

An Overview on Administering Testing Accommodations to Students with Disabilities: D181 Instructional Assistants

Kelly Lyell, Ph.D., NCSP
School Psychologist
klyell@d181.org

Who can receive testing accommodations?

- Students with IEP's
- Students with 504's
- (Some students receiving ELL services)



What testing accommodations can students receive?

- **ONLY those listed explicitly in their IEP/504**
 - These accommodations can be different for classroom based assessments vs. district vs. state assessments
 - Accommodations can vary across subjects
 - Be sure to clarify/confirm which accommodations the student is eligible for in your specific situation
 - **The case manager will have this information**
 - **If you are unsure about a specific accommodation, be sure to ask them for clarification!**

Why do students receive accommodations?

- Accommodations are designed to **provide equity, not advantage**, and serve to **level the playing field** for students with disabilities.
- When used appropriately, they **reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student's disability**; they **do not** reduce learning expectations.

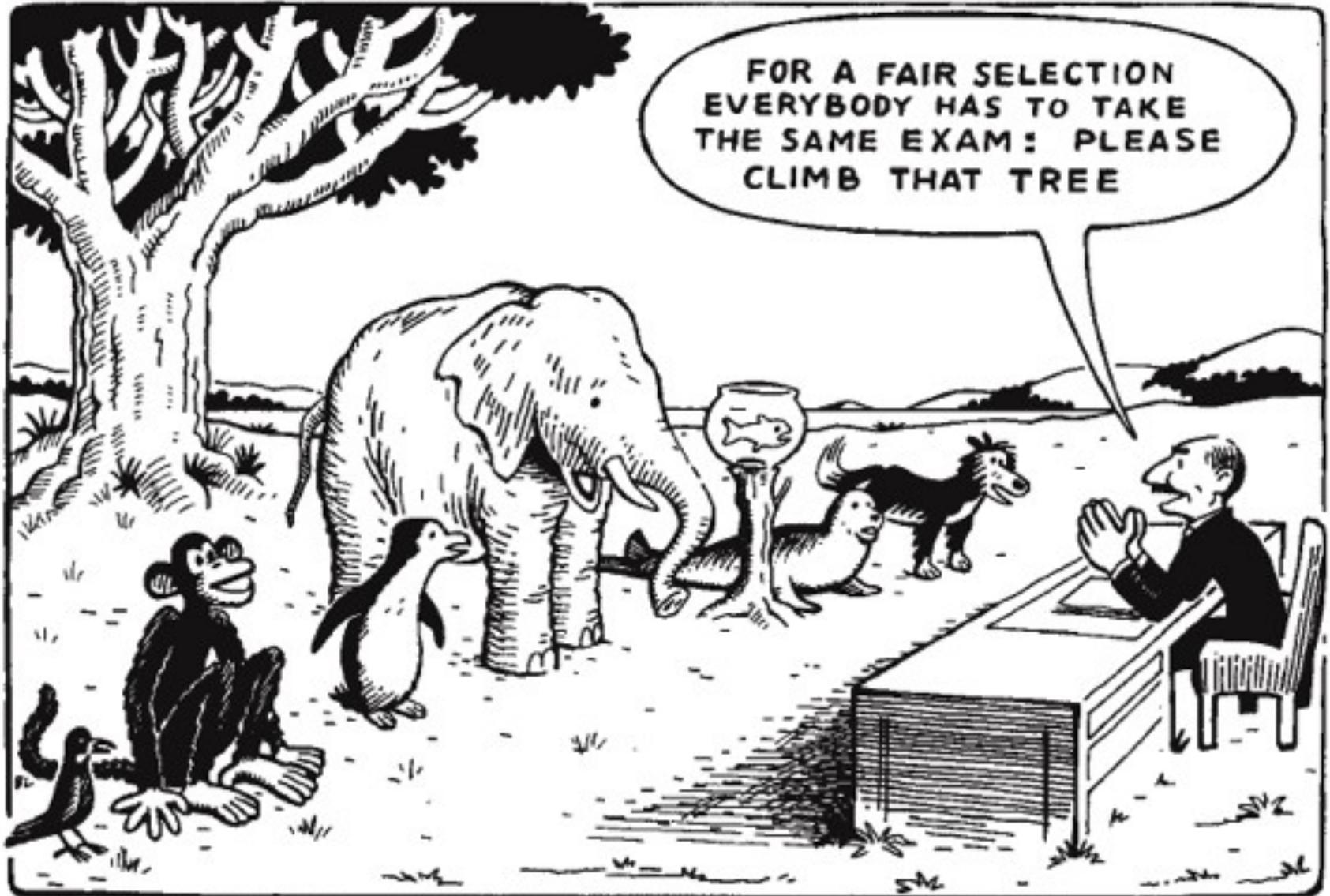
What about modifications?

