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A challenge in conducting fieldwork can be catering for all of the members of the class. Over time organising excursions has become increasingly difficult due to risk assessments, staff training requirements, increasing costs, medical and health plans, and student allergies. In many cases schools are opting for regular, school-based fieldwork over whole day fieldwork excursions to avoid some of the administrative tasks. Differentiation of fieldwork can be quite challenging compared to differentiating a classroom activity. In class based activities teachers are required to develop more focused and personalised learning for students by providing different approaches and resources, or graduated tasks where everyone is expected to complete different sections. Most teachers do this regularly, but trying to apply the same concepts can be quite daunting when trying to apply it to fieldwork.

A range of student needs need to be taken into consideration when planning your excursion. This includes the needs of gifted and talented students, lower ability students, EAL/D students (formerly ESL), students with mobility issues, those hearing or sight impaired and students on the autism spectrum. These students should be given the opportunity to enjoy the many benefits of planned fieldwork, however, you may feel unable to fully cater for them due to resource limitations, time constraints, safety issues and the competing needs of other students. The Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education 2005, Standards for participation, mandate that all students are entitled to reasonable adjustments to ensure access to the curriculum and participation. In Department of Education schools this has been reinforced by the "Every Student, Every School" Learning and Support Framework. As such, it is not only unfair to exclude students from fieldwork, but it is actually not legal.

Lower ability students

Lower ability students may require fieldwork resources to be adjusted. Adjustment can take the form of using simplified language, relatively simple vocabulary, short, simple sentences, extra scaffolding or giving different tasks to different groups of students. Prompting for student answers can take the form of sentence stems or cues such as the beginning letter of an answer. It is important to ensure that students aren't overwhelmed by the amount of text on the fieldwork handout. Be sure to include white space on the page and enlarge images and text font to build student confidence. Use a plain, lower case font, and avoid italics or words in capital letters to enhance students' ability to recognise words. Allow students to just focus on one or two sources of information at once, whether it be the actual fieldwork or supporting data table, graphs or newspaper articles. You may allow lower ability students to complete fewer questions than more able students. If these strategies still don't provide enough structure, prompt cards could be provided for students to copy from.

Differentiating geography fieldwork to address students' needs

Below: A small section of a fieldwork booklet for an excursion to the Blue Mountains designed for mainstream students.

Human interactions with the environment

1. How have people mainly used this area in the past?

2. How do people use this area now?

3. Count the number of visitors taking the Scenic Railway. _____

4. What impact might visitors have on the environment?

Below: The same questions have been redesigned to suit lower ability students.

Human interactions with the environment

1. How have people mainly used this area in the past? Circle the relevant activities.

Hunting; mining; horse riding; bushwalking; scientific research; tourism; housing; education

2. How do people use this area now? Circle the relevant activities.

Hunting; mining; horse riding; bushwalking; scientific research; tourism; housing; education

3. Count the number of visitors taking the Scenic Railway. _____

4. What impact might visitors have on the environment?

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EAL/D

For EAL/D students the key is to ensure that they recognise and understand the key terms used on the fieldtrip. Depending on their level of English proficiency you may choose to allow students to write some of the information in their first language and to then translate it into English. Although this may sound as though it will take the student a long time, it should result in the information that they record being more accurate and enable them to focus on the geographical information as opposed to grappling with language proficiency. Obviously you want to encourage the student to embrace using English as soon as possible. This can be encouraged by providing simplistic definitions of metalanguage and directing students to underline key terms and defining them themselves. If the student is recently arrived, you may choose to assist the student by using Google translate to incorporate their first language into the handout. It is always best if you can then get a person who speaks the language to double check the translation.

Mobility issues

Students with a physical impairment or disability that may hinder their movement may not be able to participate in all activities. If this is the case, appropriate



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alternatives need to be provided which meet the same outcomes. This may be replicating the fieldwork technique in a more accessible area or completing virtual activities that model the same technique and replicate similar results. As a last resort a student may watch a video or listen to a sound recording of the technique, but this is not ideal and does not actively involve the student. As much as possible the student should be given the opportunity to actively engage in all activities.

Below: A small section of a fieldwork booklet with adjustments for Korean, EDL/D students.

