



Special Education in a Virtual Setting

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Special Education in a Virtual Setting

The transition to virtual learning has brought unique challenges and opportunities for special education. In a virtual setting, students have the ability to have an individualized approach that helps meets their unique needs. Customized schedule, accommodations and instruction can help bridge the gap while also making the student feel more comfortable.

Accommodations in a Virtual Environment

To effectively support students with special needs, virtual education can incorporate several key accommodations:

Accommodations	
Reduced Multiple Choice Questions	Students may benefit from assessments that include fewer multiple choice questions and instead offer alternative formats, such as short answers, essays, or project-based assessments, which allow them to demonstrate their understanding in diverse ways.
Flexible Scheduling	Virtual learning offers the flexibility to accommodate different learning paces. Students can attend live sessions at times that work best for them and their families, or they can access recorded lessons to review at their own pace.
Personal Live Sessions	One-on-one live sessions can provide personalized instruction and attention, allowing educators to address specific needs and tailor their teaching strategies to each student as well as assist in the general education curriculum.
Extended Time	Students may receive extended time for completing assignments and exams, reducing pressure and anxiety, and allowing them to demonstrate their knowledge more effectively.
Text-to-Speech	Text-to-Speech and Speech-to-Text can be utilized as an accommodation to assist students in their writing production as well as listen to the assignments as they are reading through the work in their learning modules and assignments.

Synchronous and Asynchronous Instruction

Specially designed instruction in a virtual setting can be delivered through both synchronous and asynchronous methods:

Synchronous Live Sessions

Synchronous learning involves real-time interaction between students and educators. Elementary and Middle School have live sessions with their classroom teachers. Elementary, Middle and High School students have live sessions depending on what is written in their IEP. These sessions can be scheduled regularly to provide consistency and structure. Key features include:

- **Real-Time Interaction:** Students can ask questions and receive immediate feedback, helping to clarify misunderstandings and reinforce learning.
- **Engagement and Collaboration:** Synchronous sessions can incorporate interactive activities, such as group discussions or collaborative projects, to engage students actively.

Asynchronous Learning Opportunities

Asynchronous instruction allows students to access materials and complete assignments at their own pace. This approach offers several benefits:

- **Flexibility and Accessibility:** Students can learn at times that suit their individual schedules, which is particularly beneficial for those with varying energy levels or who require frequent breaks.
- **Self-Paced Learning:** Asynchronous materials, such as pre-recorded videos, readings, and online resources, enable students to revisit and review content as needed, promoting deeper understanding.

In a virtual setting, the combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction provides a comprehensive approach to special education, ensuring that students receive the tailored support they need to thrive. By leveraging technology and creative teaching strategies, educators can create an inclusive and effective learning environment for all students. Each student has unique features depending on what is written in their IEP, but the IEP team works collaboratively to set up the best plan based on the unique needs of each student.

Accommodation Comparisons

In-Person	Virtual
Student will receive academic support in a separate setting	Student will receive routine email responsiveness, live 1:1 video call sessions
Student will have option for breaks during school day	Student will have flexible scheduling to finish schoolwork during any part of the day, option to start and end assignments any time throughout school day
Student will have extended time to complete assignments	Student will have customized deadlines for assignments as needed and extensions granted
Student will have assignments read to them when content is above instructional or independent reading level	Student will have access to text-to-speech on assignments, audiobook access and option to meet with teacher through video call to read content
Student will have frequent check-ins throughout the school day.	Student will have routine scheduled settings to assist in organizing plan for completing assignments and answer any questions that present themselves during school work time.
Student will have content modified to their current present level of functioning.	Student will have content modified or reduced to access standard mastery as created by teacher co-planning.
Collaboration between special education staff, general education staff and student's family.	Student and student's family will have access to communication through agreed upon method such as email or phone calls and school staff will communicate within 24 hours on weekdays.
Student will have directions and assignments clarified and repeated as needed.	Student will have access to assignments whenever they want, option to have videos explaining assignments, and the option to join a video call with a teacher to receive clarification.
Student will have access to supports and tools to aid and support in mental health or anxiety.	Student will have option to create individualized supports to accommodate specific needs such as 1:1 sessions and alternate ways to communicate (video camera off, typing in the video chat).

Student will have access to a scribe or speech-to-text for writing assignments.

Student will have access to speech-to-text tools, live video chats with teacher to scribe, and other technology tools to produce writing.