

5.2 Strategies to Support Students with Special Educational Needs in the Mainstream Classroom

There are many resources available to help a teacher adapt learning activities. The following list is based on the work of Berta & Blaisedell (1998), Borrows (2000) and Feters, Pickard & Pyle (2003).

Strategies to support all students

- Call on the student by name.
- Discuss with the student about what types of adaptations they prefer.
- Ensure students have an easy and efficient method for seeking help (journal, special signal etc.).
- Refer to scientists who have disabilities, whenever possible.
- Allow students to familiarise themselves with the room or school lab prior to their first lesson.
- Speak clearly and naturally, but be aware of the volume of your voice.
- Write clearly in large writing on the board.
- Make worksheets using a computer so font size can be increased if needed.
- Give one direction at a time.
- Provide safety instructions in both verbal and written form (large print with a graphic – 14 point font) for every experiment.
- Ensure everybody (including adults) adheres to safety rules, e.g. wearing safety glasses.
- Use concrete objects, diagrams, and pictures as often as possible.
- Demonstrate the steps of an experiment prior to an activity (if appropriate).
- Use co-operative learning strategies, as appropriate, and assign individual roles within groups.
- Encourage students to use computers to organise information and submit typed material if this proves helpful.
- Provide students with the option of recording their responses where necessary.

- Use materials with strong textures and primary colours.
- Use whole-class discussion at the end of a lesson.
- Write homework clearly on the board five minutes before the end of class.
- Give clear instructions for homework (e.g. spend ten minutes on these questions).
- Allow students adequate time for carrying out activities.

References

Berta, M., & Blaisedell, M. J. (1998). *Science projects for all students*. New York: Facts on File.

Borrows, P. (2000). Teaching science to pupils with special needs – health and safety issues. *School Science Review*, 81 (296).

Fetters, M., Pickard, D. M., and Pyle, E. (2003). Making Science Accessible: Strategies to Meet the Needs of a Diverse Student Population. 26 (5).