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# Selecting Accommodations: Guidance for Individual Educational Plan Teams

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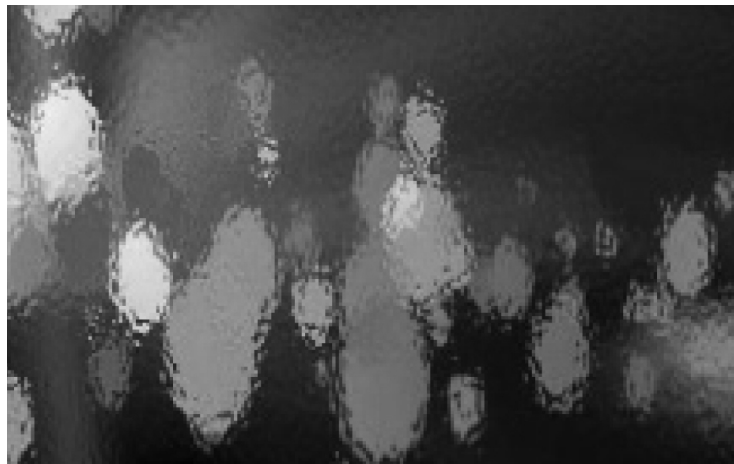
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# Selecting Accommodations: Guidance for Individual Educational Plan Teams



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# Table of Contents

<b>Guidance on Selecting Accommodations</b> .....	1
<b>Questions</b> .....	1
1. What instructional and assessment tasks are difficult for the student to do independently? Are these difficulties documented in the present level statement? .....	1
2. Why are these tasks difficult for the student? .....	2
<i>Analysis of a Difficult Task</i> .....	3
<i>Example Task: Editing Written Work</i> .....	3
<i>Example Task: Lining up in the Classroom</i> .....	4
3. What accommodations will allow the student to access the information and demonstrate performance of the tasks? .....	5
<i>Criteria for Selecting Classroom Accommodations</i> .....	6
<i>Selecting Testing Accommodations</i> .....	7
4. How will the IEP team know if the accommodation is effective? .....	9
<b>Appendix</b> .....	10
Corey .....	10
Danilo.....	14
Emma .....	18
<b>References</b> .....	22

## Guidance on Selecting Accommodations

Each team charged with developing an individual educational plan (IEP) for a student with a disability must consider the student's need for accommodations. Sometimes team members produce a long list of accommodations in case the student ever needs them. As a result, teams may choose unnecessary or inappropriate accommodations that can have a detrimental effect on the student's performance (Vansciver & Conover, 2009). To ensure that the accommodations are matched to student needs, IEP teams are urged to think about the student's needs and the potential impact of the accommodation on student performance (Gerlach, 2009, June). In addition, IEP teams should consider all accommodations within a framework that supports effective inclusion practices, such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Problem-solving activities identifying appropriate accommodations should align with the school's implementation of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS).

Under a UDL framework, many accommodations students with disabilities need should be available to all students within a universal, differentiated core learning environment. Examples include accessible instructional materials (digital text, audio, large print, etc.) and supports for presentation, comprehension, writing, scheduling, organization of materials, and following directions. By embedding these supports in universal core pedagogy, the effective use of the accommodations is supported in all classroom activities.

The following guiding questions are provided to help IEP teams select, implement, and evaluate accommodations (from Florida Department of Education, 2012).

1. What instructional and assessment tasks are difficult for the student to do independently? Are these difficulties documented in the present level statement?
2. Why are these tasks difficult for the student?
3. What accommodations will allow the student to access the information and demonstrate performance of the tasks?
4. How will the IEP team know if the accommodation is effective?

This paper provides a brief explanation of the process the IEP team should follow to answer each question. The appendix provides examples based on three IEPs included in *Developing Quality Individual Educational Plans: A Guide for Instructional Personnel and Families* (Beech, 2012) to show how the IEP teams used these questions to guide their selection of accommodations.

### Questions

#### **1. What instructional and assessment tasks are difficult for the student to do independently? Are these difficulties documented in the present level statement?**

To determine which accommodations a student may need, the IEP team first considers the tasks and activities the student will be expected to complete in the general curriculum. The IEP team should identify any that are currently difficult for the student to perform independently. The student's disability may impact performance on similar tasks across a range of content or behavior. The student's disability may impact performance on academic and nonacademic tasks. This data will come from diagnostic or in-depth assessments, progress monitoring, classroom work samples, as well as observational and anecdotal

information collected by teachers, therapists, or parents. The specific difficulties should be documented in the student's present level statement on the IEP. Difficulties may include the following:

- Difficulty structuring main ideas and supporting details when writing essays
- Inability to see standard print, with need for enlargement
- Losing place while reading
- Forgetting to turn in assignments
- Trouble organizing personal space and activities
- Problems maintaining attention and effort

The student's IEP may also describe accommodations that the student has used in the past. They may be described in the present level statement, the annual goals, or in the services section where classroom and testing accommodations or supplementary aids and services are listed. The IEP team will need to determine if the student continues to need these accommodations or if changes are necessary.

