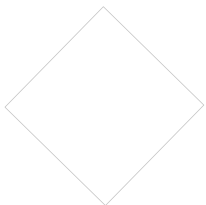


Testing Equity: The Challenges and Opportunities for Testing Students Who Are Deaf/Hard of Hearing

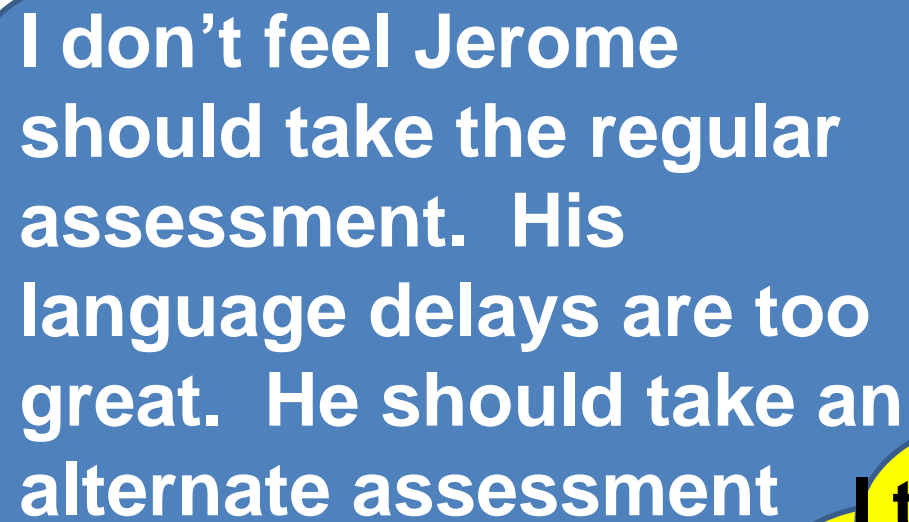


You are there....

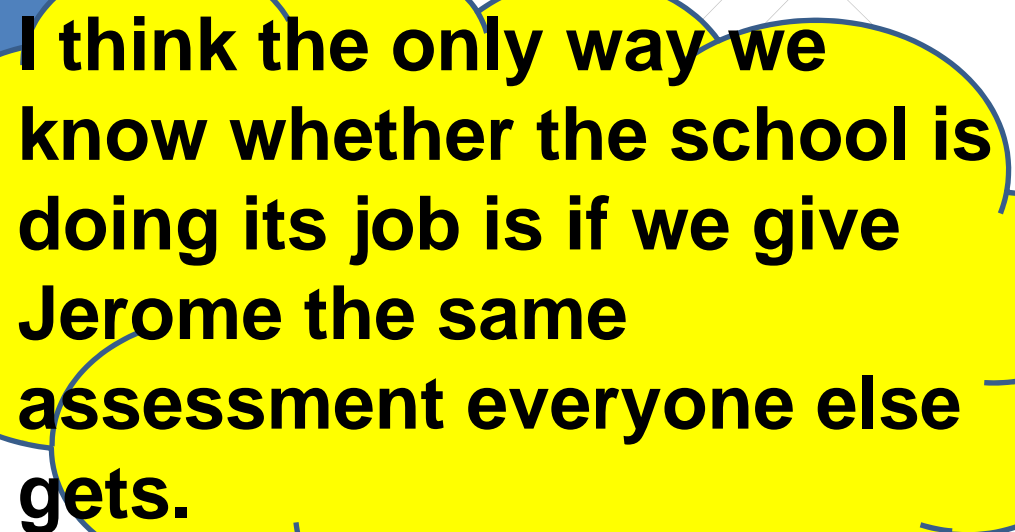
It is a Wednesday afternoon on a fine spring day...

- ✓ **IEP meeting for:**
- ✓ **Jerome Kelly**
- ✓ **8 years old**
- ✓ **deaf**
- ✓ **and in second grade.**

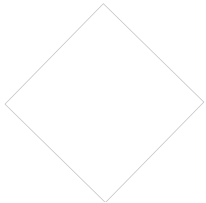






I don't feel Jerome should take the regular assessment. His language delays are too great. He should take an alternate assessment



I think the only way we know whether the school is doing its job is if we give Jerome the same assessment everyone else gets.



