AgriLIFE EXTENSION
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Accommodations and Modifications in CTE Classroom Instruction: Strategies that Work

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Introduction

The purpose of this module is to assist CTE teachers as they participate in the educational process of teaching students with disabilities. This tip sheet will help you as a quick reference for strategies that work with your students who have learning disabilities or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

Learning Disabilities

A learning disability (LD) is a neurological disorder that affects the brain's ability to receive, process, store and respond to information. The term "learning disability" is used to describe the seemingly unexplained difficulty a person of at least average intelligence has in acquiring basic academic skills. These skills are essential for success at school and work, and for coping with life in general. LD is not a single disorder. It is a term that refers to a group of disorders. Learning disabilities can affect a person's ability in the areas of: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and mathematics (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2009).

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common childhood disorders and can continue through adolescence and adulthood.

There are three different types of ADHD, including:

- combined ADHD (the most common type), which involves all of the symptoms;

- inattentive ADHD (previously known as ADD), which is marked by impaired attention and concentration; and

- hyperactive-impulsive ADHD, which is marked by hyperactivity without inattentiveness.

The inattentive type of ADHD shows signs that include:

- inability to pay attention to details or a tendency to make careless errors in schoolwork or other activities;
- difficulty with sustained attention in tasks or play activities;
- apparent listening problems;
- difficulty following instructions;
- problems with organization;
- avoidance or dislike of tasks that require mental effort;
- tendency to lose things like toys, notebooks, or homework;
- distractibility; and
- forgetfulness in daily activities.

The hyperactive-impulsive type of ADHD shows symptoms such as:

- fidgeting or squirming,
- difficulty remaining seated,
- excessive running or climbing,
- difficulty playing quietly,
- always seeming to be "on the go,"
- excessive talking,
- blurting out answers before hearing the full question,
- difficulty waiting for a turn or in line, and
- problems with interrupting or intruding

The combined type of ADHD involves a combination of the other two types and is the most common (National Institute of Mental Health, 2009).

Accommodations

Accommodations are practices and procedures that provide equitable access during instruction and assessments for students with disabilities, special needs, or eligible English language learners who need linguistic accommodations. Accommodations are intended to reduce or eliminate the effects of a disability or limitation but not to reduce learning expectations. In addition, a student may have a temporary disabling condition (e.g., a broken arm or lost eye glasses), which may require the use of an accommodation (Texas Education Agency, 2009). You can consider accommodations as assisting the student in meeting the same goals as all other students in the classroom.

Some examples are:
- use of interpreter for instruction,
- use of Braille or large print text,
- dictate or type composition,
- oral administration,
- allowing for an oral response,
- use of color transparencies,
- place markers,
- individual administration,
- small group administration,
- use of highlighters/colored pencils,
- responding orally, and
- having the response marked in the test booklet or having the response typed.

More about Specific Accommodations

Allow for oral response:
When teachers allow for an oral response, they remove the difficulty many students have in transferring what they have learned into a written format. This is especially helpful for a student with a learning disability in written expression but can also be an effective modification for other students. The time that it takes a student to transfer an answer into a written response can be much longer than the allotted time. Additionally, the student may provide a shorter response that does not fully express their learning simply because of the struggle they face in the process.

Oral administration of a test:
Reading a test to a student can eliminate many difficulties faced by a student. If the purpose of the test is to measure content knowledge and not reading ability, an orally administered exam can provide a student with the opportunity to focus on the question being asked and their response rather than struggling to figure out what is being asked because of the difficulty they have reading the question.

Individual administration of a test:
Taking time to individually administer a test to a student can be very helpful. Students who are easily distracted may benefit from this accommodation. Students will be able to proceed at their own pace and will not feel the pressure of completing the exam as they often do when watching other students complete the exam and turn it in. Also, the students will be able to ask for clarification and for question to be repeated without disrupting other test takers.

Small group administration of a test:
Administering a test to a small group provides many of the same benefits of individual administration. Smaller groups of students allow a teacher to read a test orally, respond to individual questions, and provide additional time for answering the questions. Also, students may wish to revisit a question, with the teacher repeating it orally.

Modifications

Sometimes we use the terms accommodations and modifications interchangeably. We described accommodations as ways to assist a student in meeting the same goals as other students in the class. Now, we can think of modifications as a way to assist a student in reaching some of the same goals as the other students. Maybe a student will be responsible for fewer course objectives or will have fewer problems to answer on an assignment. This means that teachers have to consider the student's needs and suggest modifications that would help the student progress in the classroom.

Examples of modifications are:
- writing alternatives, such as displays or projects;
- checking for understanding;
- immediate feedback;
- allowing self-talk;
- preferential seating;
- adjusting the length of assignments;
- allowing extra time to complete assignments;
- reading a test to a student;
- using taped texts;
- using study guides;
- providing a copy of notes;
- creating an assignment notebook for the student;
- giving them credit for oral response;
- using peer readers or tutors; and
- using graphic organizers.

More about Specific Modifications

Use of writing alternatives, written displays and projects:
Many students with learning disabilities have unique talents that can be used to demonstrate mastery of objectives. Research has shown that many students with disabilities struggle with writing and do not enjoy it. In many cases, students will provide a shorter response when asked to write it than if they are asked to provide the same information in a different manner. Providing alternative ways to present their information can assist students in many ways. A written display can help students organize their material in shorter segments, while still covering the entire topic. It can also help them organize their thoughts around separate and specific concepts rather than being overwhelmed by the prospect of writing a lengthy assignment. Projects also allow students alternate ways of presenting information. By incorporating technology, pictures, drawings, and other items into a project, teachers can allow students to use their preferred method of demonstrating what they have learned.