## **2. Why are these tasks difficult for the student?**

To identify which accommodations the student needs, the team should determine why these tasks are difficult for the student. To do this, the team analyzes the critical elements of the task to determine which specific aspects of the tasks are problematic for the student. Each task involves **critical elements**, including cognitive, motor, sensory, social or emotional, and communication elements in the skills and behaviors used to carry out the task (Zabala, 2010).

To analyze a student's difficulty with a task, IEP team members first identify the expected grade-level or age-appropriate performance for each critical element of the task. They then review available student data to determine how the student currently performs the task. The team should consider any standard classroom tools, equipment, or assistive technology the student currently uses and answer the following questions:

- Is the student able to use the tool or assistive technology effectively and efficiently?
- Does the student have the knowledge and skills needed to perform the task?
- Has the student received instruction in using the tool or other type of accommodation?
- Are environmental supports or barriers present?

Gaps in performance will become evident, and the IEP team can make more precise decisions about possible accommodations or interventions the student will need. Use this chart to analyze the critical elements of the task and compare them to what the student can do now.

## Analysis of a Difficult Task

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Task: \_\_\_\_\_

Critical Elements	What Student Can Do Now	Is There a Gap?
Cognitive		
Sensory		
Motor		
Social/Emotional		
Communication		

### ***Example Task: Editing Written Work***

The present level statement indicates that the student turns in written work that addresses the topic, but has many errors in spelling and grammar. Teachers report that the student has difficulty editing his own work. To determine what kind of accommodation the student needs, the IEP team will look more closely at the critical elements of editing and compare them with what the student currently does in order to identify any gaps.

A student may have difficulty with the task of editing written work for a variety of reasons. The student may have inadequate knowledge of language and writing conventions. The student may have trouble using a pen or pencil to mark the errors. The student may have difficulty maintaining attention to complete the task and edits only the beginning of the essay. Each of these difficulties calls for a different kind of accommodation.

Critical Elements	What the Student Can Do Now	Is There a Gap?
<b>Cognitive</b>		
(a) Recognize whether written work reflects the intended purpose, audience, organization, and content	(a) Recognizes whether written work reflects the intended purpose, audience, organization, and content	No
(b) Recognize and correct errors in grammar and writing conventions—sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation	(b) Recognizes, but does not correct, errors in grammar and writing conventions—sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation	Yes
(c) Revise words and punctuation to improve clarity, accuracy, and grammatical correctness	(c) Revises words and punctuation to improve clarity and accuracy of meaning; does not revise words and punctuation to improve grammatical correctness	Yes
<b>Sensory</b>		
(a) See the writing on the paper	(a) Sees the writing on the paper	No
<b>Motor</b>		
(a) Sit in position for writing	(a) Sits in position for writing	No



(b) Manipulate a writing instrument	(b) Has trouble holding pencil to mark edits on paper	Yes
<b>Social/Emotional</b>		
(a) Work independently (b) Maintain attention until task is complete	(a) Works independently (b) Maintains attention on task for five minutes, only edits first part of writing	No Yes
<b>Communication</b>		
(a) Identify needed changes to content and mechanics	(a) Identifies some, but not all, needed changes to content and mechanics	Yes

**Example Task: Lining up in the Classroom**

Nonacademic tasks required for active involvement in the classroom also have critical elements. The present level statement may indicate that the student has difficulty lining up for lunch and is late getting to the cafeteria four out of five days each week. A student may understand the purpose of lining up, but lines up only when the teacher takes her by the hand. She may not be able to hear the verbal command. She may run into furniture or other students when she is getting into line because other things going on in the classroom distract her. She may stand too close to other students and not know how to keep from touching those who have crossed into her personal space when standing in line. The problems are varied, but the results are the same; the student does not independently line up for a school activity. The team needs to look more closely at the critical elements for lining up to determine what the student needs.

<b>Critical Elements</b>	<b>What the Student Can Do Now</b>	<b>Is There a Gap?</b>
<b>Cognitive</b>		
(a) Recognize a line of students (b) Understand purpose of lining up (c) Know where the line begins (d) Know how to get in line	(a) Recognizes a line of students (b) Understands purpose of lining up (c) Knows where the line begins (d) Knows how to get in line	No No No No
<b>Sensory</b>		
(a) Recognize the spoken instruction to get in line (b) Avoid bumping into furniture, equipment, and other students when moving in the room	(a) Cannot hear the verbal command (b) Is distracted by noises and motion when getting into line and bumps into furniture and students	Yes Yes
<b>Motor</b>		
(a) Move into position to be part of the line	(a) Moves into position to be part of the line	No
<b>Social/Emotional</b>		
(a) Maintain acceptable personal space (b) Stay calm and quiet and keep hands close to the body	(a) Stands too close to other students (b) Touches other students who get into her personal space	Yes Yes
<b>Communication</b>		
(a) Follow signal or verbal instructions	(a) Follows visual signal or verbal instruction presented in sign language	No

