




2011-07-14

# Self-Advocacy Training in Secondary Schools for Students with Learning Disabilities

Ashleigh R. Smith

*Brigham Young University - Provo*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Counseling Psychology Commons](#), and the [Special Education and Teaching Commons](#)

---

## BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Smith, Ashleigh R., "Self-Advocacy Training in Secondary Schools for Students with Learning Disabilities" (2011). *All Theses and Dissertations*. 2823.

<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/2823>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact [scholarsarchive@byu.edu](mailto:scholarsarchive@byu.edu), [ellen\\_amatangelo@byu.edu](mailto:ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu).

Self-Advocacy Training in Secondary Schools for Students with Learning Disabilities

Ashleigh Smith

A thesis submitted to the faculty of  
Brigham Young University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science

Mary Anne Prater, Chair  
Darlene Anderson  
Gordon Gibb

Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education

Brigham Young University

August 2011

Copyright © 2011 Ashleigh Smith

All Rights Reserved

## ABSTRACT

### Self-Advocacy Training in Secondary Schools for Students with Learning Disabilities

Ashleigh Smith

Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education

Master of Science

To be successful in the general education students with disabilities may require accommodations. Students with disabilities need to develop self-advocating skills to be able to request the accommodations needed in the general education. This article describes a study in which six high school students with learning disabilities were explicitly taught to recognize when an accommodation was needed, select the appropriate accommodation, request the accommodation and then implement the accommodation in the general education classroom. The study indicated that students were able to advocate for themselves by requesting accommodations from their general education teacher. Based on data collected through this study, it is important for self-advocacy training to be implemented in the curriculum for all students with disabilities.

Keywords: self-advocacy, self-determination, accommodation, learning disability

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Mary Anne Prater, for her endless efforts as my thesis chair. I could not have accomplished all that I have without her support. I would also like to thank Dr. Darlene Anderson and Dr. Gordon Gibb, who were members of my committee. Their insights and suggestions helped me along the way and made achieving this goal possible. I am also thankful to all the professors at Brigham Young University. Each course was amazing and has helped me become the best teacher possible.

I am grateful for the students and teachers who participated in this study. I appreciate the time and effort they were all willing to invest.

I am also thankful for my family and friends, who took a backseat to my thesis work for the past two years. I especially want to thank my parents for inspiring me to always do my best and for putting such a strong emphasis on education. A special thank you to my future husband, Casey. I could not have finished this process without your patience and kindness. Thank you for sacrificing date nights so I could continue to be a diligent student.

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Statement of Purpose .....	5
Research Question .....	5
Method .....	6
Setting .....	6
Participants.....	6
Students with disabilities.. .....	6
General education teachers.. .....	7
Special education teacher. ....	7
Procedures.....	7
Materials .....	7
Data collection. ....	7
Dependent variable .....	8
Independent variable.....	8
Lesson format.....	9
Experimental design.....	10

Treatment fidelity.....	10
Interobserver agreement.....	10
Baseline.....	11
Training.....	11
Post-training. ....	11
Results.....	11
Grant .....	12
Baseline.....	12
Training.....	12
Post training.. ....	12
Hadley .....	13
Baseline.....	13
Training.....	13
Post-training.....	13
Don.....	14
Baseline.....	14
Training.....	14
Post-training.....	14

Eric.....	14
Baseline.....	14
Training.....	15
Post training.....	15
Social Validity .....	15
General education teachers.. ..	15
Students with disabilities.....	16
Discussion.....	17
Reflections of Findings .....	17
Self-advocating behaviors.....	17
Self-advocating training.....	20
Limitations .....	22
Future Research .....	23
Implications for Special Education Teachers .....	23
Conclusion .....	24
References.....	26
Figure 1 .....	30
Results.....	30

Appendix A.....	31
Appendix B.....	51
Appendix C.....	81
Appendix D.....	83
Appendix E.....	89
Appendix F.....	93



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. <a href="#">Results</a> .....	30

## **INTRODUCTION OF THESIS STRUCTURE**

This thesis, *Self-Advocacy Training in Secondary Schools for Students with Learning Disabilities*, is written in a hybrid format, bringing together traditional thesis requirements and journal publication formats. Its preliminary pages of the thesis reflect requirements for submission to the university. The thesis report is presented as a journal article, and conforms to length and style requirements for submitting research reports to education journals. The literature review is included in Appendix A. Appendix B contains the lessons and handouts used during the self-advocacy training. Both the general education teachers and the students completed a daily checklist throughout the study. These checklists are included in Appendix C. Appendix D includes the treatment fidelity checklists that were used throughout the study. Appendix E contains the social validity questionnaire that was given to the participants of the study. Appendix F includes the consents forms that were given to the participants and parents prior to the study.

## **Introduction**

Students with learning disabilities (LD) are spending an increased amount of their day in general education classrooms. In 2009, 59% of students with learning disabilities spent 79% of their day in the general education classroom (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). Students with mild to moderate disabilities, to be successful in general education classes and in post high school settings, need to be explicitly taught to self-advocate (Brinckerhoff, 1994). Research suggests that students with mild to moderate disabilities do not demonstrate these skills. Thus, students need self-advocacy training, and most teachers are not currently teaching these skills (Brinckerhoff, 1994).

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) can provide the framework for students to learn to self-advocate. When the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) was passed in 1975, students were not included as active participants in creating their IEP's. In 1990, when the EAHCA was reauthorized and renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), it required that every student be provided an opportunity to participate in their IEP meetings (Bremer, Kachgal, & Schoeller, 2003).

Many IEPs include accommodations that students need to help ensure their success in school. General education teachers should be notified of the students' accommodations. Due to the increasing number of special education students in general education classes, it becomes impossible for each teacher to remember every student's individual accommodations. Thus it is vital that students learn how to self-advocate in order to request accommodations in the general education curriculum.

Self-advocacy has been defined as “knowing what you want; knowledge of what you are legally entitled to; and the ability to effectively achieve your goal” (Brinckerhoff, 1994, p. 229). Self-advocacy has also been defined as being able to communicate needs to others in order to gain information to achieve goals (Balcazar, Fawcett, & Seekins, 1991). Martin, Huber-Marshall, and Maxson (1993) state that self-advocacy involves recognizing one’s own strength and weaknesses, determining goals, and having the ability to make decisions. Essentially, students who can self-advocate understand their own disability, including their learning strengths and weaknesses, and have the ability to communicate their needs effectively.

Self-advocacy is a component of self-determination. Self-determined individuals advocate for their own needs (Trainor, 2002) and are more successful in life (Test, Fowler, Wood, Brewer, & Eddy, 2005). Research suggests that students who become self-determined perform better academically, participate in class more frequently, have better employment opportunities, are more likely to go college, are more independent, and have a greater quality of life (Stang, Carter, Lane, & Pierson, 2009). It has also been suggested that if students with disabilities have the ability to make good choices, work toward goals they have selected, work through problems, understand and have the ability to communicate their strengths, and seek accommodations, they will achieve more and have greater success in school (Pierson, Carter, Lane, & Glaeser, 2008).

In order for students to develop self-advocacy skills, they must be explicitly taught to self-advocate in real world settings (Test et al., 2005). If students are going to self-advocate in the classroom it is advantageous to teach and practice the skills in that same setting. Self-advocacy should be taught with the same persistence as any other subject that students are

required to master while in school (Campbell-Whatley, 2008). Although it is vital that these skills are taught and mastered while students are in school, this training rarely happens. When special education and general education teachers were surveyed about the importance of teaching self-determination skills, results indicated that the teachers believed that the skills of problem solving, self-management, decision-making, goal-setting, self-awareness, and self-advocacy were a very important part of the curriculum. However, the same teachers also reported that self-advocacy and self-awareness were the least frequently taught (Stang et al., 2009). If students are expected to be successful adults and citizens, teachers should to incorporate self-advocacy training into the daily curriculum.

Students who are self-determined and thus possess the skills necessary to self-advocate are more likely to have improved post-school outcomes (Stang et al., 2009). Students with disabilities who are self-determined are reported to be happier and have a better quality of life when compared with students that have similar disabilities, but lack self-determination (Thoma, Nathanson, Baker, & Tamura, 2002). Students that self-advocate are more likely to be successful and participate in their general education classes (Stang, 2009).

To self-advocate effectively, students must understand their strengths and limitations. Many special education students leave their schools with no knowledge of their disability or what accommodations are necessary for them to be successful (Test, 2005). Without understanding their disability and how it affects their learning, students will not be able to set realistic goals for themselves or articulate their needs to others (Milsom, Akos & Thompson, 2004). In a longitudinal study conducted by Randskind, Goldberg, Higgins, and Herman (2002), several success attributes were identified as having influence on the success of students with

learning disabilities. One of the attributes was self-awareness. Individuals with LD were more likely to be successful when they had a clear understanding of their disabilities and the strengths and limitations related to their disability. Randskind et al. also found that successful people with disabilities were not defined by their disability. These individuals acknowledged they had a disability and developed strategies to overcome their limitations. As students begin to understand their academic limitations, they need to be taught what specific accommodations will help combat those weaknesses (Skinner & Lindstrom, 2003).

When students understand their limitations, they need to be made aware of what accommodations are available to them and especially what accommodations are outlined in their IEP. They will have a better understanding of what accommodations are necessary for them to have equal access to the general education curriculum (Brinckerhoff, 1994). Detailed accommodations that are typically used by students with disabilities include extended time on tests and assignments, substituting a required course for another course, taking tests in a smaller or private room, tape recording a class lecture, using audio textbooks, readers, or computers, and accessing a copy of the teacher's notes (Brinckerhoff, Shaw, & McGuire 1992).

Many students with disabilities do not naturally possess the skills necessary to ask for appropriate accommodations (Skinner, 1998). Therefore, self-advocacy training needs to include teaching students to appropriately select what accommodations are needed and then articulate those needs to the teacher. Students can be taught to do so (Durlak, Rose, & Bursuck 1994). Wall and Dattilo (1995) reported that students with disabilities have limited opportunities to use their self-advocating behaviors. They suggested that educators provide opportunities that will allow students to practice and further develop their self-advocating behaviors.

In a study conducted by Durlak et al. (1994), eight high school students with specific learning disabilities were taught the skills necessary to self-advocate. The students were taught about their specific disability and how to communicate what accommodations they needed. The students practiced requesting accommodations through video-taped role plays. They were then given the chance to request accommodations in real-world settings. The data suggested that students were able to acquire the skills needed to self-advocate and request accommodations.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Many professionals advocate the need to teach students with disabilities to self-advocate. Yet the research conducted on the effectiveness of such training is limited. In particular, few studies have examined the training effects for students with LD in applying their training to requesting accommodations in the general education classroom. Additional research is needed to verify that students with LD can be effectively taught to do so.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of self-advocacy training on high school students with learning disabilities. Students were explicitly taught self-advocacy skills focused on four main components: (a) knowledge of accommodations, (b) knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses, (c) knowledge of appropriate accommodations, and (d) the skills needed to ask for appropriate accommodations. It was expected that once the students are explicitly taught these skills, they will be more successful in general education classrooms.

### **Research Question**

The primary research question for this study was as follows:

1. What are the effects of explicit self-advocacy training on the self-advocacy behaviors exhibited in general education classes by high school students with learning disabilities?

## **Method**

### **Setting**

The high school the students attended served approximately 1,000 students, 87% of whom were White, 10% Hispanic, and 3% other. Of the students who attended the school, 13% have had an IEP, 28% were on free or reduced price lunch, and 5% were below the poverty line. The daily school schedule was divided into four 80 minute periods. The six research participants received special education services in the English or reading resource room. Each class had between eight to 15 students; however, the participants were not in the same English or reading resource class. The participants also attended several general education classes to fulfill graduation requirements. The self-advocacy training took place in the English or reading resource classrooms. The post-training phase of the study was conducted in a variety of academic classrooms.

### **Participants**

**Students with disabilities.** Six students with learning disabilities were selected to participate in this study. Participants were classified as LD by certified school psychologists and met state and federal guidelines in order to be classified as having a learning disability. Participants received special education services in the resource room for approximately 200 minutes a week. Students were selected to participate in this study based on their LD classification, class schedule, past attendance record, and parental permission (see Appendix F).



Participants had a general education class when the investigator had a preparation period, so the investigator could collect data during the general education class. Past attendance was considered before participants were chosen so that the investigator could trust them to attend class regularly. The investigator also chose participants that had similar IQs to ensure that the participants were as homogeneous as possible.

**General education teachers.** Four general education teachers were selected to participate in this study. The general education teachers who participated in the study taught a variety of general education curriculum classes. They were selected based on having participating students in their classes and their willingness to participate in the study.

**Special education teacher.** The investigator, who was also the special education teacher, taught a variety of English and reading classes. Each participant had a class from the researcher for 80 minutes on alternate school days.

## **Procedures**

**Materials.** Each self-advocacy lesson included a lesson plan, poster, and handouts for the participants. The trainer used an overhead projector, white board, document camera, LCD projector, and treatment fidelity checklist. The students also received an accommodations sheet that aided them in choosing the appropriate accommodation. The students used pencils, paper, textbooks, classroom materials, and checklists. The general education teachers used checklists and pencils

**Data collection.** Data were collected by the general education teachers. During all three phases of the study (baseline, training, and post-training), the teachers completed a checklist each time the student was in the class. The student completed a checklist once the intervention was

complete and continued to complete a checklist throughout the post-training phase. The teachers and the participants were explicitly trained to accurately complete the checklist. During training, the cooperating teachers practiced filling out checklists by role playing with the trainer. The teachers achieved 100% mastery of the skills before they began taking data on the students. They were given a copy of an accommodations sheet so they were aware of the accommodations the student would be requesting. The teacher and student checklists included seven steps the students were taught to use when asking for an accommodation. A percentage of the steps students completed based on the number of steps they should have completed was calculated and graphed (see Figure 1).

**Dependent variable.** The dependent measure for the study was the self-advocacy behaviors exhibited by high school students with LD. Self-advocacy behavior was described as recognizing that an accommodation was needed and requesting the accommodation. When students requested the accommodation, they faced the teacher, maintained eye contact, requested the accommodation, stated the reason the accommodation was needed, and thanked the teacher. The last step was to implement the accommodation. The teachers followed up and marked a checklist each day to determine which components of the target behavior were exhibited by the student. A percentage of the steps followed were taken during each phase of the study and graphed.

