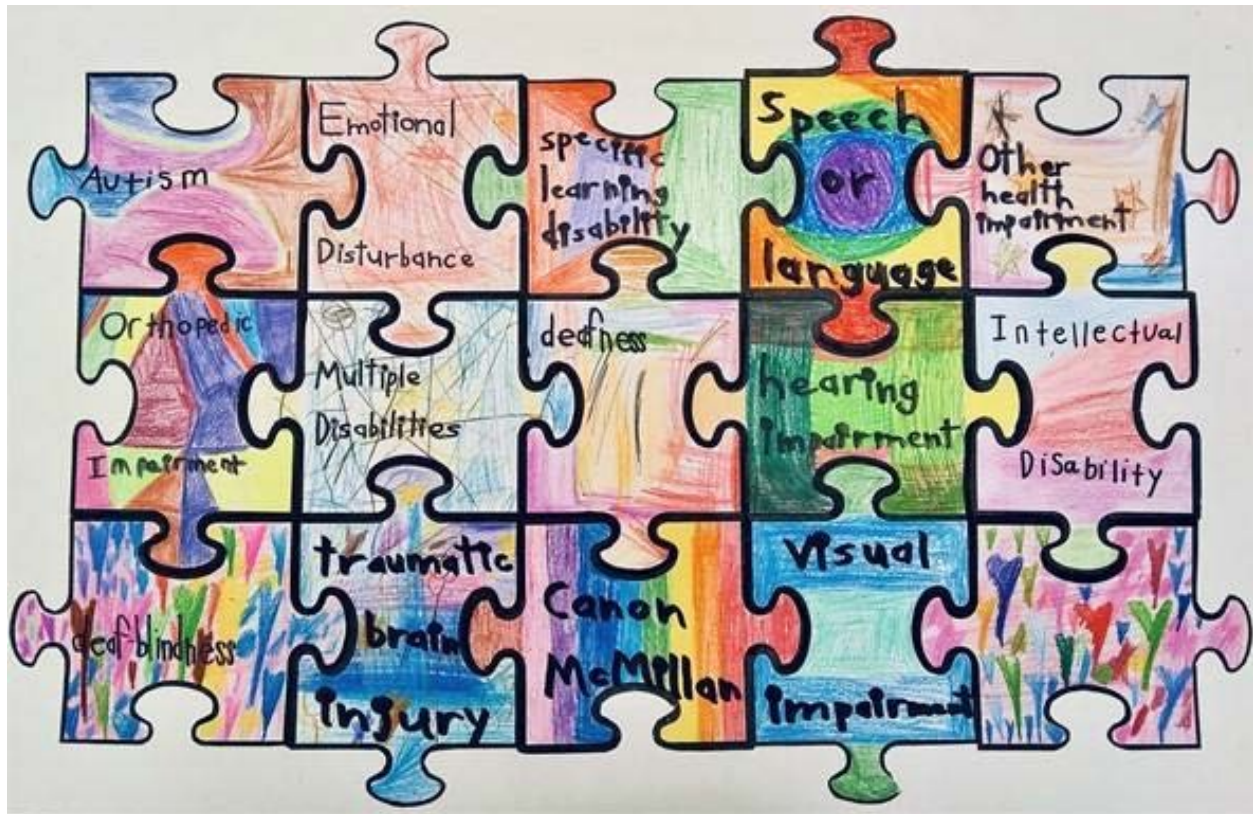


Guide for Administrators Evaluating Teachers Using an Active Learning Approach During Instruction



Developed by
Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired



Outreach Programs
For Active Learning Space

Note from the Authors:

This document is currently being piloted and may be revised periodically. We would appreciate hearing from you if you use this version. Please share what you found useful and what was confusing or not helpful. You may send your comments to Kate Hurst at hurstk@tsbvi.edu.

We recognize that each district has established policies and procedures for evaluating all staff members. This document is not meant to supplant but rather to support you as you carry out what you are already doing to evaluate educators working with these students who are blind or deafblind with significant additional disabilities.

The resources listed in the charts may help you understand more about what to look for related to Active Learning, and they may also be used to guide staff in developing their understanding of the approach. These resources may also help staff in working with family members to have better collaboration between home and school.

