

THE
MASTER TEACHER®



THE PARAEDUCATOR'S GUIDE

to Supporting
Instructional and
Curricular Modifications

SECOND EDITION

By Wendy Dover Balough, Ed.D.

Copyright 2014 by THE MASTER TEACHER®

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the publisher, with this exception: Pages labeled “Form” may be copied by school paraeducators, teachers, and administrators for instructional or administrative use, but not for republication or resale.

THE MASTER TEACHER®
Publisher
Leadership Lane
P.O. Box 1207
Manhattan, Kansas 66505-1207
Phone 1-800-669-9633
www.masterteacher.com

ISBN: 978-1-58992-337-9
Printed in the United States of America

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The initial purpose of this book was to help paraeducators sort out what they can and should do and to help them understand the line that should signal the need for more support from the certified members of the school staff or student team. The resulting modification manual is actually as helpful to general education and special education staff as it is to paraeducators. My hope is that the modification roles, responsibilities, and job tasks of “all those people” helping students will be clearer—thus making challenging jobs easier (or at least less confusing).

As a special educator, modifying materials and using research-based strategies and interventions are my favorite parts of the job. My love for the challenges of instructional modifications is inspired by several years of hands-on modification opportunities with students, teachers, and paraeducators at R. C. Edwards Junior High, Pendleton High, Bryan High, Utica Elementary, West-Oak High, Manhattan High, Junction City High Schools, and Fort Mill and Gold Hill Middle Schools.

This book is the culmination of years of researching strategies, refining explanations, rearranging the order of the presentation, and practicing what I preach. Thanks to all those who have listened, collaborated, experimented, argued, and shared with me over the years.

A special thanks to the administrative and paraeducator staff of the Southwest Kansas Area Cooperative District 613 out of Ensign, Kansas. This book was only a notion until the response and enthusiasm from a roomful of paraeducators helped me form the outline for this book. The drives to and from west Kansas also provided valuable contemplation time.

As always, the people at THE MASTER TEACHER® have been wonderful. I thank Bob, Tracey, and Steve for the opportunity. Special thanks go to the product manager, Katie, and the editor, Laura, as well as to Mathew and Danny for the design and the artwork. I also wish to thank all the others in printing, distribution, and sales. I couldn't do it without you. THE MASTER TEACHER® is an outstanding organization to work with.

Finally, love and admiration to John and Paul, the most fun and wonderful sons a mother could possibly hope to have.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Wendy Dover Balough is the Director of Exceptional Student Education with Rock Hill Schools in Rock Hill, South Carolina, where she lives with her two sons. She has served in many capacities in special education during her career, including college professor, district coordinator, teacher, consultant, and workshop facilitator. She has made presentations at numerous state- and national-level conferences and has facilitated workshops in many schools and districts around the country.

Wendy received the 1996 Kansas Special Educator of the Year award from the Kansas Federation of the Council for Exceptional Children. As a practicing educator, Wendy has taught mildly and moderately disabled students in South Carolina, Texas, and Kansas through a wide variety of service delivery models at elementary, middle, and high school levels. She has served as a special education coordinator in which her primary function was to support staff, administrators, and parents in the inclusion of students with special needs in schools and general education classes.

Wendy earned her B.S. in Special Education from Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina. She completed her M.S. and Ed.D. in Special Education at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. She has published several other books and video series with THE MASTER TEACHER[®], which support teachers and assistants working to provide students with disabilities access to the general curriculum.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Section 1: Introduction1**

- Section 2: Why We Modify for Some Students3**
 - Special Support Programs4
 - Reasons for Making Modifications6
 - The Fairness Issue.....8

- Section 3: Modification Basics11**
 - General Modification Guidelines11
 - Working with General Classroom Teachers15
 - The Differences Between Instructional and Curricular Modifications17

- Section 4: A Collection of Modification Strategies27**
 - General Tips and Skills27
 - Accommodations for Common Classroom Troubles29
 - Specific “How To” Strategies33
 - How to Question Students34
 - How to Read Materials, Worksheets, and Tests Aloud37
 - How to Provide Extended Time and Shortened Assignments41
 - How to Include Students in Cooperative Learning Groups44
 - How to Incorporate Mnemonic Instruction46
 - How to Use Graphic Organizers.....52
 - How to Handle Oral Answers and Be a Scribe54
 - How to Provide Note-Taking Assistance55
 - How to Develop and Adapt Study Guides58
 - How to Maximize Student Learning Styles68
 - How to Use Task Analysis71
 - How to Develop and Use Visual Schedules73
 - How to Support Classroom Testing75
 - How to Include Instructional Games and Activities78
 - How to Manage Student Behavior79
 - How to Monitor Student Progress84

- Section 5: Supporting Curricular Modifications87**
 - Levels of Modification: Revisited88
 - Suggestions for Making Curricular Modifications90
 - Parting Words to Paraeducators93

- Section 6: References, Appendix, and Forms95**

notes

Special education's charge to provide students with disabilities access to the general curriculum has changed how and where students get specialized instruction and support. *Inclusion* describes the efforts to keep students with diverse learning and behavior needs in the classrooms and schools they would attend with their age-level peers if they were not identified with a specific disability. Historically, students with different learning and behavior needs were sent somewhere else—away from their friends, classrooms, or schools—and separated from the general curriculum. But now, specialized instruction, supplemental aids and services, and instructional and support staff such as paraeducators are being brought into instructional settings and general education classrooms to provide direct support to such students and their teachers.

While paraeducators are used to support and assist a wide range of student needs and programs, this guide specifically targets those who support students with special needs—implementing accommodations and modifications within the general classroom and through the general education curriculum. Paraeducators are often directed to support and instruct students in various settings, but may not be given clear directions for how to do it. This guide provides basic information about two forms of modifications—instructional and curricular. The differences between the two are very important. Understanding those differences will help you—the paraeducator—better define your role and the tasks you are to perform, as well as recognize the roles of the other adults—general classroom teachers and special program personnel—in meeting classroom and student modification needs. This guide also provides an understanding of your role in promoting and supporting the use of research-based strategies and interventions.

We will begin with the basics, such as why modifications are used, the differences between instructional and curricular modifications, and strategies for providing instructional support in the general classroom. These concepts will lay the foundation for the more specific, research-based strategies and interventions described later. The assistance you provide to students often includes accommodating for specific teaching methods, monitoring student progress, reading materials and tests aloud, providing note-taking assistance, making and modifying study guides, and more. This guide also addresses ways you can be more proactive and better prepared to meet individual student needs by using planning tools and by taking useful materials with you as you move from one setting to another.