Making Response Accommodations
Est. Time: 1 Hour

Objective

Use a set of guiding questions to identify response accommodations for a student with a disability based on her individual strengths and needs.

Overview

Students with disabilities often encounter barriers or challenges when accessing the general education curriculum. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require that educators address these barriers by providing appropriate accommodations. Careful consideration of a student's strengths and needs can help guide the identification and selection of instructional and testing accommodations.

An *accommodation* is a change to instructional or testing procedures or materials that allows a student to fully access the information and to accurately demonstrate knowledge. It does not change the expectations of learning or the requirements of the task. Instructional and testing accommodations are generally grouped into four categories:

- Presentation
- Response
- Setting
- Timing and Scheduling

This activity will focus on *response accommodations*, which allow a student with a disability to complete instructional assignments or assessments through ways other than typical verbal or written responses. These accommodations change the way that a student demonstrates learning, knowledge, or the ability to perform a skill. The following table provides examples of some common response accommodations.

Response Accommodations	
Common Barrier	**Accommodation Examples**
Verbal communication	- Type responses on a tablet or computer - Visuals or gestures - Alternate modes of communication (e.g., written, augmentative alternative communication device, sign language)
Written expression (e.g., putting thoughts on paper, organizing information)	- Speech-to-text software - Graphic organizers - Templates (e.g., for outlines, paragraphs, essays) - Checklists

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Response Accommodations	
Common Barrier	Accommodation Examples
Oral expression (e.g., articulation, finding words) or speaking in front of a group	• Alternate response mode (e.g., written report) • Increased wait time • Visuals (e.g., cue cards) • Circling or pointing at answers
Spelling, grammar, and punctuation	• Computer/word-processing program with spell-checking feature • Computer/word-processing program with grammar-checking feature
Organizing information	• Graphic organizers • Templates (e.g., format to write a friendly letter, guide to write a five-paragraph essay)
Mathematics computation	• Calculator • Abacus • Concrete objects or manipulatives • Sheet of basic math facts
Visual-spatial tasks	• Graph paper to help students align numbers when writing mathematics problems • Writing answers in a test booklet instead of on a bubble sheet (this does not require the student to solve the problem in a booklet and then transfer it to a separate sheet)
Handwriting	• Scribe • Computer • Braille writer • Audio record responses • Speech-to-text (or voice-recognition) software • Alternate response mode (e.g., oral response) • Finger spacer • Handwriting guide

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Response Accommodations	
Common Barrier	Accommodation Examples
Staying focused	• Writing answers in a test booklet instead of on a bubble sheet (this does not require the student to solve the problem in a booklet and then transfer it to a separate sheet) • Graphic organizers • Monitor understanding of directions (e.g., student restates directions)
Dexterity or muscle control (e.g., difficulty holding a pencil, difficulty keeping papers in place)	• Scribe • Word-processing program • Text-to-speech software • Audio record responses • Pencil grip • Paper stabilizer (i.e., non-slip material to keep paper from moving) • Word-prediction software
Hearing	• Interpreter • Scribe

Note: Although this table highlights common examples of response accommodations, it is by no means an exhaustive list.

Activity

Identify a response accommodation for a student with a disability based on his or her individual strengths and needs. Select one of the options below to begin.

Option 1: Identify a student with a disability in your classroom. To preserve the anonymity of your student, be sure to use only her first name or an alias.

1. Describe the student you selected, making sure to include:

   • Information about the student's age, gender, disability, and first language
   • The student's strengths (list a minimum of three)
   • The student's barrier(s)

2. Complete the attached Response Accommodations Worksheet.

3. Select one presentation accommodation from the Response Accommodations Worksheet.

   • Identify the accommodation you selected and explain how it will address the student's barrier(s).
   • Provide an example of how you would implement this accommodation.

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Option 2: If you are not currently teaching, use the student in the scenario below to complete this activity.

Mason is an energetic 10-year-old boy who speaks English. Typically, he gets along with his peers and is well-liked by his classmates. Because he is quite creative and is fascinated by objects with moving parts, he is actively involved in the robotics club. Although Mason is very bright, he has a learning disability and ADHD. Mason has difficulty processing, retaining, and recalling information. He also has some difficulty organizing materials and keeping up with school supplies. It is quite common for him to complete his homework but then misplace it before he has a chance to turn it in. Mason often becomes easily distracted by what is going on around him and has difficulty staying focused long enough to complete his work.

1. Complete the attached Response Accommodations Worksheet.

2. Select one response accommodation from the Response Accommodations Worksheet.

- Identify the accommodation you selected and explain how it will address the student's barrier(s).
- Provide an example of how you would implement this accommodation.

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Response Accommodations Worksheet

Directions: This worksheet should be completed for an individual student. Read through each item in the left-hand column and determine whether it is a barrier for the student. If it is, circle "Yes." If not, circle "No." For each item with a "Yes," refer to the Response Accommodations table above and record one or two accommodations in the third column to address the student's barrier(s).

Response Accommodations		
Barrier	Circle One	If "Yes," list 1–2 accommodations.
Verbal communication	Yes No	
Written expression (e.g., putting thoughts on paper, organizing information)	Yes No	
Oral expression (e.g., articulation, finding words) or speaking in front of a group	Yes No	
Spelling, grammar, and punctuation	Yes No	
Organizing information	Yes No	
Mathematics computation	Yes No	
Visual-spatial tasks	Yes No	
Handwriting	Yes No	
Staying focused	Yes No	
Dexterity or muscle control (e.g., difficulty holding a pencil, difficulty keeping papers in place)	Yes No	
Hearing	Yes No	

Note: This worksheet was developed specifically for this activity. It is not a standard form.