

Resource Guide

Teaching with Accommodations in the Classroom

Accommodations are alterations made to a learning environment to make learning and assessment more accessible for students with disabilities (Byrnes, 2008), or other additional needs. Common examples include giving students extended time on an exam or providing lecture materials in alternative formats. While the goal is to “level the playing field” for students with disabilities, these alterations can benefit and improve the learning experience for all students. The following are pedagogical strategies for teaching with common accommodation requests in the classroom:

- **Strategies for providing extended-time on exams.** This type of alteration usually entails giving a student 50 percent to 100 percent additional time to complete an exam in a testing center. Other options include arranging alternative times outside of class or giving students [extra time to take an exam in Canvas using the Quizzes tool](#). Alternatively, you could elect to give all students extra time or provide a “due date” window for students to complete the exam in Canvas. This benefits students who need additional time to have test questions read aloud using assistive technology as well as students learning English as a second or third language.
- **Strategies for providing instructional content in alternative forms.** In some cases, individual students need access to instructional content in different, but equivalent forms. One option might include giving students the ability to choose between an article or podcast covering the same information. Another option is to record class meetings using Panopto and then upload these recordings with automated captions to Canvas. These captions can then be exported into transcript alternatives as one more way for students to access the information through a “plus-one” method (Tobin and Behling, 2016). For Zoom meetings, remind students to click on live transcription to access closed captions or a full transcript alternative.
- **Strategies for providing copies of lecture notes.** Students with accommodations for designated note-takers often need assistance both generating and interpreting class notes. One option is to ask individual students to volunteer on a class or semester basis. Other options include providing lecture outlines or asking students to contribute notes to a shared Google doc. For group work and other in-class activities, consider assigning student roles (e.g., a scribe, timer, reporter) to generate notes and structure group interactions for these sessions.

Resources

Byrnes, M. (2008). Writing explicit, unambiguous accommodations: A team effort. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 44(1): 18-24.

Allarakhia, H. (2022). Strategies for accommodating students with disabilities in higher education. Faculty Focus.

Tobin, T and K. Behling. (2016). *Reach everyone, teach everyone: Universal design for learning in higher education*. Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press.

For more information or to discuss how you might incorporate these ideas into your courses, contact the Reinert Center by [email](#).