

## **ACCOMMODATION OR MODIFICATION?**

Choosing between an accommodation OR a modification is a decision critical for future educational choices.

**Note Well: *Appropriate accommodations should be viewed as part of the normal cycle of teaching and testing—never reserved ONLY for periods of assessment.***

## **ACCOMMODATION**

- Provision of services that ensure equal access to a student with a learning disability
  - Example: extended exam time for a student who has slow processing speed that affects academic fluency (processes information more slowly than students without a learning disability)
- Adjustments that enable a student to demonstrate knowledge-skills-abilities without lowering learning or performance expectations and without changing the complexity of the target skill being taught or test construct being measured
  - Example: provision of text in audio-format when CONTENT KNOWLEDGE is target skill being measured (e.g., history, biology, literature)
- Allowed for both testing and instruction
- Do not change skills being taught or tested
- Adjustment made to ensure that students with special needs (e.g., students with specific learning disability, including dyslexia, or other disability) can participate fully in school and demonstrate their learning without being impeded by their disability
- Alternative way of TEACHING and/or MEASUREMENT of knowledge-skills-abilities.
  - Classroom Accommodations make it possible for students to learn, help them to participate fully in classroom instruction, and enable them to demonstrate their learning.
  - Assessment Accommodations make it possible for students to demonstrate what they have learned in ways that bypass or circumvent the features of their disability (e.g., *extended time*)
- Testing accommodations are changes in assessment materials or procedures that enable students to participate so that their abilities—not their disabilities—are being tested.
- Without accommodations, an assessment may not accurately measure the knowledge and skills of a student with a learning disability such as dyslexia.
- An accommodation does NOT change item or test validity.
- *Under the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA, states must have accommodation guidelines for assessments and report the number of students using accommodations during state and district assessments.*

## **MODIFICATION**

- Provision of services that change the nature of a task
  - Example: use of a calculator on a test of math facts accuracy
- Allowed for both testing and instruction
- Change nature of task or target skill being taught or tested
  - Example: provision of a reader or text in audio-format when READING COMPREHENSION is target skill being measured
- ***If validity of a test item or a test (or instruction) is affected, the change is a modification—not an accommodation.***

<b>MODIFICATIONS Categories and Examples</b>	
<b><u>Assignment Modifications</u></b>	<b><u>Curriculum Modifications</u></b>
Complete different homework problems requiring lower level of math knowledge-skill than peers	Learn different information <i>(continuing to work on multiplication while class moves on to fractions)</i>
Write shorter essays	Use of lower standard of assessment
<b>www.understood.org</b>	

- \* Formal decisions about accommodations should be made by a student's IEP team.
- \* Accommodations should be the same or similar for classroom instruction, classroom tests, and state/district tests.
- \* However, some accommodations are only permitted during instruction and cannot be used on state/district assessments.
- \* Accommodations in students' IEPs and 504 plans will be available on Common Core tests.

### **Universal (CCSS) Accommodations for grades 3-8 Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium [SBAC]**

- \* **What kinds of supports will be available during the SBAC assessments?**
  - ◎ **SBAC is creating several universal tools and supports available to all students:**
    - Magnify the text.
    - Repeat instructions.
    - Take notes on a digital notepad.
    - Use scratch paper.
    - Use spell-check software.
    - Use a highlighter.

\* **Students with disabilities [SWD] will receive many of the same accommodations for statewide testing that are outlined in their IEP or 504 plan for the classroom:**

- ⊙ Read aloud or text-to-speech—with the student in a private setting or using headphones
- ⊙ Speech-to-text dictation
- ⊙ Closed captioning
- ⊙ Braille
- ⊙ American Sign Language
- ⊙ Calculator

<b>TYPES OF ACCOMMODATIONS</b>
* <b><u>Presentation Accommodations</u></b> allow students <b><u>to access information</u></b> in ways that do not require them to visually read standard print. These <b><u>alternate modes of access</u></b> are auditory, multi-sensory, tactile, and visual.
* <b><u>Response Accommodations</u></b> allow students <b><u>to complete</u></b> activities, assignments and tests in <b><u>different ways</u></b> (e.g., to solve or organize problems using some type <b><u>of assistive device or organizer</u></b> ).
* <b><u>Timing/Scheduling Accommodations</u></b> increase the allowable <b><u>length of time</u></b> to complete a test or assignment and <b><u>may also change the way the time is organized</u></b> .
* <b><u>Setting Accommodations</u></b> change the <b><u>location</u></b> in which a test or assignment is given or the <b><u>conditions</u></b> of the assessment setting.