**Independent variable.** The students participated in a self-advocacy training course conducted in the students' special education English/reading class. The training consisted of four lessons. Students showed 100% mastery of the skills before they moved to the next lesson. The students were taught in lesson four how to complete a checklist. The checklist was used as a

self-monitoring tool to help the students remember the steps to follow when requesting an accommodation. Two of the participants, Grant and Hadley, began the training after three stable baseline data points had been collected. The data points were considered consistent when they fell at or around the same point on the data path. Don began training two weeks later and Eric began training four weeks later.

**Lesson format.** Training lessons followed a direct instruction format. In each lesson the participants were given a verbal advance organizer that outlined the objectives for the lesson and direct instruction on a specific skill; the lesson concluded with a role-play to practice the skill. Praise and corrective feedback were given during role playing as appropriate. During Lesson One, the participants were taught what an accommodation is and how accommodations can benefit them in the general education classroom. The participants also learned how accommodations can be used to overcome personal academic limitations. Lesson Two addressed how to decide when an accommodation is needed. During this lesson, the students were given several different scenarios to analyze and determine if an accommodation was needed and what accommodation to choose. During Lesson Three, the students were taught how to appropriately ask for an accommodation. The acronym FESTA was used to help students remember the correct steps to requesting an accommodation. The steps that the students followed included (a) facing the teacher, (b) maintaining eye contact, (c) stating the reason the accommodation was needed, (d) thanking the teacher, and (e) implementing the accommodation. During this lesson, the students participated in several role-plays to practice requesting an accommodation. In Lesson Four the students learned how to implement the accommodation and then determine if they had

selected the right accommodation. Also, during Lesson, Four the students were trained how to correctly fill out the check list.

**Experimental design.** A multiple-baseline across participants was used to evaluate the effects of the self-advocacy training in high school students with learning disabilities. The experimental conditions included baseline, training, and post-training.

**Treatment fidelity.** To ensure the consistency in delivery of instruction across participants, the trainer followed a treatment fidelity instructional checklist (see Appendix D) during each session. The checklist consisted of the steps that the trainer was to follow when teaching the lessons to the participants. While teaching the lessons to the students, the trainer was observed by another teacher to ensure that all the steps were followed. The other teacher checked off the steps as they were taught to the students. The treatment fidelity checklist indicated that all the skills were taught to each student with 100% accuracy.

All of the general education teachers were taught at the same time how to complete the checklist. The trainer followed a treatment fidelity checklist to ensure that the teachers were explicitly taught how to fill out the checklist and with 100% accuracy. The treatment fidelity assessment indicated that the steps were followed with 100% accuracy.

**Interobserver agreement.** Interobserver agreement (IOA) scores were obtained for each phase of the study. The primary investigator observed and completed a checklist in approximately 25% of the sessions by participants and phases throughout the study. Total count IOA was used to calculate interobserver agreement. The IOA data during each phase of the study equaled 100%. The primary investigator and the general education teacher agreed 100%

of the time if the student needed an accommodation and if the student followed the steps to appropriately request that accommodation.

**Baseline.** During baseline, the cooperating general education teacher filled out a checklist at the end of each class period to record the occurrence of self-advocacy exhibited by the participant during their general education class. The cooperating teacher also documented the number of accommodations the student should have requested based on their limitations.

**Training.** During the training phase, the general education teachers continued to collect data each time the student was in class. The training phase lasted four days.

**Post-training.** During post-training, the general education teachers collected data on the occurrence of accommodations needed and whether the participant asked for an accommodation according to the steps taught during the self-advocacy training. These data were collected by the teacher who completed checklist. The participant also completed a checklist daily.

## **Results**

In this study, high school students with learning disabilities learned to advocate for themselves by requesting accommodations from general education teachers in general education classrooms. Identifying when an accommodation was needed, appropriately requesting the accommodation, and implementing the accommodation were measured during each condition (baseline, training, post training) across six students. The results indicated that students with learning disabilities can learn to advocate for themselves in the general education classroom by requesting accommodations when needed (see Figure 1). Additionally, the data support the notion that students can identify when an accommodation is needed and can also identify what accommodation should be requested. The result for each student follows.

## **Grant**

**Baseline.** During the three sessions of baseline, the general education teacher identified six accommodations that Grant should have requested. He advocated zero times during baseline.

**Training.** During the four self-advocacy training lessons, Grant did not increase the number of accommodations requested. The general education teacher indicated that Grant should have requested two accommodations during the training phase of the study. In no instance did he request accommodations and advocate for himself.

**Post training.** After Grant participated in all four self-advocacy lessons, he was able to identify when an accommodation was needed, appropriately ask for the accommodation, and implement the accommodation with 93% accuracy. Over the eight sessions in the generalization phase Grant requested an accommodation in the general education classroom eight times. Grant followed the steps to appropriately request the accommodation with 100% accuracy on seven of the eight accommodations. On one occasion Grant followed four of the steps to requesting an accommodation when he identified that an accommodation was needed, requested the accommodation, thanked the teacher, and implemented the accommodation; however he did not complete three of the steps when he failed to face the teacher, maintain eye contact, or state the reason the accommodation was needed. The teacher reported anecdotally that Grant requested this accommodation in front of the whole class. The accommodation that Grant requested was help with spelling. Because he asked for help in front of the whole class, it was not appropriate or possible to follow several of the steps. Grant followed the steps that were socially appropriate for the circumstance.

## **Hadley**

**Baseline.** During baseline, Hadley requested accommodations during baseline with 16% accuracy. The teacher identified three accommodations based on Hadley's individual need that he should have requested during baseline. Hadley identified that he needed an accommodation one out of the three times; however, he did not follow the appropriate steps when requesting accommodations.

**Training.** During the four self-advocacy training lessons, Hadley's ability to request accommodations increased to 19%. The general education teacher indicated that Hadley should have requested six accommodations. Of the six accommodations needed, Hadley identified and requested five; however, he did not follow the steps to appropriately request an accommodation.

**Post-training.** After Hadley participated in the four self-advocacy lessons, he was able to identify when an accommodation was needed, appropriately ask for the accommodation, and implement the accommodation with 68% accuracy. During the post-training phase of the study, the teacher identified nine times that Hadley should have requested an accommodation. Hadley requested an accommodation all nine times. He consistently followed four of the six steps by requesting the accommodation, facing the teacher, maintaining eye contact, and implementing the accommodation. Hadley did not consistently thank the teacher and did not state the reason the accommodation was needed. Through the generalization phase of the study, the student identified when an accommodation was needed and requested the accommodation 100% of the time.

**Don**

**Baseline.** During baseline, Don requested accommodations with 24% accuracy. The teacher identified 13 accommodations that he should have requested during the baseline phase. Out of the 13 accommodations, Don identified that he needed an accommodation three times; however, he did not follow the appropriate steps when requesting accommodations.

**Training.** During the four self-advocacy training lessons, Don's ability to request accommodations increased to 55%. During training, the general education teacher indicated that Don should have requested three accommodations. Of the three accommodations needed, Don identified and requested two; however he did not follow the steps to appropriately request an accommodation.

**Post-training.** After Don participated in the four self-advocacy lessons, he was able to identify when an accommodation was needed, appropriately ask for the accommodation, and implement the accommodation with 91% accuracy. During the post-training phase of the study, the teacher identified six times Don should have requested an accommodation. Of the six accommodations that Don requested, he followed the steps with 100% accuracy four times. One of the times he did not follow all steps, in that he did not maintain eye contact or thank the teacher. On the other occasion Don followed five of the six steps, omitting thanking the teacher. Through the post-training phase of the study Don identified when an accommodation was needed and requested the accommodation 100% of the time.

**Eric**

**Baseline.** Eric requested accommodations with 33% accuracy during the baseline phase of the study. The teacher identified nine accommodations based on Eric's individual need that



he should have requested during the baseline phase. Out of the nine accommodations Eric identified that he needed an accommodation five times; however, he did not follow the appropriate steps when requesting accommodations.

**Training.** During the four self-advocacy training lessons, Eric's requesting accommodations increased to 70%. During training, the general education teacher indicated that Eric should have requested four accommodations. Of the four accommodations needed, Eric identified and requested all four; however, he did not follow the steps to appropriately request an accommodation.

**Post training.** After Eric participated in the four self-advocacy lessons, he was able to identify when an accommodation was needed, appropriately ask for the accommodation, and implement the accommodation with 100% accuracy. During the post-training phase of the study, the teacher indicated there were five times that Eric should have requested an accommodation. Eric identified that he needed an accommodation five out of the five times. He followed the steps to request accommodations with 100% accuracy on each of the accommodations.

### **Social Validity**

**General education teachers.** Once the study was completed, all of the general education teachers involved in the study completed a social validity questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of eight questions using a Likert-type scale and three open ended questions.

The teachers reported that they believed that the students had the ability to advocate for themselves. All teachers strongly agreed that students should learn how to advocate for themselves and that the students benefited from the training. One teacher reported that the students were able to ask more questions and show initiative and accountability. The teachers

also requested that all students be taught to self-advocate at the beginning of the school year. One teacher reported that he would like his students to not only advocate at school in their general education classes, but also to self-advocate and become involved in activities, clubs, and sports. One teacher would like more training on how to identify when students really need an accommodation and when they are using accommodations as a way to make the assignment easier or as a way to get out of class.

**Students with disabilities.** The student social validity questionnaire was very similar to the teacher questionnaire. Students were asked about their ability to advocate in their general education classes using eight Likert-type and three open-ended questions.

Most of the student responses were positive. One student reported that he did not know what an accommodation was. All of the other answers to the questions were positive. All students agreed that they would continue to request accommodations in their general education classes when necessary. All of the students agreed or strongly agreed that they believe they do better in their general education classes when they request accommodations. Students all agreed or strongly agreed that they know how to appropriately ask for an accommodation. One student reported that he liked the self-advocacy training because he gets a lot of help in his general classes. He also said that he will be able to do better in his general education classes by asking for more accommodations. Another student reported that he thought he could do better in his general education classes if his teachers had a better understanding of how and when to help students. That same student said that the best thing about the self-advocacy training was learning to ask for help.

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effects of teaching high school students with learning disabilities to advocate for themselves by requesting accommodations in their general education classrooms. Specifically the students were taught to identify why an accommodation was needed, what accommodation to select, and how to communicate that need to the general education teacher. The four-lesson intervention taught students to identify their strengths and limitations and match accommodations to their limitations. The intervention improved students' ability to effectively communicate their need to their general education teachers.

### Reflections of Findings

**Self-advocating behaviors.** Communicating needs is a vital part of self-advocacy (Stang et al., 2009). More specifically, Brinkerhoff (1994) suggested that part of self-advocacy is to clearly communicate individual needs and reasons for the need. In order to do so, students first need to have a clear understanding of their strengths and limitations (Milsomm et al., 2004). Once students understand their strengths and weaknesses, they will be able to understand what accommodations are necessary for them to be successful in the general education curriculum. Part of the self-advocacy training was to teach students how to select an accommodation based on their academic limitation. Before the students could ask for help, they needed to understand when they needed help. Once the students understood their limitations, they were more likely to communicate those needs effectively.

Many students enter college with no knowledge of their disability and how the disability affects their academic success. Students are often sheltered from the fact that they have a

disability by parents and other well-meaning adults. Such sheltering prevents students from understanding strengths and limitations and where or how to seek help for their limitations (Brinkerhoff, 1994). Many students do not implicitly pick up on those skills and must be explicitly taught how to appropriately advocate for themselves (Brinkerhoff, 1994).

Interestingly, many teachers believe that self-advocacy is important, but do not take the time to explicitly teach the skills necessary to self-advocate. In order for students to fully understand how to self-advocate, they must be explicitly taught to do so (Stang et al., 2009).

In this study, one participant was removed midway through the study because the teacher identified that the student did not need accommodations in the general education classroom. This particular teacher had a very organized classroom and had taught many students with disabilities. He had developed a way for all students to be successful in his classroom without having to request accommodations. Because the student had been used to his teacher providing what little accommodations he needed, he did not recognize the need to request an accommodation. The student knew that his teacher would provide the accommodation for him. In this instance this student was unable to identify when an accommodation was needed because he did not need any accommodations in this general education classroom.

Research indicates that self-advocating skills are necessary for students with disabilities to be successful in the general education and post high school settings (Pierson et al., 2008). Prior to the intervention, a few students requested accommodations; however, none of the students were able to appropriately request the accommodation. The researcher used a simplified set of steps to teach the students the skills to appropriately request an accommodation. Once the students were taught how to request accommodations, they were able to communicate their needs

to the general education teacher and obtain the help needed in order to be successful on an assignment or test. Teachers involved in the study reported anecdotally that, once the students were taught how to self-advocate, they became more confident with their ability to be successful in class and participated more often than before they were taught to self-advocate. Students that possess the skills necessary to self-advocate will be able to successfully access the general curriculum (Lee, Wehmeyer, Palmer, Soukup, & Little, 2008).

One of the steps to requesting accommodations was to state the reason the accommodation was needed. The students were taught to request the accommodation and state why the accommodation was needed. This step was included to help the teachers understand why the accommodation was necessary. According to the data, this was the step that students most often omitted. The students consistently requested the needed accommodation, but they often neglected to explain to the teacher why the accommodation was needed.

The findings of this study support previous research by Stang et al. (2009) that suggested that students who can advocate for themselves are more likely to have success in their general education classes and they are more likely to participate in class. Although academic performance or participation data were not taken, teachers reported anecdotally that students' performance and participation improved.

Arnold and Czamanske (1991) suggested that students with disabilities do not have a good understanding of how they learn, or what accommodations are available to them. Yet, knowledge of accommodations is essential for students to become successful at advocating for themselves (Skinner, 1998). Self-advocacy is not only important for success in school, but it is a necessary skill for students with disabilities to be successful in life. In an earlier study, students

that were explicitly taught self-advocating behaviors and who were then followed a year after graduation were more likely to have experienced a higher number of positive adult outcomes (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997).

In this study, all students enrolled in the targeted English or reading classes were trained, although data were recorded on only a few targeted students. Several students who were not part of the study also requested accommodations in the general education classrooms. The students verbally reported they had done this, or they would go to their special education teacher for help in implementing the accommodation after they requested it. Several teachers who were not involved in the study reported that they had students who were trained but not involved in the study make requests for accommodations in the general education classroom.