- Modifications or alterations refer to practices that **change, lower, or reduce learning expectations.**
- Providing a student with an **unapproved modification** can cause negative unintended consequences for the student and is an ETHICAL VIOLATION
- Some students require modifications *in addition* to accommodations; **HOWEVER** these are created and set up by the case manager or resource teacher.
 - You should not attempt to **add or provide** modifications during an assessment.

What do modifications look like?

- Examples of modifications include:
 - requiring a student to **learn less material** (e.g., fewer objectives, fewer pages or problems)
 - **reducing assignments** and assessments so a student only needs to complete the **easiest problems** or items, **revising assignments** or assessments to make them **easier** (e.g., crossing out half of the response choices on a multiple-choice test so that a student only has to pick from two options instead of four)
 - **giving a student hints or clues** to correct responses on assignments and tests

Do they need accommodations or modifications?



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, including:
 - allowing a student to answer fewer questions or choose from fewer options
 - changing the content by paraphrasing or offering additional information
 - coaching students during testing
 - editing student responses, or giving clues in any way

The accidental modification!

- It can be *easier than you think* to accidentally give a student hints or clues to correct responses on assignments and tests
- This may look like excessive cues, asking students “if they are sure,” telling them to “go back and read that one again,” etc.
- Student performance should be consistent across raters, **regardless of who administers the assessment and accommodations**

Standardization

- 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 ***test results reflect actual student learning***

Are tests still standardized when students have accommodations?

- **YES, essentially**
 - We want to ensure as much standardization as possible
 - Some changes may be necessary to make the test more accessible to students, but **ONLY** changes that are made are those detailed in their IEP/504 are allowed (anything else is an ethical violation)

What are standardized measures?

- AIMSweb
 - RCBM, MCAP, MCOMP, TEL, TEN
 - *Should be standardized for benchmarking and progress monitoring*
- MAP
- PARCC
- IAAT
- ISA
- ... and now the CogAT!

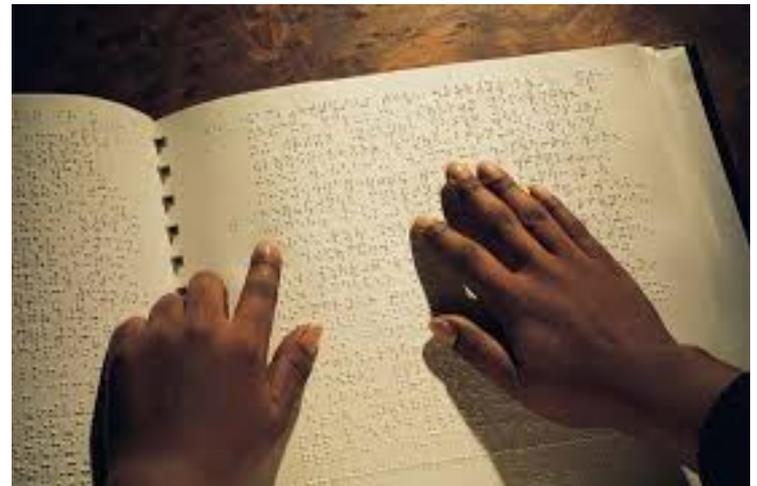


What are common accommodations?

- **Presentation Accommodations** — adjusts the presentation of test material and/or test directions.
- **Response Accommodations** — adjusts the manner in which students respond to or answer test questions.
- **Setting Accommodations** — adjusts the place in which the testing normally occurs.
- **Scheduling Accommodations**—adjusts the time allowance or scheduling of a test.

Presentation Accommodations

- Commonly used for:
 - students with print disabilities, defined as difficulty or inability to visually read standard print because of a physical, sensory, or cognitive disability.
- Examples include:
 - large print, Braille, highlighter, explain or paraphrase directions



Response Accommodations

- Commonly used for:
 - Students with physical, sensory, or learning disabilities (including difficulties with memory, sequencing, directionality, alignment, and organization).
- Examples include:
 - Braille writer, special writing tools, scribe, use of calculator



Setting Accommodations

- Commonly used for:
 - Students who are easily distracted in large group settings or who receive accommodations that might distract other students.
 - Students with physical disabilities might need a more accessible location, specific room conditions, or special equipment.
- Examples include:
 - Examples: small group setting, 1:1 setting, special lighting, adaptive furniture



Scheduling Accommodations

- Commonly used for:
 - Students who need more time than generally allowed to complete assessments
 - Students who cannot concentrate continuously for an extended period or who become frustrated or stressed easily
 - Students with health-related disabilities or medications that affect their ability to stay alert or who have more productive times of the day
- Examples include:
 - Examples: extended time, frequent breaks, optimal time of day for testing



LET'S DISCUSS!