<b>ACCOMMODATIONS</b>	
<b><u>Categories and Examples—Presentation-Teaching and Equipment-Material</u></b>	
<b><u>Presentation—Teaching Accommodations</u></b>	<b><u>Equipment—Material Accommodations</u></b>
* Repetition of Directions	* Calculator
* Reading Aloud	* Speech-to-Text Software
* Revised Answer Sheet	* Text-to-Speech Software
* Text/Instructions in Audio-Format	* Electronic dictionary
* Larger Print	* Spelling Checker
* Fewer Items per Page	* Grammar Check
* Visual Prompts or Cues (e.g., <i>arrow pointing on page</i> )	
* Highlighted Text	<a href="http://www.understood.org">www.understood.org</a>

<b>ACCOMMODATIONS</b>	
<b><u>Categories and Examples—Response and Setting</u></b>	
<b><u>Response</u></b> Accommodations	<b><u>Setting</u></b> Accommodations
* <b>Mark answers in test book instead of on separate answer sheet</b>	* <b>Individual or small group</b>
* <b>Answer questions orally instead of in writing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊙ Dictate to scribe</li> <li>⊙ Capture oral responses on audio-recorder</li> </ul>	* <b>Reduce visual and/or auditory distractions (e.g., separate desk or location within classroom—“private” office)</b>
* <b><u>Point</u> to response choices</b>	* <b>Distraction-free setting (separate room)</b>
* <b>Type (keyboard) response</b>	* <b>Alternative furniture arrangement (e.g., facing front → teacher for whole group lessons vs block of tables for small group work)</b>
<b><u>www.understood.org</u></b>	

<b>ACCOMMODATIONS</b>	
<b><u>Categories and Examples—Timing-Scheduling—Organizational</u></b>	
<b><u>Timing-Scheduling</u></b> Accommodations	<b><u>Organizational</u></b> Accommodations
* <b>Flexible scheduling (e.g., several sessions vs one)</b>	* <b>Timer</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊙ Behavior management</li> <li>⊙ Time management</li> </ul>
* <b>Extended time</b>	* <b>Highlighter to mark text</b>
* <b><u>Allowing for more frequent breaks (as appropriate)</u></b>	* <b>Teach S to use planner to coordinate assignments</b>
* <b>Changing order of tasks or subtests</b>	* <b>Study skills instruction</b>
<b><u>www.understood.org</u></b>	

<b>ACCOMMODATIONS</b>	
<b><u>Choosing Accommodations Wisely and Purposefully</u></b>	
*	<b>Match the accommodation with the student's need.</b>
*	<b>Decide what is needed to ensure that S is on equal footing with those who do not have a disability:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊙ Provide <u>evidence</u> to support accommodation requests-choices.</li> <li>⊙ Are the accommodations <u>linked directly to the S's functional limitations</u>?</li> </ul>
<b><i>Answers may not be the same for instruction and assess</i></b>	
*	<b>Not every student needs, or benefits from, extended time.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊙ Extended time gives students <u>time to use learned strategies</u>.</li> <li>⊙ Extra time alone rarely improves performance for students with LD—the same as for students without LD.</li> </ul>
*	<b>Practice is the key to mastery.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊙ Accommodations are only helpful if the student has had <u>sufficient practice</u> and <u>KNOWS HOW to use them effectively</u>.</li> <li>⊙ Accommodations should be integrated into classroom practice before use is expected in assessment situations.</li> </ul>

<b>TEACHING STRATEGIES</b>	
<b>LEARNING STRATEGIES</b>	
*	<b>Teaching Strategies</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊙ Paraphrasing during lectures</li> <li>⊙ Reading aloud</li> <li>⊙ Providing an outline to students for note-taking</li> </ul>
*	<b>Learning Strategies</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊙ Visualization</li> <li>⊙ Retelling as soon as possible after a lecture</li> <li>⊙ Putting new learning into own words asap after class—talking about learning</li> <li>⊙ Organizing a study group for discussion (practice)</li> </ul>

**A Few Alternatives for Increasing  
Accessibility within the Classroom...**

- \* **Vary modality of presentation.**
- \* **Enunciate clearly.**
- \* **Speak at a slower pace, emphasizing key components of content.**
- \* **Break task down into smaller chunks or more steps.**
- \* **MODEL steps of a process or assignment—while verbalizing.**
- \* **Shorten instructions and/or assignments.**
- \* **Reduce the length of an exam.**
- \* **Present instructions in clearly defined steps.**
- \* **Repeat instructions more than one time.**
- \* **Provide oral instructions in written form or on website.**
  - ⊙ **Assignments, schedules, rules/guidelines, lecture outlines**
- \* **Use visuals to reinforce auditory presentation—when possible.**
- \* **Allow use of manipulatives.**
- \* **Provide extra time for oral, as well as written responses.**
  - ⊙ **Allow time for slow processors to formulate/express verbal responses.**
- \* **Allow use of videotapes or books in audio-format.**
- \* **Allow oral responses to complex essay questions instead of, or in addition to, written responses.**
- \* **When appropriate, give open book exams.**
- \* **Provide systematic, sequential study guides for test prep.**
- \* **Provide immediate positive reinforcement for appropriate response—as well as constructive correction to incorrect response.**
- \* **Return corrected written assignments as soon as possible to ensure that feedback is of value to students.**
- \* **Take time to explicitly connect new concepts to previously learned information and concepts.**
- \* **Follow initial presentation of new concepts with carefully guided practice.**
- \* **Provide SUFFICIENT repetition and guided practice.**

