

Edward Jacobs, Ph.D. & Associates
Psychological Services • Testing • Neurofeedback •
Learning Disabilities Services • Tutoring
12 Parmenter Road
Londonderry, NH 03053
www.JacobsAssociates.org

Phone: (603) 437-2069
Fax: (603) 437-5588

TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH PROCESSING DEFICITS

Language Processing or Auditory Processing Deficits

Provide visual cues and hands-on learning experiences.

Provide more opportunities for discussion and interactive learning, rather than primarily lecture based classes.

Play word games, such as Scattergories or Password, to help build vocabulary skills.

Relate new information to experiences that student has already had

Provide concrete examples and information when teaching new concepts. Slowly build to the abstract level by making connections among the concrete, visual information.

Create graphic representations of information heard or read. Flow charts, for example, can represent procedural concepts such as steps for a bill to become a law and photosynthesis; tables can be used to compare and contrast concepts learned during classroom instruction.

Use discussion groups and questioning activities in which the student moves through the stages of summarizing ideas, generating questions about the material, clarifying comprehension of the material and predicting or anticipating information to come.

Activate associations by having student attach visualizations or mental images to information she is learning.

Preview new vocabulary and new concepts.

Give examples of what will constitute a good answer on an exam and explain why.

Attention and Organizational Deficits

Have student sit near the front of the classroom and the sources of information.

Develop strategies for completing multi-step tasks, such as underlining each step and then making a check mark next to each one to ensure that he has completed every step.

Provide a written outline of lecture notes prior to the lecture.

Break study periods into short periods over several days, rather than studying a large amount of material during one session just before the test.

Promote the even use of effort and pacing. For example, to reduce the likelihood of the student rushing through a task, require him to: plan for so many minutes, work for so many minutes, and review for so many minutes.

Teach the student to use pre-reading strategies, such as looking at headings, subheadings, charts, and questions prior to reading. Then he should break reading assignments into manageable sections to read and take notes to clarify his understanding.

Break extended activities down into smaller tasks, e.g., a long lecture into two parts.

When giving directions and instructions, limit the use of multi-step directions

Group similar concepts together in your lesson. Help the student to see the patterns in what he is learning through how your presentation is organized

Teach post-listening activities:

- Reviewing notes from a lesson after class,

- Connecting what was heard today with what is already in notes,

- Questioning oneself if there is anything the student does not understand so he can get immediate clarification,

- Drawing up a summary statement from the lecture, and

- Reading the summary statement as a pre-listening tool at the beginning of the next class session.

Use a Know-Want to Know-Learned (KWL) Chart to help student build his prior knowledge of a subject before instruction.

Provide a completed model of what is expected on the assignment

Teach estimating before doing, and reasoning after doing (e.g., thinking about the answers to math problems, the results of a science experiment).

Break tasks into smaller steps, assigning each step (or group of steps) to a particular time period.

Break long-term assignments into short-term or daily goals.

Call on student frequently to ensure that he is engaged and that he understands the concept being taught.

Provide frequent and specific verbal positive reinforcement for compliant/productive behavior.

Use color highlighting for the places where answers go or for important information to increase the stimulus value of a worksheet.

Allow opportunities for student discussion during lectures or instruction by stopping to allow students to turn to each other and talk about what was present, such as using a “Think-Pair-Share” strategy.

Agree on a visual cue, such as a colored sticker on the desk or the back of the student’s hand, to remind the student to pay attention. Change the stimulus frequently.

Use short-term contracts with clear time expectations for work completion.

Behavior support plan based on reinforcement of positive behaviors, whenever possible.

Allow tests to be taken in a distraction free setting with extended time limits.

Set clearly defined goals for behavior and task completion each day.

Have a check in at the beginning of the day, to make sure student comes to school prepared for the work he has to do, and at the end of the day, to make sure he is going home with what he needs to do his homework and study. Model, practice, and develop independence in this skill.

Provide a written schedule.

Provide a plan regarding where to go when student is emotionally overwhelmed.

Incorporate hands-on learning experiences.

Start each lecture with an outline of material to be covered and end by summarizing key points.

Demonstrate the format of an upcoming exam.

Self-Monitoring

Teach an approach like FACT (Focus attention- Ask yourself questions- Connect ideas- Try to picture important ideas).

Teach test taking strategies, such as planning ahead of time how to use the time allotted.

Have student practice estimating the amount of time needed to successfully complete a task, and then have him compare his estimate with the actual time available, and finally, select appropriate strategies to complete the task.

Have student estimate his optimal attention span for specific tasks adjusted for the time of day or his energy level. Have student plan to work no longer than his estimate of his optimal attention span, then take a short break, and then resume working for the same amount of time.

Have student list all his assignments and estimate the time needed for completion of each, keeping in mind his knowledge of his optimal attention span. Have student alternate more preferred with less preferred activities.

Have student identify the optimal level of ambient stimulation he needs to keep his brain activated but not to distract him.

Attention/work completion report card.

