



Developing Barrier-Related Skills and Strategies

At Action Driven Education, we strive to help educators and parents recognize the power of accommodations as a means to support students around their needs. However, as the Barrier Moving Mindset® teaches, the permanent solution to addressing a child's struggles is by developing barrier-related skills and strategies. Skills and strategies empower students to overcome challenges independently, equipping them with tools to succeed in the classroom and in life. Students learn that barriers are a part of life that are overcome by learning and developing skills in the areas where they struggle. By fostering resilience, developing skills, and teaching the importance of using strategies, we help children learn to thrive in any environment by turning obstacles into opportunities for growth.

[Read on to learn more!](#)

What do you do when a child can't read? You teach them reading strategies. What do you do when a child struggles with organization? You teach them organization skills. What do you do when the child struggles with _____? You teach them _____ skills and strategies. It seems obvious, right? But how do we do this? How can educators accomplish everything we need to do in a day and still find time to teach barrier-related skills? Read on to find out!

What are barrier-related skills and strategies?

barrier-related skills and strategies **noun**

1 a : abilities and techniques a child develops in the specific area(s) where they struggle. These skills and strategies are used to overcome academic, behavioral, social/emotional, or other obstacles that hinder their progress in educational, vocational, or other areas of life.

"Pay Attention"

Tell me the story...

A distracted student

"Oliver, please pay attention," Ms. Stevens subtly suggests as she circles past Oliver's desk. Oliver pulls his hands out of his desk and begrudgingly slumps his head down on his arm, his eyes settling on the board in an attempt to make sense of Ms. Stevens' lesson on adjectives. To Oliver, it seems like he hears this reminder to pay attention a thousand times a day.

Ms. Stevens continues with the lesson. "I need everyone to come up with a sentence using an adjective."

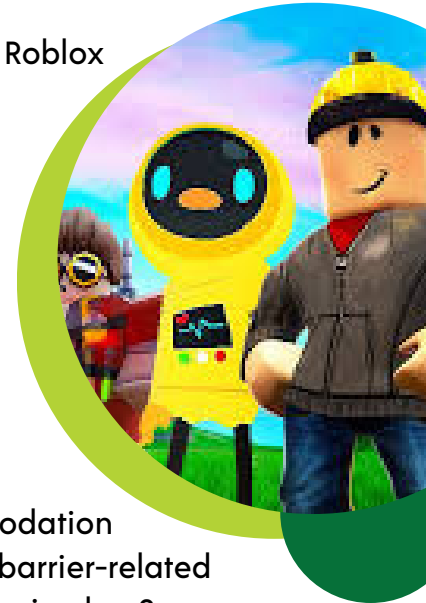
Oliver thinks to himself, *This is so frustrating. Hmm... is frustrating an adjective because it describes how I feel? I'm so frustrated. It was frustrating last night when Mom asked me to walk the dog, and then he wouldn't go, so I couldn't get back to playing my video game. I was doing so well at Roblox! I built such a cool experience and was just ready to play in it when I had to take the dog out. That one tower I built was going to be awesome to climb.*

As he's thinking, Oliver takes a broken piece of pencil, imagining it as his Roblox character, and begins climbing the books in his desk like a tower.

"Oliver, I just asked you to please pay attention!" Ms. Stevens yells.

"I was paying attention," Oliver replies.

"No, you were not. You were playing in your desk again," Ms. Stevens retorts as she heads back to the front of the class to continue the lesson.



What's the context?

Develop the ability to pay attention

Oliver struggles to pay attention in class. Ms. Stevens is using an accommodation—a verbal reminder—to help him focus, but when is he actually developing barrier-related skills? In other words, when is he learning the skills necessary to pay attention in class?

There is no class called "Paying Attention" that happens daily in the child's schedule. When is Oliver learning how to self-monitor his engagement, refocus his attention, and develop the other skills his peers use to stay on task?

The answer is that there are many opportunities to provide this instruction. However, Oliver's teachers and parents need to be creative in recognizing and taking advantage of these opportunities. The team might work together to maximize learning moments at home and school, including:

- Planning and being informed about the skills and strategies the team is working to develop. Get the entire team on board! [Watch this video](#)
- Teaching self-monitoring techniques that are encouraged and supported across all environments, including home, class, and other settings. [Learn more here](#)

Get to the point...

Developing skills and strategies

All members of a child's instructional team should work together to ensure the child works to build barrier-related skills and strategies. These skills and strategies are the permanent solution to helping the child address their learning, behavioral, and social barriers. Through teamwork and by developing creative solutions, teams can ensure the learner acquires the skills necessary to overcome any challenge. Do not overlook the importance of building barrier-related skills and strategies!

The story continues...

