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SCALED Course

Increasing accessibility in language education

Module 9. Inclusive and accessible language assessment

Dina Tsagari

SCALED Course – Increasing accessibility in language education

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The document has been published digitally at https://scaled.uw.edu.pl/output-2/

Project SCALED – Supporting Content and Language Learning Across Diversity (EOG/21/K4/W/0127W/0174) benefits from a EUR 100,266 grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Grants.

Warsaw 2023

Working together for a green, competitive and inclusive Europe

How to cite the book/file version of the course:

Nijakowska, J., Tsagari, D., & Guz, E. (Eds.). (2023). *SCALED Course – Increasing accessibility in language education.* SCALED project. https://scaled.uw.edu.pl/output-2/

How to cite this module:

Tsagari, D. (2023). Module 9. Inclusive and accessible language assessment. In J. Nijakowska, D. Tsagari & E. Guz (Eds.), *SCALED Course – Increasing accessibility in language education* (pp. 323-368). SCALED project. https://scaled.uw.edu.pl/output-2/

For further information and the online course materials of the SCALED project, please visit the SCALED project website.

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Table of contents

Introduction to the SCALED Course

Joanna Nijakowska

Aims and rationale

The SCALED course aims to promote equity, anti-discrimination, and inclusion in language education through increasing accessibility and universal design in course planning, design and implementation. It focuses on diverse learners, including learners with special needs.

The course advocates the idea that student diversity is a norm, and it should be celebrated. We believe that designing educational environments and experiences with an average student in mind, following the one-size-fits-all approach is not effective. In contrast, when instructional design is more universal, it targets the broadest possible range of learners and proactively addresses the potential barriers to learning.

The SCALED course supports universal design – an approach where instructors and teachers provide options and choices available to all learners in a class because it helps to avoid stigmatising learners as being different. In many countries multi-tiered systems of learner support, which make use of both universal design and accommodations offered to individual learners, are in place. The course refers to instructional and assessment accommodations as well. Attention is given to meeting special needs that language learners may have, which may require a more

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individualised approach or the use of assistive technology. These needs may stem for instance from sensory and mobility impairments or specific learning difficulties.

Target audience

The course responds to the needs of the academic and school community and has been designed to be part of the initial training and continuing professional development of pre-service and in-service school teachers and academic teachers working in the context of foreign language teaching (FL) and education through language (Content and Language Integrated Learning – CLIL, English Medium Instruction – EMI). The course equips teachers with tools to eliminate barriers and effectively include the maximum number of students in language education.

Methodology and pedagogical strategies

The SCALED course follows recent trends in teacher education in terms of its structure and methodology by implementing task-based instruction and teacher reflection. Its pedagogical strategies are in line with inclusive teaching and universal design. The course integrates self-study, experiential learning, critical thinking, and professional enquiry and reflection. The course has been designed so as to enable implementation in online self-study, hybrid (face-to-face and online – synchronous and asynchronous) and face-to-face modes.

The course uses task-based instruction and teacher reflection in developing teacher knowledge and skills in equitable and accessible language education. The course incorporates the model of the teacher as a reflective practitioner (Wallace, 1991), according to which reflective teachers:

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- experiment with new ideas and methodologies promoting learner-centred teaching, critically evaluate the learning content,
- question and verify assumptions and beliefs about teaching and learning,
- creatively adapt their teaching,
- reflect on the outcomes of the learning and teaching processes.

In this model, the trainer/instructor plays a role of a moderator and facilitator rather than a model and a controller.

Many features of reflective teaching embodied in the course are fundamental to inclusive teaching. The following instances of reflective teacher behaviour are inclusive and encouraged in the course:

- questioning and redefining personal beliefs and values concerning the learning needs of all students (not just those with special needs),
- giving careful consideration and thought to classroom situations and case studies,
- paying attention to what is to be taught and how it is to be taught so that all learners can benefit,
- taking initiative to trigger development and change,
- seeking out and trying new things to support all learners and to solve different dilemmas of the classroom,

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- consulting and discussing new ideas and initiatives with colleagues (Minott, 2019).

Inclusive pedagogy promoted by the course aims to provide appropriate equitable support to all learners and to extend what is available to everybody rather than to offer provision for most with additional or different experiences for some (Florian & Spratt, 2013). It responds to individual differences between learners but attempts to avoid the stigma of treating some learners as different and the marginalisation caused by designing the teaching process only with individual learners in mind (Black-Hawkins & Florian, 2012; Florian, 2014). Options and choices are offered to everybody in the class instead of differentiated supports available only for some students (CAST, 2018; Meyer et al., 2014; Novak, 2022; Torres & Rao, 2019).

Course content

The course modules have as their central goal effectively including diverse learners in language education through active presence, participation, and engagement. It is important to note that inclusion has many faces and is operationalised in different ways in different countries. The modules in the course cover different aspects of increasing accessibility in language education and offer ways of providing appropriate equitable support to diverse learners by overviewing a range of possible supports and accommodations.

Accommodations may be differently defined, categorised, and administered in different countries. Often what is defined as an accommodation (available to an individual learner) in one country or context in other countries or contexts is offered

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as a universal feature (available to all learners). We share the belief that responding to individual differences across learners should be done in an informed, sensitive, and respectful way which prevents the marginalisation that can occur either when some students in a class are treated differently or when some learners are deprived of access to experiences, contents, resources, or settings that other learners have access to.

The course is composed of ten modules that tackle several issues crucial for effective inclusion in language education, all of them linked by the concept of accessibility.