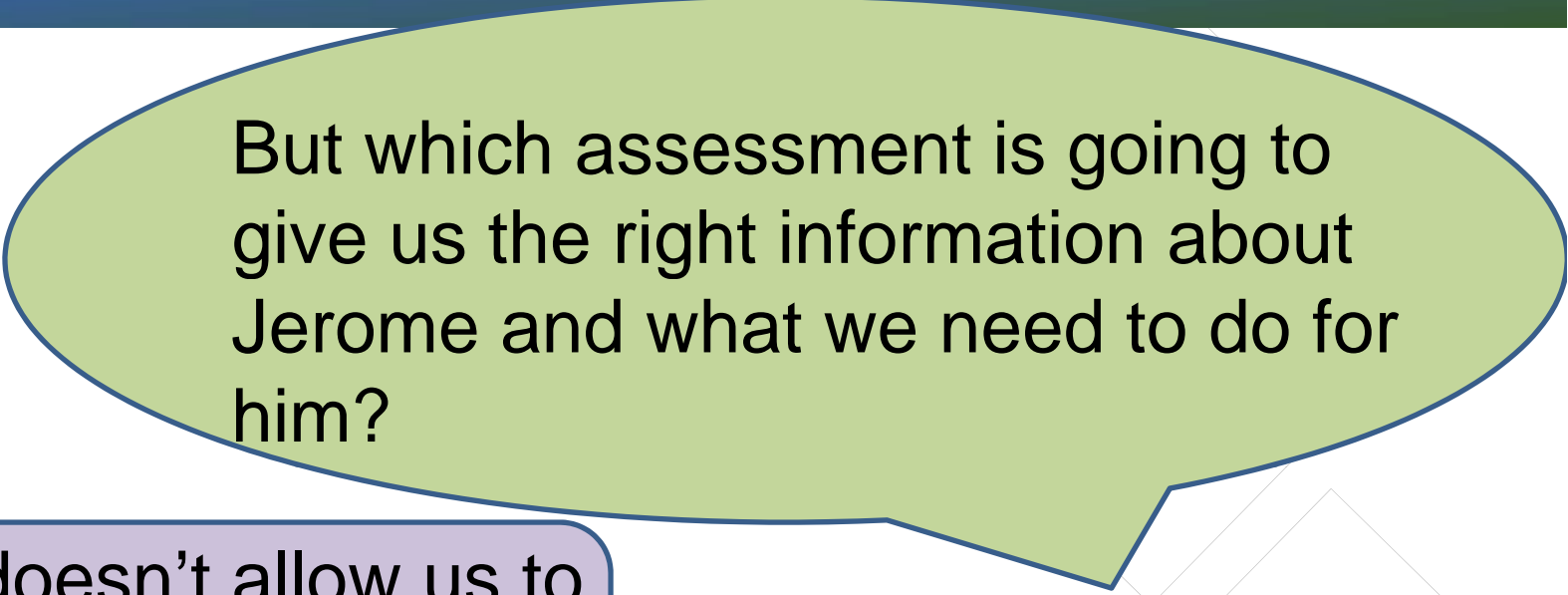

I think we should modify the assessments to fit his needs

The law doesn't allow us to modify the assessment anymore.

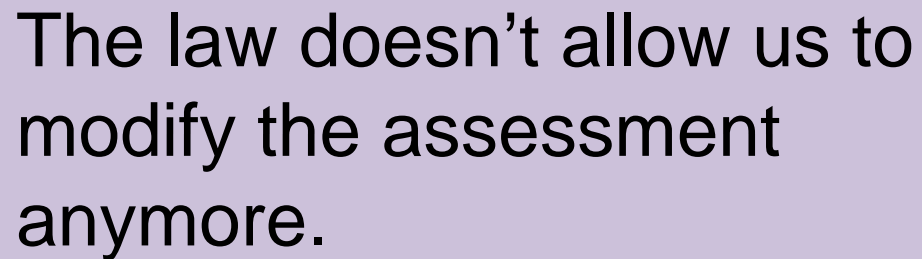


But No Child Left Behind says he has to pass the state assessment


I think we should modify the assessments to fit his needs



But which assessment is going to give us the right information about Jerome and what we need to do for him?