### 3. What accommodations will allow the student to access the information and demonstrate performance of the tasks?

Disabilities can have a wide range of effects on student performance. Sometimes the disability makes it difficult or even impossible for the student to perform one or more critical elements of the task. For example, a student with a visual impairment may be unable to see well enough to edit an essay and need an alternate method for accessing the written word. A student who cannot speak may need an alternate mode of communication to participate in classroom discussions. A student may need some type of support from a person, assistive device, or accessible instructional materials to be able use standard tools and textbooks to complete a task. Task adaptations reduce the length or complexity of the practice or test items and make assignments or test items more accessible. Accommodations provide alternate methods, supports, or task adaptations (Beech, 2010a), such as the following:

<b>Alternate Method</b>	Dictate to a scribe or use voice recognition software instead of writing with a pencil
<b>Support</b>	Use a word processor on a computer instead of a pencil
<b>Task Adaptation</b>	Break the assignment into segments so student can write with a pencil for short periods of time

When thinking about possible accommodations for a student, the IEP team may consider assistive technology, accessible instructional materials, and environmental adaptations. The team should make sure the specific features of the accommodations match the student's abilities and needs in the critical elements or areas of motor skills, cognition and comprehension, language processing, and senses (vision, hearing, and tactile) to the specific features of the accommodation. In some cases, students may need a combination of accommodations to be able to perform the tasks.

The IEP team is responsible for supporting the student in the selection, acquisition, and effective use of appropriate assistive technologies. As an assistive technology service, the IEP team can recommend an assistive technology assessment. The assistive technology assessment should take place in the student's customary educational setting so that a functional evaluation can be conducted of the challenges or tasks that the student finds difficult or impossible. Assistive technology assessments should be student centered and include the professional staff from the student's customary educational setting. The team should consider adding additional expertise to the technology assessment team, such as the speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, or assistive technology specialist. Many districts have procedures for working with local assistive technology specialists, regional local assistive technology specialists, and Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services discretionary project staff. The results of assistive technology assessment will provide valuable information and insight toward the selection, acquisition, and use of assistive technology devices.

Members of IEP teams can also use their own expertise to identify appropriate accommodations, assistive technology, and strategies to address the student's difficult tasks. Involving the student in decisions about accommodations is critical. The student can provide personal insights in determining which accommodations are both necessary and acceptable. Additional resources may be used, such as *Accommodations: Assisting Students with Disabilities* (Beech, 2010a), *Guide to FCAT and FCAT 2.0 Accommodations for Students with Disabilities* (Beech, 2010b), *Guide to Accommodations for Computer-*

*Based FCAT, FCAT 2.0, and EOC Assessments* (Beech, Spring 2012) published by the Florida Department of Education. Test administration manuals for the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments, and Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) provide lists of allowable accommodations.

### ***Criteria for Selecting Classroom Accommodations***

After the IEP team members have considered a number of possible accommodations, they are ready to support the student in selecting the accommodation. The IEP team can use the following criteria to evaluate the potential effectiveness of an accommodation:

#### **Necessary**—*Does the student require the accommodation to perform the task?*

A necessary accommodation:

- Reduces or eliminates the effect of the disability
- Increases the student's ability to accomplish the task

This criterion is straightforward when applied to specialized presentation formats and alternate response modes. For example, students who use sign language may need an interpreter to access spoken language. It may be more difficult for other types of accommodations. For example, IEP teams frequently recommend allowing extended time to complete assignments and tests. However, a student may need extended time for some, but not all kinds of tasks.

#### **Independence**—*Can the student perform the task more independently with the accommodation?*

An accommodation that promotes independence:

- Is easy to use; the least complex alternative
- Supports continued skill development and promotes self-sufficiency

As a rule, the goal is to choose the simplest tool that meets the student's needs. If the accommodation is too complicated, it may be abandoned. Reducing a student's need for an accommodation through instruction or environmental support should also be considered. For example, a student who needs help keeping track of due dates may first use an assignment list from the teacher and then learn how to use a personal calendar.

#### **Generalizable**—*Can the student use the accommodation for similar tasks in different environments?*

An accommodation that is generalizable:

- Can be used for similar tasks
- Can be used in different settings

An ideal accommodation is one the student can use across different environments. Portable and unobtrusive accommodations are more easily transferred to other settings.

**Acceptable**—*Will the student consistently use the accommodation?*

The student:

- Is capable of learning how and knowing when to use the accommodation
- Is willing to use the accommodation
- Prefers the specific accommodation over others that are effective

The team must make sure the student is able to learn to use the accommodation in a satisfactory timeframe, considering any physical, sensory, cognitive, behavioral, or communication problems that affect its use. Some students are unwilling to use an accommodation because it makes them look different from their peers. The use of a UDL framework to make accommodations available universally can increase the effectiveness of many accommodations by decreasing user rejection based on appearing different. Tools and language are consistent for all students.

