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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

**STATE MANDATED ASSESSMENTS: TEACHER PERCEPTIONS
AND ACCOMMODATION-MAKING**

A Dissertation
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By
James Lee Rose
Norman, Oklahoma
2001

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**A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

BY

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Schools are thought to be symbols of a society's well-being, a mirror of its future, and sometimes a scapegoat for what is perceived as wrong with society's failings. Of all of the components of schools, few are more controversial, as visible, or as far reaching as assessment. On an individual level, assessment consists of judging the value of a student's and teacher's performance. But from a broader perspective, assessment is a clear statement about the expectation society has for both educators and graduating students. Its perceived critical function is determining whether or not school reform, from the classroom to the national level, has been successful (Smith, 1997). Moreover, assessment is one of the more important school procedures in a student's life, often utilized as a gateway to higher education and, therefore, increased pay and social standing. This is also true for teachers in many states, which closely tie teacher performance via student assessment results to pay increases and district/state wide recognition (Smith, 1997). More importantly, assessment is another means by which students with special needs can participate, not just in the assessment process, but in the classroom. Therefore, giving students more access to the standards by which their work will be judged, and thereby, influencing the future development of those standards. For the basis of any culture, including the culture of a school, is not so much shared rules of knowledge as it is shared interpretations of those rules and knowledge (Garfinkel, 1986). For a student with disabilities, full participation in the interpretation of those rules and knowledge becomes the vehicle by which he or she can access an education on an equal playing field.

However, state mandated assessments are often perceived as a statement about how effective teacher's educational programming has been for the student being assessed (Turner, et al, 2000). The issue of accountability, for teachers who work directly with students with special needs, find assessment a more complicated issue than educational programming. First, they must identify the appropriate accommodation(s) for each student with a disability and successfully apply them during the school year in the classroom environment to ensure that the student is acquiring the assigned curriculum, thus leveling the playing field in the classroom. Second, these same or similar accommodations must be made available to students with disabilities during any and all annual assessments. Third, they must stand prepared to justify each accommodation, given or not, to parents and administrators regardless of assessment outcome. Finally, they must fight the urge to exclude or resent students with disabilities because of the time and effort involved in making these accommodations and modifications available.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education first expressed a concern for education in the 1970s with support for the "minimal competency" testing movement. This concern continued to grow as reflected by A Nation at Risk (1983), which called for educational reform and accountability. Following these calls for educational reform, the Regular Education Initiative (REI) (Will, 1986) and the inclusion movement (National Association of School Boards of Education, 1992) paved the way for the integration of students with disabilities into general education classes and, by consequence, their inclusion in "regular" education assessments. The passage of Goals 2000: Educate America Act (P.L. 103-227) aligned itself with similar concerns regarding public education, assessment of achievement and accountability for educational results

(Thurlow, Ysseldyke, & Silverstein, 1995). The result of this and other legislation, [i.e., The Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, (Driscoll, 1985; Fenton, 1980; Phillips, 1992), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142), the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1990 (IDEA: P.L. 101-476), and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA: P.L. 101-336) (Driscoll, 1985; Phillips, 1992; Willingham, 1988),] plus additional to calls from the National Association of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO), supported the view that all students be included in assessment activities. Inclusion of this kind would arguably provide a more reliable accounting of public school performance while ensuring the rights of students with disabilities (Thurlow, Ysseldyke, & Silverstein, 1995). Furthermore, courts at all levels upheld these rights regarding the assessment of students with disabilities [e.g., *Southeastern Community College v. Davis* (1979); *Anderson v. Banks* (1981); *Brookhart v. Illinois State Board of Education* (1983); *Board of Education of Northport v. Ambach* (1983); and *Debra P. v. Turlington* (1984).]

Previously, the data collection systems that were used to monitor the progress of regular education students toward educational goals were not available to students with disabilities and they were excluded if they required an accommodation (McGrew, Thurlow, Shriner, & Spiegel, 1992). This point was made clear in *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (American Psychological Association, 1985). The APA encouraged the development of tests and testing procedures for students with disabilities but stated in Standard 6.2:

When a test user makes a substantial change in test format, mode of administration, instructions, language, or content, the user should revalidate the use of the test for the changed conditions or have a rationale supporting the claims that additional validation is not necessary or possible. (p. 41)

The APA Division of Evaluation, Measurement, and Statistics concluded that accommodations and test modifications were not worth the effort (Thurlow, Ysseldyke, Sylverstein, 1995). But issues of including students with disabilities in testing continue to arise in other contexts. For example, when students with disabilities began to apply to enter postsecondary training institutions, it became necessary to consider whether and how entrance tests could be modified (Bennett, Rock, Kaplan, & Jirele, 1988; ; Laing & Farmer, 1984; Maxey & Levitz, 1980; Willingham et al., 1988;). Similarly, participation and accommodation issues arose with certification and licensure assessments for teachers themselves. To date, more than half of all states require students to pass a minimum competency test in order to earn a high school diploma, making high stakes testing a game of high stakes accommodation-making (Thurlow, Ysseldyke, Sylverstein, 1995).

The 1997 Reauthorization of IDEA Defined

Since its inception, been the most controversial and deliberated topic in education law. The recently enacted Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA)(P.L. 105-17) are no exception and will probably continue to be debated in State and Federal Courts for years. When the regulations were released in March, 1999, it was clear that one of the more significant requirements and controversies of the law

was that of nationally mandated assessments for special education students. The law stated:

- Policies and procedures must ensure that children with disabilities are included in general state- and district-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations where necessary.
- Individualized education programs (IEP's) must include a statement of any individual modifications in the administration of state or district-wide assessments.
- For students with exclusion recommendations the district must develop guidelines for their participation in alternative assessments.
- A system for reporting scores for students with special needs, who may have received accommodations and or test modifications, must be developed so that the reporting of these scores are commensurate with the reporting of scores for regular education students.

In an effort to meet the specific evaluative needs of students who have been identified as having a disability, according to IDEA and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, some educators and administrators have had to employ creative evaluative measures to best serve all students participating in mandated assessments. These changes have given rise to test accommodations, modifications, and alternate forms of assessment. The most familiar assessments for special educators are the measures given to students for eligibility and placement purposes. Students are assessed to help determine their eligibility for remedial or special education services. Although this type of assessment serves a vital interest, it does not connect with or count in state and district accountability systems.

Problem Statement

The requirements of IDEA-97 place the burden of accountability for special education on the shoulders of local educators. The system by which educators are asked to account for special education efforts and outcomes is currently the system of state mandated assessments (Zlatos, 1994). As not to discriminate against persons with a disability, all students, regardless of severity of disability, will participate in all state and district-wide assessments. Therefore, suggesting that compliance with IDEA-97 regulations equates to accountability. Accountability, as described here, is an end product, a goal for which school districts are required to achieve. The problem then becomes defining and measuring the objectives for which the goal of accountability can be achieved.

Statement of Purpose

This study explores trends in teacher perception, over a three-year period, as they relate to the participation of students with disabilities in state mandated assessments. Vignettes were utilized to determine if various amounts of inservice were effective in a teacher's ability to identify appropriate accommodations given a specific case study.

The purposes of this study were to:

1. Describe trends in teacher perceptions with regard to state mandated assessments over a three-year period from the perspective of each teacher participant's responses to each question on the survey by category, i.e., accommodation-making (questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7), training (questions 9, 10, and 13), accountability (questions 5, 6, 8, and 15), and participation (questions 11, 12, and 14) (See appendix B).

2. Evaluate teacher responses, given the teacher's level of exposure to inservice, to vignettes when asked to determine appropriate accommodations for each case scenario.

This study will increase the knowledge base of student assessment by providing a greater understanding of teacher perceptions of assessment, accommodations, accountability, and the effectiveness and usefulness of assessment results based on a three-year trend teacher survey. Additionally, this study will provide educators and administrators with fundamental information regarding the effectiveness of inservice training. Findings of this study may be generalized to similar districts with regard to trends in teacher perceptions and patterns in appropriate teacher accommodations as they respond to a select number of vignettes.

Research Questions

1. Will trends in teacher perceptions suggest changes in their perceptions over a three-year period?
2. Will trends in teacher perceptions reflect differently from the perspective of each teacher participant's responses to each question on the survey by category, i.e., accommodation-making (questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7), training (questions 9, 10, and 13), accountability (questions 5, 6, 8, and 15), and participation (questions 11, 12, and 14)?
3. Will teachers, regardless of the amount of inservice training, consistently respond to vignettes with appropriate accommodation recommendations?

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The History of Standardized Assessments

On a winter evening amidst a driving snowstorm a man on horseback arrived at an inn, happy to have reached a shelter after hours of riding over the wind swept plain on which the blanket of snow had covered all paths and landmarks. The landlord who came to the door viewed the stranger with surprise and asked him whence he came. The man pointed in the direction straight away from the inn, whereupon the landlord, in a tone of awe and wonder, said: "Do you know that you have ridden across the Lake of Constance?" At which the rider dropped stone dead at his feet (Koffka, 1935, p. 62).

Koffka's point was simple. The physical environment must be distinguished from the psychological environment as it appears to the organism. The traveler physically crossed a frozen lake but psychologically crossed a plain. After realizing that he had just traversed a sheet of ice, which could have been shattered by the weight of the horse and himself and plunged them both to a watery grave, the traveler dropped dead of fright because his psychological plain had turned into a frozen lake (Kendler, 1987). The lesson of this legend is portrayed in the lives of many special education students. That is, when one measures one's psychological environment as he or she interprets the physical environment, (i.e., "I can't read, therefore I must be stupid.") Students may become learned helpless.

Koffka's wisdom was not available to the early developers of intelligence tests. If it were, Koffka would no doubt have agreed with Sir Frances Galton (1892), when he

said, "Whenever you can, count it." Galton was the first to use mental tests, inaugurating the new field of study of individual differences. His research led him to study the differences in an individual's characteristics and the relationship of those differences to their other traits and abilities (Hunt, 1993).

While Galton studied the characteristics of genius he utilized the "law of deviation from the average," as a means of describing the rarity of this phenomenon. Mathematicians who expressed the distribution of errors in astronomic observations and of cards or numbers in games of chance had worked out the law of deviation early in the century. This was also applied to human traits. In 1835 the Belgian astronomer Adolphe Quetelet revealed a statistical phenomenon. He reported that a few men were very tall, a few very short, and the rest in between, with by far the largest number being in between or average. The data, when plotted on a graph, yielded a bell-shaped curve, with most individuals located in the center. The farther from either side of the midline, the fewer individuals there were. This became known as the curve of normal distribution (Galton, 1892).

In Galton's studies of hereditary genius (1892), he discovered that children of unusual parents were generally less unusual. In terms of physical traits, the children of tall parents were less tall, though still above average, and the children of short parents not as short, though still below average, a tendency Galton called "regression toward mediocrity" (Galton, 1907), which later became known as the regression toward the mean.

In 1885, an American and Galton Protégé, James McKeen researched "mental-testing and measurements and published several articles (McKeen, 1890, 1906, 1923,

1928, 1929). The work of these early researchers gave testing and measurement a prominent place in psychology. But Alfred Binet made testing functional in society.

Intelligence Testing in Education

Binet, a French psychologist, spent a great deal of time studying his children and realized that children seemed to know and understand things differently and inherently at different ages. To study the nature of thinking at various ages, he devised a number of simple tests. For example, naming the function of everyday objects, judging which of two piles of beans contained more items, removing a group of objects from view and then putting them back one by one, and asking if any remained unreturned. When his children were older he gave them little problems to solve in order to study the growth of their reasoning processes (Binet, 1905). These studies, which Binet described in three papers, foreshadowed the achievements of Jean Piaget, the developmental psychologist (Hunt, 1993).

Binet's research involving the measurement of intelligence led him to conceive of intelligence as a combination of cognitive abilities. His findings suggested that a battery of tests might measure intelligence. A serendipitous turn of events gave Binet the thrust he needed to greatly expand his research. That event was the mandatory universal education of children instituted in France in 1881. In 1899 the Free Society for the Psychological Study of the Child began urging the Ministry of Public Instruction to do something about retarded children who were in attendance at school but who appeared unable to maintain an average level of progression in their educational growth. It was later recommended that children who were identified by an examination as retarded

should be placed in special classes or schools where they could get education suitable to their condition (Binet & Simon, 1916).

Binet and his colleague, Simon were commissioned to develop the first examination to identify those children deemed to be retarded and therefore likely to be unsuccessful in the traditional classroom. Binet and Simon fashioned what they called a "measuring scale of intelligence, a series of tests of increasing difficulty, starting from the lowest intellectual level that can be observed, and ending with that of normal intelligence. Each group of tests in a series corresponded to a different mental level (Binet & Simon, 1905, p.132)." Through the examination of hundreds of children they discovered that the retarded children's intelligence was not of a different kind from that of normal children; it was simply not as developed as it should have been by their age. They concluded intelligence could be measured by comparing the performance of one child, given his or her specific age, with the performance of average children of the same age (Binet & Simon, 1916).

In 1912, a German psychologist, Stern, suggested that if a child's mental age is divided by his or her chronological age, the result will be a "mental quotient," a ratio that expressed the child's relative degree of retardation or advancement. This later became known as intelligence quotient or IQ. The IQ became a useful way of expressing test results and offered a basis for predicting a child's potential development (Hunt, 1993).

Intelligence Testing Comes to America

Intelligence testing was adopted in the United States for a variety of reasons. In the early 1900s the United States had a fluid social structure, a rapidly expanding need for workers who could master complex technological jobs, a growing underclass of the

poor, delinquent, and criminal, and an influx of millions of immigrants who appeared ill-educated. A scientific way of evaluating the mental capacity of individuals offered the leaders of America a way to maintain social order (Hilgard, 1987).

All versions of the Binet scale had to be administered individually by a trained technician. But group testing, in which subjects read multiple choice test questions to themselves, promised to be far quicker, simpler, and much less expensive. Goddard was the first to use the Binet-Simon scale for mass testing. He administered it to 400 children at the Clark University Training School and 2000 children in the New Jersey Public School System. His results revealed a broad range of intelligence scores in both populations with a surprising number of children in the public schools scoring below their age norms (Goddard, 1910).

Global Application of Intelligence Testing

The breakthrough in mental measurement came about as a result of the entry of the United States into World War I. The American Psychological Association (APA) immediately formed a committee to determine how psychologists could help in the war efforts. They recommended the development and administration of psychological examinations that could be given quickly and to large numbers of military personnel to eliminate incompetent recruits (Hilgard, 1987).

Yerkes, a psychologist with expertise in intelligence testing, was commissioned by the Army to develop a test that would help determine suitable rank and job skills for new recruits. Yerkes assembled a staff of forty psychologists, who in two months produced the Army Alpha, a written test of intelligence, and the Army Beta, a pictorial version for the functionally illiterate (Hunt, 1993).

By the time the war ended in November, 1918, more than 1.7 million men had taken the tests, some three hundred psychologists had assessed each man's performance and suggested a suitable military assignment. The tests resulted in the discharge of about eight thousand men as unfit and the assignment of about ten thousand of lower intelligence to labor battalions. The Army Alpha was also a significant factor in the selection of two thirds of the 200,000 men who became commissioned officers (Hilgard, 1987).

The Army Testing Program had far greater impact outside the military. It made America more conscious than ever of the practical applications of psychology, especially those derived from mental measurement. The Alpha Test, in particular, led to the expansion of intelligence testing, which rapidly became a multi-million dollar industry (Hunt, 1993). Within a few years of the end of World War I, a number of Alpha-type paper-and-pencil intelligence tests were being marketed to school administrators throughout the country. One of the most successful tests appeared in 1923, developed by Terman and Yerkes, under the auspices of the National Research Council (Yerkes, 1923, 1932; Terman, 1924, 1926,). This test had been given to seven million American school children by the end of the decade (Hunt, 1993). Another major success was the Scholastic Aptitude Test, developed by Bringham, a colleague of Yerkes, and developed from army models (Bringham, 1923, 1930; Terman & Merrill, 1937). Testing became prevalent in schools, colleges, the military service, institutions, and various segments of industry (Hilgard, 1987).

By the 1930s group testing in schools had greatly expanded. School systems in both America and Great Britain classified pupils early in the educational process and

assigned them to broad programs of preparation. Some were directed toward higher education while others were led to more narrow "vocational" or "technical" tracks, which prepared them for blue-collar jobs (Hunt, 1993). Attention in the 1930s turned to improving the existing tests based on a better understanding of sampling methods and of psychometrics in general. Although the practical utility of tests continued as a source of controversy, psychologists continued to revise and improve upon the basic foundation of mental measurement (Hilgard, 1987).

The National Assessment of Educational Progress

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a congressionally mandated project of the National Center for Education Statistics and is responsible for national mandated assessments. Mandated assessment refers to large scale, usually in-group settings, (State-wide or district-wide) multiple-choice (Bond, Braskamp, & Roeber, 1996) and open-ended item testing programs. These are used for policy purpose for evaluation and accountability, which includes nationally normed, standardized achievement tests and tests custom-designed to reflect state and district educational objectives (Ballator, 1996). Accountability means showing both those inside and outside of schools whether students are making adequate progress. That is, accountability systems are interpreted in such a way that they show what and how students are learning and to what degree of mastery (Thurlow, 1998).

The NAEP is the only federal program of its kind. Its purpose is to collect assessment data and report on the performance and trends of young Americans in reading, mathematics and communications over time. It conducts assessments in other subject areas as well, providing state and local educational agencies with technical

assistance in interpreting assessment results and in conducting their own assessments (Brandt, 1982). After every assessment, NAEP reports the results for each exercise used and summaries of the results of all exercises to show the relative performance of particular groups. Administrators often receive this information categorized according to age, race, gender, geographic region, level of parental education, type and size of community.

The National Center for Educational Outcomes

According to the National Center for Educational Outcomes (NCEO), nearly half of all students with disabilities in the U.S. were excluded from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) prior to 1998, the U.S. yardstick for evaluating education. A 1993 NAEP study revealed that wide disparities existed from state to state. According to the report, Washington D.C. was least likely to test students with a disability while California was least likely to test those students with limited English skills.

NCEO found that test participation of students with disabilities ranged from a low 2% in Michigan to 100% in Delaware. Ysseldyke (1997) reported that administrators indicated that they excluded students with disabilities because of the pressure to improve test scores. According to Zlatos, (1994), Oklahoma City Public Schools, for example, exempted thousands of exceptional and limited English students from state and local tests and placed thousands of others in transition classes during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The result of this exclusion was twofold: test scores rose from 39% of the students scoring above the national norm in 1987-1988 to 53% in 1991-1992; the number of students who were tested fell from 34,000 in 12 grades to 19,000 in 10 grades. Because

of the increase in scores, 20 Oklahoma City Public Schools were dropped from the state's probationary list. Additionally, a federal court dismissed a desegregation lawsuit partly due to the improved test scores of minority students. Furthermore, the district received a Leadership in Learning Award from the American Association of School Administrators for the district's effective schools and their improved test scores (Zlatos, 1994).

In 1994, the NCEO began advocating for the participation of all students with disabilities in state assessments (Phillips, 1995; Thurlow, Erickson, & Danielson, 1996; Ysseldyke, 1996). This position was furthered when the 1997 Amendments to IDEA (Public Law 105-17) mandated that students with disabilities be included in district and state assessments. The federal legislation gave schools three options for assessing students with disabilities: (a) have the student complete the general assessments in their original form, (b) have the student complete the general assessments with individualized accommodations and or modifications, or (c) provide the student with an alternative assessment.

Those who advocate for the equalization of students with special needs by means of participation in state and district wide assessments had only found themselves addressing the problem inherent in the "Lake Wobegon effect." A phrase coined by Cannell (1987), to describe the phenomenon that most states claimed their students perform above average on the national exams, which violate the statistical laws of average. The reasons cited for the "Lake Wobegon effect" include the use of old norms, the repeated use of the same test year after year, the exclusion of students with disabilities from participation in accountability testing, and the narrowing focus of instruction on the skills and question types used on the test (Linn, 1995).

Elected officials pressed for more testing in the 1990's with the expectation that test results would lead to school reform. As a matter of public policy, testing has been used to affect schools, to grade and compare schools, and to judge whether other improvements in the educational system were having the desired effect (Barton, 1999). Simply put, testing programs bear the responsibility of being the measuring stick for accountability.

The question then became why select testing as the predominant means for measuring accountability? According to Barton (1999), tests are relatively inexpensive when compared to more costly changes like increasing class time, decreasing class size, or providing substantial professional development. Tests are easily externally mandated by states or districts as it is usually very difficult to mandate anything that involves change inside the classroom. Additionally, tests can be rapidly implemented, even within the term of an elected official. And finally, test results are quantifiable and visible. They can be reported to the press and be held up by policymakers who desire to show educational improvements during their tenure. However, most of the users of these state and district tests, do not understand that they have not been validated for accountability purposes. By and large, tests are not used within the classroom by teachers as their means of assessment; rather, teachers understand these tests to be a means of assessing themselves (Barton, 1999).

