Best Practices for Designing Accessible Performance Assessments

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Document Overview

As with any curriculum, it is critical to design performance assessment tasks to be grounded in a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) perspective in order to ensure that the tasks facilitate an accessible learning opportunity for all students. UDL can be framed as "supporting access for all" by removing the barriers for some. Teachers who design tasks, activities, and assessments with their students' needs and choice in mind are not changing the rigor of the test; they are just being flexible with the resources available (scaffolding, explicit instruction, etc.) and/or the method of demonstrating understanding.

UDL is grounded in three key principles:

1. **Multiple means of representation**—"using a variety of methods to present information, provide a range of means to support"
2. **Multiple means of action and expression**—"providing learners with alternative ways to act skillfully and demonstrate what they know"
3. **Multiple means of engagement**—"tapping into learners' interests by offering choices of content and tools; motivating learners by offering adjustable levels of challenge"

Therefore, UDL might specifically help meet the needs of students with disabilities and English learners better than a non-UDL learning environment will; however, the UDL framework is designed to structure learning experiences that can work for anyone.

With that said, when working on performance assessments, it is important to distinguish among **task design**, **grading/assessment**, and **instruction**.

- **Tasks** should always be designed with UDL principles in mind such that they allow points of entry for all learners.
- In terms of **grading/assessment**, there are not only UDL guidelines to be aware of, but also specific considerations when assessing specific student populations. For example, while all students might be assessed using the same presentation rubric, be intentional about how panelists are trained to assess English learners and students with disabilities.
- For **instruction** related to performance assessments, certain scaffolds can be critical to supporting English learners and students with disabilities. UDL proponents often avoid the terms *accommodations* and *modifications* and related language to emphasize that UDL's purpose is to design learning to be accessible to all students, but we use them in the context of instructional scaffolds to make clear distinctions between the supports in question. This will oftentimes be the language used in the context of IEPs and 504s.

As a point of clarification, **accommodations** allow "students to complete the same assignment or test as other students, but with a change in the timing, formatting, setting, scheduling, response and/or presentation. This accommodation does not alter in any significant way what the test or assignment measures."

Research has shown that there are five major categories of an **accommodation**:

1. **Timing**—alternative test schedules, such as extended time
2. **Response**—alternative options for responding to the assessment (e.g., marking directly in the test booklet)
3. **Setting**—changes to test surroundings such as testing in a private space
4. **Equipment and materials**—the use of additional devices (calculator) or references (vocabulary sheets)
5. **Presentation**—alternative presentation of testing materials (for example, having the test read aloud)

On the other hand, **modifications** are an "adjustment[s] to an assignment or a test that changes the standard or what the test or assignment is supposed to measure. Examples of modifications include a student completing work on part of a standard, or a student completing an alternate assignment that is more easily achievable than the original assignment." Altering the instruction/language/etc. is not necessarily a modification; only changing *the learning goal/construct* that is being assessed is considered a modification.

Sources: TEAL, *Universal Design for Learning*; SCALE, *Performance Assessment Task Adaptation Guidelines*; PACER Center, *School Accommodation and Modification Ideas for Students Who Receive Special Education Services*; Lai & Berkeley, *High-stakes test accommodations: Research and practice*; Byrnes, *Alternate Assessment FAQs (and Answers)*.

Best Practices for Designing Performance Assessments

The following list provides suggestions for designing performance assessments to be accessible to all learners. All of the elements of task design can be applied to all students, and the instructional scaffolds suggested are specifically suggested to address the needs of English learners and students with disabilities.

Task Design

1. Design tasks from a UDL perspective

Fundamentally, as with any form of assessment, performance assessments should be designed in a way that makes the learning goals clear to students and provides them adequate support and context to succeed in the task. This includes designing tasks that keep learner variability in mind, that measure both product and process, that focus on the specific knowledge/skills being taught, etc. For more guidelines on how to approach performance task design with UDL in mind, see CAST's *Top 10 UDL Tips for Assessment*.