The course comprises ten modules:

- Module 1: Responding to diversity: Inclusion and accessibility – *Astrid Gillespie & Hege Knudsmoen*,
- Module 2: Accessible learning: Universal Design for Learning – *Joanna Nijakowska*,
- Module 3: Accessible learning: Instructional accommodations – *Joanna Nijakowska*,
- Module 4: Universal Design for Learning: Accessible and usable digital learning materials – documents – *Weiqin Chen & Norun Christine Sanderson*,

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- Module 5: Universal Design for Learning: Accessible and usable digital learning materials – multimedia – *Weiqin Chen & Norun Christine Sanderson*,
- Module 6: Universal Design for Learning: Accessible online learning platforms – *Dorota Sidor*,
- Module 7: Making language education accessible to students with ADHD, Autism, and Dyslexia – *Veerle Garrels*,
- Module 8: Making language education accessible to visually impaired and blind students – *Zbigniew Drzazga*,
- Module 9: Inclusive and accessible Language Assessment – *Dina Tsagari,*
- Module 10: Making language education accessible to students with diverse language and cultural background – *Agnieszka Kałdonek-Crnjaković*.

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SCALED course – formats

The SCALED course is available on an open license and can be accessed in different ways, namely in the book/file format and in the online course format for distance learning. The course in the book/file format is available on the SCALED project website for browsing and reading online as well as for download and print as pdf files. These files include links and QR codes to electronic resources used in the course. Users can choose to browse or download the whole course or individual modules.

SCAN ME

The course is also available as a remote online course for self-study on the e-learning platform of the University of Warsaw – Kampus.

SCAN ME

Course duration

The course consists of ten modules and is planned to afford maximum flexibility to instructors and participants, offering a choice of compulsory and optional tasks and steps within tasks as well as additional resources so that it can cover a period of from

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one to two semesters/terms. It should be noted that due to the complexity of the subject matter, the modules vary in length with some of them requiring a more intense and extensive time and effort investment. The course is designed so that the course takers and instructors have an opportunity to choose activities and plan their learning path throughout the course to meet both their individual needs and learning/course objectives.

The self-study version of the course is planned for one semester/term (from 10 to 15 weeks). Each module is planned to cover a minimum of 120-minute direct study time and to provide a minimum of 2-3 hours of outside-the-classroom study and preparation time. The course participants are expected to spend approximately 5-6 hours on completing a module. Completing the whole course requires about 30 hours of classwork and 30 hours of outside classroom study and preparation time. A considerably larger amount of time needs to be allocated if the materials are adapted to be used during interactive online classes (synchronous online classes, involving an instructor/trainer working with a group of online course participants) or during onsite face-to-face classes. In these settings group interaction involving pair and group activities, panels and discussions, role-playing, sharing experiences and reflection, which constitutes a crucial element that can considerably enhance learning outcomes, requires allocating sufficient time. In these settings the course can be taught over a minimum of 10 to 15 weeks (depending on the length of the semester/term) or a maximum of 20 to 30 weeks.

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Notes and suggestions for trainers/instructors

The modules in the course follow a template, with predefined elements and their sequence, including:

- an introduction,
- learning objectives,
- a list of compulsory and optional tasks and steps – which helps to navigate through the module,
- four to six tasks, each including detailed instructions to all steps, materials, resources and notes for the trainer,
- a list of references,
- extra resources and recommended reading,
- a module summary,
- a list of key points/lessons learned from the module and a quiz.

Each module provides notes for the trainers on classroom management offering suggestions on adapting the self-study tasks to group work context. Options for classroom management are greater when trainees have access to different devices (e.g., computers, smartphones, headphones) so that they can have individualised and customised access to digital materials. This allows them to work at their own pace, for instance to watch a video with closed captions and at slower playback

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speed. Course instructors should choose classroom management options most suitable to and feasible in their teaching context and note that the suggested time required to complete a given task is approximate time and it may depend on the group's dynamics.

When you work with a book/file version of the course (online or printed), please instruct the trainees to either click the link (if they browse the text online) or scan the QR code (if they work with printed materials) to access the materials (e.g., a website or a video). A smart phone camera can be used to scan the QR codes.

Trainees should be instructed that they can customise and individualise the experience of watching the YouTube videos by setting the options that will make the video more accessible to them such as the size of the screen, the playback speed and quality of the video, subtitles/closed captions, translation into a selected language, and transcript. Also, the videos are divided into short chapters, which allows trainees to watch selected fragments.

Trainees should be also instructed about how they can use the text-to-speech functions (read out loud and immersive readers) in pdf documents and on websites. If they prefer listening to the text or reading and listening at the same time, they may activate the "Read out loud function" in the pdf document.

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If they read the text on the website, they may use the “Immersive reader on websites” extension in Chrome. To get started, they select the text on the website they want to read, right-click it, and choose “Help me read this!” function. In the course modules you will find more suggestions on how to use freely available technology, software and apps to increase accessibility of various resources and facilitate the learning process.

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Module 9. Inclusive and accessible language assessment

Dina Tsagari

Introduction to the module

Over the recent years the number of student population who is becoming culturally and linguistically diverse along with children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), e.g., Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs) such as dyslexia, Developmental Language Disorders (DLDs), and visual, hearing, or physical impairments has increased. This situation combined with increasing awareness of individual human rights, has led to a demand for special provisions in language testing and assessment for second or foreign language learners – SLLs (Tsagari & Spanoudis, 2013).

This module focuses on the practical considerations involved in assessing SLLs with SEN and reflects on the effectiveness of assessment accommodations employed in both high-stakes standardised tests and classroom-based assessment. More specifically, this module focuses on inclusive and accessible language assessment drawing on previous modules on the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach. It is composed of four tasks, each of them including several compulsory and optional steps. In the first task you will get insight into the guiding principles of inclusive and accessible language assessment provision from international high-stakes exams. In

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the second task you will review the most commonly used test accommodations and explore how these can be incorporated into classroom assessment. You will work with practical methods and techniques on how you can design your testing practices to embrace student variability in your classroom. In the third task you will also learn how to use various accommodations and modifications to create flexible tests that support all learners. In task four, you will use observations and other types of formative assessment to evaluate your diverse SLLs' language needs. Finally, you will reflect on how to provide constructive and meaningful feedback to your students with SEN when assessing their second or foreign language skills.

