

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CLASSROOM TESTING OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS

Students with disabilities need some form of instruction on test taking. The teacher should develop a lesson plan for teaching test taking skills and preparation.

Make sure that the directions are understood . Slowly read them aloud and repeat them several times if needed. A student who is distracted easily may not hear or remember everything the teacher is saying.

In order to ensure that the student is clear about the directions and the test in general, **have the individual student repeat and explain the directions after they have been given.**

The way that a test is presented to a student with disabilities may need to be altered from the standard test form given to the rest of the students. Depending on the students' disability the test may need to be given in Braille or sign language presentation may be necessary.

If a student cannot read on their reading level and speed is significantly stunted, accommodations should be made. The test can be read to the student in a way that is comparable to the normal test delivery. These types of accommodations should only be made when appropriate. If the child were given a test to measure reading comprehension then this would not be a suitable adaptation.

If the student with a disability cannot write or if their handwriting is illegible then certain devices should assist the child. These could include: a tape recorder, word processor, and magnification or amplification devices.

If the student with a disability has physical and sensory impairments it may be necessary to aid their test responses. If a student cannot successfully copy the answers from an original source onto a response form, they should be allowed to mark answers directly on the test booklet. This should be applicable even if it breaks standardized procedure.

If the student is physically unable to write the answer or fill in a multiple choice bubble then the teacher should provide an alternate response pattern. The child could respond verbally, point to the answer, or use assistive technology to successfully complete the testing.

To focus their attention and accommodate for sensory deficits of disabled students, it may be necessary to give them an alternate version of the test. Putting the text or bubbles from multiple-choice tests in larger print will help the child.

To keep students with disabilities interested in continuing on the test, provide visual or graphic cues to prompt a change in directions or change in subject area. Be sure to check the student's progress during the testing to make sure that they have understood a change in the format or directions.

Incorporating motivational strategies into test administration procedures will aid the teacher in helping students stay on task. The teacher could give positive comments or allow the student to choose a specified number of items to complete.

Time constraints are often a problem in testing students with disabilities. **In order to aid a child who has trouble reading, fatigues quickly, and has attention problems it may be necessary to give the child an extended or unlimited time frame to finish the test.**

Students who cannot focus their attention for a long period of time struggle to stay on task when being tested. In order to alleviate this problem, **it is necessary to give the child frequent breaks during the test administration.**

Scheduling changes to accommodate the child may be necessary. If the child cannot finish the exam with an extended or unlimited time adjustment then it may be necessary to administer the test over several days.

The specific time frame in which the testing occurs may have a profound effect on how well the child performs. The scheduling of the exam may have to be at a certain time of the day in order to accommodate the child with the disability. This could be at a time when the child has received his or her medication or when they are most alert and cooperative.

If the student with a disability remains in the general education classroom during testing then they should receive preferential seating close to the teacher. This will reduce distractions and the teacher can intervene quickly if the student becomes off-task.

Students with disabilities often have a difficult time concentrating on tests when they are in the general education classroom. **They may need to take the test individually, like in a quiet study carrel, in order to successfully complete the exam.**

Students may perform better on tests if they are given in a different setting.

Administering the test to a small group of students away from the rest of the class may be a way to reduce test anxiety and distracting behaviors.

Students with disabilities may need an altogether separate room to focus better, limit their distracting behaviors, and because of other needed accommodations.

These accommodations could include special technology, lighting, or teacher prompting.

If it appears that there is no possible way that the disabled child can take an exam in any educational setting, other accommodations should be made. The teacher should

consider take home exams or projects that measure similar skills. If the child is unable to participate in statewide testing, an alternate assessment is required.

Additional Resources:

Strein, W. (1997). Grades and grading practices. In G.G. Bear & K.M. Minke, Children's needs II: Development, problems, and alternatives. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Thurlow, M., House, A., Scott, D., & Ysseldyke, J. (2000). Students with disabilities in large scale assessments: State participation and accommodation policies. *Journal of Special Education, 34*, 154-163.

Warger, Eavy, & Associates. (2000). *Making assessment accommodations: A toolkit for Educators*. Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.

<http://education.umn.edu/NCEO/OnlinePubs/MdKy5.html>: Accommodations, Modifications, and Alternates for Instructions and Assessment.

<http://education.umn.edu/NCEO/OnlinePubs/Technical26.html>: Assessment Accommodations Research.

http://ldonline.org/ld_indepth/teaching_tips.html: Testing and Evaluation Tips.

www.Ideapractices.org: Practices Consistent with IDEA.

Contributor:

Jennifer Dugan