**Self-advocating training.** The results of this study support prior research indicating that students need to be explicitly taught to self-advocate (Test et al., 2005). In fact, self-advocacy instruction should become part of the curriculum (Brinkerhoff, 1994). When students are deliberately taught the skills necessary to self-advocate, they take more ownership and gain confidence in their general education classes (Test et al., 2005). During this study, the self-advocacy training took place in the resource English or reading class and became part of the curriculum. By making self-advocacy training a part of the curriculum, all students can benefit from the training, and no extra time is required from the teacher or the student. One teacher reported that the students who received the training became more confident in their ability to be successful in the general education classroom. Bremer et al. (2003) suggested that students need to be given opportunities to practice advocating for themselves or the self-advocating behavior won't transfer to other areas of the students' lives. As educators, we often assume students will

ask for help when they need it. Once the students in the study were explicitly taught and then given a chance to practice asking for the accommodations, their ability to do this in the general education classroom dramatically increased. After being explicitly taught self-advocating behaviors, the students were able to communicate their needs to their general education teacher and were given the help they needed to be successful in class. These results indicate that students with learning disabilities can be taught to recognize when an accommodation is needed, select an appropriate accommodation, and communicate that need effectively to a general education teacher.

Not only should self-advocacy skills be explicitly taught, but students should also be taught to self-advocate at an early age. Many people believe that self-advocacy training is most pertinent to high school students; however, students need to be taught self-advocacy skills as early as elementary school (Chambers, Wehmeyer, Saito, Lida, Lee, & Singh, 2007). The earlier students learn self-advocacy, the more likely they will be to transfer the skills to all aspects of their life (Stang et al., 2009). Self-advocacy should be taught systematically and deliberately at an early age and throughout the life of the student. Although students involved in the study were aware that teachers would sometimes provide them accommodations, they lacked the knowledge of how to request those accommodations. Many students reported that they expected their teachers to be responsible for their accommodations. Before the study, the students had little to do with their own accommodations. Once the students were taught how to advocate for themselves they became more responsible for their educational success.

## **Limitations**

A second participant was omitted from the study because he could not recognize that he needed help in the general education classroom. When asked why he did not request accommodations, he reported that he knew what to do in class and he did not need help in that class. This participant was also unable to identify any academic limitations and therefore was unable to match an accommodation with an academic limitation. Even with several prompts from the trainer, the students would not assert himself to request accommodations. The student later claimed that he did not need accommodations in that class. Teachers need to be aware of students who do not recognize when they need an accommodation. These students may need additional help and support in their general education classes. The type of training provided in this study may not be adequate for all students.

Another limitation of this study was the researcher's assumption that the general education teachers knew how to accommodate students with learning disabilities in their classroom. During the study, when Hadley made the request for an accommodation the general education teacher would send him to a special education teacher for help instead of accommodating him in the classroom. This became a problem because Hadley missed additional notes and assignments in the general education classroom as he was working with the special education teacher. This situation also took time away from the other students in the special education teacher's classroom or took the special education teacher away from additional responsibilities. Fortunately, Hadley was still able to learn when an accommodation was needed and communicate that need to the general education teacher. Thus, it is just as important to train



the teachers on how to provide accommodations as it is to train the students on how to request accommodations.

### **Future Research**

In order for students to request accommodations, they must have a need. It would be advantageous for the researcher to observe all general education teachers prior to beginning a study to ensure that accommodations are needed in the classroom. Some teachers create an environment that ensures success for all students who are willing to work, so accommodations may not be needed in some general education classrooms.

It is as important to teach the general education teachers how to accommodate in the general education classroom as it is to teach the students to request accommodations. Many general education teachers want to help students but lack the knowledge of accommodations and how to appropriately accommodate in the general education classroom. Before students learn to request accommodations, teachers need to be educated on accommodations as well.

### **Implications for Special Education Teachers**

Students need to be taught in all grades how to advocate for themselves (Test et al., 2005). Self-advocacy is not a skill that should be postponed until high school. Teaching students with disabilities to self-advocate should start in the early elementary grades. The self-advocacy training should be explicit and deliberate and should be repeated each year throughout the students' educational career. General and special education teachers should work together to teach students with disabilities to self-advocate at an early age.

Although some students may implicitly learn to self-advocate, many students with disabilities do not. The general education and special education teachers need to work together in

order to ensure student success in the general education classroom. The type of self-advocacy training provided to students with disabilities needs to be communicated to the general education teacher so that they are aware of what the students are learning, and also so they can help reinforce and support those skills.

Some general education teachers are skilled at providing accommodations, so students in their classes may not need to ask for accommodations. However, many teachers lack these skills and need training. General education teachers need to be taught to recognize when a student may need an accommodation and to decide what accommodations may be requested in their classroom. Also, they need to be trained on how to accommodate students in the classroom. If the general education teacher can accommodate students in the classroom, the student will not be likely to miss out on additional instructions and assignments.

Not all students will respond to self-advocacy training and need additional support. Self-advocacy training should be an ongoing process, in which students are taught and re-taught the skills. Some students may need additional one-on-one training with the special education teacher in the general education classroom. General education teachers should be aware of students who are having difficulty identifying when an accommodation is needed so they may offer additional prompts to the student in order to help the student realize that a request for accommodation is needed.

## **Conclusion**

Teaching students to self-advocate will take additional time and require more effort on the part of the special education and general education teachers. Although self-advocacy training may be time consuming, it will greatly benefit students in their general education classes. By

teaching students to understand their strengths and limitations, to identify which accommodations are necessary for them to be successful, and to appropriately request those accommodation, students will have control over their education and will assume more of the responsibility for their education.

## References

- Arnold, E., & Czamanske, J. (1991, April). *Can I make it? A transition program for college bound learning disabled students and their parents*. Paper presented at the 69<sup>th</sup> Council for Exceptional Children Annual Convention, Atlanta, GA., ED 335836.
- Balcazar, F., Fawcett, S., & Seekins, T. (1991). Teaching people with disabilities to recruit help to attain personal goals. *Rehabilitation Psychology*, 36,31-34.
- Bremer, C. D., Kachgal, M., Schoeller, M., & National Center on Secondary Education, and Transition. (2003). *Self-determination: Supporting Successful Transition. Research to Practice Brief*. Retrieved from [http://www.ncset.org/institutes/proceedings/2004\\_04\\_13.asp](http://www.ncset.org/institutes/proceedings/2004_04_13.asp)
- Brinckerhoff, L. C. (1994). Developing effective self-advocacy skills in college-bound students with learning disabilities. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 29(4), 229-37.
- Brinckerhoff, L. C., Shaw, S. F., & McGuire, J. M. (1992). Promoting access, accommodations, and independence for college students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 25(7), 417-429.
- Campbell-Whatley, G. (2008). Teaching students about their disabilities: Increasing self-determination skills and self-concept. *International Journal of Special Education*, 23(2), 137-144.
- Chambers, C. R., Wehmeyer, M. L., Saito, Y., Lida, K. M., Lee, Y., & Singh, V. (2007). Self-determination: What do we know? Where do we go? *Exceptionality*, 15(1), 3-15.  
doi:10.1207/s15327035ex1501\_2

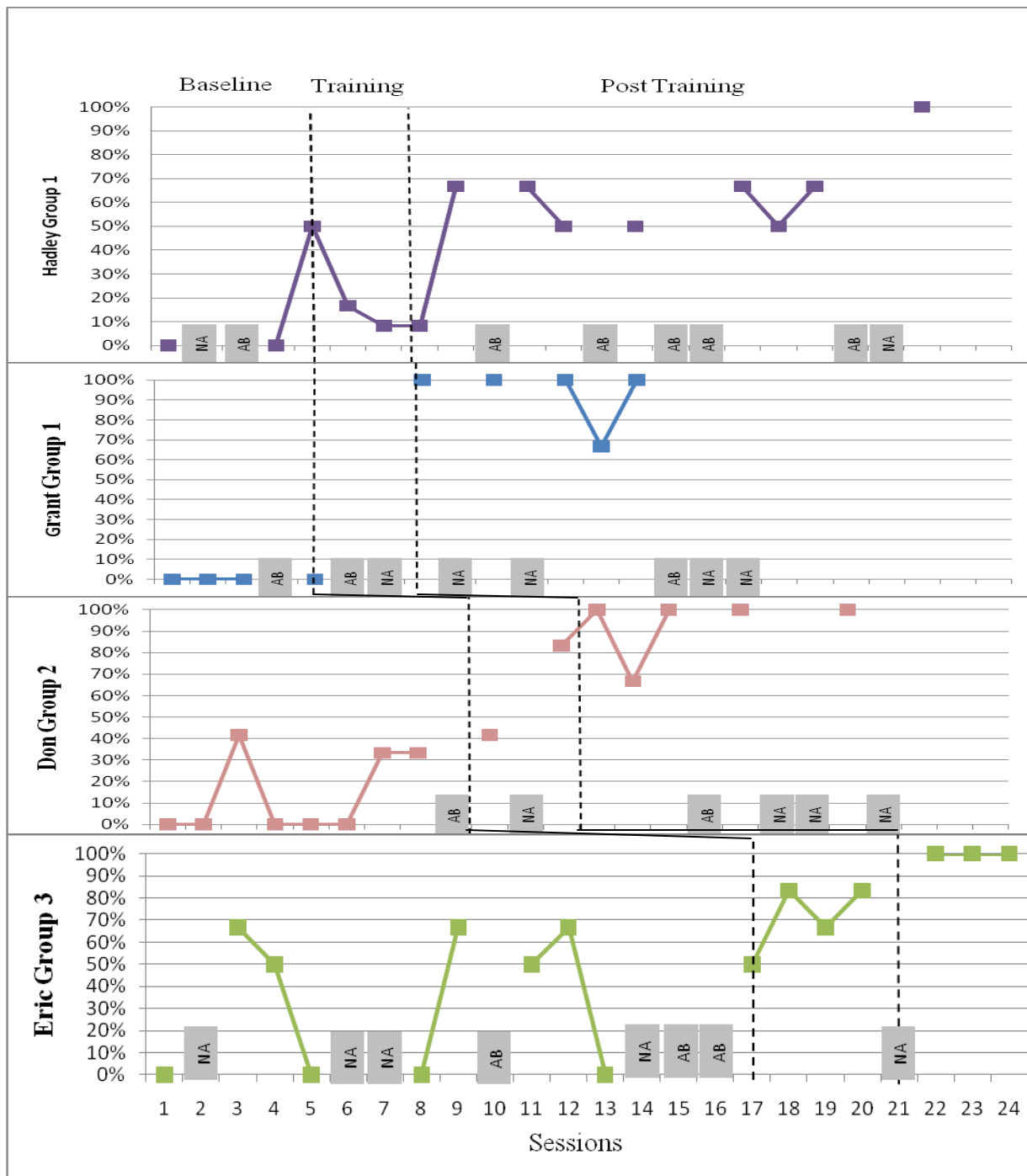
- Durlak, C. M., Rose, E., & Bursuck, W. (1994). Preparing high school students with learning disabilities for the transition to postsecondary education: Teaching the skills of self-determination. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 27*(1), 51-59.
- Lee, S., Wehmeyer, M. L., Palmer, S. B., Soukup, J. H., & Little, T. D. (2008). Self-determination and access to the general education curriculum. *Journal of Special Education, 42*(2), 91-107.
- Martin, J., Huber-Marshall, L., & Maxson, L. (1993). Transition policy: Infusing self-determination and self-advocacy into transition programs. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 16*, 53-61.
- Milsom, A., Akos, P., & Thompson, M. (2004). A psychoeducational group approach to postsecondary transition planning for students with learning disabilities. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 29*(4), 395-411.
- Pierson, M. R., Carter, E. W., Lane, K. L., & Glaeser, B. C. (2008). Factors influencing the self-determination of transition-age youth with high-incidence disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 31*(2), 115-125.
- Raskind, M. H., Goldberg, R. J., Higgins, E. L., & Herman, K. L. (2002). Teaching 'life success' to students with LD: Lessons learned from a 20-year study. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 37*(4), 201.
- Skinner, M. E. (1998). Promoting self-advocacy among college students with learning disabilities. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 33*(5), 278-83.

- Skinner, M. E., & Lindstrom, B. D. (2003). Bridging the gap between high school and college: Strategies for the successful transition of students with learning disabilities. *Preventing School Failure, 47*(3), 132-37.
- Stang, K. K., Carter, E. W., Lane, K. L., & Pierson, M. R. (2009). Perspectives of general and special educators on fostering self-determination in elementary and middle schools. *Journal of Special Education, 43*(2), 94-106.
- Test, D. W., Fowler, C. H., Wood, W. M., Brewer, D. M., & Eddy, S. (2005). A conceptual framework of self-advocacy for students with disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education, 26*(1), 43-54.
- Thoma, C. A., Nathanson, R., Baker, S. R., & Tamura, R. (2002). Self-determination. *Remedial and Special Education, 23*(4), 242.
- Trainor, A. (2002). Self-determination for students with learning disabilities: Is it a universal value? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 15*(6), 711-725.  
doi:10.1080/0951839022000014394
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2010). *The Digest of Education Statistics 2009* (NCES 2009-013), [Table 51](#). Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=59>
- Wall, M., & Dattilo, J. (1995). Creating option-rich learning environments: Facilitating self-determination. *The Journal of Special Education, 29*, 276-294
- Wehmeyer, M., & Schwartz, M. (1997). Self-determination and positive adult outcomes: A follow-up study of youth with mental retardation. *Exceptional Children, 63*(2), 245-255.

Zhang, D. (2001). Self-determination and inclusion: Are students with mild mental retardation more self-determined in regular classrooms? *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 36(4), 357-362.

Figure 1

Results



NA=No accommodation needed  
 AB=Absent



## **Appendix A**

### **Review of Literature**

#### **Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy**

##### **Definitions**

Self-determination has been described as a combination of skills, that when combined, enable a person to take control of his or her life and assume responsibilities that are consistent with that of adulthood (Field, Martin, Miller, Ward & Wehmeyer, 1998). Furney, Carlson, Lisi, and Yuan (1993) believed that self-determination and self-advocacy are related concepts and both place high value on the rights of individuals with disabilities to make their own choices and live independent lives. Self-determination has been used synonymously with self-advocacy. Self-advocacy is one of the components that make up a self-determined person (Field et al., 1998). When a person can advocate for themselves, they are that much closer to becoming self-determined.

Self-advocacy has been defined in several different ways. Balcazar, Fawcett, and Seekins (1991) defined self-advocacy as being able to communicate needs to others to gain needed information and obtain help in meeting goals. Martin, Huber-Marshall, and Maxson (1993) extend the definition to include teaching people with disabilities about their legal rights and the responsibility that comes with those rights. They indicate that self-advocacy also involves recognizing one's own strengths and weaknesses, determining goals, and the ability to make decisions. Brinckerhoff (1994) defines self-advocacy as three simple skills: (a) being knowledgeable about what you want, (b) being knowledgeable about your legal rights, (c) having the ability to achieve your own personal goal. Essentially, self-advocacy can be defined by

including the following components: knowledge of your disability, knowledge of your strengths and weaknesses, understanding your legal rights, and the ability to communicate your needs and desires effectively.