We hope this helps you and your staff feel more confident in providing an Active Learning approach for your students. Please continue to visit [Active Learning Space](#) often for more information and new ideas!

Guide for Administrators Evaluating Teachers Using an Active Learning Approach During Instruction

What Is Active Learning and Who Needs It?

Students with multiple and significant challenges who are also dealing with vision and hearing loss face unique challenges when it comes to learning. Active Learning is a best practice instructional approach being utilized worldwide for children who are blind, visually impaired, and deafblind experiencing significant additional disabilities impacting physical, cognitive, sensory, social, and emotional development. It especially targets children who are developmentally at birth-4 years of age.

Active Learning is an approach based on the work of Dr. Lilli Nielsen, a developmental psychologist and preschool teacher, who worked for over 43 years with children and adults with multiple disabilities at Refsnaesskolen, the National Institute for Blind and Partially Sighted Children and Youth in Denmark. Along with the [Active Learning Space](#) website developed by Penrickton Center for Blind Children, Perkins School for the Blind, and Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired, we hope this document will help you feel more confident when evaluating your staff using this approach.

We encourage you to utilize the website, webinars, and our online self-paced training modules to support your staff's training needs. These resources are also helpful for the families of these students.

What Should You Be Looking for When Evaluating Staff?

A large team of professionals serve these students including teachers of students with visual impairments, teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing, physical and occupational therapists, speech-language therapists, and others. Though the classroom teacher has the primary responsibility for overseeing the program for the child, all team members should be involved in the process of assessing, planning, developing, and delivering instruction. For example, other team members should be responsible for helping to complete assessment and track progress on the IEP. When evaluating classroom teachers and other staff serving these children using Dr. Nielsen's Active Learning approach in their classroom there are many things you should be able to observe or document. Each team member may be evaluated by a different administrator. This document is meant to serve as a guide for any administrator and should be adapted to meet individual needs.

- Evidence of proper and ongoing assessment and documentation of student performance
 - Completion of the Functional Scheme for the student (including summary page) with at least annual updates
 - Completion of other assessment reports from related service staff, teacher of students who are visually impaired, teacher of students who are deaf and hard of hearing, and/or teacher of students who are deafblind
 - Regular weekly documentation on student performance in activities and learning environments
 - Reports sent to families at designated intervals
- Evidence of the ability of all staff working with the student to use educational techniques that address the student's social and emotional developmental levels and IEP goals
 - Shows ability to reduce demands during activities based on the child's responses (e.g., shorten the duration of the activity, accept partial response, allow the child to take a short break and try again, offer an alternative activity, does not overly praise the child)
 - Shows understanding of the specific IEP goals related to child's interaction skills and the appropriate student response (e.g., child tolerates the presence of the adult, child shows an interest or interacts with the adult, child is able to attempt a step in a familiar activity, child shows the ability to self-regulate)
 - Shows the ability to adapt academic content using an Active Learning approach (using real objects and materials, provides opportunities for hands-on examination of materials prior to group activities, aligns goals to standard curriculum utilizing essences statements, etc.)
 - Shows the ability to follow the child's lead (e.g., imitates the child's actions on objects, makes his/her hands available to the child and models actions using hand-under-hand when necessary, allows for small breaks to let the child process, does not talk continually interrupting the child's learning.)

- Shows the ability to notice and interpret the child's communication attempts made through movement, gestures, vocalizations, signals, signs, words, etc.
- Uses communication methods that are meaningful to the child and appropriate to his/her sensory abilities (e.g. supports speech with sign/gestures if child is deaf or uses tactile information if child is blind or deafblind)
- Uses turn-taking interactions and responds to expressive communication attempts to encourage the development of conversation and communication. Limits directive communications.
- Selection of specific Active Learning equipment matches IEP goals for physical development
 - Can explain why a specific piece of equipment is used in an activity and how it relates to the student's IEP goals
 - Can set up and position the child using the equipment appropriately and safely
- Selection and creation of Active Learning environments address the student IEP goals and supports academic content and expanded core curriculum for students with visual impairments or deafness
 - Can explain why specific materials are used in an activity and how the activity relates to the student's IEP goals
 - Demonstrates knowledge of the student's preferences, motor skills, and sensory abilities for accessing materials in the activity
 - Materials in all activities include many common objects (not miniatures of objects) made of various materials including wood, metal, paper, natural substances (rocks, plants, animals, fabric, etc.)
- Ability to explain specific Active Learning strategies to the student's family members and provide resources to help them understand the approach
 - Communication and progress notes to the family reflect the child's activities and how they relate to the IEP goals
 - Can explain why specific pieces of equipment and materials are used with the child
 - Can explain why an Active Learning approach differs from typical learning approaches due to the child's early developmental levels
 - Can direct the family to resources and training related to Active Learning

