that the integrity of the tested construct is preserved in both languages. Typically, tests are not translated but adapted to preserve the meaning of the original test. Translation and back-translation processes should be performed to ensure accuracy of assignments and test items.</p>	Provide translated test			
		Provide side-by-side dual language test			
		Provide written directions in native language			



	 <p>In computer-based instruction and assessment, parts of instructional content can be manipulated to meet students' needs for translation. Technology also allows educators to pre-program translations of tests in multiple languages and select them instantly based on ELLs' individual needs.</p>				
Dual language reference materials	<p>To understand instructional or test content, some students may need to a dual language dictionary, glossary, or translator.</p> <p><b>Standardization:</b> In a paper-based environment, students are provided with a standard dual language dictionary or glossary.  Note: A bilingual or dual language word-to-word dictionary does not have examples or definitions of words. It should give the student access to the general test content but does not include key words that would compromise the construct being tested.</p> <p> A computer-based content and delivery system could embed dual language dictionary, glossary, and translator terms in the content for students to access as needed.</p>	Provide customized dual language glossary			
		Provide commercial word-to-word dual language dictionary			
		Allow pocket word-to-word dual language translator			
		Provide commercial dual language dictionary that contains explanations, definitions, pictures or examples of terminology			
Written response	<p>Some students may need to respond to test items in writing in their stronger language. Native language responses may either be scored in the native language or translated into English prior to scoring.</p> <p><b>Standardization:</b> If the test is translated into English before scoring, the translator may not edit the student responses.</p> <p> In a computer-based environment, students may benefit from their proficiency of typing in their native language. However, computer software and keyboard should be calibrated to meet students' linguistic needs.</p>	Allow student to respond in writing in native language			
Scripted oral translation	<p>ELLs may need assistance accessing instructional or test content by having test items or directions read aloud in a native language.</p> <p> In a computer-based environment, a content and test delivery system could allow students to have text read aloud while being</p>	Read aloud oral script of test items in native language			
		Read aloud oral script of directions in native language			
		Read aloud requested test items			

	<p>highlighted. Students should be able to select pieces of text to have it re-read when requested. A screen reader may also be utilized to read all information on computer screen. This tool may be very helpful for instruction.</p> <p><b>Standardization:</b> Native language readers should use even inflection so that the student does not receive any cues by the way the information is read. It is important for readers to read text word for word exactly as written. Readers may not clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance to students. Readers need to be familiar with the terminology and symbols specific to the content. This is especially important for high school mathematics and science. Readers must be provided on an individual basis – not to a group of students. A student should have the option of asking a reader to slow down or repeat text. This cannot occur when a person is reading to an entire group of students.</p>  <p>In a computer-based environment, a content and test delivery system could allow students to have text read aloud while being highlighted. Students should be able to select pieces of text to have it re-read when requested. A screen reader may also be utilized to read all information on computer screen. This tool may be very helpful for instruction. Pre-recorded human voice recordings or synthesized voice recordings could be provided to play directions and test items to students. Students benefit by listening to a fully approved, standardized human voice or synthesized voice recordings that have been vetted for correct pronunciation, assuring accurate presentation of words, symbols, and equations. The system should allow students to decide when they want to hear the text read to them, and allow them to play sound clips repeatedly. All components of the delivery interface containing text, such as buttons, menu options, and directions, should have native language read aloud available for them.</p>	<p>on translated test</p> <p>Play audio tape/CD of test in native language</p> <p>Play audio tape/CD of directions in native language</p>			
Sight translation	<p>Sight translation involves oral, on-the-fly rendering of test items, directions into a student's native language as well as clarifying test items and directions and highlighting words from directions in a native language. This type of accommodation differs from scripted oral translation in that instead of reading from a script, the test administrator orally translates as he or she reads.</p>	<p>Translate test items orally into native language</p> <p>Translate directions orally into native language</p> <p>Clarify word or phrase in test item on</p>			

