

Accommodations and Modifications for English Language Learners with Learning Disabilities

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Who is an English Language Learner (ELL) with a disability?

Generally speaking, an ELL with a disability is a student who is eligible for both special education and English as a second language (ESL) and/or bilingual education services.

What is a disability?

A learning disability refers to a variety of disorders that affect the acquisition, retention, understanding, organization, or use of verbal and/or nonverbal information.

What are the most common learning disabilities ELLs have?

From the data on all students with disabilities, the following can be inferred:

The majority of ELLs with disabilities are identified as Specific Learning Disabled (SLD), followed by those who are classified with speech or language impairments (SLI)

How is an ELL with a Disability Educated in a General Education Classroom?

Instruction is modified in order to accommodate differences in learning styles and abilities. Instruction **must be integrated** with that of the *general education curriculum*.

It is the *curriculum of the general education classroom* that should be central in every student's educational plan (IEP).

Accommodations: What are they?

Accommodations help students who are behind their peers by leveling the playing field. They allow students to access the same material and meet the same expectations as their peers.

Common Accommodations for Struggling Learners: Literacy

- Study Guides
- Pre Teach Vocabulary
- Check understanding frequently
- Encourage brainstorming
- Graphic Organizers
- Digital books/books on tape
- Choral reading
- Sticky notes to write questions on
- Highlighters/ highlighting tape
- Read from a computer with headphones
- Follow along with a word window
- —Make connections to self

Accommodations: Writing

- Use of graphic organizers
 - Sentence frames
 - Option to tell a friend his or her story or opinion before writing it
 - Whole group discussion about the topic before writing
 - Allow for translanguaging
 - Allow for use of translator (Google)
 - Choice about type of writing instrument
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Accommodations:

Math

- Use of calculator
 - Hundreds charts
 - Number lines
 - Flash cards
 - Manipulatives
 - Multiplication table
 - Chart paper to keep track of columns
 - Numbered dice instead of dotted dice
 - Allow students to work out problems in their L1
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Accommodations:

Classroom Management/Instruction

- Collaborative learning groups
 - Partner work
 - Hands on experiences/activities
 - Direct instruction
 - Drilling, ample time for practice
 - Consistent routine
 - Frequent, consistent, deliberate checking for understanding
 - Formative assessment
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Accommodations:

Testing: Setting, Timing, Presentation, Response

- Review test strategies
 - Study Guides
 - Review of information
 - Practice Test
 - A double spaced test
 - Easy questions first
 - Chunking of material
 - Extended time, different time
 - Ability to retake after teacher corrects
 - Ability to accrue extra points
 - Open book, open note
 - Smaller, quieter area
 - Paper and pencil vs. computer or vice versa
 - Big print
 - Oral, read aloud, via scribe
 - Repeating, paraphrasing directions
 - Take home test
 - Questions in English, answers in L1
 - Allow for translanguaging, use of translator
 - Alternative assessments
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Accommodations:

- Are intended to reduce and/or eliminate the effects of a student's disability and/or English language proficiency level
- Should never reduce learning expectations by reducing the scope, complexity, or rigor of an assessment

In other words...accommodations should not be used to compensate for a student's lack of knowledge and skills. If they are, they won't work.

**Modifications:
What are they?**

Usually, a modification means a change in what is being taught to or expected from the student. Making an assignment easier so the student is not doing the same level of work as other students is an example of a modification.

Some common Modifications

Literacy, Writing, Math and Testing

- Adapted readers/novels
 - Fewer problems or questions
 - Select specific problems and omit others
 - Give student choice of which problems to do
 - Reduce the number of multiple choice
 - Eliminate true/false questions
 - Reduce or omit open ended/essay questions
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Common Modifications Continued

- Word bank
 - Option to draw or label
 - Use of bullet writing
 - Simplified directions
 - Simplified language on test
 - Simplified version of worksheet
 - Modified grading
 - Alternative assessments - project based
 - Portfolios to assess
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Assessments should be *authentic and realistic*. The term authentic assessment describes the multiple forms of assessment that reflect student learning, achievement, motivation, and attitudes on instructionally relevant classroom activities.

Often traditional types of assessments (i.e., multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, etc.) are heavily language dependent. These content assessments become English proficiency tests rather than a measure of what students know.

Design a realistic assessment. ELLs in general and those with disabilities in particular, do not have to be assessed in the same manner as mainstream students.

When teaching ELLs with Special Needs Emphasize and Implement:

- Educational activities within the context of students' prior experience and skills
- Complex solutions and higher level thinking
- Collaborative learning activities
- High expectations while valuing diversity
- Active learning and inquiry based tasks
- Ongoing verbal dialogue
- Modeling and Prompting

Check out these resources:

- **The Bilingual Special Education Interface Fourth Edition**
Leonard M. Baca and Hermes T. Cervantes, 2004
- **Teaching for Biliteracy** *Karen Beeman and Cheryl Urow, 2013*
- **Special Education Considerations for English Language Learners Second Edition** *Else Hamayan, Barbara Marleer, Cristina Sanchez-Lopez and Jack Damico, 2013*

Check out these as well:

- The Optimal Learning Environment (OLE) *Figueroa and Ruiz*, 1984
- The Assessment and Intervention Model for Bilingual Exceptional Students (Aim for the BESt) *Ortiz and Rivera*, 1990

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