To aid in the evaluation process, we have developed this form for administrators and supervisors to use. It indicates things to look for in the instructor's practice, and in some cases, what to look for in terms of the student's responses or behaviors. We have also included resources for training purposes that may also guide you, as the administrator, in better understanding the Active Learning approach.

Each section is assigned a maximum number of points that when totaled equals 100 points. Bonus points are assigned to indicate excellence in the utilization of this approach. You might award these points for inclusion of all items or a single item that has been done in great depth. For example, if the teacher works with the family to get them to training or meets with them regularly to discuss strategies for implementing Active Learning in the home, this might merit bonus points being awarded. Of course, there is always more to learn and expertise is developed over time and in collaboration with other professionals. This scoring system only addresses the specifics of implementing Active Learning and does not supplant any required state teacher evaluation documentation.

Instructor's Name:
Name:

Total Points Awarded:

Date:

Administrator's

Comments:

Area	Evidence of Teacher Knowledge and Skills	What the Student Does	Resources	Rating
Standards & Alignment	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Goals are aligned to state content standards and are developmentally appropriate based on assessed developmental age of the student2. Technology (Active Learning equipment/materials) is being used to support mastery of lesson's goals in academic areas and are adapted to student's sensory and motor abilities3. Segment of the academic lesson provides for sufficient time for student work and the adult-child interaction4. Lesson structure and pacing match the learner's needs5. Lesson addresses scaffolded learning and complex concepts as it progresses6. Functional skills are integrated and supported in the lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Interacts with materials and environments that are the focus of the academic lesson● Uses Active Learning equipment and materials in a way that reflects familiarity with the activity● Explores at his/her own pace and own way and is not interrupted by the teacher or teacher's directions● Indicates through behavior or communication when lesson should be shortened or lengthened● Does not engage or rejects activity when novelty should be introduced or activity changed● Practices gross/fine motor skills, sensory skills, communication, and/or social/emotional skills during lesson	<p>Texas Pre-Kindergarten Guideline</p> <p>Early Learning Pathways: An alignment of the Texas Infant, Toddler, and Three-Year-Old Early Learning Guidelines</p>	<p>___/15 points</p> <p>2 points for each item with up to 3 points for excellence</p>

Area	Evidence of Teacher Knowledge and Skills	What the Student Does	Resources	Rating
Data & Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Within 6 weeks of receiving student has completed or updated at least gross / fine movement, visual, auditory, spatial and object perception, and language sections of Functional Scheme 2. All sections of the Functional Scheme are completed and/or updated by year's end and Functional Scheme Assessment summary page updated at least 2 times per year 3. Other required assessment has been done by related service staff, TVI, TDHH and/or TDB 4. Regular observation and documentation of progress on each activity/learning environment student uses related to specific IEP goals 5. Learning activities are adjusted based on progress/lack of progress on IEP goals 6. Progress on IEP goals is regularly reviewed with team and family through meetings and/or reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Show progress in goals / benchmarks for at least 2 items each regular reporting period (6 weeks) based on collected data 	<p>Functional Scheme Summary Page</p> <p>Documenting Progress Using the Functional Scheme</p> <p>Forms for Documenting Progress</p>	<p>___/20 points</p> <p>3 points for each item with up to 2 points for excellence</p>
Knowledge of the Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knows the child's approximate social and emotional developmental levels 2. Reduces or increases demands made on the student in response to the child's behavior 3. Utilizes strategies to elicit a positive response and continued engagement with the child 4. Knows the specific IEP goals related to child's interaction skills (communication, social/emotional domains) and appropriate student response 5. Can explain the adult's role in utilizing any of the five phases of educational treatments 6. Shows the ability to respond to the student's behavior, follow his lead and use appropriate interaction techniques (reduce demands, slow pacing, extend wait time, use hand-under-hand guidance/modeling, allows short breaks for child to process during activity, does not talk excessively during activity or interrupt the child's exploration of learning environments, uses turn-taking and serve-and-return interactions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tolerates the adult working with him/her ● Seeks to make contact with or interact with the adult by imitating, offering objects, playing turn-taking games, participating in familiar routines, returning to the adult after taking a short break ● Attempt a step in a familiar activity or game ● Communicates acceptance or rejection of activity ● Shows increased ability to self-regulate when experiencing stress or novelty 	<p>Dynamic Learning Circle</p> <p>Five Phases of Educational Treatment Used in Active Learning</p> <p>Deafblind Interaction</p>	<p>___/20 Points</p> <p>2 points for each item with up to 4 points for excellence</p>