The trend toward including all students in general education activities has been growing since 1987 with an estimated inclusion rate of 27% of students with a disability (ages 3-21) to 67% in 1997 (U.S. Department of Education, 1998) respectively. Educators find themselves caught in the middle of a battle between including students

with disabilities and the forces of reform (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Outcomes, 1993) who have been ardently calling for an increased commitment to educational excellence and rigor (Hocutt, Martin, & McKinney, 1990; Schumaker & Deschler, 1988). These educational reform reports suggest making several changes in the educational system including: more rigorous standards, more graduation requirements, higher expectations for student performance, greater emphasis on testing to achieve accountability, more homework, and more academic courses. Specifically, with respect to testing, the push for reforms such as a National Achievement Test, higher graduation standards, essay rather than multiple-choice formats, and performance-based testing (Harrington-Lueker, 1991; Shepard, 1989; Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Thurlow, 1992) has elevated expectations for student performance in general education classes without consideration of the participation rates of students with disabilities in those classes.

Policymakers, administrators, teachers, and others consider both Norm Referenced Tests (NRT) and Criterion Referenced Tests (CRT) results when developing educational policy and making instructional changes. Accordingly, students who do not participate in these assessments are, by default, overlooked in educational policy changes even though these decisions may affect their instruction. Historically, administrators have not wanted to include the test scores of students with disabilities for fear that the scores of these students would give the appearance of significantly lowering the overall school or district's performance (Kiplinger, 1996). Thus, researchers have found evidence that students with disabilities have largely been excluded from both assessment and accountability activities in schools, especially when reports are released to the public

(Erickson, Thurlow, & Ysseldyke, 1996; McGrew, Thurlow, & Spiegel, 1993; Thurlow, et al, 1998; Vanderwood, McGrew, & Ysseldyke, 1998).

Most states identify between 9.5% and 12% of their students as receiving special education services and the majority of students with disabilities have no evidence of biological anomalies that would impede participation in large-scale assessments (Reschly, 1993). Students with severe developmental disabilities have not been required to participate in large-scale assessment programs because the literacy skills of these students may be functionally nonexistent and unmeasurable through state-wide assessments. This group is suspected to be only 2% of the population (Reschly, 1993).

Results from district and state-wide assessments are by design, used by policymakers to make decisions about curriculum, allocation of resources, and development of school, district, or state policies about the instructional process. These are the assessments from which students with disabilities are typically excluded (McGrew et al, 1993). However, the IDEA Amendments of 1997 ensured that students with disabilities are not excluded from the decisions made by policymakers and the impact these decisions have on the educational process (McGrew et al. 1993).

Although many educators believe that testing programs have little impact on classroom instructional decisions, assessment data help educators make appropriate decisions regarding instructional goals (Thurlow, Seyforth, & Ysseldyke. 1997). These assessments provide information to be used as part of the local education agency's (LEA) accountability system.

LEA Accountability Measures

Districts typically use two assessment approaches in their accountability systems that include norm-referenced tests (NRTs) and criterion-referenced tests (CRTs). Norm-referenced tests provide a comparison of individual performance to that of a state or national (standardization) sample. NRTs provide an accountability index for consumers, letting them know how students within the district score against other similar students across the state or nation. However, they render little specific instructional information about content and methodology regarding the instruction of students. NRTs are not absolute curricular matches because they provide a sampling of items across a broad range of facts, concepts, and strategies to which students may or may not have been exposed. A good NRT measures approximately 40% of the classroom curriculum, but most NRTs only sample approximately 20% - 30% of what is taught (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1998).

Criterion-referenced tests are used to examine student performance relative to state and district standards (also known as learner expectancies, curriculum frameworks, or learning outcomes). CRTs measure the extent to which students have mastered specific objectives and a predetermined level of proficiency (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1998). While CRTs are often more difficult to administer than NRTs, the results can be more relevant for teachers when making curricular and instructional decisions.

Participation Rates of Students with Disabilities

Until 1999, most districts reported test participation in terms of the number of "eligible" students. But eligibility rules varied throughout the country. And few school districts made clear to the public whom they were testing and whom they were excluding.

As a result, a nation ever fond of rankings compared districts that did not apply the same rules to the population they were assessing. This practice often resulted in the public's misperception of how well, or how poorly, their local schools were performing.

Because of the consistent exclusion of students with disabilities from district and state assessments, the research available on evaluating the performance of students with disabilities in large-scale standardized assessments have been limited until recent years (McGrew & Thurlow, 1996; Ysseldyke, 1996). In fact, researchers estimate that in national assessments before 1999, exclusion rates for students with disabilities were as high as 90% (McGrew, et al., 1992; Ysseldyke & Thurlow, 1993). Zlatos (1994) referred to the exclusion of exceptional students from state-wide assessments as "academic red-shirting." According to Zlatos, (1994), schools had been very creative in applying this variation on the sports gambit of holding back players until they strengthen and mature. Weaker performing students were excluded from standardized assessments by (a) suspending them from school during testing days, (b) failing them to keep them from moving to a key testing grade, (c) assigning them to bilingual programs, and (d) identifying them as having disabilities. These exclusionary practices have resulted in questionable reliability and inappropriate comparisons between schools, districts, and states. For example, test variations are utilized differently from state to state and district to district for types of tests and norms used, the grade levels tested, the amount of time spent on test preparation, and/or the time of the year the test is taken, resulting in a quagmire of inconsistencies. Finally, taken into account the difference in the number of students excluded and the very purpose of the state-wide assessment and the use of assessment for accountability purpose, participation significantly diminished (Elliott,

1997). Yet, the amount of state funding a school receives can depend on test scores. A bond election can pass or fail on test scores. Even a state takeover can depend in large part on whether a district's test scores significantly rose or fell.

Table 1 demonstrates how the exclusion of some students affected the 1992-1993 school year state assessments for fourteen of the nation's largest school districts with regard to participation rates (Zlatos, 1994).

To demonstrate some of the disparities, Boston, that had the largest proportion of special education students identified at 21 %, excluded approximately 60% of their special education population in the state-wide assessment. Resulting in one out of every ten students in the Boston public schools unrepresented in the school district's test scores.

In a study conducted by the Consortium on Chicago School Research (1998), a federation of local groups focused on Chicago's use of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) to identify low performing schools. The Federation concluded that using the test system for this purpose was problematic. The reliability of the test, its content validity, and the application of the test raised concerns about the inappropriate use of the test, citing for example, the ITBS as a system of tests with different versions given in different grades and in different years. When researchers gave the same students different forms of the same exam, their scores varied significantly, suggesting that the ITBS may not be a reliable testing instrument over time. Additionally, the content of the ITBS over the past decade had been changed dramatically. The standards against which schools and students were being measured appeared to be a "moving target." Finally, this study revealed that a school's overall test results could be significantly manipulated by focusing

Table 1:

Participation rates of the 14 largest school districts in the nation.

<u>District</u>	<u>Number of test participants</u>	<u>Total enrollment</u>	<u>Percentage of test participants</u>
Memphis*	71,553	76,841	93%
Fairfax Co., Va.*	36,456	40,175	91%
Baltimore	51,620	57,517	90%
Philadelphia*	112,043	129,470	87%
Indianapolis	13,355	15,732	85%
Miami	141,164	166,134	85%
Detroit	139,941	169,439	83%
Pittsburgh	30,182	36,960	82%
Chicago*	196,491	246,077	80%
Los Angeles*	423,674	552,239	77%
N.Y. City*	535,923	703,505	76%
Wash. D.C.*	22,768	32,398	70%
Oklahoma City	8,599	12,534	69%
Boston	32,866	49,942	66%

Note. Baltimore, Philadelphia, Indianapolis, and Miami did not include high school students in their testing program.

Source: Zlatos, 1994

improvement efforts on a small group of students. Even more problematic were those schools that significantly improved learning for a large group of very low achieving students but could still fail to meet the state cutoff. Therefore, the Chicago School Consortium concluded that the ITBS did not result in a good accountability test system over time for the Chicago school system.

Large Scale Assessments

In the years since ETS's early work in assessment, researchers have focused their efforts on how to include students with disabilities in large-scale district and state assessments designed to measure local reform efforts. One of the most comprehensive efforts has been the work done at the National Center for Education Outcomes (NCEO), whose major research focus has been on increasing participation of students with disabilities in large-scale assessments.

In a national study, NCEO (1995) reported wide variability in the rate at which students with disabilities participated in assessments. At that time NCEO estimated that approximately 85% of the students eligible for special education services could take large-scale assessments with or without accommodations with the remainder needing an alternative assessment (Thurlow, 1995).

In many state accountability systems, the performance of students with disabilities had not been addressed, in part because no widely agreed upon methods existed for determining fair and valid accommodations (Fuchs, 1997). As a result, there was wide variability in accommodation policies, making comparisons between states and/or

districts difficult. Before the IDEA Amendments of 1997, accommodations permissible by states varied tremendously as indicated in Table 2.

With the need to collect information about acceptable and effective testing accommodations, a number of other instruments have been developed to assist teachers in their decision-making process with regard to the student's needs, and therefore, possible assessment accommodations. The Assessment Accommodation Checklist (AAC) (Elliot, 1997) helps the teacher organize and record information regarding a student's testing accommodations. This information can then be used by the teacher as a springboard for ideas, in addition to serving as a recording device.

The AAC contains 74 accommodations that are organized into eight domains: motivation, assistance prior to administering the test, scheduling, setting, directions, assistance during the assessment, adaptive technology, and changes in test format. Using the AAC, educators rate the extent to which they think that a particular accommodation will help the student best demonstrate his or her abilities. The manner in which and the number of accommodations identified? After the student has taken the test, accommodations are then rated by the teacher to help determine if the accommodation(s) were helpful and fair.

Table 2:

States that provide accommodations.

<u>Accommodation</u>	<u>Number of States that Participated</u>
Large Print	34
Braille or Sign Language	33
Small Group Administration	33
Flexible Scheduling	31
Separate Testing Session	31
Extra Time	30
Audiotaped Instructions/Questions	27
Multiple/Extra Testing Sessions	25
Word Processor	21
Simplification of Directions	15
Audiotaped Responses	12
Use of Dictionaries	9
Alternate Test	6
Other Languages	2

Adapted from Testing Students With Disabilities (1998), M.L. Thurlow, J.L. Elliott, & J.E. Ysseldyke.

Accommodations and Modifications

Many states allow for special testing conditions and accommodations for students with disabilities who are participating in standard assessment activities. When used appropriately, accommodations improve the validity of testing results by reducing the distortions or biases caused by identified disabilities. Bruininks et al. (1994) declared that the terms accommodation and modification are used interchangeably and that a formal consensus on their use is lacking. Tindal, Hollenbeck, Heath, and Almond (1997) placed these terms at opposite ends of the continuum. These researchers characterized accommodations and modifications as follows:

Accommodations do not change the nature of the construct being tested, but differentially affect a student's or group's performance in comparison to a peer group. Also, accommodations provide unique and differential access (to performance) so certain students or groups of students may complete the test and tasks without other confounding influences of test format, administration, or responding. (p.1)

In contrast,

Modifications result in a change in the test (how it is given, how it is completed, or what construct is being assessed) and work across the board for all students with equal effect. Because of the lack of interaction between group and change in test, the modification itself does not qualify as an accommodation. (p.2)

Therefore, accommodations provide access to, but do not change, the test, whereas modifications do change the test (Hollenbeck, Tindal, & Almond, 1998).

If exceptional students are to successfully participate in standardized assessments, IEP teams must work collaboratively to identify key accommodations needed. A promising resource for the delineation of effective accommodations is the instructional environment and the student's teachers. That is, IEP teams should evaluate the accommodations used to facilitate learning for the student in his or her classroom first. Typical instructional accommodations used in classrooms include, but are not limited to extending time, prompting task initiation, restructuring tasks, and reducing tasks. The following accommodations for students with special needs are identified in Table 3.

Accommodations, such as those in Table 3, may increase exceptional students' successful participation in standardized assessments and make the transition to state and district tests more systematic (Ysseldyke, et al., 1998).

The decision regarding which accommodations are best for a student lies with the IEP team. These team members need to know what the tests are measuring and the appropriateness of an accommodation. Some people argue that providing assessment accommodations for select students is not equitable. But consider the example provided by Thurlow (1998):

Table 3:

Accommodations approved for Criterion Reference Test (CRT) and Norm Reference Test (NRT).

Criterion-referenced Tests

Large Print / Braille / Magnifier

**Auditory Amplification Devices,
hearing aids, noise buffers**

Extended time and Breaks

extended time

more breaks during testing

**extended testing sessions over
several sessions**

Placement and Seating

Alone

Small group

In a testing carrel

Separate location, such as a classroom

individual or small group

Norm-referenced Tests

Large Print / Braille

**Auditory Amplification Devices,
hearing aids, noise buffers**

Placement and seating

alone

small group

in a testing carrel

**separate location, such as
different classrooms,
individual or small group, or
any other appropriate**

**location which will minimize
distractions**

special lighting

Transcribing answers

mark answers in the assessment

Table 3 (continued).

Accommodations approved by Criterion Reference Test (CRT) and Norm Reference Test (NRT)

any other appropriate location which	booklet and not on an answer
will minimize distractions	sheet
special lighting	give oral responses
	give responses in sign
	language

Transcribing answers

mark answers in the assessment booklet
and not on the answer sheet
give oral responses
give responses in sign language
use of a pencil grip device
other communication devices

CRT (writing)

Placement and seating

alone
small group
in a testing carrel
separate location, such as a classroom, individual or small group

Table 3 (continued).

Accommodations approved by Criterion Reference Test (CRT) and Norm Reference Test (NRT)

any other appropriate location which will minimize distractions

special lighting

Transcribing answers

use a word processor or computer (without the use of any "help" features)

dictate words to a scribe

tape record writing task to be transcribed later

Increased line spacing

increased spacing

wider lines or margins

use of masking device while copying writing tasks from rough to final draft

use of pencil grip devices

Adapted from Testing Students With Disabilities (1998), M.L. Thurlow, J.L. Elliott, & J.E. Ysseldyke.

You are a person who needs to wear corrective lenses to read and write.

You enroll in a graduate class and attend all classes wearing your glasses

during lectures, class activities, and completion of assignments in class

and at home. The night of the final exam arrives, and your instructor

enters the class with the exam. The instructor announces that you will

have 3 hours to complete the exam and requires all students wearing corrective lenses to remove them. The instructor notes that there will be no unfair advantages given to those students who wear glasses. (p. 16)

According to Thurlow (1998), the above example is what occurs when special education students are not allowed to use accommodations to complete an assessment.

A second issue raised about assessment accommodations is that they may invalidate what the test is trying to measure. Some argue that any accommodation, other than Braille and large print, automatically invalidates the score obtained by a student (Thurlow, 1998). To determine what accommodation is appropriate, IEP teams must be acutely aware of the constructs or skills the test is attempting to measure. To deny the use of a calculator on a mathematics test or for someone to read aloud on a reading test because it is believed that this will invalidate the test is a sweeping, possibly inaccurate, statement. For example:

If an arithmetic test is attempting to measure a student's command of the basic four functions (e.g., add, subtract, multiply, divide), the use of a calculator would be an inappropriate accommodation, one that would threaten the validity of what the test is measuring. However, if the arithmetic test is used to determine a student's application of a theorem, steps, or procedures, the use of a calculator to complete arithmetic functions would be appropriate.

Educators must possess a high level of knowledge regarding assessment and related concepts (O'Sullivan & Chalnack, 1991), particularly regarding appropriate accommodations (Siskind, 1993), if standardized assessment activities are going to be successful for students with special needs. Unfortunately, many educators, including

special education teachers, are not adequately prepared to deal with assessment issues (Siskind, 1993). Investigators have consistently found that the majority of teacher education programs do not require that preservice educators complete a course in measurement (O'Sullivan & Chalnack, 1991; Shafer, 1991; Stiggins, 1991; Wise et al., 1991). Teachers' lack of assessment knowledge can result in mismeasurement of achievement and invalid reporting, referencing, and interpreting of students' school performance and progress.

To respond to the need to have an objective process for identifying valid accommodations for students, a number of systems have been developed. The Dynamic Assessment Tool for Accommodations (DATA) (Fuchs, 1998) is one system which helps the IEP team make qualitatively fair and appropriate decisions regarding a student's accommodation needs. DATA compares the accommodation boost of each individual student with learning disabilities to the "typical" boost to determine whether the individual demonstrated a greater-than-expected boost and therefore qualifies for that accommodation on a given large-scale assessment.

Fuchs, et al. (1998), compared accommodation decisions based on DATA to the decisions teachers had formulated using their judgement. In this study, very poor correspondence was discovered, revealing that teachers awarded many more accommodations than were necessary when compared with the DATA system (73% vs. 41% for DATA). Moreover, students to whom teachers had awarded accommodations failed to earn greater accommodation boosts than did students to whom teachers had denied accommodations. In fact, effect sizes were minimal, ranging from -.07 to .06

standard deviations, with boosts larger for teacher denials than awards for two of the three accommodations.

Oregon State Department of Special Education (Erickson et. al., 1996), surveyed 633 general and special educators on students' participation in statewide assessments and their knowledge of testing accommodations and assessment procedures. Only 26% completed the survey with approximately an equal number of special education and regular education teachers responding. This survey revealed that 96.4% of the respondents were less than 80% correct and thus considered to be weak in their knowledge about appropriate test accommodations and only correctly identified about half of the approved accommodations. Additionally, three of the four accommodations most used by teachers were incorrectly identified as accommodations, resulting in the test being incorrectly identified as a modified test according to the assessment manual. The Oregon State Department of Special Education concluded that teachers were in need of inservice about state assessments and assessment accommodations.

The Impact of Accommodations on Assessment Results

Despite the obvious importance of testing accommodations for students with disabilities, researchers have found that such accommodations are not always made by the general and special education teachers (Putnam, 1992; Zigmond, Levin, & Laurie, 1985). Putnam (1992), examined the testing accommodations of 120 high school teachers for students with learning disabilities in a variety of subject areas. He found that on average, 52.4% of the teachers modified tests (e.g., they grouped similar questions together under a topical heading to aid student comprehension), 43% provided alternate testing procedures (e.g., they read tests orally to students), 87.4% provided assistance

during tests (e.g., they read test directions to students), and 50.8% allowed written assistance during tests (e.g., they allowed students to look at notes). Teachers consistently reported that test accommodations were not made because they believed the accommodations too time consuming.

Schuman and Vaughn (1991) surveyed 93 general education teachers to examine the variables of desirability and feasibility with respect to making classroom accommodations for instructional purposes. They found that many general education teachers perceived classroom accommodations as being more desirable than feasible. These researchers speculated that educators may be more concerned about the added time and effort needed to make accommodations. Similarly, Gajria, Salend, and Hemrick (1994) surveyed 64 general education teachers from two suburban school districts in New York to determine the effectiveness and ease of use of 32 specific testing accommodations. They found that general education teachers were more likely to accept accommodations that were perceived as being effective and easy to use in terms of time and material resources.

In a similar but more comprehensive study, Jayanthi, Epstein, Polloway, and Bursuck (1996) surveyed 401 general education teachers from all geographic regions of the United States. These researchers found that teachers reported accommodations, which they perceived as easiest to administer and did so on a regular basis. These accommodations included giving individual help with directions during tests, reading test questions to students, simplifying the wording of test questions, making black and white copies, providing extra space on tests for answering, giving practice questions as a study guide, and giving open book/notes tests. However, in this survey teacher's concerns

turned from making accommodations only if they were easy and less time and resource consuming to the fairness of providing accommodation to students with disabilities only and not to regular education students. An overwhelming majority of teachers, 76.6%, commented on the unfairness to offer these accommodations strictly to students with disabilities.

In a study by Grise, Beattie, and Algozzine (1982) about 350 fifth grade students took the Florida State Student Assessment Test. Two different formats were used, a regular size print format and an enlarged version. Half of the student population was administered the regular size print version while the other half received the enlarged print version. They found that students with learning disabilities had slightly higher scores on the regular print version when compared with the enlarged version, on only one of six subsections and equally well on the other five subtests. They also found 20% to 30% more students who were administered the modified version performed at mastery levels in various subsections of the test, as compared to students who took the regular print version. The authors suggested that the modified test format (enlarged) enhanced the test performance of regular education students while they had little effect for the students with special needs.

In a comparable study using the same modification with 345 third grade students, Beattie, Grise, and Algozzine (1983) found few differences on most subsections when comparing performance on the regular print version versus the large print version. And, as in their previous study, more students without learning disabilities demonstrated mastery when taking the modified test. Twenty percent more regular education students

reached mastery levels when the modified version was used than when the test was taken under standard conditions.

Tolfa-Veit and Scruggs (1986) conducted an investigation focusing on the use of separate answer sheets with 101 fourth graders of which 19 were students with learning disabilities. Although they found significant differences between general and special education students in the total number of items copied onto an answer sheet (97 versus 86), they found no significant differences in the percentage of items marked correctly, with both groups about 97% correct.

Scruggs, Mastropieri, and Tolfa-Veit, (1986) conducted a study with 85 students identified with learning and behavioral disabilities. These students were coached in several test-taking strategies. They found significant differences between the trained experimental and the untrained control groups in word study and math concepts. However, there were no significant differences found on reading comprehension and math story problems.