In practice, this can manifest in a number of ways, but SCALE's *Performance Assessment Task Adaptation Guidelines* resource provides a useful set of guidelines for how to design performance tasks from a UDL perspective that still allows for adaptations.

2. Provide standardized presentation slide templates

A resource that can easily be made available to all students, and that may be particularly useful for English learners or students with disabilities, is standardized slide templates to help structure students' presentations. In essence, the slide template serves as a graphic organizer to support students' construction of their presentation so that they address the requirements and don't leave out reflective pieces or anything related to the competencies that they are being asked to demonstrate. Note that a template may take away from some students' ability to be more creative, but it can be provided as an option and students can adapt the template as they wish.

This practice has been implemented in Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) and Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) schools, and in some Big Picture schools. To see an example of such a slide template employed in one LAUSD school, click here.

Source: *LAUSD Linked Learning Portfolio & Defense Weebly.*

3. Modify portfolio requirements according to a student's IEP

Accommodations can be made for the level of proficiency that the student needs to demonstrate in order to be allowed to defend that artifact, or modifications can be made to the artifact requirements. These kinds of accommodations or modifications would also be explicitly outlined in the student's IEP.

For example, one could imagine a student with a processing disability that impacts their short-term memory. This student would have IEP goals written in mathematics, and their teachers could, therefore, anticipate that their math artifact would be focused on their IEP goal area and may even be a completely modified artifact.

4. Provide students with opportunities to use multiple languages in performance tasks

Though celebrating bilingualism in this way particularly serves the needs of English learners, this is a practice that can be used for all students and can be a great way to support students' language acquisition in both English-language and non-English-language courses. There is great power in assigning competence and identifying the asset of students' native languages by including some native language portion of the project. As is discussed later this in this document, students' native languages can similarly be integrated into the presentation section of their capstone or portfolio/defense as well. This practice is not designed to compromise English learners' resources to learn English; rather, it recognizes the fact that welcoming and honoring their bilingualism can go a long way in the classroom.

Instructional Scaffolds

5. Scaffold the writing, presentation, revision, and reflection/feedback process

In addition to linguistically simplified tasks and rubrics, using scaffolds throughout the writing, presentation, revision, and feedback process can support English learners' learning. Examples of such scaffolds include sentence stems/frames, opportunities for translation, collaborative time with speakers of the same native language, graphic organizers, etc.

In particular, with graphic organizers, teachers who want to support students in writing their essays/reflections might consider breaking the different paragraphs/essay elements into different boxes with question prompts to support students in guiding their thinking and reinforcing their understanding of writing structure. This can be used as a scaffold that teachers gradually remove or get students to create for themselves so that they can apply these skills after they have graduated high school.

Some examples of reflection-focused sentence stems for teachers to use to scaffold formative reflection might include:

- I prefer to work by myself when...
- I enjoy working with others when...
- When I don't understand something, I...
- When I have to get something read, I...
- When the environment I'm in is too noisy for me, I...
- When I'm distracted and not getting my assignment done, I...

You can find more examples of sentence stems/frames here. (More examples are also available widely online by searching "sentence stems" or "sentence frames.")

Example of Scaffolding for English Learners in an ELA Classroom

Adele Fiderer is a fourth grade classroom teacher and language arts developer who has incorporated performance assessment into her teaching practice. In her reading class, Adele always encouraged students to choose their own books and read them independently, and then she would ask her students to talk and write about what they were reading. Throughout the years she developed portfolios of each student's best work, but she thought this was not a completely accurate measure of a student's learning. As Adele was looking for a comprehensive assessment technique to support the natural act of reading and responding to a story, she discovered through research that the performance assessment approach would give a better picture of what she wanted to know about her students' reading performance.

She adopted a performance assessment that required a common reading and writing task for the entire class. She begins by selecting a text that her students have not read—for example, a book discussing a story with a significant theme appropriate for her students that has a clearly identifiable problem and resolution, well-developed characters, and high interest. Adele then creates a writing task that encourages students to think about the story. Before they write their final draft, she gives them prewriting organizers such as webs, maps, and Venn diagrams, allowing her students to make notes about their ideas and giving them enough time to complete the performance assessment. Such a writing prompt for primary students would involve asking them to think about how to retell a story they have read to a friend. Students prewrite using a story map to outline all the important parts of the story and then write about the story on lined paper in final draft form.

