



Defining and Refining Accommodations Appropriate for English Language Learners

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ADDRESSING ACHIEVEMENT GAPS: LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND
EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF ELLS
EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE
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Topics Addressed

- Why are test accommodations necessary?
- What is an accommodation?
 - What is the research base?
- What are challenges for policy makers?
- What are challenges for teachers?



Why Are Test Accommodations Necessary?

Heterogeneity of ELL Population

Student	Proficiency		Literacy		Recent Instruction						Formal Schooling		Age		
	L1	L2	L1	L2	L1			L2			L1	L2	Elem.	Middle	High
					R	W	M	R	W	M					
Saram	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			
Cesar	✓							✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
Sabrina															
Cerissa															
Helena															
Johann															
Julisa															



Problem of Accurately Assessing ELLs Academic Knowledge

Standards-based reform and legislation require states to be accountable for the progress of ELLs.

ELLs' reduced English language proficiency may be an obstacle to measuring their content knowledge independently of their familiarity with the language of the test.



Role of Accommodations

Address the heterogeneity of ELLs needing to access the content of a test

Reduce construct irrelevant variance due to English language proficiency

Assess the content without altering the construct being tested



What is an accommodation?

An Accommodation for an ELL is....

is intended to help the student demonstrate his or her knowledge of test content without altering the test construct.

An accommodation

- involves changes to testing materials, testing procedures, or the testing situation to allow the student to participate meaningfully in an assessment
- addresses the unique linguistic and socio-cultural needs of the student without altering the test construct
- provides results that are comparable to unaccommodated assessments

Litmus Test:

Is the Accommodation ELL-Responsive ?

Direct Linguistic Support Accommodations

- Involve adjustments to the text of the assessment with the intent of reducing the linguistic load necessary to access the content of the test.
- Can be delivered in English or the native language

Indirect Linguistic Support Accommodations

- Involve adjustments to the conditions under which a test is taken to allow ELLs to more efficiently use their linguistic resources
- Includes adjustments to test environment and test schedule

Rivera, Collum, Shafer Willner, & Sia (2006)



Litmus Test

Does the Accommodation...

	Use	If Yes, Don't use
Alter the construct to be measured?		√
Reduce construct irrelevant variance due to a student's limited English language proficiency?	√	
Differentiate among students with different levels of English language proficiency?		
Maintain score comparability?	√	
Benefit ELLs and not non-ELLs?	√	
	√	



What is the Research Base?

Commonly Studied Accommodations

Direct Linguistic Support Accommodations in English



Dictionary — Provides a general definition of a word



Glossary — Provides an explanation of a word (e.g., Pop-up computer delivered glossary — a click on a word brings up its definition)



Plain English — Reduces linguistic complexity (i.e., grammatical structure of

sentences and vocabulary are refined to make test items

Commonly Studied Accommodations (cont.)

Direct Linguistic Support Accommodations Native Language

- ✓ **Bilingual dictionary** — provides equivalent meanings of a term in another language; translates but does not define
- ✓ **Bilingual glossary** — provides translation of words in specific content area
- ✓ **Dual language or side-by-side test** — test is presented in two languages; for essays, student chooses language in which to write
- ✓ **Native language test** — full test is provided in a non-English language



Commonly Studied Accommodations (cont.)

Indirect Linguistic Support Accommodations

- ✓ Extra time
- ✓ Small group administration



Promising Direct Linguistic Support Accommodations

Dictionaries

Glossaries

Plain English

Native language

+ Extra Time



What Research Has to Say About Mapping Accommodations to ELP Level

Lower levels of ELP

Native language appears to be an effective accommodation for ELLs

- With literacy skills in native language, *and*
- Receiving instruction in native language

Intermediate levels of ELP

Plain English

Customized glossaries

Pennock-Roman & Rivera (2007)



How is the Research Base Being Extended?

GW-CEEE LEP Partnership Project

Conducting descriptive study of
2006-2007 state assessment policies

Accommodations Allowed for ELLs in 2006-2007 State Assessment Policies

109 total accommodations

- Direct linguistic support accommodations in English and Native language
- Indirect linguistic support accommodations
- **29** disabilities
- **4** test administrator qualifications
- **7** test preparation and motivation



Types of Direct Linguistic Support Accommodations in State Policies

English

- Plain English
- Repetition

- Reference Material
- Response
- Clarification

Native Language

- Translation

- Reference Material
- Response
- Clarification

Types of Indirect Linguistic Support Accommodations in State Policies

- Test schedule
- Test environment



GW-CEEE

LEP Partnership Project

Conducting Delphi study with expert group

Rank order accommodations most appropriate for ELLs

Match accommodations to different levels of English language proficiency

Highly Ranked Direct Linguistic Support Accommodations in English

Plain English

- Plain English version of test
- Read aloud test items in plain English
- Written directions in plain English
- Read aloud directions in plain English