In a more recent test accommodations study by Tindal, Heath, Hollenbeck, et al.. (1998) 481 fourth-grade special and general education students were administered a large-scale state wide assessment. Two accommodations were provided to students, which addressed response conditions and test administration. On both the reading and math tests, students bubbled in answers on a separate sheet (standard response) for half the test and marked the test booklet directly (accommodation response) for the other half of the test. The math test was read to a subgroup of students by a trained teacher for the second accommodation. Mixed results of the test accommodations were reported by researchers on the reading test. Performance was not affected by the response conditions. Students

from general and special education performed equally well whether they were allowed to answer using a bubbled answer sheet or marked directly in the test booklet. As a general observation, general education students performed significantly higher than their special education peers on the overall test. Similar results were found for the math test that was read to a group of students. Overall, test performance was not affected by having the test read to them, but general education students performed significantly higher than special education students in general.

In a further analysis of this study, the ten lowest ranking general education student performances were compared with the performance of students who were receiving special services for math or reading. The students in special education performed significantly higher when the math test was read by teachers, rather than when they read the test themselves. In contrast, the performance of the general education students revealed no such improvements whether they read the test themselves or were read to. These same results were also found for the response accommodation: students with special needs bubbling in the answer sheet scored higher than the 10 lowest ranked students when they were allowed to write in the test instead of bubbling in the responses.

Finally, in a study by Fuchs and Fuchs et al. (1998) 365 fourth graders, half with learning disabilities, were administered four brief assessments under varying conditions: standard (four minutes, regular-size print, student reads silently), extended time (eight minutes), large print, and student reads aloud. For two of the three accommodations, extended time and large print, students with learning disabilities (LD) did not benefit more than students without LD. In fact, the effect sizes for these accommodations were almost identical for students with or without LD (.36 and .38 for extended time and .03

and .08 for large print). Extended time, the authors concluded although the most awarded accommodation to students with LD, may not serve to level the playing field. Rather, extended time may provide students with LD an advantage, making test scores less valid and inflating the scores of students with LD. Similar conclusions might also be applied to the use of large print. Each of the four assessments were averaged across formats resulting in a 98.4% interscorer agreement, alternate form/test-retest reliability average of .82, and a correlation with the ITBS of .80. In contrast, results for permitting students to read tests aloud illustrated how some accommodations may in fact level the playing field for students with and without LD. The interaction, which was statistically significant with a combined effect size across students summed to .18, indicating how the accommodation increases scores of students with LD, even as it depresses scores of students without LD. This finding is consistent with the literature, which suggests that although poor readers increase their text comprehension when they read aloud, more skilled readers benefit more from silent reading. It suggests that having students read reading tests aloud may represent a valid test accommodation, which permits students with LD the opportunity to demonstrate the reading competence they actually possess (Fuchs, Fuchs, Eaton, & Hamlett, 1998).

Extensive studies of test accommodations have been done with Educational Testing Services (ETS) on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) prior to the 1990s (Willingham et al., 1988). Although, historically few students with disabilities have participated in these tests, the number of test participants with special needs have grown significantly in the past few years. In general, ETS found there was comparable reliability between the standard and nonstandard

administrations of small samples (Bennett, Rock, & Jirel, 1986; Bennett, Rock, & Kaplan, 1985, 1987). Additionally, researchers noted similar factor structures (Rock, Bennet, & Kaplan, 1987) and similar item difficulties for disabled and nondisabled examinees (Bennett, et al., 1987). Also noted were noncomparable predictions of academic performance with the nonstandard test scores less valid and SAT test scores substantially underpredicting college grades for students with hearing impairments (Braun, Ragosta, & Kaplan, 1986), and comparable admission decisions (Benderson, 1988). In an analysis of test content, Willingham et al. (1988) found that, although students with disabilities perceived the test to be harder, their performance was comparable to peers without disabilities.

ETS, as a result of these studies, recommends that those using any test results (a) use multiple criteria to predict academic performance of disabled students, (b) give less weight to traditional predictors and more consideration to students' backgrounds and nonscholastic achievement, (c) avoid score composites, (d) avoid the erroneous belief that nonstandard scores are symmetrically either inflated or deflated, and (e) where feasible and appropriate, report scores in the same manner as those obtained from standard administrations" (ETS, 1990, Executive Summary Report, p. 13).

The State of Kentucky has studied the impact of accommodations on performance data, in its Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS). Kentucky allowed accommodations for students with disabilities that were consistent with the appropriate delivery of instructional service for that individual student. Accommodations included changes in the administration of the assessment and/or recording of student responses that were consistent with the normal instructional strategies and assistive

devices and services identified on the student's IEP or 504 plan. Koretz (1998) found that the majority of students with disabilities who participated in the KIRIS assessment required at least one accommodation. Koretz suggested that to regulate assessment accommodations nationally, considerations be given to clarifying the intended purpose and guidelines of the assessment, monitor and periodically audit the assessments use.

Other states, such as Maryland reported a 99% participation rate for students in its state-wide assessment system in 1997 (Haigh, 1998). Students with disabilities were expected to participate unless they fit exemption criteria (e.g., second-semester senior, transfer from out of state; limited English proficient student). Haigh (1998) of the Maryland State Department of Education recommends the following for including all students in state-wide assessments: (a) highlight the rationale for including all children in the assessment; (b) include all stakeholders in implementation; (c) involve parents when developing alternative assessments; (d) link discussions about assessment to student outcomes; (e) use a local district accountability coordinator to monitor exemptions and accommodations; and (f) build in significant professional development for teachers and administrators.

Data from the State of Hawaii revealed participation rates of students with disabilities at approximately 64% (Jenkins, 1998). Reportedly, one of the major issues was establishing a norm group for students with disabilities that truly reflected the diverse demographics of Hawaii (i.e., culture, language, and ethnicity). Whereas students in Hawaii were found to represent some of the national norms, there were areas where students performed differently. Jenkins (1997) recommends that other states that use

standardized measurements establish norms for their own state, rather than rely exclusively on national norms.

Participation Rates

In a study by Gronna, Jenkins, and Chin-Chance (1998) an analysis was conducted to evaluate the participation rates of students with disabilities in the Hawaii statewide assessment. During 1995, only eleven accommodations were given when the statewide assessment was administered. However, just one year later, and with the construction of an accommodations request form, the number of accommodations allowed jumped to 133. (Chin-Chance, Gronna, & Jenkins, 1996).

In the spring of 1995, Hawaii tested 85% of their total student population in grades 3, 6, 8, and 10. Sixty-four percent of the students receiving special education services were included in the total student population who participated in the statewide assessment. Of the total special education population that participated, 87% had mild cognitive disabilities and did not receive accommodations during their participation in the assessment. The remaining 13% fell into the more severe special education population and were given a number of accommodations, (i.e., individual and small group administration, read directions or test items, extended time, use of calculator, and exemption from particular sub-tests). Analysis of the participation rates revealed that none of the 244 schools excluded students receiving special education services disproportionately. A cross-sectional analysis of the total statewide assessment data for reading scaled scores was calculated for each grade level, each disability category, and nondisabled categories. These descriptive statistics revealed a normal frequency distribution of scores (Gronna, Jenkins, & Chin-Chance, 1998).

The one important goal of including students with disabilities in an accountability system is to prompt schools to use their resources to enhance outcomes for all students, including those with disabilities. If this is to occur, test scores must provide realistic, not inflated estimates of student capacity in order that schools may use accountability databases to identify which students with disabilities require additional attention. In fact, when accommodations produce spuriously high scores, schools experience reduced pressure to intervene on behalf of students with disabilities (Fuchs, et al., 1998).

Meaningful Reporting of Test Results

As districts are increasingly called upon to demonstrate their efficacy school personnel have sought ways to report the progress of all students in meaningful ways but particularly those with disabilities. Reporting information on students with disabilities is important because it ensures they are represented in the district wide accountability system. However, there are concerns that when special education students participate in large-scale assessments their test results might not be comparable to those of other students because of the special testing circumstances. The problem then is less about how to test all children, and more about how to report the results in a way that makes sense. While some believe the ideal situation is one where the scores of students receiving accommodations would be aggregated with the scores of all other students (Thurlow, 1998), not all agree. Building principals are concerned that aggregated scores that include those of exceptional students will be misinterpreted by the public as failure.

The 1997 Reauthorization of IDEA specifically mandated that educators and administrators address these concerns through the teaching and assessment of multi-disciplinary, multi-intelligence approaches to learning. Emphasis was on growth, rather

than simple acquisition of specific knowledge. Ongoing evaluations would encourage the student's understanding of his or her own progress, teachers' and specialists' assessment of mastery of skills and processes in specific domains. However, to exclude 15% to 20% of the school population from these assessments not only violates students' rights to participate, but distorts the results, and therefore, the perception reported by the National Association for Educational Progress (NAEP) to law-makers, administrators, educators, and the public at large (Thurlow, 1995).

John Dewey said "The goal of American education is to value each child as equally an individual and entitled to equal opportunity of development of his own capacities, be they large or small in range.... Each has needs of his own as significant to him as those of others are to them. The very fact of natural and psychological inequality is all the more reason for establishment by law of equality of opportunity, since otherwise the former becomes a means of oppression of the less gifted" (Dewey, 1916, p.16).

Karl Hertz (1998) suggested that,

achieving the highest test scores in the world may leave our children, much like the Japanese, out searching the world for creative, imaginative, and intuitive school settings in which they can bring back to America. Employers would describe their employees as quite literate, but unimaginative, poor at innovating, and unlikely to solve problems. Shocking as it may be, the test scores in America may never be the highest in the world. It may well be that there are other characteristics in the

American makeup that cause us to be leading the world in so many ways.

America must be careful to cherish and support the parts of the educational process that lead toward excellence of all kinds, in the work place, in the theater, in the music hall, in our chairs at home reading, in passing along to future generations a sense of beauty, loyalty, kindness, compassion, justice, and a love for the common good. (p. 2)

There is a paucity of studies addressing state and district-wide assessments of students with special needs. Those studies that exist have for the most part used descriptive statistics to show participation rates and teacher knowledge about accommodating students with disabilities. Because IDEA was only recently reauthorized, time has not been sufficient to collect very much data on the effectiveness of accommodations with regard to state and district-wide assessments. What does seem clear is that it is imperative that teachers understand which modifications and accommodations are appropriate according to each student's needs and how to implement those accommodations effectively before interpreting test results with any amount of certainty.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions as they related to the participation of students with disabilities in state mandated assessments. These trends were described from the perspective of each teacher's response to survey questions regarding accommodation-making, training, accountability, and participation. Second, the study determined the effectiveness of teachers at identifying test accommodations for students with learning and behavioral concerns (Appendix D).

Subjects

Special educators employed in a suburban school district in Oklahoma participated in this study. Special education teacher participants were sampled over a three-year period. The pool included individuals holding current Oklahoma teaching certification in various areas of special education. Participants were distributed across teaching assignment, years of teaching experience, and number of special education college hours. The subject pool consisted of 67 (70%) special education teachers during Year 1, 56 (54%) special education teachers during Year 2, and 79 (71%) special education teachers in Year 3.

During the three-year period of survey data collection, surveys were sent out to every special education teacher employed by the school district (Year 1 – 96 special education teachers, Year 2 – 103 special education teachers, and Year 3 – 112 special education teachers). Of the 311 surveys mailed approximately two-thirds (N=201) of the surveys were returned. Table 4 provides an overview of the participants' demographics.

Table 4:

Characteristics of Respondents – Demographic Summary

Teacher Descriptors	Year 1 N = 67		Year 2 N = 55		Year 3 N = 79	
	N	%of total	N	%of total	N	%of total
Bachelors Degree	33	49	28	51	42	53
Masters Degree	34	51	27	49	37	47
0-10 Years Teaching	30	45	14	25	38	48
11-20 Years Teaching	22	33	21	38	19	24
21-30 Years Teaching	12	18	20	36	20	25
31-40 Years Teaching	3	4	0	0	2	3
Primary Teacher	29	43	24	44	33	42
Secondary Teacher	38	57	31	56	46	58
Learning Disabilities	38	57	36	65	51	65
Emotional Disturb.	10	15	6	11	8	10
Mental Retardation	13	19	9	16	14	18
Other Disabilities	6	9	4	7	6	8
Male	4	6	4	7	6	8
Female	63	94	51	93	73	92

Item Selection

A review of assessment-related activities and themes was conducted using descriptive and research journal literature and state assessment guidelines to delineate classroom and test accommodations (OSDE Draft Guidelines, 2000; Elliott, 2000, Ysseledyke & Thurlow, 1998, Thurlow, Ysseledyke, & Elliott, 1997). The teacher perceived purpose of state-mandated assessment items for all students were constructed based on current literature (Hollenbeck, Tindal, & Almond, 1998). Results from the aforementioned investigations that detailed operating assessment procedures, accommodation planning, purpose of assessment, accountability issues, and other assessment-related activities were used to develop the questionnaire items in the teacher survey of mandated assessments for students with special needs and vignettes.

Instrument Description and Distribution Procedure

First, an assessment questionnaire consisting of a cover letter in the form of a newsletter was distributed to special education teachers March 1998, 1999, and 2000. The newsletter gave teachers instructions on how to fill-out the questionnaire and return it so as to maintain anonymity. The newsletter also served as a training tool to discuss the topic of assessing students with special needs (Appendix C). The questionnaire consisted of eight questions soliciting demographic information, followed by fifteen questions related to accommodations, training, and the purpose of assessing students with special needs. Respondents were asked to report demographic information that included: (a) gender, (b) age range, (c) education level, (d) years of teaching experience, (e) grade levels taught, and (f) primary special education certification. The perception section of the questionnaire asked participants to rank on a 5-point Likert scale their perceptions

regarding accommodation-making for students with special needs on state and district-wide assessments. Accountability issues, usefulness of assessment products, feelings of competence with regard to assessment, and willingness to participate in assessment training were also ranked.

Second, five vignettes, two pre-written and adopted in whole for the study and three prepared by the researcher (Appendix D), were used to determine the special education teacher's skills in identifying test accommodations and/or modifications. Two vignettes were commercially prepared, one by Ysseldyke, 1998 and a second by Bigge & Stump, 1999, and included appropriate accommodations or modifications required for the student to be successful. Three of the vignettes were written by this researcher who followed similar patterns from the commercially produced vignettes and who employed the expert advice of two university professors, a school psychologist, and three special educators. Each vignette depicted a situation whereby a student with special needs required testing modifications or accommodations. Two questions were presented to the participant following each vignette. The first asked the respondent to identify the primary disability category needing accommodations and/or modifications (i.e., cognitive/academic, behavioral, physical). The second question asked the respondent to identify the primary focus of the accommodation itself (i.e., setting, scheduling, time, presentation, or response). Each vignette was approximately two paragraphs in length. The response form concluded with five lines provided for teacher response. The instructions encouraged the teacher participant to read the vignette, and based on his or her knowledge and experience, list some appropriate accommodations and or modifications needed by the student to participate in state or district-wide assessments.

The responses to the vignettes were collected and scored. Regarding the identified area of impairment and the focus of accommodation-making questions, these were scored either correct or incorrect according to the vignette authors predetermined answer and subjected to inferential statistics.. The teachers written accommodation responses were calculated for number of preferred accommodations and the number of non-preferred accommodations identified on the survey by the teacher.

Evaluation

This project used a two-phase assessment model to evaluate special education teachers' knowledge in test modification. The self-administered assessment questionnaire that provided respondents with anonymity assurance, was selected due to time, cost, personnel requirements, varying site locations, and as a means of facilitating participation. Research reveals that respondents are more likely to be candid on self-administered surveys than in interviews (Aiken, 1994; Sudman & Bradburn, 1982; Wiersma & Latham, 1986). Additionally, questionnaire research often result in a high response rate when the participants represent a highly literate group of people who are interested in the research topic (Bowmas & Bernardin, 1991; Fowler, 1984; Kulik & McKeachie, 1975; Witt, Heffer, & Pfeiffer, 1990).

Dillman (1978) and Witt, et al. (1990) suggested that the effectiveness of questionnaire research was related to respondent trust. In this regard, criteria were established to guarantee respondent trust including: (a) using a direct professional manner, (b) offering survey results to respondents, (c) clarifying the role of the respondents, and (d) assuring anonymity of the respondents. These factors were incorporated in the Special Services Newsletter that accompanied the questionnaire

(Appendix C). In addition, respondents were invited to contact the principal investigator with questions concerning the questionnaire or to receive a summary of the research results.

The assessment questionnaire and vignettes were designed to ensure valid and reliable responses. Experts in questionnaire development have identified items that affect questionnaire effectiveness, including: instruction clarity, question arrangement, time requirements, and question clarity (Dillman, 1978; Fowler, 1984; Sudman & Bradburn, 1982).

Vignette research has been successfully used as an educational tool to assess teacher behavior (Pedhazur, 1969), to measure reaction to rape crimes (Alexander & Becker, 1978), and to determine the effectiveness of psychotherapy (Druss, 1987; Fitzpatrick & Freed, 2000; Wenzel & Holt, 2000). Vignettes are a combination of expressive and objective ideas and projective methods, which can be constructed to be interesting to subjects, can measure complex variables, and can be good approximations to realistic psychological and social situations. They also represent unobtrusive approaches to sensitive information about the subjects (e.g., prejudiced attitudes, needs, and sexual preferences).

Both the questionnaire and vignettes were subjected to expert and peer review before use. Two special education faculty members from the University of Oklahoma who had knowledge in research methodology, a school psychologist, a director of special education from a large school district in Oklahoma, and three special education teachers from a large Oklahoma school district reviewed the survey and vignettes multiple times

for clarity, design, length, and depth. Revisions were made in response to their suggestions.

Procedures and Data Collection

Data was collected using a variety of methods and procedures. The questionnaire was used annually over a three-year period; the vignettes were distributed as a single follow up task at the end of three years. All participating special educators received a district newsletter, which contained the questionnaire. The questionnaires were sent out on three different occasions. The first questionnaire was sent out during the month of February, 1998 just before spring assessments to the 96 special educators who were currently employed by the district. Year 2 was distributed in February of 1999 to 103 special educators employed at that time. Finally, Year 3 was sent out in the March of 2000 to the 112 special educators employed by the district. Each newsletter contained a brief article about assessing students with special needs, the questionnaire, and instructions to return the completed questionnaire to the special services department through the district's mail system. Teachers were given five weeks to return completed surveys. Questionnaires received up to and including the designated closing date were included in the research sample.

Vignettes one through five were attached to a consent for participation form and distributed to 42 teachers over a three day period who were in attendance at a quarterly district-wide special education teacher meeting. Each participant returned the completed questionnaire at the close of each meeting. As a general observation, attendance was low due to poor weather conditions during this three-day period of data collection. The

following table represents each vignette by student name, primary area of impairment, and focus of accommodation.

Table 5

Vignette Response Guide.

<u>Student Name</u>	<u>Primary Area of Impairment</u>	<u>Focus of Accommodation</u>
Shelli	Physical	Time, Presentation, Response
Sharon	Behavior	Setting, Scheduling, Time
Benjamin	Academic	Presentation, Response
Jonathan	Academic	Presentation, Response
Darren	Cognitive/Academic	Scheduling, Time, Presentation, Response

Data Analysis

Questionnaire items were individually coded for data recording and analysis. Coded responses were entered into rows-by-column format using SPSS for Windows advanced statistics software package (Norusis/SPSS, 1993) with a Compaq Deskpro P50 computer (Compaq Computer, 1998). Entries into the computer were reviewed for reliability and accuracy by a doctoral student. That is, 100 entries (50% of the coded responses) were double checked with the original questionnaire for data entry accuracy. These randomly selected entries thus served to determine data entry reliability. The percentage of item-by-item agreements was 99%; disagreement areas were adjusted to achieve 100% agreement.

Vignettes were coded in two ways: the number of answers recorded and the number of correct answers provided. For example, if a teacher gave five modifications or accommodations for a vignette with four of the five answers matching the author's recommendation. This vignette would be coded "+5" for the five answers recorded and "+4" for the four answers correct. Teacher participants were also asked to identify the primary disability represented in the vignette, and the primary focus of accommodation-making, by circling the corresponding letter. Those responses were coded as correct or incorrect.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive, inferential statistics and One-way ANOVA's were employed to analyze the vignettes and changes in teacher perceptions from one year to the next for the three years of study. Because these groups varied somewhat each year due to retirements, new hires, and natural changes in teacher participation, a nonparametric analysis, namely the Mann-Whitney Test, was employed.

Nonparametric inferential statistics like the Mann-Whitney Test are utilized when data is either skewed, the variances of the groups are greatly different from one another, when sample size is small, or when there is doubt concerning the normality of the underlying population distribution, which may violate the assumptions of the parametric statistic, rendering any conclusions from these procedures suspect (Runyon, Haber, Pittenger, & Coleman, 1996). Categorical variables were analyzed to show teacher/participant trends or changes that occurred for the three years under study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this investigation was to determine: (a) special educators' perceptions with regard to state mandated assessments over a three-year period and (b) determine special educators' accuracy at identifying appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. Data was collected using a questionnaire and a follow-up vignette task.

Research Questions

1. How will teacher perceptions regarding accommodation-making, training, accountability, and participation in state mandated assessments change across a three-year period?
2. How effective are special education teachers in identifying test modifications for students with disabilities?