Adele developed a rubric with ratings on a scale of 0–3 to evaluate children's writings about a story problem. Within the rubric, she provides detailed information of the performance level descriptions for all four levels (0–3). For example, to obtain a perfect score of 3, a student's written response must be complete, indicating good understanding of the story and its problem, and it must give accurate and relevant details, information, and supportive reasoning.

Quoted from: Abedi, *Performance assessments for English language learners*, reproduced in Abedi, J. (2014). "Adapting Performance Assessments for English Language Learners" in Darling-Hammond, L., & Adamson, F. (Eds). *Beyond the Bubble Test: How Performance Assessments Support 21st Century Learning* (pp. 185–205). New York, NY: Wiley.

Further Resources

For support in teaching academic vocabulary to English learners, see this video and the referenced artifacts from Teaching Channel showing how one teacher uses a seven-step process for introducing new vocabulary to English learners in grades 6–12. See this video and the referenced artifacts from Teaching Channel for additional guidance on how to scaffold newcomers' engagement with both language and content (specific to argumentation).

Source: Abedi, *Performance assessments for English language learners*, reproduced in Abedi, J. (2014). "Adapting Performance Assessments for English Language Learners" in Darling-Hammond, L., & Adamson, F. (Eds). *Beyond the Bubble Test: How Performance Assessments Support 21st Century Learning* (pp. 185–205). New York, NY: Wiley.

6. Encourage/coach students to be knowledgeable about their IEP/504 diagnosis and their accommodations/modifications

Students' knowledge of their IEP/504 diagnosis is helpful both for the students themselves and for the capstone/defense panelists who are assessing their portfolio and presentation. Encouraging students to know and understand their diagnosis, accommodations, and IEP/504 plan details involves close collaboration with your special education department to create policies and procedures for including these items in the development of the IEP and in preparing for the annual meetings with parents. Providing opportunities for students to reflect on and share their strengths and areas of challenge and supporting them in this process is extremely beneficial, as these skills will serve students' growth as they prepare for college and/or their future careers.

Source: Hawbaker, *Student-led IEP meetings: Planning and implementation strategies*.

7. Provide multiple opportunities to practice capstone/defense presentations

For example, in San Francisco International High School, students are provided opportunities to present in more informal settings in 11th grade (in front of peers, teachers, family members, and members of the community, when possible). This provides them with a lower-stakes space to practice their English fluency; however, this could also serve as a useful learning scaffold for any student. During these practice sessions, participants employ this Presentation Listening Guide. In one LAUSD school, students are provided a script for their 10th-grade mini-defense. This is designed as a scaffold for English learners and students with disabilities in particular.

Additionally, **videotaping practice student defenses** and allowing the students to watch themselves present can be a great learning tool to help students improve during their live presentation. This practice can also be an amazing archive of how much better students' presentation skills in general (or English proficiency, in particular) have grown over time.

Sources: LPI's *Performance Assessment Profile: San Francisco International High School*; *LAUSD Linked Learning Portfolio & Defense Weebly*.

8. Set up presentation space as a safe space for risk-taking

Doing the hard work of setting up the presentation space as a safe space for risk-taking in a new language can also be a critical support for English learners. This can mean having presentations happen in advisory groups (in which the students are in a familiar group of peers), doing rigorous norm setting, or allowing student presenters to have some say over whom they present to.

Having panelists who are either familiar with the student and/or are familiar with being a panel member for modified presentations may help to facilitate this sort of safe space.

9. Implement scaffolded Q&A sessions after students' capstone/defense presentations

For example, in Oakland International High School, a question-and-answer session follows all student presentations, even for students who are new to the school and in the early stages of learning English. In order to support newcomer students, the process is highly structured. For example, they receive a list of expected questions in advance of their presentation and practice answering those questions with support from their peers and teachers. By contrast, the process is free-ranging for 12th graders, who have presented their portfolio multiple times and are

approaching graduation. Anyone can ask an off-the-cuff question, and the student is expected to be ready to defend his or her knowledge.