Area	Evidence of Teacher Knowledge and Skills	What the Student Does	Resources	Rating
Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Uses appropriate communication techniques based on the child's sensory abilities and language development to include tactile, auditory, and/or visual strategies, e.g. tactile cues, object symbols, tactile symbols, signs, spoken word, gestures 2. Targets language at the child's developmental level using short, simple words and phrases and consistent vocabulary during lessons 3. Notices and responds to student's attempts to communicate through bodily-tactile signals, signs, vocalizations, gestures, object symbols, etc. 4. Uses appropriate level of calendar system for VI or DB to organize the day for the student 5. Uses scripted routines to complete activities of daily living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Uses gestures, signs, vocalizations, object symbols, and/or tactile symbols for both receptive and expressive communication during the activity ● Requests or rejects offered materials and activities ● Comments using bodily-tactile methods, signs, vocalizations, etc. during interactions with adult ● Responds to calendar symbols in such a way that indicates understanding of the next activity 	<p>Deafblind Interaction – Five Steps of Interaction</p> <p>Instructional Strategies for VIMI and DB</p> <p>Calendars by Robbie Blaha</p>	<p>___20 points</p> <p>3 points for each item with up to 5 points for excellence</p>

Area	Evidence of Teacher Knowledge and Skills	What the Student Does	Resources	Rating
Activities (including use of equipment learning environments design)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Selects appropriate equipment based on IEP goals and child's ability. Sets up and safely uses equipment as it was designed and checks materials for safety 2. Plans activities and designs learning environments that are based on the student's interests and preferences 3. Uses materials in all activities that include many common objects made of various materials and with attention to sensory channel abilities 4. Designs learning environments to target specific student goals in the IEP in either academic and/or functional skills areas 5. Uses signs of student habituation to the activity to indicate a need for novelty to be introduced to the activity or learning environment 6. Provides opportunities for student interactions with peers in some activities each day 7. Adapts group activities so that student can access fully and respond at his/her developmental level independently or with only limited support 8. Includes activities that include both independent play and adult-child interactions throughout the day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Appears comfortable using the equipment after a short time ● Extends the amount of time they will play when positioned in/on equipment ● Shows curiosity and attempts to explore objects (grasps, bangs, mouths, etc.) ● Is active throughout the day and not idle or asleep for long periods of time ● Completes a schedule of learning activities that fill the entire day with little down time 	<p>Quick Guide to Active Learning Equipment (PDF)</p> <p>Attractive Objects</p> <p>Dynamic Learning Circle</p>	<p>___/20 points</p> <p>2 points for each item with up to 4 points for excellence</p>
Family training / resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has informed th family about Active Learning Space website and newsletter, online training courses, and webinars. 2. Can answer questions about equipment, materials, techniques being used 3. Shares pictures, video and other communication regularly with family about activities and child's progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in similar activities in the home environment. ● Demonstrate targeted skills in the home environment. 	<p>ALS Newsletter</p> <p>ALS Webinars</p> <p>ALS Self-Paced Modules</p>	<p>___/5 points</p> <p>1 point for each item with up to 2 points for excellence</p>

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