The law doesn't allow us to modify the assessment anymore.




From: Johnson, C.J., Mitchell, R.E., eds. (2008). *Testing Deaf Students in an Age of Accountability*. Washinton, DC: Gallaudet University Press, page 17.

You are there....

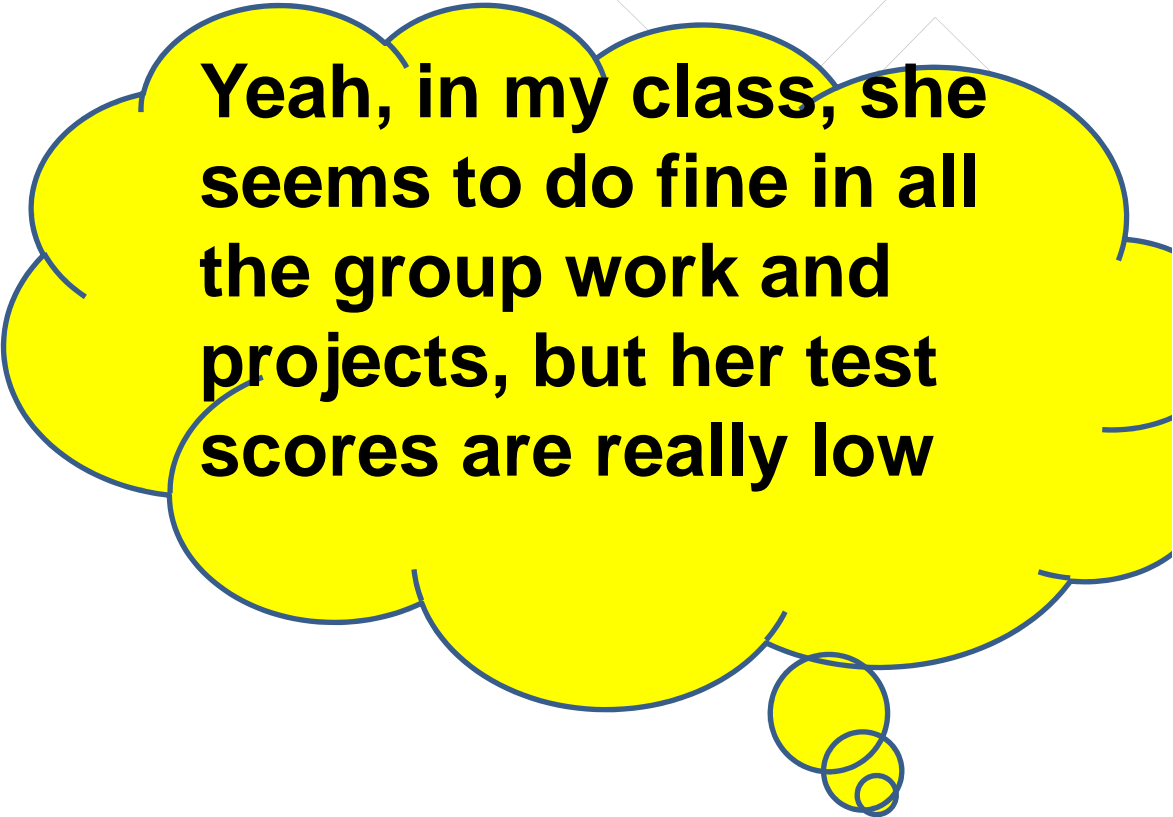
It is a beautiful day at State U ...

