

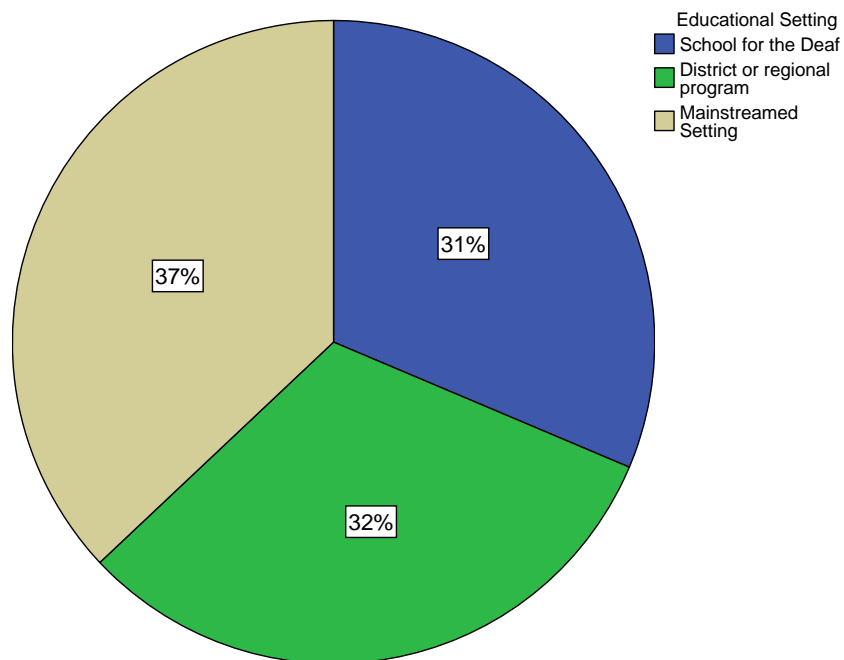
National Survey of Assessments and Accommodations for Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Greetings! It is our pleasure to share with you preliminary findings from *the 3rd Annual National Survey of Assessments and Accommodations for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*. We would like to thank each of you for your support in this effort!

Who Participated?

A total of 389 people responded to our survey (Figure 1). We had roughly equal participation from schools for the deaf, district or regional programs, and teachers in mainstreamed settings.

Figure 1: Study Participants



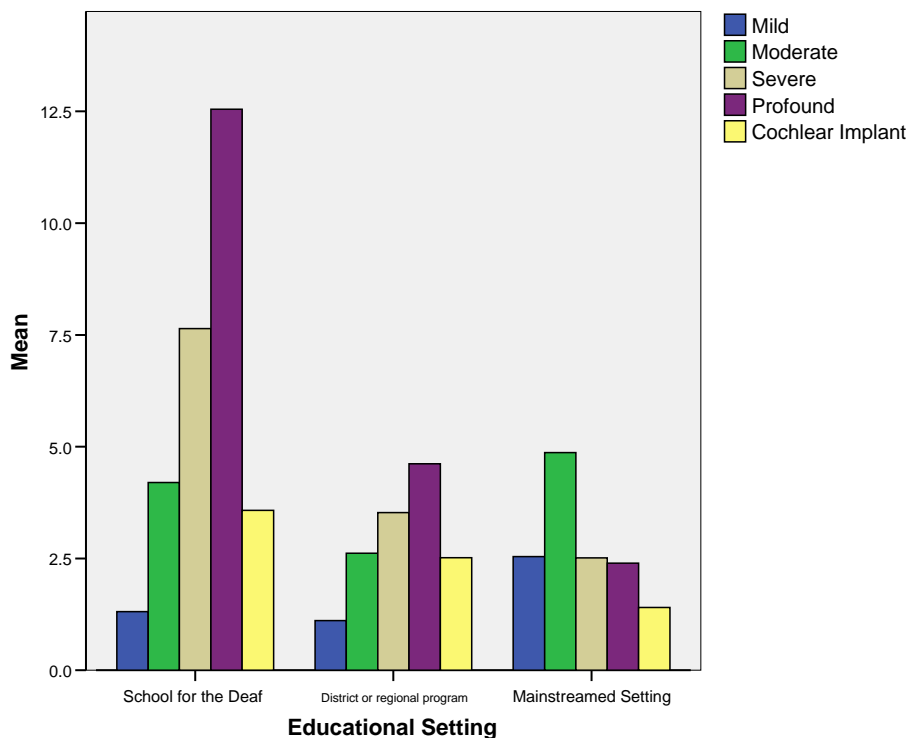
Characteristics of Students of Study Participants

As part of this survey, we collected information about the students served by study participants. Percentage of enrollment by grade range (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12) and Educational Setting is provided in Table 1. The distribution of students by level of hearing loss and cochlear implant use is shown in Figure 2.

