

SAT Interventions



As a regular education support group, one of the primary functions of the SAT is to design and implement academic and behavioral interventions for students experiencing difficulties in the regular education setting. Possible interventions are as numerous and diverse as the students themselves.



The most successful interventions will be those that

- ▶ address the student’s specific individual needs and strengths
- ▶ have been based on teacher and parent input
- ▶ consider variables other than student performance (environment, personality conflict, health, teaching styles, cultural differences, etc.)
- ▶ are objective- or data-based so that effectiveness can be measured
- ▶ draw upon the expertise of educational specialists and resources
- ▶ are least intrusive, most natural, and most effective
- ▶ support the regular educator in implementing the interventions



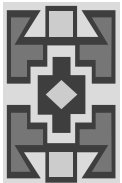
It is beyond the scope of this general overview guide of the SAT and the child study process to address all the possible areas of concern and interventions. The pages that follow are intended to offer sample accommodations in seven major student areas of need and some teacher strategies for accommodation in the categories of presentation, physical environment, materials, and instruction. School districts may have other resources to support SATs in their efforts including school-wide literacy programs and community services.



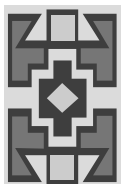
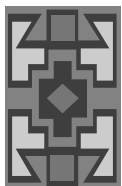
There is also a jackpot of free ideas and on-line tools to assist school staff in designing academic and behavioral interventions available at www.interventioncentral.org. Educators and the SAT may find this website particularly helpful for locating effective teaching strategies and ideas for intervention and/or remediation plans for students who did not achieve progress with the first round of interventions and need a revised plan. In addition, the SAT may wish to consult the following resource:



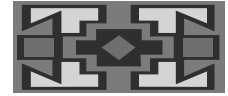
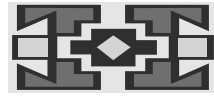
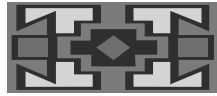
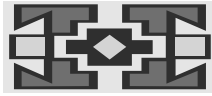
- *Pre-Referral Intervention Manual (PRIM)*, by Stephen B. McCarney, Hawthorne Educational Services, 1993. ISBN# 1878372114



NOTE: The terms *he* and *she* are used for simplicity; the statements apply to either gender.



Sample Accommodations in Seven Major Problem Areas



Attention Problems • Inability to Focus

Some accommodations to consider:

- ▶ It is easier for students to attend to learning activities when they are fortified with the energy food provides. Make sure students have access to school breakfast and lunch programs, as well as healthy snacks.
- ▶ Use a beach ball to focus students' attention as you speak. After you say a key point you want students to remember, toss the beach ball to a student. When the student catches the ball, he has to repeat what you just said. Since students do not know who you will toss the ball to, attention stays focused.
- ▶ Develop a set of silent signals and use them to signal the student that a certain type of information is coming. For example, touching your nose with your fingertip may mean "I am going to give directions next."
- ▶ Whenever possible, accompany oral explanations with visual back up. For example, draw diagrams or write key words on the board as you discuss a topic or process.
- ▶ When students are to be engaged in independent work, set a timer for the amount of time you expect they should be able to complete the task. If necessary, break longer tasks into a series of shorter sub-tasks and time them separately.

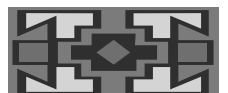
Some Specific "What Ifs":

What if a student needs oral directions repeated frequently?

- ☺ Appoint a "listening buddy" for these students. If students need something repeated, they just ask their listening buddy.

What if a student has trouble with visual memory?

- ☺ Give visual clues, such as showing part of a word or picture, and support it with a verbal hint. For example, if you were studying the water cycle, say "Yesterday we were learning about something that happens in nature." Then you could show a picture of a cloud (or draw it) and/or write W_ _ _ _ C_ _ _ _.
- ☺ Let the student use highlighter tape or brightly colored stick-on arrows to focus her attention to specific parts of text or illustrations. (Both are removable without damaging materials and are reusable and available commercially.) When using overhead transparencies or charts, use a pointer or light pen.