✓ Disability coordinator is meeting with two professors about a new freshman student who is deaf

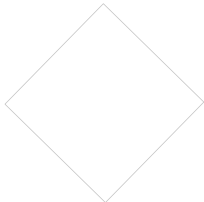






**Mary failed her first
multiple choice exam ...
lowest grade in the class**

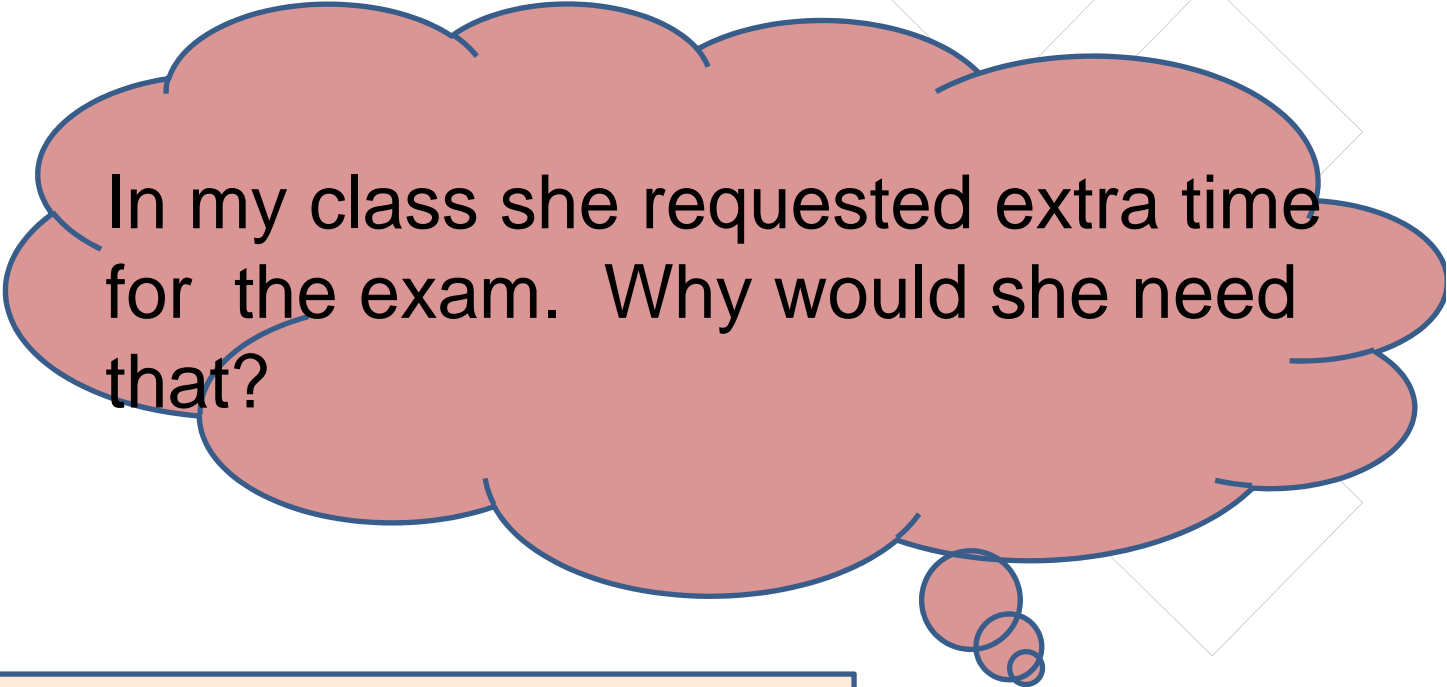



**Yeah, in my class, she
seems to do fine in all
the group work and
projects, but her test
scores are really low**

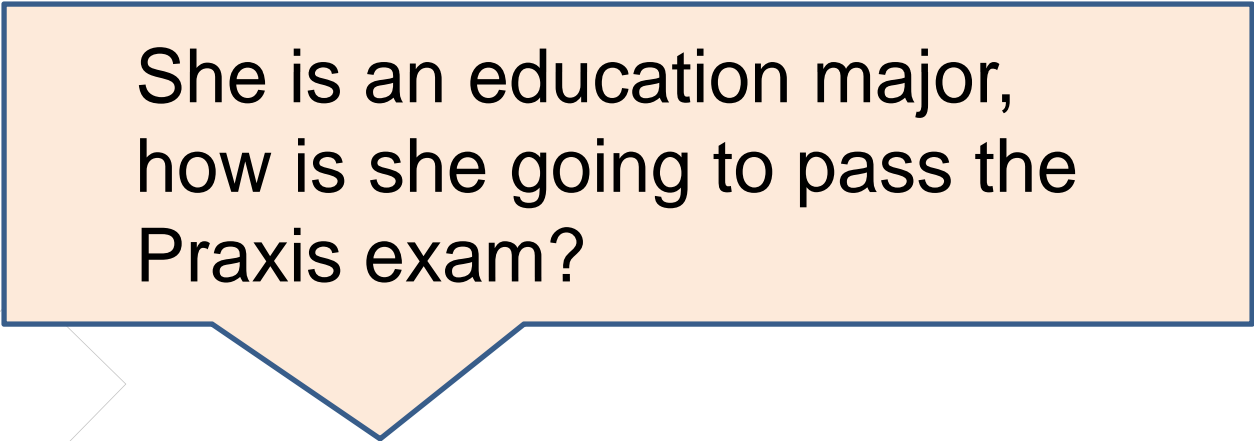


She asked if she could have an interpreter for her next exam!

Won't an interpreter give her an unfair advantage?



In my class she requested extra time for the exam. Why would she need that?



She is an education major, how is she going to pass the Praxis exam?

Sound Familiar ???

Tests : a vital determinant of achievement and competence:

- Passing on to next grade level
- Earning a diploma
- Being accepted to a college
- In employment: As a basis for hiring and promotion
- Professional licensure and certification

Today's Objectives:

1. Introduce PEPNet's Testing Equity Summit
2. Explore three fundamental issues and additional problems identified by summit participants
3. Report recommendations from the Testing Summit

PEPNet 2007 National Needs Assessment



Identified a significant need for training in three areas relating to testing:

1. psychoeducational testing and assessment
2. testing of academic skills
3. determining what “reasonable accommodations” can and should be made during testing or assessment

The PEPNet Test Equity Summit

- August 2008, Broomfield, Colorado
- Twelve leading experts shared their experiences
- Facilitated by