Human interactions with the environment

1. How have people mainly used this area in the past? Circle the relevant activities.

Hunting; mining; horse riding; bushwalking; scientific research; tourism; housing; education
수렵 ; 채광 ; 말 타기 ; 부쉬 워킹 ; 과학적 연구 ; 관광 여행 ; 주택 ; 교육

2. How do people use this area now? Circle the relevant activities.

Hunting; mining; horse riding; bushwalking; scientific research; tourism; housing; education
수렵 ; 채광 ; 말 타기 ; 부쉬 워킹 ; 과학적 연구 ; 관광 여행 ; 주택 ; 교육

3. Count the number of visitors taking the Scenic Railway. _____

4. What impact might visitors have on the environment?

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Gifted and Talented

Fieldwork resources designed for Gifted and Talented students should have more complex text, advanced language and reference to a greater number of sources. Questions should require greater breadth and depth of understanding and knowledge and higher levels of skills. Students may enjoy being involved in the planning of the day's activities and should be encouraged to shape the fieldwork activities that will take place. Some fieldwork providers actually offer different types of experiences for different students. So if you use an external provider you may use a standard option for most of your students where they are actually led through completing research and fieldwork on a topic, while another group of your gifted and talented students may have more flexibility, choice and challenge in how the fieldwork operates. Students may be provided with extension cards to complete throughout the day. Twice exceptional students (students who are gifted and talented and have a disability for example a sensory processing disorder, ASD or OCD) may also benefit from some of the strategies outlined in other sections.

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Planning should begin before the field trip commences. Teachers should plan in collaboration with parents/ caregivers and students about adjustments can be made for the individual student in the form of an Individual Education Plan (IEP). This would include considerations such as how the students are getting to the excursion, if there needs to be a School Learning Support Officer who needs to support the student, whether there is medication that needs to be given to the student, if there are any sensory issues which need to be taken into consideration and if a buddy system would work.

Teachers and parents create a "count down" until the trip both in class and at home. Provide parents with information about the trip so that they can talk to their child and help prepare them for what will happen in the excursion, if there are people who are not teachers, what their role is during the excursion, behaviours expected from the student, who will be there to assist the student. Parents can assist by planning ahead for lunches and snack breaks by adding favourite snacks and lunches and plenty of water for the student. Teachers should inform parents as early as possible about proposed excursions so that planning can occur.

Talking about what will happen on the trip far ahead of time will prepare all students not just the ones with ASD. Many excursion sites have websites with virtual tours and other information to help the student to become orientated with the area. This may occur in the form of a project to learn about the excursion and what they are expected to learn during the excursion. Try to ensure that your information is as accurate as possible so the student develops realistic expectations about what will happen on the day.

Teachers can create a written or picture schedule of the day of the field trip for your child. This way your child can know which parts of the regular school day will be disrupted or altered. Depending on the excursion itself and the student needs, the schedule needs to be quite detailed. The schedule should include breaks and how time will be spent during this time, include how the student will get home after the excursion and that the next day will be as usual.

Students with high level ASD will need to have the activities of the day clearly explained and an itinerary of the day, which includes a list of equipment and clothing that might be needed for their safety. A social story might be created to assist the student with activities for the day and behaviours which are expected to keep them safe. For example, "Victor will attend the excursion with all members of the class. Victor will get on the bus and sit with Tom. Victor will stay with Ms X who will help him during the excursion." You may like to include visuals to assist the student understand what the excursion entails. The story needs to use words like wait, take turns, and the need to be flexible if the plan gets disrupted.

It is advisable to gain the attendance of your School Learning Support Officer (SLSO) for assistance with the student on the day of the fieldwork. Ask the SLSO who ordinarily assists the student to attend, as they would be able to identify signs of anxiety and assist the teacher in alleviating behaviours. Have a plan in place if the student has a meltdown, this should be included in your

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Risk Assessment for the excursion. Be sure to review safety rules and take safety precautions.

Special Education teachers or Learning and Support Teacher (LaST) can assist with modifying activities, fieldwork handouts and follow up activities. Teachers can create worksheets, targeted to each student's level, to help students prepare for the trip. The worksheets can include pictures and words which can be eliminated if applicable or not applicable to activities.

Teachers or aides can use a point chart or reward system to help motivate a student throughout a field trip. Provide frequent positive reinforcement in advance of the trip and throughout the special day.

Vision and hearing impairment

In many cases students with vision or hearing impairments will still be able to participate in fieldwork activities, but may require a range of modifications to the planned activities. Students with hearing impairment should be placed as close as possible to the presenter, or the presenter should be given a transmitter microphone which feeds to the students' headset. You could also give the student the option to record the information given verbally.

Written material and instructions should be given to supplement verbal instructions and information.

