

Use of Accommodations

Supporting Student Achievement Through Appropriate Use of Accommodations

Francis Stetson, during the Inclusive Practices Conference, spoke at length about the differences between Accommodations and Modifications within the continuum of supports for students. Understanding these differences, their hierarchy, and when to appropriately choose them is critical to supporting academic excellence for any student who requires alternative access to grade level material. This week we will focus on accommodations and next week we will review modifications.

An accommodation is a change made to HOW content is presented to ensure students can access grade level content and demonstrate their knowledge of the material using an alternative method. This level of support is less restrictive than a modification, and should be an initial consideration for any student in need. There are four types of accommodation: Presentation, Response, Timing/Scheduling and Setting. Below are examples of these accommodation types.

- Presentation Accommodation: Reduce the readability level of an assigned reading while ensuring all of the concepts and ideas are covered. This accommodation can be accomplished using [Newsela](#) to allow students to adjust the reading level appropriately for their needs.
- Response Accommodation: Allow a student struggling with handwriting or typing to orally respond using a voice recorder on the computer, then share the recording with you. All student computers have Sound Recorder or [Audacity](#) under the Start menu to easily and quickly create an audio file and email them to the teacher. Once the student has demonstrated his knowledge, he can listen to the recording to practice writing and typing some of the content.
- Timing/Scheduling: Allow a student who struggles with completing all assigned work during one sitting short structured but individualized movement breaks between tasks. [S'cool Moves](#) has excellent intervention strategies to help keep these activities structured and successful so students return to the task at hand.
- Setting: Support students by grouping them into small groups to review lesson vocabulary prior to the whole class lesson. Some students may benefit from vocabulary in a picture, wordbank, Braille or other alternative format prior to the whole group lesson.

Use of Modifications

Supporting Student Achievement Through Appropriate Use of Modifications

Last week we talked about the four *accommodation types* used to support the differentiation needs of any student: Presentation, Response, Timing/Scheduling and Setting. We noted that accommodations are a change in HOW content is presented to ensure students can access and demonstrate grade level subjects and knowledge. We also noted that accommodations are less restrictive than curricular modifications. So now let's talk more about the more restrictive support of curricular modifications.

While accommodations are a change in HOW the teaching is done, a modification is a change in WHAT the student is expected to learn or demonstrate. Examples of curricular modifications are reducing the number of grade level standards a student is taught, presenting material at a grade level below their assigned grade, or testing a student's knowledge in only a few subjects. Dr. Francis Stetson, a national leader in inclusive practices, discusses that curricular modifications can be an appropriate support for

students with significant disabilities who need these changes in WHAT is taught to them. However, she mentions, the use of modifications should be a rare occurrence, especially for learning disabled students, as this limits the content and standards knowledge a student learns. This may result in a student falling further behind in their education. Instead, accommodate and differentiate for their needs, by presenting and assessing grade level content.

An excellent webinar discussing these differences, and much more, is [5 Easy Ways to Fail in Education](#). At minute 26, she specifically discusses the differences between accommodations and modifications, but spend the time to listen to this whole exceptional webinar by Dr. Francis Stetson.