Ruth Loew, Ph.D., Director of the Office of Disability Policy at Educational Testing Service

Judith Mouny, Ed.D., M.S.W. , research scientist with the Language Planning Institute and Center for ASL/English Bilingual Education and Research at Gallaudet University.

Summit Participants:

- **Barbara Boyd, Ph.D.**, professor in English, Communication Studies, and Undergraduate Studies at California State University, Northridge
- **Lisa Coyner, Ph.D.**, a licensed psychologist and certified school psychologist in Arizona
- **Stephanie W. Cawthon, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Psychology, University of Texas at Austin
- **Dan Farley, M.A.**, Assessment and Evaluation Coordinator at New Mexico School for the Deaf (NMSD)
- **Carol Funckes, M.A.**, President of the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) and Associate Director of the University of Arizona's Disability Resources
- **Peter Hauser, Ph.D.**, deaf clinical neuropsychologist who directs the Deaf Studies Laboratory (DSL) at Rochester Technical Institute,

Summit Participants:

- **Mary Huffnell, Psy.D.**, Coordinator of Training at the Mental Health Center at Gallaudet University and a licensed psychologist
- **Rebecca Sills, M.S.**, Director of the VR Deaf Services Program, Georgia's Department of Labor/Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- **Luisa Soboleski, M.Ed.**, assistant principal (elementary department) of the American School for the Deaf, West Hartford, CT
- **Robert Weinstock, M.A.**, Special Assistant to the Provost, Gallaudet University

