

# Enabling or Empowering? Adaptations and Accommodations for Twice-Exceptional Students

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## Abstract

This article addresses the different perceptions that parents, students, and teachers have regarding appropriate accommodations for twice-exceptional students.

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In order for gifted/learning disabled (GT/LD) students to effectively gain access to enriched and accelerated instruction, they often need to have appropriate adaptations and accommodations (Baum, 2004; Baum, 1991; Barton & Starnes, 1989; Cline & Schwartz, 1999; Weinfeld, Barnes-Robinson, Jeweler, Shevitz, 2002). Teachers, parents, and students have strong opinions and beliefs that influence which, if any, adaptations and accommodations they believe to be appropriate.

As a result of two decades of experience with GT/LD students, the authors recognized that there is a difference in perception regarding the appropriateness of adaptations and accommodations, as well as differing beliefs about whether these adaptations and accommodations enable or empower students.

The authors came to believe that perceptions differed widely among parents, students, and special and general educators at varying grade levels.

Accepting the belief that attitudes are malleable was essential to the value of the informal study that follows and its implications for positively impacting instruction for GT/LD students. By collecting and analyzing data on attitudes toward appropriate adaptations and accommodations, the authors have developed guidelines for providing them to GT/LD students and action plans that empower these students to be successful learners.

### **Adaptations and Accommodations**

When advocating for adaptations and accommodations, first, it is essential for educators, parents, and students to understand the differences between an adaptation and an accommodation. Wiggins and McTighe created a framework for planning units and lessons for mastery learning (Wiggins &

McTighe, 1998) that helps to illustrate the basic tenants of appropriate adaptations and accommodations for GT/LD students. Their plan for any lesson or unit focuses on three important elements: 1) the enduring understanding which is the lasting idea or concept; 2) essential questions that guide the unit and focus teaching; and 3) key knowledge and skills that students must acquire by the end of the unit in order to demonstrate mastery of the standards and indicators addressed in the enduring understandings. While these three pieces remain the same for gifted students with disabilities as they are for other gifted students, it is the learning activities and assessments that may need to be adapted and/or accommodations provided for GT students with learning disabilities.

For example, in an elementary social studies lesson on how Native Americans adjusted to their environment, a teacher typically uses a learning activity of reading a textbook or some source material, and the assessment of having students write a multi-page essay about the topic. The teacher could provide an adaptation to the learning activity for GT/LD students by allowing them to actually build a model of the cliff dwellings in which the Native Americans lived and then, from their research, describe the key points about that structure. Other options might include creating a dramatic reenactment or participating in a simulation of Native American life. There will be times, however, when the activity cannot be adapted or changed because gaining information from print material and producing a written document are, in and of themselves, goals of the lesson. In that case, accommodations will be necessary for those students who have a disability that affects their ability to read or write. Students who have a disability that affects their reading

may be provided with books on tape, text to speech software or opportunities to hear a person read the information aloud. Students who have a disability that affects their writing may use graphic organizers, a word processor, word predictive software, organizational software and /or work with partners and dictate responses to them. Through the use of effective adaptations and accommodations, GT/LD students are able to achieve the same learning goals as non-disabled GT students.

Disagreement on the meaning and types of appropriate adaptations and accommodations for students is not only evident at the school level, but also at the state level. Looking at the state-by-state policies, there is little agreement regarding what accommodations are allowed. For example, extended time, the most frequently used accommodation, is allowed in 37 states, but five of those prohibit it under certain conditions and two states completely prohibit it. While nine states offer reading aloud with no restrictions and 23 states offer reading aloud with some restrictions, three states completely prohibit reading aloud as accommodations during assessments (Thurlow, House, Scott, Ysseldyke, 2000).

Although these policies relate to state regulations on formal assessments, they impact accommodations that are allowed for classroom instruction and assessments. As teachers prepare their students for mandated state assessments, they often allow the same accommodations in their classroom instruction that will be allowed in the mandated assessments (Weinfeld, Barnes-Robinson, Jeweler, Shevitz, IN PRESS).

The power of appropriate adaptations and accommodations for GT/LD students is illustrated in the following two profiles. One elementary school student received no accommodations. His teachers viewed him as

bright, but inattentive and lazy. He was viewed by some of his classmates as “crazy” or “retarded.” Each day, in elementary school, as his turn to read aloud approached, he went to the bathroom, where he got sick to his stomach and wished he would die. Unfortunately, when he returned to the room, it was always still his turn to read aloud. In sixth grade, when assigned a composition, he dictated an outstanding composition to his mother, because his poor handwriting and spelling interfered with his work production. He was accused of plagiarism and became so disconsolate he dropped out of school for a time. In contrast, one college student met with each of his professors prior to each semester. He described to them his love of literature and his passion for writing. He also described his need to take periodic breaks during class due to his ADHD, his need for copies of a peer's notes, his need to do all major writing on the word processor due to his written language disability, and his need to have books on tape because he read on a 7<sup>th</sup> grade level. The professors invariably agreed to work closely with him and allow all of the appropriate accommodations. He graduated from Brown University with Honors and a 4.0 average (Mooney, 2000).

