Supporting Success
for Children with Hearing Loss

BIMONTHLY UPDATE
Early February Update 2017

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Director & Update Editor

Over 10,500 people have subscribed to receive these Updates!

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Resources for Professionals

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Webcasts for Professional Development

Interact-AS Speech-to-Text Captioning for Schools

2017 Supporting Success Conference

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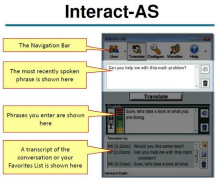


Join our next
FREE Interact-AS Webinar
February 9

TOPIC: ACCESS DURING HIGH STAKES TESTING

Dear Karen,

For those of you who are new to Bimonthly Updates, welcome! The Updates are sent to over 10,000 subscribers who enjoy the practical topics that are especially applicable to improving the skills and abilities of students with hearing loss. You can find past Update issues for this school year here. Feel free to forward this newsletter to colleagues!

It is almost testing time again! High stakes testing often occurs in March. Over the years the emphasis on test results has increased, including buildings and teachers being judged for effectiveness based on the test scores of their students. It is important that **EVERY student have the opportunity to perform their best** on high stakes test. In the case of students who are hard of hearing or deaf, we must plan and prepare effective accommodations so that all is ready for test week.

This Update will focus on accommodating students with hearing loss effectively for high stakes testing.

WHAT'S NEW / WHAT'S NOW?

Supporting Success has been referring to students with hearing loss as zebras, not horses, for two years now. Never heard of zebras being used to describe children with hearing loss? There is a saying: "When you hear hoof beats it is usually horses, not zebras." This saying is used widely in medicine and business to reflect that when you see something wrong, it is usually due to a more common cause than something unusual. In the case of children with hearing loss, their behavior in the classroom may look very similar to that of children who have ADHD, learning disabilities, Aspberger's syndrome social issues, or even mental challenges. In fact, all of these behaviors can be attributed to challenges listening and interacting with a hearing loss. Hearing loss is NOT a learning disorder ("horses"). Hearing loss can cause learning issues due to lack of full access to communication ("zebras!"). You will see more of your colleagues wearing zebra scarves, lanyards or clothing as they

1:30 PM CT

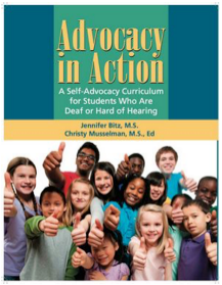
Learn how it works, what is new, how to start! Register now!

Great Materials from SSCHL

Build Your Binders!

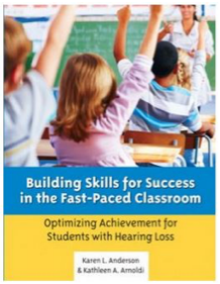
All of the following have files that can be incorporated into one or more binders. This way you can have great teaching materials, tailored YOUR way, at the tips of your fingers!!!

Advocacy in Action: Self-Advocacy Curriculum



Building Skills for Independence in the Mainstream

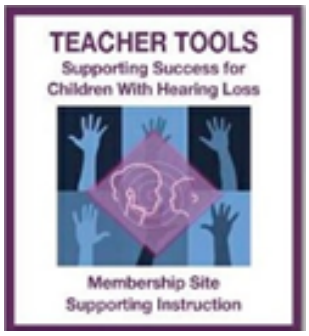
Building Skills for Success in the Fast-Paced Classroom



Steps to Success REVISED

head into school team meetings. The name of the game is **ACCESS** and access issues are what makes our students "zebras" and not "horses."

TEACHER TOOLS



Now over 1150 members! Many rich materials are still to come this year! JOIN NOW and enjoy!

We have two fun holidays in February: February 2nd is Ground Hog Day and February 9th is Pizza Day. For **Instructional Stories**, we revisit January with a comparison of the squirrel and a groundhog. We also looks at what people put on pizza around the world. **Attributes** looks at Time and how the brain uses past experiences to project future prospects. **Social skills** considers social distance and its impact on interaction and relationships. **Words, Words, Words** practices making words with the suffix 'al' and the roots 'ast(er)' and "man(u).' **Listening Strategies** digs into developing listening skills to judge grammaticality of sentences, morphological errors, and the creation of complete sentences. **Maximizing Acceptance** focuses on the power of a positive attitude in building resilience. **Research Round-Up** looks at the impact of hearing loss on brain development and the ability to compensate in the presence of noise. Teacher Tools provides so much to learn and share with your students!