The survey data collected reflected the trends in teacher perception by survey category, (i.e., accommodation-making, teacher training, student participation, and teacher/student accountability), which were then broken down by the specific survey questions asked and compared to one another across the three years of study. Teachers were given a choice of five responses per question: strongly disagree (1 = SD), disagree (2 = D), neutral (3 = N), agree (4 = A), or strongly agree (5 = SA). Data identified as significant was interpreted collectively as the most consistent response pattern among teacher answer choices. The resultant chi-square demonstrated the degree to which teacher perceptions were significant each year. The One-way ANOVA's revealed any significant changes which may have occurred over a three-year period.

Teacher Perceptions

Tables 6 through 10 address teacher perceptions regarding test accommodations. In general, very little change in teacher perception regarding accommodation-making was found. Teachers indicated during the three years of data collection that they were “comfortable making accommodations” (0.01 level of significance), with “sharing accommodation ideas with other teachers” (0.01 level of significance) and “making both classroom and assessment accommodations” (0.01 level of significance).

More specifically, the accommodation data suggests that a significant number of teachers perceived themselves as making classroom accommodations (Table 6), with 100 percent teacher agreement to survey question 1 (I readily make accommodations to daily class assignments) by Year 3. A significantly equal number of teachers were comfortable with the idea of accommodation-making (Table 9), with 93 % of teacher disagreement with survey question 3 (I am uneasy about making classroom accommodations) by Year 3. And reportedly, with little concern for how time-consuming was the accommodation-making (Table 10), with 84 % of the teachers disagreeing to survey question 4 (I believe that making accommodations is too time consuming) by Year 3. Additionally, a majority of teachers perceived themselves as having made accommodations for students with special needs in an evaluative situation (Table 7), with 81 % of the teachers agreeing with survey question 7 (I have made accommodations for students during evaluative situations) by Year 3. It also appears that teachers perceived themselves as “sharing accommodation ideas” more readily during the later years of the study (Table 8) with 99 % of the teachers agreeing with survey question 2 (I share accommodation ideas with other teachers.) by Year 3.

Accommodation-making

Table 6

Question 1: I readily make accommodations to daily class assignments, i.e., shortened and or additional time to complete assignments.

Teacher Response	Year 1 (N = 67)				Year 2 (N = 55)				Year 3 (N = 79)				Yrs. 1-3 F
	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	
Strongly Disagree	0 (0)	6	13.4	73.37*	0 (0)	3	11	55.46*	0 (0)	0	19.8	33.25*	0.031
Disagree	0 (0)	2	13.4		2 (4)	2	11		0 (0)	4	19.8		
Neutral	2 (3)	4	13.4		2 (4)	4	11		0 (0)	11	19.8		
Agree	15(22)	15	13.4		8 (14)	15	11		20(25)	28	19.8		
Strongly Agree	50(75)	40	13.4		43(78)	31	11		59(75)	36	19.8		

Note. * denotes statistical significance at the .05 level.

Accommodation-making

Table 7

Question 7: I have made accommodations for students during evaluative situations.

Teacher Response	Year 1 (N = 67)				Year 2 (N = 55)				Year 3 (N = 79)				Yrs. 1-3 F
	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	
Strongly Disagree	0 (0)	6	13.4	71.32*	0 (0)	3	11	55.97*	0 (0)	0	19.8	32.74*	0.034
Disagree	0 (0)	4	13.4		2 (4)	2	11		0 (0)	3	19.8		
Neutral	5 (7)	5	13.4		5 (9)	6	11		2 (3)	13	19.8		
Agree	15(22)	15	13.4		9 (16)	16	11		18(23)	27	19.8		
Strongly Agree	47(75)	37	13.4		39(71)	28	11		59(74)	36	19.8		

Note. * denotes statistical significance at the .05 level.

Accommodation-making

Table 8

Question 2: I share accommodation ideas with other teachers.

Teacher Response	Year 1 (N = 67)				Year 2 (N = 55)				Year 3 (N = 79)				Yrs. 1-3 F
	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	
Strongly Disagree	2 (3)	2	13.4	48.05*	0	0	18.3	44.76*	0	0	26.3	40.28*	2.414
Disagree	0	0	13.4		0	0	18.3		0	0	26.3		
Neutral	5 (8)	5	13.4		2 (4)	2	18.3		1 (1)	1	26.3		
Agree	23 (34)	23	13.4		12 (22)	12	18.3		32 (41)	32	26.3		
Strongly Agree	37 (55)	37	13.4		41 (74)	41	18.3		46 (58)	46	26.3		

Note. * denotes statistical significance at the .05 level.

Accommodation-making

Table 9

Question 3: I am uneasy about making classroom accommodations.

Teacher Response	Year 1 (N = 67)				Year 2 (N = 55)				Year 3 (N = 79)				Yrs. 1-3 F
	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	
Strongly Disagree	45 (67)	45	13.4	104.27*	43(78)	43	13.8	83.55*	54 (68)	54	15.8	129.54*	0.417
Disagree	16 (24)	16	13.4		6 (11)	6	13.8		19 (25)	19	15.8		
Neutral	1 (2)	1	13.4		4 (7)	4	13.8		4 (5)	4	15.8		
Agree	3 (4)	3	13.4		0	0	13.8		1 (1)	1	15.8		
Strongly Agree	2 (3)	2	13.4		2 (4)	2	13.8		1 (1)	1	15.8		

Note. * denotes statistical significance at the .05 level.

Accommodation-making

Table 10

Question 4: I believe that making accommodations is too time consuming.

Teacher Response	Year 1 (N = 67)				Year 2 (N = 55)				Year 3 (N = 79)				Yrs. 1-3 F
	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	
Strongly Disagree	42 (63)	42	13.4	53.78*	35 (63)	35	11	67.09*	48 (60)	48	15.8	94.23*	0.023
Disagree	13 (19)	13	13.4		7 (13)	7	11		19 (24)	19	15.8		
Neutral	9 (13)	9	13.4		4 (7)	4	11		8 (10)	8	15.8		
Agree	3 (5)	3	13.4		7 (13)	7	11		2 (3)	2	15.8		
Strongly Agree	0	0	13.4		2 (4)	2	11		2 (3)	2	15.8		

Note. * denotes statistical significance at the .05 level.

Training

Changes in the area of teacher training also resulted in the identification of teacher response patterns. Specifically, in the first year of the study, a significant majority of teachers (0.05 level of significance) indicated that they were relatively “uncomfortable” with the knowledge they had about assessment accommodation-making (see Table 11), with 68 % disagreeing with survey question 9 (I am comfortable with the amount of knowledge I have regarding the reauthorization of IDEA and assessments.). But by Year 3, only 42 % of the teachers were disagreeing with survey question 9. Table 12 suggests a similar trend. During Year 1, 73 % agreed with survey question 10 (I could benefit from training in assessment accommodations.), but by Year 3, only 59 percent of the teachers agreed to survey question 10. Approximately equal numbers of teachers responded positively to survey question 13 (I would gladly attend a workshop on making assessment accommodations for students with special needs.) during both Year 1 (71 %), and Year 3 (77 %) (see Table 13).

Accommodation-making

Table 10

Question 4: I believe that making accommodations is too time consuming.

Teacher Response	Year 1 (N = 67)				Year 2 (N = 55)				Year 3 (N = 79)				Yrs. 1-3 F
	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	
Strongly Disagree	42 (63)	42	13.4	53.78*	35 (63)	35	11	67.09*	48 (60)	48	15.8	94.23*	0.023
Disagree	13 (19)	13	13.4		7 (13)	7	11		19 (24)	19	15.8		
Neutral	9 (13)	9	13.4		4 (7)	4	11		8 (10)	8	15.8		
Agree	3 (5)	3	13.4		7 (13)	7	11		2 (3)	2	15.8		
Strongly Agree	0	0	13.4		2 (4)	2	11		2 (3)	2	15.8		

Note. * denotes statistical significance at the .05 level.

Training

Table 11

Question 9: I am comfortable with the amount of knowledge I have regarding the reauthorization of IDEA and assessments.

Teacher Response	Year 1 (N = 67)				Year 2 (N = 55)				Year 3 (N = 79)				Yrs. 1-3 F
	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	
Strongly Disagree	21 (31)	21	13.4	28.15*	5 (9)	5	11	42.73*	7 (9)	7	15.8	24.23*	15.23*
Disagree	25 (37)	25	13.4		29 (53)	29	11		26 (33)	26	15.8		
Neutral	13 (19)	13	13.4		13 (23)	13	11		23 (29)	23	15.8		
Agree	6 (9)	6	13.4		6 (11)	6	11		19 (24)	19	15.8		
Strongly Agree	2 (3)	2	13.4		2 (4)	2	11		4 (5)	4	15.8		

Note. * denotes statistical significance at the .05 level.

Training

Table 12

Question 10: I could benefit from training in assessment accommodations.

Teacher Response	Year 1 (N = 67)				Year 2 (N = 55)				Year 3 (N = 79)				Yrs. 1-3 F
	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	
Strongly Disagree	1 (2)	1	13.4	35.31*	0	0	13.8	8.78*	6 (8)	6	15.8	23.60*	5.610*
Disagree	6 (9)	6	13.4		6 (11)	6	13.8		6 (8)	6	15.8		
Neutral	11 (16)	11	13.4		16 (29)	16	13.8		21 (25)	21	15.8		
Agree	22 (33)	22	13.4		21 (39)	21	13.8		28 (36)	28	15.8		
Strongly Agree	27 (40)	27	13.4		12 (21)	12	13.8		18 (23)	18	15.8		

Note. * denotes statistical significance at the .05 level.

Training

Table 13

Question 13: I would gladly attend a workshop on making assessment accommodations for students with special needs.

Teacher Response	Year 1 (N = 67)				Year 2 (N = 55)				Year 3 (N = 79)				Yrs. 1-3 F
	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	
Strongly Disagree	1 (2)	1	13.4	34.12*	0	0	13.8	23.91*	2 (3)	2	15.8	49.04*	0.194
Disagree	5 (8)	5	13.4		2 (4)	2	13.8		5 (6)	5	15.8		
Neutral	13 (19)	13	13.4		8 (15)	8	13.8		11 (14)	11	15.8		
Agree	26 (38)	26	13.4		24 (43)	24	13.8		33 (42)	33	15.8		
Strongly Agree	22 (33)	22	13.4		21 (38)	21	13.8		28 (35)	28	15.8		

Note. * denotes statistical significance at the .05 level.

Accountability

The accountability survey questions also showed some response trends. Table 14, for example, revealed no significant changes in teacher perceptions regarding their use of the resultant state mandated assessment data, survey question 5 (I believe that mandated evaluations for students with disabilities will result in beneficial information for teachers.). However, nearly 50 % more teachers disagreed with this statement Year 3 (52 %), when compared with Year 1 (28 %). Likewise, no significant changes were noted in teacher perceptions regarding general public access to the state mandated assessment results with approximately an equal number of teachers expressing both agreement and disagreement with survey question 6 (I believe that the general public should have access to accountability information like mandated assessments.) (see Table 15). Table 16 revealed the teacher's concern regarding meeting the IDEA-97 timelines trends noted Year 1 (45 %), Year 2 (45 %), and Year 3 (31 %), were positive to survey question 8 (I am concerned about the timelines for meeting the 1997 IDEA mandated assessment requirements for the Spring of 1999.). However, when teachers were asked to respond to survey question 15 (Table 17), (I am concerned that evaluation results might be interpreted as a reflection of my teaching skills.) teachers' responses varied from year to year with a majority of teachers indicating they were not concerned during Year 1 (52 %). By Year 2 (53 %) the majority of teachers indicated that they were concerned about the results being a reflection of their teaching skills. And by Year 3 (63 %) teachers reported a lack of concern about how the test results would be interpreted in relationship to their teaching skills.

Accountability

Table 14

Question 5: I believe that mandated evaluations for students with disabilities will result in beneficial information for teachers.

Teacher Response	Year 1 (N = 67)				Year 2 (N = 55)				Year 3 (N = 79)				Yrs. 1-3 F
	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	
Strongly Disagree	8 (12)	8	13.4	8.30	14 (26)	14	11	16.00*	20 (25)	20	15.8	5.87	6.001*
Disagree	11 (16)	11	13.4		16 (29)	16	11		21 (27)	21	15.8		
Neutral	22 (33)	22	13.4		6 (10)	6	11		16 (20)	16	15.8		
Agree	14 (21)	14	13.4		17 (31)	17	11		12 (15)	12	15.8		
Strongly Agree	12 (18)	12	13.4		2 (4)	2	11		10 (13)	10	15.8		

Note. * denotes statistical significance at the .05 level.

Accountability

Table 15

Question 6: I believe that the general public should have access to accountability information like mandated assessments.

Teacher Response	Year 1 (N = 67)				Year 2 (N = 55)				Year 3 (N = 79)				Yrs. 1-3 F
	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	
Strongly Disagree	12 (18)	12	13.4	11.73*	14 (26)	14	11	6.00	18 (23)	18	15.8	9.29	0.210
Disagree	11 (16)	11	13.4		12 (22)	12	11		13 (17)	13	15.8		
Neutral	23 (35)	23	13.4		15 (27)	15	11		25 (31)	25	15.8		
Agree	15 (22)	15	13.4		9 (16)	9	11		14 (18)	14	15.8		
Strongly Agree	6 (9)	6	13.4		5 (9)	5	11		9 (11)	9	15.8		

Note. * denotes statistical significance at the .05 level.

Accountability

Table 16

Question 8: I am concerned about the timelines for meeting IDEA-97 mandated assessment requirements for the Spring of 1999.

Teacher Response	Year 1 (N = 67)				Year 2 (N = 55)				Year 3 (N = 79)				Yrs. 1-3 F
	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	
Strongly Disagree	1 (2)	1	13.4	38.45*	2 (4)	2	11	21.27*	10 (14)	10	15.8	42.33*	8.248*
Disagree	7 (10)	7	13.4		11 (20)	11	11		6 (7)	16	15.8		
Neutral	29 (43)	29	13.4		17 (31)	17	11		38 (48)	38	15.8		
Agree	9 (13)	9	13.4		5 (9)	5	11		16 (20)	16	15.8		
Strongly Agree	21 (32)	21	13.4		20 (36)	20	11		9 (11)	9	15.8		

Note. * denotes statistical significance at the .05 level.

Accountability

Table 17

Question 15: I am concerned that evaluation results might be interpreted as a reflection of my teaching skills.

Teacher Response	Year 1 (N = 67)				Year 2 (N = 55)				Year 3 (N = 79)				Yrs. 1-3 F
	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	
Strongly Disagree	15 (22)	15	13.4	8.45	9 (16)	9	11	7.09	20 (25)	20	15.8	29.42*	1.983
Disagree	20 (30)	20	13.4		11 (20)	11	11		30 (38)	30	15.8		
Neutral	16 (24)	16	13.4		6 (11)	6	11		19 (24)	19	15.8		
Agree	9 (13)	9	13.4		11 (20)	11	11		4 (5)	4	15.8		
Strongly Agree	7 (11)	7	13.4		18 (33)	18	11		6 (8)	6	15.8		

Note. * denotes statistical significance at the .05 level.

Participation

Finally, other significant trends were noted in the area of assessment participation. Table 18, survey question 11 (I do not believe special education students should participate in mandated assessments.) revealed no significant trends with approximately equal numbers of teachers reporting a belief that students should and should not participate in state mandated assessments across all three years of data collection. The trend noted in survey question 12 (If given the choice I would encourage parents to allow their children to participate in mandated assessments.), Year 1 (42 %) suggests that teachers were uncertain or “neutral” (0.05 level of significance) about whether or not they would encourage parents to allow their child to participate in state mandated assessments before the required deadline of spring 1999. However, by Year 3 the statistically significant majority of teachers (47 %) (0.05 level of significance) indicated that they would encourage parents to allow their child to participate in state mandated assessments (see Table 19). A significant trend was also noted regarding survey question 14 (Table 20), (I believe that accommodations should be available to all students, not just students with special needs.), the majority of teachers reported in Year 1 (64 %) that they believed that all students should have accommodations made available. This belief changed by Year 3 (37 %).

Participation

Table 18

Question 11: I do not believe special education students should participate in mandated assessments.

Teacher Response	Year 1 (N = 67)				Year 2 (N = 55)				Year 3 (N = 79)				Yrs. 1-3 F
	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	
Strongly Disagree	7 (10)	7	13.4	10.84*	15 (27)	15	11	14.91*	5 (6)	5	15.8	13.85*	1.662
Disagree	13 (19)	13	13.4		8 (15)	8	11		16 (20)	16	15.8		
Neutral	23 (35)	23	13.4		8 (15)	8	11		24 (30)	24	15.8		
Agree	14 (21)	14	13.4		4 (7)	4	11		13 (17)	13	15.8		
Strongly Agree	10 (15)	10	13.4		20 (36)	20	11		21 (27)	21	15.8		

Note. * denotes statistical significance at the .05 level.

Participation

Table 19

Question 12: If given the choice I would encourage parents to allow their children to participate in mandated assessments.

Teacher Response	Year 1 (N = 67)				Year 2 (N = 55)				Year 3 (N = 79)				Yrs. 1-3 F
	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	
Strongly Disagree	7 (10)	7	13.4	22.03*	7 (13)	7	11	6.73	13 (17)	13	15.8	15.87*	0.005
Disagree	10 (15)	10	13.4		7 (13)	7	11		13 (17)	13	15.8		
Neutral	28 (42)	28	13.4		10 (18)	10	11		16 (19)	16	15.8		
Agree	14 (21)	14	13.4		15 (27)	15	11		29 (37)	29	15.8		
Strongly Agree	8 (12)	8	13.4		16 (29)	16	11		8 (10)	8	15.8		

Note. * denotes statistical significance at the .05 level.

Participation

Table 20

Question 14: I believe that accommodations should be available to all students, not just students with special needs.

Teacher Response	Year 1 (N = 67)				Year 2 (N = 55)				Year 3 (N = 79)				Yrs. 1-3 F
	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	N (%)	Obs.	Exp.	X ²	
Strongly Disagree	7 (10)	7	13.4	16.51*	7 (13)	7	11	14.00*	10 (13)	10	15.8	6.89	5.182*
Disagree	9 (13)	9	13.4		9 (16)	9	11		16 (20)	16	15.8		
Neutral	8 (12)	8	13.4		22 (40)	22	11		24 (30)	24	15.8		
Agree	22 (33)	22	13.4		9 (16)	9	11		13 (17)	13	15.8		
Strongly Agree	21 (31)	21	13.4		8 (15)	8	11		16 (20)	16	15.8		

Note. * denotes statistical significance at the .05 level.

Vignettes

The following tables supply the results of teacher vignette responses. Table 21 represents the teachers' responses to the question regarding the focus of accommodation-making. A preferred response indicates the teacher appropriately identified the focus of accommodation-making. A nonpreferred response indicates the teacher inappropriately identified the focus of accommodation-making. This data was followed by another table (Table 22) indicating the teacher response rates for focus of accommodation-making by grade level (i.e., elementary, middle school, high school). Table 22 indicates if a particular grade level of teachers were better able to identify the focus of accommodation per each vignette. In a few cases, teachers may have chosen not to answer a portion of the vignette survey. However, the survey was used by the researcher in its entirety. This resulted in less than a 100 % response rate for the following tables.

Table 23 represents teacher response rates for the question addressing the area of impairment requiring an accommodation. A preferred response indicates the teacher appropriately identified the area of impairment requiring an accommodation. A nonpreferred response indicates the teacher inappropriately identified the area of impairment requiring an accommodation. This data was followed by another table (Table 24) indicating the teacher response rates for primary area of impairment by grade level (i.e., elementary, middle school, high school). The data collected for teacher responses to each vignette are represented in the following tables by their resultant chi-square and its level of significance.

Table 21

Focus of Accommodation Making. N = 42

Vignette	N	Mean	SD	<u>Preferred</u>	<u>Nonpreferred</u>	X2
				<u>Response</u>	<u>Response</u>	
A. Shelly	42	1.45	0.504	24 (57)	18 (43)	0.86
B. Sharon	40**	1.18	0.501	30 (71)	10 (24)	29.71*
C. Benjamin	41**	1.33	0.525	26 (62)	15 (36)	22.43*
D. Jonathon	41**	1.30	0.516	27 (64)	14 (34)	24.14*
E. Darren	38**	1.48	0.670	25 (60)	13 (31)	15.86*

Note. * denotes significant at the .05 level.

Note. ** denotes missing data.

To the question regarding the focus of accommodation-making, Table 21, Vignette A, no significance was indicated, suggesting that teacher participants identified the preferred focus of accommodation-making only slightly more often as they identified a nonpreferred accommodation. Vignette B revealed a 0.01 significance level with 30 (71.4%) of the respondents identifying the required accommodation. Vignette C

revealed a 0.01 significance level with 26 (61.9%) of the responders identifying the required accommodation. Vignette D revealed a 0.01 significance level with 27 (64.3%) of the responders identifying the required accommodation. Vignette E revealed a 0.01 significance level with 25 (60%) of the responders identifying the required accommodation.

Table 22 specifically addressed the focus of accommodation by grade level to determine if the grade level educators teach significantly impacts his or her ability to identify the focus of accommodation for a particular disability. Of the five vignettes representing different impairment areas for the three grade levels, only two vignettes were found to be significant with regard to grade level. Vignette B (Sharon) was found to be significant with 88% of the preferred responders being elementary school special education teachers at a significance level of 0.01. Vignette E (Darren) however was found to be significant with 65% of the nonpreferred responders being elementary school special education teachers at a significance level of 0.05.