Both of these portraits are of Jonathan Mooney who explains his experiences in his book, Learning Outside the Lines (2000). Jonathan's experiences clearly exemplify the negative effects and problems that students face when adaptations and accommodations are not part of their instructional program. It affirms the impact and effects that positive beliefs and attitudes have on student self-esteem and performance.

Many researchers have studied the relationship between attitudes and behavior (e.g., Goodmonson & Glaudin, 1971; Ryan & Bonfield, 1975; Scheier, Buss & Buss, 1978;

Seligman, Kriss, Darley, Fazio, Becker & Pryor, 1979; Wicklund, 1982; Janis, 1986; Wilson & Hodges, 1992). Cohen (1964) asserts that there is a "broad psychological assumption that since attitudes are evaluative pre-dispositions, they have consequences for the way people act toward others, for the programs they actually undertake, and for the manner in which they carry them out. Thus attitudes are seen as...determinants of how a person will actually behave..." (pp.137-138).

Assessing the attitudes of parents, students, and educators toward adaptations and accommodations became the first step to creating a plan to influence behaviors regarding the implementation of appropriate adaptations and accommodations for GT/LD students.

## **The Survey**

Because differing attitudes and beliefs may impact the decisions that are made regarding the appropriate adaptations and accommodations for GT/LD students, the authors developed an attitudinal survey in order to substantiate the hypotheses that different groups, comprised of parents, students, general educators, and special educators, have distinctively different opinions about what constitutes appropriate adaptations and accommodations. As a result of analyzing the findings, guidelines and action plans for implementing appropriate adaptations and accommodations were created. Figure 1 gives the actual survey we used in the study. We have included it because it may be useful to you as you plan for your students needs.

## **Beliefs**

The seventeen-question survey was developed, based on these positively stated beliefs regarding appropriate adaptations and

accommodations. The survey was designed to incorporate the major issues that were addressed in the laws that relate to accommodations (Section 504; IDEA '97).

The survey was constructed on the following beliefs related to the use of appropriate adaptations and accommodations.

- Adaptations/accommodations are in the best interest of students.
- Adaptations/accommodations level the playing field.
- Adaptations/accommodations are aligned with student's disabilities and needs.
- Adaptations/accommodations allow students to participate more fully in assessments.
- Adaptations/accommodations allow students to better demonstrate their knowledge.
- Adaptations/accommodations are based on the needs of the individual student.
- Adaptations/accommodations allow students to move from dependence to independence.
- The amount of adaptations/accommodations students receive is adequate.
- Providing adaptations/accommodations does not compromise the teaching of the content material.
- Providing adaptations/accommodations does not compromise the assessment of students.
- Adequate information is communicated to all staff regarding students' disability and their resulting needs for adaptations/accommodations.
- Adaptations/accommodations are more empowering than enabling.
- The adaptations and accommodations that are found in a student's individual plan are usually appropriate.

Figure 1: The survey

**ENABLING OR EMPOWERING?  
ADAPTATIONS/ACCOMODATIONS FOR GT/LD STUDENTS**

**Is providing accommodations and adaptations for underachieving gifted students in their best interest or is it “enabling” them?**

**Please assist us in collecting data on attitudes and perceptions about this issue by completing the following questionnaire.**

Identifying information (check all that apply)

Special educator\_\_\_\_\_ General Educator\_\_\_\_\_ Administrator\_\_\_\_\_ Counselor\_\_\_\_\_

Parent of student with IEP/504\_\_\_\_\_ Parent of student without IEP/504\_\_\_\_\_

Student with IEP/504\_\_\_\_\_ Student without IEP/504\_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level (if appropriate)\_\_\_\_\_ Content area taught (if appropriate)\_\_\_\_\_

**For the following statements please circle the response most aligned with your beliefs.**

**1. Providing specified IEP/504 adaptations/accommodations is generally in the best interests of underachieving GT students**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

**2. Providing specified IEP/504 adaptations/accommodations gives some students an unfair advantage**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

**3. The IEP/504 plans for most students call for**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Inadequate accomodation		Adequate		Excessive accommodation

**4. The adaptations/accommodations most students receive are aligned with the educational impact of their disability as well as the needs described in their IEP/504 plan:**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

**5. The adaptations/accommodations most students with IEP/504 plans receive allow them to participate more fully in formal and informal assessments:**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. The adaptations/accommodations most students with IEP/504 plans receive allow them to better demonstrate their knowledge:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. Adaptations/accommodations of most students with IEP/504 plans are based upon the needs of the individual student and not upon a category of disability, level of intensity, level of instruction, time spent in mainstream classroom, or program setting:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. Adaptations/accommodations of most students with IEP/504 plans allow them to move from dependence to independence:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