Learning objectives

Upon completing this module, you will be able to:

- Explain what test accommodations/modifications are
- Identify and name test accommodations/modifications relating to students with SEN
- Choose and apply selected test accommodations/modifications for classroom assessment
- Design or modify your own language tests to meet the needs of students with SEN
- Consider and evaluate formative types of assessment for students with SEN
- Identify and consider appropriate methods of effective feedback

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Tasks you will do

In this module you will do the following tasks:

- Task 1. All about test accommodations
  - Step 1. Getting started: test accommodations
  - Step 2. Frequently used test accommodations
  - Step 3. Exploring test accommodations
  - Step 4. Find out more about test accommodations *(optional)*
- Task 2. Universal Test Design in the classroom
  - Step 1. Validity and fairness of test accommodations
  - Step 2. Teachers' test accommodations
  - Step 3. Implementing test accommodations in the classroom *(optional)*
- Task 3. Designing a test for students with SEN
  - Step 1. Test modifications
  - Step 2. Evaluating a classroom test
  - Step 3. Evaluating a modified classroom test
  - Step 4. Designing a modified classroom test *(optional)*
- Task 4. Using formative assessment and providing feedback
  - Step 1. Meeting Effie: working with anecdotal records
  - Step 2. Reflecting on feedback provision
  - Step 3. Practise providing feedback

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Task 1. All about test accommodations

Task instructions

In this task you will reflect on your current understanding of the term ‘testing accommodations’ within the UDL approach and will explore how these have been applied in the field of high-stakes second language testing. You will also become familiar with the most popular ones and consider how you can use them in your language testing context. You will then reflect on how testing accommodations resonate with you.

This task is composed of four steps – three are compulsory and one is optional.

Task duration

Time required to complete the task: 40-50 minutes

Step 1. Getting started: test accommodations

As second language classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse in all educational levels, test providers are focusing on inclusive practices to accommodate the diverse needs of their SLL. Test accommodations aim to respond to an increasing demand and need for an inclusive approach in assessment for accessibility, opportunity, relevance, and engagement. What do you think the term ‘test accommodations’ refers to? Can you think of any examples of ‘test accommodations’?

Read the following short text and find out more about ‘test accommodations’:

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‘Test accommodations’ are defined as changes made to ‘test content, format or administration conditions for particular test-takers that do not change the construct being measured but do remove construct-irrelevant contributions to test scores that would otherwise exist for these individuals’ (Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, 2011, as cited in Thurlow, 2014, p. 598). In simple words, test accommodations aim to remove the barriers that may prevent students with SEN from successfully taking a language test. Test accommodations do not change the purposes of the test.

In general, the types of accommodations offered by exam providers of language tests are:

- *Accommodations to presentation format*, e.g., modified layout (large print), coloured overlays, assistive technology, a reader, etc.,
- *Accommodations to response format*, e.g., a computer, a copier and assistance with filling in the answer,
- *Accommodations to administration procedures*, e.g., extended time, supervised breaks, taking the test in a separate room, special procedures for some test papers (i.e., listening or speaking).

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Now reflect on the following questions:

- Do you know of any test accommodations used in high-stakes (international language or University entrance) exams in operation in your context? Make a list.
- What is the role of teachers in preparing students for such accommodated exams?

Step 2. Frequently used test accommodations

Table 1 offers an overview of accommodations frequently used in high-stakes standardised tests (Taylor & Nordby Chen, 2016, pp. 383-384). These come together to help create accessible and equitable language testing opportunities for all. These accommodations have now become well-established arrangements and are the first step towards supporting SLLs with SEN in various high-stakes exams. While reading, think about the following questions and note down your reflections:

- Choose three accommodations from Table 1 which you could easily use in your teaching/learning context. Why have you chosen these specific accommodations?
- Are there any accommodations in Table 1 which seem unrealistic in your teaching/learning context? Which ones? Why would it be difficult to implement them?

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Table 1

Frequently used test accommodations.

For test takers with	Presentation: text	Presentation: audio	Response conventions	Timing and scheduling	Setting
Visual impairments	large print, coloured paper, magnifier, Braille, graphics adapted to text reader, screen reader		amanuensis or scribe[1]; enlarged score sheets; keyboard (braille or other)	extended response time; extended response time; additional breaks	larger desk surface; special lighting; larger desk surface
Hearing impairments		amplify; face-to-face; video mediated; sign language	adjust paired speaking test format	extended response time; additional breaks	seating near audio source

[1] An amanuensis/scribe is a person employed to write or type what another dictates or to copy what has been written by another person

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For test takers with	Presentation: text	Presentation: audio	Response conventions	Timing and scheduling	Setting
		interpreter for instructions; headphones			
Learning difficulties (dyslexia; dysorthogra-phia; ADHD)	coloured test books or overlays; text marking device, such as a ruler		Keyboard; scribe	extended response time; additional breaks	seating away from distraction
Physical challenges (paralysis; diabetes; broken arms)			amanuensis or scribe; keyboard	extended response time; additional breaks	special seating or furniture

Step 3. Exploring test accommodations

Well-known international language examination boards offer accommodations to their test-takers and other groups (e.g., evaluators, disability services providers, etc.). This task compares accommodations offered by three major high-stakes English language proficiency tests, e.g., Cambridge English Language Assessment, Educational Testing System (e.g., TOEFL) and IELTS. Visit their websites and fill in Table 2 with

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summaries of the accommodations they offer for students with SEN (see the example in Table 2).

- Cambridge English Language Assessment: Special requirements | Cambridge English

- TOEFL, ETS (Educational Testing System): Resources for Disabilities & Health-related Needs | ETS

- IELTS: Special requirements (ielts.org)

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Table 2

Test accommodations of three well-known examination boards

	Cambridge English Language Assessment	TOEFL (ETS)	IELTS
Presentation format	screen magnifier; large-print question papers; Braille (only for applicants who are blind, legally blind or have low vision)		
Response format			
Test administration			

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Finally, compare and contrast the above accommodations by reflecting on the following questions:

- What do they have in common?
- What are the differences?
- Which website guides test-takers with SEN better through the process of requesting accommodations?