### **Importance of Self-determination and Self-advocacy**

Students who are self-determined and thus possess the skills necessary to self-advocate are more likely to have improved post-school outcomes (Stang, Carter, Lane, & Pierson, 2009). Students with disabilities who are self-determined are reported to be happier and have a better quality of life when they are compared with students that have similar disabilities, but lack self-determination (Thoma, Nathanson, Baker, & Tamura, 2002). Students who are self-determined are more likely to be employed, have a savings and checking account, and live on their own (Bremer, Kachgal, & Schoeller, 2003). Students who self-advocate are more likely to have success in their general education classes and are more likely to participate in class (Stang et al., 2009). Self-advocating skills, such as problem solving, understanding strengths and weaknesses, communicating needs, and self assessment are essential for individuals with disabilities to be successful in general education settings and also in post high school outcomes (Pierson, Carter, Lane, & Glaeser, 2008).

Self-advocacy is a necessary skill for students with disabilities to be successful in life (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997). This self-advocacy training program was designed to teach students with learning disabilities the skills necessary to recognize when they needed help and have the skills to be able to communicate that need effectively to the teacher in the general education classroom. Positive life outcomes were measured in a study conducted by Wehmeyer and Schwarts. In this study, 80 students ages 17-22 were followed a year after they exited high

school. Prior to their leaving high school, data was taken on their self-determination skills. Findings showed that students who scored high on levels of self-determinations were more likely to have experienced a higher number of positive adult outcomes.

In a study conducted by Zhang (2001), 44 students with mild mental retardation (MMR) were observed to determine if they displayed self-determined behaviors more frequently in the resource classroom or in the general education classroom. The students were measured on 13 different self-determined behaviors. Being aware of personal strengths and weaknesses and applying personal strengths to overcome weaknesses were among the 13 skills. Results showed that students were more likely to exhibit these behaviors in the resource classroom than in the general education classroom. Zhang concluded that this happens for three reasons: (a) students with MMR feel more intimidated in general education classrooms, (b) special education teachers are more helpful and friendly to students with MMR than general education teachers, and (c) students with MMR do not have the ability to self-advocate in their general education classes because they have not been properly trained in the area of self-determination. Based on the results of this study, Zhang advocated the importance of incorporating self-determination training into the general education classroom.

In order for students to fully become self-advocates they must be taught explicitly to self-advocate, preferably at an early age. This training should start in the elementary grades and then continue throughout the remainder of the grades (Stang et al., 2009). Test, Fowler, Wood, and Brewer (2005) reported that, if students are taught to self-advocate and communicate their needs to others at an early age, these skills will take on more meaning and make for an easier transition from one grade to the next. Teaching these skills in the early grades and then reinforcing them

throughout the grade levels will contribute to the generalization of these skills later in life (Test et al., 2005).

Research indicates that, although many teachers believe that self-advocacy is important, it is often not included in curriculum (Test et al., 2005). Teachers reported that they lack the information needed in order to incorporate self-advocacy into the curriculum (Thoma et al., 2002). Eisenman and Chamberlin (2001) gathered information about what self-determination activities were already being used in the schools and what activities could be added to benefit students. Many teachers were incorporating some self-determination activities, such as self-awareness and goal setting, into their classroom; however, they lacked the time and resources needed to assess those skills to determine if the students were generalizing them into other aspects of their life. Although a published self-determination curriculum was made available, the teachers reported that they lacked the time needed to incorporate new self-determination activities into their already full day. They also expressed the need for all teachers to incorporate self-determination instruction into their curriculum. Many felt that their limited self-determination instruction was isolated and not reinforced across the curriculum.

Many students leave high school with no knowledge or understanding of their disability, their strengths, or their weaknesses. Some parents, teachers, school counselors, and other school personnel are responsible for making the decisions for the student with disabilities. In school settings, the responsibility to make decisions about needs, goals, and desires is not placed on the student with a disability. Although these people mean well, this behavior can be very damaging for the student. If the students are not able to make their own decisions and self-advocate, they

will not obtain the skills necessary to become independent, successful adults (Brinckerhoff, 1994).

### **Components of Self-Advocacy Training**

Several laws directly impact students with disabilities, specifically the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Skinner & Lindstrom, 2003). IDEA requires that each student have an IEP that states how the student's disability affects his or her progress in the general education. An IEP also outlines any modifications students need to have access to and progress in general education. In this sense, special education is defined as an education similar to that of a non-disabled student. With the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA, general education teachers must now attend IEP (Lee, Wehmeyer, Palmer, Soukup, & Little, 2008). At the IEP meeting, specific accommodations are identified as needed for the students to have equal access to the general education curriculum. Students need to have knowledge of their rights and what laws apply to them in order to self-advocate. Students also need to understand what accommodations are outlined in their IEP (Test et al., 2005).

### **Disability Awareness**

The first step to self-advocacy is disability awareness. Many students leave high school with little knowledge of their disability (Arnold & Czamanske, 1991). Often times, students with mild to moderate disabilities do not even understand that they have a disability. Without understanding their disability and how it affects their learning, students will not be able to set realistic goals for themselves or articulate their needs to others (Milsom, Akos, & Thompson, 2004). Many teachers feel uncomfortable talking to students about their disability. Teachers try

to protect them from feeling embarrassed and uncomfortable about being different and having a disability (Eisenman & Chamberlin 2001). Eisenman and Chamberlin (2001) discovered that a vital issue in self-advocacy and self-determination development is the uneasiness that teachers and parents feel when discussing a student's disability. If nobody is willing to discuss the realities of living with a disability, students will not be able to realistically identify their strengths and weaknesses and in turn will not be able to develop the skills necessary to self-advocate (Eisenman & Chamberlin, 2001).

If no one has talked to the students about their disability, others may believe that they are unmotivated and not as smart as their peers. This belief is reinforced by parents, teachers and employers who think that the low academic success of students with mild to moderate disabilities is attributed to lack of motivation and stagnant behavior (Campbell-Whatley, 2008). Mild to moderate disabilities are often considered "hidden disabilities" because they are not visually apparent and many times go unrecognized. Because of this, students often sit back while their parents and teachers make decisions on their behalf (Brinckerhoff, 1994). Students with mild to moderate disabilities need to understand that they truly have a disability (Campbell-Whatley, 2008). In order for students to be able to self-advocate, they need to have a good understanding of their disability and the ability to articulate and explain their disabilities to others (Campbell-Whatley, 2008). Once students realize that their disability is a true disability that cannot be cured but that can be overcome through self-advocacy, they will be more willing to learn the skills necessary to self-advocate (Brinckerhoff, 1994). When students have a good understanding of their disability, they should be taught to explain their disability in terms that are easily understandable (Brinckerhoff, 1994).

In order for students to self-advocate, they must have a good sense of self and truly understand themselves and their disability. In a study conducted by Campbell-Whatley (2008) 13 students with disabilities of varying ages and grade levels were taught seven lessons that focused on self-awareness and self-concept. Six of the students were in fifth grade, four were in sixth grade and three were in ninth grade. Prior to receiving instruction, the students were given *the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale* to determine levels of self-concept. Students learned (a) about successful people with disabilities, (b) disability characteristics that impact learning, (c) their own strengths and weaknesses, and (d) strategies for handling anger. After completing the training, the Piers Scale was once again administered. The results indicated that there was a significant difference in students' self-concept and self-esteem after the training (Campbell-Whatley, 2008).

### **Individual Strengths and Limitations**

Before students can self-advocate, they must have knowledge of their own strengths and limitations (Test et al., 2005). Generally speaking, students are not being explicitly taught to self-advocate; thus, they do not understand their strengths and limitations, and they do not have the ability to communicate the accommodations that are needed for them to have equal access to the general education curriculum (Test et al., 2005). Students must feel safe in their environment before they can fully discuss their strengths and limitations. Some students may need additional support in order to become comfortable enough to discuss their own disability and limitations (Eisenman & Chamberlin, 2001). Teachers must remember that, even when students understand their disability and have developed the skills necessary to discuss their disability, they may continue to feel uneasy when talking to teachers about their educational weaknesses (Merchant

& Gajar, 1997). Once students have identified their academic strengths and limitations, they should make a list of their limitations and then match each limitation with an appropriate accommodation. The training facilitator may help by giving each student a list of accommodations from which to select (Brinckerhoff, 1994).

In a longitudinal study conducted by Ranskind, Goldberg, Higgins, and Herman (2002), several success attributes were identified as having influence on the success of students with learning disabilities. One of the attributes was self-awareness. Individuals with LD were more likely to be successful when they had a clear understanding of their disability and the strengths and limitations related to their disability. One of the identified successful adults gave a quote about having a disability:

You know, everybody comes with a package. And yeah, there are things that I am good at and things that I am not so good at. Some of my limitations are reading and writing. But boy, when it comes to putting things together and understanding how things go together, reading plans, I'm really good at reading plans. I'm really good at chasing down problems. I'm a good diagnoser....so those are some talents, some skills that I was born with....I carved a different path, and my whole life has been that way. (Ranskind et al., p. 202)

Ranskind et al. (2002) also found that successful people with disabilities were not defined by their disability. These individuals acknowledged they had a disability and developed strategies to overcome their limitations.



## **Accommodations**

As students are taught to self-advocate and begin to understand their academic limitations, they need to be taught specific strategies and what accommodations will help combat those weaknesses (Skinner & Lindstrom, 2003). When students understand their limitations, they need to be made aware of what accommodations are available to them and especially what accommodations are outlined in their IEP. This can be done by giving students an accommodations menu that outlines possible choices. Once students understand their disability and what accommodations are available to them, they will have the skills necessary to determine what accommodations are necessary for them to have equal access to the general education curriculum (Brinckerhoff, 1994). Examples of accommodations that students may need include (a) extended time on tests and assignments, (b) audio text books, (c) reduced distractions, (d) the use of assistive technology, calculators, highlighters, and computers, (e) text book and other reading material with large print, (f) memory aids, (g) note-takers, and (h) paraphrasing of directions.

In a study conducted by Fletcher, Francis, Boudousquie, Copeland, Young, Kalinowski, and Vaughn (2006), 91 third graders with dyslexia and 91 third graders identified as being average readers were randomly assigned to two groups. Group one took a standardized test with accommodations, and the other group took the standardized test with no accommodations. Each student, regardless of group assignment, completed the test in a small group consisting of two to eight students. The experimental group received the following accommodations: (a) extended time and splitting the testing session into two blocks, (b) proper nouns read aloud, and (c) stems and possible answers read aloud after the students had read passages independently. The

students with dyslexia who were in the experimental group performed considerably better than their counterparts who did not receive accommodations. However, the students who were average readers and received accommodations did not achieve a higher score than the average readers who did not receive accommodations (Fletcher et al., 2006). This study showed that, although accommodations improve the performance of students with disabilities, they have little effect on those without disabilities. This finding supports the idea that accommodations aid in leveling the playing field for students with disabilities.

In another study by Elliott and Marquart (2004), the idea that accommodations do not impact students without disabilities was again supported. In this study, 97 eighth grade students were split into three groups. The first group consisted of 23 students who were receiving special education services and had been classified as having a disability. The second group of students consisted of 23 students that were considered at risk in the area of mathematics. The remaining group of 51 students was above grade level in math. This study was conducted to measure the effect of extended time on math tests. The students that received extended time on the math tests were told they could take up to 40 minutes on the tests whereas the standard time was 20 minutes. The students were split into two equal groups. The groups were equal in their number of students with disabilities, students at risk in the area of mathematics, and students who were above grade level in math. One group was given the test under normal conditions. The second group received the accommodation of extended time. The results indicated that, although there was not a significant difference in the scores of the students with disabilities, there was a significant difference in the scores of the students that were at risk in the area of math. This

study would indicate and support the idea that the use of accommodations does not impact students without disabilities.

Finally, in a third study the two ideas that accommodations level the playing field and also do not impact students without disabilities were supported. In this study, Johnson (2000) measured the use of accommodations with 115 fourth grade students. Each student was placed in one of three groups. Seventy-seven students without disabilities were randomly assigned to either group A or B. Thirty-nine students were assigned to the control A and 38 students were assigned to group B. Group C consisted of 38 students with reading disabilities. During the first phase of the study, groups A and B took the 1998 Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) under normal conditions. Group C took the 1998 WASL with the questions read to them. Six to twenty-one days later, students in groups A and C took the 1997 version of the test under normal conditions. Group B took the 1997 version of the test and had the questions read aloud to them. Students with disabilities performed significantly better on the version of the test that was read aloud to them. Students without disabilities did not improve significantly from having the test read aloud. This study supported the assumption that by allowing students with disabilities to accommodations in the general education we are leveling the playing field for students with disabilities.

If students understand their strengths and limitations, they will be able to recognize when they need help and what accommodation will be most helpful for them. Accommodations are put into place to allow special education students to show their true abilities. Elliott and Marquar (2004) reinforced the idea that students without disabilities will not have significant improvement on their tests and assignments when they are given the same accommodations.

Detailed accommodations that are typically used by students with disabilities include extended time on tests and assignments, substitution of a required course for another course, taking a test in a smaller or private room, tape-recording a class lecture, audio textbooks, the use of a reader, the use of a computer, and a copy of the teacher's notes (Brinckerhoff, Shaw, & McGuire, 1992).

Generally speaking, special education teachers are more likely to use accommodations than general education teachers. Special education teachers use different accommodations based on the students and the task that is expected. General education teachers tend to use the same accommodations regardless of the disability or the task (Maccini & Gagnon, 2006). Maccini and Gagnon (2006) administered surveys to general education and special education teachers on their use of accommodations in math classes. The results indicated that, although both special education and general education teachers used accommodations, the special education teachers were more specific about accommodations used in class with particular tasks and based on particular need of the individual student. Special education teachers also reported using more accommodations than the general education teachers. Special education teachers reported (a) using reduced problems on test, (b) using cue cards that listed strategy steps and (c) having the problems read aloud to the student. These accommodations were most frequently used when the special education teacher was assessing knowledge of basic skills. The four most commonly used accommodations among special education teachers in math classes were (a) extended time on tests, (b) use of calculators, (c) problems read aloud to students, and (d) reduced number of problems on tests. The general education teacher reported using the following four accommodations: (a) the use of calculators, (b) extended time on tests and assignments, (c) problems read to students, and (d) individual attention given by classroom aides. Although both

special and general education teachers used accommodations, special education teachers were more likely to use accommodation that were more specific to the task and student (Maccini & Gagnon, 2006).

