

# Articulating Positive Behavior Supports as Accommodations for Large-Scale Assessment

The Expanding World of PBS: Science, Values, and Vision  
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## Science

- Accommodations
- Students with challenging behavior
- Accountability testing

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## ADAPTATIONS

- Accommodations
  - Practices and procedures in the areas of presentation, response, setting and timing/scheduling that provide equitable access during instruction & assessments for students with disabilities
- Modifications
  - Practices that change, lower, or reduce learning expectations
  - Accommodations Manual: Thompson et. al, 2005 (CCSSO)

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## ACCOMMODATIONS

- Presentation-allows students to access information in ways that do not require them to visually read standard print
- Response-allows students to complete activities, assignments, and assessments in different ways or to solve or organize problems using some type of assistive device or organizer
- Setting-Change the location in which a test or assignment is given or the conditions of the assessment setting
- Timing/Scheduling-increase the allowable length of time to complete an assessment or assignment and perhaps change the way the time is organized

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## What research tells us

- A brief history of accommodations
  - 1990s push to include more students with IEPs in state assessments
  - 1996 Accommodations were introduced to NAEP
  - 1997 Amendments to IDEA stated that ALL students with IEPs should be provided with appropriate accommodations on district and state assessments
  - NCLB emphasized reporting the scores of all students & those with disabilities be allowed their accommodations on the IEP

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## What research tells us

- A brief history of accommodations
  - > in 1993 only 20 states had accommodations policies in place (NCEO: Lazarus et. al, 2009)
  - > 2001 states were identifying whether accommodations were "okay" or "not okay" for use by students whose scores would be aggregated
  - > 2005 there appeared to be consensual use of the terms 1) allowed, 2) allowed, but nonstandard, 3) allowed in certain circumstances, 4) allowed with implications for scoring and/or aggregation, and 5) prohibited

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While states have determined specific criteria to guide the decision making process (Thurlow, 2007), improving the quality of decision making for accommodations must also consider how states inform stakeholders of state and federal policy accommodation mandates as well as the technical consideration of policy practice

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## What research tells us

- And how did that policy play out?
  - > there is no consensus among the states as to accommodation approaches and in levels of specificity of state policy (Pullin, 2007) that would help a teacher in the decision-making process.

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## What research tells us

- › Complicating matters further, individual states decide whether specific accommodations are permissible for students on their state accountability exams which may or may not be permissible on the NAEP testing (Baker & Hemmer, in progress)
- › Teachers (both general and special) did not know which accommodations might be "disallowed" for reporting results on the state assessment (Thurlow, 2007)

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## What research tells us

- › teachers often recommended accommodations for assessment even though the accommodations were not listed on the IEP (Ketterlin-Geller et al. 2007)
- › teachers predicted with only about 50% accuracy those students who would benefit from a read-aloud accommodation (Helwig & Tindal, 2003)

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## What does research say about students with challenging behavior?

- There is little research documenting the use of accommodations for instruction or assessment and outcomes for the students.
- Most of the research looks at the effectiveness of a few specific accommodations (extended time, use of scribes, different testing location).

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## What does research say about students with challenging behavior?

- There is no category for social or motivational accommodations in the Accommodations Manual.
- There is even less research discussing social, motivational, or sensory accommodations for students whose behaviors interfere with successful participation in state testing (Baker, in progress).

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## What does research say about students with challenging behavior?

- It is well documented that students with challenging behavior experience the poorest educational outcomes of any disability category (Kern, Hill-Farahon, & Sokol, 2009)
- These students also experience lower test scores and higher drop-out rates. Lane et. al (2005b)

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## What does research say about students with challenging behavior?

- students served in segregated instructional EBD classrooms were not provided with structured and positive incentive programs, but were presented mostly with lecture and passive student engagement (Gresham et. al., 2006)
- school personnel may not be receiving appropriate professional development for tertiary interventions (Crimmins & Farrell, 2006)

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## What does research say about students with challenging behavior and accommodations?

- Praise & encouragement, reminders, redirection, self-management skills (Shriner & Destefano, 2007)
- Motivational Accommodations such as encouragement (Elliott, Kratochwill, & Schulte, 1998)
- Not much else

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## Values

- It is not surprising that IEP team members have difficulty determining appropriate accommodations for students when there is so little research available to guide their decision-making.
- Research on accommodations is beginning to promote the need for determining validity of accommodations that are recommended for state tests

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## Values

- the accommodation must be shown to improve student performance over performance without the accommodation as well as the same accommodation having little or no effect on performance of nondisabled peers
- It is suggested that school personnel determine the validity based on data gathered over time for the individual as well as for peers

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## Values

- Many teachers believe that students with challenging behavior have an internal deficit and they do not understand the relationship of environmental triggers for inappropriate responding.
- It is almost as though such teachers believe they are being blamed for the students behavior when asked to modify aspects of the environment to prevent inappropriate responding.

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## Values

- Perhaps by framing environmental adaptations as accommodations for student performance, teachers will feel less threatened and defensive about making the accommodations.
- Once school personnel see improved test scores with appropriate accommodations they may be reinforced for providing the accommodations.

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## Vision

- The implementation of accommodations policy rests heavily on the teacher to mediate. These individuals are positioned to wield considerable agency and power based on how they make sense of policy and how they act in relation to policy in contextual situations (Baker & Hemmer, in progress).

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## Vision

- Policy is situated in a legal frame that requires the provision of accommodations (Pullin, 2007), and therefore provides the authoritative component that is built into the accommodation decision-making process.

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## Vision

- Ensuring that accommodations policy is extended to teacher practice should produce important results for student outcomes in the form of
  - > increased engaged academic activity and achievement
  - > student participation in state assessments
  - > reduction of undesirable behavioral events due to increased engaged activity and participation.

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## Vision

- There is theoretical suggestion that
  - > improving the quality of decision-making for accommodations will increase meaningful participation in testing for students with IEPs (Hollenbeck & Tindal, 1998; Ketterlin-Geller et al., 2007; Fuchs et al, 2005; Shriner & DeStefano, 2007)
  - > relationship between behavioral engagement and reading achievement (Ponitz et al., 2009)

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## Vision

- > increasing engaged instructional activity for students who present behavioral challenges will result in reduced discipline incidents (Kercood & Orskovic, 2009; Niesyn, M., 2009) and gains in achievement (Fredricks et al., 2004; Greenwad, 1991).
- > Shriner and DeStefano (2007) discuss the social/motivational teacher behaviors that some students need to engage with state assessments.

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## Vision

- > Cox et al. (2006) analyzed state data to look for trends in state assessment participation and state discipline rates. Their analysis found a correlation between states having "more unrestricted" accommodations allowing more students with disabilities to participate in state testing and those same states documentation of lower discipline rates.

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## Vision

- Therefore, we need to view PBS strategies as accommodations by
  - > Stating positive behavior supports as a category of accommodation in state accommodations manuals
  - > Arguing for PBSs as "allowed" accommodations for state testing
  - > Evaluating the effectiveness of said accommodations for issues of validity (bringing us back to Science)

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