

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION ACCOMMODATIONS MANUAL

<http://www.cte.unt.edu/>

Created by The University of North Texas in partnership with
the Texas Education Agency

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cover art by Don Breeden, Brownsville, TX (www.breedenart.com). Used with permission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	4
CHAPTER 2 CATEGORIES OF ACCOMMODATIONS.....	16
CHAPTER 3 ADAPTATIONS.....	18
CHAPTER 4 ACCOMMODATIONS FOR LEARNING CHALLENGES.....	22
CHAPTER 5 ACCOMMODATIONS BY CATEGORY.....	28
CHAPTER 6 ACCOMMODATIONS BY IEP.....	
CHAPTER 7 ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE 504 PLAN.....	
CHAPTER 8 INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN.....	
CHAPTER 9 IMPLEMENTING INSTRUCTIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS.....	
CHAPTER 10 EVALUATING ACCOMMODATIONS.....	
CHAPTER 11 WORKING WITH YOUR SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT	
CHAPTER 12 SUMMARY	
APPENDIX	
A. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	
B. ACCOMMODATIONS IN IEPs EXAMPLE	
C. ACCOMMODATIONS IN 504 EXAMPLE	
D. RESOURCES	
REFERENCES	

1

Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to introduce the Career and Technical Education (CTE) teacher to a broad variety of resources available to support students from special populations in their classes. As many CTE teachers can attest, there often seems to be a disproportionate number of students in their classes who are from special populations. Whether they choose CTE because alternative strategies are often used in these classes, or because of the real-world experience that students get, these classes typically have more students from special populations than other, more traditional classes have.

In order to better understand these students, let's first discuss what special population's means. According to the Carl D. Perkins Act, a person categorized as being a member of special populations defines an individual with a disability, comes from an economically disadvantaged family, is preparing for non-traditional fields, is a single parents or a single pregnant woman, is a displaced homemaker, or has limited English proficiency. In order to better understand the term, we should examine what each criterion under the special populations category means.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

An individual with a disability means any disability as defined in Section 3 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. This means they must have one of the following:

A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities, or a record of impairment, or being regarded as having impairment.



The CTE teacher will have a broad variety of individuals with disabilities in their program over their career. In making sure that these individuals receive the services they to learn on a level playing field, it is important to know how students can receive services under the various Federal laws.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (2004), identifies disabilities by 13 categories under which a student, aged 3 to 21, can be eligible to receive services under the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This can only occur if the disability has an effect on the student's educational performance. The 13 categories and their definitions (from IDEA) are:

AUTISM

Autism is defined as “...a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three that adversely affects educational performance. Characteristics often associated with autism are engaging in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to changes in daily routines or the environment, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.”

DEAF-BLINDNESS

“...means concomitant [simultaneous] hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.”

DEAFNESS

“...means a hearing impairment so severe that a child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification that adversely affects a child's educational performance.”

EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE

“...means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance:

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

The term includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance.

● HEARING IMPAIRMENT (INCLUDING DEAFNESS)

“...means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance but is not included under the definition of deafness.”

● MENTAL RETARDATION

“...means significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently [at the same time] with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.”

● MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

“...means concomitant [simultaneous] impairments (such as mental retardation-blindness, mental retardation-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in a special education program solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness.”

● ORTHOPEDIC IMPAIRMENT

“...means a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly (e.g. clubfoot, absence of some member, etc.), impairments caused by disease (e.g. poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures).”

OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENT

“...means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that:

- (a) is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia; and
- (b) adversely affects a child’s educational performance.”

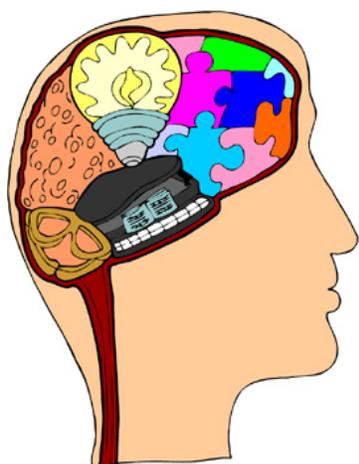
SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY

“...means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of mental retardation; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.”

SPEECH OR LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT

“...means a communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.”

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY



“...means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. The term does not include brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or brain injuries induced by birth trauma.”

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT (INCLUDING BLINDNESS)

“...means impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.”

OTHER PERKINS CATEGORIES

The Carl D. Perkins Act also lists categories of special populations that include individuals from economically disadvantaged families and foster children. According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), students are classified as economically disadvantaged if they receive free or reduced-price school lunches, or if they qualify for other public assistance. To qualify for free and reduced-price lunches, student families must have incomes less than 185% of the federal poverty level. Students are eligible for free lunches if they come from families with incomes less than 130% of the federal poverty level.

It also identifies individuals preparing for non-traditional fields. This means those occupations or fields of work. This includes careers in computer science, technology,

and other emerging high skill occupations, for which individuals from one gender comprise less than 25 percent of the individuals employed in each such occupation or field of work. Single parents, displaced homemakers and single pregnant women are included.

Individuals with limited English proficiency are identified under the Carl D. Perkins Act which means a secondary school student, an adult, or an out-of-school youth, who has limited ability in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language, and—“(A) whose native language is a language other than English; or (B) who lives in a family or community environment in which a language other than English is the dominant language.”



▼ DEFINING ACCOMMODATIONS

An accommodation is an adjustment or support given to learners that enables them to have access to the same educational opportunities as other learners do. The criteria remain the same and student learners are expected to “test” or complete assessments and assignments at the same level as students without disabilities. For a video explaining this, [click here](#).

How do you determine what the student’s present level is when trying to select accommodations? When considering curricular adaptations, determine whether they will alter or lower standards or expectations of what is learned in either the instructional process or assessment. If not, they can be considered accommodations. Where there are altering of or lowering of standards and/or expectations so a student can be given access to the general curriculum, then it is considered a modification. In the CTE program where a student receives modifications, they can participate with their peers, but they may not be able to earn an industry-level certificate upon completion of a given unit of instruction. Where do accommodations fit into the special education process? Let’s briefly review the steps and what happens in each.

THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS¹

This brief overview is not designed to give the full details of the process, but merely an overview from the time the student is suspected of having a disability until he/she has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and finally, may not longer require educational services. Accommodations can be made at any time, but when they are part of the formal education plan, they are written into the IEP at the IEP/ARD Meeting stage.

In order to assist in understanding the Special Education process, the following diagram illustrates the sequence of events. In Texas, the committee that meets to determine the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is the Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) Committee. While the meeting is typically called an *ARD Meeting*, it means the same as an IEP Meeting. At this meeting, the IEP (a document) is developed to outline the student's educational program and any accommodations or modifications that are needed.

