Instructor's Guide for Assessment Accommodations

Topic Area: Assessment

Module: Assessment Accommodations

Case Study: Helping Sally Visualize a Successful ACT Score

Summary: Jerald Abney is the teacher for students with Visual Impairments (VI) in a small, rural school district. He works with Sally Mason, an eleventh grader, who has been visually impaired from birth. Sally is a bright student who has managed to keep up with her peers in spite of her struggles with inaccessible learning and testing materials. Sally plans to retake the ACT this year to improve her scores and hopefully qualify for academic scholarships. In addition, she must complete statewide high stakes testing and exit exams for the school. Both Jerald and Sally are exploring effective accommodations for Sally, so she can demonstrate her knowledge and potential for higher education.

Characters and Roles:
- Jerald Abney, teacher for the visually impaired
- Sally Mason, eleventh grade who is visually impaired
- Dianna Hernandez, Sally's math teacher
- Dan Donovan, Sally's English teacher
- Mr. Matthews, Sally's history teacher

Tools:
- Presentation
- Setting
- Timing and Scheduling
- Response

Artifacts:
- Sample Science Test
- Sample Test for Low Vision Accommodations

Glossary Terms:

Web Sites:
- http://seriweb.com
- http://www.nfbstudents.org
- http://www.uniteforsight.org

Discussion Points:
- Discuss the types of instructional and assessment accommodations that would be necessary for a student who is visually impaired.
• What are the advantages and disadvantages of taking high stakes assessments online?
• What is the value of a collaborative team of educators working together to meet the needs of a student who is visually impaired?
• Who should facilitate the meetings to discuss individual education plans for a student who is visually impaired? Who is responsible for the implementation of the IEP?
• How much time should a regular education teacher expect to devote to making accommodations for a student who is visually impaired?
• When a regular education teacher is required to get additional training in order to work effectively with a student with a disability, what compensation, if any, should be provided?

Activities:
• Plan a staff development session for educators on the different types of assistive technology that would benefit a student with a visual impairment.
• Research the different types of assistive technologies and the evidence of their success when used by students with visual impairments.
• Write a proposal for a school district or a state and/or federal grant to purchase computer software or programs that would provide accommodations for students who are visually impaired.
• Roleplay a situation where educators have diverse commitments to providing accommodations for a student who is visually impaired.

Reflective Question: Scene 2, Question 3 - What role does collaboration play in getting Sally's accommodations refined and working better for her? Collaboration can be extremely effective in helping educators meet the needs of all students. In the case of a student with a visual impairment, it is critical. First of all, not all classroom teachers have enough knowledge about visual impairments and how to most effectively work with students with the particular disability. Secondly, there are new technologies becoming available every year, and only a specialist in that area would have that information. Parents should be involved, because they know the child and his/her educational history. If the student is old enough, he/she should also be part of the team. When all interested parties are actively involved in making decisions about instructional and assessment accommodations, the student has the greatest potential for success.

Connections:
Topic Area: Assessment; Module: Quality Test Construction
Topic Area: Assessment; Module: Grading