	<p><b>Standardization:</b> Native language interpreters should use even inflection so that the student does not receive any cues by the way the information is read. Interpreters need to be familiar with the terminology and symbols specific to the content. This is especially important for high school mathematics and science. Readers must be provided on an individual basis – not to a group of students. A student should have the option of asking a reader to slow down or repeat text. This cannot occur when a person is reading to an entire group of students.</p> <p> In a computer-based environment, students should be able to select pieces of text to have it re-read when requested. A screen reader may also be utilized to read all information on computer screen.</p>	translated tests			
Oral response in native language	<p>Some ELLs may need to respond to test items orally in their native language. Native language responses may either be scored in the native language or translated into English prior to scoring.</p> <p><b>Standardization:</b> For validity purposes, oral responses are scribed and/or tape-recorded and entered onto the student’s test form by the test administrator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scribe: A scribe must be proficient in the student’s native language to fully capture the student’s oral responses. A scribe may not edit or alter student work in any way and must record word for word exactly what the student has dictated. The student must be able to edit what the scribe has written. If the test is translated into English before scoring, the translator may not edit the student responses.</li> <li>• Audio recording: A recording device may also be used to create an audio recording of a student’s narrative response. The oral response can be recorded as an analog or digital file.</li> </ul> <p> In a computer-based environment, speech-to-text software can be used to record student answers.</p>	Allow student to respond orally in native language; scribe response in native language			
		Allow student to respond orally in native language; translate response to English			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Speech-to-text software:</b> Speech-to-text conversion or voice recognition allows students to use their voices as input devices. If voice recognition is used to dictate text into the computer or to give commands to the computer (e.g., opening application programs, pulling down menus, or saving work), the computer software must be pre-programmed for the student's native language.</li> </ul> <p><b>Digital recording:</b> For students who have difficulty generating text in written form, a recording device may also be used to create an audio recording of a student's narrative response. The oral response can be recorded as a digital file by a computer-based content or test delivery system.</p>				
<b>Indirect Linguistic Support</b>					
Extended time	<p>Some students may need an extra amount of time to complete assignments, projects, and assessments</p> <p><b>Standardization:</b> Extended time may require a student's ELL team to determine a fairly specific amount of extra time as an instruction or assessment accommodation. For timed tests, a standard extension may be time and one half. This means that a student is allowed 90 minutes to take a test that normally has a 60-minute limit. Double time may also be allowed. Decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, keeping in mind the type of accommodations being provided, the level of English proficiency, and the type of assignments, assessments, and activities. Usually "unlimited" time is not appropriate or feasible. Sometimes students who request extended time end up not needing it because of the reduction in anxiety of simply knowing that plenty of time is available. Students who have too much time may lose interest and motivation to do their best work.</p>	Allow extended time			
Frequent breaks; flexible testing schedule	Frequent breaks or flexible testing schedule may be beneficial in reducing cognitive fatigue as ELLs experience heavy linguistic demands when they are tested in English.	Schedule breaks between cognitively demanding sections of an assessment.			

# TOOL 4

## ACCOMMODATIONS FROM THE STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

*Use this questionnaire to collect information about needed accommodations from the student's perspective. The questions can be completed independently or as part of an interview process. Whatever method is used however, be certain that the student understands the concept of an "accommodation," providing examples as necessary. Also, provide a list of possible accommodations for English language learners to give the student a good understanding of the range of accommodations that may be available.*

1. What parts of learning the English language are you good at (i.e., vocabulary, grammar, speaking, listening)?
- 

2. Tell me something in ESL class that you do well.
- 

*The things you said you can do well above are your strengths. For example, you may have mentioned vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, listening, drawing, or doing your homework as some things you can do well. If you said you really like the subject, have a good memory, and work hard in class, these are also examples of your strengths.*

3. What parts of learning English are hardest?
- 

4. Tell me something you do in ESL that is hard.
- 

*The things you said were hardest are areas you need to work on during the school year. For example, you might have listed reading the class textbook, taking tests, listening, remembering new information, doing homework, or doing work in groups. These are all things in which an accommodation may be helpful for you.*

5. In the list that follows, write down all of the challenges you currently have related to learning English. Then look at a list of accommodations for English language learners. Next to each class, write down what accommodation(s) you think might be helpful for you.

