Teacher Tips for Classroom Adaptations

**Environment**

Lighting - take it away for glare or add extra task lighting if needed.

Seating arrangement, lockers – student will likely do better with a desk or locker close to a waypoint or somewhere close to the classroom door. Consider your students travel skills and spatial awareness.

Maintain consistency in your classroom – don’t move things around without reorienting your student. Also please ask students to tuck in their chairs and remove obstacles.

School Orientation – consider hallways, bathrooms, playgrounds, gym, cafeteria, library.

Materials – Keep often used materials in a central, easily accessed location. Everything must have a place. Braille label on the main areas is a good way to encourage literacy and independence.

Desk Space – make sure your student has ample space for all their materials and their equipment. Two desks will likely be necessary. Braille materials are often twice the size of print materials and often come in multiple volumes.

**Visual Adaptations**

Reproduce common classroom materials including word walls and anchor charts in the correct format for the student so they can be easily referenced.

Graphic Organizers/Venn Diagrams – simplify and organize your information in a top to bottom, left to right format. Consistently use this format throughout the year. Label or number any headings or lists for ease of use for the braille using student.

**Material Reproduction**

Know your student – what are their strengths for gathering tactual information.

Don’t get too crafty on your reproductions; it’s more important that they are relevant and easy to understand.

Your examples should be as realistic as possible.

It’s not possible to reproduce every item, pick and choose what is important for your learning skills.

**Instructional Adaptations**

Instead of relying on tactual representations of objects (ie. 2d picture of a bee or small dinosaur plastic figures) relate size to a student’s prior knowledge and build on that.

Make sure that your braille reading students have access to all the materials that your other students are reading in print.

Pre teach skills like chart and graph reading. Reduction of information given to the student will help avoid overload. Remember that your chart doesn’t have to look nice visually; it just has to make sense to the braille reader.

You may need to reduce the amount of information given to the student so that he/she will be able to keep pace with the rest of the class.

Try to always use consistent language and inform parents or other staff members what you are using so that they can also use this language.

**Assessment**

Be in touch with parents; make sure they know what the classroom and school expectations about assessment are.

Be sure to include any assessment accommodations on official documents (like scribes, verbatim reading of questions, extra time, computer or braille, etc.)

You may want to consult your ITVI prior to a test to make sure that the format is accessible for your student; it is also helpful to stick with a format that you have been using all year. That way the student is familiar and there are no surprises.