

## ADAPTATION/MODIFICATION OPTIONS: LEVELS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Clearly, with more and more disabled students moving back into the regular classroom, adaptations and modifications in curriculum and classroom activities and materials are becoming a necessity. Knowing where to start in the process of choosing appropriate adaptations, modifications, and accommodations—and then implementing them in the regular classroom—is rather involved.

With the decision to educate a special needs student in the regular classroom comes the need to put into place the supports and services that will make that placement a success. Simply saying that adaptations, modifications, and accommodations need to be made gives the teachers and other staff members involved little or no indication of the nature of the needed changes. Three key elements in the process are:

- Information on the individual student.
- Information on activity or subject content expectations (setting demands): and
- Options available for adaptations, modifications, and accommodations.

Student areas of disability, strengths, and needs should be viewed alongside specifics on the expectations for the activity or subject content. Conventional wisdom holds that the special educator should provide the team student information and the regular classroom teacher should provide the team with activity or content setting demands. Through a process of comparison, the most effective method of accommodation should emerge.

Setting demands involve areas basic to the organization and smooth running of a classroom. Areas to consider are teacher expectations, classroom organization, student responsibilities, instructional materials and techniques, instructional groupings, and assessment techniques. A broad way of thinking about setting demands is that they are the requirements for “making it” successfully through an activity or subject content. The following questions may be helpful in clarifying the setting demands.

- How are assignments given to students?
- What are expected classroom procedures? (How do students know what to do next?)
- What are considered to be student responsibilities during activities or instruction?
- What grouping arrangements are made for instruction, if any?
- What are the rules for appropriate behavior?
- What are the consequences for following or not following rules?
- How are grades assigned?
- Will the same content and outcomes be required of all students?
- Will content be presented in the same manner to all students?
- What materials will be used for practice and reinforcement?
- What type of instructional grouping will be used for practice or reinforcement?
- Will alternative practice or reinforcement be provided?
- How and when will content be tested or activities assessed?

Setting demands can be viewed in the context of “class” requirements and “activity” requirements. The team defining a student’s needs may want to look at one or the other, or both. This decision should be based on the types of modifications—individual activities or broader class or course adaptations.

The third key element is the options available for adaptations, modifications, or accommodations. The remainder of this section is given to an exploration of the wide range of options available for the delivery of services and activities for supporting special needs students in the regular classroom.