**Selecting Testing Accommodations**

When the IEP team selects classroom accommodations for a student, they must also think about accommodations for state and district assessments. The student will generally use the same type of accommodations in the classroom and on state and district assessments. Accommodations allowed for state tests, such as the FCAT 2.0 and EOC Assessments, are described in the test administration manuals. Some accommodations may not be used on the state tests. If a student needs to use a nonallowed accommodation in the classroom, parents must acknowledge in writing they understand potential consequences of using this nonallowed accommodation in the classroom. Written parental consent must be obtained for the student's use of the accommodation.

Some students with disabilities may require unique accommodations for the FCAT 2.0 and EOC Assessments. Unique accommodations generally involve altering the test materials, such as fewer items per page or increased space between items. The unique accommodation must not alter the concepts or skills being assessed, and the student must use the unique accommodation in classroom instruction. Unique accommodations require prior approval from the Commissioner of Education or designee.

The form on the next page may be used to rate each accommodation under consideration in order to make more informed decisions about accommodations. The IEP team will review each of the criteria, including whether the accommodation can be used on statewide assessments, to select the most appropriate accommodation. Ideally, the accommodation should meet all criteria. If the accommodation does not meet all criteria, the team may determine the accommodation is still the best fit for the student at this time. The team may also determine that the student will need a combination of accommodations to be able to perform the tasks required in the general curriculum.

### Selecting Accommodations

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Area of Concern: \_\_\_\_\_ Difficult Task: \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:** In the top row of the chart, record possible accommodations. For each criterion, check (✓) Y or N to indicate if the possible accommodation meets the criterion, and record relevant comments. Check (✓) Y if the accommodation is allowed on the FCAT, FCAT 2.0, EOC Assessment, or FAA, N if it is not allowed, or N/A if it is not applicable.

<b>Possible Accommodations</b>				
<b>1. Necessary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduces or eliminates the effect of the disability</li> <li>• Enables the student to accomplish the task</li> </ul>	Meets Criterion __ Y __ N	Meets Criterion __ Y __ N	Meets Criterion __ Y __ N	Meets Criterion __ Y __ N
<b>2. Independence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ease of use, least complex</li> <li>• Supports continued skill development and promotes independence</li> </ul>	Meets Criterion __ Y __ N	Meets Criterion __ Y __ N	Meets Criterion __ Y __ N	Meets Criterion __ Y __ N
<b>3. Generalizable</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be used for similar tasks</li> <li>• Can be used in different settings</li> </ul>	Meets Criterion __ Y __ N	Meets Criterion __ Y __ N	Meets Criterion __ Y __ N	Meets Criterion __ Y __ N
<b>4. Acceptable</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is capable of learning to use accommodation</li> <li>• Is willing to use accommodation</li> <li>• Prefers the accommodation</li> </ul>	Meets Criterion __ Y __ N	Meets Criterion __ Y __ N	Meets Criterion __ Y __ N	Meets Criterion __ Y __ N
<b>Allowed on FCAT 2.0, EOC, or FAA?</b>	__ Y __ N __ N/A	__ Y __ N __ N/A	__ Y __ N __ N/A	__ Y __ N __ N/A

#### **4. How will the IEP team know if the accommodation is effective?**

This last question is very important. To determine if an accommodation is effective, a deliberate plan for implementation is needed considering each of these questions:

- a. Who will provide or acquire materials or devices required for the accommodation?
- b. Who is responsible for initial set-up of the equipment and maintenance procedures?
- c. What does the student need to know and be able to do to use the accommodation effectively?
- d. What do teachers and other adults who work with the student need to know to support the student's use of the accommodation?
- e. How will teachers integrate the accommodation with daily instruction and assessment tasks?
- f. How will teachers monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodation? Will the student be expected to complete the task more independently, more effectively, more completely, or more quickly? How can data be collected to show these changes? What is the expected impact on academic outcomes? How will this be reflected in the progress monitoring data?

Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the accommodation is an essential component of the implementation plan. The impact on student performance is the most important factor to monitor. Teachers collect data by interviewing or observing the student (self-report) or reviewing completed student work samples. Teachers need to consult periodically to evaluate the impact of each accommodation to determine the effect on student performance. For a more comprehensive discussion on collecting and analyzing data to determine the effectiveness of an accommodation, see *How Do You Know It? How Can You Show It?* (Reed, Bowser, & Korsten, 2002).

## Appendix

Three examples are included to illustrate the process the IEP teams follow to select accommodations. These examples are based on three of the IEPs included in Appendix C of *Developing Individual Educational Plans: A Guide for Instructional Personnel and Families* (Beech, 2012). Excerpts from the IEPs are included along with the completed chart used to analyze the difficult task and apply the criteria to select appropriate accommodations, with a brief description of the plan for implementation and evaluation.

### Corey

The first example features Corey, a fourth-grade student with intellectual disabilities. Her individual educational plan is included in *Developing Individual Educational Plans: A Guide for Instructional Personnel and Families* in Appendix C., pp. 177–188.