Many students with disabilities do not naturally possess the skills necessary to ask for appropriate accommodations (Skinner, 1998). Therefore, self-advocacy training needs to include teaching students to appropriately select what accommodations are needed and then articulating those needs to their teacher. Students can be taught to communicate their needs to their teachers if they are explicitly taught to do so (Durlak, Rose, & Bursuck, 1994). In order for students to generalize what they have learned about self-advocacy, they should be encouraged to meet with their teacher outside of class to explain their disability to the teacher and identify what accommodations will be needed in the class. Students should be prepared to answer any questions that the teacher may have about the disability or accommodations (Brinckerhoff, 1994). Bremer et al. (2003) reported that students with disabilities have limited opportunities to use their self-advocating behaviors because too many well-meaning adults want to protect their student from making mistakes or having difficulty in school and life. They suggest that educators provide opportunities that will allow students to practice and further develop their self-advocating behaviors.

### **Self-Advocacy Training Studies**

In a study conducted by Durlak, Rose, and Bursuck (1994), eight high school students with specific learning disabilities were taught the skills necessary to self-advocate. Specifically, the students were taught (a) to identify their academic strengths and limitations, (b) the ability to communicate their strengths and limitations to adults, (c) to identify service needs and

appropriate accommodations, and (d) the ability to request an accommodation in a general education setting. The students were also taught seven additional skills to aid in requesting accommodations and notifying teachers of their disabilities:

The list of skills include (a) ask for clarification of the lecture material from class, (b) tell a teacher that one has a learning disability, (c) make an appointment with a teacher to discuss needs and/or accommodations, (d) ask a teacher if a tape recorder may be used to record class lectures, (e) obtain teacher approval for another student to take notes or to copy another student's notes, (f) ask the librarian for assistance, and (g) make an appointment with a resource person (outside of the classroom) for academic assistance. (Durlak et al. p. 52)

Durlak et al. (1994) included prebaseline, baseline, training, maintenance, and generalization phases. During the prebaseline phase, the students were taught about their specific disability and also how to communicate what accommodations they would need. During baseline, the students were asked hypothetical questions to see if they would use the seven steps to solve the problem. During training, the students were taught a skill, and then they practiced using that skill in a role-play. The role-plays were video taped for immediate feedback. One week following instruction, students wrote down the steps to self-advocate that they had been taught. During generalization, the students practiced using the skill in different areas such as the library, general education classroom, and with an additional service provider (i.e., a college counselor). By being explicitly taught to self-advocate and then practicing in real life settings, the students were able to acquire the skills needed to self-advocate. This study suggested that

more research should be done to measure students abilities to generalize the self-advocating behaviors that they had been taught.

In another study, Lee et al. (2008) selected 45 students from 11 different schools. The students were given the Arc's *Self-Determination Scale* (SDS). The highest-scoring students were placed in the experimental group. Conversely, the lowest-scoring students became the control group. The experimental group was taught self-determination skills using the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction. During this instruction the students were taught to set goals, take action, and adjust when necessary. This study concluded that self-determination did not have a statistically significant relationship with student access to the general education curriculum. They also concluded that a student's level of being self-determined is not a good indicator of student's access to the general education curriculum.

Palmer, Wehmeyer, Gipson, and Agran (2004) conducted a study to increase students' access to the general education by teaching self-determination skills. Twenty-two junior high students with intellectual disabilities were included in the study. The students were split into two groups. The two groups were similar in IQ and self-determination score. Prior to any interventions, all of the students took the Arc's Self-Determination Scale. Group one received training in the area of problem solving. During this training, the students learned several problems solving steps: (a) identify the problem, (b) identify several solutions, (c) pick a solution, (d) implement the solution, and (e) identify if the plan worked. Students in group two served as the control group during this phase. All the students were then given the Arc's Self-Determination Scale again. The students in both group one and group two scored similarly on the Arc's Self-Determination Scale; however, after group one received the intervention the

scores of the two groups were significantly different ( $p < .05$ ). Next, the students in group two were taught goal setting and planning skills. Group one was the control group for this part of the study. Prior to any intervention the students were given a fourteen item criterion referenced measure that provided an indicator of change in problem or study planning skills. Once the intervention was complete, both groups were given the criterion reference test again and the difference between the mean scores of the two groups were significantly significant ( $p < .05$ ). This study shows us the importance in directly teaching self-determination and self-advocacy skills to students with disabilities.

Research has shown that students with disabilities benefit greatly when they have been explicitly taught to self-advocate. When students can self-advocate and have specifically been taught to request accommodations, they are more likely to have success with the general education. Students who self-advocate are more likely to have successful adult lives. Although research shows that students need to be explicitly taught to self-advocate, this rarely happens in schools. Based on the research, I believe that if students are taught self-advocacy skills, specifically requesting accommodations, they will be more successful in general education classes and in post high school setting.



## References

- Arnold, E., & Czamanske, J. (1991, April). *Can I make it? A transition program for college bound learning disabled students and their parents*. Paper presented at the 69<sup>th</sup> Council for Exceptional Children Annual Convention, Atlanta, GA., ED 335836.
- Balcazar, F., Fawcett, S., & Seekins, T. (1991). Teaching people with disabilities to recruit help to attain personal goals. *Rehabilitation Psychology, 36*, 31-41.
- Bremer, C. D., Kachgal, M., Schoeller, M., & National Center on Secondary Education, and Transition. (2003). *Self-determination: Supporting Successful Transition. Research to Practice Brief*. Retrieved from [http://www.ncset.org/institutes/proceedings/2004\\_04\\_13.asp](http://www.ncset.org/institutes/proceedings/2004_04_13.asp)
- Brinckerhoff, L. C. (1994). Developing effective self-advocacy skills in college-bound students with learning disabilities. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 29*(4), 229-37.
- Brinckerhoff, L. C., Shaw, S. F., & McGuire, J. M. (1992). Promoting access, accommodations, and independence for college students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 25*(7), 417-429.
- Campbell-Whatley, G. (2008). Teaching students about their disabilities: Increasing self-determination skills and self-concept. *International Journal of Special Education, 23*(2), 137-144.
- Durlak, C. M., & Rose, E., Bursuck, W. (1994). Preparing high school students with learning disabilities for the transition to postsecondary education: Teaching the skills of self-determination. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 27*(1), 51-59.
- Eisenman, L. T., & Chamberlin, M. (2001). Implementing self-determination activities. *Remedial & Special Education, 22*(3), 138.

- Elliott, S. N., & Marquart, A. M. (2004). Extended time as a testing accommodation: Its effects and perceived consequences. *Exceptional Children, 70*(3), 349-367.
- Field, S., Martin J., Miller, R., Ward, M., & Wehmeyer, M. (1998). *A practical guide for teaching self-determination*. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.
- Fletcher, J. M., Francis, D. J., Boudousquie, A., Copeland, K., Young, V., Kalinowski, S., & Vaughn, S. (2006). Effects of accommodations on high-stakes testing for students with reading disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 72*(2), 136-150.
- Furney, K., Carlson, N., Lisi, D., & Yuan, S. (1993). *Speak up for yourself and your future!* Burlington: University of Vermont.
- Johnson, E. S. (2000). The effects of accommodations on performance assessments. *Remedial & Special Education, 21*(5), 261.
- Lee, S., Wehmeyer, M. L., Palmer, S. B., Soukup, J. H., & Little, T. D. (2008). Self-determination and access to the general education curriculum. *Journal of Special Education, 42*(2), 91-107.
- Martin, J., Huber-Marshall, L., & Maxson, L. (1993). Transition policy: Infusing self-determination and self-advocacy into transition programs. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 16*, 53-61.
- Merchant, D., & Gajar, A. (1997). A review of the literature on self-advocacy components in transition programs for students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 8*, 223-231.

- Milsom, A., Akos, P., & Thompson, M. (2004). A psychoeducational group approach to postsecondary transition planning for students with learning disabilities. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 29*(4), 395-411.
- Palmer, S. B., Wehmeyer, M. L., Gipson, K., & Agran, M. (2004). Promoting access to the general curriculum by teaching self-determination skills. *Exceptional Children, 70*(4), 427-439.
- Pierson, M. R., Carter, E. W., Lane, K. L., & Glaeser, B. C. (2008). Factors influencing the self-determination of transition-age youth with high-incidence disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 31*(2), 115-125.
- Raskind, M. H., Goldberg, R. J., Higgins, E. L., & Herman, K. L. (2002). Teaching 'life success' to students with LD: Lessons learned from a 20-year study. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 37*(4), 201.
- Skinner, M. E. (1998). Promoting self-advocacy among college students with learning disabilities. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 33*(5), 278-83.
- Skinner, M. E., & Lindstrom, B. D. (2003). Bridging the gap between high school and college: Strategies for the successful transition of students with learning disabilities. *Preventing School Failure, 47*(3), 132-37.
- Stang, K. K., Carter, E. W., Lane, K. L., & Pierson, M. R. (2009). Perspectives of general and special educators on fostering self-determination in elementary and middle schools. *Journal of Special Education, 43*(2), 94-106.

- Test, D. W., Fowler, C. H., Wood, W. M., Brewer, D. M., & Eddy, S. (2005). A conceptual framework of self-advocacy for students with disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education, 26*(1), 43-54.
- Thoma, C. A., Nathanson, R., Baker, S. R., & Tamura, R. (2002). Self-determination. *Remedial and Special Education, 23*(4), 242.
- Wehmeyer, M., & Schwartz, M. (1997). Self-determination and positive adult outcomes: A follow-up study of youth with mental retardation. *Exceptional Children, 63*(2), 245-255.
- Zhang, D. (2001). Self-determination and inclusion: Are students with mild mental retardation more self-determined in regular classrooms? *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, 36*(4), 357-362.

## Appendix B

### Lessons/Handouts

#### Lesson one:

#### What is an accommodation?

##### 1. Give an advance organizer.

- a. **State the purpose of this lesson.** *“For the next 20 minutes or so we’re going to talk about self-advocacy. The more knowledge you have about self-advocacy the more power and control you will have over what you learn in school.”*
- b. **Define “control” and “power”** (write control and power on the board) *“Does anyone know what control and power mean?”* (write responses on board) *“That’s right control means to be in charge of and power means strength. Today we will discuss how you can be in charge of your education through a position of strength. We will talk about how you can take more control over what you learn and do in and out of school.”*
- c. **Define “self-advocacy.”** (write self-advocacy on the board) *“One way to gain power and take control is to advocate for yourself. Does anyone know what it means to advocate?”* (Elicit responses) *“That’s right. To advocate is to speak up for a cause or to try to persuade others that the cause is right. To advocate for yourself means to speak up and ask for what you need. Self-advocacy helps you take charge of your life and be more independent. Over the next few weeks you will have the opportunity to learn more about self-advocacy and how advocating for yourself can help you in your life.”*
- d. **Check for understanding.** *“Who can tell me what self-advocacy means?”*  
*“Why is it important that we advocate for ourselves?”*
- e. **Specify expectations.** *“In order for you to get the most out of this lesson, please listen and participate in the discussion.”* (write “Listen” and “Participate” on the board)
- f. **Provide examples of how students often react to teacher or adult decisions about learning and development activities.** *“Think of a class you’ve had where you thought the teacher made all the decisions about what you had to learn or do. It should be a class where you had very little chance to talk about or help decide what was important for you to learn or how you were going to learn.”* *“What was the situation and how did you feel?”* (Elicit responses)

- g. *“Many students who feel upset or bored with what they have to learn and how they are made to learn become frustrated and upset. Students in this situation may think that their teacher won’t listen to what they say. Some students either because they are shy or don’t know what to say won’t talk to their teachers about their concerns. The fact is, most teachers are willing to listen to and talk with students about their schoolwork.” “Raise your hand if you’ve ever felt uncomfortable talking to a teacher about your schoolwork.”*
- h. *“One way to get help in school is through accommodations. What are accommodations?” (elicit responses) “Those are good answers. Accommodations are changes that can be made that will help you succeed or reach your goals. For example, you may work very slowly on tests. You know the information and would do pretty well if you were given more time to finish a test. An accommodation you might need is more time on tests. If you have difficulty with calculation on math problems, you might be more successful if you could use a calculator. This would be another reasonable accommodation. Can you think of some accommodations that would be important for you?” (elicit responses and write on board)*
- i. **Check for understanding.** *“Who can tell me what an accommodation is?” “How can an accommodation help you be more successful in school?”*
- j. *“Here is a list of accommodations that have been helpful for other students. Let’s look over them and add the accommodations that you have discussed to the list.” (hand out accommodation menu and show poster, then read the list of accommodations)*
- k. *“Knowing what accommodations you need and communicating that information to others is important. For example, if you know you need more time on tests, but you don’t tell your teachers, then they won’t have the opportunity to offer you that accommodation. Look at the list of accommodations and think which ones are really important for you to be successful. Let’s take a minute to discuss each accommodation.” Don’t worry about the codes right now those will become important in lesson three.*
- l. **Read the directions.** *“If you are unable to read the directions on a test or assignment, you need to ask the teacher to read the directions for you. If you try to complete a test or assignment without understanding the directions, it will be more difficult for you to be successful on that test or assignment. Who can tell me why it is important to ask the teacher to read directions on tests and assignments?”*
- m. **Read the questions.** *“If you have trouble reading and making sense of questions on tests or assignments, you can ask the teacher to read this out loud to you. If*

*you do this you will have an increased chance of obtaining a higher score on the test or assignment. “Who can tell me why it is important to ask for help reading tests or assignments if you are unable to do so?”*

- n. **Help find answers in the book.** *“Many times teachers will give assignments that include using a textbook to find the answers. If you struggle with reading, or reading comprehension this task can be very difficult. If you are in a general education class and you need help finding the answer in the book, you can ask the teacher to show you what page, paragraph, or sentence the answer is in. This way you will still be responsible for finding the answer, but the task will not seem too impossible. “What should you do if you are asked to find the answer to a question in a textbook?” “How can this accommodation help you be more successful in your classes?”*
- o. **Help with spelling.** *“Spelling is important because it is vital for teachers to be able to read your assignments and understand your responses. If you misspell too many words your teachers might not be able to give you the grade you deserve. If you are completing a test or assignment and you need help with spelling you can ask you teacher to help you spell the word you are struggling with.” “Who can tell me when it is appropriate to ask for spelling help on tests or assignments?”*
- p. **Take test in an alternate location.** *“Students often feel overwhelmed and rushed when they are taking tests in large groups. Many students find it less stressful and more comfortable to take tests in a different room. At our school you have the opportunity to take tests in Jeri Carter’s office. You can also take the test in my classroom, as there are fewer students to distract you. If you need your test read aloud, it is a good idea to also take the test in an alternate location, so the test can be read out loud without disrupting the other students.” “Who can tell me when you should ask to take a test in an alternate location?”*
- q. **Extended Time.** *“If you read at a slower pace, it may take longer for you to complete some tests and assignments. As long as you are always doing you best, it is understandable to need extra time to complete difficult tests or assignments. If you know that you are capable of completing a test or assignment, but you need extra time in order to do the best job possible, then you can request extended time on your test or assignment. This accommodation is not meant to be exploited by requesting more time but then procrastinating your tests or assignment until the end of the term. It is only to be used if you know you will be able to do a better job, if you are given more time. Who can tell me when it not appropriate to request extended time as an accommodation? Who can tell me when it is appropriate to request extended time as an accommodation for an assignment or test?”*