Table 1: Percentage of Student Enrollment by Grade Range & Educational Setting

Educational Setting	Grade Range			
	K-5	6-8	9-12	K-12
Schools for the Deaf	42.0%	49.0%	57.4%	49.5%
District or Regional Program	29.8%	27.3%	15.8%	24.1%
Mainstreamed Setting	28.2%	23.8%	26.8%	26.4%

Figure 2: Distribution of Level of Hearing Loss & Educational Setting

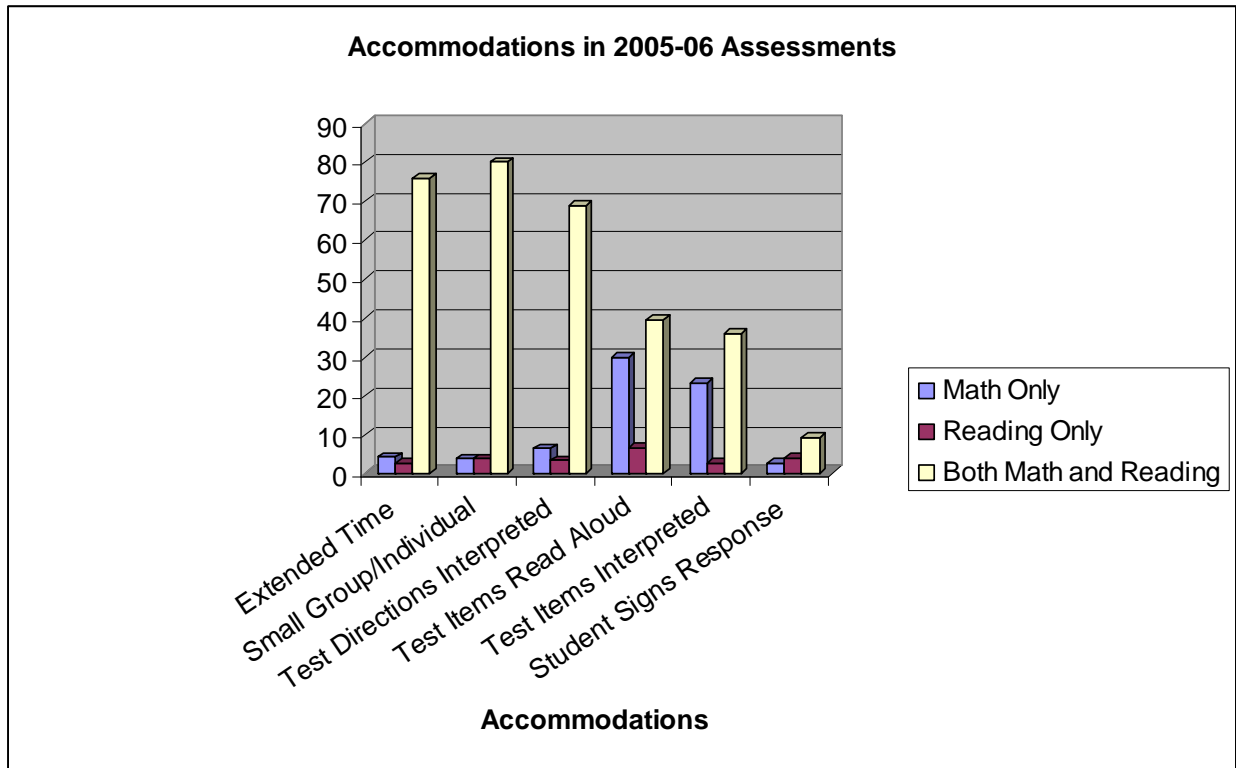


What accommodations did students use?

Figure 3 shows information on the types of accommodations used by students of study participants for the 2005-06 assessments. The results were similar to last year. Most participants used extended time, small group or individual administration, and an interpreter for test directions. These accommodations were typically used for both math and reading. Accommodations that changed the presentation of the test item (read aloud or interpreted) were also used with students who are deaf or hard of hearing. However, unlike the first three accommodations, these two accommodations were used either for math only or for both reading and math. Teachers rarely described their use

as being only for reading assessments. Having students sign for a scribe was used only infrequently on the 2005-06 assessments.

Figure 3: Accommodations used for math and reading assessments



Recommendations for Accommodations and Alternate Assessment Use

This year's survey delved into the question of how various factors contribute to what teachers recommend for accommodations or alternate assessment. Participants reflected on three scenarios and gave their recommended accommodations (or alternate assessment), as well as a description of why they made those choices.

We learned a great deal about the many factors involved in these decisions. For example, participants were more likely to recommend accommodations that change the language of the test item/response if the student was taking a math test than for a reading test. However, participants were more likely to recommend an alternate assessment for a reading test than a math test. These patterns were true regardless of whether the language of communication in the classroom was ASL or total communication.