Corey is working on the Access Points of the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. She struggles with word recognition and decoding, but she can identify the main idea and details of reading passages using the context and supporting illustrations. Corey's IEP also addresses her difficulty in mathematics and in health care. This example focuses on Corey's need for accommodations to learn the meaning of new vocabulary.

#### 1. What instructional and assessment tasks are difficult for the student to do independently? Are these difficulties documented in the present level statement?

**Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance:  
Curriculum and Learning Environment**

**Task:** Identify meaning of new vocabulary words

Corey can identify 137 of 220 Dolch sight words and 73 of 95 common nouns. She needs at least five explicit exposures with new vocabulary before she is able to identify the meaning of the words independently. She is most successful learning new vocabulary by talking about it in her own words or using objects and pictures.

**2. Why are these tasks difficult for the student?**

**Analysis of a Difficult Task**

**Student:** Corey  
**Task:** Identify meaning of new vocabulary words

<b>Critical Elements</b>	<b>What Student Can Do Now</b>	<b>Is There a Gap?</b>
<b>Cognitive</b>		
(a) Recognize the meaning by relating to previous experience	(a) Uses objects and pictures to identify the meaning of vocabulary	Yes
(b) Use context clues or structural analysis to figure out meaning	(b) Puts the meaning of the word into her own words	Yes
(c) Multiple exposures over time in different contexts	(c) Requires at least five explicit exposures (instruction) to the meaning	Yes
<b>Sensory</b>		
(a) See the written words	(a) Sees the written words	No
(b) Hear the word when spoken	(b) Hears the word when spoken	No
<b>Motor</b>		
N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Social/Emotional</b>		
(a) Attend to the words	(a) Attends to the words	No
<b>Communication</b>		
(a) Talk about the meaning of vocabulary in own words	(a) Talks about the vocabulary in her own words	No



**3. What accommodations will allow the student to access the information and demonstrate performance of the tasks?**

**Selecting Accommodations**

Student: Corey School: Sample 3333 Date: 9/17/2011

Area of Concern: Reading Difficult Task: Identify meaning of new vocabulary

**DIRECTIONS:** In the top row of the chart, record possible accommodations. For each criterion, check (✓) Y or N to indicate if the possible accommodation meets the criterion, and record relevant comments. Check (✓) Y if the accommodation is allowed on the FCAT, FCAT 2.0, EOC Assessment, or FAA, N if it is not allowed, or N/A if it is not applicable.

<b>Possible Accommodation</b>	<i>Use a dictionary to look up the meaning of new vocabulary</i>	<i>Use a semantic map to explore the meaning of new vocabulary</i>	<i>Provide vocabulary flash cards with both a written definition and a pictorial depiction of the word</i>
<b>1. Necessary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduces or eliminates the effect of the disability</li> <li>Enables the student to accomplish the task</li> </ul>	Meets Criterion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	Meets Criterion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	Meets Criterion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
<b>2. Independence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ease of use, least complex</li> <li>Supports continued skill development and promotes independence</li> </ul>	Meets Criterion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	Meets Criterion <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N	Meets Criterion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
<b>3. Generalizable</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be used for similar tasks</li> <li>Can be used in different settings</li> </ul>	Meets Criterion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	Meets Criterion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	Meets Criterion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
<b>4. Acceptable</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is capable of learning to use accommodation</li> <li>Is willing to use accommodation</li> <li>Prefers the accommodation</li> </ul>	Meets Criterion <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N	Meets Criterion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	Meets Criterion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
<b>Allowed on FCAT 2.0, EOC, or FAA?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

## Accommodations for Corey

Corey's IEP team decided that she will be provided flash cards for new vocabulary words with both a written definition and a visual representation (picture) of the word. Her teachers will ensure that she has sufficient instruction and practice with the cards to learn the meaning of the words. They did not select the dictionary because Corey did not prefer it. The semantic map was not selected because it was more complex and couldn't be used on statewide assessments.

### 1. How will the IEP team know if the accommodation is effective?

To determine if an accommodation is effective, a deliberate plan for implementation is needed. This will include consideration of each of these questions:

- a. *Who will provide or acquire materials or devices required for the accommodation?*

The teacher will need blank flash cards and a computer with clip art and/or the capability to search for images.

- b. *Who is responsible for initial set-up of the equipment and maintenance procedures?*

The ESE teacher will create a set of visual vocabulary cards for the student to use. This can be done ahead of time for the instructional period using a list of vocabulary words to be covered in all subject areas. Other subject area teachers (if applicable) should provide the ESE teacher with a list of their vocabulary words for the grading period/semester ahead of time.

- c. *What does the student need to know and be able to do to use the accommodation effectively?*

If vocabulary is new, Corey will ask to have the meaning explained. Corey will need to independently review the vocabulary words using the flash cards when possible.