- r. **Special seating arrangement with minimal distractions.** *“Some students work better in the front row where they can see and hear the teacher without being distracted by the other students. Other students work better away from the window so they are not distracted by the people walking by. Other students need to be placed away from the door to avoid the temptation to wave or holler to friends walking by. Once you have determined where you need to sit in the classroom in order to be the most successful, you need to talk to your teacher about being moved. This should be the first accommodation that you request in your classes. By requesting this accommodation, you will be placed in the classroom where you know you will be the most successful. Also, this request shows your teacher that you are responsible and ready to learn.” “Who can tell me where they need to sit in order to avoid distractions or disruptions in the classroom?”*
- s. **Adjustments in the amount of work required for school assignments.** *“In many classes students become overwhelmed by the amount of work assigned and feel immediately discouraged. This discouragement often turns into frustration when the work is not completed on time. This is usually when students start falling behind in school. If you feel like you do not have the skills necessary to complete the amount of work given, or if you know you can do the work but that it is going to be very difficult for you to complete the amount of work, you can request that the assignment be shortened. You may ask the teacher if you can write a two-page paper instead of a five-page paper. Or perhaps you request to complete the even problems on your math assignment. It is important that you have the teacher help you decide what part of the assignment is the most important. This is probably not an accommodation that you need to use on a daily basis; however, it can be very useful in helping you be successful on your tests and assignments. Who can tell me when this accommodation would not be appropriate to request? Who can tell me when this accommodation would be helpful?”*
- t. **Review.** *“You have now learned several new words. The first word you learned was self-advocacy. Let’s all read the definition of self-advocacy together” (read together). “The second word we learned was accommodation. Who can tell me what an accommodation is?” (Wait for a response.) “Yes, accommodations are changes that can be made that will help you succeed or reach your goals.”*
- u. **Model.** *“We are now going to try to remember the eight accommodations that we learned today.” “Let’s use the codes to help us remember the accommodations. As you can see on our accommodations chart the code is listed next to the accommodation. RD is reading directions. What is RD? (Wait for response. If*



*the whole class does not respond, repeat previous directions.) Great job, let's try the next one. RQ is reading questions. What is RQ?" (wait for response) Use the same procedures with the rest of the accommodations.*

- v. **Guided Practice.** Remove the accommodation poster. Write only the codes on the board. *"I am going to point to a code, and I would like all of you to tell me what accommodation this code stands for. After I point to the code, I will count to three. When I say three, all of you need to respond at once. Let's try one together (point to RD.) One, two, three (say the response with the class.) Read Directions."* If students do not respond together, repeat that example. Follow the same procedure until all the accommodations have been removed. Continue to practice the accommodations until the students have a good understanding of each accommodation.
- w. **Independent Practice.** *"Now I am going to hand you a card. On the left side of the card, all eight of the accommodations are listed. On the right side, all of the accommodation codes are listed. You need to match the code with the appropriate accommodation. I will give you five minutes. (Hand out paper and have students complete the assignment. If they need more time, allow a few more minutes.)"*
- x. **Correction and feedback.** Correct the independent practice and offer corrective feedback to students who did not receive 100 percent. For those students who did not receive 100 percent, give the independent practice assignment again.
- y. **Conclusion.** *"Today I have taught you eight accommodations that can be used in your general education classes. Next time we will learn how to identify when an accommodation is needed."*

## Self-Advocacy:

To speak up and ask for what  
you need

---

Self-Advocacy helps you take  
charge of your life and be more  
independent

# Accommodation:

Changes that can be made that  
will help you succeed or reach  
your goals.

# Accommodations Card

<u>Accommodations</u>	<u>Code</u>
1. Read the directions	RD
2. Read the questions	RQ
3. Help find the answers in the book	HA
4. Help with spelling	HS
5. Take test in an alternate location	TA
6. Extended time	ET
7. Special seating arrangement with minimal distractions	SS
8. Adjustments in the amount of work required for school assignments	AW

# Accommodations

## Independent practice

**Directions: Draw a line to match the accommodations with the correct code.**

### Accommodations

### Code

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. Read the directions   | TA |
| 2. Read the questions  | ET |
| 3. Help find the answers in the book                                 | SS |
| 4. Help with spelling  | RQ |
| 5. Take test in an alternate location                                | HA |
| 6. Extended time   | HS |
| 7. Special seating arrangement with minimal distractions             | AW |
| 8. Adjustments in the amount of work required for school assignments | RD |

## Lesson two

### When is an accommodation needed?

#### 1. Give advanced organizer.

- a. **State the purpose of this lesson.** *“For the next 20 minutes or so we’re going to talk more about self-advocacy and accommodations. Remember that the more knowledge you have about self-advocacy the more power and control you will have over what you learn in school.”*

#### 2. Review.

- a. (write self-advocacy on the board) *“Who can tell me what self-advocacy means?”* (elicit student responses) *“That’s right, self-advocacy means to speak up and ask for what you need.”*
- b. (write accommodation on the board) *“Who can tell me what an accommodation is?”* (elicit responses) *“Great job; accommodations are changes that can be made that will help you succeed or reach your goals.”*
- c. (write the eight accommodation codes on the board) *“Who can tell me what accommodations these codes stand for?”* (Elicit responses) *“Yes, great job!! RD is read the directions, RQ is read the questions, HA is help find answers in the book, HS is help with spelling, TA is take test in alternate location, ET is extended time, SS special seating arrangement with minimal distractions, AW is adjustments in the amount of work required for school assignments.”*

#### 3. Academic strengths.

- a. **Introduction.** *“Every person has strengths and weaknesses. We all have things that we are good at and things that we need to work on, or things that we need help with. It is important to identify things that we are good at so we can practice those things and become even better. I am good at typing. I am able to type really fast. Who can tell me one thing they are good at?”* (elicit responses from a few students and write them on the board) *We are not all good at everything, but we are all good at some things.”*
- b. **Model.** *“Before we can use an accommodation, we first need to identify when an accommodation is needed. To do that we are going to identify our strengths and limitations. First, we are going to identify our academic strengths, or the things that we are good at. Look at the skills inventory list. I will read the questions out loud. If this is something that you do well, circle Y, if you are not able to do the*

*skill circle the letter N.” (Hand out the skills inventory list; read each question out loud and have the students circle the correct response. Walk around the room to ensure that the students understand the directions and are completing the inventory accurately.) “Number one says ‘Can you spell most words correctly?’ Because I cannot spell most words correctly I am going to circle the letter N. Now you circle the answer that pertains to you.”(Complete the rest of the sheet and read all of the questions aloud.)*

- c. **Independent practice.** *“Now I am going to hand you another sheet called ‘Skills I know.’ Please write down all the skills from the inventory list that you answered Y to. For example, if I circled Y for “Spelled most words correctly” I would write that on the first line of my skills I know sheet.” (Pass out the skills to know sheet and have the students write their strengths on the sheet. Monitor all students to make sure they are doing this.)*
- d. *“The skills you have listed on this paper are your academic strengths. These are skills that will be helpful in all of your school classes.”*
- e. **Feedback/error correction.** (Walk around to room to check all students’ papers to ensure that they have filled out the skills inventory worksheet correctly. If students did not understand the directions, repeat the instructions and help students on an individual basis.)

#### 4. Academic weaknesses.

- a. **Introduction.** *“Just like we are all good at some things, we all have areas that we need help in, or areas of limitation that we need to improve. I am good at typing, but I am not good at drawing. This is an area that I would like to improve, and it is an area that I often need help in. When I need to draw a picture for something, I usually ask one of my students who is good at art and likes to draw to help me. Everybody has areas that are weaknesses that they need help in.”*
- b. **Model.** *“Now we need to identify the areas that we have difficulty in. These areas are called academic limitations. Take a look at your skills inventory list. The questions that you answered No to are your academic limitations. If I am looking at my skills inventory sheet, I see that I answered “no” to “spell most words correctly.” I know this is an area that I need help in.”*
- c. **Guided practice.** *“Now I am going to hand out a sheet called “Skills I need to know” On this paper, you need to write the areas that you circled N. On my paper, I am going to write “spell most words correctly” because this is a skill I answered “no” to. Everyone write down the first skill that you answered “no” to.” (check that all students did this)*

- d. **Independent practice.** *“Now I want you to finish filling out the ‘skills to know’ sheet. Please raise your hand if you have any questions.”*
  - e. **Feedback/error correction.** (Walk around the room to check students’ papers to ensure that they have filled out the “skills I need to know sheet” if students did not understand the directions, repeat the instructions and help students on an individual basis.)
- 5. Identify accommodations specific to academic limitations.**
- a. **Introduction.** *“Now that we know what our academic strengths and limitations are, we can identify what accommodations we might need to help us be successful in all classes.”*
  - b. **Model.** *“Everyone, take out your accommodations card: this card should be in your folders. Next, I want you put your accommodations card next to your academic limitation. Look at each academic limitation and identify one or two accommodations that will help with this limitation. For example, when I look at my academic limitation sheet I see that my first limitation is “spell most words correctly.” When I look over at my accommodations card I see that one accommodation is help with spelling. On my things to work on sheet. next to spell most words correctly I am going to write HS so I remember what accommodation will help me with this limitation.”*
  - c. **Guided practice.** *“Now I want you to look at your first academic limitation: Choose one accommodation that will help with this limitation and write it next to the academic limitation.”* (Walk around the room to ensure that all students are able to identify an accommodation to go along with the limitation.)
  - d. **Independent practice.** *“Go ahead with the rest of your academic limitations. Be sure the accommodation you choose will help with your academic limitation.”* (Give students a few minutes to do this.)
  - e. **Feedback/error correction.** (Walk around the room to check students’ papers to ensure that they have filled out the “skills I need to know sheet”, if students did not understand the directions, repeat the instructions and help students on an individual basis.)
- 6. Conclusion.** *“We learned how to identify when an accommodation is needed. We identified our academic limitations and selected an accommodation that will help with that limitation. Next time we will learn the steps to requesting an accommodation.”*



## **Skills Inventory List**

1. Can you spell most words correctly? Y N
2. Can you write complete sentences? Y N
3. Can you take and complete notes? Y N
4. Can you use punctuate sentences correctly? Y N
5. Can you find the main ideas in a piece of writing? Y N
6. Can you identify the sequence of a story or an event? Y N
7. Can you ask yourself questions about what you have read? Y N
8. Can you remember the meaning of new vocabulary words? Y N
9. Can you use the table of contents and index of a book? Y N
10. Can you use the glossary of a text book? Y N
11. Can you write a paragraph using a topic sentence? Y N
12. Can you write paragraphs that have topic, detail, and conclusion? Y N
13. Can you organize your ideas for a five-paragraph essay? Y N
14. Can you correct capitalization errors? Y N
15. Can you type? Y N
16. Can you prepare and bring your materials to class each day? Y N
17. Can you complete all assignments given on time? Y N
18. Can you identify the main idea of an oral lecture? Y N
19. Can you carefully read test/assignment directions? Y N
20. Can you find the answers on a worksheet from a textbook? Y N

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Class period \_\_\_\_\_

Skills I know

Reading:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Study Skills:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Writing:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Test taking skills:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Organization:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Class period \_\_\_\_\_

Skills I need to know

Reading:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Study Skills:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Writing:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Test Taking:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Organization:

---

---

---

## Lesson three

### Steps to Requesting an Accommodation

#### 1. Give an advanced organizer.

- a. **State the purpose of this lesson.** *“For the next 20 minutes or so we’re going to talk more about self-advocacy and accommodations. Remember that the more knowledge you have about self-advocacy, the more power and control you will have over what you learn in school.”*

#### 2. Review.

- a. (Write accommodation on the board) *“Who can tell me what an accommodation is?”* (Elicit responses) *“Great job; accommodations are changes that can be made that will help you succeed or reach your goals.”*  
  
(Write the eight accommodation codes on the board) *“I am going to pass the marker to one person. That person will write the accommodation next to the code, then that person will pass the marker onto someone else until all of the accommodations are listed on the board.”* (Give one student a marker, offer help where needed.) *“Great job” RD is read the directions, RQ is read the questions, HA is help find answers in the book, HS is help with spelling, TA is take test in alternate location, ET is extended time, SS special seating arrangement with minimal distractions, AW is adjustments in the amount of work required for school assignments.”*
- b. *“Who can tell me what an academic strength is?”* (Elicit responses) *“Exactly academic strengths are things that we are good at that help us do well in school. Who would be willing to share one of their academic strengths?”* (elicit response) *“Thank you”*
- c. *“Now let’s review academic limitation. Remember, an academic limitation is an area that we have difficulty in. Academic limitation can make school more difficult for us. Who remembers what one of my academic limitations is.”* (elicit responses) *“Great job, my academic limitation is I have difficulty spelling.”*
- d. *“How would I know when to ask for an accommodation?”* (elicit responses) *“Yes, good job. You match an accommodation with an academic weakness.”* *“Who can tell me what accommodation I should request to help with my academic limitation?”* (wait for a response) *“Yes, I would choose HS, which stands for help with spelling.”*

#### 3. Step one.

- a. **Introduction.** *“Now that we know when an accommodation is needed, we need to learn how to appropriately ask for the accommodation. Today we are*

going to learn five steps to appropriately ask for an accommodation. We are going to use the word FESTA to help us remember what the behaviors are. The F stands for 'Face the teacher'."

