



The DIAMOND Project: Using Accessibility Supports to Improve Educational Outcomes for English Learners

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Outline and Goals

Accessibility Paradigm Shift

- *Understand how a new way of thinking about accessibility creates new opportunities and challenges*

DIAMOND Project Overview

- *Understand what the DIAMOND project is*

Relevance to ESL Educators in Minnesota

- *Understand how the DIAMOND project could be helpful to ESL educators in the state*
- 



Accessibility Paradigm Shift

What Do We Mean by Accessibility?

- Braille
- ASL Video
- Human Signer
- Human Scribe
- Extended Time
- Color Contrast
- Text-to-Speech
- Test-Level Zoom
- Bilingual Dictionary
- Answer Masking

Accessibility Paradigm Shift

- Started without requirements in law
- Consortia of states started to create assessments after passage of Race-to-the-Top in 2010
- The teams assembled to do this:
 - Used principles of universal design
 - Opened up concept of accessibility to include all students

Tiers of Accessibility



Universal Features

for all students

Designated Features

*for students who need them as
identified by an educator in
advance*

Accommodations

*for students with disabilities; in
some cases, ELs are also eligible*

*Accessibility Features &
Accommodations*



Accessibility Features and Accommodations

- Consortia developed general, alternate, and ELP assessments
- All of the assessment consortia have slightly different lists of accessibility features and accommodations
- Across consortia, there are around 55 distinct accessibility features and accommodations



DIAMOND Project Overview

Need for DIAMOND Project

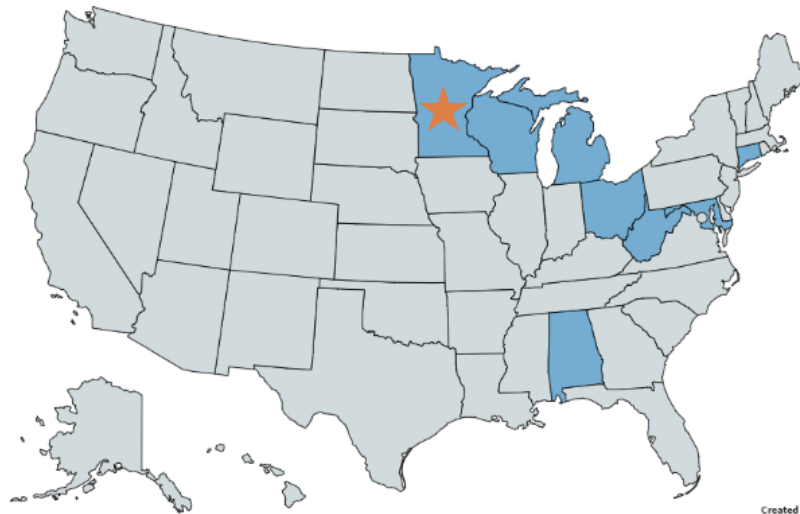
- Some educators select accessibility features and accommodations based factors other than students' individual characteristics and preferences:
 - Feasibility, e.g. selecting only supports that are readily available
 - Placement information, e.g. selecting the same supports for all below-level readers
 - Demographic information, e.g. selecting the same supports for all English learners

DIAMOND Project

- The Data Informed Accessibility: Making Optimal Needs-based Decisions (DIAMOND) Project started in response to this issue.
- The goal of the DIAMOND project is to improve validity of assessment results and interpretations for students with documented needs. It will do this by developing guidelines for educators to make informed decisions about accessibility features and accommodations.