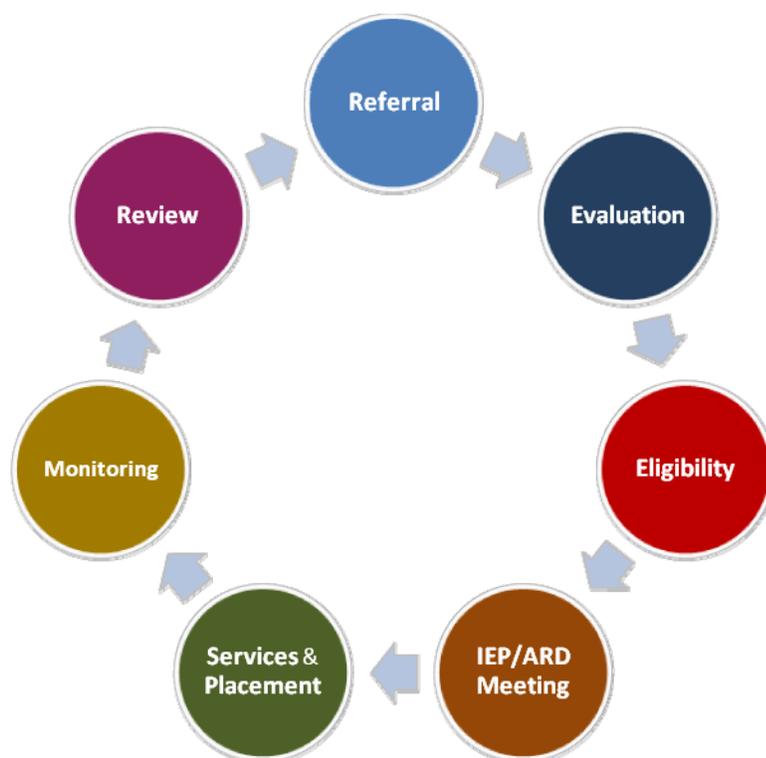


Figure 1 The Special Education Process

¹ Adapted by from Families and Advocates Partnership for Education (FAPE) and the U.S. Department of Education Guide to the Individualized Education Program.

A brief description of each of each stage in the process:

Referral

The reason for referral should be based on whether the student is not learning at the same rate or in the same sequence as other students, or if the student is experiencing unusual or prolonged difficulties with general education curriculum and instruction. If a parent or school staff believes that a student has a disability AND needs special education or related services in order for that student to be successful, they should be referred for evaluation. Students are required to be reevaluated every three years, but this can be more often if needed.

Evaluation

The school has a qualified person evaluate the student for eligibility status. Parents may have an independent evaluation done.

Eligibility

If the student is eligible for service, and the school and parents agree, an ARD meeting is scheduled to develop the student's IEP.

IEP/ARD Meeting

Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) Committee meets to develop the Individualized Education Program (IEP). The team talks about the student's needs, any special services they should have, and how progress will be measured.

Services & Placement

The student must be placed in the least restrictive environment where they can receive services and be successful. A key part of the IEP is the variety of special education and related services that are needed to ensure that the student gets the tools needed to be successful and meet learning goals.

Monitoring

Progress on the student's goals is regularly reviewed. This is reported to the student's parent or guardian on a regular basis (at least as often as regular progress reports).

Review

The IEP must be reviewed at least once a year and more frequently if necessary. A meeting of the ARD team can be planned if changes need to be made. Every three years a student must be reevaluated to determine if they still have a disability.

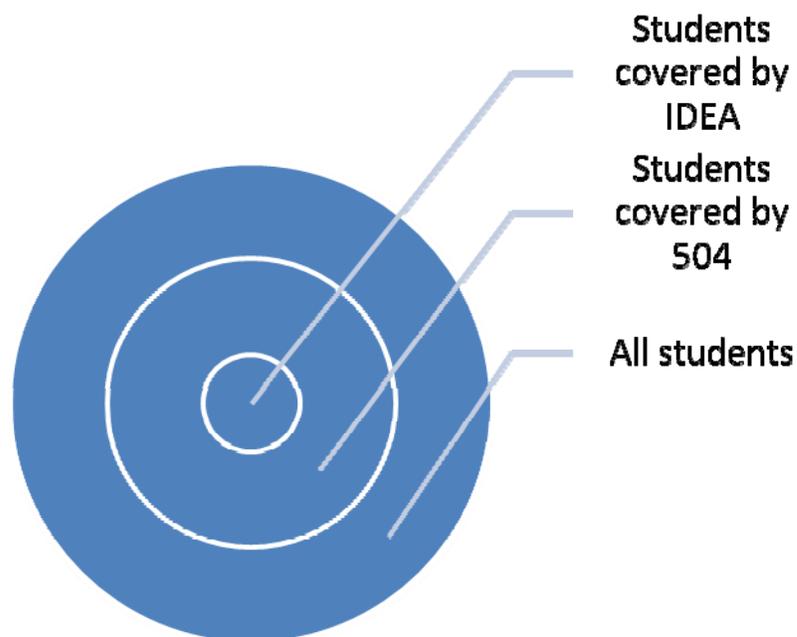
In order to better understand the essential element of giving students accommodations, it is important to become familiar with the laws that guide implementation and provision of services to students from special populations.

▼ BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE LAW

There are a variety of laws that guide teachers and others who provide services when working with individuals from special populations. There are three main laws that will probably guide you in your teaching. These three are the Carl D. Perkins Act (“Perkins”), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (“Section 504”). For a more detailed description of the laws, refer to the Appendix.

If it is believed that a student has a disability, he/she may be referred for evaluation by a parent, teacher or other school staff. After gathering relevant information on the student, a decision is made whether or not to evaluate that student. If the student is evaluated and found to need services, an Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) meeting is scheduled. At the ARD meeting the IEP (the written component) is developed. The ARD is only held for those students who qualify for services under IDEA. For more information on the ARD process, the reader is referred to the [Texas Education Agency ARD Guide](#).

All students who qualify for IDEA services also qualify for Section 504, but some students who may fall under 504, do not qualify for IDEA. The following graphic shows how this works:



It is easy to be confused as to how students are eligible for services under Section 504. Even administrators are confused about how students can qualify for services (Samuels, 2008). Section 504 requires schools to provide appropriate educational services to students with disabilities so they access to the same learning that their nondisabled peers have.

▼ THE CARL D. PERKINS ACT

The Carl D. Perkins Act, most recently reauthorized in 2006, was first authorized in 1984 to increase the quality of Career and Technical education (then called vocational education) in the U.S. It was reauthorized in 1998, and again in 2006 with almost unanimous support in both houses of Congress. Changes included more accountability for results and program improvement. In the new reauthorization, the term vocational education was changed to career and technical education, requirements were included for linkages between secondary and postsecondary education through programs of study, and accountability provisions were strengthened. The new legislation also expanded academic and technical integration and provided additional links to NCLB. The new law supports increased coordination with business and industry and on the education and training of students for high demand, high skill, and high wage jobs. The definition of individuals

from special populations is maintained from the 1998 Perkins Act, and is listed in this manual.

Section 504 is a civil rights act that states no individual with a disability can be excluded from or denied benefits of any program receiving federal financial assistance. The definition of a disability under Section 504 is much broader than the definition under IDEA, so all IDEA students are also covered by Section 504, but not all Section 504 students are eligible for services under IDEA.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND MEETING INDUSTRY STANDARDS

Employers want their employees to have the proper equipment and tools with which to perform the job for which they have been hired. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, a reasonable accommodation would be any change in the work environment that will enable the individual with a disability to participate in the application process, perform essential job functions, and enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment that are available to those without disabilities.

Skills standards are very important to business and industry and the connection between developing skilled workers and supplying qualified employees to the local labor market has not always been in agreement. To address the gap between a student's existing skills and those needed in the workplace, there has been a growing trend toward high skill jobs and industry-based certifications. More students from special populations will be applying for these positions and employers will be seeking ways in which to hire and retain individuals who can perform these high skill jobs with accommodations.

ACCOMMODATIONS VERSUS MODIFICATIONS

Accommodations are any changes in teaching strategies, course content, environment, or other elements for learning that give a student with a disability access to participate, but do not fundamentally lower the standards or alter the expectations of the content.