- b. **Model.** "If I am talking to someone and I am turned the other direction or to the side, the person I am talking to might think I'm not interested in the conversation. Let me show you what I mean." (Demonstrate talking to someone without looking at them; turn the other way and do not face the person.) "Does this look like I am interested in the other person, or do I look like I am not interested in this conversation." "If I want to show that I am interested in the conversation, then I need to face them" (Demonstrate how to correctly face the person you are talking to.)
  - c. **Guided practice.** "I need a volunteer who would like to practice step one with me" (have a volunteer come to the front of the room) "I want you to tell me about your favorite class while you practice the first step." (Guide student through this process correct where needed) "Great Job!!"
  - d. **Independent practice.** "Now I want you to turn to your neighbor. I want you to face the person appropriately and take turns telling each other about your favorite holiday."
  - e. **Feedback/error correction.** (Walk around the room to give corrections where needed.)
  - f. **Conclusion.** Who can tell me what the F in FESTA stands for?" (elicit responses) "Yes, you are exactly right; F stands for 'Face the teachers'. Face the teacher is the first step when asking for an accommodation."
- 4. Step two.**
- a. **Introduction.** "Now that we know the first step, let's move onto step number two. The E in FESTA stands for, 'maintain eye contact'. If I am facing the teacher but looking at the teacher's feet or at another person in the room, the teacher may not take me seriously. When I do not maintain eye contact, the person I am talking to might think I am not confident. In order to show the teacher that you are confident in your request and also to show them you are interested, you must maintain eye contact."
  - b. **Model.** "If I am talking to someone and I am looking at their feet or looking away, the person might not think I am confident or not serious about the conversation. Let's have another volunteer come to the front and I will demonstrate this skill for you" (Have a student come to the front and demonstrate for them how to talk and maintain eye contact.)
  - c. **Guided Practice.** "I need a volunteer who would like to practice step two with me." (Have a volunteer come to the front of the room) "I want you to tell me what you ate for dinner last night; remember to maintain eye contact while you practice the second step," (Guide student through this process correct where needed) "Great Job!!"

- d. **Independent practice.** *“Now I want you to turn to your neighbor. I want you to face the person appropriately, maintain eye contact, and take turns telling each other about your favorite thing to do when you are not at school.”*
- e. **Feedback/error correction.** (Walk around the room to give corrections where needed.)
- f. **Conclusion.** *Who can tell me what the E in FESTA stands for? (elicit responses) “Yes, you are exactly right; E stands for ‘maintain eye contact.’ Maintain eye contact is the second step when asking for an accommodation.”*

### 5. Step three.

- a. **Introduction.** *“Now that we know the first and second steps, let’s move onto step number three. The S in FESTA stands for ‘state the accommodation and reason.’ If I don’t tell the teacher what I need, I can’t expect them to help me. Teachers have many students and it is difficult for them to keep everyone straight. It is so important that you advocate for yourself and tell the teacher what you need and why.”*
- b. **Model.** *“When I am telling a teacher what I need and why I need it I must be clear. Remember how my academic limitation is spelling most words correctly. If I needed to request an accommodation to help with this limitation, what accommodation would I request (elicit responses) Yes, great job; I would ask for HS, help with spelling. To request this accommodation, I would face the teacher, maintain eye contact, and ask for help with my spelling. I need someone to pretend that they are a teacher; who would like to do that? (Have volunteer come up to the front of the room. Have them pretend to be a teacher) “Excuse me Mr./Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_, I need help with my spelling because I don’t know how to spell this word.” (Say to student) “Did I follow the first three steps accurately?” (have students respond)*
- c. **Guided Practice.** *“I need someone who has not come up yet to help me with step three. (Have volunteer come up to the front of the room) “I want you to pretend that your academic limitation is difficulty spelling. I want you to pretend that I am the teacher, and I want you to ask me for an appropriate accommodation following the first three steps.” (Have student practice, help where needed)*
- d. **Independent practice.** *“Now I want you to turn to your neighbor. I want you to face the person appropriately, maintain eye contact, state what accommodation is needed, and give the reason. For this purpose let’s all pretend that our academic limitation is not being able to spell all words correctly. If you need help remembering what accommodation you would choose, you can look at your accommodation check list. Go ahead.”*

- e. **Feedback/error correction.** (*Walk around the room to give corrections where needed.*)
- f. **Conclusion.** *“Who can tell me what the S in FESTA stands for?” (elicit responses) “Yes, you are exactly right; S stands for State the accommodation and reason. State the accommodation and the reason it is needed.”*

#### 6. Step four.

- a. **Introduction.** *“Now that we know the first, second, and third steps, let’s move onto step number four. The T in FESTA stands for Thank the teacher. Whenever you ask for something it is very good manners to thank the person.”*
- b. **Model.** *“Whenever I ask for something, I need to remember to thank the person that I am talking to. I need a volunteer to be the teacher and I am going to be the student. I am going to practice the first four steps.”* (Have student come to the front of the room) *“Excuse me Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, I need help with my spelling because I don’t know how to spell this word.”* (Have student help spell a simple word) *“Thank you”* (Ask student) *“Did I follow the first four steps?”* *“Did I Face the teacher?”* (Let the students respond) *“Did I maintain eye contact?”* (Let the students respond) *“Did I state the accommodation and the reason the accommodation as needed?”* (Student response) *“Did I thank the teacher? It looks like I followed the first four steps when appropriately asking for an accommodation. Now let’s practice one together.”*
- c. **Guided Practice.** *“I need two volunteers. I want one volunteer to be the teacher and one to be the student (assign roles to each student). I want you to practice requesting an accommodation following the first four steps. I need the rest of the class to watch and make sure these students follow the first four steps.”* (watch students and help where needed)
- d. **Independent practice.** *“Now I want you to turn your neighbor. Each of you will take a turn requesting an accommodation by following the first four steps. I want you to face the person appropriately, maintain eye contact state what accommodation is needed and give the reason. Then thank the person. For this purpose, let’s all pretend that our academic limitation is not being able to spell all words correctly. If you need help remembering what accommodation you would choose, you can look at your accommodation check list. Go ahead.”*
- e. **Feedback/error correction.** (Walk around the room to give corrections where needed.)
- f. **Conclusion.** *“Who can tell me what the T in FESTA stands for?” (elicit responses) “Yes, you are right; T stands for Thank the teacher.”*

#### 7. Step five.

- a. **Introduction.** *“You all are doing such a great job learning and practicing the steps. We are now going to learn the last step. The A in FESTA stands for*

*Accommodation was used. If you need an accommodation and you ask for an accommodation, you must use the accommodation for it to be helpful.*

*Otherwise the accommodation won't help you with your academic limitation."*

- b. **Model.** *"If I wanted to implement help with spelling I would write down each letter of the word I needed help with as the teacher said it to me. For example, if I needed help with the word 'Encyclopedia,' I would write down each letter as the teacher said it to me. As the teacher said (Show students how to do this by writing the word as you say it on the white board) ENCYCLOPEDIA"*
  - c. **Guided practice.** *"I am going to show you how I would implement the accommodation of Help with Spelling. If I asked the teacher for help with spelling. I would make sure to write down the word that the teacher helped me spell. For example, if I asked the teacher how to spell accommodation, I would write down the word accommodation as the teacher spelled it to me. Let's all implement the accommodation of Help with Spelling. I will tell you all how to spell accommodation and I want you to write it down. Ready (give students a few seconds to get ready) A-C-C-O-M-M-O-D-A-T-I-O-N (spell the word for the students nice and slow) "Raise your hand if you wrote down the word accommodation. If you raised your hand then you all implemented the accommodation."*
  - d. **Independent Practice.** *"Now I want you to turn to your neighbor. Each of you will take a turn requesting an accommodation by following all five of the steps. You will face the person appropriately, maintain eye contact, state what accommodation is needed and give the reason, thank the person, and then implement the accommodation. If you are acting as the teacher, you will spell a word for them. For this practice the word can be simple. Decide who is going to be the teacher and who is going to be the student first. Get ready, go ahead and practice." (when students finish with round one, instruct them to complete the steps again, but switch places, the student is now the teacher and the teacher is now the student.)*
  - e. **Feedback/error correction.** (Walk around the room to give corrections where needed.)
  - f. **Conclusion.** *"Who can tell me what the A stands for in FESTA?"*
8. **Lesson Conclusion.** *"We learned how to identify when an accommodation is needed. We learned the steps to appropriately requesting an accommodation. What word did we use to help us remember the steps to requesting an accommodation appropriately (FESTA). F stands for \_\_\_\_\_, E stands for \_\_\_\_\_, S stands for \_\_\_\_\_, T stands for \_\_\_\_\_, and A stands for \_\_\_\_\_. Great job!! Next time we will learn how to implement all of the accommodations we learned and also how to document that we followed the right procedures.*



# Steps to Requesting an Accommodation

**F**=Face the teacher

**E**= Maintain eye contact

**S**= State the accommodation  
and the reason

**T**= Thank the teacher

**A**= Accommodation was used

## Lesson four

### Implementation of an Accommodation

1. **Give an advanced organizer.**
2. **State the purpose of this lesson.** *“For the next 20 minutes or so we’re going to talk more about self-advocacy and accommodations. Remember that the more knowledge you have about self-advocacy, the more power and control you will have over what you learn in school.”*
3. **Review.**
  - a. *“Who can tell me what an academic strength is?” (elicit responses) “Exactly. Academic strengths are things that we are good at that help us do well in school.”*
  - b. *“Now let’s review academic weaknesses. Remember, an academic limitation is an area that we have difficulty in. Academic weaknesses can make school more difficult for us. Who remembers what one of my academic limitations is?” (Elicit responses)*
  - c. *“Who can tell me what the letters in FESTA stand for?” (wait for response) “Great job, you are right. F stands for Face the teacher, E stands for Maintain eye contact, S stands for State the reason and accommodation, T stands for thank the teacher, and A means to Implement the accommodation.”*
  - d. *“How would I know when to request an accommodation?” (elicit responses) “Yes, exactly; you match an accommodation with an academic weakness.”*
  - e. *Who would like to demonstrate requesting an accommodation? (Choose student to follow the steps and request an accommodation. Correct where needed.)*
  - f. *“Let’s review the accommodations” (write the accommodation codes on the board RD, RQ, HA, HS, TA, ET, SS, AW) “When I point to an accommodation code, I want everyone to shout out what accommodation this code stands for. Ready? RD (read directions), RQ (read questions), HA (Help find answers in the book), HS (help with spelling), TA (take test in alternate location), ET (extended time), SS (special seating), TA (take test in alternate location,) and ET (extended time).”*
4. **Introduction.** *“Now that we know when an accommodation is needed and how to ask for an accommodation, we need to make sure we know how to use the accommodations appropriately. Each accommodation can be very useful to help us overcome our academic limitation, but if the accommodation is not used correctly it will do little to help us. Let’s take a look at each accommodation to make sure we know how to appropriately use the accommodation.”*

- a. **Accommodation one: RD.** *“If your academic limitation is difficulty with reading, you might choose to use the reading directions accommodations. To use this accommodation, you will raise your hand, wait for the teacher to come to you, and then, following the FESTA steps, request that accommodation. You will listen carefully while the teacher is reading the directions to you. Once he or she have finished, you will thank the teacher. What should you do if you don’t understand the directions?” (elicit response) “Great; you should ask them to repeat or explain the directions. In order to use this accommodation, all you have to do is listen to the teacher read the directions.”*
- b. **Accommodation two: RQ.** *“Just like reading the directions, if you have difficulty with reading, you might choose to use the reading questions accommodation. This accommodation can be used on a test or assignment. If you begin a test or assignment and need an accommodation, you should raise your hand and let the teacher know that you need to have the questions read aloud to you. You need to make sure you follow the FESTA steps when you request this accommodation. To use this accommodation, you will listen as the teacher reads the questions and you will answer the questions to the best of your ability. Don’t forget to thank the teacher for reading the question to you.”*
- c. **Accommodation three: HA.** *“If your academic limitation is difficulty with reading you might have a hard time finding answers in a text book. You should try to find the answers on your own first, but if you are unable to do this, you may need to use this accommodation. You will need to raise your hand and request this accommodation using the FESTA steps. Once the teacher shows you the page, paragraph, or sentence that the answer is in, you will need to locate the answer and write it down. Remember to thank the teacher. Once the teacher has shown you where the answer is, if you still can’t find the answer you need to ask for this accommodation again and have the teacher help you find the answer in the book.”*
- d. **Accommodation four: HS.** *“If your academic limitation is difficulty with spelling, you might have to request help with spelling as an accommodation. To do this, you will use the FESTA steps. As the teacher spells the word for you, you need to listen carefully and write down each letter. If you don’t get the whole word written down, you may need to ask the teacher to spell the word for you again. To use this accommodation, all you have to do is write down the word. Don’t forget to thank the teacher.”*
- e. **Accommodation five: TA.** *“If you have the academic limitation of being able to concentrate, you may want to use this accommodation. Also, if you need your test read aloud you may also want to use this accommodation. You can take your test in an alternate location and have Jeri Carter or me read it to*

you. To use this accommodation you might want to make arrangements with the teacher before class. Anytime you want to take the test in an alternate location, you can go into Jeri Carter's office or you can come into my room. Don't forget to thank the teacher."

- f. **Accommodation six: ET.** "If you are working on an assignment or test that is difficult for you, you may need extra time to work on the test or assignment in order to do your best. To use this accommodation you need to use the FESTA steps to request the accommodation. Then you need to take the assignment or test home, or stay in the classroom with the teacher. Don't forget to what? \_\_\_\_\_ (elicit students to say "Thank the Teacher")
- g. **Accommodation seven: SS.** "If you are easily distracted and need to sit in a different place in the classroom, you might want to request special seating. To do this you will use the FESTA steps. You will let the teacher know where you want to sit in order to concentrate and stay on task. Once the teacher has assigned you the new seat, you will quietly move there and continue to do your work."
- h. **Accommodation eight: AW.** "Sometimes, although you are capable of doing the work, it may take you a very long time. Or you might feel like you would be more successful if the assignment was shortened. To use the accommodation of adjust the amount of work required for school assignments, you might need to do explain why you need this accommodation in more detail than the other accommodations. For example, if I had difficulty in writing and I was assigned to write a five page paper, I might feel overwhelmed and discouraged. This would be a good time to use this accommodation. I would use the skills in the FESTA steps to request this accommodation. I would explain to the teacher that I did not think I could complete a five-page paper, but I knew I could complete a two-page paper. When using this accommodation, it is a good idea to let the teacher know what you can do. In order to use this accommodation, I need to make sure I do what I told the teacher I could do. So if I told the teacher I was going to write a two-page paper, then I need to make sure I write a two-page paper. Let's practice this one together."
- i. **Model.** "I need a volunteer. (Have student come to the front of the room.) I need you to pretend like you are the teacher and I will be the student. I want the rest of you to watch and make sure I am following the FESTA steps. Hi Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_. I don't think I can write a good five-page paper, but I know I can write a good two-page paper. Can I write a two-page paper instead of a five-page paper? (Let student respond.) Thank you. Remember, if I was going to use this accommodation I would do my best to write a two page paper."