Partners

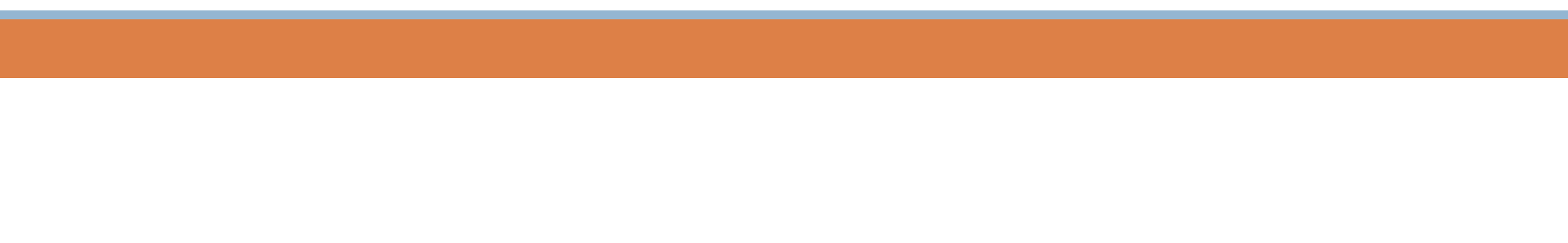
- Funded by a USDE Enhanced Assessment Instruments Grant
- Collaboration between the National Center on Educational Outcomes and the departments of education of nine states



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

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Research Activities

1. Facilitate online focus groups with teachers
 2. Conduct teacher interviews and student demonstrations
 3. Analyze state assessment statistics
 4. Host a forum with national experts to develop guidelines
 5. Create a training module and supplemental materials
 6. Pilot and revise the professional development materials
- 

Activity 1: Focus Groups

- One focus group per state
- Eight teachers per focus group: four general education, two special education, and two ESL education
- Teachers' input about their strategies for selecting and using accessibility features and accommodations for all students
- Starting this fall, with Alabama and Ohio first



Activity 2: Teacher Interviews and Student Demonstrations

- Teacher interviews for deeper view into how they use accessibility features and accommodations during instruction and on assessments
- Student demonstrations for their perspective on what works well
- Starting this winter





Relevance to ESL Educators in Minnesota

Relevance to ESL Educators in Minnesota

- DIAMOND will help determine:
 - Which accessibility features and accommodations are commonly used with ELs
 - Where there are gaps related to accessibility in teacher training and professional development
 - What ESL teachers see as the biggest challenges and opportunities when it comes to accessibility
- All of this will help build field-specific ways of thinking about accessibility

Relevance to ESL Educators in Minnesota



Universal Features

for all students

Designated Features

*for students who need them as
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Accommodations

*for students with disabilities; in
some cases, ELs are also eligible*

- DIAMOND may uncover differences in how educators in WIDA states think about accessibility
- Minnesota belongs to WIDA, a consortium that develops an ELP assessment
- WIDA lacks a middle tier of accessibility

Educator Survey

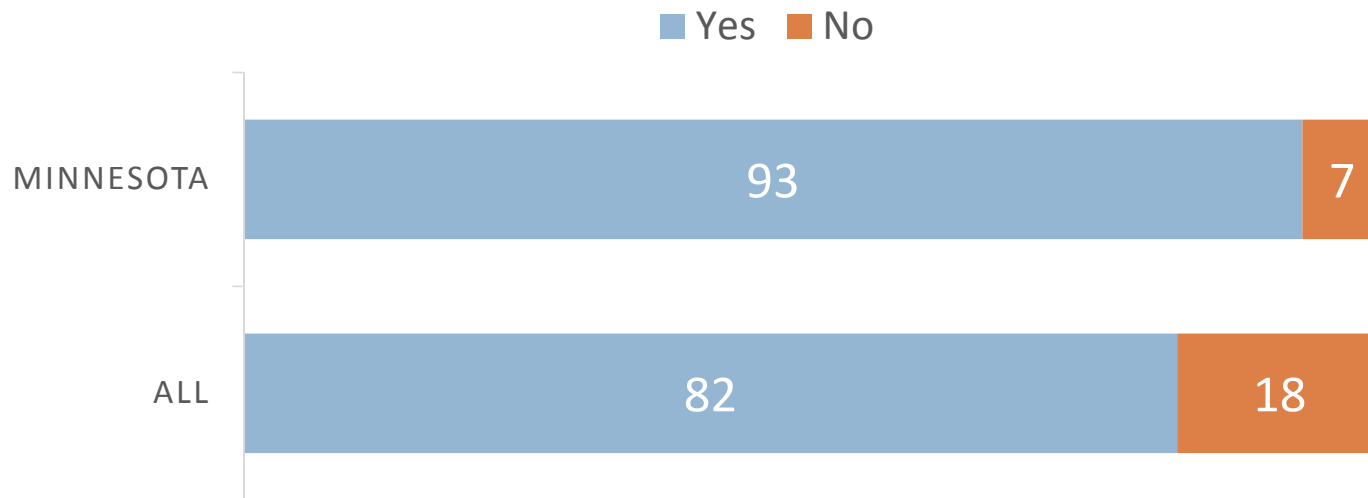
- DIAMOND started with a survey of educators in all member states
- 2250 participants: most were general education or special education teachers
- Educators answered questions about their experiences and attitudes
- Educators marked all the accessibility features and accommodations that they had ever used with students