Why would you want to make an accommodation rather than a modification? The rationale, or purpose, of accommodations is to provide equal footing and “level the playing field” without compromising essential criteria or standards. Critics might say that, by using modifications, you are watering down the curriculum; but, by using accommodations, the essential elements of the curriculum remain the same.

2

Categories of Accommodations

Accommodations can be categorized in four ways: presentation, response and setting, timing, and scheduling. Each of these categories is explained here along with specific examples of how they can be used. The accommodations that the CTE teacher uses can fall across several of these categories, but the key is to address the needs of the individual student and level the playing field so they have the same opportunities to learn as other students. When grading student work, it should be done for students with disabilities, the same as for students without since the accommodations have allowed the student to meet the same criteria.

PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATIONS

Is there a problem with the way in which the student can see, hear, or read the lesson?

Allow students to access information in ways that do not require them to visually read standard print. These alternate modes of access are auditory, multi-sensory, tactile, and visual. Example of presentation accommodations include:

- Provide on audio tape
- Provide in large print
- Reduce number of items per page or line
- Provide a designated reader
- Present instructions orally

RESPONSE ACCOMMODATIONS

Does the student have problems manipulating items, or is there something that might pose a problem with the student due to the way in which a response is required? If possible, change the response. By changing the response, you can allow students to

complete activities, assignments, and assessments in different ways or to solve or organize problems using some type of assistive device or organizer.

- Allow for verbal responses
- Allow for answers to be dictated to a scribe
- Allow the use of a tape recorder to capture responses
- Permit responses to be given via computer
- Permit answers to be recorded directly into a test booklet

SETTING ACCOMMODATIONS

If the student has a problem focusing on work when there are a large number of students in the class, this may be a possible choice. These students can be easily distracted by others or have behaviors that are distracting to others. Change the location in which a test or assignment is given or the conditions of the assessment setting.

- Provide preferential seating
- Provide special lighting or acoustics
- Provide a space with minimal distractions
- Administer a test in small group setting
- Administer a test in private room or alternative test site

TIMING AND SCHEDULING ACCOMMODATIONS

Increase the allowable length of time to complete an assessment or assignment and perhaps change the way that time is organized.

Timing

- Allow frequent breaks
- Extend allotted time for a test

Scheduling

- Administer a test in several timed sessions or over several days
- Allow subtests to be taken in a different order
- Administer a test at a specific time of day

Accommodations should fall under one of these categories and may cut across several. Understanding how each works in helping the student learner will assist the CTE teacher in providing them with the tools to learn with other students.

3

Adaptations

Adaptations are adjustments to the learning and testing environment that allow a student the opportunity to better demonstrate skills and abilities. They are what is done to change the educational environment so that a student can have equal access to learning. They can be divided into nine types. These include size, time, support, input, difficulty, output, participation, alternate goals, and substitute curriculum.

▼ NINE TYPES OF ADAPTATIONS

1. Size/Quantity

Adapt or reduce the number of items that the student is expected to learn or complete. Alternate items with practicals for generalization. Example: Reduce the number of terms the student must learn at any one time and spread them across a week.

2. Time

Change or adapt the time allotted for task completion, learning, or assessment. For example: Individualize a task and give the student a deadline, but let them pace it differently (increase or decrease). This would work for fast learners as well since they would not be done and bored waiting for others.

3. Level of Support

Increase the amount of assistance given to a student in keeping on task or learning new skills. For example: Assign peers as teaching assistants, tutors, or work one-on-one. Use cooperative learning to team students who need more support with peers.

4. Input

Change the way in which instruction is delivered. For example: Have students teach each other in groups, give students more practical exercises, and incorporate visual aids.

5. Difficulty

Adapt the skill level, rules, or the problem type to how the learner may approach the work. For example: Simplify directions, accommodate learner needs, provide equipment (such as a calculator) to assist the learner.

6. Output

Consider other ways in which the student can respond to instruction. For example: Instead of answering questions on a test, allow the student to present the material to others or demonstrate it visually.

7. Participation

Try to involve the student more actively in the task. For example: In Automotive Technology, have a student hold the electrical chip, while others point out what each component does.

8. Alternate Goals

When absolutely necessary, modify the goals or expectations while understanding that this will probably be considered a modification. For example: In welding, have the student point out the good and bad welds, while other students must demonstrate how to make a good weld.

9. Substitute Curriculum

Provide different materials and instruction to meet the student's individual goals. For example: During a law test, one student is learning law in an online format rather than with their peers. (adapted from Wright, D.B., *Teaching & Learning*, 2005).

Adaptations can require more teacher time and effort than simply changing instructional methods or access as in an accommodation. An adaptation is a goal-driven process. In order to decide on an adaptation to curriculum, individual student goals must be reviewed. While adaptations can be used by individuals with and without a disability, they do not change testing standards. Examples of some types of adaptations that can be used include page magnifiers, ear plugs, color-coding, stress balls, line readers, large diameter pens, and other items.

Adaptation can sometimes involve not only the modification of instructional methods but also include a slight change in conceptual difficulties introduced to students. In many cases, adaptation should be practiced when teachers determine that a student is able to learn the same content knowledge as other students if a slight change is made to modify conceptual difficulty.

4

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR LEARNING CHALLENGES

Occasionally, the CTE teacher may have a student who is failing to learn the material. The student may or may not be classified as having a disability, but when a student cannot learn, it is important to find a way in which they can. Referral for services may be necessary, but many teachers make accommodations for all students in the general education setting. Some of the most common learning challenges observed in the CTE classroom include distractibility, visual impairment, hearing difficulties, behavior, comprehension, organization, memory and processing.

What follows are some possible accommodations for these specific types of learning challenges. Remember, when making any accommodation, consider it only if it meets the specific individual needs of the learner.



DISTRACTIBILITY

If students are frequently distracted by other students, elements inside and outside the classroom can divert their attention. While in the classroom this can pose unique challenges for the student learner: in the workplace it can be dangerous.

All students can have some distraction depending on the classroom, but students with cognitive disabilities are especially prone to distractibility. Things to consider when designing and implementing instruction for these students should include the learning environment and time or scheduling. Questions regarding seating, organization of materials and distractions should also be reviewed.

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Accommodations that can assist students who are blind or visually impaired include orientation and mobility assistance, Braille and large print items, priority class scheduling, assistance in making print accessible, adaptations of materials, accommodated test administration, recruitment and referral of readers and note takers, taped textbooks, video and computer lab services, and access to transportation when needed.

HEARING DIFFICULTIES

Auditory impairment includes hearing loss from mild to profound and students who have hearing difficulties frequently also have problems with learning and using language. Accommodations that can help students with hearing difficulties include software that improves language skills, hearing evaluations, text telephone services, closed captioning, specialized computer equipment, assistive listening devices, and other items.

BEHAVIOR

There are numerous strategies for dealing with behavior issues in the classroom. First, it is important to have a short list of classroom rules that are posted and clearly understood by all students. These need to be enforced uniformly and fairly across all students in the class. Students are quick to understand when a rule is not enforced.

COMPREHENSION

Cognitive disability means significantly sub average intellectual functioning that exists concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior. This combination adversely affects educational performance. Significantly sub average intellectual functioning is defined as an IQ standard score of approximately 70-75 or below. This score is based on an individually administered general intelligence test.

Existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior means that the intellectual imitations occur at the same time as the deficits in adaptive behavior. Adaptive behavior generally refers to the quality of everyday performance in coping with environmental

demands. These are the behaviors that people do to take care of themselves. Cognitive disability can adversely affect educational performance because the individual is below average in the academic areas of language, reading, mathematics and general information areas as determined by a comprehensive individual assessment.

