

Accommodations for the METROPOLITAN8: Meeting the Needs of All Students

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(NOTE: This report was originally written in December 1999 and became Pearson policy for customers using the Metropolitan Achievement Tests, Eighth Edition [METROPOLITAN8].)

Background

The trend toward the inclusion of students with disabilities and limited English proficient (LEP) students in state and district-wide assessment programs became a requirement in 1997 with the reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Act* (IDEA). The large majority of students with disabilities will participate in the same way as their classmates or use accommodations. Some LEP students will also require the use of accommodations. (See the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* of 1994 [ESEA]).

An accommodation is an alteration in the way a test is administered. It is provided because of a student need only, and not to give a student an unfair advantage. When used appropriately, accommodations enable student to show what they know and can do without being impeded by their disabilities or limited proficiency in English.

Interpretation of METROPOLITAN8 Test Scores

The METROPOLITAN8 was developed as a normative test used to report norm-referenced scores. The METROPOLITAN8 can also be used as a criterion-referenced test (CRT) when the reporting of performance standards is requested. The focus of a CRT is to compare measured achievement to specific criteria or standards that students are expected to master. CRT scores are interpreted in relation to a functional performance standard, as distinguished from interpretations made in relation to the performance of others (a norm-referenced test would be an example the latter). Examples of criterion-referenced interpretations include comparison to cutoff scores, domain-referenced score interpretations, and interpretations based on expectancy tables. Another way of interpreting a CRT is that a score of 85% suggests that a student has acquired 85% of the knowledge of interest for a subject area or in total.



Defining Accommodations

Accommodations, according to Tindal & Fuchs (1999), “are changes in standardized assessment conditions introduced to ‘level the playing field’ for students by removing the construct-irrelevant variance created by their disabilities. Valid accommodations produce scores for students with disabilities that measure the same attributes as standard assessments measured in nondisabled individuals.” (p. 7).

Pearson uses the accommodations taxonomy listed below, which was developed by the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO), University of Minnesota.

Timing	Changes to the amount of time allowed for testing (e.g., extended time), breaks between subtests, and frequent breaks.
Scheduling	Changes to when the assessment is given
Setting/Administration	Changes to where the assessment is given
Presentation Format	Changes to how the assessment is given
Response Format	Changes to how a student responds to the assessment
Other	Use of dictionaries/word lists/glossaries

It is important to note that in the recent evolution of assessment terminology in psychometrics, the use of the term “accommodations” defines changes in format, response, setting, timing, or scheduling that do not alter in any significant way what the test measures or the comparability of scores (Phillips, 1993). In contrast, “modifications” refers to changes in the assessment that alter what the test is supposed to measure or the comparability of scores (e.g., Braille in some accountability systems) (Phillips, 1993).

IDEA uses the terms “accommodations” and “modifications in administration” interchangeably. It uses the terms “adaptations,” “individual modifications” and “necessary accommodations” as well. Many states use these terms interchangeably. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) uses the term “accommodations” (Elliott, 2001; Bielinski & Ysseldyke, 2000; Koretz & Hamilton, 1999; NCEO, April 2001; Thurlow, Elliott & Ysseldyke, 1998).

Accommodations for the METROPOLITAN8: Meeting the Needs of All Students**An Empirical Basis for Defining Accommodations**

Research continues to shed new light on the effects of specific accommodations on the validity of inferences from achievement tests. Based upon the results of current and ongoing research and consistent with current practice in a majority of states, Pearson has prepared an accommodations policy for the METROPOLITAN8.

In addition to developing a taxonomy of accommodations, Pearson has utilized Tindal's (Tindal & Fuchs, 1999) classification of research approaches to examine the validity of test accommodations. The approaches are classified as descriptive, comparative, or experimental.