Additional suggested practices from one LAUSD school include:

- Allowing for additional "think time" after questions are asked (to allow students time to process questions and formulate answers)
- Providing a written copy of questions (if they are prepared in advance) so that students can read them before their presentations (particularly useful for students who have auditory processing issues, but could also be useful for English learners)

Sources: LPI's *Performance Assessment Profile: Oakland International High School*; *LAUSD Possible Accommodations for Senior Defense*.

10. Modify the capstone/defense presentation setting according to student's IEP

There are a number of ways to do this. For instance, at Envision Schools, staff members make various accommodations or modifications to the defense presentation depending on the student's IEP. In some cases, this could mean reducing the length of the presentation by having the student present only two instead of three artifacts. This might also include reducing the complexity of the presentation by either highly structuring the different sections or allowing a student to only present on a certain section related to a given artifact—e.g., talk about the work, talk about what they learned, or talk about how it related to other learning in the real world.

The following suggestions, developed from teachers in an LAUSD school, can also be employed for students with a variety of educational needs as a means of better structuring capstone/defense presentations around their needs:

- For students who have autism and who experience other challenges with their social skills, note that considerations for "Presentation Skills" need to be made (i.e., may not look you in the eye, may fidget with hands, may be unable to gauge and use appropriate voice levels, etc.).
- Allow student breaks during the presentation if needed for the student to regain their composure and collect their thoughts.
- If the student is uncomfortable speaking, allow them to answer questions through other mediums (e.g., writing).
- Students' comfort level with physical proximity should be taken into consideration (i.e., some students may need more space with panelists farther away, while other students may speak quietly and not mind the panelists sitting closer so they can hear).
- Allow students to organize their thoughts on paper before answering questions if needed (metacognition—present their plan).
- When needed, support students by providing clarification on questions.
- When needed, panelists may give students three questions and allow them to pick two to answer (or give them two questions and allow them to pick one to answer).

In OUSD, some schools also have students receiving special education services present to **resource teachers** rather than the traditional full, mixed panel. This allows for students' presentations to be scored with their specific learning needs and growth better incorporated in their assessment.

Another practice is to focus the presentation on the student's areas of strength and to connect the presentations to their Transition Plan. This might mean that the student talks more about experiences they had while in high school, such as a work-based learning experience or a particular project or developing a particular set of skills.

Sources: *LAUSD Possible Accommodations for Senior Defense*; LPI's *Performance Assessment Profile: Oakland Unified School District*.

11. Modify presentation times and/or be intentional about scheduling defenses for English learners

As with students receiving special education services, English learners might also be given additional time to complete their defense presentations and intentionally be scheduled to present later in the school year to allow them to observe more of their peers' defenses before giving their own. Providing students with more time for their defenses, in particular, can be a useful practice for students who may benefit from more processing time and/or time to ask clarifying questions during the question-and-answer session.

Source: LPI's *Performance Assessment Profile: Los Angeles Unified School District*.

12. Structure capstone/defense presentation setting to support and celebrate bilingualism

To celebrate the identities of newcomers and other students whose native language is not English, some schools allow students to present their defenses in their native tongue. In this case, students are not marked down on the basis of English proficiency; rather, English language is treated as a construct-irrelevant feature of the assessment.

Another model that some LAUSD Linked Learning pathways employ is allowing English learner students to present their defense in English while responding to the Q&A section in Spanish. The same model could, of course, be replicated given any other language.

Both models require that the defense panelists can understand the native tongue of the student presenting. In cases in which no staff at a school know the native tongue of a student, there is an opportunity to bring in outside community members to serve on those panels.

Source: LPI's *Performance Assessment Profile: Los Angeles Unified School District*.