Checking for understanding:
Many time students with disabilities are hesitant to ask questions in front of their classmates. This may lead to them stalling to begin their assignment, completing their assignment incorrectly, or not attempting the assignment at all. When a teacher checks for understanding at different points in the lesson cycle, they insure that the student knows how to complete the assignment, that the student understands what is expected on the assignment, and that the student knows that they will consistently receive help and does not have to continuously ask for help in front of classmates.

Providing immediate feedback:
When a student with a disability begins an assignment, it is important that the teacher check their progress. Providing immediate feedback will keep a student on track and eliminate the frustration of completing an assignment incorrectly. Students will receive feedback more frequently and will often be encouraged to complete the assignment if they are successful.

Adjusting the length of assignments:
It is often difficult for students with disabilities to complete the same number of questions or problems on an assignment as students without disabilities. This can be due to reading difficulties, perceptual difficulties, a disability in written expression, and many other issues. Therefore, a teacher may choose to reduce the length of an assignment so that the student has adequate time to complete the

assignment while still demonstrating mastery of the objectives. Some ways to adjust the length of an assignment are requiring half of the questions to be answered, grading what a student has completed in the allotted time, reducing the required number of paragraphs that must be written, and choosing select questions that need a response then allowing the student to continue with the assignment after those have been answered.

Tutorials:
Providing a student with a disability the opportunity to have additional instruction on a specific topic can be beneficial to the student's success. Tutorials may be provided in oral or written format. It is especially helpful for a student to have a chance to use a tutorial with a set of practice questions prior to the actual assignment. Receiving feedback on their practice can assist them with being successful on the actual assignment. If time does not allow a separate tutorial, providing step-by-step instructions for a student can help them learn the skills. Continuous practice may eliminate the need for step-by-step instructions.

Taped texts:
Taped texts can be helpful for students who need access to materials in a book but have difficulty comprehending that material whey they read it alone. Providing taped texts can help a student learn content knowledge by eliminating the struggle they may have with reading the material. Oftentimes, the content is lost in the process of decoding words.

Study guides:
Study guides can be very helpful in organizing content for students with disabilities. Oftentimes, these students may have problems with organization and can feel overwhelmed by the amount of information they are required to learn. Study guides can help them connect the material into meaningful context and help them prepare for daily class, tests, or projects.

Peer tutoring:
Peer tutoring can assist both the student with a disability and the teacher. By having students with disabilities work with other students, they have more opportunities to ask questions, retell what they have learned, and have peers re-teach information in a different manner.

Graphic organizers:
Graphic organizers are helpful in many ways and can be designed for use in a variety of settings. They can be used for organizing writing assignments, planning responses, organizing thoughts and facts, delineating key concepts, identifying themes, comparing and contrasting, and solving problems.

Best Practices

Assisting students in meeting the goals of your CTE program of study can be achieved through active participation in the IEP process. This includes collaborating with colleagues from special education, general education, and CTE; determining appropriate goals based on your classroom requirements and the student's present levels of performance; differentiating between accommodations and modifications; and applying them appropriately to the student's needs. For additional resources, please refer to the toolbox that accompanies this module.

Activities

Use our CTSP Tools to assist you in writing IEP goals and identifying appropriate modifications and accommodations.

Writing IEP Goals for Students with Disabilities

As a teacher of students with disabilities, you may be asked to write IEP goals for your students. You will need to use the TEKS for your class and consider the student's present level of performance to write a goal.

Goals should be measurable and observable. They should be written in a way that anyone could come into your classroom and observe whether or not the student is meeting the goal.

Examples of Goals:
- Mark will be able to comprehend grade-level texts.
- When Mark is given a grade-level text to read, he will be able to answer three comprehension questions about the text with 80% accuracy.
- When given a story to read, Mark will be able to identify the main idea of the story three out of four times.
- Mark will be able to solve 25 math problems in 20 minutes with 70% accuracy.

List some of the TEKS objectives required for your class:

Practice writing goals based on the above objectives.	

| **Student Profile:** |
| Describe the characteristics of a student with disabilities in your classroom. |

| **Goals:** |
| What goals do you have for all students in your classroom? |
| What goals would be appropriate for the student described above? |

| **Does this student need accommodations, modifications, or both?** |

Accommodations:	**Modifications:**
What accommodations might work best for this student?	What modifications might be most appropriate for this student?

Accommodations:	Modifications:
Accommodations are used when students with disabilities are working on the same goals as all students in the class. Accommodations do not change what the student will be responsible for mastering.	Modifications are used to make changes to the content that a student with a disability may be responsible for learning. In other words, students may not be required to master the same objectives, or they may have a different level of instruction.
Examples:	*Examples:*
Extra time on assignments Oral exams Small group instruction Study guides Graphic organizers Immediate feedback	Selected TEKS objectives, some of which may be at a different level Shortened assignments Alternate curriculum Fewer TEKS objectives to be mastered
What are some accommodations that you might consider using in your classroom?	What are some modifications that you might consider using in your classroom?