Step 4. Find out more about test accommodations *(optional)*

Other test providers of high-stakes international English (and other language) tests are also likely to offer accommodations for candidates with SEN. Do a website search of the language tests that your students with SEN prepare for and create a similar table. Then reflect on the strengths and weaknesses (if any) of these accommodations for your students with SEN. Do you find them adequate or effective in meeting the assessment needs of your students with SEN? Which ones do you think you could implement in the classroom for your assessment purposes? If there is enough information on the websites, make a list of the special arrangements for other stakeholder groups, e.g., evaluators, disability officers, teachers, or any other relevant group.

Notes for the trainer

In Steps 1, 2 and 3, allow trainees to think and reflect on the questions. Invite them to work in small groups and exchange ideas. If possible, collect their responses and practices on a padlet or electronic pinboard and share with the whole group.

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It is also important to draw the attention of trainees to the following: Examination boards differ in the types of test accommodations they offer and the process for requesting them. EFL teachers need to be aware of the test accommodations offered to be able to guide their students as it is not always easy for students with SEN to navigate through the official websites of the examination boards in search of information relevant to their needs. Also, testing policies are regularly updated, so teachers and students should always get in contact with the exam centre in advance to check the accommodations available at the time.

Set up Step 4 for homework. Highlight that test accommodations also vary according to how local test centres implement these. Therefore, it is important to contact the centre in advance to confirm exactly which accommodations are offered.

Step 3. sample answers

	Cambridge English Language Assessment	**TOEFL (ETS)**	**IELTS**
Presentation format	screen magnifier; large-print question papers; Braille (only for applicants who are	screen magnifier; large-print question papers; braille (only for applicants who	screen magnifier; coloured overlays; braille (only for applicants who are

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	Cambridge English Language Assessment	TOEFL (ETS)	IELTS
	blind, legally blind or have low vision)	are blind, legally blind or have low vision); large-print test book; large-print answer sheet; recorded audio	blind, legally blind or have low vision)
Response format	computer to write answers (spellchecker, grammar checker, and thesaurus prohibited); copier;	computer to write answers (ergonomic keyboard, touchpad); screen magnification;	computer to write answers (spellchecker, grammar checker, and thesaurus prohibited); copier

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	Cambridge English Language Assessment	TOEFL (ETS)	IELTS
	writing answers onto the question paper	selectable background and foreground colors; trackball mouse	
Test administration	extended time (normally 25% but extendable on a case-by-case basis); special procedure for listening test; speaking test can be taken on one's own or with a non-assessed partner; supervised breaks separate room	extended time (normally 25%, but up to 50%); extra breaks	extended time (normally 25%, but up to 50%) special procedure for listening/speaking test

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Task 2. Universal Test Design in the classroom

Task instructions

In this task you will review and discuss procedures for formal (summative) classroom-based assessment for students with SEN. You will use the UDL framework (see previous Modules, e.g., Module 2, etc.), including its principles, guidelines and checkpoints to reflect on how you can design your assessment practices to embrace student variability in your classroom. You will see examples of how this framework can be incorporated into daily assessment practice in the classroom and reflect upon and relate their effectiveness in your context.

This task is composed of three steps – two are compulsory and one is optional.

Task duration

Time required to complete the task: 40-50 minutes

Step 1. Validity and fairness of test accommodations

In their line of work, teachers are expected to assess their students' language performance to determine the extent to which they have addressed the expectations and learning goals set in the curriculum. It is important for language teachers working with students with SEN to make sure that their assessment procedures are 'valid' and 'fair'.

Watch the lecture by Prof. Judith Kormos, Lancaster University, UK Assessing language learners with specific learning differences (12:02), in which Prof. Kormos is talking about the importance of accommodating language tests for language learners

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with dyslexia (and other learning difficulties) in foreign language exams and classroom testing contexts.

She further discusses the basic principles of validity, and test fairness. While watching keep in mind the following two questions and take notes: How does Prof. Kormos define test validity and fairness in relation to SEN students? What does she say about the effectiveness of test accommodations?

Kormos and Smith (2012, p. 149) also make a very important point about SEN-oriented assessment: ‘Although fairness and validity are strongly interrelated, and in most cases a valid test is fair and a fair test is valid, in the case of special arrangements it is important to consider how being fair to a particular group of test-takers might adversely affect the validity of the exam’.

Reflect on the above points and answer the following questions:

- What types of formal (summative) assessment (test, quizzes, oral interview, oral presentation, etc.) do you use with your students with SEN?
- Do you think they are appropriate for them? How?
- How can you make sure that your assessment does not compromise fairness and validity?

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Step 2. Teachers' test accommodations

Some of the most typical accommodations that teachers can use to assess their SEN students in the classroom are summarised in Table 3:

Table 3

Typical teacher test accommodations (Adapted from Daloiso, 2017, p. 161).

Presentation format (i.e., how the test is presented to students, mainly in terms of layout and structure)	• Change the layout in order to improve legibility and readability. • Allow the use of assistive technology to support decoding such as magnifiers and text-to-speech software. • Allow the assistance of a reader (e.g., someone who reads the test for the students), especially when decoding is severely impaired. • Provide assistance during the test (e.g., read out the instructions and make sure they are clear to the students). • Rearrange he instructions to avoid misinterpretation (e.g., highlight keywords, provide instructions in the students' first language, etc).

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Response format (i.e., how students can answer the test and which tools are allowed to assist them in the process)	• Allow for the use of assistive technology, depending on the purpose of the test (e.g., spellcheckers, if spelling is not being tested). • Introduce a copier to write the students' answers for them. • Provide a choice of different response formats (e.g., open questions, true/false, oral summary/answers, etc.) so that the students can choose the format that best suits their learning preferences. • Depending on the skill being tested, allow for the use of appropriate learning supports (e.g., if the ask is to write a composition, the students may be allowed to use a tool for writing compositions; if the task requires rapid lexical retrieval, they may be allowed to use a vocabulary mind map, etc.).
Administration procedures (i.e., the conditions under which the test is administered to assist	(this measure seems to be applied differently, depending on the test) • Depending on the test, extra time (25%, 50%) is provided depending also on the individual case.