Comprehension skills include the ability to use a learned concept in context and it is based on prior knowledge. Strategies for comprehension include:

- Introduce the lesson and ask what students know about it (checking prior knowledge).
- Students then use prior knowledge to explain it.
- After the item is fully described, students are asked how they would apply it or use it in another (different) situation (generalizing).
- Ask students to add details.
- Compare and contrast.

Check for comprehension by assessing the following:

- Can they put new information into their own words?
- Is organizing their thoughts difficult?
- Can they see how what they have read relates to the whole topic?
- Can, or do, they take notes well?
- Hard to express themselves.
- Doesn't get the big picture.
- Takes too long to read and understand.
- Cannot stay focused.
- Rambles.
- Gets off topic.
- Has frequent tangents.

✦ ORGANIZATION

Some students have difficulty in organizing time, information or materials. For these students there are various strategies that can help. These include:

- Giving the student a quiet, uncluttered homework space;
- Showing them how to use an alarm watch;
- Purchased texts that can be marked with a highlighter or making copies for use and showing these students how to use an organizer;
- Have students keep a page of their homework assignments in their binder and check it often;
- Show them how to use study skills and take notes (refer to the CTE Website under [Notetaking Skills](#)).

✦ MEMORY

Everyone can forget things. For the student who chronically forgets, some strategies may help. First, consider if you will just use strategies or refer the student for evaluation.

Extremely poor memory can be an indication of a more serious problem that needs to be addressed as soon as possible. Contact your local special education or building principal for information.

Memory strategies include:

1. Structuring information by pictures, colors, using mnemonics and repetition.
2. Mnemonics can include using rhymes, and acronyms for learning. When using repetition, the key is to make each usage slightly different or find a different angle so that it is not just repeated but more connections will be forged for connecting to long-term memory.
3. Slowing down and speeding up instruction can assist in reaching more students.
4. Questioning for comprehension can assist in determining if memory strategies are effective.



Example

A new student to the CTE Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security program is having trouble remembering assignments. As part of the regular instruction, the CTE teacher has decided to use chunking as much as possible. Chunking links items that are similar in a logical way, to items that the student might already know. While the student may not be able to quickly learn the following sequence of letters, if put into a sequence that has relevance to the student, it is easier to learn:

C B B I A K G F I

If the letters are chunked:

K G B C I A F B I

With each new concept, the CTE teacher explores ways in which to “chunk” information that connect with student previous learning.

PROCESSING

A processing disorder refers to a deficiency in a person's ability to effectively use the information of the senses such as sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch. The act of using those senses is only the first step towards being able to use the data collected. The information the body collects is sent to the brain which recognizes it, understands it, responds to it and stores it. It is NOT the result of hearing loss, impaired vision, an attention deficit disorder or any kind of intellectual or cognitive deficit.

Though information processing disorders are often not named as specific types of learning disabilities, they are seen in many individuals with learning disabilities and can often help explain why a person is having trouble with learning and performance. The inability to process information efficiently can lead to frustration, low self-esteem and social withdrawal, especially with speech/language impairments.

Strategies that can be used for processing disorders include:

- Enlarging print for individuals who have visual processing difficulties or having students use a ruler or pointer for reading.

- Adding more structure to the paper for a student who is taking notes, such as the type used with Cornell Notes.
- Varying teaching styles to make classroom accommodations that will assist student learners.
- Supplement oral instructions with visual and written cues.
- Try to simplify instructions.
- Uses rubrics.
- Plan activities that will assist in building processing skills, such as sorting and discrimination games.
- Omit nonessential items and double negatives in handouts and instructions.
- Allow students to discuss assignments for clarification.
- Teach students how to summarize and take notes.

Many people experience problems with learning and behavior occasionally, but if a person consistently displays difficulties with these tasks over time, testing for information processing disorders by trained professionals should be considered. Further resources on specific disabilities can be found in Appendix D.

5

Accommodations by Category

This section gives more specific information on categories of disability. Under each category is the definition, characteristics, general accommodations and example(s). Remember not to assign an accommodation without consideration of each student's unique needs.

LEARNING DISABILITIES

Definition

A learning disability is a neurological disorder and related to central nervous system dysfunction. It is the result of a difference in the way a person's brain is "wired." Students with learning disabilities can often be as smart as or smarter than their peers. Yet learning disabilities affect the ability of the student to understand or use spoken or written language, do mathematical calculations, coordinate movements, or direct attention, and students have difficulty in tasks such as reasoning, recall, spelling, writing, reading, and/or organizing and processing information (ldonline, 2008; National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, 2006).

A learning disability is a lifelong issue, cannot be cured, and occurs differently in each individual. It is possible for individuals with learning disabilities to succeed in school with support and the right interventions. Learning disabilities in general are heterogeneous groups of disorders that range from mild to severe.

Characteristics

Learning disabilities are characterized by a significant difference in the student's achievement in some areas, as compared to their overall intelligence. Students who have learning disabilities may exhibit a wide range of traits, including problems with reading comprehension, spoken language, writing, or reasoning ability.

Hyperactivity, inattention, and perceptual coordination problems may also be associated with learning disabilities. Other traits that may be present include a

variety of symptoms such as uneven and unpredictable test performance, perceptual impairments, motor disorders, and behaviors such as impulsiveness, low tolerance for frustration, and problems in handling day-to-day social interactions and situations.

Learning disabilities may occur in the following academic areas:

Spoken language: Delays, disorders, or discrepancies in listening and speaking.

Written language: Difficulties with reading, writing, and spelling.

Arithmetic: Difficulty in performing arithmetic functions or in comprehending basic concepts.

Reasoning: Difficulty in organizing and integrating thoughts.

Organization skills: Difficulty in organizing all facets of learning.



Some considerations for having students with learning disabilities in your classroom include:

1. Don't assume that the person is not listening just because you are getting no verbal or visual feedback.
2. You do not have to explain everything to students with learning disabilities because they do not necessarily have a problem with comprehension.
3. Consult with your special education staff to obtain help in understanding the nature of their learning disability.
4. Don't assume you know a student's capabilities based solely on their IQ or other standardized test scores.
5. A student may have a learning disability and still score in the average or superior

- range on intelligence tests.
6. A student may have a disability even if they are undiagnosed. Learning disabilities often go undiagnosed, so you may be the first major source of identification.
 7. Bring to the student's attention any individuals who are well known role models with a similar disability to that of the student.

For a printable form of this list, click here.



Accommodations

Each accommodation should be based on what the student needs to learn and should not be selected from a list that has been generated for a group of students without considering what will uniquely fit the needs of the individual student. Some of the examples of accommodations that can be made for students with learning disabilities can include:

- Using a note taker
- Reinforcement
- Audio taping and videotaping class sessions
- Extended exam time
- Control of noise
- Visual, aural, and tactile is incorporated into instruction
- Outlines & books & materials on tape
- Alternative assessments & evaluation methods (e.g., portfolio, oral or video presentations)
- Breaking large amounts of information or instructions into smaller segments (scaffolding)
- Using alternative assessments & rubrics
- Computer assistance (speech output and text), word processing software & software to enlarge screen images



Example

A new student in a Health Science Cluster Program is having trouble understanding the class material due to distractibility. After discussing the requirements of the program and the difficulties the student is experiencing, the teacher agrees to use more rubrics, give extended exam time for in-class assessments, and move the student to near the teacher's desk to prevent distractions.

AUTISM

Definition

According to the National Autism Association, autism is a bio-neurological developmental disability that generally appears before the age of 3. It impacts the normal development of the brain in the areas of communication skills, social interaction, and



cognitive function. Individuals with autism often suffer from numerous physical ailments which may include: allergies, asthma, epilepsy, digestive disorders, persistent viral infections, feeding disorders, sensory integration dysfunction, sleeping disorders, and more.

