CCSI EST

CENTRE COLLÉGIAL
DE SOUTIEN À L'INTÉGRATION

Distance Learning and Accommodations

(Advices Regarding this Exceptional Situation)

March 2020

Context

It is important to specify that the adjustment of the accommodations for a student who would switch from a classroom mode to a distance mode would ideally be made at the start of the session.

In the current context, classroom courses are migrating to distance learning courses during the session. Therefore, it will be necessary to adjust the individualized education plan (IEP) already in place. It is possible that the adjustments be made by the teacher. It could also be requested by the student in order to respect as much as possible equal opportunities for students with disabilities (with accommodations or not). We must focus on flexibility and simplicity.

Also, it is important to point out that the exceptional situation in which we find ourselves brings major changes for both the teacher and the student, which can increase stress and anxiety for the individuals faced with many new situations. The various actors therefore aim to act all in good faith and to the best of their knowledge…
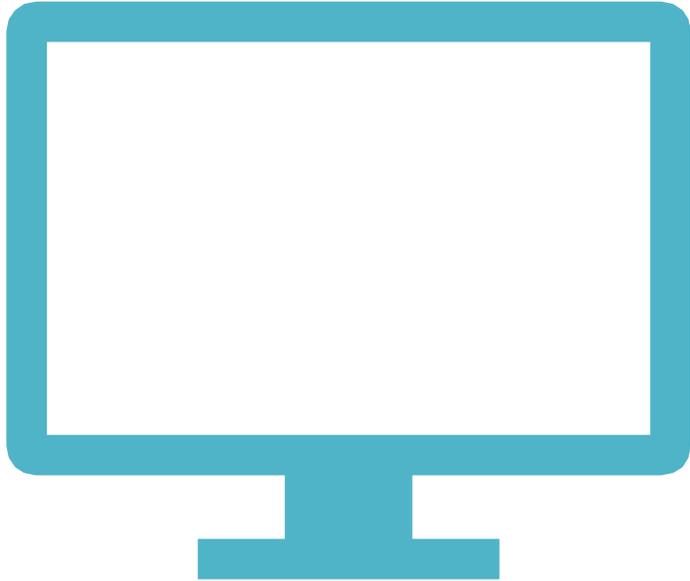
Distance learning and Accommodations

In many colleges and universities, many students with an IEP are already living distance learning.

The challenge right now is to set achievable adjustments in the context of distance learning. This process belongs to the Adapted Services, but it must be carried out in collaboration with the various actors of the environment (teachers, department heads, educational advisors, etc.).

Today's presentation will remain general. The CCSI is always available if you have any questions or more specific needs.

Meeting Plan

- General recommendations (for all students).

- Distance learning good practices that will benefit students with difficulties.

- Frequent accommodations.

- Evaluation methods.

- Frequent concerns regarding distance learning.

General recommandations (for all students)

❑ Use digital materials.

❑ Encourage deferred teaching (asynchronous) where students can view and/or listen the presentations (e.g. PowerPoint narrated capsules) at their convenience.

❑ No time assessments.

❑ Fewer and flexible assessments (when possible).

❑ Learn to work with the different tools before the start of the lessons (e.g. Office 365, Moodle, VIA, Zoom, etc.). There are several tutorials already available online.

General recommandations (for all students)

❑ Diversification of means of communication in order to be accessible to students (chat, videoconference, phone, email). Ideally, this system allows communication as well as the exchange and filing of documents, both on the part of the student and the teacher.

❑ Set up availability periods by videoconference or instant messaging and increase the number of periods, if necessary.

❑ Delivery of a schedule as specific as possible (with the assignment deadlines, but also the availability of course notes, question periods, videos, etc.)

❑ The level of familiarity with technological tools is variable for ALL students, not just students with disabilities.

Distance Learning Good Practices That Will Benefit Students With Difficulties

- ✓ Establishment of a link between the teacher and the students.

- ✓ Frequent communications with the students.

- ✓ Frequent feedback on the subject being taught.

- ✓ Development of mini-courses or mini-presentations (e.g., make three 20-minute videos rather than a single hour long video)

- ✓ Clear description of expectations.

- ✓ Flexibility in the evaluation methods.

- ✓ Distance learning can cause anxiety and stress for ALL students, with difficulties or not; so try to reduce this stress from the start by raising the subject with the students either by video recording, email or even with a phone call.

- ✓ Communication with Adapted Services for all more specific questions regarding students with an individualized intervention plan.

Work environment for the student

It is important to explain to the students that it is essential for them to settle into a quiet place. The use of headphones is also highly recommended. A common area of the house like the living room or the dining room is often not ideal because of the noise and the comings and goings of other occupants.

