

ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

In order for schools to provide a free appropriate public education for students who are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, accommodations and modifications will likely be necessary. These may be implemented in special education classrooms or general education classes. There are numerous accommodations and modifications that schools can include in students' educational plans.

An **accommodation** is any technique that alters the academic setting or environment. A **modification** is any technique that alters the work required in some way that makes it different from the work required of other students in the same class. Some intervention tools might be seen as either an accommodation or a modification depending on the situation or on the implementation.

The Office of Civil Rights (1989) describes the following as examples of these accommodations and modifications:

1. A student with a long term, debilitating medical problem such as cancer, kidney disease, or diabetes may be given special consideration to accommodate the student's needs. For example, a student with cancer may need a class schedule that allows for rest and recuperation following chemotherapy.
2. A student with a learning disability that affects the ability to demonstrate knowledge on a standardized test or in certain testing situations may require modified test arrangements, such as oral testing or different testing formats.
3. A student with a learning disability or impaired vision that affects the ability to take notes in class may need a note taker or tape recorder.
4. A student with a chronic medical problem such as kidney or liver disease may have difficulty in walking distances or climbing stairs. This student may require handicapped parking or more time between classes to conserve his energy.
5. A student with diabetes, which adversely affects the body's ability to manufacture insulin, may need a class schedule that will accommodate the student's special needs.
6. An emotionally or mentally ill student may need an adjusted class schedule to allow time for regular counseling or therapy.
7. A student with epilepsy who has no control over seizures, and whose seizures are stimulated by stress or tension, may need accommodations for such stressful activities as lengthy academic testing or competitive endeavors in physical education.
8. A student with arthritis may have persistent pain, tenderness or swelling in one or more joints. This student may require a modified physical education program.

The following pages include additional examples of these accommodations and modifications:

Physical Environment Accommodations

1. Seat the student near the teacher.
2. Seat the student in an area free from distractions, out of main traffic areas.
3. Provide more space for students to store and use various instructional aids.
4. Allow the student additional break or rest time.
5. Establish learning centers and/or special interest centers.
6. Arrange classroom to facilitate small group, large group, and peer learning opportunities.
7. Ensure proper lighting.
8. Ensure proper desk height and seating comfort.
9. Store materials away from students.
10. Arrange classroom to ensure physical accessibility.
11. Provide modifications to any instructional equipment.
12. Arrange furniture to ensure that student traffic patterns do not promote disruptions.
13. Encourage teacher to move around in classroom for proximity control.
14. Ensure that various materials, supplies, and room compositions do not result in allergic reactions by student.

Textbook Modifications

1. Determine student-reading levels to identify students with potential problems with textbooks.
2. Determine level of difficulty of textbooks.
3. Preview textbook with students to orient them to textbook organization and learning tools.
4. Preview reading assignments with students to orient them to a topic and to budget reading and study time.
5. Introduce key vocabulary before a reading assignment.
6. Provide students with purposes for reading; create interest in assignment to motivate students.
7. Develop a study guide or study outline to direct learning from text. Provide students with questions to guide their reading.
8. Teach students to use graphic aids as a tool to being an active reader: charts, graphs, maps, diagrams, illustrations.
9. Use hi-liters to color-code information in textbooks: vocabulary, definitions, and facts.
10. Provide student the opportunity to read passage aloud or to subvocalize.
11. Structure postreading activities to increase retention of content and to relate information to overall unit.
12. Provide assistance for answering text-based questions.
13. Summarize and reduce textbook information to guide classroom discussions and independent reading.
14. Place students in pairs or cooperative learning groups to master textbook content.
15. Teach study strategies to improve retention of text material.
16. Reduce length of assignments given at a time.
17. Read textbook aloud or audiotape textbook content.
18. Substitute or supplement textbook reading assignments with direct experiences, film, videotapes and recordings, or computer programs.

Testing Modifications

1. Provide a variety of testing options to fit needs of students:
 - open-book tests
 - oral exams
 - paired or group test
 - offer extra credit activities
 - take-home tests
 - record answers on tape recorder or computer
 - project, demonstration, experiment
2. Use pre- and post-tests to determine progress.
3. Provide frequent opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and skills. Several short tests are preferable to one lengthy evaluation.
4. Consider testing environment; setting, lighting, noise, distractions.
5. Provide appropriate study guide and/or review opportunities.
6. Prepare tests that are typed or neatly printed, clearly legible, with ample space for responses. Do not crowd questions.
7. Provide some opportunities to practice testing procedures before taking a grade.
8. Monitor students during test.
9. Allow students to create own test.
10. Allow use of memory aids, cues, and references.
11. When appropriate, allow students to choose questions to answer.
12. For content tests, do not grade down for spelling, grammar, handwriting, or punctuation errors.
13. Provide an example on test, or before the test.
14. Read test directions and/or questions aloud to students.
15. Keep directions simple and direct.
16. Avoid too many different types of questions.
17. Use appropriate reading-ability level for questions.
18. Assess only critical information and only what was presented.
19. Consider alternate methods of grading: consider effort and participation, consider partial credit, create a modified grading scale.
20. Provide opportunity for retest if necessary. Give credit for improvement.
21. Avoid transferring answers to answer sheet.
22. Use consistent testing styles throughout year.
23. Consider/limit length of test and time pressure.
24. Take time to review corrected tests. Have students make corrections on tests or on a clean copy of the tests.
25. Mark the number of items correct on the paper instead of the number wrong.
26. On multiple choice items:
 - avoid ambiguous choices
 - allow student to circle correct response
 - limit number of choices
 - place choices vertically under question
27. On matching items:
 - place an equal number of choices in both columns
 - have one correct answer for each item - eliminates guessing
 - group questions in small sets of items, less than ten
 - place blank beside items in one column, rather than have student draw lines