9. Providing specified IEP/504 adaptations/accommodations is generally not in the best interests of underachieving GT students:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. The number of adaptations and accommodations special educators want for most students with IEP/504 plans is:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

11. The number of adaptations and accommodations special educators want for most students with IEP/504 plans is:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Insufficient		Adequate		Excessive

12. The number of adaptations and accommodations most students with IEP/504 plans want is:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Insufficient		Adequate		Excessive

13. Providing adaptations and accommodations for students with IEP/504 plans compromises the teaching of certain classes:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

**14. Providing adaptations and accommodations for students with IEP/504 plans compromises the administration of certain tests:**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

**15. I have adequate information regarding most students disabilities and their resulting need for specific adaptations/accommodations.**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

**16. The following adaptations and accommodations, when recommended, are generally appropriate for students with IEP/504 plans: (check most appropriate answer)**

The use of projects or other alternatives to written products		
Inappropriate_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____
Periodic breaks		
Inappropriate_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____
Extended time for classwork		
Inappropriate_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____
Extended time for homework		
Inappropriate_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____
Extended time for tests		
Inappropriate_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____
Preferential Seating		
Inappropriate_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____
Word Processor		
Inappropriate_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____
Calculator		
Inappropriate_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____
Peer notetaker		
Inappropriate_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____
Copy of teacher notes		
Inappropriate_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____
Dictating response		
Inappropriate_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____
Adjusted workload		
Inappropriate_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____
Books on tape		
Inappropriate_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____

**17. The use of the following accommodations by students with IEP/504 plans is generally more enabling than empowering: (check most appropriate answer)**

The use of projects or other alternatives to written products		
Enabling_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____
Periodic breaks		
Enabling_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____
Extended time for classwork		
Enabling_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____
Extended time for homework		
Enabling_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____
Extended time for tests		
Enabling_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____



<b>Preferential Seating</b>			
Enabling_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____	
<b>Word Processor</b>			
Enabling_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____	
<b>Calculator</b>			
Enabling_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____	
<b>Peer notetaker</b>			
Enabling_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____	
<b>Copy of teacher notes</b>			
Enabling_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____	
<b>Dictating response</b>			
Enabling_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____	
<b>Adjusted workload</b>			
Enabling_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____	
<b>Books on tape</b>			
Enabling_____	Undecided_____	Appropriate_____	

**Comments:**

## **Hypotheses**

The hypotheses were that those parents and students, with the exception of middle school students, would agree with the positive attributes of adaptations and accommodations; special educators would agree to a lesser extent; general educators, including administrators and counselors, especially those at the secondary level, would disagree.

## **Methods**

### *Sample of Convenience*

From January 2001, to June 2001, parents, students, and staff in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) were surveyed. Two hundred eighty-nine surveys were collected. The participants included: 58 special education teachers, 119 general education teachers, 10 school administrators, 2 school counselors, 30 parents of students with an IEP, 8 parents of students without an IEP, 49 students with an IEP, and 20 students without an IEP. Special educators and general educators were divided into the following categories: 13 elementary special educators, 20

middle school special educators, 5 high school special educators, 33 elementary general educators, 46 middle school general educators, and 21 high school general educators.

### *Measures*

The attitudes of parents, students, and educators toward appropriate adaptations and accommodations were assessed using a survey created by the authors with guidance from the research department of Montgomery County Public Schools. The survey consisted of 17 statements regarding responses the participants felt were most aligned with their beliefs on the question - Is providing adaptations and accommodations for underachieving gifted students in their best interest or is it "enabling" them?

Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement to questions #1-15 on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). For question # 16, participants were asked to rate the appropriateness of specific adaptations and accommodations for students with IEP/504 plans. The choices were "inappropriate", "undecided",

