

Adapting Curriculum for Students with Special Needs Series

Part VI-Working with the Child with a Learning Disability in the Classroom

Adapting Curriculum for Children with Learning Disabilities

The teacher should be aware that not all techniques will work with all students, but try as many of them as possible. These techniques should create a better learning environment for children with learning disabilities.

How to make adjustments in the type, difficulty, amount and sequence of materials

1. Give shorter but more frequent assignments.
2. Shorten the length of the assignments to insure a sense of success.
3. Copy chapters of textbooks so that the child can use a highlighter pen to underline important facts.
4. Make sure that the child's desk is free from all unnecessary materials.
5. Correct the student's work as soon as possible to allow for immediate gratification and feedback.
6. Allow the student several alternatives in both obtaining and reporting information--tapes, interviews and so on.
7. Break assignments down to smaller units. Allow the child to do 5 problems at time, or 5 sentences, so that they can feel success, receive immediate feedback if they are doing the assignment incorrectly and direct their energy to more manageable tasks.

8. Hold frequent, even if short conferences with the child to allow for questions, sources of confusion, sense of connection and avoidance of isolation which often occurs if the work is too difficult.

How to adjust space, work time and grouping

1. Permit the child to work in a quiet corner, a study carrel when requested or necessary. This should not be all the time since isolation may have negative consequences. This technique depends on the specific learning style of the child who may be less distracted by working under these conditions.
2. At first the teacher may want to place the child closer to her/him for more immediate feedback.
3. Try to separate him/her from students who may be distracting.
4. Alternate quiet and active time to maintain levels of interest and motivation.
5. Make up a work contract with specific times and assignments so that the child has a structured idea of his/her responsibilities.
6. Keep work periods short and gradually lengthen them as the student begins to cope.
7. Try to match the student with a peer helper to help with understanding assignments, reading important directions, drilling him/her orally, summarizing important textbook passages and working on long range assignments.

Consider adjusting presentation and evaluation modes

Some students learn better by seeing (visual learners), some by listening (auditory learners), some by feeling (tactile learners) and some by a combination of approaches. Adjustments should be made by the teacher to determine the best functional system of learning for the children with learning disabilities. This will vary from child to child and is usually included in the child's evaluation.

If the child is primarily an **auditory learner**, offer adjustments in the mode of presentation by use of the following techniques:

1. Give verbal as well as written directions to assignments.
2. Place assignment directions on tape so that students can replay them when they need.
3. Give students oral rather than written tests.
4. Have students drill on important information using tape recorder, reciting information into the recorder and playing it back.
5. Have students drill aloud to themselves or to other students.
6. Have children close their eyes to try and hear words or information.

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If the child is primarily a **visual learner**, offer adjustment in the mode of presentation by:

1. Have students use flash cards printed in bold bright colors.
2. Let students close their eyes and try to visualize words or information in their heads, see things in their minds.
3. Provide visual clues on chalkboard for all verbal directions.
4. Encourage students to write down notes and memos to themselves concerning important words, concepts, and ideas.