Suggest that students make a schedule to better plan their study periods during the day. Encourage the use of a routine.

Work environment for the student

The following recommendations can be presented to students to make them aware of the favorable conditions for taking an online course :

- use of earmuffs or earplugs;

- turn to face a wall;

- close the doors;

- put the cell phone on "do not disturb";

- turn off the television;

- ask other occupants to wear headphones;

- etc.

Frequent Accommodations

We will now look at the most frequent accommodations and see how they can be easily implemented in distance learning.

Extra Time

In the case of work to be submitted, the teacher may give reasonable time to complete work for all students. For example, allow 3 weeks rather than 2 weeks in the context where students may have a family reality that makes them less active in their work. So we are not talking about accommodation, but rather about being flexible in the present context.

In the case of an examination to be carried out online with a time limit (e.g. Test mode in Moodle), it is then possible to modify the completion time for ONE student or SOME students. On the other hand, it might be appropriate to allow more time to ALL students, especially if this is the first time that they have completed a timed online exam. We must also emphasize the importance for students to settle in a quiet place.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The general orientation in this context is to schedule flexible evaluations, therefore, not to schedule or encourage timed evaluations.

Technological Tools

Validate if the student currently has access to the technological tools that are determined in the IEP (e.g. Antidote, WordQ, etc.), a computer, headphones / speakers and an Internet connection.

What if the student does not have access to these specific technological tools?

➢ Check with the IT department of the college to find out if the software can be installed remotely (e.g., voice control).

➢ If remote installation is not possible, see if there is another tool (perhaps less efficient), but free, which could be installed on the student's computer (e.g., WordQ free trial 30 days, Office 365 institutional includes several assistive functions, Lexibar in free version on the Internet). You can help teachers find their tools or contact the CCSI to help you find another tool that is more easily accessible for the student.

➢ Suggest that the teacher be more flexible in correcting the language, if for example, student do not have access to the tool they usually use.

Course Notes Given in Advance

Suggestions to teachers :

- Send the course notes in advance using a messaging system (email) to the target student or to the whole group.

- File the documents in advance on the platform used (e.g., Moodle), which will allow all students to have access to them in advance.

- Specify, in your schedule, when the notes will be filed; this will allow them to better organize their time.

Note: at the very end of this training, you will find recommendations for the preparation of accessible documents.

Note Taker

- Determine if the note taker is always a need for the student. Indeed, if the student has the ability to listen to the course as often as desired and to receive the course notes several days in advance, perhaps this need is no longer present.

- If the note taker is always a need, several options can be considered :

  ➢ Ask one or more students to share their notes; it will then be necessary to define how the notes will be taken and how the note-taking documents will be sent.

  ➢ The teacher could, in the exceptional context in which we are, share their own notes with the student (e.g., PowerPoint format with notes).

Note Regarding Formats

- Validate if the format of the documents that the teacher will deposit or send to the student (e.g. PDF, Word) is compatible with the technological tools used by the student.

- Suggest the teacher send the documents in a facilitating format for students who use technological tools (e.g., .doc, .docx, etc.). Avoid formats like PDF image.

Separate Room

In the current context, some students who are also parents may need to take care of young children at home. This could cause a problem during the completion of a timed online exam. It is therefore essential to check if the student will have access to a quiet place and that he or she will not be disturbed during the performance of his/her exam, hence the importance of not favoring timed assessments.

Reference Books and Reading

Considering the situation where students do not have access to reference books or to the document to be obtained (e.g., novel), encourage the use of documents in electronic format. In this sense, it may be necessary to modify certain choices of documents because, for example, they would only be available in paper format. In the current context, CAMS will not be able to digitize and make accessible paper documents. Paper-only documents are therefore to be avoided as much as possible.

Oral Presentation in Subgroups or Individually

Depending on the presentation tool used (e.g., Zoom, Teams), it is possible to make an oral presentation in subgroups or individually, live or delayed; online mode allows a lot of flexibility (don't forget to provide tutorials to the student).

Physical support

It is the most difficult accommodation to pursue in the context of confinement.

- First of all, look at what the support consisted of (physical support specific objectives/tasks).

- Then, collect the information from the actors (teachers, pedagogical advisor, entourage of the student, student himself or herself, etc.) to engage them to seek solutions to meet the needs around the student role that are not answered :

  - *Can this support be provided remotely (e.g., for the preparation of material for an oral presentation) with the physical guide?*

  - *Is it possible for a family member, a CLSC worker or a person living with the student to take charge of the physical support?*

  - *Is it possible that in the context of distance learning, the student no longer requires physical support since all the assessments will be carried out online, as well as the reading and the listening to the courses (based on online organization of classes)?*

Educational guide

Encourage distance support by using means of communication that promote exchange, according to the needs of the student :

- Phone call;

- Office 365 (Teams, Outlook);

- Text message;

- Videoconferencing (e.g., Zoom, Skype); or

- Any other relevant means.