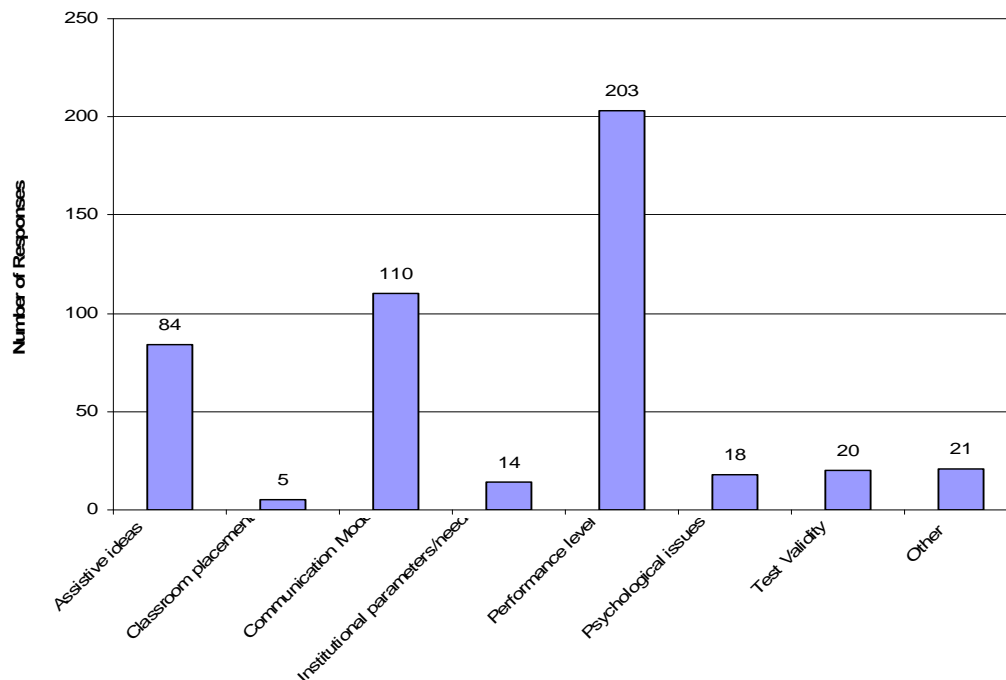
We also looked at how student skills in math and reading affected participant recommendations for accommodations or an alternate assessment. If a student was

described as having high math skills, participants were more likely to recommend accommodations. However, if the student in the vignette was described as having math skills that were significantly below grade level, participants were more likely to recommend an alternate assessment. The same patterns was true for students described as having high or low reading skills.

Finally, we looked at the relationship between the teacher's educational setting and ratings of accommodations on the recommendations they made in the vignettes. Responses were the same whether participants served students in mainstreamed settings, district/regional programs, or schools for the deaf.

When asked to discuss why they made recommendations for accommodations or an alternate assessment, participants gave a range of responses. Figure 4 gives an example of how participants described their choices for one of our scenarios. The most commonly described issues were communication mode in the classroom and student performance level. A number of participants also made additional suggestions for assessment strategies as part of their responses. Educational placement, psychological issues, or test validity were mentioned relatively infrequently in participant responses.

Figure 4: Distribution of open-ended responses to Vignette 16 by respondents



It was also interesting to look at these recommendations in conjunction with other responses on the survey. For example, participants who recommended that the student receive an alternate assessment were more likely to focus on a student's performance

level than other factors in the vignette. Also, teachers in classrooms where ASL is used in instruction were more likely to discuss language and communication in their discussion about accommodations recommendations. Interestingly, discussion of language and communication did not vary if the test subject in the vignette was for reading or math.

Where do teachers get support and training?

The final section of our survey asked about professional development opportunities across a range of topics and venues (Table 2). Very few teachers had received formal training during their preparation or certification programs (13%). Teachers were most likely to have gained support and training from discussions with colleagues (50%) or professional development in their local school or district (46%). Most of their training focused on accommodations use, IEP team decisions, or on specific accommodations. Items were participants did not have training or support included standards-based curriculum (23%), having test directions interpreted (20%), having test items interpreted (22%), or having students sign responses (37%).

Table 2

Sources of Training and Support

Rank	Training Source	Percent
1	Discussions with Colleagues	50%
2	Professional Development in School/ District	46
3	No Training	19
4	Other Professional Development	19
5	Teacher Preparation/Certification Program	13
6	State or National Conference	10

Coming Up!

The Fourth Annual National Survey will be conducted in the Fall-Winter of 2007.

The fall survey will ask about accommodations use on the 2006-07 state assessments. We will expand our test subjects to include science, different perspectives on validity issues, and more about the IEP decision making process. We are truly indebted to all of you for your participation in our survey. Feel free to distribute this summary to interested parties. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at stephanie.cawthon@waldenu.edu.

Thank you again for your support!!