Vision impairment may result in students having difficulties scanning and tracking, with depth perception, peripheral vision, difficulty discerning fine detail or narrowed field of vision. From a fieldwork perspective this may result in issues with orientating maps, writing notes, perceiving features of the landscape, trip hazards and uneven ground and recording field data. Activities like landscape sketching are not really possible for vision impaired students and often the instructions to use fieldwork equipment can be too small. Safety issues can come into play if students are expected to climb or cross a river. You should place a barrier around any dangerous sites, or choose sites with fencing. Student handouts should be enlarged, or the student may be given a copy of the handouts on a tablet so that they can zoom in to enlarge details. Modifications to activities can be made, for example "observations" can be replaced with "nearby considerations" which may be made by smelling, hearing, tasting and feeling the environment, rather than looking at it. The students have experienced the site by walking through it so you may ask questions regarding the slope they have walked over, whether it is even, rocky, etc. If you have access to high levels of support or funding you may consider braille labelling of objects, tactile maps, embossed worksheets and braille compasses. Students should be provided with

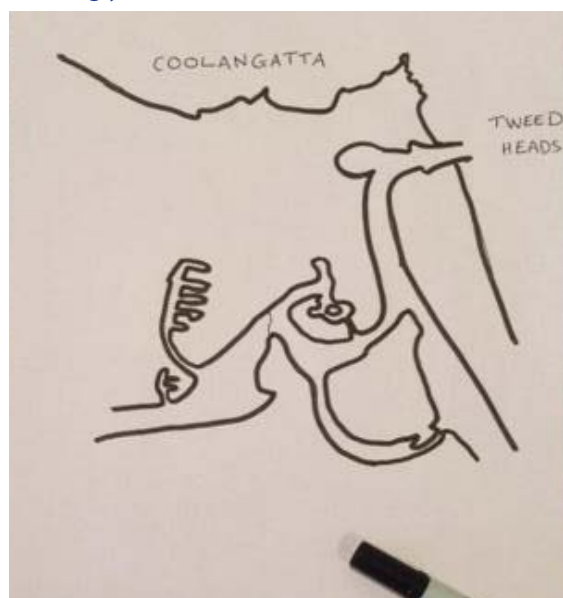
magnification devices and additional time to read text. Tactile experiences are encouraged.

Creating tactile fieldwork maps for vision impaired students

Maps for visually impaired students can be very hard to come by. If you have a good relationship with staff in your TAS faculty, you may be able to create a 3D printed map, but this will involve a fair bit of planning in advance. If you are short on time and would like to provide some additional support for your visually impaired student on a fieldtrip you may like to try creating your own 3D map of the site.

Below: Creating a tactile map for vision impaired students

Create a basic outline of the area where you will be conducting your fieldwork.



Add some basic colour to your map. Ensure that you maintain high colour contrast. If you use colours that are similar to each other it will be hard for the student to differentiate between different features.

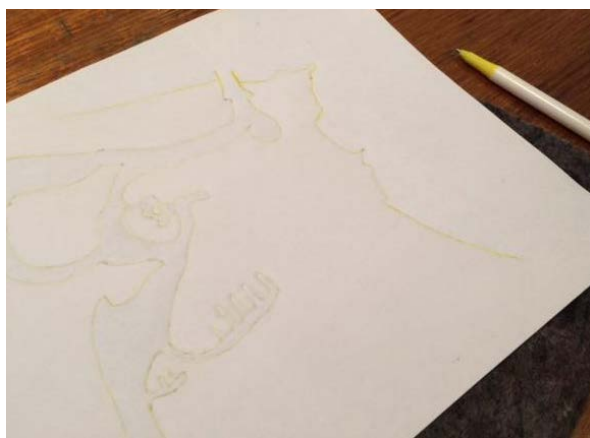


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Use some foam and a light coloured ballpoint pen. If you are super keen you can actually buy something called an embossing tool from a craft store, but it works the same way. (You can use a blue or black ball point pen, but I would suggest covering up the drawing of the reversed image to ensure that you don't confuse the student.



Turn the map over and trace the map outline with the pen while leaning on the foam. This will create a raised impression of the map on the "right side up".



The student will be able to run their finger over the map to feel]



To accentuate particular features on the map, use stickers. Ensure that you can actually feel them when you run your finger over them. You may need to layer a sticker several times to create a raised effect.



In this example red dots have been layered several times to show where field sites are located. Raised jewel-like stickers have been used to show where the sea walls are located.



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Resources:

- <https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/about-us/how-we-operate/national-partnerships-program/every-student-every-school/learning-and-support.pdf>
- <http://techloversblog.com/blind-now-3d-printed-maps/>
- <http://cityminded.org/4-ideas-from-4-continents-helping-the-blind-navigate-cities-14771>
- <https://www.carautismroadmap.org/supporting-students-with-asd-on-field-trips/>
- <http://www.perkinselearning.org/scout/tactile-maps-and-teaching-maps-skills-blind-visually-impaired>