

A Guide to Modifications and Accommodations For Students Experiencing Difficulty in General Education Classrooms

- ◆ WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “MODIFICATIONS” AND “ACCOMMODATIONS”?
- ◆ WHICH STUDENTS REQUIRE MODIFICATIONS AND ACCOMMODATIONS?
- ◆ AS A GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHER, WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES?

Background

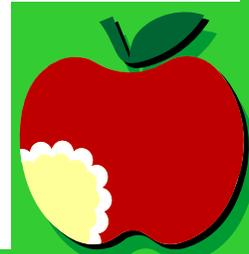
What is the difference between accommodations and modifications?

- ◆ **Accommodations** are changes to the course content, teaching strategies, standards, test preparation, location, timing, scheduling, expectations, student responses, environmental structuring and/or attributes which provide access for a student with a disability to participate in a course/standard/test which **DO NOT fundamentally alter or lower the standards or expectations of the course/standard/test.**
- ◆ **Modifications** are changes which **DO fundamentally alter or lower the standards or expectations of the course/standard/test.**

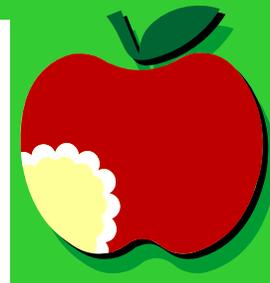
Source: Miriam Kurtzig Freedman, J.D. (1999) as quoted in “Guidelines For the Promotion and Retention of Special Education Students,” California Department of Education, Special Education Division

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*Developed by the Access to the Core Committee
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General Strategies for Accommodations/Modifications



Step 1 – Break failure pattern; reduce pressure:

- ◆ Shorten assignments (lengthen gradually as student begins to cope):
 - Assign every other problem or question
 - Require fewer words or pages
- ◆ Allow extra time (particularly on tests)
- ◆ Provide easier materials
- ◆ Simplify requirements

Step 2 – Build motivation and self-esteem:

- ◆ Use *frequent* positive reinforcement:
 - Verbal – “Super!” “I knew you could do it!”, “You got that right!”
 - Non-verbal – Pat or simply touch on shoulder, big smile
 - Find something the student does well and acknowledge publicly
 - Make phone call home during the day with the student listening
 - Send a quick note home to parent complimenting student
- ◆ Provide frequent feedback

Step 3 – Modify testing procedures:

- ◆ Provide a written outline or review sheet or study guide
- ◆ Give exam orally (individually or to entire class)
- ◆ Type all tests or print clearly
- ◆ Avoid separate answer sheets
- ◆ Avoid long essay exams
- ◆ Include some recognition questions: multiple choice, matching, true-false, etc.
- ◆ Give shorter, more frequent tests
- ◆ Provide extra testing time
- ◆ Allow student to dictate answers
- ◆ Provide opportunity for projects in lieu of tests or as extra credit
- ◆ Test major points only
- ◆ Use study carrels

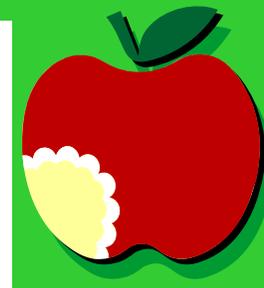
Step 4 – Adjust grading requirements:

- ◆ Mark items correct, not mistakes
- ◆ Notice and give credit for oral participation in class
- ◆ Grade content areas on the basis of ideas/knowledge rather than on spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.
 - (or give two grades: one content and one mechanics)
- ◆ Look for and comment on strengths and areas of improvement rather than faults and areas of weakness
- ◆ Provide an opportunity to correct errors without penalty
- ◆ Be specific regarding specific requirements for a particular grade

Step 5 – Individualize teaching strategies:

- ◆ Simplify or reduce complexity of directions; be specific
- ◆ Use student’s name or nonverbal signal to get his/her attention
- ◆ Provide reason for listening (tell student what to listen for)
- ◆ Present one concept at a time
- ◆ Break complex tasks into smaller steps
- ◆ Enhance verbal instructions by using lots of visual aids:
 - Direct eye contact
 - Key words on board
 - Notes on overhead projector
- ◆ Repeat directions when necessary; ask students to repeat
- ◆ Ask frequent questions during oral discussion to check for understanding
- ◆ Increase waiting time for response to questions
- ◆ Space repetition over a period of time
- ◆ Keep classroom quiet