Sample Accommodations in Seven Major Problem Areas



2 Completing Assignments • Homework

Some accommodations to consider:

- ▶ First, make certain that the material is at the student's independent level and that he has the skills to complete it successfully. If not, adjust the material so that the student can "easily" complete it successfully. If the problem is not a skill deficit, but a performance deficit (he *can*, but *does not*, complete the work), he may simply need more time than you are allowing.
- ▶ If the student won't even try to do the work, she may feel intimidated or overwhelmed by the task. Begin by requiring that the student do only part of the task, such as every third question or math problem. Praise or grade her as if she did the whole thing. Then, gradually increase the requirement. *Note: The object is not to push the student until she can do every problem; it is to reach the optimum she can do and still feel successful without crossing over into frustration.*
- ▶ Provide an assignment sheet that breaks down the total assignment or homework into sections. Have the student focus on one section at a time. Have him highlight or check off each section as he completes it.

Some Specific "What Ifs":

What if a student just doesn't seem motivated?

- ☺ She may respond to positive reinforcement, especially if it is a "trade" (15 minutes of focused work for 15 minutes of computer time).
- ☺ Do something unexpected—ask for his help. Say, "It seems that some students think this assignment is boring. What would *you* do to perk it up?"

What if the student never seems to have the needed materials?

- ☺ If the student has difficulty remembering to bring school materials home or home materials back to class, provide this student with *two* complete sets of everything she needs—one for school and one for home. If that is not possible, assign a buddy (or older sibling) to check that the student has materials needed before going home each day and have a parent or sibling do the same each morning before the student leaves for school.



Sample Accommodations in Seven Major Problem Areas



Organizational Skills Deficits

Some accommodations to consider:

- ▶ Arrange the classroom so that materials, books, supplies are always in the same place. Designate a specific place to turn in assignments, get library or restroom passes, etc. Label these areas and, if necessary, color code them.
- ▶ Post a daily schedule that shows the order and times of the day's activities. Set aside an area on a bulletin board where students can check for news and information (bus schedules, lunch menu, special activities, notices, etc.).
- ▶ Pair each student with a buddy. Allow them to confer briefly before, during, and at the end of class to check that they each have all the materials they need, the assignments, and that they understand the directions
- ▶ Encourage students to use stick-on notes as reminders.
- ▶ Begin each class with a “prep” talk—say what you will be doing and what materials they will need. Allow students to gather and organize materials before you start the lesson.

Some Specific “What Ifs”:

What if a student needs help keeping track of different subjects?

- ☺ Make a chart that assigns a color for each subject, such as red for math, blue for writing, etc. Have the student organize a notebook with colored dividers and a zipper pouch with colored markers. Tell the student to color the corner of each paper she does or receives with the corresponding subject color. Then as soon as she is done with it, file it in the same color section of the notebook.
- ☺ Have the student place blank notebook paper in the front of his folder. When any homework is given that day, he is to write it down immediately and color code it by subject. At the end of the day, he checks his list and gathers the materials he needs to take home to complete the assignment.

What if the student has trouble organizing ideas?

- ☺ Teach the student how to use graphic organizers, such as webs, flowcharts, time lines, and Venn diagrams. Encourage students to design their own!



Sample Accommodations in Seven Major Problem Areas



Difficulty Following Directions

Some accommodations to consider:

- ▶ Break compound directions into separate simple statements. For example, instead of “Take out your social studies book, find the chapter on simple machines, and read the first paragraph,” break it into three separate directions, allowing time to complete one before presenting the next.
- ▶ Present directions in several forms to allow for different learning styles (verbal, written, graphic).
- ▶ Use a signal to let students know that you are about to give directions. This can be an action (such as flicking the lights), a sound (such as a bell or a clap), or a verbal cue (such as “Who is ready to “LAF”—*Listen and Follow Directions*).
- ▶ Play “Pete and Repeat.” When you give oral directions, use a different voice—that of “Pete.” Then ask who can “repeat” what you said. (With young children, you can be “Pete the Parrot.”)
- ▶ Help students focus on written directions by highlighting them. (For materials that cannot be marked on, use highlighter tape.)

Some Specific “What Ifs”:

What if a student doesn't wait until the directions are completed?

- ☺ Use yellow poster paper to make a 4x6 inch card. Hold the yellow card in your hand as you give directions. If you see a student attempting to begin before you are finished, at the end of the directions hold up the yellow card and say “false start.” Ask a different student to restate the directions. This way the student who tends to “false start” will learn to listen when you are holding the yellow card and also will hear the directions again without being singled out.

What if the student gets confused by written directions?