A permanent solution

Ms. Stevens realizes that, to do her best job teaching English Language Arts, she also needs to teach Oliver how to pay attention in class and stay engaged with academic tasks. She works with other stakeholders, including Oliver's family, to help him develop self-monitoring skills that will allow him to redirect himself. As a ten-year-old learner, gaining these skills will empower Oliver to manage himself without relying so much on others.



Ms. Stevens understands that she must be intentional about creating opportunities to learn and rehearse these skills. She begins:

- Planning videos for Oliver to watch at home.
- Redesigning instructional activities to integrate short reading and writing assignments that reinforce both academic standards and self-monitoring skills.
- Collaborating with her colleagues to encourage them to reinforce these skills in their own classes.
- Implementing ten-minute intensive skill-building lessons during the homeroom period.
- Hosting a weekly "lunch bunch" where she eats with Oliver and several of his friends to discuss moments when they caught themselves daydreaming and how they brought their attention back to their tasks.

As Ms. Stevens continues working to create opportunities for Oliver to develop self-monitoring skills, she finds that it becomes easier to identify and implement strategies. Her creativity skyrockets, and she discovers even more ways to integrate skill-building into everyday learning. Over time, these interventions are no longer necessary, as Oliver begins paying attention in class independently!

Be action-driven...

1. To effectively address a child's barrier (need) we should work in two ways. We should plan ways to develop barrier-related skills while simultaneously supporting the learner around their needs with just-right accommodations.® Log in to [Accomods®](#) to explore the support you're providing a child.
2. Consider a child in your classroom or school that's struggling. When and how is that learner working to develop need-related skills? How might you enhance this effort?

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Even more ideas!

Consider a few more ideas of ways you can support a learner in **building or rehearsing** barrier-related skills and strategies!

- Redesign activities to teach skills (use ChatGPT to develop a reading assignment, give different writing topics, change spelling words, etc.).
- Assign online activities as homework or as a supplement to regular homework.
- Plan and share videos for parents to play during car rides
- Select library books or other reading materials that reinforce barrier-related skills.
- Provide a tip-of-the-day to the student as they enter your classroom.
- Provide a personalized note reminding the student of a skill or strategy they should practice in class today.
- Plan for and take advantage of any moment(s) of downtime to provide instruction.
- Walk with the child beside you in line when moving through the school.
- Chat as the student enters class.
- Hang out with the learner at recess.
- Send the student an email with a link to a video, article, or other resource.
- Plan and coordinate the efforts of others (paras, colleagues, parent volunteers, etc.) by sharing goals you have for the student
- Build an online minicourse.
- Be creative, scan for resources and opportunities, you'll be surprised what opportunities you might create!

Download a Top-Ten List showing why skills and strategies matter so much!

Click Me!

Why Skills and Strategies Matter

The top-ten reasons why developing skills and strategies are key to eliminating a learner's learning, social/emotional, or behavioral barrier.

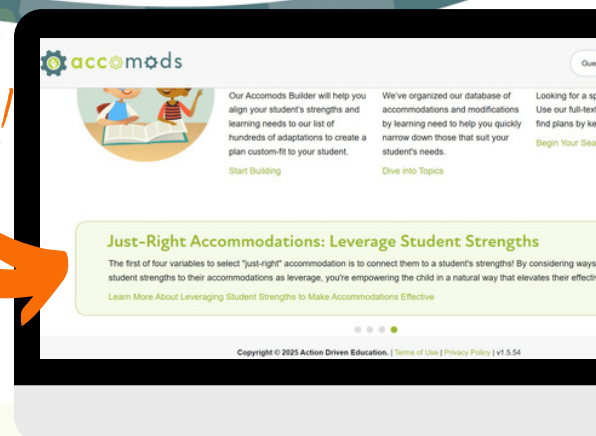
- 1 Skills and strategies are plentiful - there are many to learn, giving us many options for responding to a challenging task or situation.
- 2 They're able to be taught - anyone can teach them, typically without the need for expertise!
- 3 Skills and strategies are easily generalized - once mastered, skills and strategies can be easily used by the learner in many settings and situations!
- 4 Skills and strategies are possessions - once we have them they're ours!
- 5 Skills and strategies are tools - they can be used anytime the learner needs them!
- 6 Skills and strategies are specific - you can quite literally talk about them, ask the child if they used them, gain insight into how they're used!
- 7 Skills and strategies are quick to develop - skills and strategies can be learned, and used by the learner in a short amount of time!
- 8 Skills and strategies are the attainable building blocks - how do you become a "good reader" or "good at math" by developing individual skills and strategies?
- 9 Skills and strategies boost the learner's confidence - when we feel empowered and better prepared, we're more likely to try!
- 10 Skills and strategies serve as direct replacement - when we are challenged by a task or situation, how do we learn a new skill or strategy?

Newest Feature!

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Check it out!

Did you notice that **Accomods®** now includes Best-Practice Tips? - It's just one more way Action Driven Education is working to ensure an effective education for all children!



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