Descriptive Approach. With a descriptive approach, accommodations are analyzed logically to consider the disability along with the characteristic of the assessment. According to Tindal & Fuchs (1999), large print is considered to be valid for a student with visual disabilities because it allows access to printed information and lets the student demonstrate what he or she knows by preserving the meaningfulness of the measured content (p. 9).

Comparative Approach. With this approach, extant databases are analyzed to gain insight into how accommodations may affect students with disabilities. Koretz (1997) and Koretz & Hamilton (1999) utilized this approach. Both studies indicated that accommodations, at times, overestimated the academic competence of students with disabilities (Tindal & Fuchs, 1999, p. 10). Pearson has utilized this method of data review. While the methodology permits interesting insights into the affects of accommodations, the approach often leaves important questions about validity of specific accommodations unanswered.

Experimental Approach. In this approach, the effects of accommodations are examined with controlled research designs, which examine effects for students with and without disabilities, with and without accommodations (Tindal & Fuchs, 1999). Pearson reviewed the studies reported in Tindal & Fuchs (1999), Elliott (2001), Koretz & Hamilton (1999), and Thurlow, Elliott, & Ysseldyke (1998). In addition, Pearson is in the process of developing and conducting similar studies.

Pearson's Policy on Accommodations

As shown in the following tables, students with disabilities (Table 1) and limited English proficient students (Table 2) using accommodations marked under "standard administration" can receive norm-referenced scores that are considered to be valid and can be aggregated with those of other students. Those using non-standard administrations receive special score reports, and scores are disaggregated from other students.

Accommodations for the METROPOLITAN8: Meeting the Needs of All Students**Table 1.** Accommodations for Students with Disabilities.

Accommodation	Standard Administration	Non-standard Administration
Timing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaks between subtests • More frequent breaks • Multiple test sessions over several days • Extended time (up to twice the time) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x x x x 	
Scheduling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time of day • Pacing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x
Setting/Administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group • Individual setting • Learning/study carrels • Environmental modifications: Special lighting, adaptive or special furniture, location with minimal distractions, noise buffers, preferential seating, hospital/home administered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x x x x 	
Presentation Format <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Braille edition • Large print (18 point text) • Interpreting test items (signing, cued speech) • Audiocassette • Repeating directions • Simplification of directions • Interpreting directions (via signing, cued speech) • Secure papers to work area with tape/magnets • Provide cues (e.g., arrows and stop signs) on answer form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x x x x x x x x 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x x x x
Response Format <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual aids: templates, masks, or markers • Amplification equipment (hearing aid, auditory trainer) • Large diameter pencil, pencil grip, special pencil or pen • Braille and then transcribed by scribe • Tape record responses for later verbatim translation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x x x 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x x
Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistive or augmentative technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varies

Accommodations for the METROPOLITAN8: Meeting the Needs of All Students**Table 2.** Accommodations for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students.

Accommodation	Standard Administration	Non-standard Administration
Scheduling		
• Extra time (no more than twice the time)	x	
Setting/Administration		
• Bilingual dictionary (dictionaries with no definitions)		x
• Separate room	x	
• Answer queries as described in manual	x	
• Small group setting	x	
Response Format		
• Mark in booklet (teacher/aide transcribes to an answer sheet)	x	
Translations		
• Written, directions only	x	
• Oral, directions only	x	
• Words defined		x

Pearson recognizes that some students with disabilities require the use of accommodations when our assessments are administered. Often, the conditions under which the test was standardized differ from those present when accommodations are used. These differences, in some cases, reach a level sufficient to jeopardize the validity of interpretations. However, based on available evidence, most of the accommodations listed in the tables above are considered to be “incidental to the construct intended to be measured by the test” (AERA *Standards*, 1999, p. 101).

Available Related Topics in this Series

Case, B. (2003). *Accommodations on Stanford 10 for students with disabilities*. San Antonio, TX: Pearson Educational Measurement.

Case, B. (2003). *Accommodations on Stanford 10 for limited English proficient (LEP) students*. San Antonio, TX: Pearson Educational Measurement.

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