- ☺ Isolate and teach the “key” words used in directions (circle, match, underline).
- ☺ Work through an example or the first part of the task for or with the student.
- ☺ Read the directions aloud, rephrasing difficult words or parts as needed.



Sample Accommodations in Seven Major Problem Areas



5

Exhibiting Inappropriate Behavior

Some accommodations to consider:

- ▶ First, make sure that your expectations are clear, that the student can do what you expect (as opposed to won't), and that your rules and consequences are consistent. Note: Consequences are the natural result of an action. They can be positive or negative. Teach students that behavior is a choice, and that choice results in consequences—positive or negative. This approach empowers the student with the internal responsibility for his choices, as opposed to punishment, which is imposed externally (and has little or no effect).
- ▶ Use positively worded statements rather than negatively worded ones. Tell students what to *do* rather than what *not* to do. For example, instead of saying, “Don’t talk during the test,” say, “Remain silent during the test.”
- ▶ Teach students to use “Think First” strategies when confronted with a situation that requires a behavior choice. Young students can use the acronym “CAT”—Choose After Thinking. Teach older students to “STACK”—Stop, Think, Assess, Choose, Keep control.

Some Specific “What ifs”:

What if a student is constantly distracting himself and others?

- ☺ Divide the day into time periods or use the student’s schedule. Make multiple half-sheet copies. At the start of each day, tape a sheet to the student’s desk or notebook. At the end of each period, decide with the student how well he stayed on task for that time. (It helps to ask the student what rating he thinks he should get rather than just pronouncing your judgment.) Then, mark and initial a rating on his sheet for the period. With young students use smiley faces or stickers. You can use a number score with older students. Have the student take home the sheet each day and have it signed by a parent.

What if a student does not seem to respond to rewards?

- ☺ Try this: Instead of you picking the reward you would like to give, find out from the student what reward she would like to get. The student is more likely to be motivated to earn something she values.



Sample Accommodations in Seven Major Problem Areas



6

Immature Social & Interpersonal Skills

Some accommodations to consider:

- ▶ Assign the student a class “buddy” who is especially mature. The buddy will not only model mature, responsible class behavior, but also can assist the student with staying on task, following directions, and appropriate behavior.
- ▶ Frequently acknowledge and praise students who are demonstrating appropriate interactive behavior. Watch for any opportunity to positively acknowledge the student who is having difficulty.
- ▶ Observe if there are any individuals whom the student seems to gravitate toward or shy away from. Depending upon whether that individual encourages or discourages the desired behavior, give the student more or less opportunity to interact with him or her.
- ▶ Help students understand that acceptable behavior varies with circumstances. Teach them the difference between behavioral expectations in different settings, such as home, classroom, playground, and community. Remind them that expectations not only differ in different settings in general, but also may differ from specific adult to adult. Remind them to be constantly aware of where they are and what “rules” they are expected to follow in that setting.

Some Specific “What Ifs”:

What if a student has difficulty sharing with others?

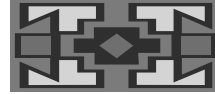
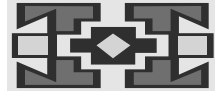
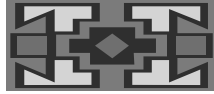
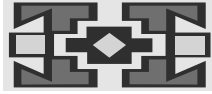
- ☺ Give the student the job of passing out group materials, such as art supplies.
- ☺ Create a class “mascot” (such as a stuffed animal). During certain times of the day, appoint different students to “care” for it. Let students who willingly share have a turn before the student who has difficulty. This will model for her how to accept responsibility for something, have it for a while, and then return it.

What if the student is withdrawn and won't interact with others?

- ☺ Greet this student every day. Smile and say “Good Morning” using her name.
- ☺ Attempt to “read” the student’s non-verbal cues—body language, facial expressions, etc. Then ask her to validate or invalidate your observation. For example say, “You look like you may be nervous about this assignment. Am I right?” Even if she only nods, you can continue by offering help or support.



Sample Accommodations in Seven Major Problem Areas



Problems with Language Fluency

Some accommodations to consider:

SPEAKING

- ▶ Use a tape recorder to model correct speech. Have the student play back the recording to listen and to repeat the model speech.
- ▶ If the student speaks very quietly and/or is shy about speaking, let him practice playing different speaking parts with puppets.

WRITING

- ▶ Use wooden cubes to make “writer’s blocks.” Use the cubes for writing topics, adjectives, connecting words (suddenly, then...), or any other writing need. A student with “writer’s block” rolls the cube for help.
- ▶ If neatness is a problem, let the student use graph paper, writing one letter or number in each block.