Scoring/Grading Considerations

13. Design rubrics to measure only construct-relevant factors

According to Dr. Jamal Abedi's resource, *Performance Assessments for English Language Learners*, "Scoring rubrics, particularly in large-scale assessments, are often validated.... The process of validating scoring rubrics should always include clear instructions to avoid factors unrelated to the content, but oftentimes is especially critical to support English learners. For example, in content-based areas such as math and science, where spelling and grammar are not the focal construct of measurement, students should not be penalized for spelling or grammar errors."

In other words, rubrics should be designed not to measure "construct irrelevant" variance—i.e., differences in students' performance that are due to features of the assessment it was not designed to measure. There will certainly be assessments in which a student's ability to define key terms in

English and use them in a response is part of the construct and should be reflected in the rubric. However, in other assessments (such as one measuring a student's ability to apply logic through the scientific method), their English language and grammar may not be part of the construct. In that case, it should not be reflected in the rubric.

Additionally, rubrics should be understood by teachers and districts as more than merely a scoring tool, but rather as an articulated learning progression of a specific competency. Taken this way, it is very easy to conceive of how a student can perform both very well in a particular competency and less strongly in another, even similar, competency. The developmental rubric can also more easily tell a story of growth over time—something that should be highlighted in capstone/defense presentations, especially for students who are working really hard to build certain skills.

Sources: Abedi, *Performance assessments for English language learners*, reproduced in Abedi, J. (2014). "Adapting Performance Assessments for English Language Learners" in Darling-Hammond, L., & Adamson, F. (Eds). *Beyond the Bubble Test: How Performance Assessments Support 21st Century Learning* (pp. 185–205). New York, NY: Wiley; ETS, *Guidelines for the Assessment of English Language Learners*.

14. Calibrate defense/capstone presentation panelists

Although properly training scorers to be consistent/reliable should be the goal for their scoring of all students, it is particularly important for English learners, because their language background might negatively affect the level of consistency between scorers. As such, professional development sessions focused on calibration should be clearly presented, and the goal of performance assessments and the validated rubric should be introduced to the scorers. Discussion of the issues concerning scoring of performance assessment tasks for student subgroups—such as English learners or students receiving special education services—should be explicitly included in these training sessions.

Source: Abedi, *Performance assessments for English language learners*, reproduced in Abedi, J. (2014). "Adapting Performance Assessments for English Language Learners" in Darling-Hammond, L., & Adamson, F. (Eds). *Beyond the Bubble Test: How Performance Assessments Support 21st Century Learning* (pp. 185–205). New York, NY: Wiley.

Appendix A. Additional Resources

For additional tools on how to provide accommodations to students in general (including how to design curriculum, organize classroom environments, etc.), see the following resources:

- PACER Center & Center on Technology and Disability, School Accommodation and Modification Ideas for Students Who Receive Special Education Resources
- Smart Kids With Learning Disabilities, Examples of Accommodations & Modifications
- Understood, Common Modifications and Accommodations

For content lesson plans (in English Language Arts, Math, and Science), see the research-backed lesson plans developed by Stanford's Understanding Language initiative here.

For a great resource on how to design/adapt performance tasks, see SCALE's resource, "Performance Assessment Task Adaptation Guidelines."

Appendix B. High-Stakes Testing Modifications

This section provides guidance on linguistic modifications in the context of more standardized assessment. These examples are less relevant in the context of performance assessments, such as the portfolio/defense or senior capstone, as the tasks are often classroom-embedded over time and take the form of project-based learning. For those still interested in providing modifications beyond their performance assessment systems, we have kept this information in the document.

When building performance tasks (i.e., assignments that might be included in a student's portfolio), linguistic modifications can be critical to ensuring that assessments are valid and fair (and free of cultural biases)—not just for English learners, but also for students with difficulty reading. Research shows that such modifications improve the performance of English learners, as well as other students in low- and average-level classes. Fundamentally, it is not possible to accurately assess a student's true content knowledge, unless that student understands what is being asked of them.

Examples of such linguistic modifications include:

- Reducing the length of the task's wording
- Eliminating conditional clauses and grammatical complexities (such as passive voice)
- Using more familiar words and concepts

Note that this does NOT mean avoiding technical language for the content being measured—i.e., a geometry task should not avoid the use of technically relevant words like "quadrilateral" or "rhombus" as a modification, and an ELA task should not avoid the intentional introduction of new vocabulary. Research suggests that ELA tasks should, however, avoid the use of low-frequency vocabulary and language structures that are incidental to the content knowledge being assessed.