- 28. On true/false items:
 - avoid stating questions in the negative
 - avoid trivial statements that do not assess student knowledge
- 29. On completion items:
 - blank size should match response
 - provide enough information in the question to facilitate recall
 - provide word banks
- 30. On essay items:
 - require only brief responses or outline form
 - provide appropriate space for anticipated answer length
 - provide answer check sheet that lists the components expected

Grading Modifications

Grade modifications must be determined on an individual basis. The system must be one that will challenge the student, yet make success possible.

1. Change weights assigned to the components of course requirements for the total grade. For example, daily class assignments, class projects, or class participation may count a higher percent than for the typical student.
2. Grade may be based on assignments that are developed by the regular and special needs teachers working together.
3. Utilize small group grading which pairs the disabled student with typical students.
4. Credit or points may be awarded to reinforce bringing materials to class and using those materials appropriately.
5. Assess only the key objective of the assignment; as student's skill level increases, add to the number of areas that are assessed with each activity.
6. Provide frequent opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and skills. Consider ways for students to choose from options for evaluation in certain areas or assignments.
7. Consider pass/fail for some activities where broad-based criteria are established.
8. Use mastery-level or criterion grading. Content is divided into sub-components. Students earn credit when their mastery of a certain skill reaches an acceptable level.
9. Provide multiple opportunities to review before taking a grade.
10. Consider alternate ways to evaluate student progress:

notebooks	oral presentations
art work	research projects
models	bulletin boards
exhibits	paired or panel discussions
posters	skits or role-plays
scrapbooks	demonstrations
checklists	teacher observations
self-assessment	share grades with teachers of other subjects on
puzzles	special projects or activities

Organizational Accommodations

1. From the beginning of the year, work with students to establish and maintain regular procedures for handling routine classroom tasks, such as:

beginning the day	moving from one subject to another
headings on written work	homework assignments
turning in work for grading	note-taking
test-taking	getting out materials for class use
returning work to students	
2. Establish a notebook organization policy. Be consistent with presentation of information to be kept in student notebooks. Provide a 3-hole punch for student use and pre-punch papers distributed to students that are to be inserted in their notebooks.
3. Conduct frequent checks of notebooks, with rewards for student who maintain well-organized and complete notebooks.
4. Include organizational skills in the subject curriculum.
 - ❖ Develop study skills such as alphabetizing, using a dictionary, index, table of contents
 - ❖ Make “rough-drafts” for major assignments.
 - ❖ Help students use paper space appropriately, with adequate margins and space between information, such as math problems.
5. Encourage lone-range planning skills by giving some assignments several days or a week ahead of time.
6. Allow students a few minutes at the end of the period to put materials away properly and review the day.
7. Help students develop a sense of time by using a posted schedule and timer or clock.
8. Reduce distractions – visual and oral

Instructional Materials Accommodations

1. Use large print materials for low vision students.
2. Use Braille for students who cannot use print.
3. Use high interest, low vocabulary reading materials.
4. Use highlighted or color-coded materials.
5. Use multi-sensory materials.
6. Tape record reading materials, lessons, and assignments.
7. Allow students to use calculators.
8. Use concrete manipulative materials.
9. Have spell-check capabilities available for students.
10. Allow students to have copies of teacher’s lecture notes and class plans
11. Shorten assignments.
12. Use index card, pencil, and/or window card for keeping place.

Reading Modifications

1. Shorten amount of required reading; provide summary or abridged version of selection.
2. Provide highlighted material.
3. Provide for oral presentation of reading selection, such as tape recording, peer or parent to read aloud.
4. Allow extra time for reading.
5. Provide opportunity for student to read aloud or to subvocalize.
6. Provide pre-reading activities to enhance comprehension, such as clear presentation of objective of activity, pre-teach vocabulary, study guides, motivational activities to build interest.
7. Oral reading in front of group should be optional. Provide alternative methods for student to contribute to the group, such as role playing or dramatizing.
8. Use a variety of visual and manipulative aids to provide concrete experiences related to reading selection.
9. Provide experience before and after reading as a frame of reference for new concepts.
Draw a parallel to a situation that the student might have previously experienced in problem solving.
10. Directly and specifically point out relationships.
11. Use color-coding or other means to mark text to show relationship between ideas.

