# Cover page of the module which includes images of six children with various types of disabilities.

# **Inclusive and Accessible Examinations and Evaluations:**

## Introduction:

Examinations and evaluations are an integral part of the academic system. They allow students to demonstrate what they know and provide feedback to the teacher about what students have mastered, as well as gaps in their understanding and comprehension. Examinations are also essential to guide decisions about students’ future educational opportunities (4).

Adapting examination and evaluation methods for students with disabilities does not mean lowering expectations. It means that students with disabilities may have to demonstrate their knowledge through methods that are different than their typically developing peers. All students can demonstrate their knowledge, and it is the role of the teacher to provide an appropriate evaluation method for all students in the class below (2).

Learning Objectives: From this module, the learner will gain an understanding of:

* What inclusive and accessible methods of evaluation and examination are, and understand why they are necessary
* Best practices for how to create and implement inclusive and accessible assignments and projects for students with disabilities
* How to use data and information from inclusive and accessible assessments and apply it to decisions for students with disabilities.

## Glossary:

1:1 correspondence: is the skill of counting each object in a set once, and only once.

Accessible: is the practice of making information, activities, and/or environments sensible, meaningful, and usable for as many people as possible.

Alt Text: Alternative text, or “alt text” describes the content of images, graphs and charts.

Dyscalculia: affects a student’s ability to acquire arithmetical skills. Dyscalculic learners may have difficulty understanding numerical concepts.

Dysgraphia: is a neurological condition and learning difference in which someone has difficulty with writing for their age level.

Dyslexia: is a learning disability in which students have difficulty reading printed text.

Inclusion: the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who have physical or mental disabilities and members of other minority groups.

Universal Design for Learning: is an approach to teaching and learning that gives all students equal opportunity to succeed.

## Case Studies:

Liza is a Grade 1 student who has many friends, has very strong verbal skills and a great memory. She can retell a story she has heard in great length and includes many details. However, when asked to read aloud, she struggles to say the words correctly and it takes her a long time to “sound them out”. She consistently loses her place on the page and at the end of the passage cannot answer basic comprehension questions.

Think about Liza and how you could modify an examination for her so she has the ability to demonstrate what she knows. On a separate paper, write down two ways you can help Liza to demonstrate what she knows.

Thomas is a Grade 4 student who has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair for mobility. His speech is very clear and easily understandable. He can write his name and a few words, but it takes him a long time and he gets tired very easily. He enjoys doing puzzles with large pieces that he can easily hold, as well as playing games with large, easy to hold pieces.

Think about Thomas and write down two ways that Thomas could demonstrate what he knows to you, his teacher?

Gema is a pre-school student who has a visual impairment and is working on learning 1:1 correspondence. She benefits from using raised line drawings for feeling shapes and letters. Gema is working on beginning to form shapes and letters on paper, but they are very large and sometimes illegible because she cannot always see her place on the page.

Think about Gema and write down two ways she could use alternative examinations and evaluations to tell her teacher what she knows?

## What are inclusive and alternate methods of evaluation and examination and why are they necessary

Alternative evaluations and examinations are assessments designed for students with disabilities for whom a general assessment is inappropriate. It is designed to be a more accurate measure of what students with disabilities know and can do. Examinations are necessary to get an accurate understanding of what the student knows and what they need additional help with.

Some countries have specific regulations and laws around examinations that are required for students in their country. Various examples of alternative examinations are included throughout this module; however, it is important for teachers to check the guidelines of their educational department or ministry within their country.

### **Pre- Assessments:**

A pre-assessment is an opportunity for a teacher to get a baseline understanding of what your students already know about a topic. A pre-assessment is important as it will guide your instruction as a teacher. An example of a pre-assessment for a student with a disability who has difficulty writing would be to ask students questions orally about a topic in history, and then allowing them to answer orally to determine what they already know. Your instruction is then guided by their answers (7). Best practice for using pre-assessments to guide instruction includes creating SMART goals. The acronym SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound. Make sure your goals are specific, can be easily measured, are achievable and realistic, and have a timeframe (5). The graphic below describes each:



Here is one example of a SMART goal from the perspective of the teacher: “To provide my students with extra help, during the next four weeks, I will dedicate 15 minutes of each class period to guided practice, as I am circulating the room and checking students’ work and answering their questions. I will do this every day unless we have a special event. To make sure I only have 15-minute sessions, I will use a timer. I will make a note in the class calendar to keep track of the days I did this”.

Specific: 15-minute sessions of extra help

Measurable: I will keep track of the days in the class calendar

Achievable: 15-minutes is a short enough time that it will not interfere with the rest of the lesson

Relevant: student’s will be working on current content

Time- Bound: The next four weeks

### **Post Assessments:**

After a teacher completes a pre-assessment and gives direct instruction to their students about a topic, the teacher should give their students a post assessment. There are various types of post assessments that are appropriate for students with disabilities including individual assignments, group projects, and standardized tests. In each case, it is the role of the teacher to think about how a student with disabilities will be able to demonstrate their knowledge through an assessment method (7).