Repetition

- Read directions aloud
- Repeat directions
- Read items aloud
- Audio tape/CD of test items

Clarification

- Explain/clarify directions

Reference Materials

- Customized English-language glossary
- Commercial English-language dictionary



Highly Ranked Direct Linguistic Support Accommodations in the Native Language

Reference Materials

- Customized dual-language word list or glossary
- Customized pop-up electronic glossary
- Commercial word-to-word dual-language dictionary
- Commercial dual-language dictionary that contains explanations, definitions, pictures or examples of terminology

Written Translation

- Written directions in native language
- Side-by-side written dual-language versions of the test
- Translated written version of the test

Oral Translation

- Audio tape/CD of test items in native language
- Read aloud oral script of directions in native language
- Audio tape/CD of test directions in native language
- Clarify/explain directions in native language

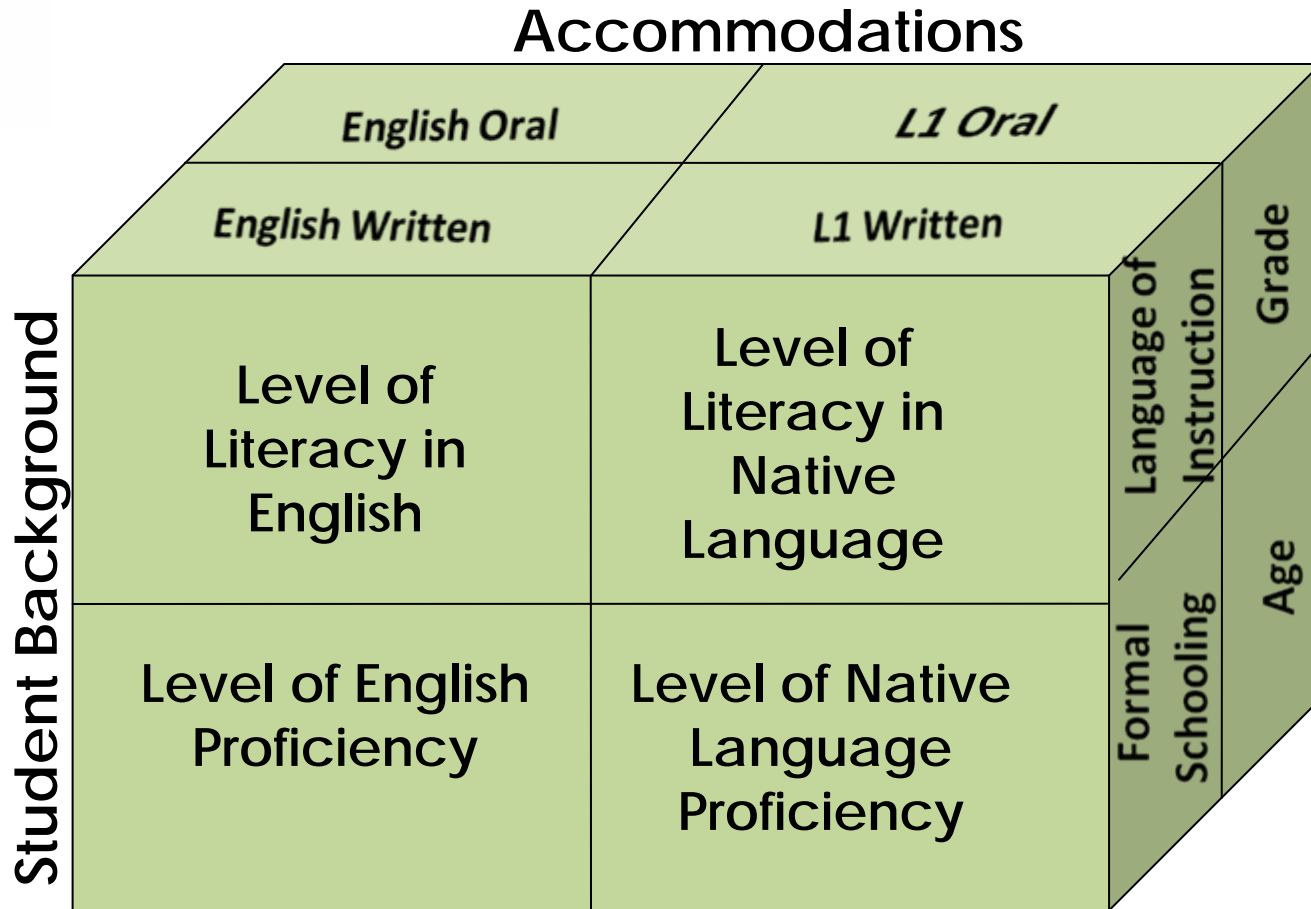


Indirect Linguistic Support Accommodations

Timing/Scheduling

- Extended time
- Multiple sessions for subtests

Mapping Accommodations to Student Background: A Multi-Dimensional Puzzle



What are Key Challenges for Policy Makers?