Discussion in Pairs

- Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 - *Students usually receive the optimal accessibility features and accommodations.*
 - *I received helpful professional development on accessibility features and accommodations as a teacher.*
- Why or why not?

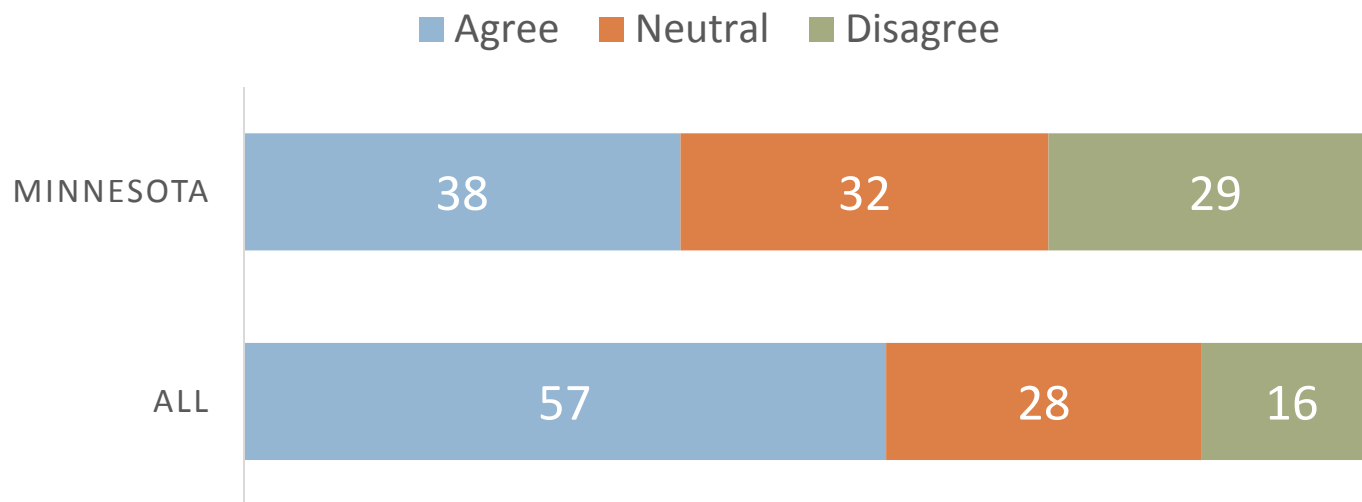
Interesting Results for Minnesota Educators

- *Have you contributed to making decisions about a student's designated features or accommodations in the past three years?*