Sometimes one type of assignment may be appropriate for all the students in the class. For example, the teacher could choose to conduct an exam as a quiz game show. In this example, the teacher would divide all the students in the class into two teams. The teacher would ask one student from each team to go at a time. Then the teacher would ask the question orally and the students who answer correctly would receive points for their team. The concept of creating an assessment that all students can participate in is part of a framework called Universal Design for Learning or UDL. UDL is an approach to teaching and learning that gives all students equal opportunity to succeed. UDL methods improve and optimize teaching and learning for all students based on scientific insights into how humans learn (1). Additional information about UDL can be found in Annexure A.

## Best practices for how to create and implement inclusive and accessible assignments and projects for students with disabilities

Now that you know what inclusive and accessible examinations are and why they are necessary, let’s talk about best practices to create and implement these types of examinations and assessments.

One critical concept to remember is alternative assessments do not mean that teachers should lower their expectations of these students. These students are eager to learn and possess many skills that they can demonstrate (3).

1. Create assessments for smaller chunks of information. Rather than doing a summative assessment at the end of a chapter, consider breaking it up into smaller more frequent assessments. This ensures that the student is understanding the concepts taught, as well as providing opportunity to collect data and adjust instruction as necessary.
2. Utilize various methods of conducting the assessment. For example, let the student type their responses on a tablet or computer, allow students to orally record themselves detailing the answer to the questions, allow the device to read the questions aloud to the student to ensure understanding of what is going asked.
3. Keep the evaluation method consistent with what the student is already doing in class. For example, if the student utilizes large print while accessing their regular curriculum, the examination should also be given to them in large print.

The video below explains various strategies and supports that students with specific learning disabilities such as Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dysgraphia would benefit from.



### **Accessibility:**

When conducting an examination, it is important for the teacher to understand that students with disabilities may also have accessibility needs. For example, a student who is Blind or low vision may benefit from having audio descriptions or alt text on images within the text. A student who has a physical disability might benefit from orally relaying the information, rather than writing it down. A student with a learning disability could demonstrate their knowledge fully if they heard the questions being asked rather than reading them on their own (1).

## How to use data and information from inclusive and accessible evaluations and apply it to decisions for students with disabilities:

Now that we have gone through the other steps to learn about what inclusive and accessible examinations are, and best practices of how to create and implement them, we have arrived at what to do with the information collected.

Teachers have long collected and used data to make decisions about their students. Data collected via inclusive and accessible examinations should be of high quality and should accurately represent what content the student has mastered and how they can apply that mastered content to various tasks. The data should reflect that the student achieved the S.M.A.R.T goals determined at the start of instruction.

Quality data collection is important for all students and should be utilized to make decisions for students’ future educational opportunities. When reviewing data from examinations, teachers can ask themselves various questions such as:

Am I looking at this information objectively? Did I collect enough information to make sure the student has mastery? What else should I teach about this topic? Is the student’s reading comprehension very strong when the text is read aloud to them instead of when they read on their own? Should the student be moved up to a higher reading group? As the teacher, you know your students and through assessments that are inclusive and accessible, students can demonstrate what they know to you (2).

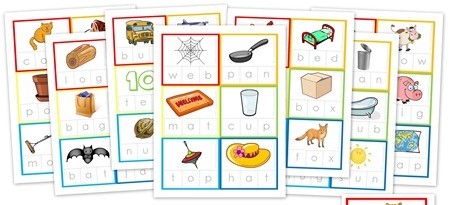
Data should also be shared with the student’s family so they can understand how the student is progressing toward their goals.

## Case Studies:

Let’s think back to our case study students: Liza, Thomas, and Gema.

As a result of Liza utilizing text to speech technology on a computer that read the questions aloud to her, she understood what was being asked and she could answer questions correctly. Her teacher was very impressed with her ability to recall key information in the text and not only answer the question but connect the current text to information she had learned previously.

Thomas was able to use large cards with pictures and words on them and group the cards into the correct categories. From this inclusive method of assessment, he was able to demonstrate to the teacher that he understood the main concepts of the text. Here is an example of large picture cards that can be used:



Gema was able to utilize various methods and modalities to demonstrate to her teacher that she had mastered letter and shape identification, such as utilize large tactile manipulatives. She also orally demonstrated her understanding of the connection between sounds and letters.

## Conclusion:

From this module, we have learned:

* What inclusive and accessible methods of evaluation and examination are and why they are necessary
* Best practices for how to create and implement inclusive and accessible assignments and projects for students with disabilities
* How to use data and information from inclusive and accessible assessments and apply it to decisions for students with disabilities.

Examinations and evaluations are an integral part of the academic system and are tools that teachers utilize to understand what they know at the start of instruction, and how much they have learned at the end. Inclusive and accessible evaluations are necessary for students with disabilities to demonstrate what they know, and to help them learn more and achieve their goals.