For support in teaching academic vocabulary to English learners, see the videos and resources referenced on page 5.

For helpful step-by-step guides on how to create linguistic modifications in assessments for English learners, you can find two resources developed by the U.S. Department of Education here.

The following two tables provide examples of what linguistic modifications might look like in the context of math tasks.

Sources: Abedi, *Performance assessments for English language learners*, reproduced in Abedi, J. (2014). "Adapting Performance Assessments for English Language Learners" in Darling-Hammond, L., & Adamson, F. (Eds). *Beyond the Bubble Test: How Performance Assessments Support 21st Century Learning* (pp. 185–205). New York, NY: Wiley; Abedi, *Language Factors in the Assessment of English Language Learners: The Theory and Principles Underlying the Linguistic Modification Approach*.

Math Task Items, Modified for Linguistic Access

Original Item	Linguistically Modified Item
Dorothy is running for president of the student body and wants to create campaign posters to hang throughout the school. She has determined that there are four main hallways that need six posters each. A single poster takes one person 30 minutes to create and costs a total of $1.50.	You want to plant 6 roses in each of 4 large pots. Planting a single rose takes you 30 minutes and costs $1.50.
What would be the total cost for Dorothy to create all the needed posters? Show your work.	What is the total cost to plant all the roses? Show your work.
If two people working together can create a poster in 20 minutes, how much total time would Dorothy save by getting a friend to help her? Show your work.	With a friend's help, you can plant a rose in 20 minutes. How much total time do you save by getting a friend to help? Show your work.
If Dorothy works alone for 3 hours and is then joined by her friend, calculate exactly how much total time it will take to create all the necessary posters. Show your work.	You work alone for 3 hours, and then a friend joins you. Now how much total time will it take to plant all the roses? Show your work.
Omar, Dorothy's opponent, decided to create his posters on a Saturday and get his friends Janice and Beth to help. He knows that he can create 24 posters in 12 hours if he works alone. He also knows that Janice can create 24 posters in 10 hours and Beth can create 24 posters in 9 hours. How long will it take them, if all three of them work together, to create the 24 posters? Round all decimals to the nearest hundredth. Show your work.	You can plant 24 roses in 12 hours. Your friend Al can plant 24 roses in 10 hours and your friend Kim can plant 24 roses in 9 hours. How long does it take the three of you to plant 24 roses together? Round all decimals to the nearest hundredth. Show your work.
When Omar went to purchase his posters, he discovered that the cost of creating a poster had increased by 20%. How many posters will he be able to create if he wants to spend the same amount of money on his posters as Dorothy? Justify your answer.	You just discovered that the cost of purchasing a rose increased by 20%. How many roses can you plant with the same amount of money that you spent when a rose cost $1.50? Justify your answer.

Original Source: Abedi, *Performance Assessments for English Language Learners*, modified from: New Jersey Department of Education (2003), 2002–03 SRA Mathematics Performance Assessment Task.

For another example of a linguistically modified math task, with explanation on why certain elements were changed, see the next table.

Math Task Items, Modified for Linguistic Access (With Explanations)