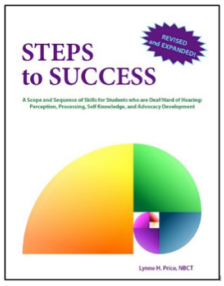
SSCHL CONFERENCE

The Conference is now full! Each of the almost 200 participants will receive our Zebra Advocacy Clipboard to go along with our zebra theme. Wear your zebra wear proudly when you come to the Conference! Participants can expect to receive an email on February 10th with conference handout information.

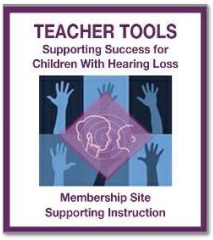
Are you sad you are not able to come to the Orlando conference? We are investigating holding the 2019 conference over President's Day weekend in the Dallas/Fort Worth area of Texas hoping that more people from the Western part of the US will be able to attend. We hope to hold poster sessions so that teachers can strut their stuff with colleagues! Also, about half of the Conference sessions will be recorded and eventually become available as webcasts! Stay tuned!

TOPIC:
ACCESS DURING HIGH STAKES TESTING

Accommodations for High Stakes Testing



Teacher Tools Materials!



Why, when and how accommodations are used to support success vary greatly student-by-student and school-to-school. The most prevalent accommodations in use are extended time, interpreter for directions and a separate room for test administration. One study investigated the effects of testing accommodations on students' standard scores.

The accommodations a student is permitted to use during assessment are supposed to be those the student requires to access daily function. The study found that in practice this is often not the case. Study results demonstrated the reading and language achievement performance of students with mild and high frequency hearing loss fell behind that of students having moderate or severe levels of hearing loss; and that unilaterals scored higher than bilaterals. Analysis found that use of testing accommodations resulted in changes in language scores, but not in reading scores.

The results of a qualitative meta-analysis of the research of the literature on assessment accommodations for students with hearing loss highlighted the complexity of and intersections between student-level factors, test-level factors, and larger policy contexts. Although there are lists of general accommodations readily available, determining appropriate accommodations is NOT a straightforward (pick from a list) process if the student is to truly be accommodated across situations and activities.

Why the emphasis on accommodations during testing?

We are aware that ADA requires equal access to communication in school. Beyond this requirement, the reality is that students with hearing loss are less likely to perform well on standardized tests than their hearing peers. An in depth study was performed in 2006 looking at the performance of students with hearing loss nationally. The students who, in large part, had no identified cognitive impairment generally scored quite low on standardized reading tests, regardless of their degree of hearing loss. More than 80% of students with severe or profound hearing loss had test scores that fell within the lowest 30th percentile range, with most scoring lower than students with mild or moderate degrees of hearing loss. Students with hearing loss require testing accommodations to 'level the playing field' thus allowing to perform their best.

Supporting Success recently received the following question:

I have a student who is preparing for the ACTs. She has a severe hearing loss and uses hearing aids and an FM in school. When she applied for ACT accommodations she was denied a separate/quiet location because she did not require extra time. The letter she received said her request "did not establish a

disability within the meaning of the ADA and/or demonstrate the need for the requested accommodations to access the ACT because small group testing is not an accommodation available without the approval of an additional accommodation such as extended time." Are there guidelines that can help me get this student the quiet location she needs and has been getting over the past 10 years in her school?

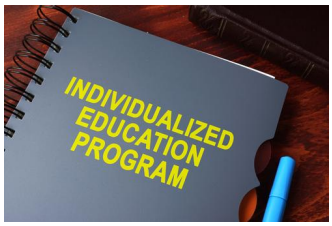
A 12/1/16 press release reported that the College Board has overhauled its request process for testing accommodations, making it easier for eligible students to receive the support they need on College Board assessments. Beginning January 1, 2017, **the vast majority of students who are approved for and using testing accommodations at their school through a current Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan will have those same accommodations automatically approved** for taking the SAT®, PSAT™10, PSAT/NMSQT®, SAT Subject Tests™, and AP®Exams. Most private school students with a current, formal school-based plan that meets College Board criteria will also have their current accommodations automatically approved for College Board exams. This streamlined process builds on the College Board's August 2016 expansion of testing accommodations that can be approved directly by schools without the need for additional documentation.