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students in the process of taking it)	• In the case of listening, the track might be stopped before each part of the test so that test takers have the time to read the questions or at certain points or after each part of the track for students to check their answers. • The same might be applied for the face-to-face speaking test. • Students may take the speaking test on their own or with a non-assessed student. • Supervised breaks might be allowed if and when students might request so. • Students might take the test in a separate room to reduce destruction or anxiety or on separate occasions/days.

Choose a language test/exam your school uses or one of your own. Fill in Table 4 with the potential difficulties your students with SEN might experience when taking this exam/test and the possible accommodations that could be introduced in the test to meet their needs. (If you think some aspects of the exam do not cause any difficulties for your students with SEN, please write NA (not applicable) in the relevant box).

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Table 4

Difficulties and accommodations for students with SEN when taking school/classroom exams/tests.

	Difficulties my students with SEN might experience	**Accommodations for my students with SEN**
Presentation Format		
Response Format		
Administration Procedures		

Step 3. Implementing test accommodations in the classroom *(optional)*

Reflect on the accommodations you identified for your students with SEN in Table 4. Reflect on the following questions and discuss your notes with colleagues/fellow teachers in your teaching context.:

- Do your students with SEN need any training in using these accommodations?
- Are there any practical constraints associated with using these accommodations?
- Do they affect the validity of the exam/test?

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Notes for the trainer

In Step 1 ask trainees to look for additional definitions of basic principles of language testing such as ‘validity’, ‘fairness, ‘reliability’ in Chapter 1, ‘The ABCs of Assessment, included in the ‘Handbook of Assessment for Language Teachers’ (Tsagari et al., 2018).

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Also ask trainees to watch the short video titled ‘Validity’ (6:43).

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In Step 2 invite participants to compare their notes in the table in pairs and discuss the quality of accommodations.

In Step 3 invite participants to compare their notes and, if possible, their tests and discuss the quality of accommodations they propose especially in terms of validity.

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Task 3. Designing a test for students with SEN

Task instructions

In this task you will work on designing a test for your classroom-based assessment to meet the diverse and variable needs of all your students by using test accommodations and, if necessary, test modifications. You will then reflect on the extent to which these changes support the diverse learning needs of your students.

This task is composed of four steps – three are compulsory and one is optional.

Task duration

Time required to complete the task: 40-50 minutes

Step 1. Test modifications

In some cases, testing accommodations, presented in Task 1 and 2, may not be sufficient to render a language test accessible for SLL students with dyslexia or ADHD or other type of SEN. Teachers might decide to modify the test to meet their needs.

‘Modifications’ refer to ‘change in test content, format and/or administration conditions that is made to increase accessibility for some individuals but which affects the construct measured and, consequently, results in scores that differ in meaning from scores from the unmodified assessment’ (Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, 2011, as cited in Thurlow, 2014, p. 598). In simple words, modifications are likely to introduce (hopefully relevant) changes in the test, see Table 5. These might modify some of the goals of the test.

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Table 5

Most frequently used modifications to test format and content(Adapted from Daloiso, 2017, p. 163).

Format	**Presentation** – Replace inaccessible exercises with accessible ones. – Split long texts into sections and introduce a question/exercise after each section, in order to alternate decoding and reflection. – Reduce the number of exercises and/or items within each exercise so the test is not too long. **Response** – Reduce the amount of decoding required (e.g., reduce the reading comprehension part). – Reduce the amount of writing required (e.g., provide alternatives to copying words and sentences to complete an exercise). – Provide support to help students understand the purpose of each task (e.g., give sample answers). – Provide support in retrieving information from memory (e.g., highlight keywords using wordpools, flashcards, picture dictionaries, etc.).

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Content	– Depending on their EFL profile and degree of SEN, exempt students from taking some parts of the test (e.g., spelling exercises). – Replace some parts of the test with creative tasks (e.g., project work) to allow the students' learning strengths to emerge. – Reduce the amount of material for student to memorize (e.g., agree upon a restricted set of vocabulary and/or forms that will be tested). – Reduce/change the goal of some sections (e.g., test the students' ability to understand the meaning of a given set of words, phrases, or grammatical structures rather than write them correctly).

Reflect on potential modifications you can introduce in your own tests from Table 5. Make a list of those modifications that can work in your teaching context.

Step 2. Evaluating a classroom test

The following reading test was used by a primary EFL teacher (level A1) in Italy. It was part of an achievement test the teacher administered in class at the end of the school year. In class, the teacher had four students with SEN: two dyslexic students, one with ADHD and one with visual impairment.

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Go through the test (Version A) below and answer the following questions:

- Do you think the test is appropriate for each of the four students with SEN?
- What kinds of difficulties might the students with SEN (and other students) in class experience when working on it?

Version A (Adapted from Daloiso, 2017, p. 164)

Part C – 10 minutes

Read the passage below. Decide if the sentences are T(true) or F(false)

Hi – my name's Molly. I'm from the UK. I'm in Year 8 at Kingsdown School in Bath. That's my hometown. It's in the west of England. My best friend is Erin Sullivan. She isn't British. She's from Ireland, but she's in my class. I'm a sports fan. My favourite sport is football, and my favourite team is Chelsea. My favourite colours are blue and white of course. I'm into judo too! The name of my judo club is Bath judo juniors. We're fantastic! Erin isn't in the judo club – and she isn't into football! Her favourite sport is hockey. Rock music is my favourite type of music. I'm not into pop! My favourite bands are old rock bands – AC/DC and Queen! My favourite animal is my dog, Caspar! He's big and black.

Bath's a small city. It's pretty and historic. It's popular with tourists. The Roman Baths are a famous monument. Bath is an old city, but it isn't boring. It's good for teenagers. The shops, cinemas and sports centres are great!

