

Module Title	Special Needs Assisting	Module Code	5N1786
Assessment Technique	Skills Demonstration	Weighting	60%

Additional Guidelines

1. Relating Skills: (15 Marks)

A key role of the SNA is to assist children with their self-care needs and communication difficulties. To relate effectively and appropriately to children who present with these needs, the SNA must have a good understanding of the child's condition.

a) Drawing on your placement experience, present a case study of a child you have worked with who has **care support needs** and/or **communication difficulties**. If you have not completed the placement element at this point, you can draw on your course learning to present a case study based on a fictitious child who has **care support needs** and/or **communication difficulties**.

Present a background profile of a child (can be fictitious) outlining their age and the class they are in. The child's area of need (difficulty) and strengths and interests. Name the child's condition, e.g., Autism, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy etc. You must pick a condition whereby the child (real or fictitious) would need SNA support with care needs (toileting, dressing, feeding, hygiene, etc.) or the child must be non-speaking or have limited speech. * See case study example on page 8.

b) Define the child's condition and its associated characteristics.

Give a definition of the condition (e.g., autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy etc.). Then, explain the difficulties a child with that condition experiences and also the strengths associated with the condition. This will be a general understanding of the condition; you do not need to refer to the child outlined in the case study here. You should research the condition in books or online to find this information. Ensure you reference the source.

c) Outline your understanding of Non-Verbal Communication skills and Active Listening techniques referring to the importance of these skills to the work of an effective SNA. Describe how you practiced, **or intend to practice**, these skills when supporting the child mentioned in your case study.

What is non-verbal communication? Why is practicing good NVC skills important to the work of a SNA? E.g., to develop genuine, trusting, and empathetic relationships with the students.

Explain what Active Listening is, the key elements of Active Listening and why it is important to the work of a SNA. How did you practice good NVC and Active Listening skills during your placement? Or, how might you practice these skills as a future SNA.

2. Practical Skills (complete section a or b) (15 Marks)

a) You are required to assist in the preparation and implementation of **one** of the evidence-based approaches below to support the case study child in developing their independence with a **self-care** skill (e.g., toileting, general hygiene, dressing or feeding)

- Social Story
- Visual Task Analysis and Chaining
- Positive Reinforcement

Your report must address the following topics:

- A description of and theory behind the chosen approach.
- The rationale for choosing the approach to support the child with a self-care skill.
- Preparation for the task explaining how the level of assistance that the child required was determined, materials required and adherence to any specific approach guidelines when preparing the task.
- Outline how the task was implemented to include a copy of the social story, visual task analysis or positive reinforcement visual supports (e.g., token economy, first/then). Note, no children or staff should be identified or photographed.
- Evaluate the task taking into consideration what was good about the experience and what did not go so well both from your perspective and also the child's perspective. ***Note, if you have not completed the placement element at this point, you may evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the chosen approach.**

OR

b) You are required to assist in the preparation and implementation of one of the evidence-based augmentative and alternative communication approaches below to support the case study child with severe communication difficulties (non-speaking).

- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
- Lámh Sign Language
- Assistive Technology

Your report must address the following topics:

- A description of and theory behind the chosen approach.
- The rationale for choosing the approach to support the child.
- Preparation for the task explaining how the level of assistance that the child required was or may be determined, materials required and adherence to any specific approach guidelines when preparing the task.
- Outline how the SNA would assist in the implementation of the approach. Include examples or images to support, e.g., a copy of a PECS communication book and PECS symbols, images of reinforcers (rewards), images of Lámh signs or assistive technology. Note, if you have carried out this task in the placement setting, no children or staff should be identified or photographed.
- Evaluate the task, taking into consideration what was good about the experience and what did not go so well both from your perspective and also the child's perspective.

*Note, if you have not completed the placement element at this point, you may evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the chosen approach.

You chose one approach out of the six above for your real or fictitious case study. Address the following 5 topics:

1. Give a description of and theory behind the chosen approach (for example, Positive Reinforcement, Task Analysis and PECS all use principles of ABA, Social Stories are to support the social understanding of children on the autism spectrum).
2. The rationale (advantages/benefits) for choosing the approach to support the child in your case study. Research the approach for this and look at unit 3 notes.
3. Preparation for the task explaining how the level of assistance that the child requires/required was determined, materials required/needed and adherence to any specific approach guidelines when preparing for the task.

This is where you say that you observed the child first to determine the assistance required, you could mention an observation technique (see unit 6 notes).

You would explain that you carried out a reinforcer assessment (if you're discussing Positive Reinforcement, Task Analysis or PECS). Mention if you downloaded, printed & laminated visuals etc. Mention how you adhered to specific requirements.

Examples - if you wrote a Social Story, you would need to adhere to specific criteria and sentence types etc. If you discuss Lámh you would mention the rules for signing.

4. Outline how the task was/would be implemented to include a copy of the social story or photos/images of visual task analysis, positive reinforcement visual supports (e.g., token economy, first/then) or photographs/images of materials needed/used for PECS, Lámh, Assistive Tech etc. Note: no children or staff should be identified or photographed. You will discuss how you assisted in the preparation/implementation of the task, for example, you may have been the silent physical prompter when implementing PECS or you may have given hand over hand assistance (full physical prompt) when teaching the child, a task analysis
5. Evaluate the task taking into consideration what was good about the experience and what did not go so well both from your perspective and the child's perspective. Alternatively, evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the chosen approach.