Scenario 1

- John has the test accommodation of **“Read Aloud Test Directions and Items”**
 - John asks the test proctor for clarification of a word in the directions.
 - Okay or not? Why?
 - John asks the test proctor for clarification of a word within the passage.
 - Okay or not? Why?

Scenario 1 Answer

- **Read Aloud Test Directions and Items**

- Test proctors must read test items/questions and text word-for-word, exactly as written. ***They may not clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance to students.***
- Providing information about a word **changes the nature of the test.** The accommodation of reading aloud for a student reduces the burden of decoding words or physically reading (for visually impaired students), but should not change the demands on the student regarding **vocabulary or comprehension.**

Scenario 2

- Diana has accommodation of “**Pacing Support**”
 - Diana hurries through test items. Test proctor reminds her to slow down and read each multiple choice item before choosing a correct answer.
 - Okay or not? Why?
 - Diana hurries through test items. Test proctor asks her, “Are you sure?” after each response.
 - Okay or not? Why?

Scenario 2 Answer

- **Pacing Support**

- Test proctors must be careful not to *inadvertently give clues* that indicate the correct answer or help eliminate some answer choices.
- Reminding students to slow down does not change the nature of the test or give them an advantage over peers.
- Asking students if they are “sure” can inadvertently get them to change a correct answer OR will give a subtle clue.

Scenario 3

- Cory has accommodation of **“Redirect Student to the Test”**
 - Cory is distracted; looking around the room or playing with materials. Test proctor says, “Let’s try number 5...” and reads item 5 aloud to him.
 - Okay or not? Why?
 - Cory frequently makes comments to the test proctor that are unrelated to the test. Test proctor encourages Cory to attempt next test item while pointing to the computer screen/paper.
 - Okay or not? Why?

Scenario 3 Answer

- **Redirect Student to the Test**
 - Test proctors should not provide accommodations not explicitly listed in the IEP. ONLY if “read test aloud” was ALSO an accommodation, would that be okay!
 - Encouraging students to keep working or orienting them towards their materials does not change the nature of the test or give them an advantage over peers.

Scenario 4

- Sean has accommodation of **“General Administration Directions Clarified ”**
 - Sean does not understand test directions and asks for clarification. Test proctor rephrases directions and asks Sean to confirm his understanding by repeating directions back to her.
 - Okay or not? Why?
 - Sean does not understand a sentence within a test passage. Test proctor rephrases the sentence from the passage and asks Sean if he understands now.
 - Okay or not? Why?
 - Sean does not understand a specific math question. He asks the test proctor which operation he should use first to solve the equation.
 - Okay or not? Why?

Scenario 4 Answer

- **General Administration Directions Clarified**
 - Rephrasing or clarifying GENERAL test directions is appropriate.
 - Test proctors should not read, rephrase, clarify, or explain specific passages or items (this will change the nature of the test)
 - Test proctors should not provide any information to students regarding how to solve specific problems or answer specific questions

Other reminders

- Remember, it's about testing, not teaching
- Don't teach or correct
- Don't practice the probes/items/etc.
- Don't give hints or clues
- Don't break standardization
- Don't over-accommodate (provide accommodations beyond what is listed in IEP)
- Mind your comments/feedback
- Maintain ethical testing practices at all times

What's the big deal?

- Consequences of ***not*** providing students with accommodations outlined in their IEP/504.
 - Thoughts?
- Consequences of providing students with MORE accommodations than are listed in their IEP/504, or by MODIFYING the assessment.
 - Thoughts?

Questions?



What if I still have questions?

- Check with the case manager, PSA, and/or your friendly neighborhood school psychologist!
 - Psychologists: Kelly Lyell (Oak ECE/Elm), Erin Eder (Oak/Lane), Ashley Miller (Monroe/Prospect), Lissa Trice (Walker/CHMS), Laura Burke (Madison), Kasia Kula (HMS)
 - PSA's: Donna Rusick (Elm/Lane), Rachel Chorley (Monroe/Walker/Oak ECE), Kelly Kramer (Oak), Carrie Finazzo (Madison), Melissa Capizzi (Prospect/CHMS), Sue Waughon (HMS)