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1. Molly’s twelve _____
2. Her best friend is English _____
3. Molly’s favourite sport is judo ____
4. Her favourite colours are red and white _____
5. She’s in a judo club _____
6. Erin’s favourite sport is football _____
7. Molly’s fan of rock music _____
8. Caspar is a cat _____
9. Bath is an old, historic city _____
10. It’s a boring city for teenagers _____

Total score: …. /10

Step 3. Evaluating a modified classroom test

The teacher attempted to use several test accommodations and modifications to adapt the test for her four students with SEN in Version B.

Compare the two versions and reflect on the following questions:

- What kind of features has the teacher introduced in Version B?
- Consider a. the presentation format, b. response format and c. content. Are they accommodations or modifications or both? Are they appropriate or applicable?

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- What other features would you like to introduce yourself to meet the needs of all four students with SEN?
- Do you think Version B would be appropriate for the rest of the students in class? Why?

Version B

Parte C – 20 minuti

Leggi e ascolta il brano. Decidi se le frasi sono T(true) o F(false)

Hi – my name's Molly. I'm from the UK. I'm in Year 8 at Kingsdown School in Bath. That's my hometown. It's in the west of England. My best friend is Erin Sullivan. She isn't British. She's from Ireland, but she's in my class.

Molly is British **T**

Bath is in Ireland **F**

1. Molly's twelve _____
2. Her best friend is English _____

I'm a sports fan. My favourite sport is football, and my favourite team is Chelsea. My favourite colours are blue and white of course (*naturalmente*). I'm into judo too! The

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name of my judo club is Bath judo juniors. We're fantastic! Erin isn't in the judo club – and she isn't into football! Her favourite sport is hockey.

3. Molly's favourite sport is judo ____
4. Her favourite colours are red and white _____
5. She's in a judo club _____
6. Erin's favourite sport is football _____

Rock music is my favourite type of music. I'm not into pop! My favourite bands are old rock bands – AC/DC and Queen!

My favourite animal is my dog, Caspar! He's big and black.

7. Molly's fan of rock music _____
8. Caspar is a cat _____

Bath's a small city. It's pretty and historic. It's popular with tourists. The Roman Baths are a famous monument. Bath is an old city, but it isn't boring. It's good for teenagers. The shops, cinemas and sports centres are great!

9. Bath is an old, historic city _____
10. It's a boring city for teenagers _____

Total score: …. /10

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Step 4. Designing a modified classroom test (*optional*)

Choose one of your language tests (any level). This could be a quiz or a placement, progress or achievement test assessing your students' reading, vocabulary, grammar, writing, speaking, listening skills or a combination of various skills.

Think of your own students with SEN. Reflect on what they need.

Make a list of the test accommodations/modifications that you would like to use (see Steps 1 and 2). Consider the following aspects:

- Layout,
- Instructions,
- Types of tasks,
- Assistance during the test,
- Alternative forms of response,
- The amount of time given,
- The setting (the room or equipment),
- Support for response (reader/copier, assistive technology, visual organizers, etc.),
- The amount of reading and writing required,
- Use of assistive technology, etc.

Use this list to accommodate your test so as to address the special needs of your students.

Note: When planning, consider the goals of your assessment too, and then plan the necessary accommodations/modifications of your testing methods and materials.

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Also decide what the learners need to know or do in the accommodated test and how you will score it.

Share your new version with a colleague, discuss the changes you made and the reasons behind them.

Notes for the trainer

In Steps 1 and 2, ask trainees to share and discuss their notes in pairs. If possible, collect practices on a padlet or electronic pinboard and share with the whole group.

Step 3. Ask trainees to share and discuss their ideas in pairs or small groups. Alternatively provide a chart with four columns and have participants fill in the types of accommodations for Column A. the presentation format, Column B. response format and Column C. content made in Version B. Also in Column D ask them to tick if the change is an accommodation or modification, and in the Column E if it is appropriate or applicable.

Step 4. This can be set for homework. Invite trainees to use it in class and report back in the group.

Task 4. Using formative assessment and providing feedback

Task instructions

In the previous tasks, classroom assessment has been explored through tests and quizzes. However, classroom assessment can be implemented using ‘informal’ or ‘formative’ types of assessment such as observation, learners’ portfolios, self-assessment, etc. These are procedures for gathering assessment information

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informally and unobtrusively that can be used to make judgements about learners' progress and language behaviour embedded in everyday EFL activities. In this task you will explore some of these methods of assessment and reflect on their benefits.

This task is composed of three compulsory steps.

Task duration

Time required to complete the task: 30-40 minutes

Step 1. Meeting Effie: working with anecdotal records

Teachers observe students' performance during typical classroom activities (e.g., a speaking task, a listening/reading comprehension task, etc.) all the time. Such information is important as it diagnoses the learning needs of SEN and other students. Therefore, it should be gathered systematically by means of specific tools such as 'anecdotal records'.

Read the excerpts below from the anecdotal records written by an English language teacher for one of the students in class, Effie, a student who is in her first grade at a secondary school in a rural area in Greece. The excerpts are taken from the teachers' diary. Then answers the questions that follow.

Meeting Effie

9/9/2022; 8:45 am. I have found out from the principal of the school that my new student, Effie, is from a village in the nearby area. Her family speaks a ROM dialect which is also spoken by the rest of the inhabitants of the village. Effie apparently attended school sporadically all these years as she frequently had to help her parents

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with the crops and the house chores. Effie hasn't spoken to anyone in class since her arrival in the school three days ago. Effie has three siblings along with four more children of her background enrolled in this school. Based on the results of a test given on her arrival, she was placed in Group A (beginners' level) along with other students.

23/9/2022; 10:30 am. *Independent seat work.* Effie is sitting at her desk looking around the room. She hasn't completed the workbook pages assigned. In fact, she's done nothing for the last 10 minutes or so.

27/9/2022; 9:30 am. *Reading skills review:* I reviewed beginning consonant sounds with Effie and three other children who are having difficulties retaining the information. I showed them flash cards with the letters on them; out of five letters, Effie could identify one, the letter "c" with the picture of a cow. When I asked her to write the letter in the space provided under the picture of the cow in her workbook, Effie just looked at me and didn't write anything. I had to demonstrate and point to where she needed to write. She is left-handed and has a very awkward pencil grasp. I had to guide her hand to write the letter. During choral repetition, Effie appeared to be verbalizing but what she said didn't match the letter I presented. Effie copied from the child sitting next to her. The other child complained to me.