While there is no research that indicates autism is affected by race, region, or socio-economic status, there are four times as many boys diagnosed with autism than girls. Since autism was first diagnosed in the U.S. the occurrence has climbed to an alarming rate of one in 150 people across the country. Autism does not affect life expectancy. Currently there is no cure for autism, though with early intervention and treatment, the diverse symptoms related to autism can be greatly improved.

Characteristics

Individuals with autism typically have difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or play activities. Specific signs to look for include: lack of or delay in spoken language, repetitive use of language and/or motor mannerisms, little or no eye contact, lack of spontaneous or make-believe play, persistent fixation on parts of objects, lack of interest in peer relationships.

Accommodations

- Make sure you have the student's attention before asking a question.

- Ask questions that are as concrete as possible.
- Ask questions that can be answered with words or a phrase instead of long, essay answer.
- During discussion, use speech literally, avoiding the use of idioms, double meanings, sarcasm, and nicknames.
- Print the questions to show text in conjunction with the verbal questions.
- Break lengthy questions into separate components.

For independent work:

- Provide a space for the student to work that decreases distractions.
- Allow the student to access the same workspace to provide consistency.
- Provide places for the student to put completed work.
- Provide a daily schedule for the student which includes the activities and daily needs (breaks, etc.)
- Provide the student with worksheets that are uncluttered (ex. 20 problems in math could be put 4 to a page), and give the student ample room for the answers.
- Use a highlighter to highlight spaces for answers.
- Provide alternate formats for completion of worksheets (oral, m-c, use of word banks, sentence completion, etc.).

Assessments

- Highlight the directions to the test so that the student will focus on them.
- Highlight important sections of a book to help the student study.
- Provide the student with a written outline of the material that will be covered on the test.
- Provide the student with short tests and try to avoid essay tests.
- When assessing skills, be aware of the student's uneven skills development.
- Allow the student to actively move during assessments. (Walk, jump, chew gum.)
- Make the center areas easily accessible during transition times.

Projects

- Use samples or pictures of finished projects to show the student what needs to be done.
- Allow the student to work with a peer.

- Provide visual cues of various elements/tasks within the project.
- Allow the student to prepare/tape presentation rather than having to do it “live”.
- Provide schedule of steps to be completed in correct sequence.

Reports

- Provide an outline for the student to work with/from.
- For oral reports, allow the student opportunities to practice and role play.

Reading

- Read to the student: Poetry, songs, etc. with strong rhythm and rhyme can be more effective.
- Allow the student to listen to the story or chapter on tape (as tolerated) to reduce external stimuli.
- Provide choices of reading materials.
- Encourage students to explore into new topics.
- Reduce amount of graphics in reading material for students who are visually distractible.

Writing

- Slant board can provide compensation for vestibular difficulties. Use commercial or homemade (4” binder).
- Use letters of various textures such as plastic, wood, or foam. This allows student to feel the letters.
- Allow the student to use a vibrating pen/weighted pen/felt tip pen.
- Allow the student to use raised lined paper to increase proprioceptive input to cue for line usage.
- Allow the student to use a word processing computer program whenever possible.
- Allow the student to write about favorite topics whenever possible.
- If a student has an aversion to handwriting, let him do the work using a keyboard solution or by tape recording the work.
- Encourage text to speech, color adjustment, illustrations, etc. to motivate the student to write.

Drawing

- Use adaptive writing utensils.

- Use a variety of drawing utensils. (Markers, paintbrushes, stamps.)
- Provide a variety of textures under the paper to provide the student with feedback as opposed to the flat surface.

Groups

- Require the student to stay in the group for the activities that are meaningful.
- Provide the student with a transition warning before group activities begin. Allow the student to leave the group before becoming frustrated.
- Provide the student with a sequence for activities (written or pictures).
- Make sure the student can complete the activity independently before moving to the shared activity group situation.

Notetaking

- Allow a peer to photocopy the class notes to share with the student.
- Allow the student to tape record the discussion/lecture.
- Provide the student with an outline of the class discussion.
- Allow the student to access a computer to take notes.

Presentation

- Accept oral answers, taped or video presentation materials.
- Give the student a written outline of what is expected and a sample of a finished product to follow.
- Allow presentation to be delivered in small chunks to help with anxiety.

Computers

- Place the keyboard close to the screen so that they can be seen simultaneously.
- Use a roller ball/tracking ball with a separate button (track ball mouse).
- Allow the student to use software and equipment that often helps reduce visual distractions. Could use enlarged adhesive letters on a keyboard.
- Encourage the student to wear headphones to minimize distractions and maximize clarity of sounds.
- Consider the use of bold key labels and primary keyboards in ABC order if keyboard awareness skills are not developing using the standard equipment.
- Use a desktop security program to prevent the student from accessing prohibited areas while completing schoolwork.

- Make sure monitor is at eye level.
- Make sure the mouse and keyboard are accessible and at the proper height.



Example

A student in an A/V Technology and Communication Program that has a classification of autism and has been exhibiting some distractibility and lack of social interaction in the classroom. When asked to work with others on group projects, the student will go to a desk and put his head down. After a meeting with the student, it is agreed that when the student is distracted or the teacher notices he is, the student will be cued by the teacher to focus. When working in cooperative groups, the student will work one minute longer each time the group meets. The teacher will signal when the minute is up.

D EAF-BLINDNESS

Definition

Deaf-blindness is defined as, “concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for students with deafness or student with blindness.” "Deaf-blindness" hearing and visual impairments is a combination that may cause severe communication, developmental and/or educational problems. These students cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for students with deafness or blindness.

Deaf-blindness is sometimes known as dual sensory impairment or multi-sensory impairment, and is more than a combination of visual and hearing impairments. It is the condition of little or no useful sight and little or no useful hearing. As with the word "Deaf," it can be capitalized to indicate that it is a culture; some prefer the spelling "DeafBlind". Deafblind people are not the same as individuals who are either deaf or

blind. With over 70 possible causes for deaf-blindness, researchers have found two distinct categories for deaf-blindness: either they are congenital or they are acquired.

Characteristics

The characteristics of individuals with deaf-blindness include cognitive difficulties such as the inability to perform basic academic tasks and difficulty in performing functional life skills. Communication difficulties include difficulty with spoken language and limited vocabulary. Students often exhibit behavior problems that include low tolerance and frustration levels, difficulty in age-appropriate behavior, adjusting to change, and inappropriate behaviors. Behavior may manifest itself with the following: environmental mobility, vision, hearing, physical-motor skills/orthopedic problems and/or cerebral palsy, seizure activity, eating, bowel/bladder control, and self care.

Accommodations

The ways in which accommodations are planned for students with deaf-blindness will vary based on the degree of hearing and vision loss, the age of the student at onset of impairment, cognitive abilities, communication mode, and/or any other associated disabilities. The environment of learning may need changes in order to accommodate the student with deaf-blindness.



Example

The majority of people with sight and hearing impairments have had both sight and hearing throughout most of their lives, and experienced a loss of those senses through illness, injury or age. Most people with acquired sight and hearing loss retain some useful sight and/or hearing. Some people have congenital deafness and acquired blindness (such as glaucoma or cataracts) or vice-versa. In a Marketing, Sales and Services Program, Melissa is a student who has been deaf her whole life and recently lost most of her vision to a viral infection. As part of her classroom procedure, Melissa has a student from her home school that teams with her and knows sign language. She signs in Melissa's hand,

so that Melissa can feel what she is saying. The teacher works with Melissa, her parents, and her peer tutor to make sure she has all of the lessons translated into sign and accommodations are made so that the lessons are accessible for Melissa.