LISTENING

- ▶ Tape record directions, assignments, vocabulary words, etc. for the student.
- ▶ Reduce distracting stimuli around the student. Use an auditory and/or visual signal that means “get ready to listen.”
- ▶ Play listening games, such as *Simon Says*, *Mother May I*, *Red Light–Green Light*.

MULTICULTURAL/BILINGUAL

- ▶ Provide bilingual or multicultural signs. Example: *News/ Noticias* (English/Spanish)
- ▶ Recruit tutors who can assist a student in his first language.

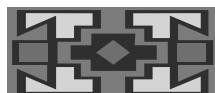
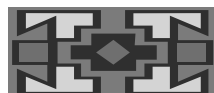
Some Specific “What Ifs”:

What if a student is terrified or embarrassed to speak to a group?

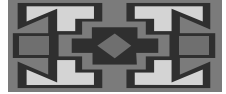
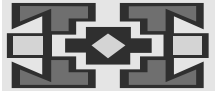
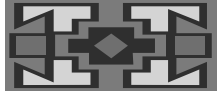
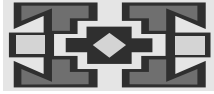
- ☺ Let the student record his presentation and play the recording instead of speaking “live.”

What if a student has trouble organizing/sequencing writing?

- ☺ Tell the student to pretend he is a reporter. (You could even make and use a “press” hat.) First, instruct him to go to the “scene” (in his mind) and take notes about the setting, characters, action, etc. Then tell him to write and answer the 5 W’s down the side of a paper—Who? What? Where? When? Why?



Sample Teacher Strategies for Accommodation



Presenting Strategies: Alternate Methods of Presenting Lessons and Materials

General

- ▶ Give both oral and visual instructions. (Use an overhead projector.)
- ▶ Vary how lessons are delivered (small group, videos, demonstrations, games).
- ▶ Arrange for a peer tutor to work with the student.
- ▶ Provide a photocopy of notes, vocabulary lists, essential facts, or study guides.
- ▶ Support presentations with graphic organizers, diagrams, or manipulatives.
- ▶ Segment directions. Pause frequently during presentations.
- ▶ Repeat major concepts or points. Use verbal clues (“This is important…”).
- ▶ Stop and review material during lessons. Summarize.
- ▶ Provide written examples or samples.
- ▶ Vary complexity of questions (concrete through abstract).
- ▶ Give assessments orally or tape record them. If necessary tape the whole lesson.
- ▶ Give students a “get up and stretch” break.

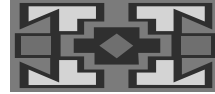
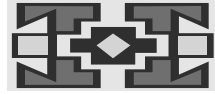
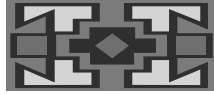
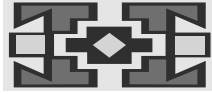
Example of Accommodations for a Specific Concern

Gr. 5 student: *Writes very slowly; cannot take notes, copy down all the information presented in lessons, or write answers to questions*

- ☺ Highlight key words and/or essential phrases. As other students copy or write complete sentences, require that this student only copy the key, highlighted parts, or respond to questions with one or two word answers.
- ☺ Provide the student with a partially completed outline of a presentation before the lesson. Have him finish phrases during the presentation.
- ☺ Allow the student to tape record lessons for review later when he is not under time pressure.
- ☺ Modify expectations of handwriting neatness for notes or non-final drafts.
- ☺ Allow this student to dictate written responses (answering questions, tests).



Sample Teacher Strategies for Accommodation



Physical Environment: Structuring the Classroom Arrangement/Environment

General

- ▶ Adjust seating arrangements. Also consider lighting (dim/bright, natural/artificial).
- ▶ Post a class schedule daily. Go over the plans for the day's lessons and activities. Write, point to, and say the objective prior to the start of each new lesson.
- ▶ Arrange the room so that the students face the instructor during presentation. Place the teacher's desk/table behind the students.
- ▶ Label and post a class "map" of areas designated for specific activities (reading corner, supply station, quiet zone...).
- ▶ Set up a "help desk." Choose specific, regular times to be available to help students with work or problems. Post your "office hours" at the help desk. Invite students with exceptional skill in an area or who get their work done quickly and are willing to then help others, to be volunteer "office assistants."