4/10/2022; 10:00 am. *Reading instruction:* Effie received small group instruction with three other students while the rest of the class was engaged in writing in their workbooks. On this occasion, the letter "d" was introduced. Effie attempted to respond to a question asked while following along in her workbook. She called a "desk" a "table". When the group was told to return to their seats, Effie did so too. They were told to complete the rest of the workbook page on their own. Effie began to color her

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worksheet. She leafed through the pictures of her book. She again colored the pictures on the page. She looked around the room frequently but was not disruptive. She remained at her seat. By the end of the work period, Effie had not written the letters under the pictures. The product was not correct with regard to the required task.

11/10/2022; 13:30 pm. Because of Effie's continuing difficulties, I have asked her to come and see me in the principal's office who was kind enough to leave us alone in the room for a while. At this time, we conversed freely in Greek. I asked her about her family and things she likes and what she wants to be when she grows up. Effie speaks in simple complete sentences, lacks an extensive vocabulary, doesn't speak Greek clearly. She repeats herself and, occasionally, there are stuttering-like utterances.

I gave Effie several picture books and time to look at them. I asked her to develop her own story in one of them in Greek. Effie's responses consisted of concrete descriptions of the actions or events depicted in the pictures. When asked a general classification question, her response was "family". Effie proceeded to describe, in both Greek and her home language, the pictures indicating the relationship of the people in them. She had difficulty elaborating on the story and in creating a story line. She had to rephrase comprehension questions at least four times for one specific item.

When asked to tell the story in English, Effie presented a great deal of limitations, but she was able to produce fairly understandable English words such as 'little baby', 'little boy', 'shower' and 'sleeping'. When the story was told to her in English and requested to retell the story, Effie was able to remember the general sequence of events by looking at the pictures. She was able to produce sentences such as "They take a

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shower. Little baby take a shower. Little boy brush teeth. All sleeping. Little boy read a story". When asked to suggest a title for the story, Effie said "They sleeping".

- What are Effie's language strengths and weaknesses in relation to reading, speaking, and other skills in English (Greek and her home language)?
- Do you think the focused observation and recording of Effie's behaviour helped the teacher gain insight into the student's language performance? How?

Step 2. Reflecting on feedback provision

Providing students with appropriate and constructive feedback after any assessment has taken place is vital because it aims to help students improve. To provide constructive feedback, as a rule of thumb, correcting all students' mistakes might prove ineffective and demotivating. For students with SEN, in particular, receiving a heavily marked piece of work would be discouraging and would not serve improvement. The following are some suggestions on how to correct written work:

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- Highlight only those mistakes which students can understand. Use these as a starting point for remedial work.
- Decide which spelling/pronunciation mistakes are worth highlighting, e.g., mistakes that do not affect the meaning of a word/phrase/sentence. Ask students to reflect and, if possible, correct them.
- It is good practice to highlight mistakes with different colours when writing. Create a key and share it with your learners (for example, red=word order, blue=spelling, etc.). Be consistent. Ask your students to use it systematically to review their work.
- Encourage students to create a personal checklist of their own frequent (written/oral) mistakes. Ask them to use it during speaking tasks, tests and when writing compositions.

Here are some questions to help you think and reflect on your own feedback practices:

- How does the feedback you provide to your students with SEN look like?
- What criteria do you apply to identify your students' special language needs?
- Do you highlight language mistakes, positive aspects (progress, effort, quality of ideas, creativity, etc.) or a combination of both?
- How can you help your students with SEN learn from their mistakes?

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Step 3. Practise providing feedback

The following text was written by a ten-year-old English language student, Level A2 (CEFR) in a primary school.

a. Read the text, identify the language mistakes in the text and reflect on the reasons for the mistakes (e.g., error analysis).
b. Write a short paragraph or create a sound file in which you give effective feedback to the student based on the points that you noticed in the student's work. Take into account of the following criteria:
    - Content.
    - Language in the text.
    - Organisation.

Be positive and supportive and provide useful information for improvement.

Creative writing task

Write a story (true or imaginary) for a writing competition about a group of people who meet for the first time in unusual circumstances and share an experience which changes their lives forever (100-120 words).

Story

One day, I was on the ship to go cruise in Italy. Suddenly the ship start moving right and left. I was in the dining area and another guy was next to me. I scared a lot and I started to talking to him. He said to me that he scared and he thinks the ship was broken.

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When He said that I got in trouble. After he said to me his name and we started to talking. His name was Chris. Suddenly a voice of the speaker of the ship said to all of us. “Everyone, don’t scare, don’t scare, it's a little problem of the ship, we will fix it in 1 hour, Don’t worry”.

We went out and the people was in trouble. They are raning up and down and the ship was made like doing party but not happy, sad.

In the end, the luck was in us and the ship fixed and all the people felt good again. I hope to don’t live this again in my life.

Notes for the trainer

In Step 1 invite trainees to share their ideas in pairs or small groups. As a follow up you might also like to ask them ‘How can the educational environment and methods used with Effie be made more accommodating?’

NB: If you wish to explore more techniques of informal assessment, you might like to draw trainees’ attention to the possibility of using portfolios or standardised self-assessment grids, e.g., the European Language Portfolio idea with its self-assessment grids is a good starting point (see also ‘Accredited and registered ELP by country’ tab).

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In Step 2 invite trainees to share their ideas in pairs or small groups.

In Step 3 ask trainees to share their feedback in pairs and discuss effective ways of feedback provision for students with SEN.

List of resources

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Task 1

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Task 3

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Task 4

Daloiso, M. (2017). Supporting learners with dyslexia in the ELT classroom. Oxford University Press.