Table 22

Teacher response rates per grade level for focus of accommodation. N = 42

Vignette	Teaching Level	N	Mean	SD	Preferred Response N (%)	Nonpreferred Response N (%)	X2
A. Shelly	Elementary	19	1.32	0.478	13 (68)	6 (32)	2.58
	Middle Sch.	10	1.40	0.516	6 (60)	4 (40)	0.40
	High Sch.	13	1.62	0.506	5 (39)	8 (61)	0.69
B. Sharon	Elementary	18**	1.05	0.405	16 (88)	2 (12)	22.21*
	Middle Sch.	10	1.20	0.422	8 (80)	2 (20)	3.60
	High Sch.	12**	1.38	0.650	6 (50)	6 (50)	3.85
C. Ben	Elementary	19	1.42	0.507	7 (64)	4 (36)	0.47
	Middle Sch.	10	1.30	0.483	7 (70)	3 (30)	1.60
	High Sch.	12**	1.23	0.599	8 (66)	4 (34)	5.69
D. Jon	Elementary	19	1.37	0.496	12 (63)	7 (37)	1.32
	Middle Sch.	10	1.30	0.483	7 (70)	3 (30)	1.60
	High Sch.	12**	1.23	0.599	8 (65)	4 (35)	5.69
E. Darren	Elementary	17**	1.47	0.697	6 (35)	11 (65)	6.42*
	Middle Sch.	10	1.60	0.516	4 (40)	6 (60)	0.40
	High Sch.	11**	1.46	0.776	3 (27)	8 (73)	4.77

Note. * denotes significance at the .05 level.

Note. ** denotes missing data.

Table 23

Primary Area of Impairment. N = 42

Vignette	N	Mean	SD	<u>Preferred</u>	<u>Nonpreferred</u>	X ²
				<u>Response</u>	<u>Response</u>	
A. Shelly	41**	0.98	0.158	41 (100)	0	38.09*
B. Sharon	41**	1.02	0.276	39 (95)	2 (5)	67.00*
C. Benjamin	42	1.29	0.464	30 (71)	12 (29)	7.71*
D. Jonathon	42	1.10	0.303	38 (91)	4 (9)	27.52*
E. Darren	40**	0.98	0.221	40 (100)	0	34.38*

Note. * denotes significance at the .05 level.

Note. ** denotes missing data.

To the question regarding the area of impairment, Table 23, Vignette A, 41 (98%) participants identified the preferred area of impairment at a significance level of 0.00. Vignette B revealed that 39 (93%) of participants identified the preferred area of impairment at a significance level of 0.00. Vignette C revealed that 30 (71%) participants identified the preferred area of impairment at a significance level of 0.05.

Vignette D revealed that 38 (91%) of participants identified the preferred area of impairment at a significance level of 0.01. Finally, Vignette E revealed that 40 (95%) of participants identified the preferred area of impairment at a significance level of 0.01.

Table 24 specifically addressed the area of impairment by grade level to determine if the grade level educators teach significantly impacts his or her ability to identify the area of impairment for a particular disability. For Vignette A, 100 % of elementary and high school teachers identified the preferred area of impairment and 90 % of middle school teachers followed close behind. Vignette B revealed that 95 % of elementary teachers identified the preferred area of impairment. One hundred percent of middle school teachers identified the preferred area of impairment, and 85 % of high school teachers identified the preferred area of impairment. Vignette C revealed no significance for grade level. Vignette D revealed that 89 % of elementary teachers identified the preferred area of impairment. Ninety percent of middle school teachers identified the preferred area of impairment. And 92 % of high school teachers identified the preferred area of impairment. Vignette E revealed that 40 (95.2%) of participants identified the preferred area of impairment at a significance level of 0.01. Ninety-five percent of elementary teachers identified the preferred area of impairment. One hundred percent of middle school teachers identified the preferred area of impairment. And 92% of high school teachers identified the preferred area of impairment.

Table 24

Teacher response rates per grade level for primary area of impairment. N = 42

Vignette	Teaching Level	N	Mean	SD	Preferred Response N (%)	Nonpreferred Response N (%)	X2
A. Shelly	Elementary	19	1.00	0.000	19 (100)*	0	
	Middle Sch.	9**	0.90	0.316	9 (100)*	0	
	High Sch.	13	1.00	0.000	13 (100)*	0	
B. Sharon	Elementary	18**	0.95	0.229	18 (95)	0	15.21*
	Middle Sch.	10	1.00	0.000	10 (100)	0	6.40*
	High Sch.	13	1.15	0.376	11 (85)	2 (15)	6.23*
C. Ben	Elementary	19	1.26	0.452	14 (74)	5 (26)	4.26*
	Middle Sch.	10	1.20	0.422	8 (80)	2 (20)	3.60
	High Sch.	13	1.38	0.506	8 (62)	5 (38)	0.69
D. Jon	Elementary	19	1.11	0.315	17 (89)	2 (11)	11.84*
	Middle Sch.	10	1.10	0.316	9 (90)	1 (10)	6.40*
	High Sch.	13	1.08	0.277	12 (92)	1 (8)	9.31*
E. Darren	Elementary	18**	0.95	0.229	18 (95)	0	15.21*
	Middle Sch.	10	1.00	0.000	10 (100)*	0	
	High Sch.	12**	0.92	0.277	12 (92)	0	9.31*

Note. *denotes significance at the .05 level.

Note. **denotes missing data.

Summary of Results

Overall, there were few surprises found in the data with regard to the four categories under study (accommodation-making, training, accountability, and participation). In general, very little change in teacher perception regarding accommodation-making were found. Teachers indicated during all three years of data collection that they were comfortable making accommodations (0.01 level of significance), with sharing accommodation ideas with other teachers (0.01 level of significance) and making both classroom and assessment accommodations (0.01 level of significance). This did not change during the three years of data collection for nearly all teachers surveyed.

The survey questions with regard to training resulted in some expected changes. Teachers indicated initially that they were uncomfortable with the knowledge they possessed with regard to assessment. However, by Year 3, teachers had attended at least one annual in service training on this topic, as well as having some experience with the assessment process, the majority of teachers reported that they were now comfortable with the knowledge they had with regard to assessment. In general, teachers were willing each year to attend workshops and training.

The accountability survey questions also revealed some interesting trends. There were significant changes in teacher perceptions regarding their use of the resultant state mandated assessment data. Initially indicating that they thought the assessment data would be useful. However, by Year 3, the majority of teachers had indicated that they thought the assessment data would not be useful. Additionally, no significant changes were noted in teacher perceptions regarding general public access to the state mandated

assessment results with approximately an equal number of teachers expressing both agreement and disagreement. Teachers expressed some concern regarding meeting the IDEA-97 timelines but expressed little concern about how the test results would be interpreted in relationship to their teaching skills.

Significant trends were also noted in the area of assessment participation. Not the least of which teachers reported in Year 1 in approximately equal numbers, a belief that students should and should not participate in state mandated assessments. However, by Year 3, the majority of teachers reported that students should participate in mandated assessments. An interesting trend was noted with regard to encouraging parents to allow their children to participate in mandated assessments. Year 1 (42 %), reported that they were uncertain or “neutral” (0.05 level of significance) about whether or not they would encourage parents to allow their child to participate in state mandated assessments. However, by Year 3 (47 %), the statistically significant majority of teachers (0.05 level of significance) indicated that they would encourage parents to allow their child to participate in state mandated assessments. A significant trend was also noted regarding accommodations for all students. The majority of teachers reported in Year 1 (64 %) that they believed that all students should have accommodations made available. This belief changed by Year 3 (37 %), indicating that only those students identified with a disability should have assessment accommodation made available.

In general, and with regard to the vignette data, teacher participants had little difficulty identifying the area of impairment, i.e., physical, behavioral, cognitive and/or academic. However, as the question shifted to the focus of accommodation-making (i.e., setting, scheduling, time, presentation, or response), the teacher respondents had some

difficulty identifying the appropriate focus of accommodation for the two lower incident populations, physical disabilities and cognitive disabilities.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The legislators who drafted the 1997 amendments to IDEA recognized the need to make states accountable for the education of students with disabilities. Therefore, Part B funding was made contingent on the participation of students with disabilities in district and state-wide assessments with appropriate accommodations as needed. States were required to report not only the participation rates of students with special needs but also those who received test modifications and/or accommodations (Elliott, Erickson, Thurlow, Shriner, 2000). It is for this reason that test developers have created and normed a growing list of accommodations and modifications for the most commonly utilized group tests. However, it is not sufficient to only set forth a set of accommodations and/or modifications to “level the playing field” for students with special needs. Teachers must be able to correctly identify the student’s area of impairment and implement accommodations and/or modifications that allow the student to have the opportunity to participate in assessments to their fullest abilities. Thus, the purpose of this study was to describe changes in teacher perception, over a three-year period, as those changes related to the participation of students with disabilities in state mandated assessments and measure the ability of teachers to identify appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities.

Teacher Perceptions

Reviewing the teacher trends in this study have found consistency with the current research in the field (Hollenbeck, et al, 1998; Siskind, 1993; Thurlow, et al, 1997). One general inference made from this three-year study was that teacher perceptions, both

negative and positive, changed over time due to experience and education. In Year 1, a significant number of teachers reported feeling uncomfortable about their knowledge of assessment and accommodation-making and expressed a need for training. By Year 3, and after several training workshops on assessment and accommodation-making, teacher perceptions of the need for training was significantly reduced, suggesting that the training provided during the three years of data collection was ample to meet the teacher's perceived needs.

It is interesting to note however, that although teachers were exposed to at least three newsletters regarding modifications and accommodation-making, and had been required to make such modifications and/or accommodations during annual mandated assessments, this experience appears to have had little impact on the special educator. For example, the data gathered from the two vignettes describing lower incident disabilities suggests that teachers experienced some difficulty identifying appropriate modifications and/or accommodations. Further, When teachers were given the opportunity to describe appropriate modifications and/or accommodations for each vignette, teachers averaged just under two modifications and/or accommodations per vignette.

Interestingly, when given the choice in Year 1 to encourage parents to allow their child to participate in state mandated assessments, the majority of teachers said they would not encourage parents to allow participation. However, by Year 3, after inservice and practice with the assessment process the majority of teachers frequently stated that they would encourage parents to allow the student to participate in the state assessment. This may be explained in part by the educator's growing comfort level with the

assessment process as they participated in workshops on the subject and experienced mandated assessments first hand. Additionally, and specifically related to students with more mild disabilities, teachers may have recognized the value of annually assessing students with special needs in the general assessment for comparative purposes. Ironically, the majority of teachers also reported in Year 1 that they believed that mandated assessment results would provide them with beneficial information. However, by Year 3, with exposure to annual newsletters, inservice training, and experience making modifications and accommodations, the majority of teachers reported that mandated assessment results would not provide them with beneficial information.

Existing research also suggests that educators over accommodate students during the assessment process resulting in many inappropriate accommodation practices (Elliott et al., 1996). Interestingly, during the first year of data collection teachers reported that they readily made classroom accommodations and shared classroom accommodation ideas with other educators. However, by the third year of data collection and after considerable in-service training, teachers were unable to show any increase in their ability to propose an increased range of possible accommodations. This data may suggest that teachers were making more appropriate accommodations, eliminating unnecessary or unwanted accommodations, which resulted in fewer accommodations in general. Teachers also reported by Year 3 that making accommodations was not too time-consuming, further suggesting that the accommodations that were made were likely more appropriate than accommodations that were made prior to training. It also may suggest that the newsletters and inservice training was not impactful on the learning process.

Therefore, by Year 3, teachers just became weary of filling out the survey for a third time in three-years and identified fewer modifications and/or accommodations.

No significant changes in teacher perceptions were noted regarding the use of the results of state mandated assessment data. Likewise, no significant changes were noted in teacher perceptions regarding general public access to the state mandated assessment results. However, when teachers were asked if they were concerned about test results being interpreted as a reflection of their teaching skills, no significant finding was noted until the third year of data collection. During the first two years of data collection teachers reported in approximately equal numbers both a lack of and a concern for test interpretations being a reflection of their teaching skills. By Year 3, a majority of teachers indicated little or no concern regarding the interpretation of test results as a reflection of their teaching skills. This may suggest that as educators became more comfortable with the assessment process through experience and training they became less concerned about how test results would be interpreted with regard to their teaching skills. Two reasons may account for this outcome. First, teachers had originally expressed concerns, through anecdotal information gathered in a qualitative pilot study, that their students' scores would not be disaggregated as required by IDEA-97. However, time and experience demonstrated that the scores were disaggregated, removing some of the pressure to maintain higher test scores from administrators, general education teachers and, in turn, the special education teachers. Secondly, time and experience may have only bore out what the special education teacher, had been reporting to parents, general education teachers and administrators alike. That is, annual mandated assessment results would contribute less to the students with special needs than does the

mandated assessment contribute to the enhancement of the learning environment for the general education student. Specifically because the student with special needs was already receiving an annual assessment and an individualized education program was being developed and implemented from that annual assessment. However, it may also suggest that because these assessments are disaggregated, they are therefore devalued by administrators and teachers. If this were the case, teachers would naturally be less concerned about the results being a reflection of their teaching skills. After all, disaggregation equates to mandated assessment results having little or no value.

Upon reviewing the survey results, the next step was to evaluate teacher performance in the area of impairment identification and its resultant appropriate accommodation-making. This data was collected using a vignette survey, which depicted students with a variety of disabilities (See Table 5). The results indicated that teachers had little difficulty identifying the student's area of impairment, identifying the preferred area of impairment with nearly 100% accuracy. This was not too surprising as each vignette clearly described the student's disability (i.e., cognitive, behavioral, physical). However, the data also indicated that teachers had more difficulty making appropriate accommodations for the vignettes depicting lower incidence disabilities. For example, teachers made as many inappropriate accommodations as appropriate ones for Vignette A, which depicted an elementary student with Cerebral Palsy. Teachers also had significant difficulty making appropriate accommodations for Vignette E, an unmotivated high school student with Mental Retardation. This may be due in part to the majority of teacher's limited classroom experience with the lower incidence disability populations. This would be consistent with the majority of teachers' certification area, mild/moderate.

as this is most school districts' area of greatest need for teachers. For the more common areas of impairment (i.e., learning disabilities and related behavior problems), teachers easily identified the impairment and the significant majority of teachers were able to make appropriate accommodation recommendations.

Research Limitations

The limitations in this research can most easily be addressed by separating the research into two distinct parts, namely the three-year trend data and the data collected from the vignettes. The three-year trend study has three limitations, which must be addressed. First, the restriction of the data collection to a single school district as opposed to collecting data from several districts would have allowed for a more diverse sample and for greater generalizability. However, the district selected was one of the largest districts in the state and is one of the few districts that provide educational services to both inner city as well as suburban students.

The second limitation is the inconsistency in the sample population over the three-year period that data was collected. The number of special education teachers increased each year from year 1. In addition, from year to year there was approximately a 15% annual turnover rate due to new hires, teacher retirements, and teachers moving in and out of the school district. The results of some of the inconsistency can be seen in the drop of participants during Year 2 of data collection. It is also important to note that this limitation, while under the three years of study, that teacher participation in the annual in-service training was approximately 60 %. That is, 6 out of 10 teachers attending the in-service training, attended each year for all three years. It is also important to note that every special education teacher received an annual newsletter during the three years

under study, which outlined the in-service training regarding mandated assessments and modification and accommodation-making. However, whether teachers read the newsletter was not controlled for.

The third limitation is related to sample size. Small sample size is the consequential result of the first two limitations noted. It is for this reason that a nonparametric statistic was utilized for this data.

Limitations related to the vignette study also fell into three categories. First, data was collected over a two-day period, thus, reducing the opportunity for a larger sample size. Data was collected from the research participants during two days of in-service training by the researcher with the assistance of a professor from the University of Oklahoma. Finally, the sample size problem was further complicated by poor weather on one of the two in-service days, resulting in low attendance at one of the in-service training days.

Finally, the third limitation is the possible coercion of the researcher. This possibility is raised because the researcher was also the assistant director of special services for the district under study. Therefore, there is the possibility that some teachers may have felt obligated to participate and may not have been fully honest in their responses. However, it is important to note that all data collected was anonymous and completely voluntary.

Future Research

In the future, educational researchers will have to address two very important issues, the specific differences in training for teachers who are certified in the areas of mild/moderate and severe/profound disabilities and how these differences impact the

student. And secondly, the accountability system will have to be addressed, more specifically, levels of accountability, cost effective accountability, and meaningful acts of accountability.

Currently, and appropriately, IDEA-97 strongly encourages the inclusionary practices of all disability categories regardless of severity of disability, as deemed appropriate by the IEP team members. This growing trend has resulted in what has become known as a “mixing of categories.” That is, in both the general education classroom and the resource/lab classroom, students with various identified disabilities find themselves in classrooms with general education students and students with a variety of identified disabilities. Whether or not this is an appropriate practice remains to be seen. However, the issue related to this study is whether or not students with special needs, regardless of disability category, will receive the appropriate modification and/or accommodation, not just during assessments but in the classroom throughout the year as well. This study suggests that for the higher incidence disabilities, accommodating their needs is not a difficult task for the classroom teacher. However, students in the lower incidence categories, who are still “included,” may find success in the general classroom more difficult and less accommodating due to a lack of teacher training. As school systems follow the lead of IDEA-97, including a variety of students to be educated together, teacher-training programs must find a way to broaden the scope of their teacher education programs to meet the changing needs of the local educational systems and the growing practice of including kids and categories.

Finally, the issue of accountability has been problematic for educational systems for decades. There are no easy solutions. The educational systems of today are fraught

with and now leery of trial and error trends, bandwagons, and pendulum swings.

Therefore, it is easy to stay with a system of state and district-wide assessment programs because it has become the status-quo for accountability. However, the current accountability system is not without problems. It is costly in terms of financial resources, manpower, and time away from academic instruction. Additionally, the assessment may or may not accurately measure what it purports to measure; many assessments are biased against minority groups, including students with disabilities; and many assessment tools have been standardized on limited populations, few or none of which included accommodations and or modifications for the student participants.

Some ideas, which the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has researched and given relevance to, are sample-based approaches whereby only a sample of students are evaluated at random points every year. This type of assessment would provide similar information about schools and performance, becoming less intrusive into the instructional settings, is more cost-effective, and would reduce large-scale assessments considerably. NAEP also endorses the practice of performance-based or authentic assessment whereby a student's assessment results are based on classroom performance, products and portfolios, and the achievement of IEP goals as determined by a pre- and post- measure of performance. Finally, NAEP endorses the exploration of the growing trend of year round school. Although year round school has more breaks built into the schedule, those breaks are considerably shorter in duration, resulting in more retention of previously learned academic material, and therefore, this system is believed to improve accountability beyond the standard assessments. Clearly, more research must

be conducted in all of these areas to determine the positive and negative impact of these ideas with regard to students with special needs.

In summary, it appears that educators are no different than most when faced with change. IDEA-97 introduced some profound changes to special education. During the initial introduction of many of these changes teachers reported a reluctance to change. Early in the data collection process, Year 1, teachers reported that they were already making classroom and assessment accommodations; that they wouldn't encourage parents to allow their child with special needs to participate; and that the general public would not want results of assessment data for their students; nor would the results be a reflection of their teaching skills. They further reported that they did not want or need training regarding the changes set forth in IDEA-97, nor were they concerned about the timelines set forth in the reauthorization. However, by the third year of implementation of IDEA-97, the majority of educators had made the necessary adjustments to many of these changes and were reporting a level of comfort with and confidence in their knowledge and abilities regarding the changes in the assessment process. Through in-service training and experience teachers were reporting fewer but more appropriate classroom and assessment accommodation-making; they reported that they would encourage parents to allow their child with special needs to participate; and a significant majority of teachers expressed less concerns about test results being a reflection of their teaching skills. Teachers further expressed positive regard for training and a willingness to participate in additional training; and finally, the significant majority of special educators expressed no concern for the IDEA-97 timelines.

This study is as much about adapting to change as it is about appropriately identifying and accommodating students with special needs. It became evident that as some teachers held on more tightly to their current practices change was more difficult to accept and implement. According to Johnson (1998), “If you do not change, you can become extinct.”

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Appendix A
(District and IRB Permission to Collect Data)

Agency/School Consent Form
University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus
Permission to Conduct a Research Project

School: Putnam City Public Schools

Glen Kastner, Director of Special Services

I understand that this study, "Perceptions of Teacher Preparedness for State Mandated Assessments with Social Education Students: A Three Year Survey" is sponsored by the University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus, Educational Psychology Department, Special Education Program. It is directed by a doctoral advisory committee (Christine Ormsbee, Ph.D., Chairperson), and the primary investigator, James L. Rose, MA. This document serves as permission to conduct this research project in the following location(s): District-wide

The overall purpose of this study is to investigate how prepared teachers perceive themselves to be with regard to the implementation of the state mandated assessment requirements as reauthorized in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-17).