MENTAL RETARDATION

Definition

People classified as being mentally retarded when they have certain limitations in mental functioning and in skills such as communicating, taking care themselves, and social skills. Mental retardation is caused by a variety of factors that include genetic conditions, problems during pregnancy, problems at birth, and health problems (such as having diseases like measles or meningitis).

Characteristics

They are likely to have trouble learning in school. They will learn, but it will take them longer. There may be some things they cannot learn. The limitations associated with mental retardation will cause a student to learn and develop more slowly than normal. Students with mental retardation may take longer to learn to speak, walk, and take care of their personal needs such as dressing or eating.

Accommodations

Accommodations for individuals with mental retardation can be divided into those for students with mild to moderate retardation and those with severe to profound retardation. Remember that it is important to consider the individual student needs when selecting any accommodations.

For Mild to Moderate Mental Retardation:

- Do not use complex sentences with a person who is mentally slow.
- Concentrate on concrete ideas and skills. An individual with mental retardation often has trouble with abstract concepts.

- Make instructions clear and concise. Break directions down into small steps or tasks.
- Demonstrate whenever possible. Showing is often more effective than telling.
- Be patient, persistent, and consistent.
- Provide warmth and acceptance. Promote a sense of security through a smile, words of praise, or physical expressions of affection.
- Show respect. Do not be condescending. Talk to the individual as a person; talk to an adult as an adult, not as a child.
- Don't have low expectations for a person with mental retardation. Given training and support, a person with retardation can be gainfully employed and totally integrated into society as a valuable, contributing member.

For Severe to Profound Mental Retardation:

- Use the accommodations listed above.
- Do not react with pity, anxiety, or a variety of other negative emotions when first meeting a person with a severe handicap.
- Use age-appropriate conversation.
- Use age-appropriate activities.
- Include these individuals in community and family activities



Example

The CTE teacher has a student with a diagnosis of borderline mentally retarded. In order to assist the student with some learning challenges in his class, the teacher is patient and offers assistance when necessary. Whenever possible the teacher provides other opportunities to learn classroom material and has the student work with others to understand the material. Ben is in a STEM Cluster Program and is working with his peers to learn how make a presentation to a large group. As part of his accommodations, Ben's teacher gives him extra time to learn what is required, teams him with another student to

assist when the teacher is not available, and has Ben keep cue cards in his pocket in case he gets “lost”. Ben feels more confident and always has a system to fall back on if he should become confused.

O RTHOPEDIC IMPAIRMENT

Definition

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), an orthopedic impairment is a severe impairment that adversely affects a student’s educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly (e.g. clubfoot, absence of some member, etc.), impairments caused by disease (e.g. poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures).



Characteristics

Orthopedic impairments include those that are genetic and by sickness or accident. These can be a birth defect of some type (congenital anomaly) or impairment from some other cause (amputation, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, burns and fractures).

Accommodations

There are some general suggestions that should be considered and fall across multiple categories. Some might call these “common sense”, but we sometimes forget about them. Consider:

- Accepting the fact that a disability exists. Not acknowledging this fact is not acknowledging the person.
- Changing room furniture can cause problems for the individual with limited sight or with orthopedic disabilities. Discuss changes with students before.
- Ask the student to tell you when they anticipate a need for assistance.

- Don't lean on a student's wheelchair and only push it when asked. The chair is a part of the body space of the student who uses it.
- Encourage students who use crutches or canes to keep them within easy reach and make such a space available.
- Have custodians keep floors clear of liquids and if at all possible use non-skid floor polish for students who use crutches and wheelchairs.
- Use a tape recorder as needed if writing is difficult.
- Speak directly to the student with a disability, confidentially, as you would other students.
- Students should be encouraged to talk confidentially with their instructors during the first week of classes to discuss their functional difficulties and needs, and to talk about ways to accommodate.
- Using a wheelchair when the person can walk with the aid of cane(s), brace(s), crutch(es), or a walker does not mean a student is "feigning" the degree of disability. It may be a means to conserve energy or move about more quickly.
- When it appears that a student needs help, ask if you can help. Accept a "no thank you" graciously.
- When talking to a student who uses a wheelchair for more than a few minutes, sit down or kneel to place yourself at that student's eye level.
- Always plan any field trip in advance to ensure accessibility.
- Sensitivity to these words such as "walking" or "running" is not necessary. Students who use wheelchairs use the same words. (adapted from West Virginia University, 2005.)



Example

Jimmie is a student in Mr. Wang's Government and Public Administration Cluster Program and has Cerebral Palsy. When students do practical exercises, or out of their seats for long periods of time, Jimmie may go and sit at his desk until he feels strong

enough to participate. His disability makes his movement hard at times and he frequently becomes fatigued. Jimmie's IEP states that he can do this when needed and his IEP gives him extra time to complete assignments as a result.

SPEECH OR LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT

▼ *Definition*

This student with a speech or language impairment has a problem in communication and related areas. Speech and language disorders refer to problems in communication and related areas such as oral motor function or control. This can range from simple sound substitutions to the inability to understand or use language or use the oral-motor mechanism for functional speech and feeding. Some causes of speech and language disorders include hearing loss, neurological disorders, brain injury, mental retardation, drug abuse, physical impairments such as cleft lip or palate, and vocal abuse or misuse. Frequently, however, the cause is unknown.

▼ *Characteristics*

With over one million students with speech or language impairments, this disability affects one of every ten people in the U.S. Characteristics can include impaired articulation, language impairment, stuttering, or voice impairment.

▼ *Accommodations*

Allow multiple ways in which the student can express or fulfill assignments including electronic devices, sign language, or computer text to speech. Using other forms of assessment that can include writing, demonstrating and working with others to show knowledge of the subject.



Example

A new student, John, in the Manufacturing Cluster Program stutters and other students frequently make fun of him. The teacher asks John how she can assist him in class. In order to both assess how the John is doing and have him work on speech, John gives a signal to the teacher when he believes he can answer a question without stuttering, and for other instances when the class orally gives responses, John writes his responses on a piece of paper. In going by John's desk, the teacher can quickly determine if John is following the discussion or is lost.

V ISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Definition

The individual with visual impairment can have partial vision or be totally blind (classification includes those who are partially sighted and those who have low vision). Even if vision is corrected, this can impact the student's educational performance.

Characteristics

The severity, type of vision loss, age when it occurs and functioning level of the student can all have an impact on learning. Loss or lack of social skills may be due to the inability to determine nonverbal cues. Independence may also be an issue.

Accommodations

Accommodations can include setting (lighting, room arrangement, proximity to tools and equipment), specialized equipment, and technology in the form of computers and audio equipment, and working with peers.



Example

Having a new student in the Finance Cluster Program that is almost totally blind, the teacher asks the new student, Elizabeth, what she needs in order to be successful in the class. Elizabeth states that she needs help with note taking and moving around in the class. Elizabeth states that she needs help with note taking and moving around in the class. Another student offers to take notes for Elizabeth and before class begins, she comes in to familiarize herself with the room layout. Once class begins, students are divided into cooperative groups and peers work with the student who has limited sight to ensure she has access to the curriculum. The instructor also provides copies of lessons or handouts before class on an as-needed basis. Elizabeth can take them home or use them with her reader-pen to understand the lesson before it is taught.

D **DEAFNESS**

Definition

Hearing impairment is defined by IDEA as "an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance." Deafness is defined as a hearing impairment so severe that the student is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification."

