

Research-based principles for organizing instruction to maximize all students' learning through these networks:

- **Principle I: Provide Multiple Means of Representation** (to address the “what” of learning). Students vary in the ways they comprehend information presented to them in school. For example, those with sensory disabilities (e.g., deafness); learning disabilities (e.g., dyslexia); or cultural differences, may all require different ways of approaching content. Others may grasp information quicker or more efficiently through visual or auditory means rather than printed text. Learning, and transfer of learning, occurs when multiple representations are used. This allows students to make connections within, as well as between, concepts.
- **Principle II: Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression** (to address the “how” of learning). Students express their knowledge in a variety of ways. For example, learners with autism approach learning tasks very differently. Some students may be able to express themselves well verbally but not in written text, and vice versa. It should also be recognized that action and expression require a great deal of strategy, practice, and organization. This is another area in which learners can differ.
- **Principle III: Provide Multiple Means of Engagement** (to address the “why” of learning). Affect represents a crucial element to learning, and learners differ markedly in the ways in which they can be engaged or motivated to learn. There are a variety of sources that can influence individual variation in affect. For example, neurology, culture, and background knowledge shape students' engagement in the classroom. Some learners are highly engaged by spontaneity and novelty while others prefer strict routine. Some learners might like to work alone, while others prefer to work with their peers. Providing a variety of these types of opportunities is essential for keeping students motivated.

Accommodations and Modifications

In addition to designing our instruction in ways to reach all learners in the classroom group, we can make sure we are attending to the accommodations and modifications as specified on students' Individualized Education Programs (IEP's).

It is important to clarify the difference between an accommodation and a modification. An accommodation is a change that helps a student compensate for or overcome the disability. Accommodations help students access the curriculum without changing the actual standards the student is working toward. Allowing a student to dictate answers orally instead of writing them is an example of an accommodation. The student is expected to know the material and completely answer all questions but is not expected to express that knowledge in writing.