
ACCOMMODATIONS

Once I was mainstreamed out of Desert Voices, I started to realize that the type of advocacy required from myself was different. At Desert Voices a lot of accommodations are a given; there's not much you need to ask for. But going into a public school, I realized that this wasn't the case. I needed to ask for the accommodations I needed, and even for the ones I didn't realize I needed at the time. Some accommodations that I have used are:

- Sitting in the front of the classroom
- Using an FM Systems
- Closed Captions
- Print out notes
- Restate questions asked by students

These are just some of the accommodations I have used through the years, there are so many other accommodations out there that can be used to fit your specific needs! These accommodations were discovered, added, and used at different times. But once I got to middle school things started getting difficult, and then even more so in high school. I had all the accommodations, I was using them all, but it wasn't working out. The accommodations that once benefited me were no longer helping. My middle school classes became more group discussion and class discussion based rather than lectures from the teachers. Because of this, sitting in the front of the classroom was no longer helpful since I couldn't see all the students and therefore couldn't identify where in the class they were (I couldn't follow along with all the class comments). Sitting in the front of the classroom was necessary in those earlier years for me, but as I got older and my classes changed, the front of the classroom became the last spot I would choose to sit. Likewise, using an FM system that was just worn by the teacher and only picked up his/her voice, was no longer beneficial. I could only hear the teacher and couldn't hear the students and their comments/answers to questions. Not being able to follow along with the whole class made it much harder to follow along and learn. This is why I started using the Roger Select instead of a traditional teacher worn FM system. I think it's important to realize that the accommodations you use one year may not be used the next year. And that the accommodations that work for me, may not be the best for you. These accommodations are meant to be tailored to your needs and your specific situations.



ACCOMMODATIONS EXPLAINED

There are some accommodations that I have used over the years that I've had to fight for and try to explain why I need them. But the explanation piece can sometimes be the hardest. For example, in elementary school, around 5th grade I discovered closed captions at home while watching a movie. I wasn't asking my family questions and I walked away without missing a detail! This is how we realized I needed captions in school. But when we said I needed captions, they asked me to tell them what I was missing in the videos. But how can I tell you what I'm missing when I don't know what I'm missing?! Sometimes you just have to keep persevering through the fight to get the accommodations you need, but in the end, know that it is necessary because you are your own best advocate.

Sitting in the front of the classroom

- Sitting in the front of the classroom can help students to better focus on the teacher and hear what they are saying. Especially for those who rely on lip-reading, it gives them that access to use this skill.

FM Systems

- Allows students to better hear the teachers while minimizing some of the extra sound from the environment around them. Depending on the age of the student and the FM system being used, this can also help to better hear your group when breaking into smaller groups for discussions, projects, etc.

Closed Captions

- Having captions on videos and movies can help to follow along and better understand the content of the video. A student may be able to hear and understand the voice behind the video, but may not be comprehending the information. Likewise, if it's an animated video and one relies on lip-reading and facial cues, that element is taken away but can help to be filled in with closed captions.

Print out notes, student note takers

- When classes are more lecture based with the students taking notes, this multitasking can become challenging. From personal experience, it's hard for me to do both at once - listen to you and take notes. When I'm taking notes, I'm so focused on remembering what you've said that I'm missing the lecture the teacher is continuing while I'm writing. Being provided with notes helps to focus on one thing at a time.

Restate questions asked by students

- Having the teacher restate questions and comments asked by students can be extremely helpful. Often times peer comments and questions can result in the class discussion being changed or guided into a different topic. Not understanding this change in discussion or not knowing what the discussion has moved onto can prove to be very challenging.

