



Teachers and Students’ Experiences with Accessibility Features and Accommodations in the Classroom

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Outline

- Overview of activities supported by a National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) affiliated project: Data Informed Accessibility - Making Optimal Needs-based Decisions (DIAMOND) Project
- Accessibility Paradigm Shift
- Teacher Interviews and Student Demonstrations

Why the need for these activities?

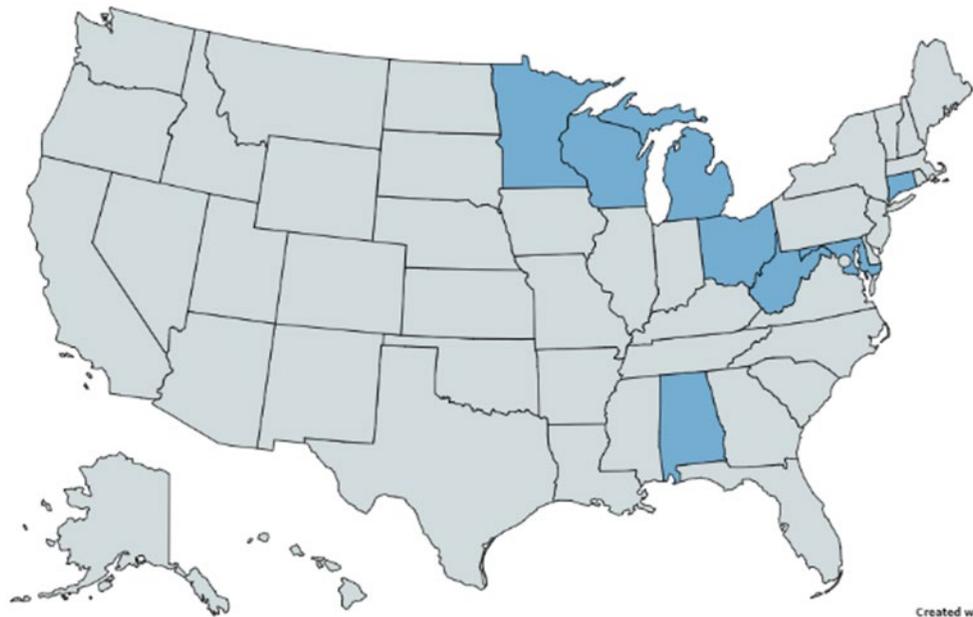
- Sometimes educators make decisions about accessibility features and accommodations based on:
 - Feasibility
 - Placement information
 - Demographic information

What is the purpose of the activities?

- To improve:
 - validity of assessment results and assessment interpretations for students
 - guidelines for educators
 - educators' decisions about accessibility features and accommodations

Partners

- Funded by a USDE Enhanced Assessment Instruments Grant
- Collaboration between the National Center on Educational Outcomes and the departments of education of nine states



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- Alabama
- Connecticut
- Maryland
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Ohio
- West Virginia
- Wisconsin
- U.S. Virgin Islands

Project Research Activities

- **Conducting teacher interviews and student demonstrations**
- Facilitating online focus groups with teachers
- Analyzing state assessment data
- Hosting a forum with national experts to develop guidelines
- Creating a training module and supplemental materials
- Piloting and revising the professional development materials