Example of Accommodations for a Specific Concern

Gr. 2 student: Easily distracted by any stimuli, is "fidgety," and has difficulty staying on task for any length of time

- ☺ Adjust the classroom seating arrangements. Place this student away from windows, doors, and "busy" areas. Particularly during independent work time, have her sit at an individual desk rather than at a group table.
- ☺ Designate "zones" in the classroom. Have an instructional zone that draws attention to the instructor and relevant materials, such as a chart or overhead transparency screen. Keep this relatively free of extraneous decoration. Put art materials and displays at the back of the room or at least behind this student.
- ☺ Allow only the materials needed for the current task on the student's desk.
- ☺ Every 15 or 20 minutes, take a "shake break" with the class. Have all students stand and shake out each leg, each arm, and then wiggle their bodies for one minute. Occasionally let students take a shake break with music. (Note: For older students, make it a "stretch break.")



Sample Teacher Strategies for Accommodation



Materials: Strategies for Adapting Student and Teacher Materials

TEXTBOOKS

- ▶ Tape record a “guide” that directs a student how to follow the text and prompt them for what is to come. Example: “Find the heading on page 37. Read it to yourself as I read it aloud...; Question 1 is about rocks that change form, called metamorphic...”
- ▶ Preview the text by providing an outline or going over the questions or assignment before presenting the text.
- ▶ Provide a vocabulary list. Read and review the words and their meanings before they are introduced in text.
- ▶ Use highlighter tape for important terms and points to remember in the text.
- ▶ Have student volunteers orally summarize or paraphrase portions of text they have read silently.

ASSIGNMENTS/ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Break assignments and periods requiring great concentration into short segments.
- ▶ Give parallel assignments. Example: If the assignment is to *write* 5 words that begin with “gr,” have this student *draw* pictures of 5 things that begin with “gr.”
- ▶ Use concrete supports for abstract ideas wherever possible. (Manipulatives are not just for math!) Examples: To match terms, pictures, Q&A, etc., make two-part puzzles by cutting apart index cards with a randomly-shaped cutting line. To “experience” sequence, give each student a part and have them physically arrange themselves in sequence.

Example of Accommodations for a Specific Concern

Gr. 6 student: Has difficulty reading independently; avoids free-choice reading, especially long or text-heavy works (novels)

- ☺ Introduce the student to “books on tape.” This is especially helpful for handling “core” literature requirements.
- ☺ Read an exciting novel to the class—a few pages at a time. Stir up anticipation by asking some prediction questions prior to each passage. Read the text dramatically. Follow with a variety of questions about what you read—literal to interpretive. (Ask a librarian for good suggestions for your grade level.)



Sample Teacher Strategies for Accommodation



Instructional Strategies: Helping Students Acquire Skills within the Regular Classroom

General

- ▶ Provide a rationale for the lesson. Point out the benefits of knowing the skills and how they apply to students' "real" lives, now or in the future.
- ▶ Begin a lesson on new material with a review. Check retention of previously taught material or knowledge of prerequisite skills.
- ▶ State the goal and objective prior to each lesson to help students be better prepared for what is to come and to focus during the lesson. Then, summarize main ideas and key points (verbally and visually).
- ▶ Elicit and draw upon students' prior knowledge and experiences to connect the known and familiar to new information and novel concepts.
- ▶ Point out similarities and differences wherever possible. Use webs, diagrams, and other graphic organizers to illustrate structure, content, relationship, etc.
- ▶ Provide *relevant* homework and practice, and only the amount needed. Give follow-up tasks that reinforce or extend skills and concepts (and not just busy work).
- ▶ Balance lecture-type instruction with hands-on activities and demonstrations, concrete experiences, and visual presentations.
- ▶ Vary groupings for instruction—size and make up. (Students should not always be with the same group.) Let students help each other learn in cooperative groups.
- ▶ Encourage learning by problem solving and discovery by experimentation.

Example of Accommodation for a Specific Concern

Gr. 9 student: Has difficulty processing lessons presented in a large-group lecture format

- ☺ Use an overhead projector during the lesson to list vocabulary and key ideas in sequence. Or, if prepared ahead, block off all but the part you are on.
- ☺ Give this student a modified version of the follow-up assignment or homework, or let the student work with a partner for in-class assignments.
- ☺ Make hand-outs and/or study guides for students. Divide students into small study groups to discuss and review the material.

