Supporting Students with Moderate Disabilities Using Accommodations
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Outline of the Presentation

• Accommodations as a tool to increase accessibility for students with moderate disabilities*
• Current findings in research on the effectiveness of accommodations
• Persistent and new challenges in implementing accommodations
  – Variability in the recommendations from accommodations research
  – Assignment of accommodations
  – Alignment of accommodations in instruction and assessment

Increasing Access for Students with Moderate Disabilities

Grade-level Content Standards

AA-MAS
Test and item-level changes
Modified achievement standards

Valid Inferences about the Student’s KSA

KSA: Knowledge, skills, and abilities
Increasing Access for Students with Moderate Disabilities

Grade-level Content Standards

Features of Instruction and Assessment

Student’s Personal Characteristics

Accommodations

Test and Item-level changes

Valid Inferences about the Student’s KSA

KSA: Knowledge, skills, and abilities

Understanding the Role of Accommodations in Improving Access

- Accommodations mediate the impact of students’ characteristics to:
  - Support learning of the content
  - Reduce construct irrelevant variance
- Assumes an accurate alignment between students’ needs and access barriers

How do Accommodations Support Access?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Implemented</th>
<th>Accessibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Students W/O Disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Students W/ Disabilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Differential Boost: Students with disabilities differentially benefit from the change.
Evidence of Effectiveness of Accommodations in Mathematics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Impact on Construct</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read Aloud (directions/questions)</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>Converging evidence of effectiveness based on observed differential boost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard calculator</td>
<td>No change*</td>
<td>Variable evidence of effectiveness; depends on familiarity and functionality of calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended time</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>Initial evidence of effectiveness based on differential boost or no change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplified linguistic features</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>Limited evidence of effectiveness based on differential boost (younger children) or no change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Construct is assumed to be mathematical problem solving and not computation

Evidence of Effectiveness of Accommodations in ELA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Impact on Construct</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read Aloud</td>
<td>May change</td>
<td>Mixed results with some research indicating that the accommodation invalidates the results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended time</td>
<td>May change</td>
<td>Mixed results with some research indicating that the accommodation invalidates the results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Challenges with Implementation of Accommodations

- Variability in outcomes of accommodations research
- Assignment of appropriate accommodations
- Alignment with instructional accommodations
SMU Accommodations Research: Interpret with Caution

- Differences in designs, measures, and populations limit generalizability
- Variations in accommodation procedures may impact applicability of findings
- Small sample sizes impact observed effects
- Test-level of analysis may obscure item level differences

More Research is Needed

SMU Supporting Assignment of Accommodations

- Resources are available:
  - Accommodation guidelines
  - Accommodation tutorials

SMU Accommodations Assignment: A Persistent Problem

- Many teachers struggle to assign accommodations that align with students' characteristics and possible access barriers
  - Identification of access and target skills

Accommodations Assignment: A Persistent Problem

- Many teachers struggle to assign accommodations that align with students' characteristics and possible access barriers
  - Misalignment between students' needs and accommodations

Alignment with Instructional Accommodations

- Instructional accommodations are needed to access the curriculum
- Little is known about teachers' implementation of instructional accommodations

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