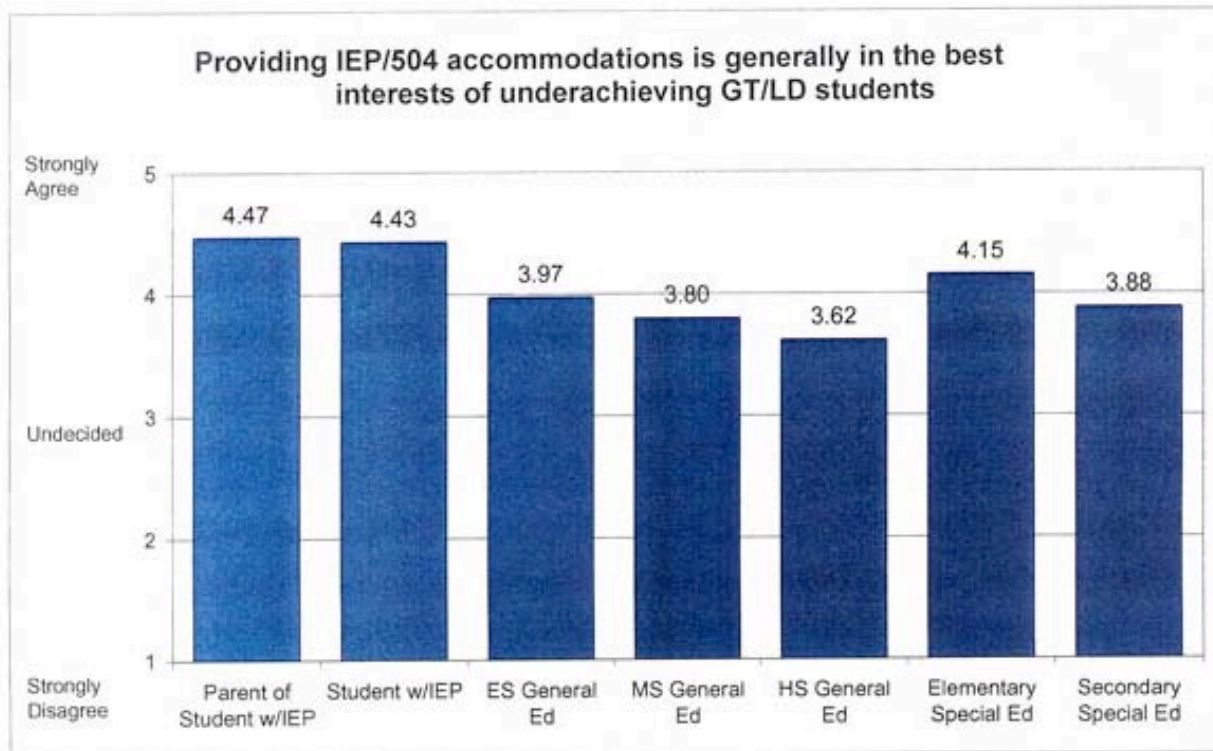
and "appropriate". For question # 17, participants were asked to respond to a list of specific accommodations for students with IEP/504 plans. They responded on two different scales - "enabling to empowering" and "inappropriate to appropriate".

### Procedures

Surveys were completed during parent meetings, during classes, and during staff training sessions. The examiner told all groups that the survey was designed to gather information to help in the delivery of appropriate adaptations and accommodations. Participants filled out the survey that took approximately 10 minutes to complete. Upon completion, the surveys were immediately collected by the examiner.

### Results

Figure 2



### Statistical Analysis

We have selected only a few of the key results to report in this article. A full set of findings can be secured through contacting the authors. Figures 2 through 6 give the results for the following survey items: Figure 2 – Providing IEP/504 accommodations is generally in the best interest of underachieving students; Figure 3 – Accommodations allow students to better demonstrate their knowledge; Figure 4 – Accommodations allow students to move from dependence to independence; Figure 5 – Providing accommodations compromises the teaching of certain classes; and Figure 6 – Use of projects or other alternatives to written products is appropriate/empowering. A discussion of the results for these survey items is given following the Figures.

