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## **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

### **With LANGUAGE-BASED LEARNING**

### **DIFFICULTIES**

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**Students with disabilities often need accommodations (and in some cases modifications) to their educational program in order to access the general curriculum in their schools and to be successful learners. These changes must be chosen to fit the student's individual need.**

**An *accommodation* is a technique or approach that allows a student to complete the same assignment or test as other students, but there is an adjustment in the timing, the formatting, the setting, scheduling, response or in the presentation of some material. The accommodation does not alter what the test or assignment measures. It is simply a different approach to get to the same end point.**

**One can find many resources on the internet, in books and publications on ideas for accommodations. The purpose of this article is to outline accommodations that are often implemented for the high school student. These ideas can be offered for discussion at a team meeting, with the team determining which will help the student based on that student's individual need. (It is assuming that the cause of the student's difficulty has been identified.)\*\***

**Types of accommodations can be summarized as follows:**

- **Presentation—Allows the student to access the information. Example: the student is given a copy of the instructor's PowerPoint notes.**
- **Timing/Scheduling—Allows for an increase in the time to complete a task or changes the way the time is organized. Example: the student is given additional time on a test.**
- **Response—Allows the student to complete activities in different ways. Example: a student is allowed to be tested orally.**
- **Setting—Allows for a change in location where an assignment or assessment is given or may allow for the change in the conditions of the setting. Example: the student is able to take a test in an alternate room.**

**The following is a summary of various accommodations. These accommodations can form a basis of discussion among the instructors, parent and student at a team meeting. It is important that the high school student participate in this discussion as he/she often will know what may help him best and the student must be willing to utilize the accommodation(s).**

### **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR READING**

- **Student is given an audio version of the textbooks. [www.learningally.org](http://www.learningally.org)**
- **Student is given a second set of all textbooks to keep at home.**
- **Student is given access to Kurzweil software (text to speech reading software). [www.kurzweilededu.com](http://www.kurzweilededu.com)**
- **The assigned reading is discussed one-on-one with the instructor or assigned individual to assure comprehension of material.**
- **Explanations of classroom readings are given to the student by the instructor or an assigned individual.**
- **Student is provided with outlines, summary of chapters, vocabulary words and preview questions before reading.**

### **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR WRITING**

- **Provide the student access to computer word processing.**



- **Allow the student to record answers to write later.**
- **Supply visual models of expected final product.**
- **Use oral quizzes instead of written tests.**
- **Allow student to write lists instead of sentences.**
- **Provide graphic organizers**
- **Provide pre-made notes or allow student access to the instructor's notes.**
- **Allow student to use a note taker (another student to take notes for him/her).**
- **Provide student with computer time to work on writing assignments.**
- **Accept non-final draft quality work for most projects.**
- **Allow student to dictate work.**
- **Do not mark down for spelling errors.**
- **Use speech-to-text software. [www.nuance.com](http://www.nuance.com)**
- **Minimize the amount of copying from board or overhead.**
- **Allow student to use a keyboard to take notes.**

### **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR MATH**

- **Allow student to use graph paper to keep numbers in the correct column.**
- **Do not penalize student's grade for reversing of numbers.**
- **Allow extended time for assignments and tests.**
- **Allow student access to instructor-provided notes.**
- **Give student access to correctly completed examples.**
- **Give student access to formulas for tests and assignments, e.g., allow use of a 3X5 card with the formulas.**
- **Allow student more space on paper to solve problems.**
- **Give student immediate feedback to avoid practicing a wrong concept**
- **Allow use of a calculator**
- **Directly teach key vocabulary**

### **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR TESTING**

- **Allow student to take tests orally.**
- **Allow for extra time.**

- **Review directions for the test orally with the student.**
- **Read test questions to student and write down the answer as the student states the answer.**
- **Allow tests to be taken in an alternate, quieter room.**
- **Allow student to state the answers into a tape recorder.**
- **Minimize use of scantrons.**

### **STRATEGIES FOR HOMEWORK**

- **Clearly define the purpose of homework.**
- **Offer immediate feedback on homework.**
- **Allow student to dictate answers to a parent, sibling or tutor.**
- **Allow typewritten homework.**
- **Use worksheets with minimal writing.**
- **Limit time spent on homework.**

### **GENERAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

#### **Assist the student in**

- **Understanding directions for assignments and tests by reviewing them orally with the student. Have the student repeat the directions back to you, checking for understanding of the task.**
- **Dividing research projects/papers into smaller components.**
- **Using a calendar to track tests and long range assignments.**
- **Using computers for word processing and spell checking.**
- **Advocating for him/herself. Ideally students must be proactive to be successful.**
- **Seeking professional counseling if indicated. Learning problems often turn into emotional problems if left alone.**

**Renee Matlock is a Speech-Language Pathologist and Dyslexia Specialist who specializes in the evaluation of students (elementary through high school) who are struggling in the classroom with reading, writing and spelling. She is the founder and Executive Director of Speech Plus, a clinic serving children and their families who present with speech, language and learning challenges.**