



THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR EQUITY AND
EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Assessing ELLs in NAEP: To what Should We Aspire?

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Overview

Topics

- Criteria for defining who is an ELL
- Inclusion policy
- Accommodation policy

Additional Topics

- Distinguishing ELLs from SDs
- Reporting on ELLs and former ELLs
- Considering linguistic access for ELLs in computer based assessments

ELLs are diverse



Foreign Born or U.S. Born

Young learners

- Level of ELP
- making good progress academically
- Struggling academically

Adolescents

- Level of ELP/ years in program (Long-term ELLs)
- On grade level academically
- Struggling academically
- With interrupted or limited formal schooling

Criteria for Defining Who is an ELL

- No common operational definition of LEP in **NAEP**
- NAEP provides criteria for schools to include ELLs

Inclusion Policy

Changing Inclusion Policy				
1964-1990; 1994	1995-1996	1998	2002	2010
<p>EXCLUDE Exclude LEP student with less than 3 years of English instruction</p>	<p>INCLUDE LEP students if instructed for at least 3 years in English; include if school staff determine inclusion is appropriate</p>	<p>INCLUDE without accommodation all LEP students instructed in English for 3 or more years; INCLUDE without accommodation third year students; <i>Exclude</i> students only if they can not demonstrate their knowledge of the subject even with an accommodation</p>	<p>INCLUDE LEP Students with and without accommodations receiving instruction in English less than 3 years; accommodated/non-accommodated samples no longer kept</p>	<p>Maximally INCLUDE ELLs with and without accommodations who have been in US schools one or more years</p>



Inclusion Policy

Benefits

- improved measurement of overall student achievement
- enhanced representativeness and generalizability of NAEP results
- greater fairness and equity

Challenges

- Upholding validity
- Maintaining reliability
 - Consistent implementation of inclusion policy
- Preserving the ability to analyze and report trends in the face of changes made to procedures and in the sampled population of respondents

Inclusion Policy

Implementation Inconsistency

- Large differences in the inclusion rates of LEP students in the NAEP state-by-state comparisons
- state-by-state comparisons may be differentially affected and the findings not comparable across all states

Inclusion Policy

Implementation Inconsistency

Interviews with school-based decision-makers identified factors influencing their decision to accommodate ELLs

- (1) understandings of ELL eligibility for accommodation
- (2) nature of linguistic accommodations,
- (3) use of NAEP guidelines and guidance

Accommodation Policy

Implementation Inconsistency

- confusion in applying eligibility criteria for accommodations
- At least half of the decision-makers across all four districts thought that **accommodations could only be provided to students with an IEP**
- Other decision-makers who did assign accommodations to ELLs, expressed confusion about the criteria which should be used to match testing accommodations to ELL needs

Accommodation Policy

Addressing the linguistic needs of ELLs

- NAGB commissioned paper, *An analysis of state assessment policies addressing the accommodation of English language learners. 1994 (Rivera and Collum, 1994)*
- The paper documents research on accommodations and recommends use of an ELL responsive accommodation taxonomy. The taxonomy links the use of accommodations to the needs of ELLs and incorporates research on second language acquisition.

Accommodation Policy

Assignment of Accommodations

- Inconsistent use of teacher judgment to assign accommodations was no better than random assignment of accommodations to students
- Students assigned accommodations based on individual needs, performed significantly better than their peers on the mathematics test.
- Students inappropriately assigned accommodations did no better than students without accommodations (Koran and Kopriva, 2006)

To What Should We Aspire?

Implementing valid/reliable *assessments*

- Recognizing the diversity of ELLs
- *Consistently including ELLs*
 - *Providing ELLs with linguistic access to assessments*
 - *Differentiating accommodations for ELLs at different levels of ELP*
 - *Monitoring implementation of criteria for including ELLs*

To What Should we Aspire?

- Using student background variables to inform selection of appropriate accommodations based on
 - a consistent operational definition of English language learner,
 - student's level of English language proficiency, and
 - the language of instruction
- Using an ELL-responsive framework as a tool for selecting appropriate accommodations for ELLs
- Using accommodations supported by research

To What Should we Aspire?

Tracking/reporting results for ELLs and former ELLs taking into consideration level of ELP and other background variables



Thank you!

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