Language in State Policies

Dictionaries	Read Aloud
<p>State 1: “Approved bilingual dictionary limited to those that have word-to-word or word-to-words translations. Students may not use electronic translation devices.”</p>	<p>State 4: “Tests are read to the student by the test administrator (with the exception of reading passages). Note: Readers must read test items/questions to the student word-for-word exactly as written. Readers may not clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance to students regarding the meaning of words, intent of test questions, or responses to test items/questions.”</p>
<p>State 2: “bilingual dictionary as needed” State 3: “dictionary and extended time”</p>	<p>State 5: “reading the test in English only (any content area, sub-test or prompt)”</p>



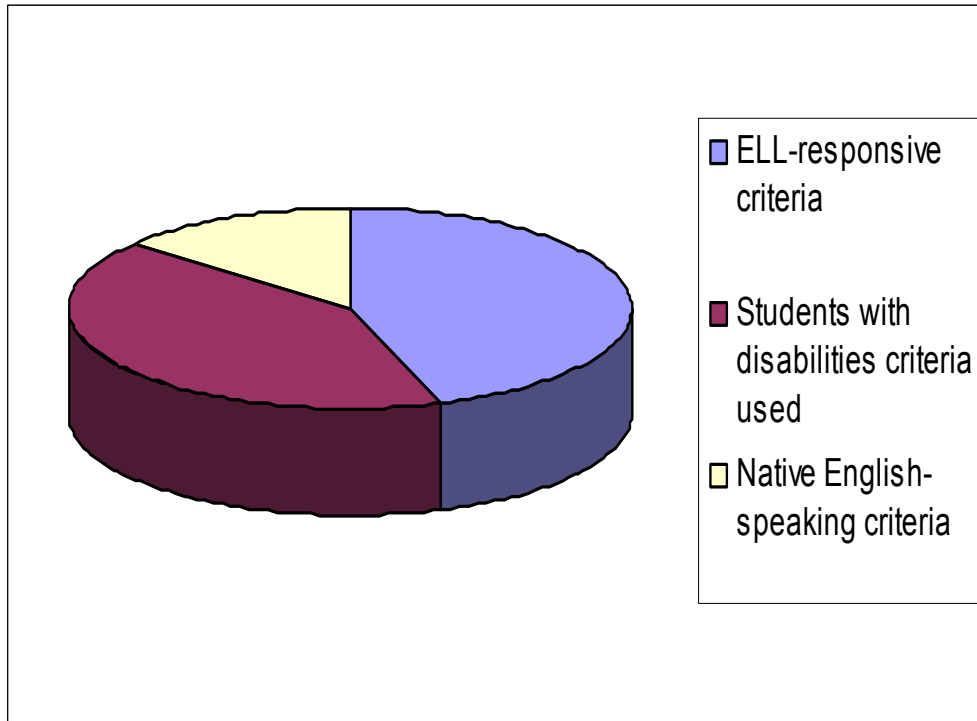
Using ELL-Responsive Criteria to Make the Decision to Accommodate

“Generally, only special education students are allowed to use accommodations on large-scale tests (e.g., per state guidelines).”

“To qualify for Special Ed is the only way to get an accommodation [on the state assessment]. If a student is to be exempted, the state must assess that student. IEP is the only mechanism for granting exemption or allowing accommodation.”

