



Action Driven Education

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Individualizing Environments to Meet Student Needs

Why Focus on Needs?

Needs are something we all experience in life. By paying attention to our own needs, we discover that they are all met through actions. "I need a drink," "I need some help," "I need a nap," are all overcome through actions.

Overcoming a child's learning and behavioral needs in our classroom is no different. By thinking about the areas where the child is struggling as needs, we can plan our actions to support the child around them. Remember, as we discuss in our "[Discover the Tools for Effective Inclusion](#)" video, the goal is to support the child around their needs through the use of an accommodation!

Differences in the Classroom

Almost three centuries ago William Cowper penned the famous quote, "Variety's the very spice of life, that gives it all its flavour." There's no better way of describing the experience of education. It's exciting for students to experience the eclectic mix and diversity of methods from one teacher to the next. However, these differences that make education so fun and "spicy" can also cause challenges for children with special needs. But that's okay! We shouldn't shy away from these differences because what causes a hurdle for one child can serve as a ramp for another.

So, what's the solution? Oddly enough, the solution is to continue being different and to look at your students that way as well. By individualizing education not only are we providing "spice" we are making it possible for all children to find success!



Accomods™ is designed to empower teachers with the ability to select and implement appropriate accommodations and modifications in your classroom. [Log in now](#) to explore the possibilities!

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Snowflakes, Children, Classrooms: Every One is Different

Tell me the story...

As you walk into Ms. Jackson's class, her pronounced teaching style hits you almost immediately. Her classroom is beautiful, and with something unique covering nearly every inch of wall space, you can't help but feel excited and motivated. The bell rings, and Ms. Jackson instantly jumps to her feet, anxious to launch into a rich class discussion. In last night's reading assignment, the students learned that Brutus, Cassius, and others had stabbed Julius Caesar! The discussion always leads to an incredible opportunity for her students to make predictions which turns into a week's-long chance to practice making predictions and citing evidence from the text to support them. As expected, the rich discussion was enthralling and engaging to all the students, except Danny. As usual, Danny paid attention for the first ten minutes then fell asleep. As the bell rang, Ms. Jackson quickly scrawled the day's homework assignment on the previously blank chalkboard as the students left in a buzz of excitement.

What's the context...

Ms. Jackson is a creative teacher, and her personal style plays itself out in her classroom. This is good because her classroom feels natural, and the children thrive on her approach. However, it can't be expected that her natural style will work for all of her students and, in Danny's case, it isn't. Ms. Jackson could easily interpret Danny as a child that doesn't like English class or hates Shakespeare, but in reality, his needs aren't being met. This fact does not mean that Ms. Jackson's class isn't of the highest quality; it only means that her learning environment isn't meeting Danny's needs.

The Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act mandates the involvement of a general education teacher in a child's IEP. The purpose behind this mandate is because each teacher, their classroom, and the needs a child may demonstrate in their environment are different. Danny is a visual learner and may also have auditory processing needs. These needs may not be present in science class where Danny's teacher uses graphics, movies, and other visual aids to present all content, but in English, where Ms. Jackson seldom writes a note on the chalkboard, it is disabling to Danny.

Get to the point...

To support Danny, Ms. Jackson needs to consider an accommodation designed to empower him around his need. She needs to recognize the limitations of her natural style and, without changing their effectiveness, find a way to support the individual(s) that need something different.

...the story continues...

At lunch, Ms. Jackson reflects with her colleagues where she mentions how Danny is the only child in the class who doesn't engage in conversations. Mr. Lee, Danny's science teacher, says, "that's odd; Danny is one of my best students." Through the conversation, the team discovers that Danny seems to respond well to Mr. Lee's visual style. This realization causes Ms. Jackson to reflect that she seldom includes any visuals during her class conversations. While her room is very visually stimulating, her lessons are quite the opposite. Ms. Jackson realizes that she needs to add some visual elements to her conversations. She begins using character maps, timelines, and other appropriate visual aids as accommodations to support Danny and other visual learners in her classroom.

Featured Accommodation: [L34 – Provide text annotations to support reading](#) is a simple, proactive way to empower a child's ability to comprehend subject area textbooks and other reading assignments.