HOMEWORK IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

Student learning is strengthened with multiple opportunities and repeated practice for newly taught skills. One way teachers provide these supports for students is by assigning homework. When assigning homework, teachers need to decide if they will be providing students with significant cognitive disabilities the same homework as their peers, different homework, or if they will be differentiating/adapting assignments to meet the unique characteristics and needs of students. This TIPS in Action focuses on planning, implementing, and evaluating homework assignments that support the learning needs of all students, including students with significant cognitive disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

Benefits for students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities:

- Presumed competence where the content of homework matches the content of instruction.

- Multiple opportunities for repeated practice for newly taught skills.

- Assignments are designed to meet unique learning needs of students.

- Increased opportunities for feedback and chances to address errors in learning while developing mastery of content.

Planning:

1. Decide the priority and format of homework assignments. If homework will be shared in class (for example, a presentation or an assignment that will be posted on a bulletin board), the assignment should always be the same for students with disabilities, including students with significant cognitive disabilities, although the length or complexity may be adapted.

2. Design homework assignments using either the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) or differentiation strategies that allow all students to participate. See Table 1 and Figure 1 for examples.

In Action:

3. Send homework assignments for students to complete.

4. Teacher gathers or family/guardians provide feedback on meaningfulness (for example, gets at the core construct of the lesson), accessibility, and

independence regarding students' completion of homework assignments.

Evaluation:

5. Use feedback to determine whether the support provided met the needs of the student by considering the following:

    a. Was the homework as designed accessible to the student?

    b. Were students able to complete the homework assignment independently or with minimal support?

    c. Was the level of homework appropriate to meet students' needs?

Homework in inclusive classrooms: Troubleshooting

*The ideas presented are examples of ways to apply principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL; https://udlguidelines.cast.org/) and are not intended to be comprehensive.

If there is a barrier to student engagement during the homework assignment, you can:

- Recruit student interest in assignments that promote individual choice.

- Vary demands based on a topic to represent a range of challenge and array of formats.

If there is a barrier to student understanding during the homework assignment, you can:

- Supply background knowledge on the homework assignment such as previously learned vocabulary and symbols.

- Display information in a flexible format that offers customization for individual learners.

If there is a barrier to student(s) expressing their ideas during the homework assignment, you can:

- Vary methods for response and allow multiple media tools to be used.

- Present multiple tools for construction and composition that allow students to successfully take part in their learning and articulate what they know.

For a planning worksheet, please refer to the TIPS in Action Planning Worksheet.

## Table 1. Example of a homework assignment using principles of UDL

Standard: W.4.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

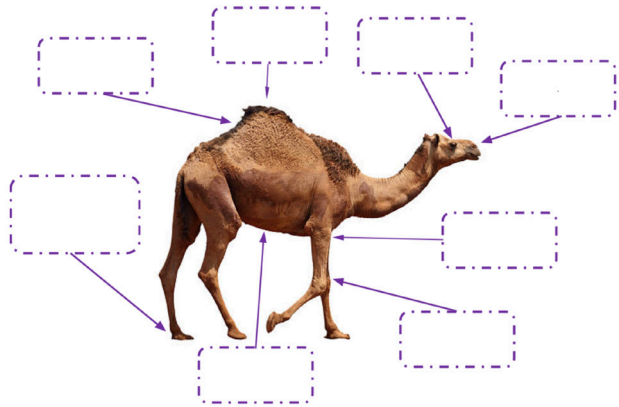f. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

Assignment	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Create your own ending to the story the class generated together. Select one of the following formats to use when documenting your conclusion.	Written expression (e.g., handwritten or typed document)	Written expression using speech transcription (e.g., Speech to Text)	PowerPoint presentation with written text and/ visuals	Video with closed captioning	Story map using pictures or picture symbols

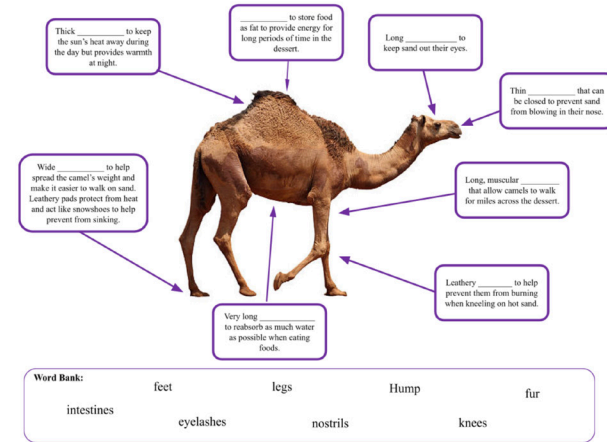## Figure 1. Example of a differentiated homework assignment
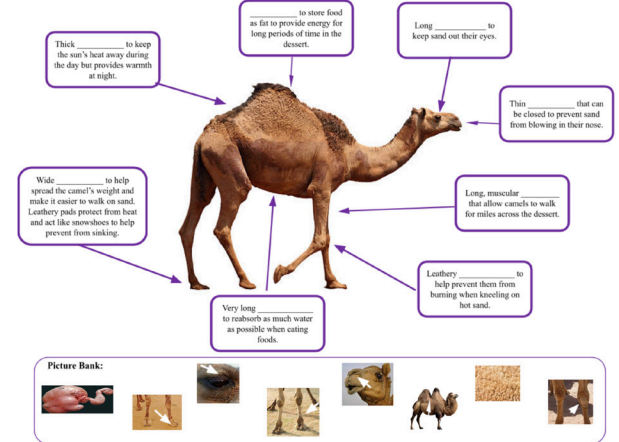
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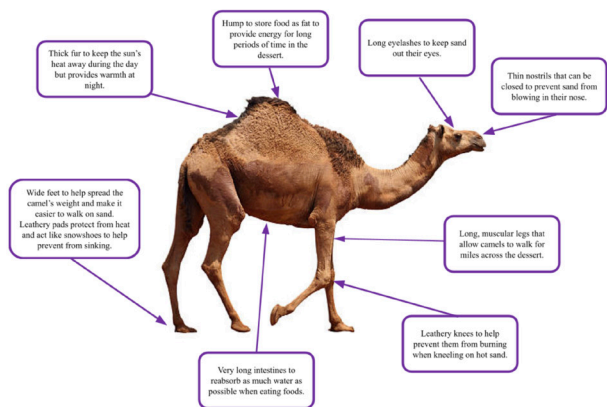
WRITTEN RESPONSE, CUT & PASTE, OR DRAG & DROP

FILL IN THE BLANK, CUT & PASTE, OR DRAG & DROP

CUT & PASTE OR DRAG & DROP

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