Characteristics

It is useful to know that sound is measured by its loudness or intensity (measured in units called decibels, dB) and its frequency or pitch (measured in units called hertz, Hz). Impairments in hearing can occur in either or both areas, and may exist in only one ear or in both ears. Hearing loss is generally described as slight, mild, moderate, severe, or profound, depending upon how well a person can hear the intensities or frequencies most greatly associated with speech. Generally, only children whose hearing loss is greater than 90 decibels (dB) are considered deaf for the purposes of educational placement. There are four types of hearing loss. Conductive hearing losses are caused by diseases or

obstructions in the outer or middle ear (the conduction pathways for sound to reach the inner ear). Conductive hearing losses usually affect all frequencies of hearing evenly and do not result in severe losses. A person with a conductive hearing loss usually is able to use a hearing aid well or can be helped medically or surgically.

Sensorineural hearing losses result from damage to the delicate sensory hair cells of the inner ear or the nerves which supply it. These hearing losses can range from mild to profound. They often affect the person's ability to hear certain frequencies more than others. Thus, even with amplification to increase the sound level, a person with a sensorineural hearing loss may perceive distorted sounds, sometimes making the successful use of a hearing aid impossible.

A mixed hearing loss refers to a combination of conductive and sensorineural loss and means that a problem occurs in both the outer or middle and the inner ear. A central hearing loss results from damage or impairment to the nerves or nuclei of the central nervous system, either in the pathways to the brain or in the brain itself.

Accommodations

Accommodations can include:

- Occupy classrooms that are not located near frequently used and noisy common areas such as the cafeteria, gymnasium, or administrative offices.
- Reduce background noise and improve acoustics by shutting classroom doors and windows and quieting air rush sounds from air and heating ducts.
- Add carpet, window treatments, or acoustical wall/ceiling coverings to absorb sound.
- Reduce noise from furniture scraping on hard surfaces by attaching tennis balls to the legs of students' desks and chairs.
- Fully light the classroom for optimum viewing of the educator and other students.
- Arrange seats for optimum viewing of the educator and other students (front row if preferred or consider an open classroom arrangement such as a “U” shape).
- Provide visual and audible alarm systems.



Example

Jesup has a hearing loss and is in Mr. Johnson's STEM Cluster Program. During lecture, Mr. Johnson has Jesup sit at the front of the class so he can read Mr. Johnson's lips. Jesup has explained that he finds this very useful and an alternate form of getting class notes. Mr. Johnson also supplies copies of some lesson plans with key words, so Jesup will understand without hearing Mr. Johnson's emphasis on the main concepts and terminology.

E MOTIONAL DISTURBANCE

Definition

Many terms are used to describe emotional, behavioral or mental disorders. Currently, students with such disorders are categorized as having an emotional disturbance, which is defined under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as follows:

"...a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance--

- (A) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- (B) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- (C) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- (D) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- (E) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. There should be evidence that the student's behavior is not the result of a temporary reaction to home, school, or community situations.

Characteristics

The causes of emotional disturbance have not been adequately determined. Although various factors such as diet, brain disorder, stress, heredity, and family functioning have been suggested as possible causes, research has not shown any of these factors to be the direct cause of behavior or emotional problems. Some of the characteristics and behaviors seen in students who have emotional disturbances include:

- Hyperactivity (short attention span, impulsiveness);
- Aggression/self-injurious behavior (acting out, fighting);
- Withdrawal (failure to initiate interaction with others; retreat from exchanges of social interaction, excessive fear or anxiety);
- Immaturity (inappropriate crying, temper tantrums, poor coping skills); and
- Learning difficulties (academically performing below grade level).

Individuals with the most serious emotional disturbances may exhibit distorted thinking, excessive anxiety, bizarre motor acts, and abnormal mood swings. This can also be identified as severe psychosis or schizophrenia.

Many students who do not have emotional disturbances may display some of these same behaviors at various times during their development, but would not be classified as having emotional disturbance since the behaviors associated with emotional disturbance will continue to occur over long periods of time.

Suggestions for CTE teachers who work with learners with emotional or behavioral problems include being consistent with rules, consequences, expectations, and standards; work with the special education department and/or other teachers to develop positive behavior support and reinforce student strengths; provide structured tasks; provide meaningful and concrete examples; do not over stimulate; allow those who are hyperactive to move around; use programmed learning methods and individualized instruction; give clear directions; give nonverbal cues for inappropriate behavior; get advice if the student is on medication; and, don't take things personally if the student acts

out (adapted from Sarkees-Wircenski & Scott, 2003).

Accommodations

Individuals with emotional or behavioral disorders can exhibit a broad range of behaviors. It is important for accommodations to be specific to the reason for the behavior. For example, it may be determined that a student who acts out does it when being asked to do math problems. The student is not proficient at math and acts out behaviorally to avoid doing any. Once it is determined that the underlying issue is a lack of proficiency in math, accommodations can be implemented that can address it and subsequently the behavior.

Some types of accommodations for learners with emotional or behavioral disorders can include:

- Verbal reinforcement
- Nonverbal reinforcers (eye contact, voice, signals)
- Use warning cues that are nonverbal and solely between the student and you
- Remove the learner from the situation
- Ask for a timeout or conference with the student
- Express that you care and would like to help
- Allow the student to explain
- Give the student an opportunity to calm down.

Consider that using negative reinforcement, blaming, criticizing and punishment are the least effect strategies you can use.



Example

Jerry comes into the Manufacturing Cluster Program angry and ready to act out. In Jerry's ARD meeting, it is determined that the reason is due to bullying that is occurring on the bus ride to the CTE complex. While the school and bus driver may address the bullying that is occurring on the bus, there will still be instances when the Jerry comes in

angry. This can be very hazardous in the classroom setting. On those days, Jerry will signal the teacher and ask for permission to go to on an errand. Once the Jerry returns, if he is still upset, he will quietly ask to go and speak with a counselor. By changing the setting, the CTE teacher can try and address the student's concerns so that learning may occur.

MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

Definition

People with severe disabilities are those who traditionally have been labeled as having severe to profound mental retardation. These people require ongoing, extensive support in more than one major life activity in order to participate in integrated community settings and enjoy the quality of life available to people with fewer or no disabilities. They frequently have additional disabilities, including movement difficulties, sensory losses, and behavior problems.

Characteristics

People with severe or multiple disabilities may exhibit a wide range of characteristics, depending on the combination and severity of disabilities, and the person's age. There are, however, some traits they may share, including:

- Limited speech or communication;
- Difficulty in basic physical mobility;
- Tendency to forget skills through disuse;
- Trouble generalizing skills from one situation to another; and/or
- A need for support in major life activities (e.g., domestic, leisure, community use, vocational).

Accommodations

Related services are of great importance, and the multidisciplinary approach is crucial.

Appropriate people such as speech and language therapists, physical and occupational therapists, and medical specialists need to work closely with classroom teachers and parents. Because of problems with skill generalization, related services are best offered during the natural routine in the school and community rather than removing a student from class for isolated therapy.

Frequently, classroom arrangements must take into consideration a student's needs for medications, special diets, or special equipment. Adaptive aids and equipment enable students to increase their range of functioning. For example, in recent years computers have become effective communication devices. Other aids include: wheelchairs, typewriters, headsticks (head gear), and clamps, modified handles on cups and silverware, and communication boards. Computerized communication equipment and specially built vocational equipment also play important roles in adapting working environments for people with serious movement limitations.



