

Implementing Accommodations and Modifications

The terms accommodation and modification can be confusing, although they are not the same.

Accommodations

Accommodations provide different ways for students to take in information or communicate their knowledge back to the teacher. Accommodations do not alter or lower the standards or expectations for the curriculum covered or material to be tested on. Students are expected to meet the same standards set for all of the other students. Accommodations do not change the measurement of work completed.

Modifications

The term modifications refers to significant changes in the delivery, content, quantity, instructional level, or grading of the classroom curriculum or test. Modifications create a different standard for children whose learning differences require more intense adjustments than simply making accommodations. In effect, modifications result in lowering or raising the expectations and standards so that the students with learning differences are not expected to master the same academic content as the other students in the classroom. This could entail changing the material from what the rest of the class is learning, changing what the student will be tested on, or changing how the student will be graded. The material is adjusted to the academic level and ability of the student.

Examples

- For example in Math, an accommodation would be to adjust the homework to only assign every other problem, while a modification would be to allow the student to always use a calculator or multiplication chart, or use a web based math program on their own level such as ALEKS (Assessment and LEarning in Knowledge Spaces)
- In Spelling, an accommodation is to allow the student to use an electronic speller, or reduce the spelling list, while a modification is to use a different spelling list that is on the student's level.
- For Science, including a word bank with the test is an accommodation, while an open book test is a modification.
- In the area of Testing or Grading, accommodations include giving extended time or reading the test orally to the student. A modification would be to create a modified grading scale to lower the percentages for letter grades for example:

Alternative Learning Grade Scale

- A 80 – 100%
- B 70-79%
- C 60-69%
- D 50-59

Recording Accommodations and Modifications on Progress Reports and Transcripts

Many questions have arisen on how to report progress of students who are learning with accommodations or modifications. The answers to these questions differ between elementary and secondary schools. In all cases, the use of accommodations does not affect the reporting of grades and credits on report cards or transcripts. Modifications, however, must be treated differently.

Elementary

- Accommodations may be indicated on progress reports or on a Modified Accommodation Plan (MAP) form for use by subsequent teachers.
- Modifications should be described in the progress report comment box or by attaching a Modified Action Plan (MAP) to the progress report. For example, a fifth grade student working at a third grade math level could receive a “B” for his third grade work. The third grade math level would be indicated in the comment box or on the MAP.
- Disabilities should not be indicated on progress reports.
- MAPs should be included in a student’s cumulative folder.

Secondary

- Accommodations may be indicated in the progress reports comment box to show what support the student is receiving.
- The use of modifications requires parent permission and should be incorporated in a Modified Action Plan (MAP).
- It is recommended that modifications be identified as “AL” alternative learning or “Introduction to” classes, for example, “AL—U.S. History” or “Introduction to US History.” Just as “AP History” indicates a different curriculum, “AL History” or “Introduction to History” shows a different curriculum based on the ability of the student.
- The registrar must change the name of the course, to reflect the alternative course name, on their report card and transcript for the student with modifications. This serves as an indication that the content of the course or the grading has been modified. In secondary schools, ongoing communication with the registrar is imperative.



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