Written Language Modifications

1. Provide a sample of finished writing assignment so student will know how to organize the different parts.
2. Have student dictate work to someone else, then have him copy it himself, if appropriate.
3. Allow more time.
4. Shorten the written assignment: prepare outline or summary.
5. Transform written material into graphic material: map, illustration, chart.
6. Allow oral responses, such as spelling tests.
7. Accept alternate forms of reports or other written assignments:
 - oral or tape-recorded presentations
 - art project – collage, cartoon, sculpture, diorama, photographic essay
 - review and presentation of video appropriate to assignment
 - showcase exhibits
 - panel discussion or debate
8. Use mnemonic devices.
9. Teach vocabulary words in context, not as an isolated list.
10. Provide practice using story starters or open-ended stories.
11. Have students make flashcards and highlight the difficult spots of the words.
12. Give a recognition level spelling test: ask student to circle correct word from 3 or 4 choices.
13. Avoid penalizing for handwriting or spelling on content assignments.
14. Provide visual aids for vocabulary words, usage rules, or other specific information:
 - displays, bulletin boards, mobiles, study cards, etc.
15. Provide a tactile/kinesthetic aid for spelling.
16. Reduce or omit assignments requiring copying.
17. Encourage shared note-taking.
18. Allow use of tape recorder, typewriter, or computer.

Math Modifications

1. Assign fewer problems, only enough practice to ensure understanding or to assess knowledge.
2. Allow extended time to complete calculations.
3. Space problems far enough apart to allow room for calculations and to reduce distractibility.
4. Provide adequate examples.
5. Group similar problems – works for students who have difficulty paying attention to process sign changes.
6. Use graphic aids to illustrate concept and to assess proficiency.
7. Use computational aids – manipulatives, models, maps, blocks, number lines, abacus, charts.
8. Use graph paper to aid students in lining up problems accurately.
9. Score according to the number correct out of the number attempted to give slower working students credit for accuracy and effort.
10. Color code or underline important words or symbols in problems that afford clues.
11. Word story problems so that the poor reader is graded on his math ability rather than reading ability.
12. Provide hints, clues, or reminders on student test or worksheet.
13. Provide student with opportunity to “teach” someone else. Allows him an opportunity to clarify correct procedures.

Physical Education Modifications

1. Modify activity; as student improves, the skill level expected becomes slightly more difficult.
 - fewer repetitions
 - shorter distance
 - lower goal
 - walking instead of running
 - wider or lighter bats or racquets
 - larger or smaller ball, as appropriate
2. Simplify activity in beginning, so fewer skills and rules are needed.
3. Focus on one skill at a time at first.
4. Provide a variety of equipment, to meet skill levels of all students.
5. Allow any appropriate garments rather than a standard uniform for students who feel self-conscious in uniform.
6. Be aware of students in distress; modify activity as needed.
7. Pair student with another who knows the activity and can perform well for assistance.
8. Use visual aids (diagrams, charts, role-playing) to teach skill sequence.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLES

Visual Learners:

1. Use flash cards printed in bold bright colors
2. Have student close eyes and visualize words or information in his head
3. Provide visual clues on chalkboard for all verbal directions.
4. Give student written directions in assignments
5. Allow students to read information needed for assignments rather than relying on oral presentations.
6. Have visual learners read to an auditory learner.
7. Allow written reports or projects in place of oral presentations.
8. Have student outline information.
9. Additionally provide:

Using the VCR	Diagrams on the chalkboard
Overhead projector	Bulletin boards
Computer software	Posters and task cards
Globes and maps	Charts or filmstrips
Books and pictures	

Auditory Learner:

1. Give verbal as well as written directions
2. Tape important reading materials
3. Give student oral rather written tests
4. Use published audio tapes with the student
5. Have student drill aloud to himself or another student
6. Tape stories or math facts and replay as needed
7. Additionally have students engage in:

Oral reports	Taping stories
Taping stories or math facts and replay as needed	Plays, choral reading, singing
One to one interviews	Spelling bee
Group discussion	Oral multiplication speed drills

Kinesthetic Learners:

1. Using classroom demonstrations when possible
2. Building models instead of writing reports
3. Using role-play or simulations
4. Teach the student to take notes
5. Allow student to draw or doodle while listening
6. Using manipulative objects
7. Use individual chalkboards for problems
8. Additional:

Manipulative vocabulary games
Construction projects with clay, clothes pins, etc.
Individual chalkboards for problems
Self-correcting materials
Manipulatives for math skills

