Instructor's Guide for Instructional Accommodations

Topic Area: Instruction

Module: Instructional Accommodations

Case Study: Scaffolding: Students Become Increasingly Independent Within Their Accommodations

Summary: When Delia Hall welcomes her new fourth grade students at the beginning of the year, Samuel hands her his list of necessary accommodations that he filled out the previous year with his regular classroom teacher. Upon looking over his paper, she sees that he has several accommodations that help him focus, organize, and complete tasks. During math, she notices that he has severe difficulty organizing his information on his paper. The transfer from book to paper is difficult and inefficient. One of his organization accommodations is that she writes math computation problems on graph paper for him to complete. She quickly finds that this is a time-consuming task, and she would like to see him become more independent using these tools. She tries to scaffold his accommodations in working toward independence and at the same time has him reflect on these changes. Mrs. Hall devises an independent response scale starting with a dependent accommodation and moving to the more independent to focus her efforts. Each time she changes the way they use the accommodation, Samuel fills out a journal with his views on the effectiveness of the changes. Through review of Samuel's journal and Mrs. Hall's personal notes, she is able to see that the accommodations Samuel is using are effective, and the added independence has boosted his self-confidence.

Characters and Roles:
- Delia Hall, fourth grade teacher
- Samuel, fourth grade student
- Mr. Bailey, third grade teacher

Tools:
- Accommodations Considerations for Assessment and Instruction
- Increasingly Independent
- Accommodations Journal: Keeping Track of What Works

Artifacts:
- Samuel's Necessary Accommodations
- Sample Page of Accommodations Found on an IEP
- Samuel's Completed Checklist of Accommodations Considerations for Assessment and Instruction
- Samuel's Completed Student Accommodations Journal
- Graph Paper with Problems
- Increasingly Independent Response Accommodations Graphic
- Audio Recording of Samuel and Delia Discussing Accommodations
Glossary Terms:
- Scaffolding
- Response Accommodation Graphic
- Accommodations Journal

Discussion Points:
- What is the purpose of scaffolding and who benefits?
- What is the value of journaling?
- What are some strategies to help students be reflective?
- What are the pros and cons of knowing about students with special needs before they begin a school year?
- Whose responsibility is it to inform the teacher of students' accommodations?
- How involved should students be in determining their own accommodations?

Activities:
- Maintain a reflective journal with a particular focus.
- Brainstorm nonverbal ways to communicate with students.
- Identify a student who needs an accommodation. Design a plan to scaffold the accommodation.

Reflective Question: Scene 2, Question 4 - Can you elaborate on the reason why Samuel is filling out the accommodations journal? Whom does this benefit, and how? Reflection is a very important factor in improving learning, both for a student and a teacher. When Samuel is asked to complete the accommodations journal, he is being encouraged to think about the accommodation and share his feelings about it. Sometimes students are more comfortable writing their thoughts rather than verbalizing them. Too often teachers make assumptions and never ask for feedback from students. The written communication is valuable to the teacher, because it can provide additional information and insight into the honest feelings of the student. The information will enable the teacher to make appropriate decisions about the scaffolding process.

Connections:
- Topic Area: Instruction; Module: Mathematics