- d. *What do the teachers and other adults who work with the student need to know to support the student's use of the accommodation?*

All teachers who instruct the student in new vocabulary should be familiar with this accommodation and allow Corey time to practice with the cards both independently and with a teacher/peer. Coordination between teachers during planning periods will allow the ESE teacher responsible for the accommodation to create cards ahead of time. Corey should be given enough time to practice the words before teachers expect Corey to know the meaning of new vocabulary.

- e. *How will the teachers integrate the accommodation with daily instruction and assessment tasks?*

See answer to d.

## Danilo

This example features Danilo, a sixth-grade student who has a hearing impairment and difficulty processing language. His individual educational plan is included in *Developing Individual Educational Plans: A Guide for Instructional Personnel and Families* in Appendix C, pp.189–199.

Danilo is working on the benchmarks of the Common Core State Standards. His overall reading and writing skills are on the sixth-grade level; however, he has problems understanding the meaning of new academic vocabulary and words with multiple meanings. Danilo's IEP also addresses his difficulties in mathematics and need for instruction in self-determination. This example focuses on Danilo's need for accommodations for note taking during class lectures.

### 1. What instructional and assessment tasks are difficult for the student to do independently? Are these difficulties documented in the present level statement?

#### **Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance: Curriculum and Learning Environment**

##### **Task:** Note taking during lectures

Danilo needs assistance with note taking in language arts and world history due to the increased language demands in these subjects. It is hard for him to listen and write at the same time.

Due to his unilateral hearing loss, Danilo needs to be seated at the front left side of the classroom with his right ear facing toward where the majority of instruction will take place. Danilo may miss some words (incidental language) and needs explicit instruction in new academic vocabulary.

Danilo's writing achievement is on grade level (score of level 4 out of 6) on the District Writing Prompt. His responses typically have a clear organizational pattern. Input provided by his general education teachers indicated that hands-on activities, graphic organizers, study guides, and cue cards are effective instructional strategies for Danilo.

#### ***Other Relevant Information in the IEP***

#### **Results of Initial or Most Recent Evaluation:**

Audiological Annual Evaluation (2/10): Right ear within normal limits of hearing. Left ear has moderate to severe conductive hearing loss. No amplification is recommended.

## 2. Why are these tasks difficult for the student?

### Analysis of a Difficult Task

Student: Danilo

Task: Note taking during lectures

Critical Elements	What Student Can Do Now	Is There a Gap?
<b>Cognitive</b>		
(a) Remember spoken information from lectures	(a) Remembers information presented orally	No
(b) Process meaning to distinguish important and irrelevant information	(b) Distinguishes important and irrelevant information (takes longer to process information)	No
(c) Use knowledge and skills related to written language (spelling, punctuation, organization) to transfer spoken words to paper	(c) Spells words accurately and can organize thoughts on paper	No
<b>Motor</b>		
(a) Use a writing tool to record notes on paper for a sustained time period	(a) Writes legibly with standard writing tools for sustained time period	No
<b>Sensory</b>		
(a) Hear/listen to spoken words	(a) Has difficulty hearing (left ear has moderate to severe hearing loss—no amplification recommended); sometimes misses words due to hearing problems	Yes
(b) Listen to spoken words while writing	(b) Has difficulty listening and writing at the same time	Yes
<b>Social/Emotional</b>		
(a) Persist on task until completion	(a) Needs additional time to complete extended writing tasks; persists in taking notes even when overwhelmed by oral input	No
<b>Communication</b>		
(a) Quickly process meaning of spoken words	(a) Has trouble getting thoughts down quickly; has difficulty understanding academic vocabulary words	Yes

**3. What accommodations will allow the student to access the information and demonstrate performance of the tasks?**

**Selecting Accommodations**

**Student:**     Danilo     **School:** Art Magnet Sample 4444 **Date:** 10/16/2011  
**Area of Concern:** Processing oral information **Difficult Task:** Note taking during lectures

**DIRECTIONS:** In the top row of the chart, record possible accommodations. For each criterion, check (✓) Y or N to indicate if the possible accommodation meets the criterion, and record relevant comments. Check (✓) Y if the accommodation is allowed on the FCAT, FCAT 2.0, EOC Assessment, or FAA, N if it is not allowed, or N/A if it is not applicable.