Visual and Hearing Impairment

Remind the teacher not to use tools that only require one sense, either the hearing or the sight (e.g., a text only available in audio version, reading materials where important concepts are in color).

The CCSI remains available for any requests regarding students with hearing or visual impairment. Each case will be analysed individually.

Teleinterpretation services can be available as required. Be sure to record the courses to facilitate services for students with hearing impairment.

Evaluation Methods (Areas for Consideration)

❖ Favour a flexible evaluation method. For example, rather than a traditional exam (question and answer), ask for a long-written assignment or an online oral presentation.

❖ Encourage creativity in assessment methods (e.g. audio recording, oral exam or oral presentation live or delayed, reading sheets to be completed, submission of individual questions by email, creation of idea cards, development of a PowerPoint with or without narration) or favor a more conventional evaluation (long written assignment). Allow students a choice, if possible. Do not forget to make tutorials available, depending on the evaluation method chosen.

❖ Think simplicity!

❖ Encourage open book assessments, therefore assessments that require analytical and synthesis skills: problem situations, case studies, open questions, problems, diagrams, etc.

Concerns in distance learning

Frequent concerns...

| Plagiarism | Technology reliability | Confidentiality |

Don't forget that for several teachers, distance learning is completely new and can cause a lot of stress and worry!

Plagiarism and Technology Reliability

- Considering plagiarism

  ➢ Continue to use plagiarism detecting tools

  ➢ Remind students to cite sources

- Considering technology reliability

  ➢ The more we use an asynchronous mode, the less the reliability of technology becomes a stressor, because it gives time to react to problems.

Confidentiality During Remote Meetings With Students

- Explain the specifics of distance exchange with the student :

  ➢ Encourage the student to express the difficulty he/she may encounter during long distance meetings (attention difficulties, hearing or visual difficulties, etc.).

- Take all the reasonable means to promote confidentiality :

  ➢ Use a password-protected secure computer network;

  ➢ Use of good IT practices (e.g., secure Wi-Fi, secure passwords, up-to-date antivirus);

  ➢ Discretion and privacy of the environment (separate room with closed door) for you and for the student.

Presentation of an Accessible Electronic Slideshow

Some criteria to favor, as far as possible.

- Use of a sans serif font (Arial, Verdana, Calibri, etc.)

- 20-24 point font size

- 1.15 pt line spacing (in the Paragraph section)

- Dark or contrasting font color

- Left alignment of text

Presentation of an Accessible Electronic Slideshow (Continued)

- Lighten the layout of the slide:

  - spacing of 6-12 pts after each listing;

  - 5 words per bullet (present ideas concisely);

  - 7 inches maximum per slide;

  - 1 slide per idea, ideally.

- Suitable background.

- Title page different from content pages.

- Sending of the slideshow to the participants (e.g. by email) or of a complementary document of the subjects to be discussed.

Preparation of Accessible Documents

MOST COMMON CRITERIA FOR CREATING ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENTS

1. Use of a sans serif typeface (Arial, Verdana, Tahoma, Calibri, etc.).

2. Minimum size of 12 pts.

3. Simple, light and structured layout.

4. Line spacing from 1.15 to 1.25 pt.

5. Space of 6 pts after the statements, 12 pts between each paragraph (or a white line).

6. Align the text to the left.

7. Write horizontally.

8. Have a maximum of 2 columns with a space of about 1 cm minimum between the margins of the text.

Preparation of Accessible Documents (Continued)

9. Clear and simple statements, one idea per sentence. Unambiguous texts.

10. Use italics or underline only if necessary.

11. Create hyperlinks with meaningful titles that lead to a website.

12. Encourage attendees to use the screen reader if needed for text-to-speech (Office 365).

13. Maximize the use of the tools on the "Developer" tab by inserting check boxes, drop-down lists, writing fields, date selectors (creation of forms).

14. Insert, in moderation, images, photos, pictograms, graphics, or illustrations that are an important source of information.

15. Use accessibility pictograms: use the colors blue or black, respect the meaning and use them in the same place in a document.

16. Use alternative text for images or graphics, a tooltip with hyperlinks (for students with visual limitations).

17. Once your document is finished, you can assess its accessibility with the verification tool on the "Revision" tab in Word, for example.

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