Special education teachers will be contacted and asked to complete a survey, which includes demographic information and their perceptions regarding state and district wide assessment procedures and student accommodations. Follow-up interviews may be conducted on a select number of special education teachers to help insure the validity of questionnaire items. The study is completely confidential and all returned surveys and interviews are anonymous. The study will require approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete each survey and approximately 45 minutes to conduct an interview. The participants will be asked to complete each survey at their convenience and will not disrupt employees in the conduct of their duties.

Agency participation in this study is limited to the voluntary participation of direct service staff (Special Education Teachers). This study holds no known risks to participants in the study, nor is there any special benefit. Agency participation in this study is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time. All records of the study will be kept confidential. The agency will not be named, the program location will not be identified and the names of the participants will be anonymous, and therefore cannot appear in any reports, publications or presentations concerning the study.

If I have any questions regarding this study, I will contact James L. Rose (405) 495-3770 or the University of Oklahoma Office of Research Administration at (405) 325-4757. I have read this consent document. I understand its contents and I consent to participation in this study under the conditions described here. I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

Agency Representative's Name: Alan C. Koster Date: Sept. 7, 1999

James L. Rose, MA
(Doctoral Student – Educational Psychology)
4221 N. Sterling Ave., Okc., OK. 73122
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Paula J. Wolfe
University of Oklahoma
Office of Research Administration
1000 Asp Ave., Buchanan Hall, 314

September 5, 1999

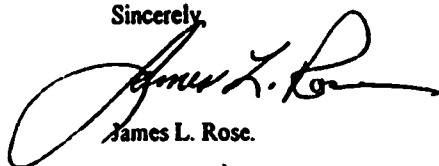
Dear Ms. Wolfe,

Please find enclosed a revision and addendum to my IRB submission of last February. IRB granted me permission to collect data through a teacher survey, which I have been doing. However, I am currently enrolled in Dr. John Rausch's Qualitative Research course, EIPT 6043. A course requirement is to conduct a qualitative research project in which I must collect data through teacher interviews.

I am submitting to you an updated version of my research project complete with participant consent form and a formal agreement to conduct this research in the Putnam City Public Schools. The data collected from teacher interviews will be limited in number and scope and be utilized solely for the purpose of survey (teacher questionnaire) validity. Please review previously submitted IRB application.

Please let me know if there are any necessary changes for IRB approval. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



James L. Rose.

PART II – DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH STUDY

A. Purpose/Objectives

The overall purpose of this study is to investigate how prepared teachers perceive themselves to be with regard to the implementation of the state mandated assessment requirements as reauthorized in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA-97) (P.L. 105-17). IDEA-97 now requires that all students with special needs participate in all state and district wide assessments, providing modifications and accommodations for the student as needed or an alternative assessment for those students with more severe disabilities. This research study includes three separate objectives. The first objective of this study is to determine if teachers perceive themselves as becoming more confident with assessment procedures over a three year period, given they receive continuous information and have opportunities to participate in the assessment process. This includes determining appropriate accommodations in a predictive manner during the construction of a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), implementing those accommodations during the assessment periods, and working cooperatively with the regular education teacher in the reporting process of the student's assessment information. The second objective is to determine the teachers perceived confidence with which he or she makes accommodations for students with special needs in the classroom as related to making similar accommodations

for state and district wide assessments. The final objective is to determine how the teacher perceives the usefulness of assessment information with regard to IEP construction and classroom instruction. This study will provide a systematic investigation of teacher perceptions regarding the efficacy of state and district wide assessments with regard to student development. The importance of knowledge gained as a result of this study may assist teachers in making more informed decisions about accommodating students with special needs not only in the classroom but in the assessment process as well. Further, it will create the dialogue necessary to successfully implement assessment accommodations to each student according to his or her individual special needs.

B. Research Protocol

A comprehensive teacher survey coupled with selected teacher interviews complements the teacher questionnaire and acts as a validity check to the responses of the questionnaire items (Schuman, 1970). These will be used to determine teacher perception of successful implementation of the IDEA-97 requirements regarding state and district wide assessments. This survey will measure teacher perception related to the procedural requirements of assessment, the perceived ease of implementing accommodations during assessment periods, and the efficacy of assessments for students with special needs. A qualitative component will be used

to collect, analyze, and validate teacher survey (questionnaire) data. A quantitative, causal-comparative design will include t-tests and a 2-Way ANOVA.

Data collection will consist of the completion of teacher surveys and selected interviews on a voluntary and confidential basis. Two stages will occur in this study. In stage one, participants will be asked to voluntarily complete a survey, one year prior to the required implementation of state and district wide assessments for students with special needs, in which they provide teacher demographic information, assisting in obtaining an appropriate sample. Participants will then be asked to complete the remainder of the survey measuring teacher perceptions (see Addendum A). Participants will then be asked to voluntarily complete the same survey, during the first and second implementation year, one and two years from the date of the initial survey.

Stage 2 includes selected interviews with several special education teachers. Each interview will focus on items found on the previous questionnaire identified in stage 1. Teacher interviews will assist in the validity of questionnaire responses previously accumulated as discussed in stage 1 (see Addendum B for participant consent form).

C. Consent Forms & Confidentiality

Prior to the study, the prospective school district will be contacted to request permission to conduct this research project. A district consent form will provide a

brief description of the research project. An administrative representative prior to the districts' participation (see Addendum C) will obtain a signed and dated consent form.

A consent form is not necessary for those participating in the questionnaire, as all special education teachers will receive the teacher survey, who will then be asked to complete and return the survey if they choose to participate. There are no identification codes, marks, or participant name requirements on the surveys, insuring the complete confidentiality of each participant/volunteer. However, after two years of data collection, selected (by demographic data), special education teachers will be asked to participate in an interview for which they will be asked to give consent for participation (see Addendum B).

Questionnaires/Surveys

Surveys will be mailed to participants as an insert in a quarterly Special Services Newsletter. The surveys and subsequent interviews will ask questions regarding teacher perceptions of state and district wide assessments for students with special needs. Teachers will be asked to return the completed but anonymous surveys to the Special Services Department through their inner-school mail system. Subsequent interviews will be scheduled according to the teacher's time and location convenience. All interviews will be audiotaped for ease of transcription.

D. Subject Benefit/Risk

The benefits of this study may lead to information that can be used to enhance the assessment of student's with special needs. Further, it may help teachers better understand the process one goes through when determining which accommodations and/or modifications are necessary for a student's equal participation in not only the classroom but in the assessment procedure as well. No known risks are associated with participation in this study. Participation is voluntary and fully confidential.

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am conducting a research project regarding State-mandated assessment for special education students, a new requirement in special education as indicated in the Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-17). My study is entitled "Perceptions of Teacher Preparedness for State Mandated Assessments with Special Education Students: A Three-Year Survey." I am the primary researcher for this project but am affiliated through the University of Oklahoma, Department of Educational Psychology, under the direct supervision of Dr. Chris K. Ormsbee. Please be advised of the following elements of participation consent: description of project, confidentiality, time requirements, risks and benefits to participants, and other elements of informed consent:

A comprehensive teacher survey and a selected number of teacher interviews will be used to determine teacher perception of successful implementation of the IDEA-97 requirements regarding state and district wide assessments. This survey will measure teacher perception related to the procedural requirements of assessment, the perceived ease of implementing accommodations during assessment periods, and the efficacy of assessments for students with special needs. Special education teachers will be contacted and asked to complete a survey, which includes demographic information and their perceptions regarding state and district wide assessment procedures and student accommodations.

The study is completely confidential and all returned surveys are anonymous. The receipt of teacher surveys will act as the teacher's informed consent to participate in this study. Further, teacher anonymity is maintained because teachers are asked not to identify themselves on the survey. Therefore teacher confidentiality regarding individual participation is maintained. Those teachers participating in an interview will be asked to sign a consent form before participating in an interview. This information will also remain confidential under the same specifications identified for questionnaires. The study will require approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete the survey and approximately 45 minutes for each interview conducted. The participants will be asked to complete each survey at their convenience and will not disrupt employees in the conduct of their duties. This request will be made of teachers in the spring of 1998, 1999 and

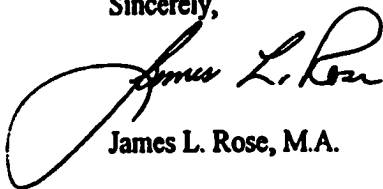
the spring of 2000 as this is when teachers are mostly involved in state and district assessments. Teacher interviews will be conducted during the fall of 1999 and spring of 2000.

Agency participation in this study is limited to the voluntary participation of direct service staff (Special Education Teachers). This study holds no known risks to participants, however, the benefits of this study may lead to information that can be used to enhance the assessment of student's with special needs. Further, it may help teachers better understand the process one goes through when determining which accommodations are necessary for a student's equal participation in not only the classroom but in the assessment procedure as well. Agency participation in this study is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time. All records of the study will be kept confidential. The agency will not be named, the program location will not be identified and the names of the participants will be anonymous, and therefore cannot appear in any reports, publications or presentations concerning the study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact James L. Rose (405) 495-3770. If you have any questions regarding the rights as a research participant please contact the Office of Research Administration at (405) 325-4757.

Please find enclosed a district consent form.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James L. Rose", with a large, stylized loop at the beginning.

James L. Rose, M.A.

Cc: University of Oklahoma, Office of Research Administration

Appendix B
(Teacher Survey)

Teacher Survey

Mandated Assessments for Students with Special Needs:

This is a survey to help Special Services better understand your concerns and needs as mandated assessments for students with special needs are required by the State Department of Education. Please familiarize yourself with this issue of the Putnam City Special Services Newsletter regarding the role of mandated assessment in special education. **Please complete the survey at your convenience and return to Special Services, James Rose - Asst. Director.** If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 495-3770. Thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

Please do NOT give your name as this survey is confidential.

1. Male _____ Female _____
2. Please specify your age range. a. 21-30 b. 31-40 c. 41-50 d. 51 or over
3. What is your level of education? a. Bachelors b. Masters c. Doctorate
4. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
a. 0-5 b. 6-10 c. 11-15 d. 16-20 e. 21-25
f. 26-30 g. 31-35 h. 36-40 i. 40 or over
5. What grade level(s) do you teach? (Check all that apply)
a. preschool b. Kdg. c. 1st d. 2nd e. 3rd f. 4th g. 5th
h. 6th i. 7th j. 8th k. 9th l. 10th m. 11th n. 12th
6. What is your primary teaching assignment?
a. regular education teacher b. special education teacher
7. If you are a regular education teacher, what subject(s) do you teach?
a. English b. History c. Language Arts d. Math e. Science
f. Social Studies g. Elementary (All Subjects) h. preschool
8. If you are a special education teacher, do you primarily teach students with:
a. LD b. ED c. MR d. Other (Please identify) _____

Please rate each item from 1 to 5 by circling your answer.

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neutral 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree
SD D N A SA

1. I readily make accommodations to daily class assignments, i.e. shortened and or additional time to complete assignment, etc. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I share accommodation ideas with other teachers. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I am uneasy about making classroom accommodations. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I believe that making accommodations is too time consuming. 1 2 3 4 5

(Continued On Back)

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. I believe that mandated evaluations for students with disabilities will result in beneficial information for teachers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I believe that the general public should have access to accountability information like mandated assessments. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I have made accommodations for students during evaluative situations, i.e. use of a calculator, test read to student, etc. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I am concerned about the timeline for meeting the 1997 IDEA mandated assessment requirements for the Spring of 1999. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I am comfortable with the amount of knowledge I have regarding the reauthorization of IDEA and assessments. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I could benefit from training in assessment accommodations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I do not believe special education students should participate in mandated assessments. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. If given the choice I would encourage parents to allow their children to participate in mandated assessments. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. I would gladly attend a workshop on making assessment accommodation for students with special needs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. I believe that accommodations should be available to all Students, not just special education students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. I am concerned that evaluation results might be interpreted as a reflection of my teaching skills. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

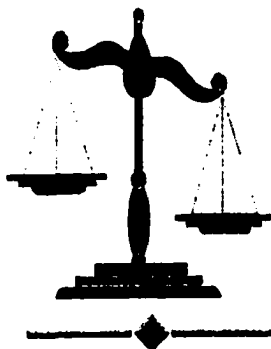
Please indicate below any additional concerns or needs related to state mandated assessments for students with special needs.

Appendix C
(Special Services Newsletters)

Putnam City Special Services News

Volume 1 Issue 2

February 1998



Special Education has, since its inception, been the most controversial and deliberated topic in education law. The reauthorization of the 1997 IDEA was no exception and will probably continue to be debated in State and Supreme Courts for years. However, both the Legislative and Congressional branches of the Federal Government voted overwhelmingly to enact the changes to IDEA with only four dissenting votes. President Bill Clinton signed it into law on June 4, 1997. Although the reauthorization of IDEA was enacted without regulations it is clear that one of the more significant requirements of the law is that of nationally mandated testing for all special education students.

The IDEA states: *...The IEP shall include a statement of any individual modifications in the administration of State or district-wide assessments of students achievement that are needed in order for the child to participate in such assessment; and if the IEP team determines that the child will not participate in a particular State or district wide assessment of student achievement (or part of such an assessment), a statement of why that assessment is not appropriate for the child; and how the child will be assessed...* Children with disabilities are to be included in general State and district-wide assessment programs. These

THE ROLE OF STATE MANDATED ASSESSMENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

public. Reports to the public should be made with the same frequency and in the same detail as reports on the assessment of nondisabled children. These reports may include the following information: *The number of children with disabilities participating in regular assessments (beginning not later than July 1, 1988). The number of these children participating in alternative assessments (beginning not later than July 1, 2000).*

1997 IDEA Reauthorization (1997, June). (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, Room 3090, Mary E. Switzer Building, 330 C Street, SW, Washington, DC 20202).

The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP): Who's Responsible for Mandated Assessments?

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a congressionally mandated project of the National Center for Education Statistics and is responsible for national mandated assessments. Mandated assessment refers to large scale, usually in-group settings, (statewide or district-wide) multiple-choice and open-ended item testing programs. These are used for policy purposes of evaluation and accountability, which includes nationally normed standardized achievement tests and tests custom-designed to reflect

state and district educational objectives (Ballator, 1996).

The NAEP is the only federally funded organization whose purpose is to collect data and report from year to year on the performance and trends of young Americans in reading, mathematics, and communications. Their responsibilities include conducting assessments in other subject areas as well as providing state and local educational agencies with technical assistance in interpreting assessment results and in conducting their own assessments (Brandt, 1982). After every assessment, NAEP reports the results for each exercise used and summaries of the results of all exercises to show the relative performance of particular groups. Administrators often receive this information categorized according to age, race, sex, geographic region, level of parental education, type and size of community, and with the 1997 IDEA reauthorization, by handicapping condition. In an effort to meet the specific evaluative needs of students who have been identified as having a handicapping condition, according to IDEA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Some educators and administrators have employed creativity in evaluative measures that best serve all students participating in mandated assessments. Education personnel are encouraged to embrace assessment accommodations and modifications, which are currently being utilized by many grass-roots educational movements, like those in Kentucky and Maryland.

The 1997 Reauthorization of IDEA has specifically mandated that educators and administrators address these concerns through the teaching and assessment of multi-disciplinary, multi-intelligence approaches to learning. Gardner suggests evaluating some students through the use of what he calls a "process folio," a documentation of progress, insights, reflections, goals, and achievements that a student maintains throughout the school year and from year to year. Emphasis is on growth, not simply acquisition of specific knowledge. Ongoing evaluations of these folios would encourage the student's understanding of his or her own progress, teachers' and specialists' assessment of mastery of skills, and processes in specific domains. However, to exclude 15% to 20% of the school population from these assessments not only violates students' rights to participate, but distorts the results. Therefore, the perception reported by NAEP to law-makers, administrators, educators, and the public at large (Thudow, 1995).

The new regulation to the IDEA also stipulates that the results of these assessments should be disaggregated from the assessment results of general education students. This will allow school districts to continue to monitor for general education curriculum improvements as they have in the past. Additionally, special education can now inform the public about the effects of the program and begin to monitor for curriculum needs in both special education and the general education curriculum, similar to current general education assessment requirements.

Arguably, many of the reasons cited for such segregation have been related to test design, i.e., reading a question, reading a selection of choices, and responding by filling in a tiny circle with a #2 lead pencil. For the general education population this is not much of a problem. However, for students who have a learning disability in reading, the evaluation results are more of a measurement of the students' reading disability than it is the subject which he or she is being evaluated. Or perhaps the student has Cerebral Palsy and cannot hold a pencil nor can the student fill in a tiny circle to indicate his or her response. The modification and ac-

commodation possibilities are endless when attempting to meet the specific needs of the education population. Other accommodations may include: frequent breaks, a change in the presentation of the evaluation, modified seating or no seating, a change in the evaluative instrument, a modified response format, etc.

As with any assessment, changes to the instrument, the instruments rules, the environment, or a host of other variables all allow students with special needs to participate in the evaluation process and demonstrate knowledge, skill, attitudes, creativity, and even flexibility. Variables that currently enrich the school environment, when assessed and included, may and should impact decisions regarding curriculum, school issues, teacher training, personnel requirements, and new program development, to name just a few (Archbald, 1990).

The implementation of such an endeavor would require the IEP team to clearly define the student's specific needs to successfully accomplish each section of the assessment instrument. This may include a multitude of assessments given the student's particular grade and school year. This is not an easy task and may require the IEP team to think creatively, engage in advanced planning, and be flexible in the IEP itself. It may be helpful for the team to think about assessment alternatives existing on a continuum. Some students may participate with no modifications. This would represent one end of the continuum. Some students would have to be evaluated, not by the assessment instrument itself, but by other means, i.e., parent/teacher academic survey, student portfolio, or by a quadriplegic's puff and sip response (Teale, 1996)

Archbald, D.A., (1990). Δ retrospective and an analysis of roles of mandated testing in education reform. (Contractor report prepared for the Office of Technology Assessment Titled "Testing in American Schools: Asking the right questions, TM 018 025).

Ballator, N. (1996). The NAEP Guide: a description of the content and methods of the 1994 and

1996 assessments. (Educational Testing Service) Princeton, NJ.

Brandt, D.A. (1982). Development of the national assessment of educational progress (National Institute of Education. No. AIR-25900-11/82-FR). Palo Alto, CA.

National Assessment of Educational Progress. (1984). Bringing the Future into focus (National Institute of Education. No. NIE-G-83-0011). Princeton, NJ.

Teale, S. (1996). Redesigning the Educational System to Enable All Students to Succeed. NASSP Bulletin.

Thudow, M.A. (1995). Inclusion of transition-age students with disabilities in large-scale assessments (National Transition Network). Minneapolis, MN.

Assessment Accommodations and the IEP

Dr. Judy Elliot, et.al. (1997), believes that an IEP team should consider six (6) areas of assessment accommodations when writing the IEP. The six areas and their assessment accommodations are as follows:

Setting

- Individual
- Small group
- Study Carrell
- Separate location

Timing

- Extended time
- Flexible schedule
- Frequent breaks during testing

Presentation

- Audio tape
- Braille edition
- Large print
- Fewer items on page
- Simplify language on test
- Keywords or phrases highlighted
- Read directions to student
- Clarify directions
- Provide additional examples
- Templates to reduce visible print
- Eliminate items that cannot be revised and estimate the score

Response

- Mark in response booklet
- Tape record for later verbatim translation
- Use of word processor
- Calculator
- Arithmetic tables
- Spelling dictionaries
- Spell checker

Scheduling

- Specific time of day
- Subtests in different order
- Frequent breaks on some subtests but not others

Other

- Special test preparation
- On task / focusing prompts
- Others that do not fit into other categories

Elliott, J.E. (1997). Accountability and Assessment: Where are Students with Disabilities? National Center on Educational Outcomes. University of Minnesota: Minneapolis, MN. 55455.

Thudow, M.L., Elliott, J.E., & Ysseldyke, J.E. (1997). Testing Students with Disabilities: Practical Strategies for Complying with District and State Requirements. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

The Goal of American education

Thomas Dewey said "The goal of American education is to value each child as equally an individual and entitled to equal opportunity of development of his own capacities, be they large or small in range.... Each has needs of his own as significant to him as those of others are to them. The very fact of natural and psychological inequality is all the more reason for establishment by law of equality of opportunity, since otherwise the former becomes a means of oppression of the less gifted."

It comes as no surprise that we as educators often find ourselves

traveling aimlessly down statistical roads fraught with blind alleys and dead-ends. This is not to say that the trip is not worth the effort and that the assessment and accountability of special education as we know it should be scrapped. Planning for the future is always suspenseful, especially when that future involves the education of all children, and most importantly, those with special needs. The only way to approach such a task is through flexible student evaluations and sensitivity to the needs of our students. The results of which will give direction for future assessment and a resultant functional level of performance applicable to the learning environment and therefore life events themselves.

SPECIAL SERVICES NEWCOMERS

The Special Services department welcomes two new School Psychologists for the 1997-98 school year. Marilyn Graham, wife of Brady Graham, stepmother of three and grandmother to six, comes to us as a former School Psychologist for the Oklahoma City Public Schools. A native of Fort Cobb, Oklahoma, says that her job is "very rewarding, particularly in seeing children receive the special help they need." She comments on how helpful the Special Services personnel have been in the transitioning to her new job. School Psychologist Kim Dixon, native of Pennsylvania, wife of Ronald Dixon and mother of two girls, has owned her own educational consulting company for the last few years. She has twenty-eight years of experience in teaching third to sixth graders in Ohio and at Hering Hall in Oklahoma City. Kim loves her new job and has enjoyed "working with such high quality professionals." Additionally, she praises the Special Services Team for their collaboration and support. Kim commented that this is the only school district she is aware of in the state where all personnel have obtained School Psychologist status.