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# Challenge List

**Things that are hard**

**Accommodations**

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This questionnaire was adapted to be ELL-responsive from *A Student's Guide to the IEP* by the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (<http://nichcy.org/pubs/stuguide/st1book.htm>). Retrieved July 28, 2005.

# Tool 5

## Accommodation Criteria

*Use this form to determine if the student is eligible for ELL-responsive instruction and assessment accommodations.*

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Person filling out the form: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions	Yes (please describe)	No
Can you comment on the student's overall oral English language proficiency and level of English literacy?		
Has the student taken the English language proficiency test? If so, what is the student's score?		
Are you aware of the language(s) the student speaks in his/her family? If so, please specify the language(s) and the level of the student's oral proficiency and literacy in the language(s).		
Has the student received prior formal education before coming to the U.S.? Have there been gaps or interruptions?		
Has the student spent time in English speaking schools prior to enrolling in this school? If so, how much time?		

Do you know how much time the student has spent in your state? Are there mobility issues?		
Are you aware of the student's performance in other content areas and on other tests?		
Are there educational resources available to the student in his/her native language?		
Are you aware of any aspects of the student's home culture that may impact the accommodation selection process (taboos, gestures, kinesthetics, etc.)?		
Are there any other aspects of the student's characteristics that should be considered when selecting accommodations for the student?		



# Tool 6

## Parent Input in Accommodations

Questions Parents Should Ask about Accommodations in Instruction and Assessments

### About Instruction

- What linguistic support does my child need to access and reach the academic standards?
- How can my child and I advocate to receive accommodations/linguistic support not yet provided in instruction?
- Are the accommodations/linguistic support my child is receiving in instruction meant to be a temporary support? If yes, what is the plan to help determine when to phase them out?
- How are the various staff members who work with my child providing accommodations/linguistic support? (across regular, special education or other staff)

### About Accommodations

- What are the tests my child needs to take, what do they measure (e.g., regular or alternate academic standards), and for what purpose is each given?
- Are the accommodations allowed on state tests also provided for district tests?
- Can my child participate in part of an assessment with or without accommodations?
- Are there consequences for allowing certain changes to how my child participates in a test? How will my child's test scores count?
- Do consequences of accommodations vary by type of test?

## Questions for Instruction and Assessment

Is the need for each accommodation documented in my child's ELL plan?

Are there too many or too few accommodations being provided?

What are my child's preferences for specific accommodations?

If my child needs accommodations, how will they be provided?

If an accommodation used in instruction is not allowed on a test, is there another option to support the student that is allowed? If yes, has it been documented and tried in instruction first? If no, how is my child being prepared to work without the accommodation before the test?

### Other questions you may have

Adapted to be ELL-responsive from *Minnesota Manual for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities in Instruction and Assessment*. Questions are based in part on questions and content from: NCLD's Parent Advocacy Brief NCLB: Determining Appropriate Assessment Accommodations for Students with Disabilities, and Testing Students With Disabilities: Practical Strategies for Complying With District and State Requirements, 2nd ed. (2003) By Martha Thurlow, Judy Elliott, and James Ysseldyke.

# Tool 7

## Accommodation Use in the Classroom

Use this chart to track different aspects of how a student uses an accommodation in your classroom. This will help inform decision making on assessment accommodations.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What accommodation(s) does the student use in the classroom? List them under "accommodation" in the chart. Then follow the questions in the chart.

Questions	List Accommodation(s)				
1. Is it noted in student's ELL plan?					
2. For what task(s) is it used? (e.g., task type* or content/standard)					
3. Does the student use it for that task every time? Note how often.					
4. Does the student use it alone or with assistance? (e.g., aide, peers?)					
5. Notes: (e.g., does one accommodation seem more effective used with another on a task, etc.)					

\*How taking in or responding to information presented, solving or organizing information, specific content/standards being learned or assessed, etc.