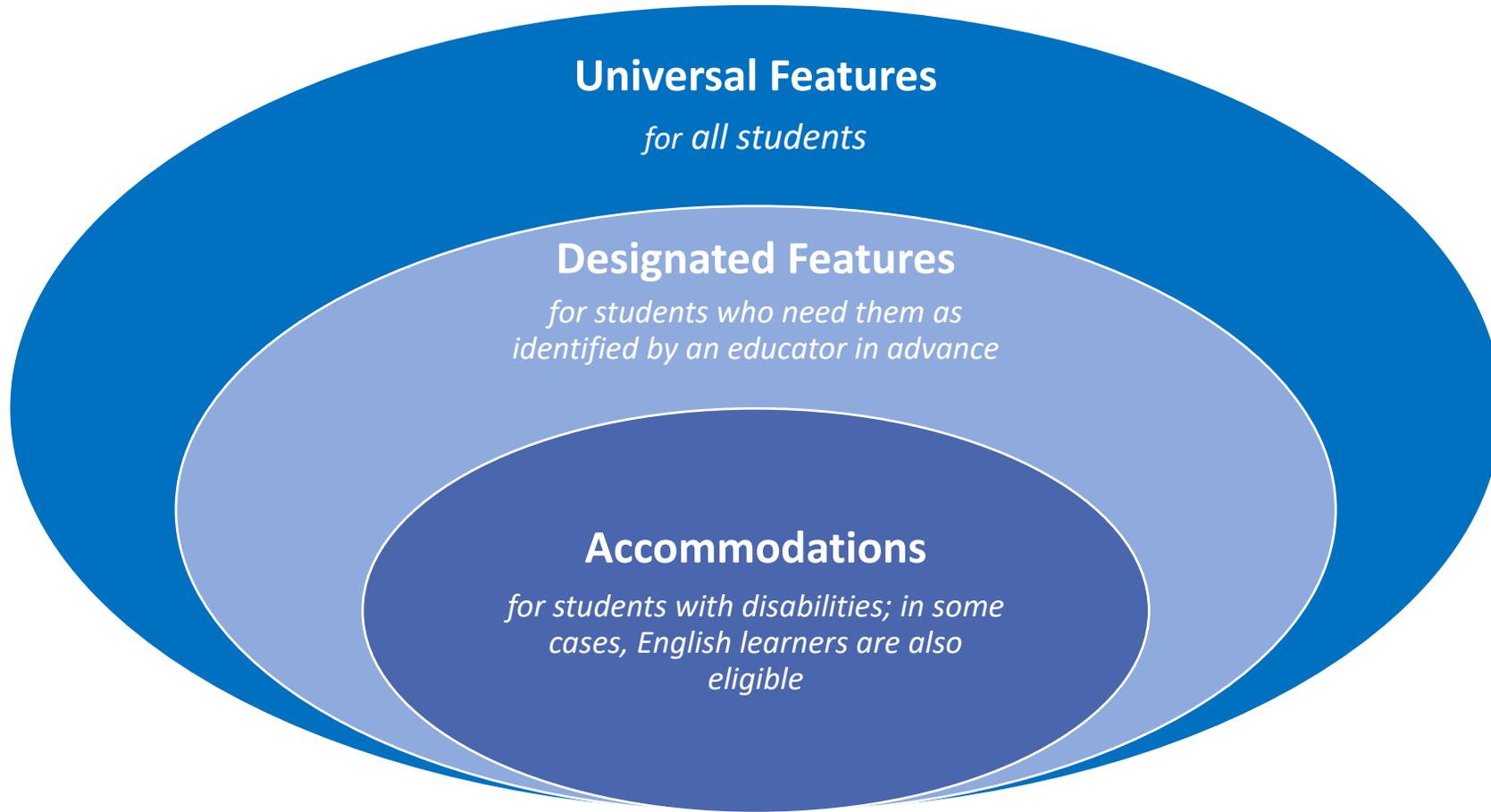
Accessibility Paradigm Shift

- The change started without requirements in law.
- The federal government funded consortia of states to develop a general assessment, alternate assessment, and English language proficiency (ELP) assessment.
- These consortia used principles of universal design and opened up the concept of accessibility.

What Do We Mean by Accessibility?

- Accessibility means providing students with tools or supports that level the playing field
- Some examples:
 - ASL video for a deaf student
 - Extended time for an English learner
 - Answer masking for a student with ADHD
 - Separate setting for struggling student

Tiers of Accessibility



How does the shift impact teachers and students?

- Increase computer-based assessments
- Improve educational outcomes
- Increase teacher decisions
- Include more students

Developing a Common Language - Accessibility Features and Accommodations

- >50 accessibility features and accommodations
- Different names.
 - Example: one support that allows students to cross out answers that seem incorrect is called strikethrough, eliminate answer choices, and answer choice eliminator on different tests.

