

SPED NEWS

Staff Edition



May 2005

John Enloe, Director
Special Education
Sevier County Schools
www.slc.sevier.org

Directors MEMO

ACCOUNTING FOR ALL LEARNERS IN THE REGULAR CLASSROOM

Diversity is more evident than ever in each classroom. As curriculum and instruction moves to meet the challenges that come when working with students who have a range of needs socially, emotionally, physically and academically, we use labels to note new ways of what happens in the classroom. In particular, these labels are used: accommodation, modification and differentiation.



Accommodation is used in the testing situation for students with identified disabilities include: participating in out-of-level testing, using audiotaped test items, receiving extended time, using tools such as typewriter/computer/word processor, being tested in an individual setting, or having a test administrator draw lines on an unlined response booklet page. These are just some of the accommodations that can be made in the conditions or environment of testing/learning settings.

Modification is often used interchangeably with accommodation. It might help to talk about modification as what the teacher does to the lesson rather than the environment. For example, knowing that there is a large range in the reading abilities of students in a classroom, a teacher may provide for smaller units of content to be learned over a longer period of time,

Differentiation of instruction and curriculum is more intentional and intensive. Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) in its current instructional INQUIRY KIT defines differentiation as providing "varied learning options in a classroom to make curriculum and instruction the best possible fit for learners who, though they have many things in common, differ in some important ways from one another."

Therefore, differentiation or adapting curriculum and instruction is a response to the varied readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles of students in mixed ability classrooms.

A teacher begins with answering these questions:

- What constitutes essential learning for all students in a given study?
- What constitutes opportunity for exploration based on personal interest and learning profile?
- What are varied ways in which content can be presented for a broad range of readiness levels?

-When should students have a choice about content and activity assignments?

The response to these questions makes certain that each student grows in all key skills and knowledge areas, moving on from their starting points.

Differentiation generally begins with the student's response to the particular curricular experience. It requires knowledge of the student, selection of the strategy for differentiation, and selection of an appropriate instructional approach. Design for Differentiation may include differentiating the:

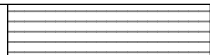


May 30th
Vacation Day

June 3rd
Administrative Day

June 4th
Report Card
Distribution

August 18th
In-Service



Inclusion Is:

(This is from a policy statement at Syracuse University. It has application for anyone)

Inclusion means:

- Educating all children with disabilities in regular classrooms regardless of the nature of their disabling condition(s).
- Providing all students enhanced opportunities to learn from each other's contributions.
- Providing necessary services within the regular schools.
- Supporting regular teachers and administrators (e.g., by providing time, training, teamwork, resources, and strategies).
- Having students with disabilities follow the same schedules as non-disabled students.
- Involving students with disabilities in age-appropriate academic classes and extracurricular activities, including art, music, gym, field trips, assemblies, and graduation exercises.
- Students with disabilities using school cafeteria, library, playground, and other facilities along with non-disabled students.
- Encouraging friendships between non-disabled and disabled students.
- Students with disabilities receiving their education and job training in regular community environments when appropriate.
- Teaching all children to understand and accept human differences.
- Placing children with disabilities in the same schools they would attend if they did not have disabilities.
- Taking parents' concerns seriously.
- Providing an appropriate individualized educational program.

Inclusion does not mean:

- It does not mean "dumping" students with disabilities into regular programs without preparation or support.
- It does not mean providing special education services in separate or isolated places.
- It does not mean ignoring children's individual needs.
- It does not mean jeopardizing students' safety or well-being.
- It does not mean placing unreasonable demands on teachers and administrators.
- It does not mean ignoring parents' concerns.
- It does not mean isolating students with disabilities in regular schools.
- It does not mean placing students with disabilities in schools or classes that are not age-appropriate.
- It does not mean requiring that students be "ready" and "earn" their way into regular classrooms based on cognitive or social skills.

According to a 1995 article in SEDL's *Issues About Change*, full inclusion's strongest arguments come from its moral, philosophical, and ethical base. Our country was founded on the principles of freedom and equality of opportunity for all persons. It is easy to claim that these ideals have not been achieved within the population as a whole, but the move towards their attainment continues. Perhaps the best explanation of the reason for supporting full inclusion comes from Lieberman (1992) who said that "*the selling points for full integration are emotionally powerful. They do not lend themselves to be easily challenged... The arguments speak in ideals for all humanity. Images are presented that show friendship, loyalty, care-giving from the heart, building a society based on mutuality of interest. As my fellow man goes, so go I. Only a cynic would take this on.*"

Is a sense of belonging, meaning, and purpose for everyone? Is the foundation of our country, the pursuit of life, liberty and justice for "some"? If inclusion isn't for everyone, is exclusion for those not included? Who decides who is to be excluded and on what basis? Should we use religion, race, sex, skin color, beliefs, or abilities? Essentially, each of us much determine how we feel about our fellow persons, and whether or not learning to learn together makes more sense than learning to learn apart.

All Learners continued from front page

- Data gathered
- Content
- Complexity
- Teaching and learning material
- Level and types of resources used
- Degree and amount of student participation in planning
- Duration of learning activities
- Expectancies of student productivity
- Evaluative process

In summary, *accommodation* is the teacher's attempt to change the learning environment and materials to meet the individual needs of students who have learning disabilities. *Modification* is the change made by the teacher of the content or curriculum to provide targeted students a more equal access to the core curriculum. And *differentiation* of curriculum and instruction is used to meet the varied needs of students within a classroom.