Figure 3

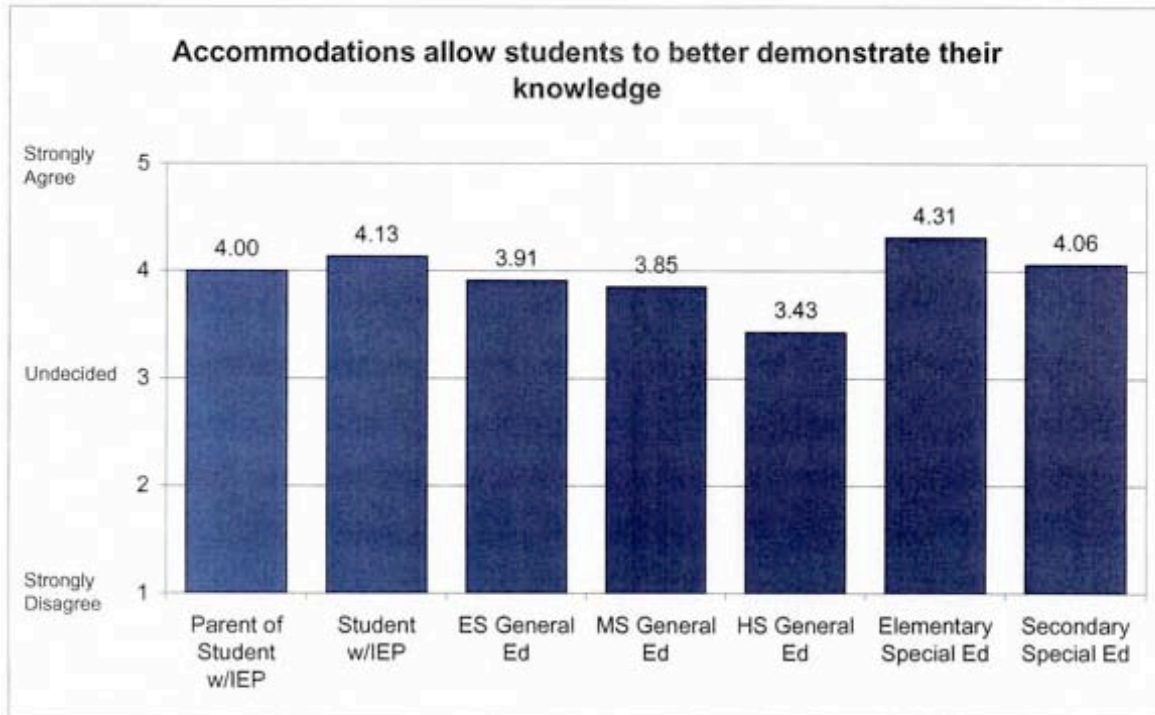


Figure 4

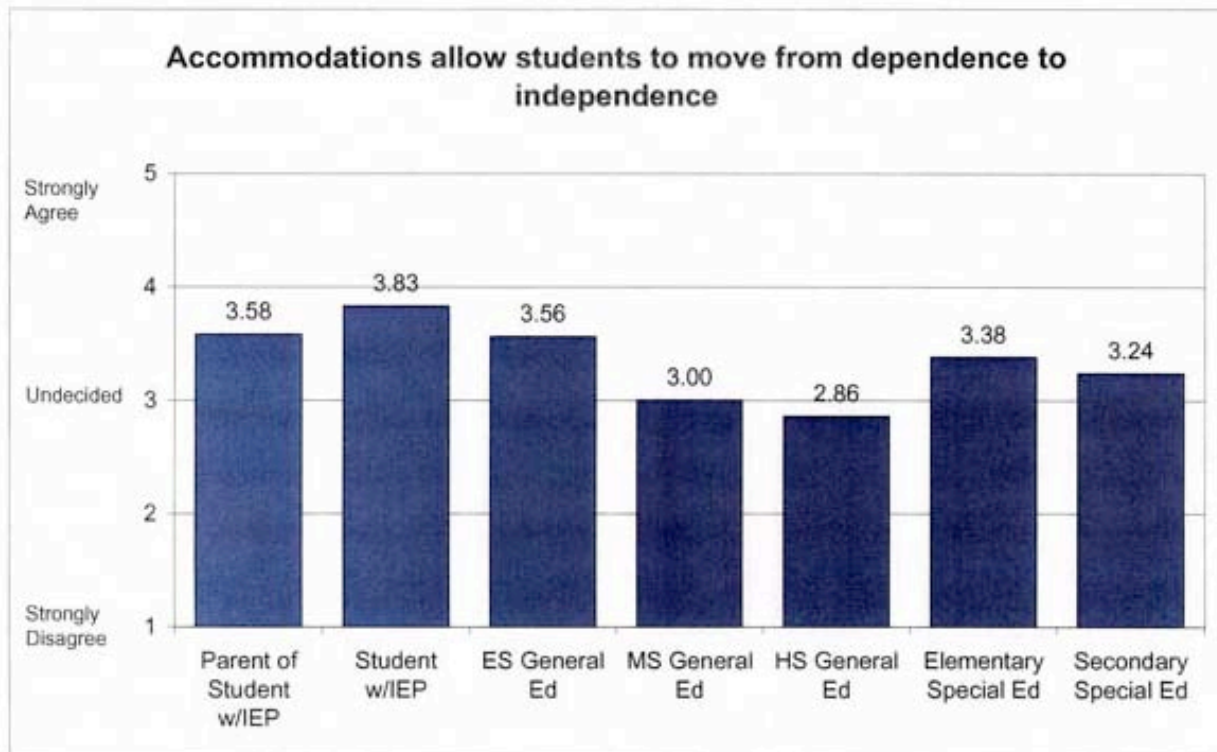


Figure 5

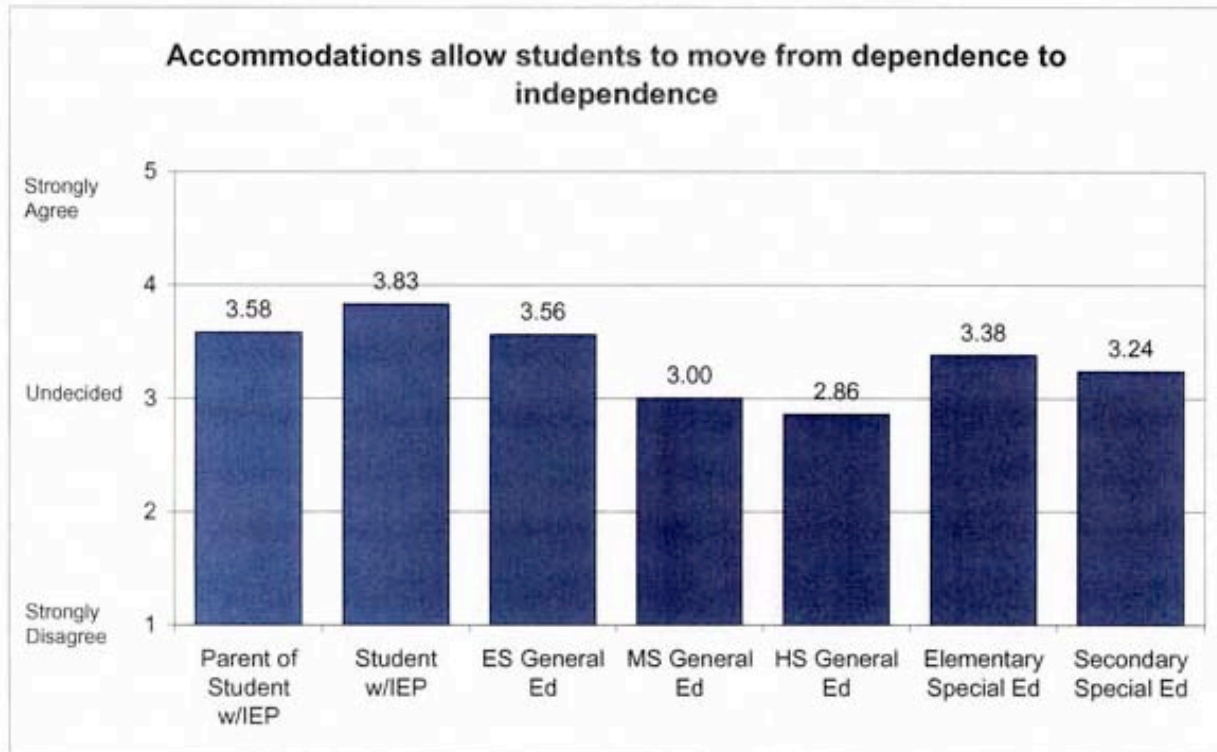
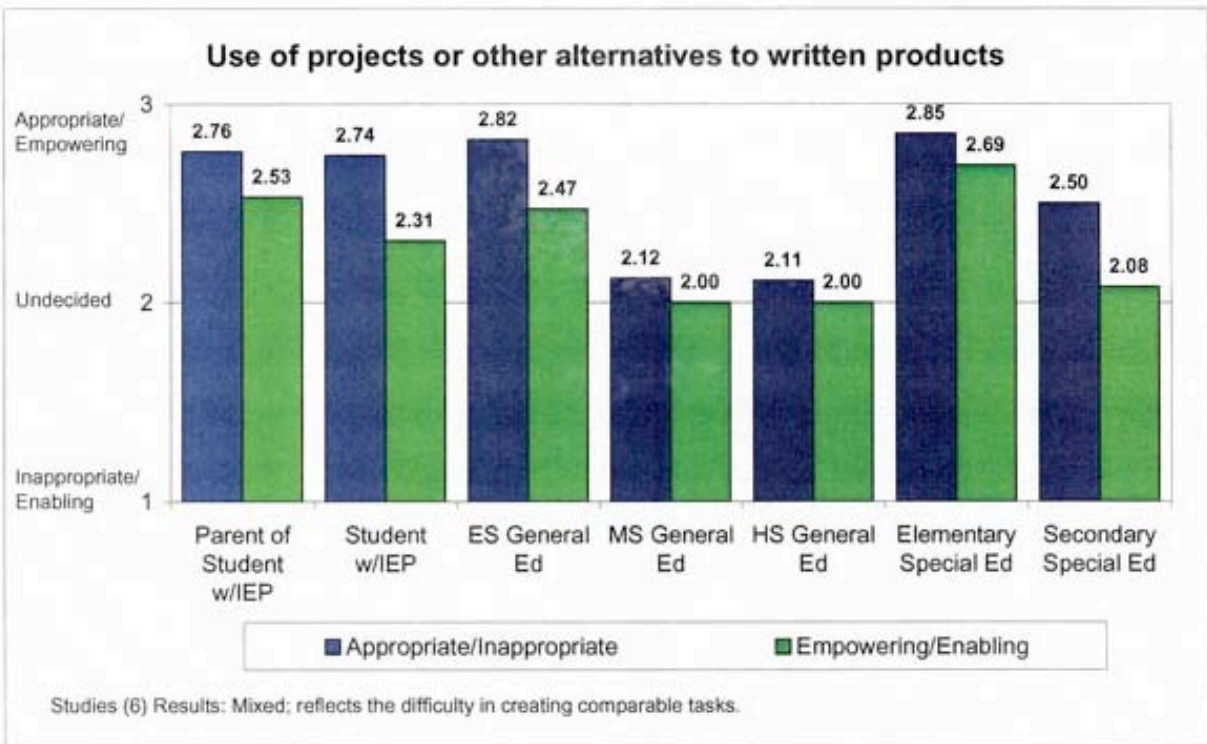


Figure 6



An analysis of the results revealed a fairly consistent pattern of responses that corresponded to the hypotheses. When asked how strongly participants agreed with the statement, “providing IEP/504 accommodations is generally in the best interest of underachieving GT students”, Figure 2 above, both parents (4.47) and students (4.43) agreed most strongly. Elementary special educators (4.15) agreed, but not as strongly as parents and students. Secondary general educators agreed (3.88), but their score was not as high as the elementary general educators (3.97). The trend for general educators, from elementary (3.97) to middle (3.80) to high school (3.62) was as predicted with high school teachers reporting less agreement with the statement that accommodations are generally in the students best interest. High school special education teachers (3.88) fell between the general education middle school and high school teachers. We selected this question because it illustrates a pattern that generally held true for most questions. Figure 3 shows a very similar pattern for responses to the statement that, “accommodations allow students to better demonstrate their knowledge.”

