

## CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

This is an example of different classroom strategies that could be used to modify the educational environment to accommodate students with various weaknesses. Many strategies listed are merely “good teaching” methods that are applicable to all students. These examples were compiled from a variety of resources.

**Comprehension-Knowledge** – Students with weaknesses in this area may struggle with language-laden material, may show a lack of interest for language activities, and may have difficulty linking new information to information already learned.

- Simplify language, give precise directions
- Break language-laden tasks into smaller parts
- Review key vocabulary prior to presenting new material
- Have the student relate new information to his/her own experiences
- Attempt to relate new concepts to ideas he/she already understands by using analogies from his/her own experiences
- Prior to and after reading, have him/her relate an event or character in the story to his/her own life
- Teach the student to read for meaning, attempting to associate the meaning of a passage with his/her own knowledge or experience
- Teach concept formation skills. Provide activities which involve abstract words, classifications, and generalizations
- Be careful in using words with multiple meanings
- Teach “technical terms” which are specific to the content area

**Long-Term Retrieval** – Students with weaknesses in this area may have difficulty accurately storing and retrieving information. New learning may be difficult.

- Teach broad concepts followed by supporting details
- Encourage “pre-learning” activities
- External organizers (outlines, webbing, planners, time-lines)
- Use mnemonic strategies to encourage memory and retrieval for new or complex information
- Teach “chunking” strategies
- Use color-coded or decorated flash cards (markers, glitter, stylized writing)
- Encourage students to put vocabulary words, concepts, number facts, etc., on index cards for continuous review.

**Visual-Spatial Thinking** – Students with weaknesses in this area may have difficulty seeing visual patterns, how things fit together in space, and retaining what they have seen. In addition to reading and math problems, they may struggle with the calendar, reading maps, doing geometry, and possibly even completing art projects.

- Supply auditory cues to supplement visual information (tape recorded reading to listen to while following along in a book)
- Verbal explanation should accompany all visual material/tasks
- Give oral tests
- Encourage the use of graph paper
- Keep visual distractions to a minimum; don’t clutter the chalkboard
- Encourage oral and written rehearsal for material that needs to be memorized

**Auditory Processing** – Students with weaknesses in this area may have difficulty discriminating sounds, using phonics, following directions, listening to and learning from lectures, taking class notes, and filtering out nonessential auditory information. Learning a foreign language may be difficult.

- Supply visual cues to supplement auditory information
- Give preferential seating so that the student can see the teacher’s face when he/she is speaking
- Avoid multiple directions-instead, show the student what to do
- Avoid giving homework orally

- Avoid oral tests
- Supply a copy of class notes or outline of discussion before the lesson
- Students with auditory processing difficulties can be sensitive to and distracted by auditory stimuli; keep auditory distractions to a minimum or provide a place where auditory distractions are kept at a minimum
- Use a variety of visual learning materials (films, computers, flash cards, etc.)

**Fluid Reasoning** – Students with weaknesses in this area may have difficulty solving more abstract problems, particularly when they involve increasing steps and complexity.

- Break down complex problems, identifying steps toward solutions
- Present information as concretely as possible, relate information to something the student can see and touch

**Short-Term Memory** – Students with weaknesses in this area may have difficulty following directions and multiple steps. They may seem to lose their train of thought easily and may commonly ask for the same information over and over.

- Encourage the student to question any directions, explanations, and/or instructions he /she doesn't understand.
  - Evaluate the appropriateness of the memory activities in the class (task too difficult, length of time to complete task is inappropriate, etc.)
  - Teach associative memory clues
  - Use multiple modalities when presenting directions, explanations, and content.
  - Teach the student how to organize information into smaller units (chunking)
  - Provide a calculator, multiplication tables, etc. during instruction in a new process in order to avoid interference with learning the new process
  - Teach student how to make notes to remember specific information
  - Teach student to recognize key words and phrases related to information
  - Reduce distracting stimuli when information is being presented or when the student is working independently
  - Give the student one task to perform at a time. Introduce the next task only when the student has successfully completed the previous one.
  - Teaches the student information gathering skills (listening carefully, writing down important points, asking for clarification, waiting until all the information is given before beginning, etc.)
  - Stop at various points during the presentation and check for the student's comprehension
  - Provide environmental cues and prompts designed to enhance his/her success in the classroom (posted rules, schedule of events, steps for performing tasks) and teach him/her how to use them
  - Provide the student with a written list of things to do, materials needed, etc.
- Establish a regular routine for the student to follow in performing activities, assignments, etc.

**Processing Speed** – Students with weaknesses in this area may appear slow to complete work and may have difficulty discriminating between and among bits of information, particularly when under time constraints.

Problems could also be due to difficulty tracking and scanning.

- Do not require the student to work under time pressure. Place emphasis on accuracy rather than speed.
- Provide ample time to complete work or shorten the assignments so they can be accomplished within the allotted time
- Reduce the amount of work required to be completed during independent time so that he/she is likely to complete his/her work in school.
- Provide extra visual structure on worksheets and assignments (arrange problems in boxes)
- Provide student with index card or word box to keep his/her place.