

# *“A TEACHER’S GUIDE TO STANDARDS- BASED LEARNING”*

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## **CHAPTER 5:TEACHING EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS**

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- Using Proficiency Scales with exceptional learners
- Assigning grades to exceptional learners
- Using Standards-based learning in special classes

# UNDERSTANDING EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS

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**Heflebower et al. (2017) stated:**

**One might argue that all students are unique and exceptional learners. Students learn in a variety of different ways and have a variety of strengths and talents. However, the United States has defined several distinct groups as exceptional for the purposes of schooling and education. These include students with disabilities, English learners, and gifted and talented students.**

# USING PROFICIENCY SCALES WITH EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS

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- A Preassessment is one way to identify students who may need accommodations or modifications.
- **Accommodations**: Put in place to help students achieve grade-level expectations. They DO NOT change the level of expectation for students. They simply allow students to demonstrate their proficiency in a manner that is best for them. Expectations remain the same.
- **Modifications**: DO change the level of expectations for students. They shift the expectations either up or down from the grade-level expectations.
  - For example, expectations for students at 2.0 might become the 3.0 expectations for a student with modifications.
  - The proficiency scale content slides up (or down) as needed for students requiring such modifications.



# ACCOMMODATIONS

THIS COMMON SET OF ACCOMMODATIONS MAY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING.

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- Offering more time
- Providing more space
- Using voice-to-text software
- Seating the student away from distractions
- Allowing for different modes of teaching (auditory explanations, pictures, and so on)
- Using graphic organizers
- Increasing font size

## Sample proficiency scale with Accommodations

It is important to stick to the accommodations and not provide too much support when unnecessary. Doing so, may actually inhibit growth and confidence later on.

### Example:

Prioritized standard: The student will apply knowledge of organizational patterns found in informational text.

Level	Description	Sample Activities (With Accommodations)
4.0	In addition to score 3.0 performance, the student demonstrates in-depth inferences and applications that go beyond what was taught.	When the teacher provides the student with a folder containing an informational text (of no more than four paragraphs) cut into paragraphs, the student reads or listens, and organizes the text. The student then identifies (from a list) the structure the author uses and cites specific examples within the text that are characteristic of the identified organizational structure. The student write or dictates an original text that incorporates a self selected organizational pattern.
3.0	<b>The student will apply he knowledge of organizational patterns found in informational text such as, Sequence, cause and effect, compare and contrast, fact and opinion, description, proposition and support.</b>	Teacher provides student with a folder containing an informational text of no more than three paragraphs, cut into paragraphs, the student reads (or listens to) and organizes the text, then identifies (from a list) the structure the author uses. The student classifies short selections of text using a graphic organizer.
2.0	The student will: Sequence three or more events in informational text. Identify the cause and effect in a given text, identify what is being compared and contrasted, recognize or recall specific vocabulary such as sequence, cause, effect, compare, contrast, proposition, description and support.	The student reads (Or listens to) a text and highlights signal words within the text that indicates the structure of the text. The student identifies (three) types of text and the organizational patterns usually associated with those types of texts. The student defines specific terms associated with organizational patterns by matching terms from a word bank to provided definitions.

# MODIFICATIONS

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- Heflebower et al. (2014) :

When modifications are made for students, their grades show progress toward *their* modified prioritized standards, which are different (simpler or more complex) than those of the general student population. The expectations are no longer the same. While modifications apply to only a small number of students, it is important for educators to understand that modifications change the descriptors on the left side of the scale (and therefore what students' grades mean) in addition to the example activities on the right side of the scale.

# MODIFICATIONS

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN USING THE REQUIRED MODIFICATIONS OF AN IEP.

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- 1.) Is the most appropriate modification to move the content up or down on the scale (Such as, score 2.0 to score 3.0, score 4.0 to 3.0)? If yes, complete the process.
- 2.) Is the most appropriate modification to identify a related proficiency scale from a lower or higher grade level? If yes, complete the process.
- 3.) Is the most important modification to customize the levels on the proficiency scale for the individual student? If yes, complete the process.



# STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

## OPTIONS FOR MODIFYING SCALES

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- Moving the level descriptors up on the scale, so that 2.0 descriptors become score 3.0 descriptors and score 3.0 descriptors become 4.0 descriptors.
- Changing the sample activities on the scale to make them simpler.
- Inserting descriptors from lower- grade- level scales.
- Example:
  - Gen. Ed Prioritized Standard: The student will apply knowledge of organizational patterns found in informational text.
  - Modified prioritized standard: The student will identify organizational patterns found in informational text.

# ENGLISH LEARNERS

## EXAMPLES OF ACCOMMODATION'S

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- Showing examples of a completed assignment to model the correct format
- Writing assignments and directions on the board in both print and cursive
- Providing:
  - a bilingual assistant or interpreter to explain concepts in the students' primary language
  - manipulatives to help students complete certain tasks
  - reading materials at the instructional level of the student
  - audio recordings for the learner
  - adequate background information for the learner
- Teaching reading strategies that enable EL's to predict, connect, question, and visualize a story.
- Rewriting story problems using short sentences, pictures, and illustrations to support understanding

# GIFTED LEARNERS

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## ACCOMMODATIONS

- Grouping students with other gifted students or higher level learners
- Adjusting Instruction to include advanced processes, products, and assessments.
- Using thematic, project-based, and problem-based instruction to connect learning across the curriculum
- Asking students higher-level questions that foster critical thinking.
- Allowing students to demonstrate mastery of a concept right away rather than engaging in unnecessary skill practice.

## MODIFICATIONS

- Requiring students to apply their knowledge in unique, real world situations
- Rephrasing prioritized standards as reflective guiding questions
- Requiring students to create hypotheses, ask questions, and analyze their learning.

# ASSIGNING GRADES

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## Areas to Consider when Assigning Grades:

1. Student performance (Mounting Evidence)
2. Giving more weight to recent information
3. Limiting the use of zeros
4. Knowing the limitations of averaging
5. Acknowledging unique considerations



# RELIABLE GRADES

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- In order to provide a true reflection of an exceptional students learning, it is important to use clear prioritized standards that have been organized into a proficiency scales. These scales should articulate competencies and examples of activities at each level.
- Teachers can adapt regular grade-level scales with modifications or accommodations to create a fair and consistent grading system for exceptional learners.

# USING STANDARDS BASED LEARNING IN SPECIAL CLASSES

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- It can be challenging to assign grades in elective classes when the standards are not as specific as they are for core content areas. Teachers whom are faced with this challenge should determine what in their course is important and requires a scale.
- Once determined, teachers can create scales to reflect that topic.
- Example: Measurement of Grammar topics

<b>Score 4.0</b>	<b>The student will use grammar topic in daily life communications.</b>
Score 3.0	<b>The student will use grammar topic in context and conversation.</b>
Score 2.0	The student will identify grammar topic (greetings, food, animals). The student will use the grammar topic in isolated examples.

DUE TO THE LACK OF SPECIFICITY IN ELECTIVE STANDARDS, THE INCLUSION OF RUBRICS MAY BE AN OPTION TO HELP DETERMINE CURRENT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE.

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Example: Fundamentals of Art proficiency scale.

<b>Score 4.0</b>	<b>In addition to score 3.0, the student demonstrates in-depth inferences and applications that go beyond what was taught.</b>
Score 3.0	<b>The student demonstrates mastery of class-level skills and processes with no major errors or omissions.</b>
Score 2.0	The student demonstrates mastery of all basic skills and processes and partial mastery of the higher-level skills and processes with no major errors or omissions.
Score 1.0	The student requires help to partially complete class-level skills and processes and some of the more complex ideas and processes .

# VIDEO:WHAT DOES STANDARDS BASED GRADING LOOK LIKE FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS?

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcFMBZ3mVkY>