



Self-Regulation Guide to MODIFYING ACTIVITIES AND ENVIRONMENTS

WHAT IS IT?

Modifying Activities and Environments (MAE) is a set of techniques used to increase students' on-task behaviors in the classroom by:

- Planning activities to meet each students' learning needs
- Adapting and modifying tasks to maximize active engagement
- Organizing the classroom to minimize distractions

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Jason's teacher notices that he has been hiding under the table when the class is working on patterning, so she considers that the task may be too difficult and gives him concrete manipulatives to use to duplicate the pattern.

Students are running around and having trouble staying in their designated center, so the teacher rearranges the furniture so there are no wide-open spaces (while still having some room to move around).

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

When students are in well-organized classrooms and participating in interesting activities, they are more likely to engage, learn, and experience success in the classroom! This is especially important for students who demonstrate more challenging behaviors – teachers can support these students by individualizing activities and/or environments to meet their specific needs!

Tips for Modifying Activities and Environments

Make sure activities are developmentally appropriate by incorporating...

- Movement.** Kindergartners cannot be expected to stay seated for more than 20 minutes.
- Student Interest.** Consider the unique needs and interests of your students in choosing content.
- Choice.** Allow choice whenever possible to increase feelings of autonomy.

Be ready to adjust the activity to meet students' needs by...

- Adapting.** Add more support and guidance for students who may struggle, and greater challenge for those who are more advanced or get bored easily.
- Engaging.** Keep children engaged by staying close by and asking open-ended questions.

Minimize distraction in your classroom by...

- Organizing.** Make sure classroom materials are well-organized and easy to reach. Remove or cover materials that may be distracting.
- Rearranging.** Reduce wide-open spaces, and redirect "traffic patterns." Clearly define boundaries and off-limit spaces.



TIPS FOR MODIFYING ACTIVITIES AND ENVIRONMENTS

1. **Make sure activities are developmentally appropriate by...**

- Considering students' interests and strengths.
- Making sure they are not too hard OR too easy.
- Varying topics, activities, and materials from day-to-day.
- Allowing movement when appropriate (no more than 20 minutes of sitting).
- Incorporating choice when appropriate.

2. **Adapt and modify tasks to maximize active engagement as needed by...**

- Monitoring engagement level.
- Providing opportunities for students to get involved.
 - Ask open-ended questions, provide choices, and encourage peer-to-peer talk.
- Modifying and adapting activities as needed.
 - Provide more *support* by simplifying, shortening, or scaffolding the activity.
 - Provide more *challenge* by increasing difficulty or having an alternative activity.

3. **Organize the classroom to minimize distractions by...**

(see *Zoning to Maximize Learning* handout)

- Reducing wide-open spaces.
- Clearly defining boundaries and off-limit spaces.
- Keeping classroom materials neat and clutter-free.
- Redirecting "traffic patterns."
 - Place footprints or arrows on the ground to clearly tell students where to go.
- Strategically seating or placing students in line.
 - Seat a student who is easily distracted closest to a teacher or place them at the front of the line.

RESOURCES THAT SUPPORT MODIFYING ACTIVITIES AND ENVIRONMENTS

Zoning to Maximize Learning

[Available as PDF](#)

NCQTL©

Stop Signs

[Available as PDF](#)

TACSEI©