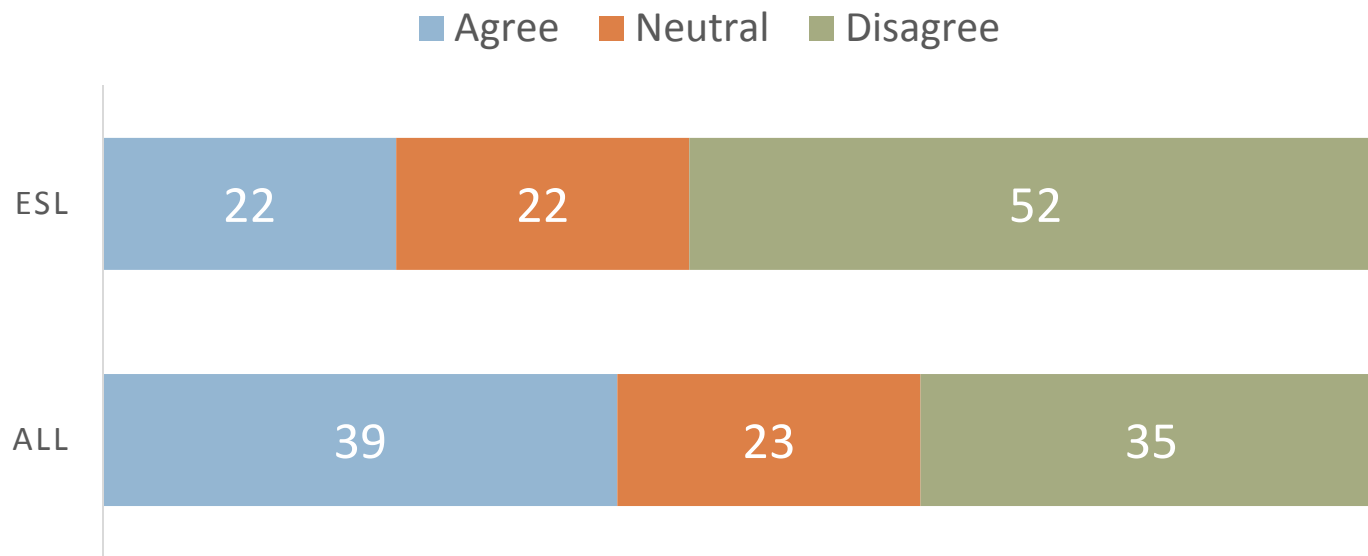
Interesting Results for Minnesota Educators

- *Students usually receive the optimal accessibility features and accommodations.*



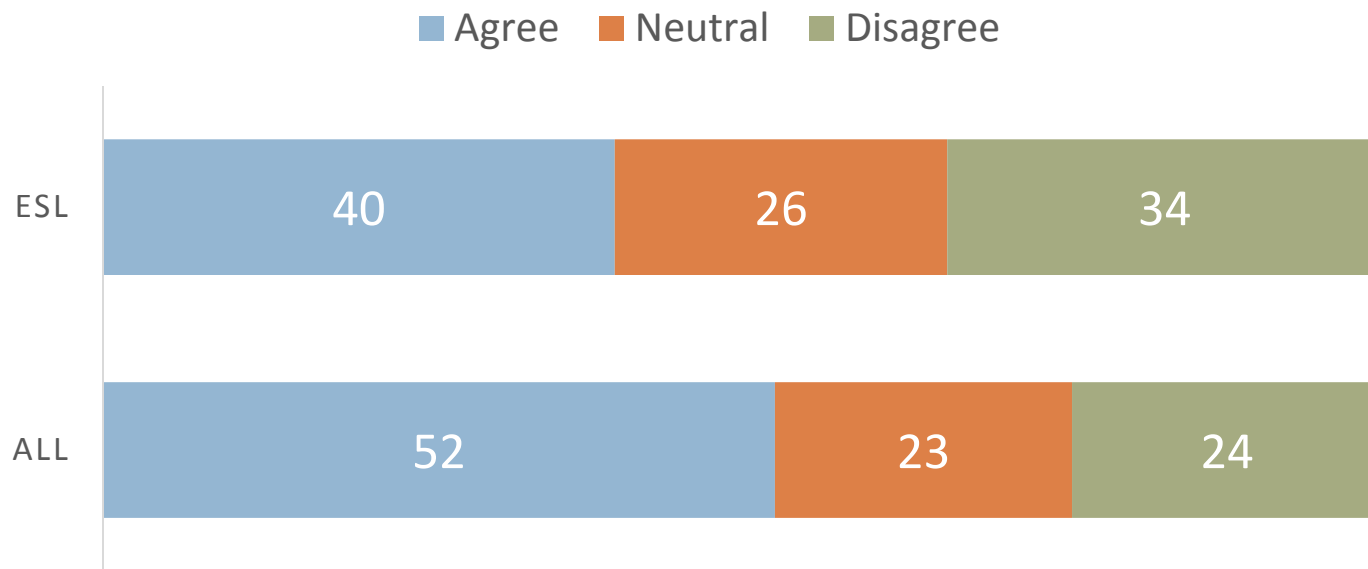
Interesting Trends for ESL Educators

- I received helpful training on accessibility features and accommodations during my undergraduate or graduate study.*



