

Research-based Recommendations for the Use of Accommodations in Large-Scale Assessments - 2012 Update



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Overview

One way to facilitate the valid participation of ELLs in large-scale assessments is to provide them with appropriate accommodations to the testing conditions. A meta-analysis of relevant research was conducted in 2006 to address the question of which accommodations can and should be recommended for use with ELLs—those that are effective and valid, and the conditions under which they are so. This 2012 report presents results from a new quantitative synthesis of research on the effectiveness and validity of test accommodations for English language learners (ELLs) taking large-scale assessments. This new publication provides an update to the 2006 report, incorporating evidence from nine studies not previously included and providing updated recommendations for educators and policy-makers. Results drawn from 20 studies (including, in total, more than 33,000 students, of whom more than 9,400 were ELLs) were aggregated using meta-analysis. The studies were primarily conducted using researcher-created tests of mathematics and science with items drawn from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in grades 4 and 8.

Kieffer, M.; Rivera, M.; Francis, D.J. (2012). *Practical guidelines for the education of English language learners: Research-based recommendations for the use of accommodations in large-scale assessments. 2012 update*. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction.

What are Accommodations?

Changes to standard test administration procedures, including:

- how the assessment is presented to the student;
- how the student is allowed to respond;
- any equipment or materials to be used;
- the extent of time allowed to complete the test; and
- changes to the environment in which the student takes the test

Recommendations

- Use simplified English in test design, eliminating irrelevant language demands
- Provide English dictionaries and glossaries
- Match the language of tests and accommodations to the language of instruction
- Provide extended time or use untimed tests

Selected References

- Francis, D., J., Rivera, M.O., Lesaux, N., Kieffer, M., & Rivera, H. (2006). *Practical Guidelines for the education of English language learners: Research-based recommendations for the use of accommodations in large-scale assessments*. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction.
- Kieffer, M.J., Lesaux, N.K., Rivera, M., & Francis, D.J. (2009). Accommodations for English language learners on large-scale assessments: A meta-analysis on effectiveness and validity. *Review of Educational Research*, 79, 1168-1201.
- Pennock-Roman, M., & Rivera, C. (2011). Mean effects of test accommodations for ELLs and non-ELLs: A meta-analysis of experimental studies. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 30, 10-28.

Accommodations Used in Selected Studies

- Simplified English**
 - Using linguistic changes in the vocabulary and grammar of test items to eliminate irrelevant complexity while keeping the content the same.
- English dictionaries or glossaries**
 - Adding definitions or simple paraphrases for potentially unfamiliar or difficult words in test booklets.
- Bilingual dictionaries or glossaries**
 - Providing access to dictionaries or glossaries with words written in English and the student's native language.
- Extended time**
 - Providing additional time to process the language of the test or to use another accommodation.
- Dual language booklets/
Dual language booklets read aloud**
 - Changing the format and access to test booklets.
- Native language tests**
 - Adapting tests to the student's primary language.
- Small group administration**
 - Testing or teaching a small number of students under adult supervision in a separate room
- Reading the test aloud**
 - Reading directions and/or items orally to the student in English or in the native language.