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Annexure A:

### **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)**

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol ([A/RES/61/106](https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/resources/general-assembly/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-ares61106.html)) was adopted on 13 December 2006 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and was opened for signature on 30 March 2007. The Convention follows decades of work by the United Nations to change attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. The Convention is intended as a human rights instrument with an explicit, social development dimension. It adopts a broad categorization of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It clarifies and qualifies how all categories of rights apply to persons with disabilities and identifies areas where adaptations have to be made for persons with disabilities to effectively exercise their rights and areas where their rights have been violated, and where protection of rights must be reinforced. (Cited from <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html> on November 18, 2022)

Article 4 – General obligations

1. States Parties undertake to ensure and promote the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities without discrimination of any kind on the basis of disability. To this end, States Parties undertake:

a) To adopt all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention;

b) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices that constitute discrimination against persons with disabilities;

c) To take into account the protection and promotion of the human rights of persons with disabilities in all policies and programmes;

d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice that is inconsistent with the present Convention and to ensure that public authorities and institutions act in conformity with the present Convention;

e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability by any person, organization or private enterprise;

f) To undertake or promote research and development of universally designed goods, services, equipment and facilities, as defined in article 2 of the present Convention, which should require the minimum possible adaptation and the least cost to meet the specific needs of a person with disabilities, to promote their availability and use, and to promote universal design in the development of standards and guidelines;

g) To undertake or promote research and development of, and to promote the availability and use of new technologies, including information and communications technologies, mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies, suitable for persons with disabilities, giving priority to technologies at an affordable cost;

h) To provide accessible information to persons with disabilities about mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies, including new technologies, as well as other forms of assistance, support services and facilities;

i) To promote the training of professionals and staff working with persons with disabilities in the rights recognized in the present Convention so as to better provide the assistance and services guaranteed by those rights.

2. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, each State Party undertakes to take measures to the maximum of its available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of these rights, without prejudice to those obligations contained in the present Convention that are immediately applicable according to international law.

3. In the development and implementation of legislation and policies to implement the present Convention, and in other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities, States Parties shall closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations.

4. Nothing in the present Convention shall affect any provisions which are more conducive to the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities and which may be contained in the law of a State Party or international law in force for that State. There shall be no restriction upon or derogation from any of the human rights and fundamental freedoms recognized or existing in any State Party to the present Convention pursuant to law, conventions, regulation or custom on the pretext that the present Convention does not recognize such rights or freedoms or that it recognizes them to a lesser extent.

5. The provisions of the present Convention shall extend to all parts of federal States without any limitations or exceptions.

### **Advisory to schools as per the Guidelines of Inclusive Education of Children with Disabilities (IECD): (India)**

1. Ensure that students with disabilities are not denied admission in Mainstream Education
2. Monitor enrollment of students with disabilities in schools
3. Schools should provide support through assistive devices and the availability of trained teachers
4. Modify the existing physical infrastructure and teaching methodologies to meet the needs of all children including students with disabilities
5. Ensure that the school premises are made disabled friendly and all educational institutions including hostels, libraries, laboratories, and buildings have barrier free access for students with special mobility needs
6. Ensure availability of study materials, digital textbooks, reading machines and computers with screen reading software to students with disabilities
7. Ensure adequate number of sign language interpreters, transcription services and a loop induction system for the students with disabilities
8. Revisit classroom organization required for the education of students with disabilities
9. Ensure regular in-service training of teachers in inclusive education at the elementary and secondary level.

Additional information about Universal Design for Learning: <https://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl>

## Examples of evaluations and the corresponding modifications:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **Subject** | **Original question** | **Modification needed** |
| I, II | Languages | Look at the picture and write the names of colours/animals etc. | Either the first letter of the pictures can be mentioned, and the students asked to complete the colours’/animal’s name, or they can be named in the regional language and the child asked to write the name in English and vice versa. |
| I, II | Mathematics | Pictures shown in the first column, and the students have to match the number in the second column. | The student may be asked to count the given objects. |
| I, II | Mathematics | Comparison of numbers using boxes for filling in <, >, = | Explain that what the first number is to the second number. |
| I, II | Environmental Science | Look at the pictures and name them. | Instead of pictures, the quality of the animal/bird/flower/plant etc. can be used for asking questions. |
| III, IV | Mathematics | Drawing shapes, measuring lines | Questions based on the drawings to be made |
| III, IV, V | Mathematics | Fraction - Students are asked to draw and shade the mentioned fraction or read the diagram and write the fraction represented. | If possible, the diagram can be explained, and the student may be asked to write the fraction.  Fractional representations of objects may be provided. |
| III, IV | Science | Label the given diagrams (e.g., Water cycle, human body systems, molecules in solid, liquid and gas) | The theme of the diagram may be explained, and the students may be asked to name the parts or components |
| V and above | Science | Draw a well-labelled diagram of concepts being taught | Name the parts of the specified diagram and explain its functions |
| VII and above | Science | Light, Electricity and magnetism diagrams | Explanations, properties, and characteristics of these |
| IV | Social studies | Map of India, show the seas, mountain range | Names of oceans |