- ◆ Provide structure; simplify student's environment
- ◆ Change seat and/or move desk if needed:
 - In front of room
 - Near you
 - Away from students most likely to distract
 - In a quiet, uncluttered corner
 - In a location of student's choice
- ◆ Consistent format for heading, margins, etc.
- ◆ Use of assignment sheet or notebook
- ◆ Post assignments on board
- ◆ Specify plan for communicating with parents:
 - Homework
 - Unfinished assignments
- ◆ Collect all work as soon as possible or as it is completed
- ◆ Post class rules/privileges and enforce consistently
- ◆ Reduce/simplify amount of material on a page:
 - Fold paper
 - Use index cards to cover part of the page
 - Larger print; fewer words or problems
- ◆ Alternate types of activities frequently during the day:
 - Group – individual
 - Sitting – moving
 - Verbal – quiet
 - Short – long
- ◆ Reward system for improved performance:
 - Notes home, privileges, stickers, graph of progress
 - Encourage self-competition rather than against others



Sample Strategies by Subject Area

READING

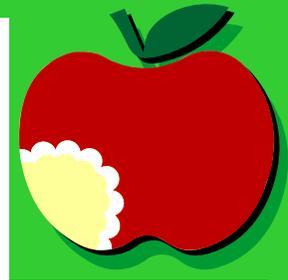
- _____ Lower level book
- _____ Skip non-relevant workbook pages
- _____ Assign fewer book reports
- _____ Provide opportunity for sharing books in a variety of ways
- _____ Paired reading practice
- _____ Individualized reading
- _____ Language experience approach
- _____ Peer or cross-age tutoring
- _____ Color code important word parts
- _____ Vocabulary cards and/or checklists
- _____ Circle words or word parts in newspaper
- _____ Games and centers for vocabulary/comprehension development

SPELLING

- _____ Reduce number of words from class list
- _____ Provide easier words, i.e., from reading book
- _____ Use spelling book from lower grade level
- _____ Teach regularities before irregularities
- _____ Highlight spelling demons (unpredictable words)
- _____ Underline difficult parts of words
- _____ Easier follow-up work for skills practice
- _____ Practice words on computer
- _____ Practice words with a partner
- _____ Practice words with a tape recorder
- _____ Weekly spelling contracts
- _____ Open-ended drill sheets
- _____ Individual dictionary for difficult words
- _____ Open-ended game boards for practice
- _____ Give test individually to allow more time
- _____ Teach use of reference books for poor spellers

Handwriting

- _____ Use of pencil grip
- _____ Use of paper with larger lines
- _____ Write on every other line
- _____ Accept homework typed by parent if student dictates
- _____ Allow student to take work home to finish
- _____ Encourage use of computer/word processor by student
- _____ Reduce standards for neatness
- _____ Photocopy some assignments rather than have student copy



Mathematics

- _____ Number line on desk
- _____ Use of multiplication facts chart
- _____ Put boxes around problems
- _____ Use of visual clues to steps in computation
- _____ Continued use of marks for carrying/borrowing
- _____ Open-ended drill sheets for number facts
- _____ Flash cards with another student or parents
- _____ Use of finger multiplication
- _____ Problems from book copied for student
- _____ Photocopy problems from book
- _____ Shorter assignments, i.e., odd or even only
- _____ Fold paper to reveal fewer problems at one time
- _____ Longer time limits on number facts drills
- _____ Easier materials, i.e., lower grade level book
- _____ Teach estimation and use of calculator
- _____ Circle/highlight sign so student knows operation

ENGLISH/WRITTEN LANGUAGE

- _____ Use textbook or workbook at student's reading level
- _____ Skip non relevant pages
- _____ Begin with the sentence as a unit of thought
- _____ Gradually lengthen writing assignments
- _____ Vary length of assignment by ability level
- _____ Allow student to dictate longer stories
- _____ Allow more time for writing
- _____ Underline incorrectly spelled words
- _____ Make individual spelling dictionary of frequently used words
- _____ Teach use of reference books for poor spellers
- _____ Peer or cross-age tutors

SCIENCE/SOCIAL STUDIES

- _____ Text or workbook at student's reading level
- _____ Provide course overview of what will be covered in what order
- _____ Teach SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review)
- _____ Provide alternative activities to be used for grading (assignments/projects/reports/tests)
- _____ Vary requirements for lesson by ability level
- _____ Have consistent homework policy and time
- _____ Prepare study guide for each unit
- _____ Divide total project into series of short assignments
- _____ Teach mnemonic devices and tricks as aids to memorizing facts/lists
- _____ Use "hands on" experiences as often as possible
- _____ Provide photocopy of your notes or those of a good student
- _____ Emphasize major concepts with a few supporting facts and details in each chapter
- _____ Use visual aids as often as possible (films, overhead, etc.)
- _____ Preview or highlight important concepts in advance
- _____ Tell the student what he needs to know for exams
- _____ Provide opportunity for student to earn extra credit

"Adapted from: "Handbook for Modifying the Regular Education Program to Meet the Needs of Students Achieving Below Grade Level!"