

Student diversity

Supporting students through reasonable adjustments

This video is available from www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/p-10/student-diversity/students-with-disability/planning-reasonable-adjustments.

What are 'reasonable adjustments'?

Dr Matthew Capp
Director of Capitalise Education

So reasonable adjustment is a support put in place to support a student with disability to overcome their barriers to the learning process to address the functional impact associated with their disability. A reasonable adjustment is an adjustment that has been discerned by all of the stakeholders involved in the student's education ... and that adjustment has been considered in terms of all of their interests.

When making reasonable adjustments, what do schools need to consider?

Dr Matthew Capp
Director of Capitalise Education

When making reasonable adjustments, schools need to consider a number of factors. They need to look for the common ground with both the student and their families. Obviously, the student making learning progresses the common ground, so focusing on the student's learning is imperative. Identifying what the student's strengths and functional impacts are is really important because the reasonable adjustments put in place need to build on the student's strengths and support the student's functional impact. It's also important that educators and schools know evidence-based practices that can be put in place to overcome the student's functional impact associated with their disability. In addition to being planned, those adjustments need to be monitored and reviewed, so it's really important that schools collect data around the effectiveness of those adjustments.

What role does data have in identifying students who require support?

Karla Pope
Deputy Principal of Inclusion
and Wellbeing
Kenmore State High School

Analysing student data is really important in finding out the students who need your support. So one of the processes that we use is giving teachers time to analyse that data. So, not just at one point in time, it's about giving them time at the start of the year and then following up in faculty time and staff meeting time at junctures through the year. We also find it's really important to make sure that when we're giving teachers those times, we really give them some focus on what we want them to look at.

So we give them target groups, we give them categories, and we're asking that they're really focusing on 'Where to next?' for the students that they're looking at? What are the strategies that they're going to put in place, with the data that they've found, to be able to support the student to succeed?

How does your school consult with students and their parents/carers in relation to adjustments required for education programs?

Kate Watts

Assistant Dean of Inclusive
Practices
Ambrose Treacy College

Consulting with students and parents and carers is a critical component in ensuring that best supports are in place. We meet regularly with families through formal review meetings and, almost as importantly, is the regular interaction that we have with students to ensure that they have a voice and are part of the process as to what supports and adjustments are being used for them in the classroom.

What are some common curriculum adjustments to consider that benefit all students?

Libby Scouller

Learning Enrichment Teacher
Concordia Lutheran College
Junior College

We use visuals in all our classrooms to support all the students, not just our exceptional students. Visuals provide non-verbal instruction to support the verbal instructions and information that the teacher has given.

What are some common environmental adjustments to consider that benefit all students?

Kate Watts

Assistant Dean of Inclusive
Practices
Ambrose Treacy College

Common environment adjustments to support all students are strategic seating, reducing sensory input for students who experience sensory overload, incorporating regular brain break activities, and providing a breakout or quiet space for students for emotion regulation.

When might an adjustment be considered not reasonable?

Dr Matthew Capp

Director of Capitalise Education

So, one example where an adjustment might not be reasonable, is where a family and a school sit down to discern some adjustments for a student, and a decision is made about an adjustment, but the family and the student believe that those adjustments would negatively impact on the student in front of their peers — that adjustment might not be reasonable any more. So the school and the family could identify something else that would support the student to overcome their barriers to the learning process.

Another example where an adjustment might not be reasonable and could be looked at differently, is it might be suggested that a student requires a stand-up desk to support them in their learning to overcome their barriers to the learning process. It might not be reasonable if the suggestion was put in place that the stand-up desk was at the front or middle of the room so other students couldn't see the teacher and access the learning process. In that case, the location might not be reasonable, but the stand-up desk put somewhere else in the classroom might be reasonable.

How can schools support students with year to year transitions?

Libby Scouller

Learning Enrichment Teacher
Concordia Lutheran College
Junior College

Sharing specific information about supporting students is done through our school in transition meetings. Our transition meetings are held at the end of each year where we involve the parents and carers, the student, the current year's teacher, and the next year's teachers.

What are the overall benefits for all students when adjustments are used successfully?

Dr Matthew Capp

Director of Capitalise Education

When reasonable adjustments are put in place, all students in a class can make learning progress. Contemporary research on inclusive education shows that inclusive education classrooms and cultures support all learners. When educators work collaboratively, knowing the Australian curriculum or the approved curriculum, knowing their students' strengths and functional impact, they can put in place supports that address everybody's barriers to the learning process. When they do this, they can support their learners to overcome their barriers to the learning process, build on their skills, and develop independence in their learning.



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