- ii. **Guided practice.** *“Now I need a volunteer that will practice requesting this accommodation (have volunteer come to the front of the room). Now I want you to request the accommodation of adjustments in the amount of work required for school assignments. Remember to follow the FESTA steps.”* (Guide students through this process.)
- iii. **Independent practice.** *“Now I would like you to turn to a partner and practice requesting this accommodation.”*
- iv. **Feedback/error correction.** (Walk around the room to give corrections where needed.)
- v. **Conclusion.** *“Who can tell me how we would use this accommodation? (Elicit responses.) Great job! We would do what we told the teacher we were going to do. In this case, we said that we were going to write a two-page paper instead of a five-page paper so we need to write a great two-page paper.”*

#### 5. Data collection sheet.

- a. **Introduction.** *“In order to advocate for ourselves we need to practice. We also need to take data in order to document our abilities to ask for accommodations. It is important that we remember to follow the FESTA steps. I am going to show you how to complete a data collection sheet, so we can take data on your ability to request accommodations.”*
- b. **Model.** (show transparency data collection sheet) *“Look at the data collection sheet. Each day in one of your general education classes you will fill this sheet out. Remember to write your name at the top. Always write the date and then complete the checklist. Put a check mark if the answer is yes; you will put a zero if the answer is no and you will leave it blank if it does not apply to you. Sometimes during one class period you might have to request more than one accommodation. Other times you will not need to request an accommodation at all. Remember, you will request an accommodation when you are having difficulty because of your academic limitation. (Introduce first role-plays) For the next several minutes we are going to practice filling out the accommodation data sheet through the use of role-plays. A role-play is a pretend situation that you will read with a partner. As you read the role play you need to fill out the accommodation data sheet. I need a volunteer to help me with role-play one”* (read role-play being the student and have the student volunteer be the teacher.) *“Show the students how to appropriately fill out the data collection sheet.”*
- c. **Guided practice.** (Now have a few students come to the front and practice being the student, using a role-play, guide them through the use of the data sheet) *“Now I need a few volunteers to practice this with me.”* (Have students come to the front of the room) *“I want you to be the student and I will be the*

*teacher. As you read the role-play practice filling out the accommodations data sheet.” (Follow this process with a few different students.*

- d. **Independent practice.** *“I am going to put you in groups of two. I will give each of you two role plays. During role play one, one person will be the teacher and the other will be the student. Then you will switch places. As you practice the role play you will practice filling out the data collections sheet.”*
  - e. **Feedback/error correction.** (Walk around the room to give corrections where needed.)
  - f. **Conclusion.** *“I am going to give each of you two data collection sheets. I want you to practice requesting accommodations. Remember to follow the FESTA steps when requesting accommodations.”*
- 6. Lessons conclusion.** Remember, self-advocacy is having the ability to speak up and ask for what you want. Self-advocacy helps you take charge of your life and be more independent. When you request accommodations in your general education classes, you are speaking up and asking for what you want.

## ROLE-PLAY 1:

Student: Excuse me, Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ (Student name)

Student: I am having difficulty spelling the word ENCYCLOPEDIA. Can you spell that word for me?

Teacher: Yes, I would love to. E-N-C-Y-C-L-O-P-E-D-I-A

Student: Thank you! (Student writes down word)

## ROLE-PLAY 2:

Student: Excuse me, Mr./Ms \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ (Student name)

Student: I am having difficulty reading this assignment. Can you help me read this assignment?

Teacher: Yes, I would be happy to. (teacher reads article to student)

Student: Thank you!

## ROLE-PLAY 3:

Student: Excuse me, Mr./Ms \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: Yes \_\_\_\_\_(Student name)

Student: I need to go take the test with Miss Smith or Mrs. Carter

Teacher: Yes, that would be great!

Student: Thank you!!

#### ROLE-PLAY 4:

Student: Excuse me, Mr./Ms \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ (Student name)

Student: I am having trouble finding this answer in the text book. Will you help me locate the answer?

Teacher: Yes \_\_\_\_\_(Student name)

Student: Thank you!!

#### ROLE-PLAY 5:

Student: Excuse me, Mr./Ms \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ (Student name)

Student: I know I can finish this assignment, but I need more time. Can I have extra time to finish this assignment?



Teacher: Absolutely

Student: Thank you!!

ROLE-PLAY 6:

Student: Excuse me, Mr./Ms \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ (Student name)

Student: I am having trouble reading this test. Can you read the questions for me?

Teacher: Sure, I would love to.

Student: Thank you!!

ROLE-PLAY 7:

Student: Excuse me, Mr./Ms \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ (Student name)

Student: I am having trouble concentrating sitting by the window. Can I move to the front of the room?

Teacher: Yes, move right over here.

Student: Thank you!!

## ROLE-PLAY 8:

Student: Excuse me, Mr./Ms \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ (Student name)

Student: I don't understand the directions. Will you read the directions for me?

Teacher: I would love to.

Student: Thank you!!

## ROLE-PLAY 9:

Student: Excuse me, Mr./Ms \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ (Student name)

Student: I don't think I can write a five-page paper, but I know I can write a two-page paper.

Can I have the assignment shortened and write a good two-page paper, instead of a five-page paper.

Teacher: That would be fine.

Student: Thank you!!

## Appendix C

### Student/Teacher Checklist

#### Teacher Checklist

Observer Name:

Date:

Student Name:

Second Observer:

√= yes

0=No

Blank=not applicable

	Accommodation 1	Accommodation 2	Accommodation 3
Accommodation needed			
Student requested accommodation			
Student faced the teacher			
Student maintained eye contact			
Student stated the reason accommodation was needed			
Student thanked the teacher			
Accommodation was used			

Accommodation Menu:

Accommodation Code

Read the directions

RD

Read the questions

RQ

Help find the answers in the book

HA

Help with spelling

HS

Take test in an alternate location

TA

Extended time

ET

Special seating arrangement with minimal distractions

SS

Adjustments in the amount of work required for school assignments

AW

## Student Checklist

Student checklist

Student Name:

Date:

√= yes

0=No

Blank=not applicable

	Accommodation 1	Accommodation 2	Accommodation 3
Do I need an accommodation?			
Did I request an accommodation?			
Did I face the teacher?			
Did I maintain eye contact?			
Did I state the reason an accommodation was needed?			
Did I thank the teacher?			
Did I use the accommodation?			

## Accommodation Menu:

## Accommodation Code

Read the directions	RD
Read the questions	RQ
Help find the answers in the book	HA
Help with spelling	HS
Take test in an alternate location	TA
Extended time	ET
Special seating arrangement with minimal distractions	SS
Adjustments in the amount of work required for school assignments	AW

**Appendix D**

**Treatment Fidelity Checklist**

Lesson 1

What is an Accommodation?

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Training\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson One training checklist

Dates Completed with 100% accuracy

Define Accommodation

\_\_\_\_\_

Model

\_\_\_\_\_

Guided practice

\_\_\_\_\_

Independent practice

\_\_\_\_\_

Feedback/error correction

Lesson Two  
When is an Accommodation Needed?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Training \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson Two training checklist

Dates Completed with 100% accuracy

Academic Strengths

\_\_\_\_\_ model  
 \_\_\_\_\_ guided practice  
 \_\_\_\_\_ independent practice  
 \_\_\_\_\_ feedback/error correction

Academic Weaknesses

\_\_\_\_\_ model  
 \_\_\_\_\_ guided practice  
 \_\_\_\_\_ independent practice  
 \_\_\_\_\_ feedback/error correction

Identify 8 Accommodations

\_\_\_\_\_ model  
 \_\_\_\_\_ guided practice  
 \_\_\_\_\_ independent practice  
 \_\_\_\_\_ feedback/error correction

Identify Accommodations Specific to Academic Weaknesses

\_\_\_\_\_ model  
 \_\_\_\_\_ guided practice  
 \_\_\_\_\_ independent practice  
 \_\_\_\_\_ feedback/error correction

Lesson Three  
Steps to Requesting an Accommodation

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Training \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson Three training checklist  
Dates Completed with 100% accuracy

Instruction of Steps

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Model	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Guided Practice	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Independent practice	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Feed back	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Role-Plays

Role play #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Feedback/error correction \_\_\_\_\_

Role play #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Feedback/error correction \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson Four  
Implementation of an Accommodation

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Training \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson four training checklist

Dates Completed with 100% accuracy

Implement Accommodation

\_\_\_\_\_

model

\_\_\_\_\_

guided practice

\_\_\_\_\_

independent practice

\_\_\_\_\_

feedback/error correction



## Treatment fidelity Checklist

### Teacher Training

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Training \_\_\_\_\_

#### Self-advocacy Definition and Rationale

	Model
	Guided Practice
	Independent practice
	Feedback/error correction

#### Define Accommodation

	Model
	Guided Practice
	Independent practice
	Feedback/error correction

#### Steps to Requesting Accommodation

Instruction of Steps					
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Model	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Guided Practice	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Independent practice	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Feed back	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
		Role-Plays			

Role-play 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Feedback/error correction \_\_\_\_\_  
Role-play 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Feedback/error correction \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix E**  
**Social Validity Questionnaires**  
**Students/Teacher**

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

**Social Validity Scale: For Students**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I have the skills to self-advocate in my general education classes.				1	4	1
2. I know what an accommodation is.			1	1	1	3
3. I have a good understanding of what accommodations are available to me in my general education classes.					4	2
4. I know how to appropriately ask for an accommodation.					4	2
5. I will continue to request accommodations in my general education classes when necessary.					6	
6. I do better in my general education classes when I request accommodations.					4	2
7. I think all students should learn how to advocate for themselves.				1	3	2
8. Teachers are willing to work with me when I ask for help.					3	3

9. What did you like best about the self-advocacy training?

10. What did you like least about the self-advocacy training?

11. What would help you do better in your general education classes?

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

**Social Validity Scale: For Teachers**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The students demonstrated the ability to advocate for themselves.					4	1
2. The students had a clear understanding of what an accommodation is.					4	1
3. The students have a good understanding of the accommodations available to them in their general education classes.					4	1
4. The students were able to appropriately request accommodations.				1	2	2
5. The students were more successful when they requested an accommodation.	1					5
6. All students should learn how to appropriately request accommodations.						5
7. I would like my students to continue to request accommodations.				1		4
8. The students benefited from the self-advocacy training.						5

9. What changes did you see the students make through this process?
  
10. What would you like to change about the self-advocacy training?
  
11. What other self-advocacy behaviors would you like the students to learn?

## Appendix F

### Consent Forms

Dear Parents and/or Guardian:

My name is Ashleigh Smith. I am a master's student at Brigham Young University. As a part of that program, I have designed a research project that I will be implementing in my classes and many of the general education classes at Payson High School. The purpose of this study is to teach students with disabilities to ask for academic accommodations when they are in a general education class. Dr. Mary Anne Prater, Dr. Gordon Gibb, and Dr. Darlene Anderson are professors at Brigham Young University and are serving as my thesis committee members. They will be working with me on the research project.

During this study, data will be collected in the general education classroom on how many times your student asks for an accommodation. The students will then be given instruction on how to appropriately ask for an accommodation. Data will again be taken to see if the student's ability to ask for accommodations has increased. Both general education teacher and the student participant will take data.

The risks associated with this study are minimal. During the first phase of the study, the general education teacher will not encourage the students to ask for accommodations. This phase of the study will only last for a few days. There are no direct benefits for your child's participation in this project; however, society may benefit by learning more about students' ability to ask for accommodations.

Participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to decline to have your student participate in this research study. You may withdraw your student's participation at any point without penalty.

Strict confidentiality will be maintained. All data collected during this study will be stored in a secure area and access will be given to only personnel associated with the study. Data will be kept for three years after the duration of the study, and then the data will be destroyed.

If you have further questions you can contact me at the following number, address, or email address. Ashleigh Smith, Payson High School, 1050 South Main, Payson, UT 84651; phone 801-465-6025; ashleigh.smith@nebo.edu. You may also contact Dr. Mary Anne Prater, who is my faculty mentor at Brigham Young University; her email address is prater@byu.edu.

All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. Questions about your child's rights as a study participant or comments or complaints about the study also may be addressed to the IRB Administrator, Brigham Young University, A-285 ASB, Provo, UT 84602; 801-422-1461 or [irb@byu.edu](mailto:irb@byu.edu)

I give my voluntary consent to take part in this study. I will be given a copy of this consent document for my records.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



Dear Student:

**Introduction**

My name is Ashleigh Smith, I am a Master's student at Brigham Young University. You are being invited to take part in a research study. Your parent or guardian needs to give permission for you to be in this study. You do not have to be in this study if you don't want to, even if your parent has already given permission. To join the study is voluntary. You are being asked to take part because you are a student at Payson High School, you have a good attendance record, and you are in Miss Smith's class.

**What am I being asked to do?**

If you decide to be in the study, we will ask you to participate in lessons that will teach you how to ask for help in your general education classes. These lessons will be taught in your reading or English class. You will also be asked to complete a checklist each day during one of your general education classes for a few days during the study.

**What are the benefits to me for taking part in the study?**

Taking part in this research study may not help you in any way, but it might help us learn more about self-advocacy.

**Are there any risks to me if I am in this study?**

The potential risks of taking part in this study are during the first phase of the study. The general education teacher will not encourage you to ask for accommodations. This phase of the study will only last for a few days.

**Will my information be kept private?**

All your personal information will be kept confidential. All data collected during this study will be stored in a secure area and access will be given to only people associated with the study. When we tell other people or write articles about what we learned in the study, we won't include your name or that of anyone else who took part in the study. The data for this study will be kept for three years after the completion of the study, and then will be destroyed.

**Will I receive anything for being in this study?**

Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You will not receive money or any other form of compensation for taking part in this study.

**What are my rights as a research study volunteer?**

You do not have to be a part of this study if you don't want to. You may choose not to answer any questions you don't want to answer, and you can change your mind and not be in the study at any time without affecting your grades or standing at school.

**Who can I talk to if I have questions?**

If you have further questions, you can contact me at the following number or address: Ashleigh Smith, Payson High School, 1050 South Main, Payson, UT 84651; phone 801-465-6025. My email address is [ashleigh.smith@neboo.edu](mailto:ashleigh.smith@neboo.edu). All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. Questions about your rights as a study participant or comments or complaints about the study also may be addressed to the IRB Administrator, Brigham Young University, A-285 ASB, Provo, UT 84602; 801-422-1461 or [irb@byu.edu](mailto:irb@byu.edu)

**Statement of consent**

I give my voluntary consent to take part in this study. I will be given a copy of this consent document for my records.

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

---

**Printed Name of Participant**