Under this new policy, school testing accommodation coordinators need to answer only two questions when submitting most requests for students: "Is the requested accommodation(s) in the student's plan?" and "Has the student used the accommodation(s) for school testing?" If the answer is yes to both questions, eligible students can be approved to receive most accommodations on College Board exams. This new process is expected to reduce the approval time for an overwhelming majority of accommodation requests.

Unfortunately, the ACT test is not under the College Boards so the student described in the question above will still need to fight for her rightful and necessary accommodations. The Late January Update shared the good news the US Department of Education released guidance on Civil Rights of Students with Disabilities. In the Parent and Educator Resource Guide there is clarification on definition of a disability under the ADA (hearing loss always fits) and clear examples on appropriate accommodations. There is no reference within the ADA that a student is not eligible for small group testing without already being eligible for extended test time. Clearly an argument can be made for small group testing to provide equity for listening to instructions (small group = less interference from noise).

All Accommodations Need to be Clearly Specified in the IEP and/or 504 Plan

As many teachers have learned from experience, students may be denied even obvious accommodations during high stakes



testing if the accommodations have not been specified in the IEP or 504 Plan. It is not sufficient to state "provide appropriate accommodations during test taking" as there are varying interpretations of "appropriate." Therefore, during the development of the Plan the team must discuss all accommodations, including test accommodations, in detail and specify them clearly.

Connecting Hearing Devices to Computers or iPads

Increasingly students are expected to be able to listen in the classroom to iPads or computers and to also respond verbally while using computer programs. For children with typical hearing this is accomplished with standard headphones or with earpieces with integrated microphones (like the headphones used with a smart phone). Unfortunately, these standard ways to connect a student to the computer often do not work with the hearing aids or cochlear implants worn by students with hearing loss.

It is important for the classroom teacher to recognize which students do not have the auditory ability to hear the difference between "cat" and cap" unless they see it being said. Audio input alone sometimes isn't enough and the use of oral interpreting must be considered. For students who have interpreter or transliterator, a splitter cord can be plugged into the computer input jack so the adult can use Walkman style headset and hear what the student is hearing. If clarification of instructions is needed, some transmitter mics will not transmit speech once they are plugged in to the computer thereby requiring visual communication with the child (to prevent this issue you may be able to select 'mute' or 'active' as a mic setting on the FM/DM device).

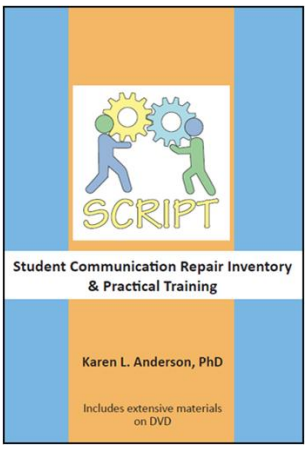
Possible Connection Options

Some options to consider when connecting hearing devices to computers are listed below. To read more on each option, go to the SSCHL webpage:

http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/connecting-hearing-devices

- Bluetooth or streaming devices
- Bone conduction devices
- FM/DM transmitter patch cord into the computer headphone input so students can hear the computer
- Assistive listening devices to compliment the capabilities of digital hearing aids or cochlear implants
- Inline volume control and/or right/left adaptor to balance the ears separately for asymmetrical hearing loss
- Headphones that fit over hearing aids and provide high fidelity

PRODUCT FOCUS



Communication repair is a necessary lifelong skill for students with hearing loss. Research indicates that students who are hard of hearing do not develop communication repair skills at the same rate, or to the same degree as their hearing peers. This results in many of our students seeming more socially immature or awkward than peers. Communication repair skills (how to appropriately ask for repetition /clarification) are a necessary part of self-advocacy skill development. The following items are available from Supporting Success to help teachers better understand how to teach communication repair skills.

Webcast: Communication Repair: Strategies for Assessment & Skill Building. 60 minutes. $24.00

Product: SCRIPT - Student Communication Repair Inventory & Practical Training **Both assessment and practical training!** $46.00 including manual and DVD.

MORE INFO ABOUT ACCESS DURING HIGH STAKES TESTING

See the following SSCHL webpage for more information: Connecting Hearing Devices to Computers or iPads http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/connecting-hearing-devices

Go to the Bimonthly Update Goodies page and download these resources. You only have a short time before they are gone!