Three Fundamental Issues

Three Fundamental Issues Identified at Summit

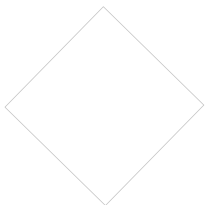
1. Individuals who grow up Deaf or Hard of Hearing have **different experiences with English**
2. Deafness is a **low incidence** disability
3. **No standards** for developing, administering or taking tests

Three Fundamental Issues

1. Individuals who grow up Deaf or Hard of Hearing have different experiences with English

Misconceptions:

- native ASL fluency causes test taking struggles
- deaf/hard of hearing testing difficulties parallel ESL difficulties



Three Fundamental Issues

Clarifying misconceptions:

Early lack of access to any language causes life-long disparities

So....

- reading writing challenges are found in all subjects
- language disparities affect academic AND psychoeducational tests that can lead to wrong LD diagnosis

Three Fundamental Issues

2. Deafness is a low-incidence disability

- Accommodations needs often poorly understood
- No single accommodation works due to wide differences in hearing loss characteristics

Three Fundamental Issues

3. No Standards for Developing, Administering or Taking Tests

- Test results may be, and often are, an under-prediction of skills and abilities
- No established best practices
- Test validity for deaf students not tested
- No standard methodology for determining grade level for deaf/hard of hearing students

Three Fundamental Issues

3. No Standards for Developing, Administering or Taking Tests

- Signed translations, when offered are often inaccurate
- Tests often reflect only hearing American culture
- Test taking skills often not taught
- No standards for alternative assessments

Additional Problems:

A. The design and wording of tests

- Multiple choice questions with:
 - » Embedded clauses
 - » Double negatives
 - » Extraneous information
- Insufficient context
 - » Pronouns without clear reference
 - » Sentences from a reading passage
 - » Prepositions have multiple meanings
- Unfamiliar vocabulary/English idioms and words with multiple meanings

Lack of Deaf involvement in test development

Additional Problems:

A. The design and wording of tests

True /False

Stanley & French would likely argue that using lottery proceeds for improved public transportation could help reduce the major problem(s) they identify in lotteries.

Additional Problems:

A. The design and wording of tests

Scientists:

- a. are skeptical
- b. never question face value
- c. ignore conflicting information
- d. admire authority

Additional Problems:

B. Accommodations: Sign Language Translation

No standards! No research !

- No one standard sign language
- Widely differing skills of sign language interpreters
- NO accepted guidelines as to who and how
- Schools vary in whether interpreted test are permissible, standardized testing agencies typically do not allow

Additional Problems:

Additional problems identified by the summit:

B. Accommodations: Sign Language Translation

No standards! No research !

- Requires adequate preparation
- Spelling tests can't be signed
- ASL signs can sometimes give meaning of word
- Videotaped translation not best solution... time-consuming and costly

Additional Problems:

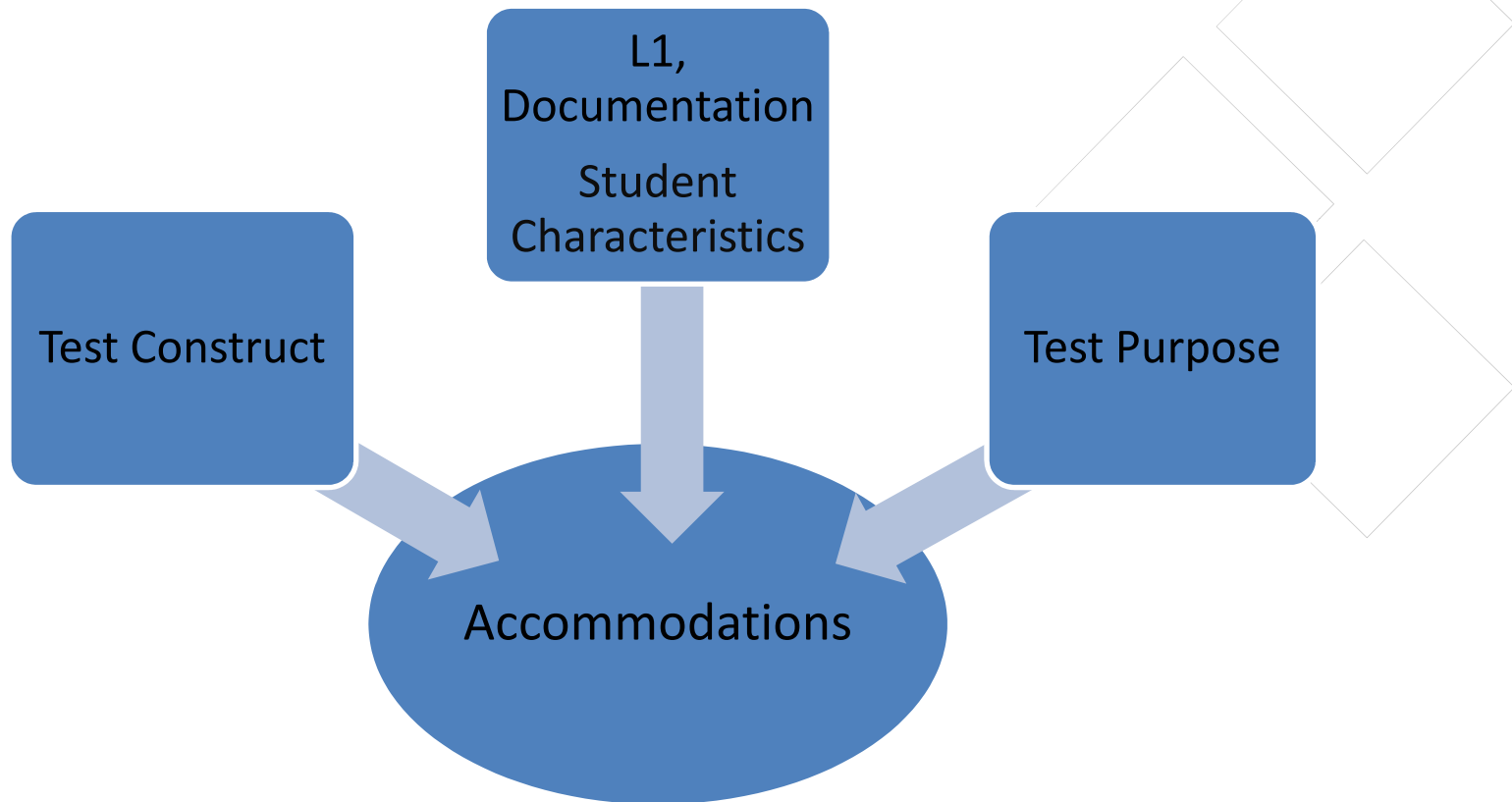
Additional problems identified by the summit:

B. Accommodations: Extended time

No standards! No research !

- Approved because of processing times issues related to hearing loss
- Generally 50% extra time allowed
- Some testing agencies require proof of secondary disability for extended time

Accommodations and Equity



Morrison, Funckes *“Test Accommodations for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students, What is reasonable?”*

Additional Problems:

Additional Problems Identified by the Summit:

- C. Transitioning Deaf and Hard of Hearing students to post-secondary schools
- Accommodations used in K-12 are not automatically offered in postsecondary
 - Disability specialists may lack in-depth knowledge deafness
 - Postsecondary institutions requires self-disclosure
 - Certification exams in effect are measuring English skills

Additional Problems:

Additional problems identified by the summit:

- D. Psychoeducational testing, assessment and evaluation
- Relies on English-based instruments
 - Relies on norm groups that do not include deaf/hard of hearing individuals
 - Shortage psychoeducational evaluators qualified to test deaf and hard of hearing students

Additional Problems:

Additional problems identified by the summit:

- D. Psychoeducational testing, assessment and evaluation
- Correctly identifying learning disabilities in presence of hearing loss is difficult
 - Social isolation from hearing loss can affect social skills that can be misdiagnosed
 - Selecting appropriate test is important