"Quote"

Perhaps once in a hundred years a person may be ruined by excessive praise,

but surely once every minute someone dies inside for lack of it.

MULTIPLE DISABILITIES TRAINING SET

The State Department of Education and the Oklahoma University Affiliated Programs have approved the Putnam City Special Services Department to provide Registry Training in the area of Multiple Disabilities. Special Services will be offering this training to teachers who currently serve students with multiple disabilities. Two presentations will be provided for teachers to make efficient use of time and resources. This four-day training will be presented in two sessions, two days each session. The first presentation will be held on February 23 & 24 and March 9 & 10 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day. The second presentation will be held February 25 & 26 and March 11 & 12 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day. Please consult your principal regarding the most appropriate dates for the training. Special Services will provide substitute pay during your participation in the four days of training. To enroll in the multiple disabilities training, please contact James Rose at Special Services, 495-3770.

MEDICATION FACT SHEET: ANAFRANIL

(Clomipramine hydrochloride)

WHAT IS IT FOR?

Anafanil is an antidepressant and is used in the treatment of some types of depression and obsessive-compulsive disorders.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

Anafanil appears to inhibit the effect of serotonin, a central nervous system neurotransmitter.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS?

Side effects can include:

1. Gastrointestinal complaints
2. Weight gain
3. Nervousness/tremors
4. Dizziness when standing up
5. Dry mouth/blurred vision
6. Seizures

DOSAGE RANGE?

The maximum dose for children and adolescents is 200 mg per day. Peak

blood levels of Anafranil occur approximately 2 to 6 hours after ingestion, with effects lasting up to 36 hours.

MEDICAID UPDATE

Recently, Special Services received some very good questions regarding Medicaid. We wanted to take this opportunity to answer these questions and bring our special educators up to date with where we are in the process of Medicaid billing.

The school board has approved a contract with the Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA). However, we have not received a password, which would allow Special Services to get on-line with OHCA to help us identify which of our Students qualify for Medicaid services. Upon receipt of the password we will begin identifying our Medicaid eligible students and will create a confidential list of these students. This list will be distributed to only those service providers who will be billing Medicaid for services rendered. This list will then be updated periodically.

Service providers can begin collecting information on Medicaid eligible students only, beginning January 06, 1998. The information collected should reflect the requirements given to those providers at a previous meeting. This information should be collected and kept in the student's confidential file, behind a Medicaid cover sheet, at the school for monitoring purposes. For Billing purposes however, basic information, i.e., student's name, providers name, service code, and units billed should be reported to Special Services by the first Friday of the following month all services provided. For example, all services provided to Medicaid eligible students for the month of January should be reported on the first Friday of February.

Special Services will soon be sending home with each student a letter and application for families to enroll in Medicaid. The changes in the Medicaid laws will significantly impact the Number of our students who will now be eligible for these services. When a parent signs the application they are giving permission for service providers (school districts) to bill Medicaid for services

provided to these students. Additionally, Special Services will be placing a notice in all student handbooks addressing the issue of permission to bill Medicaid for the provisioning of school based services.

Finally, service providers can report their billing information to James Rose at Special Services. This information will then be logged-in and billing procedures will begin. Special Services welcomes any and all questions regarding Medicaid which should be brought to the attention of James Rose at Special Services, 495-3770.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

14th Annual Summer Institute

Bill Jensen and Cal Evans will be presenting information on implementing the discipline requirements of the 1997 Individual with Disabilities Act. Their presentation will be held on June 1 and 2, 1998 at Moore-Norman Vo-Tech in Norman, Oklahoma. This workshop will provide you with the strategies necessary to implement the discipline requirements of the 1997 IDEA. You will receive instruction on how to conduct a functional behavior assessment and manifestation determination. Further you will learn how to address the discipline issues related to children with special needs through the writing of an effective behavior intervention plan. This workshop is sponsored by the Greater Oklahoma City CSPD Consortium (Edmond Schools, Mid-Dei Schools, Putnam City Schools, and Region XIII Inservice Cooperative). Workshop brochures and registration information will be provided in May 1998.

"Quote"

Measure wealth not by the things you have, but by the things you have for which you would not take money.

Middle School Library Receives Special Education Grant

Central Middle School's Library Media Specialist Bobbie Frisk was awarded a special education grant in the

amount of \$395.86 for a project she calls Wildcat Readers: Helping Special Education Students Read and Succeed. These funds will be utilized to purchase high interest/ low level books, which are designed to interest the reluctant reader. Students will be provided with their own personalized/leveled reading list from the Accelerated Reader Program. Students will receive awards of their choice to reinforce a habit of reading. Special Services wishes to congratulate Central Middle School and Bobbie Frisk for their extra effort in meeting the diverse needs of students with reading difficulties.

"Quotes"

Success is knowing the difference between cornering people and getting people in your corner.

The Aldridge Education Foundation (Grants Awarded)

The Aldridge Education Foundation has awarded Coronado Elementary School's Tracey Deathe and Dr. Armando Cruz-rodz grants to support their educational ideas and endeavors. Mrs. Deathe was awarded \$1,962.00 to assist in a program designed to remove barriers in the community and integrate her students in community activities. These funds will also help support their participation in these years Special Olympics.

Dr. Cruz-rodz was awarded \$2,927.17 to help support a virtual classroom. Special Services wishes to congratulate these individuals on their extra effort to provide educational opportunities that transcends the traditional classroom setting. Special Services also wishes to thank The Aldridge Education Foundation for their continued support of the Putnam City educational programs.

"Quote"

The one who makes no mistakes does not normally make anything.



Special Services News



VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3

FEBRUARY 12, 1999

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STATE MANDATED ASSESSMENTS: "PUTTING IT TO THE TEST"

The 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '97) (Section 674 - b) mandate a systematic evaluation of the impact of IDEA '97. In accordance with these amendments, the national assessment will examine how well schools, local education agencies, and states are addressing and following nine main issues. They are:

1. Improving the performance of children with disabilities in general scholastic activities and assessments as compared to nondisabled children;
2. Providing for the participation of children with disabilities in the general curriculum;
3. Helping children with disabilities make successful transitions;
4. Placing and serving children with disabilities, including minority children, in the least restrictive environment appropriate;
5. Preventing children with disabilities, especially children with emotional disturbances and specific learning disabilities, from dropping out of school;
6. Addressing behavioral problems of children with disabilities as compared to nondisabled children;
7. Coordinating services provided under this Act with each other,

with other educational and pupil services, and with health and social services funded from other sources;

8. Providing for the participation of parents of children with disabilities in the education of their children; and

9. Resolving disagreements between education personnel and parents.

If by now you're asking yourself, WHAT? You're not alone. But ultimately it comes down to one word - ACCOUNTABILITY!

Oklahoma administers two state mandated tests: criterion-referenced test (CRT) and a norm-referenced test (NRT). The CRT is administered annually in the spring semester at grades 5, 8, and 11. CRT's are designed to measure the state mandated core curriculum: the Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS). CRT's provide information on specific areas of knowledge, skills, and content.

For its norm-referenced component, Oklahoma administers the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). The ITBS is administered annually in the spring semester at grades 3 and 7. NRT's are designed to measure specific skills based on a national sample and to show achievement

differences between and among students to produce a dependable rank order of students across a continuum of achievement.

More accommodations are allowed on the Core Curriculum Tests (CRT) than on the ITBS (NRT). The ITBS, a norm-referenced test, is a timed test that must be administered under standard conditions in order to obtain a norm-referenced score. Because accommodations were not included for the group of students on whom this test was normed, the use of most accommodations on the ITBS invalidates the norm-referenced score.

When determining the use of accommodations, the following factors should be considered:

1. Accommodation decisions should be made by people who know the student and the student's strengths and weaknesses. Decision makers should consider the student's learning characteristics and the accommodations currently used in classroom instruction and classroom testing.
2. Accommodations must not interfere with the validity of the test; in other words, accommodations must not change the underlying skills that are being measured by the test.
3. Accommodations must be the

DIRECTORY

State Mandated Assessments: "Putting it to the Test"	1
Creative Strategies for Working with ODD Children & Adolescents	2
Speech Path News / Nurses Notes / School Psych Revue / Special Education Teacher Meetings Schedule	3
Medication Fact Sheet / Appendix 2 / The Developmental Reading Assessment / Appendix 3	

same as the accommodations used by the student in completing classroom instruction and classroom assessment activities.

4. Accommodations must be necessary for the student to demonstrate knowledge, ability, skill, or mastery.

5. Accommodations should never be introduced for the first time during an assessment. They should be systematically used during instruction and carried into the assessment process.

6. Accommodations should be based on the needs of the student, and not on the disability category of the student, the program setting, or the convenience or ease in providing an accommodation.

7. Accommodations should be determined based on the needs of the student and the instructional accommodations provided to the student first, then the IEP team should consult the state list of approved accommodations.

Core Curriculum Test (Multiple Choice)

Criterion-Referenced Tests - CRT's

SETTING: Administer test:

- Individually
- To small groups
- In testing carrel in separate location
- In a location that minimizes distractions
- Provide special lighting
- Provide adaptive or special furniture

PRESENTATION:

- Read or sign questions to students, if not a reading test

- Large print or Braille
- Use of assistive devices: magnifier, hearing aids, noise buffers
- Overlays
- Prompts on tape
- Increase spacing between items or reduce items per page or line
- Highlight key phrases in directions
- Student can ask for clarification of directions
- Sign directions to student
- Read directions to student
- Provide cues on answer form
- Reread directions for each page
- Use templates to reduce amount of visible print
- Audiotaped administration of sections
- Secure paper to work area with tape or magnets
- Masks or markers to maintain place
- Use of highlighter by student
- **STUDENTS MAY NOT USE CALCULATORS**

TIMING/SCHEDULING:

- Extended testing sessions over several days
- Flexible schedule
- Use of time of day when student is most responsive
- Allow frequent breaks during testing
- Extend the time allotted to complete the test

RESPONSES:

- Mark answers in the test booklet
 - Give oral, signed, typed responses or point to answer
 - Utilize assistive technology communication devices: pencil grip, graph paper, increase size of answer bubble, increase spacing, use wider lines and or wider margins, Braille, slant board or wedge for positioning, tape recorder, dark, heavy or raised lines
- Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)**
Norm-Referenced Test (NRT)

SETTING: Administer test:

- Individually
- To small groups
- In testing carrel
- In separate location
- In other location that will minimize distractions

PRESENTATION:

- Large print or Braille
- Use of assistive devices/supports: magnifier, auditory hearing amplification devices, hearing aids, noise buffers

TIMING/SCHEDULING: NONE!!!!

RESPONSE:

- Mark answers in test booklet and not on answer sheet
- Give oral responses
- Respond in sign language

Questions? Call James Rose at 495-3770

Creative Strategies for Working with ODD Children & Adolescents

The following is from a workshop presented by Jerry Wilde, Ph. D. and attended by Dee Dee Comer, Cooper Middle School:

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) is a pattern of negativistic, hostile, and defiant behavior without the more serious violations of the basic rights of others that are seen in Conduct Disorder (CD). There is not one specific cause of the disorder but many, which include: familial pattern, inconsistent parenting, multiple caregivers at an early age, temperament issues, environmental stressors, and unrecognized or untreated depression or grief issues.

Major criteria used in formally diagnosing ODD:

1. Recurrent pattern for at least six months.
2. Characterized by at least four of the following behaviors:

- Losing temper

- Arguing with adults
 - Actively defying or refusing to comply with the requests or rules of adults
 - Deliberately doing things that will annoy other people
 - Blaming others for his or her own mistakes or misbehavior
 - Being touchy or easily annoyed by others
 - Being angry and resentful
 - Being spiteful or vindictive
3. Greater frequency of behavior
 4. Significantly impaired normal functioning socially or academically

There are several intervention strategies that teachers can use in the classroom when dealing with a student exhibiting oppositional and defiant behavior. "Houdini Techniques" is an intervention strategy that focuses on escaping difficult situations with ODD students. Attitudinal Therapy is an-

other technique designed to help the interventionist maintain a low stress level thereby maximizing effectiveness. However, many learning and behavior problems may be avoided by encouraging school success through classroom modifications. The following are just a few accommodations that may help a student who has ODD experience more school success and tolerate the educational experience better. Seat near teacher's desk, establish clear and observable classroom rules, review rules regularly, make lessons brief, maintain eye contact during verbal instructions, be consistent with daily instructions, avoid multiple commands, abbreviate assignments, increase work time, use daily assignment sheets, and provide a quiet environment for testing. For more info. on ODD call 1-800-251-6805.

Speech Pathology News

Many young people have speech and/or language disorders, which can significantly affect their performance in school. Some typical communication disorders among young people include:

Stuttering is the disruption in the flow of speech, and the most commonly recognized speech problem.

Articulation disorders are difficulties making sounds correctly. For example, a child with an articulation disorder may say the sound "f" instead of "th". Like stuttering, these problems often begin in childhood and become life-long challenges.

Language disorders include difficulty understanding or using vocabulary, grammar or the right speech for a particular situation. Young people with language disorders may have problems communicating thoughts, feelings, or experiences. Often, language problems are observed in poor readers.

Voice disorders are apparent when young people speak too high or too low, or when the quality of voice is affected, such as having a hoarse, breathy or nasal voice.

Contact your school's certified speech pathologist for more information

== THE SPECIAL SERVICES ==
== EDITING STAFF WELCOMES ==
== ALL SUGGESTIONS AND CON- ==
== TRIBUTIONS TO THE ==
== NEWSLETTER - SO WRITE US ==
== WITH YOUR IDEAS !!!! ==

Special Education Teacher Meetings

A special education teacher meeting has been scheduled to discuss State Mandated Assessments. This is an excellent time to bring your questions and to meet and confer with colleagues from across the district. If you have trouble meeting the date and time scheduled for your identified group, you are welcome to attend any of the dates and times which best fit your schedule. We look forward to seeing you there.

DATE	TIME	LEVEL
02/22/99	3:45	Middle Sch.
02/23/99	3:30	High School
02/25/99	4:00	Elem. Sch.

NURSE'S NOTES

A majority of Americans who make New Year's resolutions probably have, somewhere at the top of their list, to exercise more and to spend more time with their families. With that in mind, and in celebration of American Heart Month, February 1999, here are some suggestions, offered in the Winter 1999 issue of *Total Well-Being*, that afford busy families the opportunity to combine "exercise AND family time as a way of having fun while keeping fit". "The best way to get your kids moving is to get yourself moving." Walking is an activity which lends itself well to participation by all age groups, without the expense of costly equipment. Here are some tips from the experts to help you get started off on the right foot toward enjoyable family walks:

- Have fun! Never stress competition or push children to do more than they can.
- Take turns! Let each person choose the place to walk or the destination at some point.
- Play a game! "I Spy" is a favorite.
- Walk at the pace of the slowest in the group! If parents aren't getting enough of a workout, add small hand-held dumbbells.
- Take water! Bring a canteen or bottled water with you. Remember that young children and seniors don't handle the heat as well as adults do.
- Don't go too far! To determine a reasonable distance, divide your youngest child's age by three and walk that many miles.
- Give prizes! Keep track of mileage and give activity-oriented awards (such as new sports equipment) when family members reach their goals.

The author, Carol Krucoff, sums it up best, "Quality family time, life lessons, and the health benefits of being fit: It's a combination that is hard to beat. Make fitness a family affair - and everybody wins."

Success is more attitude than aptitude !!

School Psych. Revue

Putnam City employs 8 school psychologists who have over 75 years of combined experience in the field. Most were teachers prior to becoming involved with the "assessment" of children with problems. Our resident "Oldie" is PATSY BREWER (still known to many of you as Shepherd). Patsy is completing her thirtieth year in education, 22 of them as a psychometrist/school psychologist, following eight years of teaching 5th grade at OKC's Polk 5th year center. Patsy's claim to fame is that she has won more than 125 contests on KOMA & KMGL (our very own trivia queen). DIANA HOLLINGSWORTH is in her 15th year at Special Services, having taught LD & MR at Dale Rogers, Crooked Oak, Central Junior High, and Western Oaks Elem. for 8 years. Diana's latest passion is gardening, especially water gardening. She abandoned a beautiful backyard pond when she moved this past summer, but plans for a new one are under way, complete with huge goldfish and Japanese Koi. BETTY CROW came to the district 10 years ago, having worked at the RESC for 6 years and having taught 4 more in Yukon and Mustang. Betty and her husband were missionaries in South Africa and actually spent 3 years living in the "bush". (Ask her to tell you her hippo story sometime). HARLI REEVES taught at Overholser Elem. and in OKC at West Nichols Hills, (where Patsy was once her psychometrist), and Sunset Elem. for 10 years before coming to Special Services 9 years ago. Harli loves to vacation in the sunny Caribbean as she is a certified scuba diver. (Maybe she'll find the next shipload of doubloons.) KATHY BUTLER and PAULA PONS came as a packaged pair 8 years ago. Kathy was an ED teacher in both PC (Coronado and Central Intern.) & OKC for 9 years. She is 1 of 8 children, while her husband is the youngest of 13 children. (Imagine having to rent the Astrodome for family reunions!) Paula also taught for 9 years at Lake Park, Overholser, and Rollingwood as well as part of a year at OKC Star Elem. The office that she currently possesses at Special Services was her 4th grade classroom at Putnam City Elem. in 1957?...(Can't tell all of her secrets). Last year the newest of the psycho staff was added when KIM DIXON

(Continued on page 4)

and MARILYN GRAHAM joined the office. Kim taught for 28 years in Ohio and Heritage Hall before becoming a school psychologist. For her 25th wedding anniversary, Kim's husband surprised her with a ride in a hot air balloon. (Check out the poster size picture on the wall of her office.) Marilyn taught elementary grades and music around Oklahoma (Fort Cobb, Leonard, and Piedmont) for 9 years. She began working as a school psychologist in OKC four years before joining the PC staff. Marilyn bets that no one knows that she was raised on a peanut farm in Caddo County.

April is always recognized as National School Psychologist Month so plan now to appreciate yours!

Textbooks On Tape

If you need a 4-track tape player or textbooks on tape, or have textbooks on tape to return, contact James Rose.

RESEARCH ?

Have you ever wondered if Special Services conducts research regarding the wealth of programs that are offered? The answer is YES! Your Special Services Department is data driven. We are constantly collecting information that might help us find more effective ways to provide services to children with special needs. We will be teaming-up with the University of Oklahoma's Special Education Department to study the effectiveness of interventions. We are especially interested in knowing what happens to the students who are not evaluated or who are evaluated but are not placed. Don't be surprised to find us digging through your files.



Special Services would like to thank Susan Higginbotham for contributing \$2,000 to the Speech Pathology Department. Her contribution was made in memory of her father, the late Commander Richard L. Long Sr. The Speech Pathology Department has not determined how they can best utilize this gift, but are most excited and grateful for the Susan's generosity.



MEDICATION FACT SHEET

CLOZARIL (Clozapine)

WHAT IS IT FOR?

Clozaril is a tranquilizer used in the management of individuals with treatment-resistant schizophrenia or those unable to tolerate the side effects of other antipsychotic medications.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

It helps to decrease psychotic symptoms and agitation, while increasing cognitive functioning.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS?

Side effects may include:

1. Drowsiness
2. Seizures
3. Dizziness
4. Gastrointestinal distress

DOSAGE RANGE?

An appropriate dosage range has not been determined for children under age 16. Adult dosage can range from 25mg per day up to 550 mg per day for seizures.

Stand Erect - -

*by bending above the fallen and
rising to lift others*

THE FIRST DUTY OF LOVE ?

LISTEN !!!!

THE DEVELOPMENTAL READING ASSESSMENT

Sally Raymond and Mona Black attended a workshop in Broken Arrow on 11/09/98. Joetta Beaver presented the workshop, Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). The DRA is an assessment tool used for grades K-3 and is currently being used in the Putnam City District with the new Literacy Success Plan in efforts to meet the guidelines of the Reading Sufficiency Act.

DRA begins with level A-2, Emergent Reading Level and continues through level 44. It was developed to enable "primary teachers to observe, record, and evaluate changes in students' performance as readers and to plan and teach what each student needs to learn next."

If you want further information regarding Developmental Reading Assessment you may contact Sally or Mona at Downs Elem. School or Sherri Brown in administration.

State-Mandated Assessment Survey

Please find enclosed a survey regarding state-mandated assessments and your opinion regarding accommodations related to assessments and classroom functioning. It is very important that you participate in this anonymous survey. We are not interested in who responds and how, but in collecting data to better serve our students, their families, and our teachers. Thank You, James



Special Services News



VOLUME 3, ISSUE 3

FEBRUARY 04, 2000

STATE MANDATED ASSESSMENTS: "What's New in the New Millenium"

Assessing students with special needs continues to occupy a space on the front burner in almost every district across our nation. Test companies are trying to keep up with the demands of local districts and their needs while teachers and counselors are working diligently to provide modifications and accommodations to students in their local schools. Where will the madness end? I'm not sure. Current research however is exploring a couple of alternatives. First, there are a couple of government studies looking at providing accommodations to all students, not just those with special needs. Second, the government is funding research to determine how valid and reliable sampling testing is with regards to accountability. The latter would mean considerably less work for teachers, counselors, administrators, and students. For now, however, we must continue down our current path. The remainder of this article defines that path with what I hope are very clear directions.

