

# **Instructional Strategies for Students with Physical/Cognitive Disabilities**

For students with cognitive or physical disabilities, educators must involve instructional strategies that are accessible throughout the daily schedule. The classroom environment and educational staff must consider changes and accommodations to increase student participation and enhance learning. When teachers and students adapt effective instructional strategies, individual and groups of students gain the tools necessary to become successful learners. Below are suggested strategies to support students with cognitive and physical disabilities, and are applicable to use within all classroom settings and with all children.

**Enhanced Scope and Sequence PLUS** Tammy Craft and Helen Barrier

## **Strategies for Students with Disabilities:**

### **Physical:**

- ◀ Use mnemonics such as SLANT (Sit up, lean forward, ask questions, nod your head, track the teacher).
- ◀ Consider environmental issues: seating placement in classroom, workspace free from distractions, proximity seating, student remove all non-related materials from space.
- ◀ Use textured mats under worksheets and manipulatives to stabilize work area.
- ◀ Provide a paper stabilizer (clipboard, non-slip writing surface).
- ◀ Use colored highlighters to direct attention to key information.
- ◀ Use digital timer to help pace student while working.
- ◀ Use a line or a place-marker.
- ◀ Provide adapted paper (bold line, raised line, enlarged spacing).
- ◀ Use colored sticky notes to draw attention or clarify important information.
- ◀ Use large pencils and/or pencil grips/weighted pencils.
- ◀ Use adaptive equipment for posture: booster seats, arm rests, etc.
- ◀ Use computers with touch screen capabilities.
- ◀ Demonstrate all concepts with manipulatives.
- ◀ Provide copies of work that is presented on the board or textbook to cut down on. “copying” for students.
- ◀ Vary group size for instruction.
- ◀ Provide large-print handouts of text.
- ◀ Provide a bookstand for books and assignment pages.
- ◀ Provide specifically lined/oriented paper.
- ◀ Make available computer speech-enhanced text and lessons.
- ◀ Use drawings and real-life examples such as lunch counts and class lists.

## Cognitive:

- ◀ Teach self-monitoring techniques. (Students set goals to complete assignment and check off each step as they complete problem).
- ◀ Have students work each step in an assignment in different colors.
- ◀ Encourage students to subvocalize while learning.
- ◀ Assign a peer tutor and allow the peer or adult to read the text aloud to the student.
- ◀ Use cooperative learning techniques to allow students to “reteach” concepts.
- ◀ Model and teach metacognitive strategies.
- ◀ Teach note-taking skills.
- ◀ Provide visual cues and props to reinforce and demonstrate from lectures.
- ◀ Maximize students’ potential for success by providing a balance of visual and auditory stimuli in your teaching.
- ◀ Teach students to use self-questioning techniques.
- ◀ Provide students with a written schedule of classroom routines and timelines.
- ◀ Provide multiple opportunities to practice in different formats.
- ◀ Use flashcards for individual or group review.
- ◀ Use songs, rhymes or rhythms to help students remember information.
- ◀ Chunk pieces of information together and in sets.
- ◀ Use acronyms to help remember words or phrases.
- ◀ Use individual and class lists for added visual representation.
- ◀ Use semantic maps and diagrams to help students remember the connections between concepts.
- ◀ Reteach items of information as often as possible, varying the approach a little each time.
- ◀ Teach the meaning of key vocabulary words.
- ◀ Introduce only one concept at a time and teach to mastery.
- ◀ Provide many practice opportunities and include problem solving, reasoning and real-life application to help with transfer of information.
- ◀ Provide learning aids such as manipulatives and models to help students focus on conceptual understanding and skill building.
- ◀ Provide cooperative learning strategies with large and small groups.
- ◀ Teach students how the textbook is organized, including the format for each page or section.
- ◀ Provide video-taped and audio-taped lessons.
- ◀ Have available textbooks on CD ROM.
- ◀ Make connections between language arts and other disciplines.
- ◀ Scaffold the instruction.
- ◀ Use visual aids (posters, models, videos, slides, pictures, bulletin boards, notebooks).
- ◀ Teach students how to look for the same or similar content in another medium (movie, filmstrip, audio tape, video tape, sticker book, photo album, field trip).