Adaptations

Adaptations are measures or actions taken in relation to teaching, learning and assessment that enable a pupil with special education needs to access curriculum outcomes and content on the same basis as their peers. The types of adaptations made will vary according to the needs of the individual pupil (Board of Studies Teaching & Educational Standards NSW [BOSTES], 2012a). Adaptations can encompass a range of areas including the physical environment, delivery and format of teaching, utilisation of assistance equipment and reduction of study load. They are based on reducing the impact of the pupil’s disability on their achievement (Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training [ADCET], 2014). Examples of adaptations include (ADCET, 2014): provision of information or course materials in accessible format, e.g. a text book in Braille; changes in teaching practices, e.g. wearing an FM microphone to enable a pupil to hear lectures; supply of specialised equipment or services, e.g. a note taker for a pupil who cannot write; changes in teaching schedules and arrangements, e.g. relocating classes to an accessible venue; changes to teaching approaches, e.g. substituting an assessment task; modifications to physical environment, e.g. installing lever taps, building ramps, installing a lift; modifications to computer equipment in the library (ADCET, 2014).

Some pupils with special education needs will require adaptations to assessment practices in order to demonstrate what they know and can do in relation to curriculum outcomes and content (BOSTES, 2012b). The type of adaptations and support will vary according to the particular needs of the pupil and the requirements of the activity. These may be:

- alternative formats for responses, for example written point form instead of essays, scaffolded structured responses, short objective questions or multimedia presentations
- adaptations to assessment activities, for example rephrasing questions, using simplified language, fewer questions or alternative formats for questions
- adaptations to the assessment process, for example additional time, rest breaks, quieter conditions, or the use of a reader and/or scribe or specific technology (BOSTES, 2012b).

Decisions are made at school level to offer adaptations to pupils with special education needs in course work and school-based assessment tasks, including examinations (BOSTES, 2012c).

Alternative assessment minimises the impact of pupils’ disabilities on their performance and allows the marker to see beyond the disability to the pupil’s knowledge and skills. It is designed to place pupils with disability on a more equal footing, and not to give them any kind of advantage. These alternative assessment approaches are often more effective when they are offered to the whole class.
rather than just the pupil with disability, possibly as a "smorgasbord" from which the pupil is required to choose say three (ADCET, 2014):

- oral presentations or viva voce exams
- additional assignments and coursework
- dot-point assignments marked for content rather than for structure
- multiple-choice questions
- practical demonstrations or production of models or displays
- class presentations or role plays
- alternative or supplementary assignments such as taped interviews, slide presentations, photographic essays or hand-made models
- a combination of any of the above

Alternative assessment should aim to simultaneously respect the pupil’s learning needs, defend academic integrity, and promote equity and consistency for all. However, it is clear that education providers are not required to lower academic standards or disregard the needs staff or other pupils. In more complex cases discussion with the disability service will be useful (ADCET, 2014).

**Instructional Adaptations**

Instructional adaptations are defined as some planned and intentional changes which aim all pupils’ learning differently from general plan, depending on their capabilities (Fidan, Cihan, Özbey, 2014 as cited in Smith, Polloway, Patton & Dowdy, 2004; Wood, 2007). Instructional adaptations are as follows:

**Adaptations of the course content:** Adaptations of the course content are the organization function, level and scope of the context which will be taught according to the pupils’ needs. Goals of these adaptations should also be established similar to other pupils, and should be appropriate. In addition, these purposes should be determined in accordance with the necessary prerequisite skills, if necessary, additional pupil teaching purposes should be determined (Fidan, et al. 2014 as cited in Kircaali-İftar & Batu, 2005; McNary, Glasgow & Hicks, 2005; Sucuoğlu, 2006). The course content of inclusive pupils must be individualized according to the needs of the pupils and must be made available in a systematic way (Fidan, et al. 2014 as cited in Eylon & Linn, 1998; Güzel-Özmen, 2003).

**Adaptations in the teaching process:** Adaptations in the teaching process can be listed as preparing pupils to learning, making changes to the instructions given during training (to use oral or written instructions), using various assistance and tips, using visual elements such as symbols, charts, diagrams, graphs and images, providing the pupil opportunities to learn, changing speed of education, using a more open and fluid expression, duplicating samples, summarizing, identifying different strategies to make the pupil correct errors, teaching again for common errors, and using the

**Adaptations of teaching methods and techniques**: The teaching methods used in the inclusive environments were grouped as teacher-centred and pupil centred teaching methods (Fidan, et al. 2014 as cited in Güzel-Özmen, 2003). Direct teaching method, especially applied behaviour analysis techniques, peer-mediated instruction, accurate teaching methods, cooperative learning, group discussions, contextual learning, self-management strategies, computer-assisted education are listed as the other teaching techniques (Fidan, et al. 2014 as cited in Güzel-Özmen, 2003, Sucuoğlu 2006; Wood, 2007). Due to the fact that each pupil is different, teachers are in need of using different instructional methods and techniques and the adaptation of these techniques (Gregory & Chapman, 2002). Activities prepared by the teacher must be based on the child’s managing his creativity and must be directed to his independence within the activity in accordance with knowledge of teacher (Fidan, et al. 2014 as cited in Bender, 2008; Wood, 2007).