<b>Possible Accommodation</b>	<i>Preferential seating (close to speaker, right ear toward speaker)</i>	<i>Provide copy of notes and study guide in language arts and world history</i>	<i>Peer buddy to answer questions about what was said</i>	<i>Reduce auditory distraction</i>
<b>1. Necessary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduces or eliminates the effect of the disability</li> <li>Enables the student to accomplish the task</li> </ul>	Meets Criterion ✓ Y ___ N	Meets Criterion ✓ Y ___ N	Meets Criterion ___ Y ✓ N	Meets Criterion ✓ Y ___ N
<b>2. Independence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ease of use, least complex</li> <li>Supports continued skill development and promotes independence</li> </ul>	Meets Criterion ✓ Y ___ N	Meets Criterion ✓ Y ___ N Danilo will use teacher-created notes at first, but he will learn to use a study guide to take his own notes	Meets Criterion ✓ Y ___ N	Meets Criterion ✓ Y ___ N
<b>3. Generalizable</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be used for similar tasks</li> <li>Can be used in different settings</li> </ul>	Meets Criterion ✓ Y ___ N	Meets Criterion ✓ Y ___ N	Meets Criterion ✓ Y ___ N	Meets Criterion ✓ Y ___ N
<b>4. Acceptable</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is capable of learning to use accommodation</li> <li>Is willing to use accommodation</li> <li>Prefers the accommodation</li> </ul>	Meets Criterion ✓ Y ___ N	Meets Criterion ✓ Y ___ N	Meets Criterion ___ Y ✓ N	Meets Criterion ✓ Y ___ N
<b>Allowed on FCAT 2.0, EOC, or FAA?</b>	✓ Y ___ N ___ N/A	✓ Y ___ N ✓ N/A	✓ Y ✓ N ___ N/A	✓ Y ___ N ___ N/A

## Accommodations for Danilo

The IEP team decided that Danilo will use three accommodations to take notes more effectively during lectures. Due to his hearing loss, he will have preferential seating (close to the speaker, with his right ear toward the speaker). His teachers will reduce auditory distractions within their classrooms. Because of the increased language demands in language arts and world history, Danilo's teachers will also give him a copy of the notes (teacher prepared) and a study guide. They did not choose to have a peer answer questions because this would not lessen the impact of the disability and Danilo does not prefer this accommodation. He could not use it on statewide assessments. Danilo will receive explicit instruction in new academic vocabulary this year. As he gains knowledge in academic vocabulary, his teachers will gradually reduce the amount of support (i.e., amount of detail) provided in the class notes and study guides to enable Danilo to become more independent in note taking.

### 1. How will the IEP team know if the accommodations are effective?

To determine if an accommodation is effective, a deliberate plan for implementation is needed. This will include consideration of each of these questions:

- a. *Who will provide or acquire materials or devices required for the accommodation(s)?*

The language arts and world history teachers will provide Danilo with a copy of the notes or a study guide for the lectures in their classes.

- b. *Who is responsible for initial set-up of the equipment and maintenance procedures?*

Not applicable.

- c. *What does the student need to know and be able to do to use the accommodation(s) effectively?*

Danilo needs to know that he should sit in the front left side of each of his classrooms with his right ear toward the speaker. He should also learn how to use the copies of the notes or study guide he receives in language arts and world history as he listens to the lectures. He will need to learn how to highlight important ideas and write additional information, as needed. He will also need to learn how to use the notes when he studies for tests.

- d. *What do the teachers and other adults who work with the student need to know to support the student's use of the accommodation?*

All of Danilo's teachers need to know that he requires preferential seating (close to speaker, right ear toward the speaker) in every class and reduced auditory distractions, due to his hearing loss.

- e. *How will the teachers integrate the accommodation with daily instruction and assessment tasks?*

Danilo's language arts and world history teachers will prepare lecture notes and a study guide to give him each day prior to beginning instruction. They will remind Danilo to highlight or write additional notes as he listens to the lecture.

## Emma

This example features Emma, a tenth-grade student with specific learning disabilities and language impairment who is almost 18 years old. Her IEP is included in *Developing Individual Educational Plans: A Guide for Instructional Personnel and Families* in Appendix C, pp. 201–211.

Emma’s postsecondary goals will lead her to training and employment in the criminal justice field. She is currently working toward a standard diploma. Her overall reading achievement is significantly below grade level. Her IEP addresses her needs in reading, language, and self-determination. This example focuses on her need for accommodations to be able to read grade-level textbooks and instructional materials.

### 1. What instructional and assessment tasks are difficult for the student to do independently? Are these difficulties documented in the present level statement?

#### **Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance: Curriculum and Learning Environment**

**Task:** Reading grade-level textbooks and instructional materials

#### Effect of the Disability

Emma has difficulty identifying academic vocabulary and comprehending grade-level materials when reading due to her language impairment and specific learning disability. She has learned to compensate using assistive technology to translate text-to-speech and is beginning to learn how to apply vocabulary and comprehension strategies to help her understand the meaning of complex text. Emma needs core materials for classroom instruction, assessments, and statewide and district tests (other than tests of reading skills) read aloud or provided in audible format using assistive technology. She needs the text provided in digital format that can be used on a tablet computer with a screen reader with highlighting, notes, hyperlinks to an online dictionary and background information, and bookmark capabilities. She will not be able to use the screen reader when she takes the FCAT Reading Retake.

When she reads grade-level passages from her textbooks with new academic vocabulary, she skips the words she doesn’t recognize and often misses most of the meaning of the passage. She needs to learn to use vocabulary strategies, including knowledge of prefixes and suffixes and roots (structural analysis), concept mapping, and use of a linked dictionary and thesaurus and background information to identify the meaning and understand how the word is used in the context of the passage.

