Low Vision and the ECC: Compensatory Access Skills

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# Compensatory access skills are….

## Skills needed for accessing the core and expanded core curricula, including typically:

* study and organizational skills,
* communication modes,
* speaking and listening skills,
* concept development, and
* adaptations necessary for accessing all areas of the standards-based curriculum

# Access can be addressed by VI professionals in 3 distinct ways

1. Making the learning ***environment(s)*** accessible
2. Providing accessible learning ***materials***
3. Teaching access ***skills*** to the student

# I. Making learning environments accessible

## Picture the layout of the school settings you work in:

* Kindergarten class
* 1st or 2nd grade classroom
* 8th grade science lab or history class
* High school learning media center
* Cafeteria
* Gym/playground

## Write in the chat

What is an example of an adaptation you have made to a learning environment for one of your students with low vision?

## What you can do to address access to *learning environments*

* Go into each environment to see the room set up, where information is posted, where student is seated, lighting, how the class “flows”
* Make sure rooms are navigable, and student knows where things are located

## Resources for Adapting *Learning Environments*

* Teaching Visually Impaired website [Environmental Adaptations](https://www.teachingvisuallyimpaired.com/adaptations.html)
* Perkins [Tips for Modifying the Learning Environment](https://www.perkinselearning.org/activity/tips-modifying-learning-environment-children-visual-impairments-and-additional-disabilities)
* Paths to Literacy [Classroom Adaptations for Students with Low Vision](https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/classroom-adaptations-students-low-vision/)

# II. Providing accessible learning materials

## Examples of accessible materials

* Adapted measuring devices, clock, number line, graph paper, games, alphabet strip, calendar, periodic table of elements, etc.
* High quality print handouts, maps, charts, graphs
* Math concept manipulatives (for place value, numeration)
* Real items vs. plastic representations
* Models of abstract concepts (solar system, electric current, 3-D shapes, geo board, etc.)

## Photo examples of accessible materials:

* Map for travel trip, with both tactile and visual access
* Counting money with adapted materials and real coins
* Adapted science materials - APH

## What you can do to address *accessible materials*

* Talk with teachers to find out content being covered
* Issue adapted materials to the teacher
* Observe the setting to see which materials are routinely used
* Add adaptations to materials (e.g., bolder lines on measuring devices)
* Give student tabbed binder with desk copies of learning materials posted on the walls (e.g., calendar, parts of speech, periodic table of elements)
* Stick a number line and alphabet onto student’s desk
* Provide bold-line pens, paper, soft-lead pencils, bold-line graph paper, etc. if needed
* Teach accessibility features of electronic devices

## Add your ideas to the chat box

* Do you have an example of a learning material you adapted?

AND/OR

* What is one of your favorite resources for helping you adapt materials?

## Great places to find ideas for adapted materials

* APH – [Educational Resources/Core Curriculum](https://www.aph.org/educational-resources/core-curriculum/)
* Paths to Literacy – [Adapting Materials](https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/search/adapting%2Bmaterials/)
* Perkins Learning – [Accessible Science](https://www.perkinselearning.org/accessible-science)
* Teaching Students with Visual Impairments – [Social Studies Adaptations](https://www.teachingvisuallyimpaired.com/social-studies-adaptations.html)

# III. Teaching *Access Skills*

## Examples of *access skills* which may require direct instruction

* Organization of “stuff”
* Study skills (note taking techniques, research, studying for tests, organizing information)
* Screen readers
* Optical devices
* Computer settings/short cuts
* Accessibility options for tablets/computers
* Scientific calculators
* Auditory skills/equipment
* Self-determination skills – being able to tell people the adaptations needed

## What you can do to address *teaching access skills*

* Familiarize yourself with sources for teaching access skills (see handout for this session)
* Assess your students in the areas mentioned and design lessons to address the gaps
* Observe!

## Resources for direct instruction of access skills

* APH – [Learning to Listen/Listening to Learn](https://www.aph.org/product/learning-to-listen/)
* APH - [Looking to Learn](https://www.aph.org/product/looking-to-learn-promoting-literacy-for-students-with-low-vision/)
* APH – [ECC Essentials](https://www.aph.org/product/ecc-essentials-teaching-the-expanded-core-curriculum-to-students-with-visual-impairments/) book
* TSBVI – [RECC](http://www.tsbvi.edu/recc/)
* Teaching Visually Impaired website – [Compensatory Skills](https://www.teachingvisuallyimpaired.com/ecc-instruction.html)

Tell me your success stories

What compensatory access skills have you worked on with your students with low vision that made them stronger learners?

Thank you for tuning in!

**References:**

Allman, C.B., & Lewis S. (Eds.). (2014). *ECC Essentials: Teaching the Expanded Core Curriculum to Students with Visual Impairments*. AFB Press.

Gray, Kitra. “What is Specially Designed Instruction for Students with Visual Impairments”. *TX SenseAbilities*, Summer 2019 Issue, pp. 35-36. <https://www.tsbvi.edu/tx-senseabilities/issues/summer-2019/what-is-specially-designed-instruction-for-students-with-visual-impairments>