

Alternatives to Written Recording

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For many children with different types of AEN being asked to write can prove a major obstacle to learning. Writing can be a physical or emotional challenge. By removing the emphasis from written recording these students can gain access to the curriculum and be as successful in their own eyes as their peers. Most of these methods can be used successfully with individuals, pairs, groups or even the whole class as they allow for children with different learning styles to access the curriculum successfully. By not always using written methods of recording you are also allowing students to develop other skills such as cooperative working, peer mentoring or ICT skills.

Scribing: This is the method that will probably spring to most minds first. Of course this method relies on having access to a spare pair of capable hands to do the writing. The student can dictate their responses to an adult helper (teacher, TA or parent helper). However, another way to do this is to allow students to pair up and to do paired recording. This will require the recorder to be a fluent writer but does have the benefit of allowing paired working, sharing ideas and talking for learning.

Images: There are a variety of ways that students can use images as a form of recording.

Posters: Allowing students to create a poster is a great method of recording for visual and kinesthetic learners as well as students with AEN.

2-D/3-D Displays: Again this is a very creative and motivating method of allowing students to record their learning and will cater for different learning styles as well as learning needs.

Drawings & Diagrams: Instead of writing a report or set of instructions you could get students to draw the process.

Digital photographs: Using digital cameras with students enables them to see results immediately. You can enhance the use of the photographs by getting students to add thought or speech bubbles to enhance understanding.

Video recording: By using a camcorder you get a longer record of work and you get the added bonus of audio allowing you to listen to the student working.

Spoken Word

Role-Play: Most students love role-play activities as they can take on a different persona. This type of activity can include hot seating and interviewing as well as plays.

Tape Recording/Digital Audio Recording: This method is very handy if you don't have access to an extra pair of able hands to scribe for students. You can also use digital recording with pictures (you can purchase resources that allow students to draw or attach a picture and record a short audio to accompany it).

Oral Presentation: Students can present on their own, in pairs or even small groups. This is a great method of assessing their speaking and listening skills, especially if you add a Q&A session at the end of the presentation.

Charts

Mind mapping: A very powerful tool for all learners. Mind maps can consist of words and pictures. There are many interactive mind mapping software packages that also have audio.

Card Sorts: These can be purchased but you can also make your own.

Flow Charts: again these can be used with words and pictures.

Group Wordstorm: Children work in groups with one student acting as scribe. Every member has to contribute at least one word.

Text (Ready Made): These methods require some preparation beforehand but are very useful and encourage and develop reading skills. Remember that some children may require the use of coloured paper, larger fonts etc.

Cloze Passages: Students enjoy using cloze passages as they like to guess or choose the correct words to fill in the blanks. You can differentiate this easily by giving less able students lists of words to choose from and/or less blanks to complete.

Highlighting: Again this is very motivating as students love the opportunity to use brightly coloured highlighters to pick out different types of words (e.g. verbs in yellow, adverbs in green) or the key words in a passage.

Sorting texts: give students sentences, paragraphs or short passages to sort into different text types, sense or nonsense etc.

Ordering: Students can put words, sentences and even paragraphs into order.

Tops and Tails: Again this activity can be used with sentences, paragraphs and even whole texts. Students match the beginnings and endings. This develops reading and comprehension skills.

NOTE: All of the above activities can be done on paper or they can be done on the computer using a word processing package or one of the many software packages available (e.g. Clicker). By using the computer for these tasks children with limited reading skills have the opportunity to listen to the text as well as to read it.

Sorting and Labelling

Object Sorting: By initial phoneme, rhyme, colour, size, type etc.

Matching: Match labels to quantities, shapes, solids etc.; match labels to objects, pictures or sentences.

Labels: match to parts of diagrams, pictures or text.

ICT

Software: There are many different software packages available to give students with different learning needs access to the curriculum.

Word processing: Some software offers predictive or voice-operated word-processing, others offer on-screen word grids. By having a range of different software packages you will be catering for a wide variety of learning needs and styles.

Access Devices: These include switch devices, screen magnifiers, special mice and keyboards.

Calculators: There are a wide variety of different types of calculator available.

Audio Recording: Digital voice recorders, tape recorders etc.

Mathematical Software: Again there are a wide variety of software packages that students of all abilities can use to help with maths.

Templates: Prepared templates for graphs, shapes or tables can be given to students to aid recording in maths.

Laptops: Allowing students access to a laptop for their use in lessons gives them access to a wider range of resources e.g. software packages, recording methods etc.

Digital Video/Photographs: As discussed in the Spoken Word and Images sections.

Interactive Whiteboards: Can be used with the whole class, groups or individuals.

Numbers

Number & Symbol Cards: Use to create number sentences, sequences etc.

100 Square: Students can locate and highlight answers

Number Line: These can be used as a learning aid or to show answers. They are available in a wide range of styles and sizes.

Fans, Arrow Cards, Wooden/Plastic/Sticky-Back, Numerals or Shapes, Symbols

Specialist Recording: e.g. Braille, sign language.

Symbol Cards: e.g. TEACCH, Writing with Symbols or Bliss.