New to our Updates? Go to the Goodies page to see all of the past Updates issues for this school year.

- **Accommodations to Improve Instruction and Assessment of Students Who Are Deaf of Hard of Hearing**
- **IEP/504 Checklist: Accommodations and Modifications for Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

ADVOCACY NOTES

As mentioned above, the Late January Update shared the US Department of Education's release of their guidance on Civil

Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504 in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
December 2016

Rights of Students with Disabilities. In the Parent and Educator Resource Guide there are highlighted passages that provide emphasis on the civil rights of students. Three of our favorites from pages 12, 14, and 18 of the Guide:

> A school district must evaluate a student if it has reason to believe the student has a disability and the student needs special education or related services as a result of that disability, even if the student only exhibits behavioral (and not academic) challenges.[47]

> In OCR's investigative experience, school districts sometimes rely on a student's average, or better-than-average, classroom grades or grade point average (GPA) and, as a result, make inappropriate decisions. For example, a school district might wrongly assume that a student with an above-average GPA does not have a disability and therefore fail to conduct a Section 504 evaluation of that student, even if the school suspects that the student has ADHD or the school is aware that the student has been diagnosed with ADHD outside of school.
>
> However, a student with a disability may achieve a high level of academic success but may nevertheless be substantially limited in a major life activity due to the student's impairment because of the additional time or effort the student must spend to read, write, or learn compared to others.[53]

> School districts violate Section 504 when they deny or delay conducting an evaluation of a student when it would have been reasonable for a staff member to have suspected that a student has a disability and needs special education or related services because of that disability.

The Parent and Educator Resource Guide provides some excellent examples. A few from page 17 of the Guide have been included below:

Appropriate Testing

Juan is a student in the third grade. His teacher tests reading comprehension with written in-class quizzes. Juan has trouble finishing the quizzes on time, and his answers are short and incomplete. Because of the poor responses on the quizzes, Juan's teacher believes he may have a disability related to his ability to understand what he reads (reading comprehension skills). The school conducts an evaluation that requires Juan to read a passage and to write responses to a series of questions about the passage. Was this testing appropriate to evaluate Juan's suspected disability?

This test would not be appropriate for determining whether Juan has a disability related to reading comprehension if he has a disability related to writing. Specifically, if Juan struggles with writing, such as trouble staying in the margins, organizing words left to right and getting words on paper, Juan may have a disability related to his ability to write manually and may not score well on the test because he cannot finish answering questions in the time given, not because he does not understand the reading passage. In this example, Juan may have excellent reading comprehension skills, but his inability to write well quickly may result in a low test score.

Timeframes for Evaluation

Mr. Williams is very concerned. In September, two weeks after the new school year began, his 16-year-old son told him that he was having a hard time hearing his teacher and, as a result, he is unable to take detailed notes during class lectures. The school promised to evaluate the student, and Mr. Williams consented to the evaluation before the end of September. However, it is now December and, to date, his son has not been evaluated. Should the school have completed the evaluation before December?

Most likely, yes. Section 504 does not provide a specific amount of time for school districts to complete an evaluation. However, under the IDEA (another Federal law that protects students with disabilities and of which schools should be aware), an initial evaluation must be conducted within 60 days of receiving parental consent for the evaluation or if the State has established a different timeframe for conducting the evaluation, within that timeframe. OCR generally looks to the IDEA timeline, or if applicable, to State requirements or local district policy to assess the reasonableness of the time it takes the school to evaluate the student once parental consent has been obtained.

It is strongly suggested that educators working with students with hearing loss read through the Guide and be prepared to share this information when collaborating at Student Team Meetings and when responding to questions by school administrators.

NOTE: The information presented in this newsletter is not legal advice, is not to be acted on as such, may not be as current as possible and is subject to change without notice.

The mission of Supporting Success is to help YOU to improve the futures of children who are hard of hearing or deaf via (1) accessible information resources, (2) professional development, (3) products selected specifically for children with hearing loss, (4) sharing information to assist in advocating for appropriate services and supports.

This 'go-to' site is for professionals and family members seeking more information about the learning and social issues of children with hearing loss and what can be done to better support the future success of these children.

Information resources are at no cost, relevant, designed to be easy to understand quickly, and practical to use. Purchase materials at SSCHL - one stop shopping for your desired items, for sale at the best possible price!

Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss,
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