Once again elementary special education teachers (4.31), students (4.13), and parents (4.00) indicate a stronger agreement than do general education teachers. Within the general education teachers the level of agreement follows the same pattern as above with elementary teachers (3.91) agreeing slightly more than middle school teachers (3.85) and middle school teachers agreeing more than high school teachers (3.43). On this item the high school special education teachers (4.06) reported agreement that was more similar to the parent and student responses. We selected these questions to report because they illustrate a pattern that generally held true for most questions. There was, however, some

variation in the pattern. It was interesting that in Figure 4, for example, “accommodations allow students to move from dependence to independence,” shows that students (3.83) agreed more strongly than any other group.

Figure 5, “providing accommodations comprises the teaching of certain classes,” is included because this is a concern that teachers sometimes raise. Unlike the above questions agreement to this statement is viewed a negative rather than positive. Interesting the pattern of agreement is almost the reverse of the pattern shown in Figures 2 through 4. In this case, high school teachers (3.05) agreed most strongly indicating that that accommodations compromise the teaching of certain classes, however, it should be noted that their score placed them in the undecided range. Parents (2.20), elementary special education teachers (2.31), students (2.42) and secondary special education teachers (2.42) voiced the strongest disagreement on this item. The trend for general education teachers was reversed with elementary general education teachers (2.48) disagreeing to a stronger degree than middle school teachers (2.69) and high school general education teachers (3.05), as noted above, indicating the strongest level of agreement.

The final survey questions asked respondents for ratings on two scales: “inappropriate to appropriate” (represented in blue) and “enabling to empowering” (represented in green). In this case, responses were viewed as more positive to the degree that the indicated accommodation was both appropriate and empowering. We have given only one Figure to illustrate this area, we will however discuss the results of other survey items. In Figure 6, we see that both middle school and high school general educators found “the use of projects or other alternatives to written products” to be significantly less appropriate

and less empowering than did the other groups. Once again, however their actual responses fell within the “undecided” range. When it came to homework, both middle school teachers and high school teachers found extended time to be enabling vs. empowering and high school teachers also reported feeling that extended time for homework was inappropriate. All groups supported the use of calculators, word processors, and books on tape. Interestingly, however, students gave these three accommodations the lowest “empowering” score of any of the groups.

### *Summary of Results*

The survey revealed a gap between the perception of general educators and that of special educators regarding how adaptations and accommodations are to be selected and provided. It also revealed a gap between the perception of parents and that of general educators, as well as pointing out some gaps in perception between students and all other groups. It was interesting that students felt that both parents and special educators sometimes wanted excessive accommodations. And students also reported feeling more strongly than other groups that appropriate adaptations and accommodations helped move them from dependence to independence. Students felt that several of the adaptations and accommodations (books on tape, calculator, word processor) were less empowering.

### **Implications**

A number of practical applications resulted from the creation and administration of the survey. These included a more careful definition of terms to bring clarity to communication about accommodations for students,

the creation of guidelines for appropriate adaptations and accommodations, and a series of action plans to help the school district bridge the differences across the primary stakeholder groups. These three applications are discussed below.

### *Definition of Terms*

In conducting the survey, it was found that not only is there often disagreement regarding accommodation policies, but also confusion about the meaning of words and pertinent terms. Since multidisciplinary teams make decisions about adaptations and accommodations, it is necessary to ensure that all participants have a common vocabulary. The following definitions of terms aided participants in the process.

**ADAPTATION:** Modification to the delivery of instruction or materials used rather than modification in content as that can affect the fulfillment of curriculum goals.

**ACCOMMODATION:** Procedure or enhancement that empowers a person with a disability to complete a task that he or she would otherwise be unable to complete because of the disability.

**ENABLE:** Behavior that interferes with acquisition of new competencies, reduces a person's sense of self-control over life events (self-efficacy), and/or reinforces old or maladaptive behavior.

**EMPOWER:** Behavior that promotes personal growth and increased competencies, increases a person's sense of control over life events, and/or encourages new coping abilities to replace maladaptive behavior

**DIFFERENTIATION:** A way of thinking about and planning in order to meet the diverse needs of students based on their characteristics. Teachers differentiate content, process, and product according to students' readiness, interest, and learning profile through a range of instructional and management strategies.