Teacher Interviews and Student Demonstrations

Purpose:

- Instructional accessibility features and accommodations decisions
- Aid student learning
- Student reactions
- Teachers' perspectives, who represent different professional roles, school levels, and school locations
- Students' perspectives, who represent different grades and different disabilities

Research Questions

- What accessibility features and accommodations do students use that help their performance in their class?
- What are the reasons teachers and students select specific accessibility features and accommodations?
- What barriers do students and teachers face in using accessibility features and accommodations?

Method

- Recruitment - phone interviews
- Criteria for participants
 - Ethnically and linguistically diverse
 - States
- In-person teacher interviews
 - General education teachers
 - Special education teachers
- In-person student demonstrations
 - Grades
 - Disabilities

Findings: Three themes

1. Student grade-level differences in the types of supports
2. Reasons for using selected supports
3. Differences between teachers' and students' perspectives about supports

Theme 1: student grade-level differences in the types of supports

- Support individual needs
- Content areas
- Manual supports (e.g., highlighter, magnifier)
- Technology-based supports (iPad, Google Read&Write, zoom)

Theme 2: Reasons for using selected supports

- Reading text
- Understanding content
- Finding information
- Answer questions
- Readability (e.g., closed captioning, magnification, color contrast)
- Follow teacher's instruction (e.g., Smartboard)

Theme 3: Differences between teachers and students' perspectives about supports

Students:

- School vs. home access
- Classroom vs. state assessments access

Teachers:

- Implementation challenges
- Cost
- Collaboration
- Professional development

Implications for decision considerations

- Identify relevant accessibility features and accommodations that students will use to help them in class.
- Identify the reasons teachers and students give for selected accessibility features and accommodations that are used or not used in class.
- Identify options to remove barriers students and teachers face in the provision of accessibility features and accommodations.

Conclusion

- Individualized student needs
- Dynamic shifts (e.g., grades, needs, technology)
- Students' value of supports on usability and helpfulness
- Informed responsibility
- Collaborative decisions
- Inclusive practices

Reflection points

- What factors may account for differences between grade-level accessibility features and supports and perspectives between teachers and students?
- What factors can influence the selection of accessibility features and accommodation that impact students and teachers?

Questions or Comments?

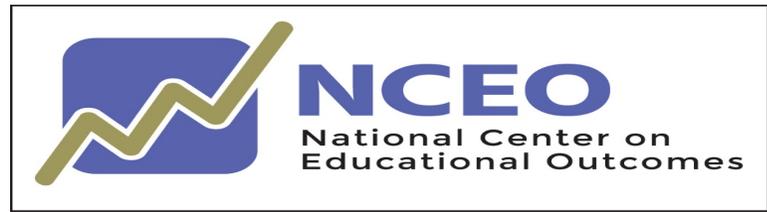


<https://nceo.info/>

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For More Information



Visit the project's webpage on the NCEO website:
<https://nceo.info/About/projects/diamond/home>

Student Demonstrations of Their Use of Accessibility Features and Accommodations
<https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/DIAMONDInPersonInterviewReport.pdf>



Educators' Perspectives on Classroom Implementation of Accessibility Features and Accommodations
<https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/DIAMONDEducatorPhoneSurveys.pdf>



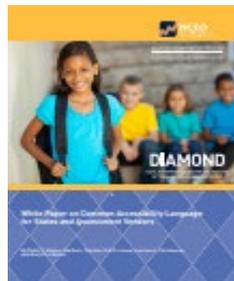
Educators' Experiences With and Attitudes Toward Accessibility Features and Accommodations
<https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/DIAMONDEducatorSurveyReport.pdf>



Educators Thoughts on Making Decisions About Accessibility for All Students
<https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/DIAMONDFocusGroupReport.pdf>



White Paper on Common Accessibility Language for States and Assessment Vendors
<https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/DIAMONDWhitePaper.pdf>



Data Informed Accessibility: A Review of the Literature
<https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/DIAMONDLiteratureReviewReport.pdf>



Additional Educators' Perspectives on Classroom Implementation of Accessibility Features and Accommodations
<https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/DIAMONDEducatorPhoneSurveysAddendumReport.pdf>