The Oklahoma State Department and the Putnam City Schools administers two types of state/district mandated tests: criterion-referenced test (CRT) and a norm-referenced test (NRT). The CRT is administered

annually in the spring semester at grades 5, 8, and 11 (11th for Geography only). CRT's are designed to measure the state mandated core curriculum: the Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS). CRT's provide information on specific areas of knowledge, skills, and content.

For its norm-referenced component, Putnam City Schools administers the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT) for grades 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7 and the Otis Lenon Standards Achievement Test (OLSAT) for grades 1st thru 8th. NRT's are designed to measure specific skills based on a national sample and to show achievement differences between and among students to produce a dependable rank order of students across a continuum of achievement.

More accommodations are allowed on the Core Curriculum Tests (CRT) than on the MAT and OLSAT (NRT's). The MAT and OLSAT, norm-referenced test, is a timed test that must be administered under standard conditions in order to obtain a norm-referenced score. Because accommodations were not included for the group of students on whom this test was normed, the use of most accommodations on the

NRT's invalidates the norm-referenced score.

When determining the use of accommodations, the following factors should be considered:

1. Accommodation decisions should be made by people who know the student and the student's strengths and weaknesses. Decision makers should consider the student's learning characteristics and the accommodations currently used in classroom instruction and classroom testing.
2. Accommodations must not interfere with the validity of the test; in other words, accommodations must not change the underlying skills that are being measured by the test.
3. Accommodations must be the same as the accommodations used by the student in completing classroom instruction and classroom assessment activities.
4. Accommodations must be necessary for the student to demonstrate knowledge, ability, skill, or mastery.
5. Accommodations should never be introduced for the first time during an assessment. They should be systematically used during instruction and carried into the assessment process.
6. Accommodations should be based on the needs of the student,

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How to Get Good Grades in 10 Days	

and not on the disability category of the student, the program setting, or the convenience or ease in providing an accommodation.

7. Accommodations should be determined based on the needs of the student and the instructional accommodations provided to the student first, then the IEP team should consult the state list of approved accommodations.

Core Curriculum Test (Multiple Choice)

Criterion-Referenced Tests - CRT's

SETTING: Administer test:

- Individually
- To small groups
- In testing carrel in separate location
- In a location that minimizes distractions
- Provide special lighting
- Provide adaptive or special furniture

PRESENTATION:

- Read or sign questions to students, if not a reading test
- Large print or Braille
- Use of assistive devices: magnifier, hearing aids, noise buffers
- Overlays
- Prompts on tape
- Increase spacing between items or reduce items per page or line
- Highlight key phrases in directions
- Student can ask for clarification of directions
- Sign directions to student
- Read directions to student
- Provide cues on answer form

Using Juvenile Literature with Portrayals of Disabilities in Your Classroom

In an article by Mary Anne Prater, January, 2000 - Intervention In School and Clinic a Pro-Ed Journal, a list of juvenile books are provided which portray individuals with disabilities leading extraordinary lives and experiencing unique relationships. These are books which one can easily find in the local library and may have significant meaning for a student in your classroom who has a disability or for a student who has a need to better understand others who have disabilities.

*Alan and Naomi by Myron Levoy (1977)

Set in 1944 in New York City, Alan tries to befriend a French girl traumatized by the

- Reread directions for each page
- Use templates to reduce amount of visible print
- Audiotaped administration of sections
- Secure paper to work area with tape or magnets
- Masks or markers to maintain place
- Use of highlighter by student
- **STUDENTS MAY NOT USE CALCULATORS**

TIMING/SCHEDULING:

- Extended testing sessions over several days
- Flexible schedule
- Use of time of day when student is most responsive
- Allow frequent breaks during testing
- Extend the time allotted to complete the test

RESPONSES:

- Mark answers in the test booklet
- Give oral, signed, typed responses or point to answer
- Utilize assistive technology communication devices: pencil grip, graph paper, increase size of answer bubble, increase spacing, use wider lines and or wider margins, Braille, slant board or wedge for positioning, tape recorder, dark, heavy or raised lines

brutality of World War II.

*All Together Now by Sue Ellen Bridges (1979)

Casey, a 12-year-old girl living for the summer with her grandparents, forms a friendship with Dwayne, a 33-year-old man who has mental retardation.

*Dance to Still the Music by Barbara Corcoran (1974)

Deafened by an illness, 14-year-old Margaret refuses to accept her conditions and runs away in fear that she will be sent to a boarding school for the deaf. Along the way she meets Josie and begins a different life.

*Don't Feel Sorry for Paul by Bernard Wolf (1974)

Two weeks in the life of Paul, a boy born

MAT & OLSAT

Norm-Referenced Test (NRT)

SETTING: Administer test:

- Individually
- To small groups
- In testing carrel
- In separate location
- In other location that will minimize distractions

PRESENTATION:

- Large print or Braille
- Use of assistive devices/supports: magnifier, auditory hearing amplification devices, hearing aids, noise buffers

TIMING/SCHED.: NO CHANGES RESPONSE:

- Mark answers in test booklet and not on answer sheet
- Give oral responses
- Respond in sign language

It is very important to remember that any testing conducted with special education students, state or district, you must insure that the student response form is marked according to the student's need for accommodations. If it is the state mandated assessment, student response forms need to be assigned to the special education teacher. However, if it is a district test (MAT, OLSAT), the student response forms do not need to be separated by special education teacher. The district will disaggregate the students accordingly. Questions? Call James Rose

with incompletely formed hands and feet, are portrayed in photographs and text.

*The Language of Goldfish by Zippy Oneal (1980)

13-year-old Carrie struggles with changes associated with growing up. She finds herself one day having attempted suicide.

*The Man Without a Face by Isabelle Holland (1972)

14-year-old Chuck develops an unusual relationship with a reclusive man who lives near his summer home and who helps him prepare for boarding school entrance exam.

*The Pinballs by Betsy Byars (1977)

Two boys and a girl, each with a unique background, come to live in a foster home

Webs of Interest

FREE Federal Resources for Educational Excellence: <http://www.ed.gov/free>

The Virtual Jamestown:
<http://www.apva.org/>

The Math Forum:
<http://forum.swarthmore.edu/>

The National Gallery of Art
<http://www.nga.gov/>

Find Out Why - Science in Motion
<http://www.nsf.gov/od/lpa/events/fow/start.htm>

Neuropsychology:
<http://www.neuropsychologycentral.com/>

Learning Strategies: Study Skill Guides
www.d.unm.edu/student/loot/acad/strat/

Instructional Support Services:
www.sss.stthomas.edu/studyguides/

Academic Skills Center:
<http://www.sas.calpoly.edu/ascs/si.html>

Redland College:
<http://www.redlands-partners.org>

THE SPECIAL SERVICES
EDITING STAFF WELCOMES
ALL SUGGESTIONS AND CON-
TRIBUTIONS TO THE
NEWSLETTER - SO WRITE US
WITH YOUR IDEAS!!!!

Special Education Teacher Meetings

A special education teacher meeting has been scheduled. This is an excellent time to bring your questions and to meet and confer with colleagues from across the district. If you have trouble meeting the date and time scheduled for your identified group, you are welcome to attend any of the dates and times which best fit your schedule. We look forward to seeing you there.

DATE	TIME	LEVEL
02/15/00	3:30	High School
02/15/00	4:30	Elem. Sch.
02/16/00	4:00	Middle Sch.

NURSE'S NOTES

February 13-19, 2000, in association with the Buckle Up America campaign, is *Child Passenger Safety* emphasis week. As reported in the January 21, 2000 Daily Oklahoman, "Despite a tougher seat belt law that went into effect in November, 1997, Oklahoma's seat belt compliance rate is 60.7% compared to the national average of 70%. Oklahoma ranks 33rd in the nation." Not exactly a statistic to be proud of. "Under the current law, everyone in the front seat must wear a seat belt. Children five (5) and under must always be buckled up. Children under four (4) who weigh less than 60 pounds must be buckled in a federally approved child restraint seat.

The Fall 1999 issue of the National Highway Safety Administration's Occupant Protection Program Update reports that "seat belts are the single most effective safety device in preventing serious injuries and reducing fatalities in motor vehicle crashes...reducing the risk of fatal injuries by 45% and reducing the risk of serious injuries by 50%." "Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death to American children of every age from 5-15 years old. While restraint use for infants is 93%, buckling up children ages 5-15 decreases to 68%. In May 1999, 45 of the nation's governors and over 1,000 corporate and community organizations officially called for zero tolerance for unbuckled children. What a statement to the American public! Are we listening?

Educational programs which stress safety while riding in motor vehicles must reach all of our citizens. An upcoming Compatibility Database website will allow parents to provide the make and model of their vehicle, the age and weight of their child, and in return, parents will be able to choose a compatible child safety seat, the various seating positions within the vehicle, and where and how the seat can be installed safely and securely.

In Oklahoma, we can boast "Buckle Up! It's the Law!", and "Click It or Ticket." But we must also begin to challenge the reasons given for not wearing a seat belt...reminding the driver and any occupants in the 39.3% group who are not buckling up that the idea is to Arrive Alive."

School Psych. Revue

Your school psychologists work very hard at finding ways they can assist you in your classrooms and on your job, addressing a host of needs. One way they assist you is by attending workshops, conferences, conventions, etc. and then sharing this information with you. As each of us continue to work with the student population, we notice more and more children overtly expressing anger. Recently, one of your school psychologists attended a workshop on "Creative Strategies for Reaching Children with Anger Problems." Another psychologist shared information with the middle school counselors at their December meeting regarding oppositional defiant children. During February, several of your psychologists will attend a consortium on "Medication Uses with Special Needs Children" and provide inservice to teachers and PTSA groups. In March, two of your psychologists will attend the National Association of School Psychologists convention in New Orleans. These opportunities for learning are in addition to their everyday responsibilities, i.e., interventions, consultations, assessments, meetings, counseling, behavioral interventions etc.

The counseling needs continue to present themselves in our schools. These needs are being addressed by your psychologists and school counselors. A few of your psychologists and school counselors are working toward their licensure as a professional counselor (LPC) through the Oklahoma State Department of Health. As you can see, your psychologists work very hard to assist you in your classroom with serving children and their families.

Man is the only animal that laughs and weeps; for he is the only animal that is struck with the difference between what things are and what they might have been. William Hazlitt

Need a Part-time Job?
Special Saturday Hours
Homeschoolers & Homebased Teachers
15:00 hours - 18:00 hrs
1 day a week - only really
add up. Call James Rose
at 495-3770

How To Get Good Grades In 10 Easy Steps

1. Believe in yourself!

"To succeed, we must first believe that we can." Michael Korda

2. Get Organized!

Use an assignment notebook, 3-ring binders, folders for schoolwork, have phone #'s for peers, locker & backpack neat, and organize yourself before going to bed.

3. Manage Your Time Well!

Use class time optimally, create a daily study plan, prepare for sabotage

4. Be Successful in the Classroom!

Adapt to different teachers, be in school-on time-every day, be aware of body language, participate in class, treat others with courtesy and respect, involve your parents

5. Take Good Notes!

Be an active listener, take notes to help you pay attention, and are easy to read.

6. Know How to Read a Textbook!

Scan - Read - Review

7. Study Smart!

Find a good place to study, know your learning style, know what to study for tests, use tricks to memorize info.

8. Use Test Taking Strategies!

Develop a plan, mark questions you want to return to, look for keywords in T/F questions, check answers and go over all returned tests.

9. Reduce Test Anxiety!

Start studying early, mentally practice taking the test successfully, and relax with slow deep breaths

10. Get Help When You Need It!

SHARE WITH YOUR STUDENTS, IT CAN'T HURT!

MEDICATION FACT SHEET

ELAVIL

(Amitriptyline hydrochloride)

WHAT IS IT FOR?

Elavil is a tricyclic antidepressant and is widely used in the treatment of depression. It has also been used for treatment of enuresis (bedwetting) and eating disorders.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

Elavil has the effect of elevating mood, improving cognitive functioning, psychomotor functioning, and concentration. Pharmacologically, Elavil acts to inhibit the reuptake of norepinephrine and serotonin, central nervous system neurotransmitters. Elavil is one of the more sedating antidepressants.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS?

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Dry Mouth | 4. Constipation |
| 2. Tremors | 5. Dizziness |
| 3. Blurred Vision | 6. Palpitations |

DOSAGE RANGE?

A common dosage range for Elavil is 50-100 mg/day, often given in divided doses. The therapeutic effect of Elavil may take as long as 30 days to become apparent.

Laughter and tears are both responses to frustration and exhaustion. I myself prefer to laugh, since there is less clearing up to do afterward.

Kurt Vorreger, Jr.

The Special Education Evening Alternative Program Needs Your Help!!!!!!!

The Special Services Department has been conducting an evening alternative program for middle and high school students who have had difficulty being successful in their current placement. The program currently has 5 teachers (both special education and regular education) employed and serves approximately 18 students. This program provides students with an opportunity to attend school on a daily basis and in an educational environment. These students typically would be placed on a homebased program with only 3 hours of educational services weekly. However the program provides them with 10 hours of educational services and maintains a ratio of 1 teacher to every 3 students. Additionally, students are separated into several classrooms. Thus, decreasing distractions and socialization. Because we serve so many children with diverse needs educational materials can run short. That's where you come in! If you have any educational materials that are outdated or that you will not be using and are willing to part with, please call James Rose at Special Services (495-3770). He would be glad to come by and look at those materials. If he can use it, he may free up some of your classroom shelf space. Thank you for your assistance.

CONGRATULATIONS

Special Services congratulates Katelyn Gillette, a fourth grader at Warren Oaks Middle School, and Angela Gillette, a fifth grader at Warren Oaks Middle School, for being awarded a Golden Apple this past December. Their efforts in education are appreciated. Congratulations!

LAUGHTER IS LIKE CHANGING A BABY'S DIAPER - IT DOESN'T PERMANENTLY SOLVE ANY PROBLEMS. BUT IT MAKES THINGS MORE ACCEPTABLE FOR A WHILE.

State-Mandated Assessment Survey

Please find enclosed a survey regarding state-mandated assessments and your opinion regarding accommodations related to assessments and classroom functioning. It is very important that you participate in this anonymous survey. We are not interested in who responds and how, but in collecting data to better serve our students, their families, and our teachers. Thank You, James

Appendix D
(Vignettes)

**The University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus
Under the Auspices of the University of Oklahoma
Consent to Participate in a Research Project**

**Teacher Preparedness for State Mandated Assessments
With Special Education Students: A Three-Year Survey**

James L. Rose, MA, Principal Investigator

I am investigating teacher preparedness and implementation of state mandated assessments. There is a great need to understand how well teachers are prepared to implement the new assessment requirement of IDEA-1997 (P.L. 105-17). It is also important to collect information regarding teacher ability to correctly identify appropriate student accommodations and modifications. This project is designed to help educators better understand the needs of special education students with regard to state mandated assessments and to meet the new requirements of IDEA-97.

If you decide to participate in this project, you will be asked to participate in one interview session to review five vignettes, which will last approximately 15 minutes. I see no foreseeable risks of participation in this project for you. Your participation will greatly help educators make the best possible decisions regarding special education student participation in assessment and the provisioning of appropriate test accommodations. You may gain insight from participating in this study.

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty in school or otherwise. You may withdraw at any time without penalty as well. All information from this project will be kept in a locked file cabinet by the principal investigator, and will remain confidential within the limits of the law, and will be destroyed at the conclusion of this investigation.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact me at 495-3770, or my University Chairperson Dr. Chris Ormsbee at (405) 325-4791. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Oklahoma's Office of Research Administration at (405) 325-4757.

**James L. Rose, MA
Doctoral Student, Educational Psychology**

CONSENT STATEMENT

I agree to take part in this research project. I know what I will be asked to do and that I can stop at any time. I give my permission to be interviewed.

Signature

Date

Shelli

Shelli is a bright and enthusiastic third grade student at her local elementary school and demonstrates average cognitive abilities, earning B's and C's on her report card. Shelli also has cerebral palsy (CP). The CP has affected her vocal cords; making it difficult to understand her speech. She is comfortable using a communication board although it is large and difficult for her to manage. Her arms and hands are usually steady but begin to quiver when she is exhausted. The trunk of her body is weak and she must be repositioned periodically for her to maintain control of her body

Please indicate the area of impairment requiring an accommodation by circling the appropriate letter.

- A. Cognitive / Academic**
- B. Behavioral**
- C. Physical**

Please indicate the focus of accommodation-making by circling the appropriate letter.

- | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| A. Setting | C. Time | E. Response |
| B. Scheduling | D. Presentation | |

Please list/describe up to 6 accommodations deemed necessary for this student to successfully participate in district-wide assessments

Accommodations:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Modified from Thurlow, M.L., Elliott, J.L., & Ysseldyke, J.E. (1998). Testing students with disabilities: practical strategies for complying with district and state requirements. Corwin Press Inc., CA.

Sharon

Sharon is in the 7th grade at her local middle school. An accident seven months earlier has left her with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). She is self-conscious about the scarring from the accident and becomes aggressive with others when she believes they are talking about her. Her cognitive abilities appear to be relatively normal although she demonstrates emotional instability, which is common in traumatic brain injuries.

Sharon's teachers see weekly improvements in her behavior. However, they continue to be concerned about the level of acting out behaviors and frustration she experiences when she is having academic difficulty.

Please indicate the primary disability category requiring an accommodation by circling the appropriate letter.

- A. Cognitive / Academic
- B. Behavioral
- C. Physical

Please indicate the focus of accommodation-making by circling the appropriate letter.

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------|
| A. Setting | C. Time | E. Response |
| B. Scheduling | D. Presentation | |

Please list/describe up to 6 accommodations deemed necessary for this student to successfully participate in district-wide assessments.

Accommodations:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Modified from Thurlow, M.L., Elliott, J.L., & Ysseldyke, J.E. (1998). Testing students with disabilities: practical strategies for complying with district and state requirements. Corwin Press Inc., CA.

Benjamin

A class is engaged in a mathematics activity known as the problem of the week. Twenty minutes of each day are devoted to working on the problem of the week. Students use manipulatives, calculators, and other tools in an attempt to find a solution to the problem. All the while, they record their procedures, findings, and questions in a group mathematics log.

Benjamin has been diagnosed with a learning disability and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Benjamin's learning differences are readily observable in the classroom. He has difficulty reading the directions for the problem of the week and he has difficulty writing his ideas into the group's mathematics log. At times, he has an excessively high level of energy, and he seems to be "constantly in motion."

Please indicate the primary area of impairment requiring an accommodation by circling the appropriate letter.

- A. Cognitive / Academic
- B. Behavioral
- C. Physical

Please indicate the focus of accommodation-making by circling the appropriate letter.

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------|
| A. Setting | C. Time | E. Response |
| B. Scheduling | D. Presentation | |

Please list/describe up to 6 accommodations deemed necessary for this student to successfully participate in district-wide assessments

Accommodations:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Bigge, J.L. (1999) Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction: For Students with Disabilities. New York, Wadsworth Publishing Co.

Jonathan

Jonathan is a highly capable student who experiences difficulties gaining information from text and expressing his thoughts in writing. He is an active participant in classroom discussions and is eager to hear the ideas and perspectives of others. He clearly articulates his own ideas and is a highly effective verbal communicator. Peers look to him for assistance when working on class projects. However, in the midst of all this success, Jonathan experiences severe difficulties in reading the textbook, writing up reports, responding to chapter questions, and taking tests and quizzes.

Please indicate the area of impairment requiring an accommodation by circling the appropriate letter.

- A. Cognitive / Academic
- B. Behavioral
- C. Physical

Please indicate the focus of accommodation-making by circling the appropriate letter.

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------|
| A. Setting | C. Time | E. Response |
| B. Scheduling | D. Presentation | |

Please list/describe up to 6 accommodations deemed necessary for this student to successfully participate in district-wide assessments

Accommodations:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

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Darren

Darren is a 17-year-old 10th grader who attends a small community high school. His attendance is poor because he works with his father at the family nursery and garden supply store. Darren was diagnosed with mild mental retardation in elementary school and has not demonstrated much interest in school for several years. Darren's IQ was last measured at 65 and his academic abilities are estimated to be on the fourth grade level. Although he prefers to go to work with his father, his father continues to encourage him to stay in school.

Please indicate the primary disability category requiring an accommodation by circling the appropriate letter.

- A. Cognitive / Academic
- B. Behavioral
- C. Physical

Please indicate the focus of accommodation-making by circling the appropriate letter.

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------|
| A. Setting | C. Time | E. Response |
| B. Scheduling | D. Presentation | |

Please list/describe up to 6 accommodations deemed necessary for this student to successfully participate in district-wide assessments

Accommodations:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Modified from Thurlow, M.L., Elliott, J.L., & Ysseldyke, J.E. (1998). Testing students with disabilities: practical strategies for complying with district and state requirements. Corwin Press Inc., CA.