What are Curriculum Adaptations?

Introduction

There are several factors that you will need to consider in adapting the curriculum. Adaptive instructional programs are characterized by combined teaching strategies, flexible scheduling, individualized instruction, mastery learning, large and small group instruction, individualized tutorials and cooperative learning. Further, while we will need to adapt the form of instruction to meet the individual needs of children with special needs we will also need to adapt the delivery and response factors that will face the child in school.

Examples of Adapting the Curriculum for Students with Special Needs

Where a student with special needs is expected to achieve or surpass the learning outcomes set out in the science curriculum, regular grading practices and reporting procedures are followed. For students not expected to achieve the learning outcomes, adaptations and modifications must be noted in the Individual Education Plan. In this way, instructional and assessment methods may be adapted to meet the needs of all students.

The following are examples of adaptations that may assist students with special needs achieve success in science. The teacher could:

Adapt the environment

- Change where the student sits in the classroom.
- Make use of cooperative grouping

Adapt presentations

- Provide students with advance organizers of key scientific concepts.
- Demonstrate or model new concepts.

Adapt the pace of activities

- Allow the student more time to complete assignments
- Provide shorter but more frequent assignments

Alternate mode for materials

- Dictate to a scribe
- Tape record
- Draw pictures
- Cut pictures from magazines
- Build models
- Use the computer
- Enlarge/shrink materials
- Use overlays/acetate on text pages
- Cut and paste

- Use manipulatives
- Use a calculator

Adapt materials

- Use large print activity sheets.
- Use overlays on text pages to reduce the quantity of print that is visible.
- Highlight key points on the activity sheet.
- Line indicators
- Sections on paper (draw lines, fold)
- Different types of paper (e.g., graph, paper with mid-lines, raised line paper)
- Provide more white space to put answers
- Highlight or color code (directions, key words, topic sentences)
- Cover parts of worksheets
- Put less information on a page
- Use high contrast colors

Adapt assistance

- Use peers or volunteers to assist students with special needs.
- Use students with special needs to assist younger students in learning science.
- Use teacher assistants to work with small groups of students, as well as with an identified student with special needs.
- Use consultants and support teachers for problem solving and to assist in developing strategies for science instruction.

Adapt assessment

- Allow various ways for students to demonstrate their understanding of scientific concepts such as performing experiments, creating displays and models, and tape recording observations.
- Adapt assessment tools such as paper and pencil tests to include options such as oral tests, open-book tests, and tests with no time limit.
- Keep work samples on NCR paper.
- Use computer programs that provide opportunities for scientific practice and recording results.
- Provide opportunities for extension and practice
- Require small amounts of work to be completed at a given time.
- Simplify the way questions are worded to match the students' level of understanding.
- Provide functional everyday examples such as building structures to develop an understanding of forces. (Ministry of education, British Columbia 2006)