3. Interpersonal Skills: (15 Marks)

SNAs must possess good interpersonal skills to maintain appropriate and professional relationships with members of the multidisciplinary team (MDT) while supporting children to develop independence with their self-care and communication skills. The SNA will often work as part of the MDT to develop a child's Personal Pupil Plan (PPP).

- Discuss your understanding of the role of the SNA as part of a school Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) including the SNA role in the preparation and implementation of the Personal Pupil Plan (PPP).

Outline what a MDT is and the role of a SNA as part of the MDT.

Explain what a PPP is and the SNA role as part of the PPP process. See course notes unit 6 and DES circular 0030/2014.

- Describe the interpersonal skills you demonstrated as part of the MDT in your placement setting.

Here you will discuss two interpersonal skills you demonstrated during your placement working with colleagues as part of a team in the classroom/school. Interpersonal skills cover: Communication Skills, Teamwork, Problem Solving, Emotional Intelligence etc. If you have not completed the placement element at this point, you may describe the interpersonal skills that are important to the work of an effective SNA.

- Develop and present an example of a Personal Pupil Plan for the case study child. [See copy of PPP template on page 7.](#)

4. Good Practice Skills: (15 Marks)

To work in a safe and professional manner and to ensure the rights of children are respected, the SNA must uphold key principles of good practice. Discuss the importance of the five key guiding principles below giving examples of how a SNA can incorporate these principles in their role.

- **Independence** – to include a discussion on supporting skills while avoiding over-helping children.

Refer to and reference a reading about the importance of promoting independence and not over-helping children with additional needs. Give examples of how you promoted or would aim to promote a child's independence.

- **Inclusion** - to include a discussion on the benefits of and barriers to inclusive education.

List the benefits of and the barriers to inclusive education. How did you/would you ensure inclusive practice? Give examples of good inclusive practice and/or details of how you observed good inclusive practices in the placement setting.

- **Children's Rights** - to include the key principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

Briefly outline the key principles of the UNCRC. How did/would you promote children's rights in school? How did you see rights being promoted by the school team? Or, how you would aim to promote the rights of the child?

- **Confidentiality** – to include SNA compliance with data protection and GDPR.

Discuss the importance of confidentiality. Discuss the SNA role in GDPR, refer to www.gdpr4schools.ie website for help with this. How did you/would you ensure confidentiality when working in the setting?

- **Child Protection** - to include the key principles of the Children First Act 2015 and Children First Guidance 2017.

Outline the key principles of Children First Act 2015 and the Children First Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017. Explain what a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is and who that would be in a school setting. How did/would you ensure child protection policy was complied with?

IMPORTANT NOTE

Please ensure to clearly reference all information sourced in your work with evidence of in-text referencing and supporting bibliography.

To ensure that the correct referencing format is applied, learners should refer to the referencing guidelines and plagiarism policy. Penalties will apply to those assessments that do not consider the referencing guidelines. All guidelines can be accessed on the student resources hub: <https://studyhub.theopencollege.com/>

Top Tip! To maximize assessment marks, you must support your points with reference to readings, websites, videos etc. Try to paraphrase (put in your own words) the information as much as possible. This demonstrates that you have read and understood the topics. Remember, even if you paraphrase, you must always reference where you sourced the information.

Use the Skills Demonstration Assignment Template (answer booklet). This is in the assessment area under the brief and additional guidelines documents.

Assignment Layout

The layout of your Skills Demonstration assessment Word document must consider each of the following headings:

- **Introduction – (write a brief introduction to the assignment)**
- **Relating Skills**
- **Practical Skills**
- **Interpersonal Skills**
- **Good Practice Skills**
- **Reference List (Bibliography)**
- **Appendices (supporting material if applicable)**

Personal Pupil Plan

Complete the PPP based on the real or fictitious child as outlined in your case study.

Student's name		Age	
Lead teacher		Class/year	
Start date of plan		Review Date	
SNA(s)			
Student's strengths and interests			
Priority personal care concerns			
Possible reasons for concerns			
Targets for the student			
Strategies to help the student achieve the targets			
Staff involved and resources needed			
Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)			
Signature of teacher			
Signature(s) of SNA(s)			

Case Study Example

The child's name has been changed for confidentiality reasons.

Johnny is a six-year-old boy with Down syndrome. He lives at home with his mother, father, and two older sisters. He attends a mainstream school and is in senior infants' class. A special needs assistant supports Johnny with his care needs and communication difficulties.

Johnny has good receptive language but limited expressive language. He is a visual learner and uses a visual timetable and first/next board.

Johnny needs assistance with toileting & dressing. He struggles with sequencing the steps of using the toilet and struggles with trousers, buttons, and zips due to fine motor difficulty.

Johnny often needs assistance with eating. He can eat independently, however, he can fail to realise if he needs to clean his face after eating. He requires help opening and closing lunch items.

Johnny loves to socialise with other children. He gets very frustrated if people do not understand what he is trying to say. This can lead to him displaying behaviours such as kicking or hitting out.

Johnny likes to play with vehicles and particularly likes Thomas the Tank Engine.