



Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

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Harnessing Active Learning for Infants who are Deafblind, Deaf, or Hard of Hearing with Co-occurring Access Needs

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Session Objectives

- Participants will describe the child who may benefit from the Active Learning approach.
- Participants will explain how accessible environments encourage concept and language development.
- Participants will list three ideas for facilitating independent exploration in infants with co-occurring access needs.

Active Learning Space

www.activelearningspace.org

How children learn naturally

- Movement
- Touch
- Safety
- Exploration
 - Environment
 - Objects
- Experimentation
- Interaction

Who benefits from Active Learning?

Birth to 48 months

- Birth to 48 months
- Sensory differences
- Co-occurring (complex) access needs

[image of a toddler with glasses and hearing aids seated on a carpeted step looking up at the camera and smiling]

Physical access

- Movement
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- High or low muscle tone
- Create ways to facilitate movement
- Provide movement!

Accessible Environments

Natural learning plus

- Responsive environments
- Zone of proximal development
 - Data driven
 - Assessment
 - Ongoing data gathering

Resonance Board

- Enhanced feedback
- Auditory
- Vibratory
- [Resonance board information](#)

[Image of a room with a folding resonance board in the foreground, two improvised ball pits consisting of small splash pools with balls, and a PVC structure behind those with different textures and items hanging down for students to walk or roll through. This is usually called a “sensory carwash.”]

Little Room

- Items based on preferences and fine motor abilities
- Self-directed movement
- Repetition
- [Little Room information](#)

[Image of a “Little Room” © on a resonance board. A variety of objects visible dangling inside the little room from the panels on the top. To the right of the little room, there is a second little room that is not in use, but additional sensory items and assistive technology is stored in it.]

Imagine the possibilities!

[Image of a young girl seated on a resonance board inside a little room. She is not wearing shoes, and she is holding an object with two hands at midline. The object is attached to the top of the little room with elastic, and she is pulling it toward her body. The walls of the little room have different textures, and some interesting everyday objects such as plastic funnels, scrub brushes, a metal cup, and metal plates are visible.]

Scratch Boards

- Earliest finger and hand movement
- Does not require a great range of motion

[Image of two lightweight boards with different textured items attached. These are generally useful for learners who have difficulty reaching out to grasp objects.]

Position Boards

- Compare & contrast
- Responsive
- Self-directed
- So much more!
- [Position board information](#)

[Image of three wall-mounted position boards, sometimes called an activity wall. These are framed pegboards with a variety of everyday items, toys, and objects with interesting textures and features. Items are chosen based on the child's current capabilities (zone of proximal development) and preferences. Below the position boards is a resonance board with other interesting items. Here is some information about [attractive objects](#).]

Compare and contrast

[Image of a young girl who is blind, is pre-verbal, and may or may not have a hearing difference. She is in a wheelchair and benefits from environments designed with physical access and conceptual learning in mind. In front of her on her wheelchair tray is a position board with a variety of brushes and scrubbers attached to the pegboard with zip ties so they remain stationary. She is learning about different brushes by comparing and contrasting their characteristics independently. Depending on her specific needs, she might continue to examine the items independently, and there might be a component of interaction with a teacher or paraeducator in which they discuss her discoveries or where identical items are brought out to include concepts like same, mine and yours, or practice using the items.]

Strategies for Interaction

[Philosophy of Approach](#)

- Everyone can learn
- Active learners vs. passive learners
- Responsive environments support independence
- Self-directed repetition is based on student preferences
- Developmentally appropriate play-based learning
- Mix of variety and consistency
- Limited adult input
- Failure is a pathway to learning

Foundations of Active Learning

- Key Points
- Dynamic Learning Circle
- Five Phases of Educational Treatment

Keys Points of Active Learning

- Active participation
- Repetition of opportunity
- Developmentally appropriate
- Reinforcing to the student
- Limited distractions

Dynamic Learning Circle

- Stage 1: Aware and interested
- Stage 2: Curious and active
- Stage 3: Completion of learning/habituation
- Stage 4: Ready for new learning

Communication

- Concepts
- [Fine & gross motor](#)
- [Vocal play](#)
- [Social interaction](#)

All of these things happen within the context of the “[Five Phases of Educational Treatment](#)”

- Phase 1: [Offering](#)
 - No demands on the student
- Phase 2: [Imitating](#)
 - Connect with the student through imitation
- Phase 3: [Interacting](#)
 - Connect through shared attention and turn-taking
- Phase 4: [Sharing the work](#)
 - Supported opportunities for independence
- Phase 5: [Consequences](#)
 - Supported opportunities to learn to endure demands and changes and establish a sense of responsibility

Thank you for joining me!

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