Council of Europe (n.d.). *What is the ELP?* https://www.coe.int/en/web/portfolio/introduction

Extra resources and recommended reading

Universal design applied to large scale assessments. Available at: https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/onlinepubs/synth44.pdf

This webpage links to a report on major considerations to Universal Design Applied to Large Scale Assessment with interesting and useful advice and tips.

Tishakov, T. & Reed, K. (2021). Language assessment [Online Lecture]. In N. Sifakis and S. Kordia (Eds.), *The ENRICH Continuous Professional Development Course*. The ENRICH Project. Available at: http://enrichproject.eu/lessons/173-2-4-language-assessment

The ENRICH course includes a module titled 'Multilingual Assessment' based on a voiceover power-point presentation and interesting activities. It provides a lot of input on how to assess multilingual students.

An example of one state's guide to accommodations (New York). Available at: http://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/accommodations-testing
Useful recommendations and ideas for testing accommodations offered by the Education Department, New York State for students with disabilities.

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An example of an examination consortium that offers Universal Tools and Accommodations embedded in their online tests to English language learners (WIDA). Available at:

https://assets.drcedirect.com/States/WIDA/Tutorials/Student/201908-html5/index.html

Kormos, J. & Smith, A. M. (2022). *Teaching languages to students with specific learning differences*. Multilingual Matters.

The book provides theoretical and practical insights and strategies for helping teachers of students with specific learning differences learn languages using the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Chapter 8 in particular, titled 'Assessment' provides examples of assessment accommodations and modifications.

Schneider, E. & Crombie, M. (2003). *Dyslexia and foreign language learning*. David Fulton Publishers.

The book provides a basic resource on understanding dyslexia and how foreign language students can be supported. Chapter 5, titled 'Preparing for and Passing Tests', offers practical suggestions on how to accommodate language tests.

Key points/lessons from the Module

- The increasing awareness of individual human rights and the number of diverse students have led to a bigger demand for special provisions in second or foreign language testing and assessment for students with SEN.

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- Test providers and educators are focusing on inclusive practices to accommodate the needs of their diverse students.
- Test accommodations aim to respond to an increasing demand and need for an inclusive approach in assessment for accessibility, opportunity, relevance, and engagement.
- Accommodations are meant to remove the barriers that may prevent learners with special educational needs from successfully taking a test because of their learning difference, without changing the goals of the test.
- Many universities nowadays require a minimum level of language competence in one or more languages, and in some cases official language proficiency certification is required or preferred.
- Testing policies can change, so teachers and candidates should always get in contact with the exam centre to check the accommodations available at the time.
- Implementation of the accommodations vary according to the local test centres, so it is essential to contact a particular test centre in advance to confirm exactly which of the accommodations are offered.
- Testing accommodations might not be sufficient to render a language test accessible for SLL students with dyslexia or ADHD or other type of SEN. Therefore, test modifications are also introduced in tests to meet their needs.
- Teacher observations of students' performance during typical classroom activities can be used for classroom assessment purposes such as 'anecdotal

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records'. Also, checklists, self-assessment and portfolios can be implemented too.

- Teachers' feedback needs to be encouraging, highlighting positive aspects first, such as effort, progress, and depending on the type of test/task, quality of ideas, communicative efficacy, creativity, language use, etc.

Module summary

Congratulations on completing the module on inclusive and accessible language assessment! In this module you reflected on possible procedures for testing an assessing language performance of students with SEN in EFL. You were presented with definitions of 'test accommodations' and 'test modifications' and then explored the main types of accommodations offered by high-stakes international English language proficiency tests. You reflected on whether these could be used for classroom-based language assessment. You explored how three major English language examination boards support SLLs with SEN in language testing and were asked to further investigate how other English or other language examinations cater for the needs of these students in your context. You evaluated the testing accommodations and modifications of an example of a classroom test and were engaged in modifying your own using a UDL approach. You focused on classroom-based assessment, providing suggestions for gathering data on the students' progress using observational data in the form of anecdotal records. Specific ideas for providing appropriate feedback were also discussed and were given practice opportunities to explore the provision of constructive feedback to students with SEN after assessment.

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Quiz

Self-assessment

How effective do you think you are in understanding and implementing the UDL framework as part of your assessment agenda with the skills and knowledge you gained upon completing this module?

Look at the eight statements below that summarise what you read about in this module.

Are the following statements **T(true)** or **F(false)**?

1. Test accommodations aim to remove the barriers that may prevent students with SEN from successfully taking a language test.
2. Test accommodations change the purposes of the test.
3. Many universities nowadays require a minimum level of language competence in two languages, and official certificates of language proficiency are required.
4. Students with SEN should be excluded from taking any exams in school and higher education.
5. Well-known international language examination boards do not offer accommodations to their test-takers With SEN.
6. Language teachers working with students with SEN should make sure that their assessment procedures are only ‘valid’ and not ‘reliable’.

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7. In some cases, testing accommodations may not be sufficient to render a language test accessible for SLL students with dyslexia or ADHD or other type of SEN. Teachers might decide to modify the test to meet their needs.
8. For classroom-based purposes, teachers can also use checklists to assess students' performance during classroom tasks. These should only be formally evaluated.

Notes for the trainer

Answer key for the quiz.

1. TRUE.
2. FALSE. Test accommodations do not change the purposes of the test.
3. FALSE. Many universities nowadays require a minimum level of language competence in one or more languages, and in some cases official certificates of language proficiency are required.
4. FALSE. Students with SEN should not be excluded from taking any exams school and higher education. Exam procedures need to be accommodated to meet the needs of SEN students
5. FALSE. Well-known international language examination boards offer accommodations to their test-takers.
6. FALSE. Language teachers working with students with SEN should make sure that their assessment procedures are both 'valid' and 'reliable'.
7. TRUE.

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8. FALSE. For classroom-based purposes, teachers can also use checklists to assess students' performance during classroom tasks. These can be formally or informally evaluated, depending on the situation.

How satisfied are you with your answers? Do you now feel ready to implement assessment accommodations and, if needed, modifications in your assessment practices? Think of practical examples of how you can do it.

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