

Implementing Accommodations and Modifications

Accommodations and modifications are academic and social-emotional support strategies intended to lessen learning barriers for students. They provide students with enhanced opportunities to master learning objectives and learn more effectively. For special population students, accommodations and modifications promote better access to learning and provide equitable learning opportunities. Implementing accommodations and modifications in online environments is challenging, but learning about available tools and strategies for online environments can promote engagement in various targeted activities to ensure a successful learning experience.

1. In what ways have I used accommodations and modifications to engage my learners within face-to-face, blended, and online learning?
2. How can I use accommodations and modifications to set expectations, redirect, or address student behaviors within blended and online learning?
3. How can I use technology to engage learners in instruction and support self-monitoring one's behaviors in blended and online learning?



to Consider

Accommodations and modifications support students' learning and are vital to many students' success. Accommodations change HOW a student learns the material. A modification is a change to WHAT a student is taught or expected to do in school. Accommodations and modifications support students' behavior needs and to engage students in learning. Some accommodations and modifications used in face-to-face learning might also be beneficial in online learning environments, but some accommodations and modifications are specific to online learning.

Providing support for special population students in online learning environments requires specific considerations to maximize student engagement and success. Special population students have important and personal perspectives related to their own learning needs and abilities. To engage students with diverse learning needs in online learning environments, start by reviewing the Individualized Education Plans (IEP), Individualized Learning Plans (ILP), or 504 Plans to identify learning needs and required support services. These plans will define the technology and learning supports that might be used and the innovative ways they can be used to engage those students. If a teacher in a traditional classroom usually asks for assignments in a preferred form, spoken or written, in an online environment the teacher might ask students to upload audio or video recordings, have a family member help write assignment responses, or have a one-to-one conference. Additionally, teachers can use different strategies to support all students in the classroom, providing informal support or using specific frameworks, such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

Active engagement and management of student behavior in online environments is key to successful learning. When teaching and learning in online environments, maintain continuous and effective communication with students, especially those who struggle with on-task behaviors, who get overwhelmed regularly, and who benefit from more direct teacher guidance. Also, parents and families can help in monitoring, motivating, and encouraging students. So, consistent and proactive communication with parents and families is vital to student engagement. Additionally, it is important to provide opportunities for students to collaborate with peers. Structured avenues for peer collaboration promote engagement. For example, 'breakout rooms' within a video conferencing platform can be utilized to support small-group collaboration. Another strategy to engage students through accommodations is to embed resources and prompts through assignments. It is beneficial to use pictures, diagrams, voice recordings, videos, built-in checks for understanding, word banks, and tasks designed for students to stop and summarize.

Supporting special population students in online learning environments is challenging. However, for some students, the online learning environment might be an opportunity to access unique support.

KEY Elements