**Adaptations of the learning environment**: Adaptation of the learning environment is an essential step for the effectiveness of learning. There are two types of learning environment adaptations for pupils with special needs. The first of these types allows the participation of the pupil’s in the learning environment. These are adaptations of educational environment. To arrange educational environment, teachers can make presentations to the whole class according to pupils' learning styles, create small groups, make them work as pairs, and if necessary, make one-to-one education (Fidan, et al. 2014 as cited in Mortweet, Utley, Walker et al., 1999; Vaughn, Bos, and Schumm, 2000).

The second type of learning environment adaptations is the adaptations of the physical environment (Fidan, et al. 2014 as cited in Wood, 2002). Physical environment adaptations of the classroom must be arranged in a secure way so that the pupil can move freely. Temperature, amount of light, cleanliness, noise level, size of the class, seating arrangement and pupils’ accessibility to learning materials are physical properties that directly affect learning (Fidan, et al. 2014 as cited in Choate, 2000; Güzel-Özmen, 2003; Lewis & Doorlag, 1999; Smith, Molnar & Zahorik, 2003; Sucuoğlu & Kargin, 2006).

**Adaptations of the instructional materials**: Textbooks, teacher-made tools and models (worksheets, graphic organizers, picture cards, etc.) are commonly used materials in educational settings. In addition, various teaching materials like computer software and hardware, optical and non-optical tools, electronic tools, flash cards, television, video, tape player, radio and recording devices are technical products which are developed or adapted for pupils with special needs (Fidan, et al. 2014 as cited in Altunay-Arslantekin, 2012; Hammeken, 2000; Wood, 2007). While choosing and using these
Adaptations made in measurement and evaluation: Adaptations to be made in measurement and evaluation process can be listed as selecting and creating appropriate measurement and evaluation system for pupils (such as multiple choice, gap filling and true-false, taking advantage of open-ended questions, open tests, open-book tests, large print texts, using sample or template/model), adapting success criteria, and examination time (extending the amount of time or taking a break during the evaluation, etc.), adapting test environment (exam location, seating arrangement, or keeping objects which distract attention away, etc.), changing the type of instruction and the type of the expected response, arranging evaluation as small groups or individual basis, informal assessment, authentic assessment, and using anecdotal records, using account papers or story forms for evaluation, evaluating pupils in multiple sessions, continuing evaluation for days, evaluating with oral assessment or embedded assessment in the form of activities. Each measurement results in a grading situation and it may be mentioned of ten evaluation methods. These include: the traditional system (Letter grades or percentages), the system of passing or failing, evaluation based on Individualized Education Program (IEP), criteria or qualification level system, multi-system, shared system, scoring system, the pupil’s self-comparison, the contract system, portfolio assessment, rubric (Fidan, et al. 2014 as cited in Jayanthi, Epstein, Polloway & Bursuck, 2000; Wood, 2007).

Scaffolding

Scaffolding has been described as having the capability to describe varied means of assistance in adult-child interactions and in learning processes from other-regulation to self-regulation (Mäkinen & Mäkinen, 2011 as cited in Rogoff & Gardner, 1984). Scaffolding has two key perspectives on classroom practices, which are especially important for inclusive settings: all pupils should engage in active and continual meaning-making and learning should be guided by ongoing interactions with significant others (Mäkinen & Mäkinen, 2011).

Mäkinen & Mäkinen (2011) proposed three ways to modify scaffolding in inclusive classrooms.

1. From direct teaching to facilitating pupils’ learning processes. The idea is to shift pupils’ learning orientations towards self-responsibility. A process-oriented learning environment is engaging and prioritizes pupils’ own interests and needs. 2. Community-based activities. Collaborative scaffolding enables teachers to pay attention to both the individual and the collective aspects of learning processes. A discussion led by the teacher after a pupil activity can be a powerful method for collaborative scaffolding. 3. Consciousness, reflection, and intentional set of practices in the teacher
profession. Pupils’ intrinsic motivation is improved when teachers scaffold pupils with intentional, reflective, and clarifying questions with regards to the expectations (Mäkinen & Mäkinen, 2011).

References