<b>College Students and Self-Advocacy How to Become an Effective Self-Advocate</b>	
*	<b>Become the expert on <u>your</u> learning disability (e.g., dyslexia).</b>
*	<b>Know your <u>strengths</u> as well as your <u>challenges</u>.</b>
*	<b>Practice verbalizing both!</b>
*	<b>Knowledge allows you to communicate your strengths and needs while keeping your challenges in constructive perspective.</b>
*	<b>You cannot successfully advocate for yourself if you can't explain what is interfering with your learning.</b>
*	<b>List important accommodations that you need—and why.</b>
*	<b>SELF-ADVOCATES CHOOSE TO BECOME RESPONSIBLE FOR EDUCATING THEMSELVES.</b>
*	<b>Educating yourself will strengthen confidence.</b>
*	<b>Confidence encourages <u>productive</u> risk-taking.</b>

<b>Paths to Success for Students with Dyslexia</b>	
*	<b>Specialized instruction is the path to academic achievement—<u>not a crutch</u>.</b>
*	<b>Accommodations <u>level the playing field</u> for students with dyslexia and other learning disabilities; they do <u>not</u> give an unfair advantage.</b>
*	<b>As either a parent or a teacher, do NOT assume a student learns the same way you do.</b>
*	<b><u>Always keep the goal in mind</u>—and plan both instruction, assessment, and accommodations accordingly.</b>

<b>HELPFUL RESOURCES</b>	
*	<b>ADA-Americans with Disabilities Act—Testing Accommodations</b> [ <a href="https://www.ada.gov/regs2014/testing_accommodations.pdf">https://www.ada.gov/regs2014/testing_accommodations.pdf</a> ]
*	<b>National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD): Understood</b> [ <a href="https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/treatments-approaches/educational-strategies/accommodations-what-they-are-and-how-they-work">https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/treatments-approaches/educational-strategies/accommodations-what-they-are-and-how-they-work</a> ]
*	<b>Accommodations, Modifications, and Alternate Assessments: How They Affect Instruction and Assessment</b> [ <a href="http://www.greatschools.net/cgi-bin/showarticle/2306">http://www.greatschools.net/cgi-bin/showarticle/2306</a> ]
*	<b>Accommodations for Students with Disabilities</b> [ <a href="http://www.cehd.umn.edu/NCEO/TopicAreas/Accommodations/Accomtopic.htm">http://www.cehd.umn.edu/NCEO/TopicAreas/Accommodations/Accomtopic.htm</a> ]
*	<b>High-Stakes Assessment (Teaching LD)</b> [ <a href="http://www.dldcec.org/ld_resources/alerts/4.htm">http://www.dldcec.org/ld_resources/alerts/4.htm</a> ]
*	<b>Forum on Accommodations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Critical Considerations for Students with Disabilities.</b> Joint Publication of National Center on Educational Outcomes. [ <i>The Center is supported through a Cooperative Agreement (#H326G050007) with the Research to Practice Division, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education.</i> ]
*	<b>Test Access and Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (New York)</b> [ <a href="http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/testaccess/policyguide.htm">http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/testaccess/policyguide.htm</a> ]

Please note that this is not a comprehensive list of accommodations and modifications. It is a sampling of options. It is up to you and your child’s team to explore and to determine the best match for your student.

**Accommodations:**

**Homework:**

- Reduced homework
- Allow student to dictate answers
- Allow typewritten work
- Allow extended time

**Math:**

- Use of a Calculator
- Provide graph paper
- Break assignments into smaller steps



**Reading:**

Access to audiobooks

Access to text-to-speech software

Do not call on student to participate in oral reading (unless student volunteers)

Allow extra time for reading assignments

**Spelling:**

Reduce spelling lists

Access to spellcheck

Access to word prediction

Do not take off points for spelling errors

**Testing:**

Provide extra time

Allow student to give oral answers

Quiet testing area

**Writing:**

Access to a scribe

Access to speech-to-text software

Provide written and/or digital copies of notes

Minimize copying from board

Provide graphic organizers

Reduce written work

***(Sources: Nancy Cushen White, Ed.D. Clinical Professor—Pediatrics-Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine-UCSF /UCSF Dyslexia Research Center and Understood.Org)***