Original Item	Linguistically Modified Item	Notes
Alba needed to know about how much the sum of 19.6, 23.8, and 38.4 is. She correctly rounded each of these numbers to the nearest whole number. What three numbers did she use? A. 19, 23, 38 B. 19, 24, 38 C. 20, 24, 38 D. 20, 24, 39	Look at the numbers below. 19.6 23.8 38.4 Which list shows each number rounded to the nearest whole number? A. 19 23 38 B. 19 24 38 C. 20 24 38 D. 20 24 39	Remove extraneous, potentially misleading information; Change verb tense (present); Less complex sentence structure; Off-set key information
Kate bought a game for $14.95, a book for $5.85, and a hat for $9.70. If the sales tax on these items is 6 percent and all 3 items are taxable, what is the total amount she must pay for the 3 items, including tax? A. $32.33 B. $32.06 C. $30.56 D. $30.50	Kate buys the three items listed below: Game: $14.95 Book: $5.85 Hat: $9.70 Kate pays 6% sales tax on the items. What is the total cost of the three items, including tax? A. $32.33 B. $32.06 C. $30.56 D. $30.50	Change verb tense (present); Less complex sentence structure; Off-set key information
If Jill is driving at 65 miles per hour, what is her approximate speed in kilometers per hour? (1 mile ≈1.6 kilometers) A. 16 B. 41 C. 104 D. 173	65 miles per hour ≈ ____ kilometers per hour (1 mile ≈ 1.6 kilometers) A. 16 B. 41 C. 104 D. 173	Remove complex sentence structure; Less complex structure of stem; Off-set key information
  Which of the following numerical expressions gives the area of the rectangle above? A. 4 x 6 B. 4 + 6 C. 2(4 x 6) D. 2(4 + 6)	Look at the rectangle below. Which expression describes the area of the rectangle? A. 4 x 6 B. 4 + 6 C. 2(4 x 6) D. 2(4 + 6)	Explicit directions/orientation to problem; Less complex sentence construction

Source: Sato, *A Guide to Linguistic Modification: Increasing English Language Learner Access to Academic Content*.

ELA performance tasks can also be linguistically modified through seemingly minor changes in language. For example, it is helpful to shift from the use of the passive voice to the active voice for English learners. And, similar to math tasks, avoiding construct-irrelevant language can also support English learners' performance on ELA tasks.

For an example of how to modify an ELA task for linguistic access, see below (and in the linked document that follows for additional examples):

ELA Task Items, Modified for Linguistic Access*

Original Item	Linguistically Modified Item
What information **led** scientist to discover that the Earth's ice cover is **diminishing rapidly**? A. The discovery of the greenhouse effect by a Swedish scientist about 30 years ago B. **The fact that** mountainous areas of the world are experiencing more precipitation C. The discovery by the British that the ice shelf in the Antarctic is stable and predictable D. A discovery of open water at the North Pole and evidence from two scientific studies	What information **helped** scientists to discover that the Earth's ice cover is **disappearing quickly**? A. The discovery of the greenhouse effect by a Swedish scientist about 30 years ago B. Mountain areas of the world are experiencing more precipitation C. The discovery by the British that the ice shelf in the Antarctic is stable and predictable D. A discovery of open water the North Pole and evidence from two scientific studies
What effects would rising sea levels have on Bangladesh? A. The rainfall would increase and the ice mass would **diminish** B. Mountainous areas would see less rainfall, depleting summer water reserves C. The country would lose much of its farmland, forcing resident to move inland D. Temperatures of low-lying areas would rise, forcing people to move to cooler coastal areas	What would happen to Bangladesh if sea levels continued to rise? A. The rainfall would increase and the ice mass would **disappear** B. There would be less rainfall in mountainous areas that will empty summer water reserves C. The country would lose much of its farmland and force residents to move inland D. Temperatures of low-lying areas would rise, and force people to move to cooler coastal areas
What evidence **best supports the author's claim** that people have been aware of the changes in the earth's climate for a very long time? A. Over the last century, sea levels rose significantly in all parts of the world B. The glaciers in the Alps have shrunk about 40 percent in the last 50 years C. The warmest 23 years have **all taken place** in approximately the last 30 years D. In the early 20th century, a scientist warned of the risks of increased CO_2 levels	What **is the** evidence **that shows** that people have known the changes in the earth's climate for a very long time? A. Over the last century, sea levels rose significantly in all parts of the world B. The glaciers in the Alps have gotten about 40 percent smaller in the last 50 years C. The warmest 23 years **happened** in approximately the last 30 years D. In the early 20th century, a scientist warned of the risks of increased CO_2 levels

*Examples of modifications and the original language that has been modified are bolded.

Source: Beckham, *Effects of linguistic modification accommodation of high school English language learners' academic performance*.