Social skills report card.

Slow Processing Speed

Allow student extra time to complete assignments and to take tests.

Reduce the number of items the student has to complete to eliminate redundancy.

Allow student to record lectures or provide him with a partial outline of notes rather than requiring him to record all notes, since his slower processing speed may impede his ability to keep pace with the information being presented.

Visual-Spatial Deficits

Organize handouts to be visually clear with sufficient white space for student to fill in his own notes.

Allow the use of graph paper to organize calculations in math

Teach student to use a marker or index card to aid tracking when reading.

For student with strength in verbal expression, activities and assignments should be modified to allow him opportunities to tell what he knows, such as allowing opportunities to orally answer questions

Provide clear verbal explanations of visual stimuli. Have student explain the concepts in his own words. Teach him to use mnemonic devices to help him remember visual information

Provide accommodations for facts that are not already automatic. For example, math fact tables may be kept on hand for reference during math activities. As math facts are mastered, remove the supportive prompts.

Make nonverbal information verbal and sequential.

Written Language

Teach strategies for writing essays that use a consistent format to organize a thesis statement, supporting paragraphs and a conclusion

Teach editing strategies to review and correct written errors. One such strategy is using the COPS checklist (check for Capitalization, Organization, Punctuation and Spelling).

Inspiration software will allow student to create a graphic organizer of his ideas, convert it to an outline which can be reorganized, and then transfer into a word processing document for paragraph writing and revision.

Provide a chart to monitor student's progress in writing, such as:

Monitoring Dimensions of the Writing Process			
Planning			
Number of Ideas Generated	Need More	Just Enough	Too Many
Quality of Ideas Generated	Poor	Okay	Great
Sources or Resources Used	Need More	Just Enough	Too Many

Use student work samples (essays, book reports, etc.) to help student develop or improve his writing skills. Have him describe the steps he would use to improve his writing similar to the samples or to avoid the errors found in the samples.

Abstract Thinking

Provide concrete examples and information when teaching new concepts. Slowly build to the abstract level by making connections among the concrete, visual information.

Group similar concepts together in lessons to help student see the patterns in what he is learning through how the presentation is organized.

Reading

Provide questions prior to reading so that student may focus his thoughts while reading passages.

Teach pre-reading strategies, such as looking at headings, charts, and questions prior to reading. Then student should break reading assignments into manageable sections to read and take notes to clarify his understanding.

Provide opportunities to look for specific information in reading texts by rereading the material to locate answers.

Encourage student to sketch what he has learned from the reading passages and use the drawings to help recall the information

Teach student to place five sticky notes in a selection of nonfiction reading to aid in the recall of important facts while he reads. Limiting the number of sticky notes helps him to focus on the most important details, rather than treating every detail as equally important

Teach student to use visual organizers to outline events in a fictional selection or information from nonfiction text. It is important that the visual organizers be modeled and practiced with the student before expecting him to use them independently.

Have student read a short passage and then retell what happened or write key words and phrases on a post-it note. Then he can review the post-it notes to review the story before a classroom discussion or when answering comprehension questions.

Teach student to review a text with questions in mind.

Working Memory/Retrieval Deficits

Preview material, such as difficult words, new concepts or challenging computations in math so the student can focus his energy on the task without getting overloaded by active memory demands.

Allow student to have a note card with formulas and key words when taking math tests in class.

Provide short, frequent opportunities for the student to practice new skills

Provide student with questions ahead of time so that he may formulate a response before being called upon in class.

Write key words and phrases on a board or overhead.

Make a list of items, such as numbers, words, pictures (shapes, figures), and ask student to give repeat it in reverse order. Provide practice using both written and oral lists.

Math

Have student maintain and using a math notebook that outlines processes and formulas, with examples to aid him.

Use color-coding to help student become aware of how and when rules are in play (e.g. making the bigger numbers in a group of subtraction problems green, the smaller numbers in each problem blue, using highlighting or underlining to identify plus or minus signs).

Make audio tapes that practice the math facts through songs.

Group math facts into math families. For example, teach all of the addition facts that have a sum of 10, or teach clusters of math facts that are related in other ways, such as having the student learn the facts $2 \times 3 = 6$, $3 \times 2 = 6$, $6 \div 2 = 3$, and $6 \div 3 = 2$ grouped together.

Put math computations in the context of a real situation, such as going to the movies or shopping.

Break multi-step problems (including equations with several computations, word problems, etc.) into smaller parts.

Provide a checklist that outlines the steps to problem solving. For example:

Look over the entire problem,

Break the problem into parts and identify which parts require calculation,

Choose the algorithm to be applied for each part, and

Solve the problem, reflecting on the answers at each step.

Encourage student to write problems horizontally and vertically, as well as to say them aloud.

Incorporate multi-sensory activities into the teaching and memorizing of math facts (i.e. have student write it, say or sing it, show it, do it).

Social Skills

Social skills report card.

Teach empathy.

Make the intuitive sequential.