### *Guidelines for Appropriate Adaptations and Accommodations*

The following guidelines for the use of adaptations and accommodations were developed to help clarify the district's position on appropriate support for students:

- The decisions regarding adaptations must be individualized for each student. The accommodations that are used in assessments must parallel those that are used in instruction. The accommodations must be based on strengths. The accommodations and assessments must provide an equal opportunity for students to demonstrate their knowledge. Accommodations must be evaluated over time and only those that are effective should be continued.
- The overarching principle is to move students, over time, from dependence to independence. With that in mind, an accommodation that is appropriate at a given point in time may be replaced with another accommodation that helps the student to be more independent at a later time. For example, an appropriate accommodation for a student who lacks keyboarding skills, but is gifted verbally, may be to dictate a composition. Later, when the same student has learned keyboarding skills,

the use of a word processor may be more appropriate because it moves the student towards greater independence.

- Finally, these guidelines include principles of effective decision-making and implementation. While parents and students must have input into the process, the professionals must make the final decision as to what is appropriate. There must be on-going communication between parents and all staff who are implementing these plans (Weinfeld, Barnes-Robinson, Jeweler, Shevitz, *Smart Kids with Learning Difficulties: Overcoming Obstacles and Realizing Potential*, Prufrock, IN PRESS).

### **Making it Happen**

A series of Action Plans were developed to address the specific steps needed to deal with the differing attitudes and perceptions of general educators, special educators, parents, and students that were substantiated by the survey. A look at the proposed Action Plans for all of the groups shows four consistent pieces: Training, Collaborative IEP/504 Formulation, On-going Communication, and Evaluation. Each of these components is crucial if effective adaptations and accommodations are provided to GT/LD students. Figure 7 gives a sample of the action plans developed for the major stakeholder groups.

Figure 7  
 Sample Action Plans for Stakeholder Groups

<p><b><i>The following is an Action Plan for Special Educators and General Educators:</i></b></p>
<p>1. Training for special educators and general educators on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•the definition, identification and best practices in programming for GT/LD students.</li> <li>•understanding the assessment data that relates to these students.</li> <li>•understanding appropriate resources, materials, strategies and techniques to be utilized both in instruction and assessments that allow students to demonstrate their skills without the interference of their disabilities.</li> <li>•understanding how to capitalize on students' strengths.</li> <li>•the need to evaluate and revise adaptations and accommodations over time.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Including general educators, as part of the IEP team, in the formulation of adaptations and accommodations.</p>
<p>3. On-going face to face meetings between special educators and general educators to plan for implementation of the student's IEP/504 plan, including needed adaptations and accommodations. Meetings include a discussion of the reason for each adaptation and accommodation as it relates to the individual student's disability.</p>
<p>4. Building in an evaluation component to look at the efficacy of each adaptation and accommodation with a view towards fading adaptations and accommodations over time, allowing students to move from dependence to independence.</p>
<p><b><i>The following is an Action Plan for addressing this issue with parents:</i></b></p>
<p>1. Training for parent on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•the definition, identification and best practices in programming for GT/LD students.</li> <li>•the possible negative effects of providing excessive or unnecessary accommodations.</li> <li>•the need to select accommodations based on the impact of the individual student's disability.</li> <li>•the need to move students from dependence to independence.</li> <li>•the need to evaluate and revise adaptations and accommodations over time.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Including parents, as part of the IEP team, in the formulation of adaptations and accommodations.</p>



3. On-going face-to-face meetings between special educators and parents to monitor implementation of the student's IEP/504 plan, including needed adaptations and accommodations.
4. Building in an evaluation component to look at the efficacy of each adaptation and accommodation with a view towards fading adaptations and accommodations over time, allowing students to move from dependence to independence.
<b><i>The following is an Action Plan for addressing this issue with students:</i></b>
1. Training for students on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•understanding their own unique strengths and weaknesses.</li> <li>•understanding how specific adaptations/accommodations maximize their strengths, while minimizing their weaknesses.</li> <li>•understanding how to advocate for themselves.</li> <li>•the need to move from dependence to independence.</li> </ul>
2. Including students, as part of the IEP team, in the formulation of adaptations and accommodations as early as possible.
3. On-going face-to-face meetings between special educators and students to monitor implementation of the student's IEP/504 plan, including needed adaptations and accommodations.
4. Participating in a periodic evaluation component to look at the efficacy of each adaptation and accommodation with a view towards fading adaptations and accommodations over time, allowing students to move from dependence to independence.
- (Weinfeld, Barnes-Robinson, Jeweler, Shevitz, IN PRESS)

## CONCLUSION

The results of this survey support the hypothesis that parents and students, with the exception of middle school students, agree with the positive attributes of adaptations and accommodations; special educators agree to a lesser extent; general educators, including administrators and counselors, especially those at the secondary level, tend to disagree with

the provision of adaptations and accommodations. The results of the survey point out that these differences must be addressed through frequent and effective monitoring and communication among all of the parties. Only then will appropriate adaptations and accommodations lead to the empowerment of GT/LD students and facilitate their access to gifted instruction and their transition from dependence to independence.

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