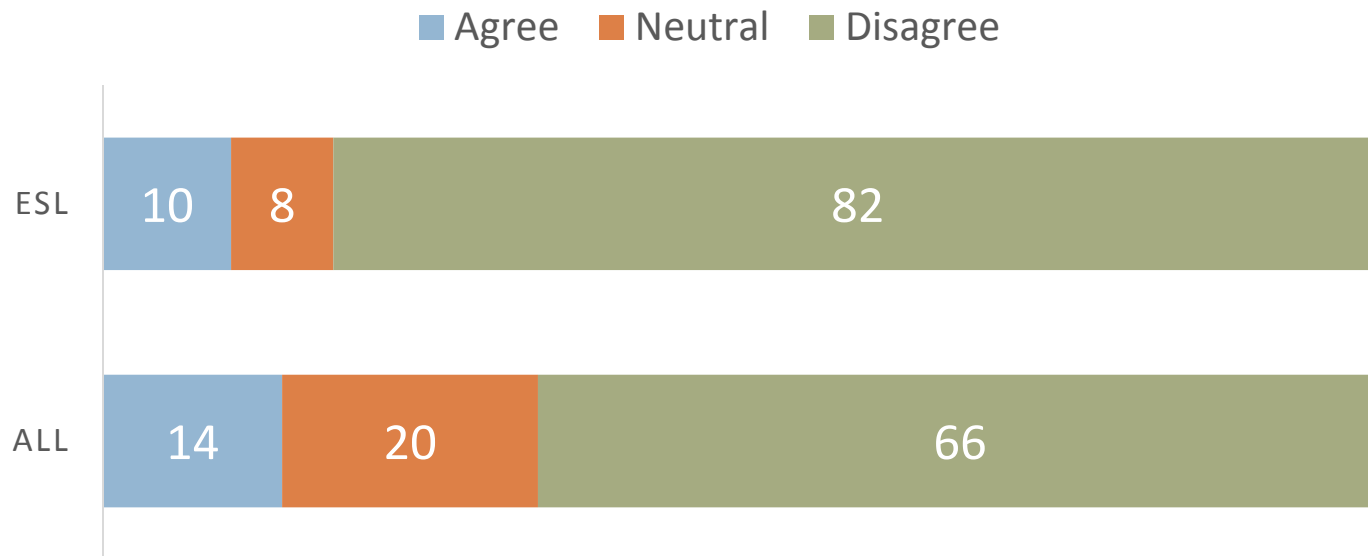
Interesting Trends for ESL Educators

- I received helpful professional development on accessibility features and accommodations as a teacher.*



Interesting Trends for ESL Educators

- *Accessibility features and accommodations give some students an unfair advantage.*



Interesting Trends for ESL Educators

TOP SUPPORTS FOR ALL EDUCATORS

1. Separate setting
2. Extended time
3. Human reader
4. Student reads test aloud
5. Paper-and-pencil test
6. Answer masking
7. Multiplication table
8. Special calculator
9. General masking
10. Scribe

TOP SUPPORTS FOR ESL EDUCATORS

1. Extended time
2. Native language translation of directions
3. Separate setting
4. Bilingual dictionary
5. Human reader
6. Student reads test aloud
7. Paper-and-pencil test
8. Answer masking
9. Unlimited replays
10. Test-level zoom

Upcoming Research Activities

- Online focus groups this fall
 - About 60 minutes per day for four days
 - Compensated
- In-person interviews and student demonstrations this spring
 - About 60 minutes with teachers and 30 minutes with students
 - Compensated
- If you'd like more information, leave your name and email