



Context

“Special needs” is an umbrella term that includes many different situations: psycho-physical disabilities, specific learning difficulties or socio-economically disadvantaged students.

The difficulties that these situations include are so diverse that the only thing they have in common is the need for individual adaptation.

Adapting written content to the needs of a student requires modifications in the form or in the content of a text, in order to make it possible for the student to overcome his/her difficulties and ease their access to educational content.



General Principles

The methodology through which a written text should be adapted is not universal but is instead unique. Different necessities should be individuated according to the nature of the obstacles found to accessing content; for example:

Psycho-physical and cognitive disabilities may need strong modifications to the text, like the use of special icon based-code called AAC (Alternative Augmented Communication).

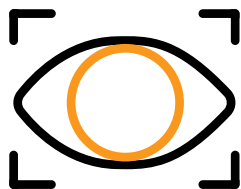
Hearing impaired students may need adjustment to the syntax, while **LSD** students (Specific Learning Disorder) may also need layout modifications or specific fonts to grant accessibility to students with reading difficulties or low linguistic competences.



Text adaptation



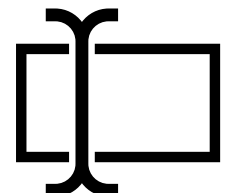
Set the font to easily readable fonts, like Helvetica, Open Sans, Verdana, OpenDyslexic font or Easy Reading font.



Add visual reference to the text, like bold key words, images or multimedia to keep attention on the topic of discussion.



Use AAC pictograms to re-process easy sentences.



Simplify the structure of sentences and words: privilege simple sentences with fewer subordinate and coordinate sentences or none at all.



Examples

High readability fonts are generally considered more legible because they have less decorations and are wider than serif fonts (like Times New Roman, Garamond, etc...)



- Helvetica → To be or not to be...
- Open Sans → To be or not to be...
- Verdana → To be or not to be...
- OpenDyslexic → To be or not to be...
- Easy reading → To be or not to be...

What is **JAPAN**?



(The flag of Japan→)

Japan is a nation that lays in Asia.

Japan's closest neighbors are Korea, Russia and China.

It consists of several islands.

The **Sea of Japan** separates the Asian continent from the Japanese archipelago, while on the other side lays the **Pacific Ocean**.

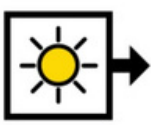







Summaries adapted with simplified structure have a very easy structure, short and repetitive sentences. Visual elements are added for better understanding and colors are used to link concepts throughout the sheet.

AAC icons are used as a reading and writing means. It is a code that matches simple words with simple icons.



AAC pictograms

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  tomorrow |  we |  go |  school |
|  by |  car | | |



Resources

Adapting written material to different needs an overall vision of both specific necessities and text to adapt to these. Websites that hold this specific material exist locally in every nation and these can be found online but should be exploited with care to revise the content first, as it could not fit every specific necessity.

European project **Bibliodos**, whose products can be found online, approaches this topic showing different levels of text re-adaptation of different classics of literature.