

Guidance for Accessing and Adapting Grade-Level Text

Purpose

The *SWSCD Companion Resources for the ELA Guidebooks* promote the goal of providing meaningful opportunities for students with significant cognitive disabilities (SWSCD) to comprehend and learn aligned, grade-level content and skills while promoting participation in inclusive education settings. This document presents guidance for educators on the purpose, creation, and use of adapted texts to be used along with the Companion Resources.

To support literacy instruction of SWSCD, educators will use grade-level texts in their original form and will differentiate instruction by using adapted text. Adapted text, a term which refers to any text that is changed from its original print format, promotes text accessibility and comprehension for SWSCD based on individual needs. While a text may be augmented or modified to make grade-level text accessible to students who have a wide range of reading ability, it is important to retain enough of the original text characteristics necessary to address student learning expectations.

Educators must provide opportunities for SWSCD to interact with the original text to ensure language development and comprehension. There are multiple ways to present original text to SWSCD such as:

- **Read Aloud:** The teacher “simply” reads the text aloud which taps into students’ listening comprehension level which may surpass their independent reading comprehension level; this allows for students to engage with texts that they might not be able to read on their own.
- **Interactive Read Aloud:** The teacher orally reads a text to the class, while asking corresponding, thought-provoking discussion questions throughout the reading of the book; the teacher also models comprehension strategies (e.g., text-to-self connections) and pauses for conversation in a whole group or in small student groups.
- **Partner Read:** A partner (e.g., same grade-level peer) reads the text aloud to an individual student or a small group of students.
- **Re-reading:** The teacher reads (more than once) sections of the text which contain text-based evidence to support students’ ability to answer comprehension questions.
- **Audio Books:** The teacher provides commercially available audio books, physical media (e.g., Compact Discs), and digital media (e.g., webpages, online books).

Note that these same presentation modes may be used with adapted text as well.

Educators must also employ adapted text, along with the additional scaffolds and supports as necessary, to ensure student access and opportunity to meet grade-level learning expectations.

Finding and creating “just right” adapted texts is best accomplished in partnership with general education teachers.

Educators facilitate access and use of text through adaptations tailored to the individual needs of the student. Several strategies can be utilized to present the text in a different 1) visual manner (e.g., enlarged text, chunking the text, adding pictures); 2) auditory manner (e.g., audio book); and/or 3) simplified manner (e.g., abridged version, text/chapter summaries). When adapting text, educators ensure the content is sufficient (i.e., breadth, depth, complexity) for a student to respond to questions in the lesson and complete the culminating tasks. Note the student’s communication system determines the type of augmentation strategies needed to adapt a text. Suggestions for adapting a text are:

- **Including pictures and or objects:**
 - add simple pictures at the beginning of each chapter section or summary
 - add picture symbols paired with key words in the text
 - add/attach objects paired with key words or ideas in the text
 - consider if the images are age appropriate and relevant and if they require inferencing (a comprehension skill) to interpret meaning
- **Shortening text:**
 - reduce the amount of text, but retain the essence of the text
 - omit pages or paragraphs; for example, if the student is working on characterization or setting, ensure the remaining text includes enough detail to understand the literary elements
- **Rewriting text as a summary:** (Note: A summary of text is very different than shortening text. A summary is a brief statement that presents the main points in a concise form. It may not have the details needed for all literary/comprehension skill instruction.)
 - summarize the text into brief sections (e.g. chapter summaries)
 - summarize the text and use some picture/symbol support
 - add a repeated story line that emphasizes a main idea or key concept of the text
- **Using a predictable structure:** (e.g., younger children include a repeated story line in the same place such as at the bottom of every page; older students might have the main idea in the first sentence of the first paragraph and add signal words)
- **Reducing Lexile level:** The *Lexile*® *Framework for Reading* measure represents the student's reading level on a developmental scale of reading ability (<https://lexile.com/>). Reducing the Lexile level of a passage might assist students who are introduced to grade-level content.

Resources

Below, you will find an additional set of resources for finding and adapting text.

- American Printing House for the Blind <https://www.aph.org/>
- Cast UDL Book Builder has Public Library Books that includes some good adaptations for books. Educators could adapt the books or chapters of the books using the Create and Edit My Books feature. <http://bookbuilder.cast.org/>
- Group activity for Adapting Text. https://www.ieccwa.org/uploads/IECC2017/HANDOUTS/KEY_14022688/LiteracyPresentationSlidesPart3.pdf
- Modules Addressing Special Education and Teacher Education (MAST) Facilitator's Guide Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Story-Based Lessons to be used in conjunction with the above PPT. http://mast.ecu.edu/modules/ssid_sbl/lib/documents/FG-Lee-Story%20Based%20Lessons-2012-04-02.pdf
- Story-Based Lessons for SWSCD to support inclusion in a literacy activity http://mast.ecu.edu/modules/ssid_sbl/lib/documents/PPT-Lee-Story%20Based%20Lessons.pdf
- Text Project has Literature Word Pictures for five books. It provides an example of how images can be used to support vocabulary acquisition. <http://textproject.org/classroom-materials/textproject-word-pictures/literature-words/>
- <https://goalbookapp.com/toolkit/v/strategy/adapted-text>

References

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Hudson, M.E., Browder, D., & Wakeman, S. (2013). Helping students with moderate and severe intellectually disability access grade-level text. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, Vol. 45, No. 3, pp.14-23.

Karvonen, M., Flowers, C., & Wakeman, S. Y. (2013). Factors associated with access to the general curriculum for students with intellectual disability. *Current Issues in Education*, 16(3). Retrieved from <http://cie.asu.edu/ojs/index.php/cieatasu/article/view/1309>

Orlando, A., & Ruppert, A. (2016). Literacy instruction for students with multiple and severe disabilities who use augmentative/alternative communication (Document No.IC-16). Retrieved from University of Florida, Collaboration for Effective Educator, Development, Accountability, and Reform Center website: <http://cedar.education.ufl.edu/tools/innovation-configurations/> (Includes an extensive list of *References* related to use of augmentative/alternate communication (AAC) and literacy instruction.