# Tool 8

## After-Test Accommodations Questions

*Use this form after a test to interview a student about the accommodation(s) provided, used, whether it was useful and whether it should be used again. Also note any adjustments or difficulties experienced by the student in either how the accommodation was administered or in using the accommodation during the assessment.*

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Accommodation used: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions	Test Taken (List)			
Was the accommodation used?  Comments:	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Was the accommodation useful?  Comments:	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Were there any difficulties with the accommodation? (Are adjustments needed)?  Comments:	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Should the accommodation be used again?  Comments:	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_

# TOOL 9

## ASSESSMENT ACCOMMODATIONS PLAN

### Student Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

### Case Information

ESL/Bilingual Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

School Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Building/School: \_\_\_\_\_

General Education Teacher(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment accommodations that student needs for this assessment and date arranged:

Accommodations	Date Arranged
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
Comments: _____	_____

Person responsible for arranging accommodations and due date:

Person Responsible	Due Date	Date Arranged
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____
Comments: _____	_____	_____

Room assignment for assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Planners for this process (signatures): \_\_\_\_\_

Adapted to be ELL-responsive from Scheiber, B., & Talpers, J. (1985). *Campus Access for Learning Disabled Students: A Comprehensive Guide*. Pittsburgh: Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities.

# Tool 10

## State Assessment Program

ELL Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Content Area	Participation in the Assessment Without Accommodations	Participation in the Assessment with Direct Linguistic Support Accommodations	Participation in the Assessment with Indirect Linguistic Support Accommodations	Comments

# TOOL 11

## LOGISTICS PLANNING CHECKLIST

*Directions: This Logistics Planning Checklist can be used in the planning and implementation of assessment accommodations for an individual student. Use the checklist by indicating Y (Yes), N (No), or NA (Not Applicable).*

<b>Accommodations Throughout the Academic Year</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>NA</b>
1. Accommodations are documented by the teacher.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Student uses accommodations regularly and evaluates use.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. A master accommodation plan/database listing assessment accommodation needs for all students tested is updated regularly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **Preparation for Test Day**

4. Special test editions are ordered for individual students based on information contained in the master accommodation plan (e.g., audio tape, translated test versions).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Test administrators/proctors receive a list of accommodations needs for students they will supervise (list comes from the master accommodations plan/database).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Adult supervision is arranged and test administrators receive training for each student receiving accommodations in small group or individual settings, including extended time (with substitutes available).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Trained readers and interpreters are arranged for individual students (with substitutes available).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Special equipment is arranged and checked for correct operation (e.g., tape recorder).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **Accommodations on the Day of the Test**

9. All eligible students receive accommodations as determined by their teacher.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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- |   |                          |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 10. Provision of accommodations is recorded by test administrator.                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Substitute providers of accommodations are available as needed (e.g., interpreters, readers). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Plans are made to replace defective equipment.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### **Consideration After the Day of the Test**

- |   |                          |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 13. Responses are transferred to scannable answer sheets using special equipment and adapted test forms and response documents. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. All equipment is returned to appropriate locations.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Students who take make-up test receive needed accommodations.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. Effectiveness of accommodation use is evaluated by test administrators and students, and plans are made for improvement.    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



# TOOL 12

## Accommodations Journal for Teachers

One way to keep track of what accommodations work for an ELL student is to support the student in keeping an “accommodations journal.” The journal lets the student be “in charge” and could be kept up to date through regular consultation with an ESL/bilingual teacher or other staff members. Just think how much easier it would be for an ELL team to decide which accommodations to document if the student kept a journal documenting all of these things:

- accommodations used by the student in the classroom and on tests;
- test and assignment results when accommodations are used and not used;
- student’s perception of how well an accommodation “works”;
- effective combinations of accommodations;
- difficulties of accommodation use; and
- perceptions of teachers and others about how the accommodation appears to be working.

*In the spaces provided below, design and organize the use of an accommodations journal for one of your students. Answer these questions:*

1. What would you include as headings for the journal?

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2. When would the student make entries in the journal, and what types of support would the student need to make these entries?

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3. With whom would the student share journal entries, and when would it be done?

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