Using ELL-Responsive Criteria to Assign Accommodations

Study of ELL Accommodation Decision-Making in TUDA for NAEP 2005:



Decisions regarding the accommodation of ELLs split almost equally between ELL-responsive criteria and criteria intended for students with disabilities

Shafer Willner, Rivera, & Acosta (2007)



Challenges for Teachers

Assigning Accommodations

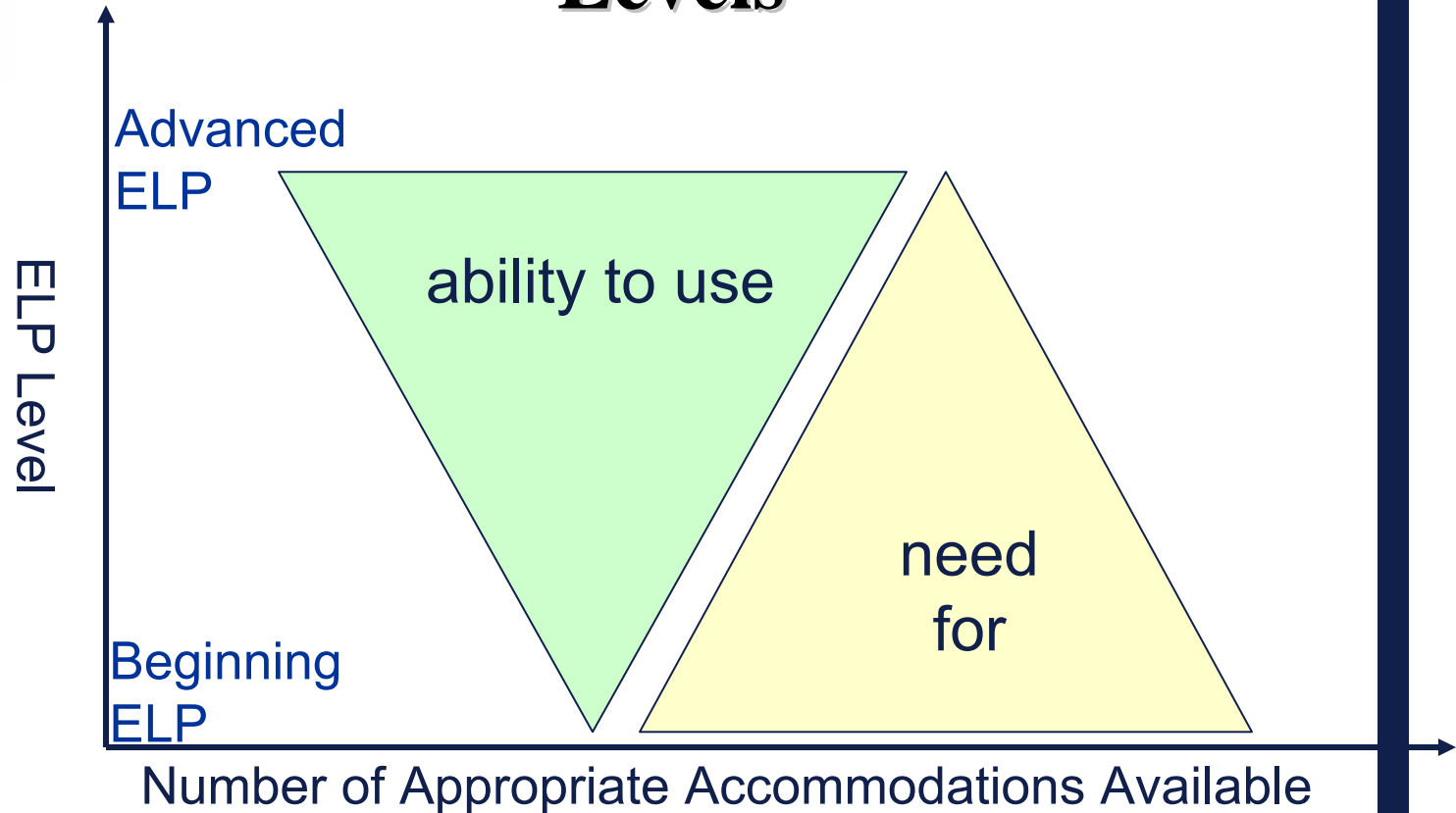
ELLs with assigned accommodations matched to their linguistic and cultural needs scored higher than

- ELLs with “incomplete” or “laundry list” of accommodations (assignment done without matching accommodations to ELL-responsive criteria)
- ELLs with no accommodations

Kopriva, Emick, Hipolito-Delgado, and Cameron (2007)



Matching Accommodations To English Language Proficiency Levels





Knowing Individual Students

Must have background information about individual students

Select only accommodations likely to address the individual student's needs



Knowing the Questions to Ask

What is the student's:

- Age and grade level
- English language proficiency level?
- Literacy in L1 and L2?
- Prior schooling experience?

Has schooling been interrupted?

In what language(s) has the student received instruction in the content area to be assessed?



Thank You



QUESTIONS?



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