Review: Issues and Problems

1. Individuals who grow up Deaf or Hard of Hearing have different experiences with English
2. Deafness is a low incidence disability
3. No standards for developing, administering or taking tests
4. Design and wording of tests
5. Accommodations: interpreting and extra time
6. Transition to postsecondary
7. Psychoeducational testing, assessment and evolution

Summit's Recommendations:

What Schools Can Do: *Standardized and Academic Testing*

- Develop guidelines for providing multiple measure of a student's abilities
- Consider test content in determining how tests are to be interpreted
- Use qualified sign language interpreters
- Give interpreters adequate training and preparation time

Summit's Recommendations:

What Schools Can Do: *Standardized and Academic Testing*

- Help student develop test-taking skills and monitor students during test
- Use team approach, include deaf consumers
- Early intervention, no “one-size fits all”
- Ensure that curriculum, instruction, and test content are aligned.

Summit's Recommendations:

What Schools Can Do: *Standardized and Academic Testing*

- Foster continued professional development of teachers and staff in Deaf culture and testing issues.
- Teachers/instructors should consult teachers of the deaf or other experts in deafness when designing academic tests.
- Standards for assessment for special populations, ([AERA](#), APA, NCME) are currently undergoing revision. Schools should offer their experience and ideas for change.



Summit's Recommendations:

What School Psychologists Can Do: *Psychoeducational Assessments*

- Understand the student's hearing loss and its implications before determining which psychoeducational tests will be administered and how results will be analyzed.
- If unfamiliar with evaluating deaf and hard of hearing individuals, consult with other service professionals
- Gather data about the child from multiple sources

Summit's Recommendations:

What School Psychologists Can Do: *Psychoeducational Assessments*

- To the maximum extent feasible, administer all assessments in the child's dominant, or natural, language
- “In house” or internal norms—norms developed from the experience of a particular school, university or site and the given population at that site—can be useful but must be used with caution.
- Give tests multiple times—

Note: Pages 83-84 in “Assessing Deaf Adults” offers recommendations for psychometric intellectual assessments

Summit's Recommendations:

Summit's Recommendations for Improving Test Equity:

What School Psychologists Can Do: *Psychoeducational Assessments*

- Best option for intelligence testing is to use non-verbal measures
- When a sign language interpreter is used for the evaluation, he or she should not be the same interpreter that the child uses in the classroom.
- Even when using a qualified sign language interpreter, when feasible bring in an ancillary evaluator

Summit's Recommendations:

Summit's Recommendations for Improving Test Equity:

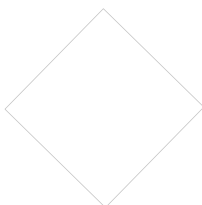
What School Psychologists Can Do: *Psychoeducational Assessments*

- Understand that facial expression is an integral part of sign language
- Practice with mock assessment to increase child's comfort
- Develop guidelines, involve those who do assessments and other professionals
- Evaluating students is an art, not a science

Summit's Recommendations:

What Test Developers Can Do

- Incorporate universal design principles into test development
- Make test items clearer
- Ensure test actually measures the knowledge that it is intended to test
- In high-stakes testing, when possible eliminate questions inappropriate for deaf and hard of hearing individuals and then rescore.
- Actively recruit deaf/hard of hearing test designers



Notes: Pages 69 -73 in “Assessing Deaf Adults” offers test construction guidelines

Other Resources

Johnson, C.J., Mitchell, R.E., eds. (2008). *Testing Deaf Students in an Age of Accountability*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.

Mouny, J., and Martin, D., eds. (2005). *Assessing deaf adults: critical issues in testing and evaluation*. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press.

Other Resources

Teacher Tipsheet: Providing Testing Accommodations for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

http://pdcorder.pepnet.org/media/1046TPSHT_Test_Accom.pdf

Hambleton, R.K., Merenda, P.F., and Spielberger, C.D., eds. (2005). *Adapting educational and psychological tests for cross-cultural assessment*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

**Stay tuned: Soon to appear: Testing Summit
Web page on PEPNet.org**

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