Example

It is important to remember that when a student is considered for classification with a disability, it needs to be shown that they need services to assist them in the learning environment. If a student has multiple disabilities, those that impair the student's ability to have the same education as anyone else are the ones that should be addressed in the IEP/ARD meeting. A student in Mr. Cagle's Architecture and Construction Cluster Program has multiple disabilities. He has a cognitive delay (where he needs more time to respond to requests), Tourette's Syndrome (manifested by multiple facial and leg tics), and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD). The student's IEP identifies the need to wait longer for responses and provide cues when preparing to transition to new topics.

Although the student has Tourette's, there are no modifications or accommodations that need to be made as a result. The student's OCD is not specifically addressed in the IEP, but when Mr. Cagle feels that other students are becoming frustrated with that student or if they do not get a concept because they are fixating too much on one area, Mr. Cagle redirects the student or specifically asks them to run an errand for him. He is considering

bringing it up at the next ARD meeting, but what he is doing so far seems to work and the student is really excelling in his class.



OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENT (OHI)

Definition

The student who has a disability classification of Other Health Impairment has limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, which results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment. This is either due to chronic or acute health problems such as attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia. The student's educational performance can be adversely affected. Other health impairments mean having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli that result in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment. In order to qualify for this category, there are two main components:

- A chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, nephritis, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia;
- That health problem must adversely affect a student's educational performance.

Characteristics

The most frequent categories under which students qualify for services as OHI are attention deficit disorder (ADD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). These conditions naturally lend themselves to the OHI classification in that both are characterized by an inability to focus, pay attention or there is distractibility. This can

also include impulsivity and, as stated before, may adversely affect educational performance.

The student's disability must have an impact on their grades for them to be considered for services under OHI. In a U.S. Court of Appeals court case, a student who had asked for special education services did not qualify because it was determined that the student's delinquent behavior was the result of drug and alcohol use, rather than any type of emotional disturbance, ADHD, or other disability. Any negative impact on educational performance must be caused by a student's disability (rather than something like drugs and alcohol) to qualify them for services.

Accommodations

When working with students who are identified as OHI, try to be flexible and consider options if the student may miss class due to chronic conditions. Some typical accommodations are extended time, assignments on tape or in audio format, and an environment that has few distractions.



Example

A student in Ms. Harrell's Information Technology Cluster Program has a chronic health condition and will be absent for several weeks from class. This is continually putting this student behind in assignments and instruction. After an ARD meeting, it is determined that an outline of the lesson(s) should be furnished to the student. The instructor can furnish a recording of classes or send lessons to the student to review outside of the classroom setting. Ms. Harrell decides that online chats and emails can keep the student in touch with what is happening in class so he/she does not fall behind.

T RAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

Definition

This condition identifies a student as having traumatic brain injury that can cause a partial or total functional disability or impairment, and can affect the student's educational performance. According to IDEA, Traumatic Brain Injury is “...an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psycho-social behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.” [34 *Code of Federal Regulations* §300.7(c)(12)]

Characteristics

Individuals with TBI often go undiagnosed, so it is important to determine if a student has had any strikes, blows or jarring that would cause the brain to be injured. Since there may be no obvious outer injuries, these are sometimes not found until the individual reports experiencing memory, behavioral, and other issues that were not manifested before. Signs can include changes in physical skills (talking, seeing, hearing, other senses), changes in thinking (short or long term memory), and social or behavioral problems (students may experience depression, anxiety, mood changes, inability to control their emotions).

Head injuries can cause changes in one or more of the following areas: thinking and reasoning, understanding words, remembering things, paying attention, solving problems, thinking abstractly, talking, behaving, walking and other physical activities, seeing and/or hearing, and learning.

Accommodations

Planning is extremely important in assisting students who have experienced a traumatic brain injury. The effect of the injury may be lifelong or temporary. Each student must be evaluated independently and their educational needs carefully considered. Work with the student's parents and other IEP team members and document student progress in class.

Specific strategies and accommodations that can assist include giving the student more time to finish their work, scaffolding instruction, give more examples, check learning, maintaining consistent routines, reducing distractions, and consider that the student may tire easily and need to rest.



Example

A student in the Business Management and Administration Cluster Program suffers a damaging blow to their head over the weekend when they fall backward out of a two story window. The student suffers from frequent fatigue and memory loss. When the student returns to class, the IEP team has already met (with the student as part of the team) and determined that the student will need to have the class lessons furnished in advance and will be assisted by a peer in completing assignments and getting to and from class. The IEP team agrees that, due to the progress the student is making, accommodations will be made in providing the student more opportunities to learn the material and no changes will be made at this point to formal class assessments. The CTE teacher will monitor student progress to determine if there needs to be a change in these accommodations.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT

Definition

Students, who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English and who

do not speak English as their primary language can be considered limited English proficient, or "LEP."

Characteristics

Characteristics of students who are LEP include difficulty in learning both core academic content and specialized content. Learning vocabulary and problem-solving skills can provide unique challenges. These students typically (but not always) come from a home where English is also the second language or may not be spoken at all. This student is often quiet in class and not willing to speak out or suggest a “wrong” answer.

Accommodations

Accommodations for LEP students should include monitoring for comprehension, organizing content to provide more opportunities for learning, assessing in different ways (simplified, with key words and pictures), using peer tutors and parent volunteers, using authentic assessments and rubrics. The CTE teacher may wish to consider using elements of sheltered instruction or having a parent volunteer translate key words into the student’s first language.



Example

The CTE teacher has a new student who is struggling to learn the terminology in the Business Management and Administration Cluster Program, but is trying very hard and has emphatically indicated their wish to be in the class and participate as needed. The teacher decides to try several strategies to help the student learn the material. First, the teacher teams the student with a peer who also speaks the student’s native language and English. This student works with the LEP student by translating material in class. These two students are part of a group of four students who do cooperative projects together. The other two students are both English-only speakers but very helpful to others. Next, the CTE teacher takes their next lesson and translates it into the student’s primary language either through a web-based translation device or by using a parent volunteer. The teacher develops an assessment that identifies 10 key terms that the student needs to

learn in the lesson and the student must be able to identify those terms in English. Finally, the teacher shows the student how to use a computer translator and for written assignments, allows the student to translate their work online. Once translated, it must be translated back and the student must read it to determine if the translation works.

ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED

Definition

An individual who is classified as economically disadvantaged receives financial support in the form of welfare or has a family income that is lower than the poverty level. This can include individuals classified as homeless and on free and reduced lunch. This is determined by the latest data on low income levels based on the US Department of Commerce or Department of Health and Human Services (Wircenski & Scott, 2003).

Characteristics

Individuals who are economically disadvantaged can include individuals who are homeless (those who lack a regular, fixed adequate residence or live in a temporary residence, automobile, public place or are shelter), those whose families are on public assistance and below the poverty line and qualify for free and reduced lunch.

Accommodations

Students who are considered economically disadvantaged may need some time at the beginning of class to change their clothing or clean up. Extra time for this gives the student a sense of dignity. Understanding that the student may be hungry or overwhelmed emotionally and need a place to feel safe is important.

Allowing the student to come early or work after school may help them complete work that they do not have the opportunity to do outside of school or they may not have the proper tools for doing it.



Example

A student comes into the Finance Cluster Program and has a distinct odor. The CTE teacher learns that other students call this student “stinky” and that their parents only allow this student to shower once a week. To assist the student in maintaining their dignity, the CTE teacher keeps an extra set of clothing at their desk and allows the student 5 minutes at the beginning of class to go wash and change clothes if needed. Extra food bars are kept in the teacher’s cabinet in case the student is hungry. As a result, the student enjoys the class more and feels accepted.