## 2. Why are these tasks difficult for the student?

### Analysis of a Difficult Task

Student: Emma

Task: Reading grade-level textbooks and instructional materials

Critical Elements	What Student Can Do Now	Is There a Gap?
<b>Cognitive</b>		
(a) Determine the meaning of words	(a) Skips words when reading passages with new academic vocabulary; has difficulty identifying the meaning and how a word is used in context; has difficulty with structural analysis and concept mapping	Yes
(b) Understand the content, form, and function of sentences (sentence meaning)	(b) Understands sentences	No
(c) Understand the situation implied by a text, develop a mental model of the content; draw on background knowledge to infer cause and effect relationships	(c) Has difficulty using background information	Yes
(d) Understand the content, form, and function of larger sections of text (global text meaning)	(d) Recalls main ideas and details of literal text at fifth grade-level text; misses the meaning of tenth grade-level text; has difficulty with inferences, cause and effect, and summarizing	Yes
<b>Sensory</b>		
(a) See the written words in passages	(a) Sees the written words in passages	No
<b>Motor</b>		
N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Social/Emotional</b>		
(a) Maintain attention to reading the passages	(a) Maintains attention to reading the passages	No
<b>Communication</b>		
(a) Discuss meaning of the information in the reading passages	(a) Discusses the meaning of information in the reading passages	No



**3. What accommodations will allow the student to access the information and demonstrate performance of the tasks?**

**Selecting Accommodations**

**Student:** Emma **School:** Sample High 5555 **Date:** 5/21/2011

**Area of Concern:** Reading **Difficult Task:** Reading grade-level textbooks and instructional materials

DIRECTIONS: In the top row of the chart, record possible accommodations. For each criterion, check (✓) Y or N to indicate if the possible accommodation meets the criterion, and record relevant comments. Check (✓) Y if the accommodation is allowed on the FCAT, FCAT 2.0, EOC Assessment, or FAA, N if it is not allowed, or N/A if it is not applicable.

<b>Possible Accommodation</b>	<i>Use of screen reader for text-to-speech translation on a tablet computer with headphones</i>	<i>Highlight key words or phrases in text</i>	<i>Have someone read aloud the textbooks and materials</i>
<b>1. Necessary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduces or eliminates the effect of the disability</li> <li>Enables the student to accomplish the task</li> </ul>	Meets Criterion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	Meets Criterion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	Meets Criterion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
<b>2. Independence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ease of use, least complex</li> <li>Supports continued skill development and promotes independence</li> </ul>	Meets Criterion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N She can write notes, use dictionary, and has background knowledge information	Meets Criterion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Emma can use paper and pencil and the tablet computer	Meets Criterion <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N
<b>3. Generalizable</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be used for similar tasks</li> <li>Can be used in different settings</li> </ul>	Meets Criterion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	Meets Criterion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	Meets Criterion <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N Not available in all settings
<b>4. Acceptable</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is capable of learning to use accommodation</li> <li>Is willing to use accommodation</li> <li>Prefers the accommodation</li> </ul>	Meets Criterion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	Meets Criterion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	Meets Criterion <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N
<b>Allowed on FCAT 2.0, EOC, or FAA?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

## Accommodations for Emma

Emma's IEP team decided to continue her use of the tablet computer with a screen reader so she could read grade-level textbooks and instructional materials. She will be able to use this tablet computer in all settings to promote her independence and develop reading skills. She will be able to improve reading comprehension by highlighting the main ideas and details. The IEP team did not select the accommodation of a person reading aloud to her because it would not be available in all settings and Emma did not prefer this accommodation.

### 1. How will the IEP team know if the accommodation is effective?

To determine if an accommodation is effective, a deliberate plan for implementation is needed. This will include consideration of each of these questions:

- a. *Who will provide or acquire materials or devices required for the accommodation?*

The exceptional student education (ESE) teacher can locate a tablet computer and install the screen reader application.

- b. *Who is responsible for initial set-up of the equipment and maintenance procedures?*

The ESE teacher will provide the initial set-up of the equipment. The ESE teacher and the speech and language pathologist will continue with the maintenance of the equipment.

- c. *What does the student need to know and be able to do to use the accommodation effectively?*

Emma has been using the screen reader and tablet computer with headphones since last year. She is learning how to use highlighting to identify important information, use text structure clues, and take notes on the tablet computer. Emma needs to learn how to use the linked dictionary and thesaurus on the tablet computer and how to use the notes and highlighted text for review.

- d. *What do the teachers and other adults who work with the student need to know to support the student's use of the accommodation?*

Emma's teachers will need to know how to keep the digital textbooks and materials up-to-date. They will need to know who to contact for assistance if the equipment or software malfunctions.

- e. *How will the teachers integrate the accommodation with daily instruction and assessment tasks?*

The teachers will identify the digital textbooks and instructional materials in advance. If materials must be specially prepared, the teachers can send a digital file to the digital rights manager for uploading.

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