

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

Greetings! It is our pleasure to share with you the preliminary findings from the 4th Annual National Survey of Assessments and Accommodations for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to all who took the time to participate. Without you this endeavor would not have been possible.

Who Participated?

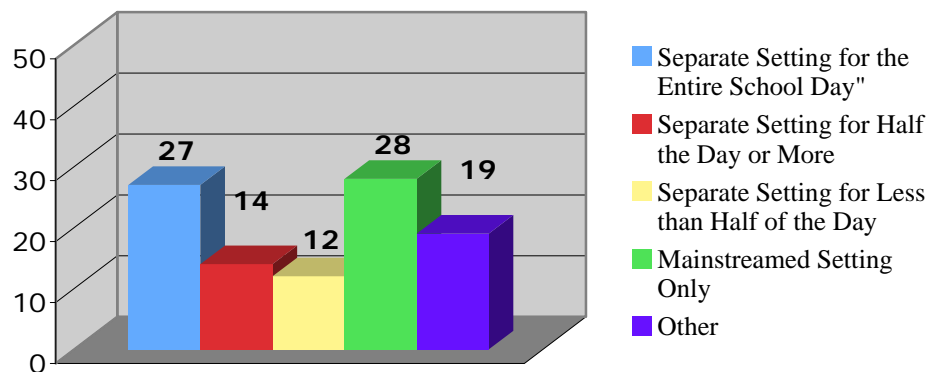
Last year a total of 293 educators participated in our survey. The majority of participants reported serving as deaf education teachers, while a significant percentage worked as full-time and itinerant teachers for the deaf or special educators. The educators who participated worked with approximately 5,883 students who are deaf or hard of hearing (SDHH) in the United States. As shown in Table 1, the majority of these students are considered to have severe or profound loss of hearing. Figure 1 gives information about the educational setting of the students of teachers in this survey, ranging from a separate setting for the entire school day to fully included in a regular education classroom.

Table 1.

Level of Hearing Loss	Percentage of students
Mild	15%
Moderate	25%
Severe	33%
Profound	39%

Figure 1.

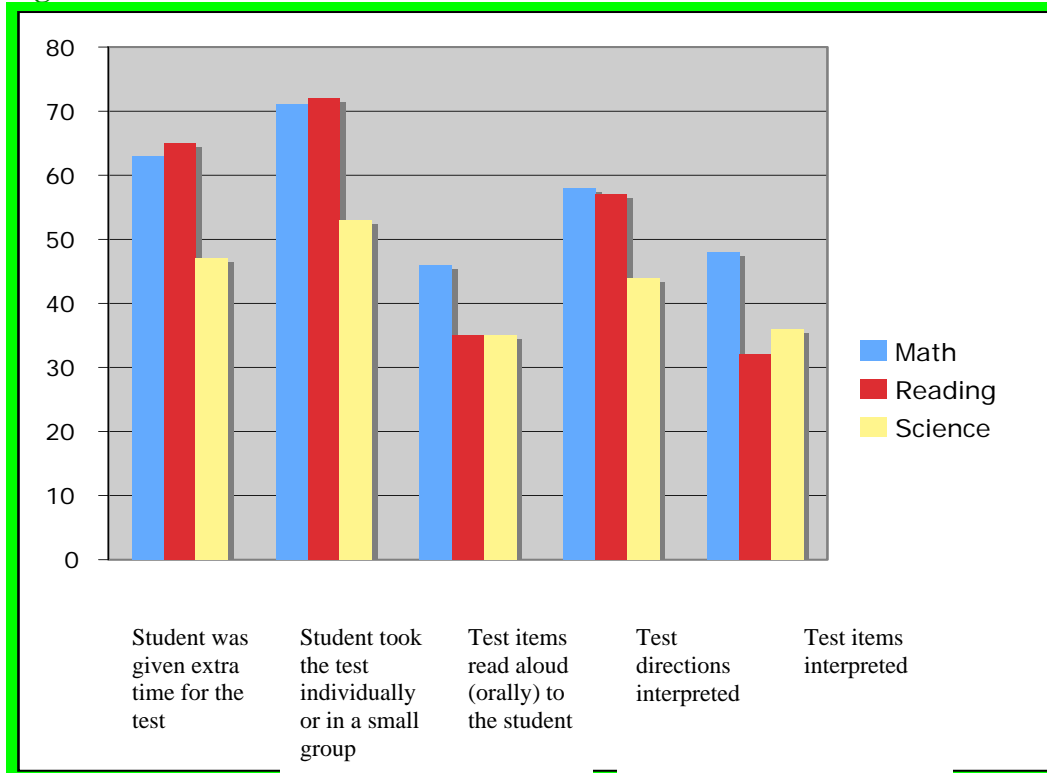
Percentage of DHH Students Per Educational Setting



What accommodations did students use?

On 2006-2007 statewide, standardized assessments, the most commonly implemented accommodations were individual or small group test taking and the allocation of extra time for completion of the test. On the whole, fewer accommodations were used for science than for math or reading (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Accommodations for Statewide Standardized Assessments



How we know if accommodations work?

This year we asked educators to share some of the information they consider when evaluating the effectiveness of a testing accommodation and how they gauge whether or not it worked as intended. The majority of the feedback we received indicated teachers most often consider the reaction of the student during the test. Many instructors also mentioned that they would either look solely at the test score, or that they look for consistency between the test score and class work done by the student.

“Really you get immediate feedback when using any accommodations during a testing situation...I look for frustration and understanding.”

“... We compare our classroom-based knowledge of the student's performance with the results of the interpreted math state-wide test. We also compare how the student had done the previous year

without interpretation to this year with the interpretation.”

“We look for test numbers improvement, but I do not believe specific attention is paid to the accommodations--the remediation/test prep gets the focus. We offer the same accommodations for all students (extended time, small group, signed directions, etc)...”

What's Coming in 2009?

The Fifth Annual Survey is coming in January, 2009! Your participation over the last four years has demonstrated how important it is to take the many different factors into account when making decisions about accommodations. This year we are going to shift our focus to gather more specific information about the effects of accommodations on standardized test scores. Right now we know very little about whether having a test item presented in ASL or read aloud to a student is beneficial. As we know from your responses, these accommodations are used with many students across the country.

Our goal this year is to begin looking at the following question:

What are the *effects* of accommodations on test scores for students who are deaf or hard of hearing?

Our study will include a number of factors you have said are important in accommodations decisions such as, the test subject, student characteristics, language use in instruction, and the accommodation itself. We hope the results will lead a more authentic measure of learning for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

How to Participate!

We are looking for teachers or assessment coordinators who serve students in late elementary through middle school grades (5th-8th grades). If you are interested in learning more about our study, please contact Stephanie at stephanie.cawthon@mail.utexas.edu. You will also receive a formal invitation when our study is officially launched!

Thank You!!!