

Core Instruction, Interventions, Accommodations, and Modifications

Core Instruction. Those instructional strategies that are used routinely with all students in a general education setting are considered ‘core instruction.’ High-quality instruction is essential and forms the foundation of RTI academic support. NOTE: While it is important to verify that good core instructional practices are in place for a struggling student, those routine practices do not ‘count’ as individual student interventions.

Intervention. An intervention is used when a student is unable to demonstrate that he/she has learned a skill, concept, or behavior. An academic strategy is used to teach the skill, build fluency in a skill, or encourage a child to apply an existing skill to new situations or settings. An intervention leaves a student with stronger skills.

Accommodation. An accommodation is intended to help the student to fully access and participate in the general education curriculum without changing the instructional content and without reducing the student’s rate of learning (Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005). Accommodations change the way an assignment or assessment is given or taken to allow access to the materials. An accommodation is intended to remove barriers to learning while still expecting that students will master the same instructional content as their peers. Accommodations do not improve skills like interventions do.

Examples: An accommodation for students who are slow readers, for example, may include having them supplement their silent reading of a novel by listening to the book on tape. An accommodation for unmotivated students may include breaking larger assignments into smaller ‘chunks’ and providing students with performance feedback and praise for each completed ‘chunk’ of assigned work.

Modifications. A modification changes the expectation of what a student is expected to know or do, typically by lowering the academic standards. An example of a modification would be giving a student fewer math problems or spelling words for practice in comparison to what the other students are expected to do. Modifications should only be made with students who have IEP’s or Section 504 plans. By changing or lowering the academic expectations with modifications, a student will never ‘catch up’ academically. Modifications are generally not included in student’s RtI intervention plans, because the working assumption is that the student can be successful in the curriculum with appropriate interventions and accommodations alone.