DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES
History/Social Studies

Students Who Have Difficulty Related to Organization, Memory, Comprehension, Attention, Reading and Writing

Instructional strategies for all learners, including those with cognitive and physical disabilities who have difficulties with:

- Inattention/distractibility
- Organization
- Following directions
- Memory/recall
- Reading decoding/access
- Understanding/comprehension
- Mechanics of writing/drawing

Problems with Inattention/Distractibility:

Teach students how to:

- Use class and individual schedules.
- Check off tasks as they are completed.
- Set goals for how much of a task they can complete in an allotted time.
- Verbalize while working.
- Use self-monitoring techniques. such as SLANT (sit up, lean forward, ask questions, nod your head, track the teacher) to help them remember the needed behaviors.

Before, during, and following instruction:

- Give students advance notice (a physical cue, special word) that you will be saying or showing key information.
- Break assignments down into shorter segments.
- Alternate short work periods with teacher-controlled breaks - have this student be your official pencil sharpener, note-runner.
- Vary presentation of a task.
- Use physical, visual, or auditory signals/cues to redirect student to stay on task.
- Provide copies of work that is on the blackboard or textbook.
- Use color cues such as neon-colored highlighters to direct student attention to important information, key words, and directions.
- Use games to reinforce concepts.
- Allow additional time to complete assignments/tests.
- Limit the number of problems that students copy and solve problems. Highlight the number of problems you want the student to complete.
- Use a digital, silent kitchen timer to help a student who is slow to complete work.
• Assign a peer tutor. Surround student with appropriate role models.
• Introduce only one concept at a time and provide scaffolding within your instruction.
• Reteach concepts frequently by varying the instructional approach.

Provide a physical environment that is:
• Free from distractions and clutter. Have the student remove all but the material with which he is working from his desk.
• Seat student in area free from distractions such as open doors or air conditioners.
• Use study carrel.
• Use proximity seating.

Provide work materials that are:
• Try not to copy on both sides of the paper.
• Use frequent indentations, double spacing, and boxes around key words to provide visual clues.
• Block extraneous information on pages to limit distractions.
• Present material on colored paper.
• Provide "windows" cut from paper or cardboard to expose only one segment at a time.
Problems with Organization

Teach students routines and procedures:
- Goal-setting skills.
- Note-taking skill to identify and highlight key information.
- Decision making/prioritizing skills.
- Time-management skills to help them estimate how long it will take to complete assignments.

Within the environment:
- Provide a time weekly for organizing desk and notebooks.
- Use assignment books and calendars.
- Have students "check" unneeded books and notebooks at the door. They can pick up their items as they exit class.
- Attach things that often get misplaced (pencils) to students' desks with Velcro.
- Check that homework assignments are written down daily.
- Check homework daily.
- Send daily/weekly progress reports home.
- Color code notebooks and school book covers.

Before, during, and following instruction:
- Provide page numbers where answers can be found.
- Provide boxes for students to write in answers.
- Provide advanced organizers or outlines of the content.
- Use slot outlines.
- Color-coding to identify vocabulary, main ideas, and details.
- Use a variety of teacher demonstrations & modeling, guided, independent practice, and frequent review opportunities.
- Provide a copy of assignments for home.
- Use checklists and mnemonics to help students remember the expected behaviors.
- Avoid cluttered/crowded worksheets.
- Allow student to use a computer to complete assignments.
- Assign a peer buddy to assist with organization.
- Create backwards timelines for larger projects.
- Introduce only one concept at a time and provide scaffolding within your instruction.
- Reteach concepts frequently by varying the instructional approach.
Problems with Following Directions

Teach the student to:
- Verbalize written directions. By doing this, you will detect early errors or misunderstandings.
- To repeat or re-explain directions.
- Look at the person who is speaking.
- Write down each step of a problem and check off as they complete it.

Before, during and following instruction:
- Face the child and speak slowly and distinctly.
- Check frequently that the student is following directions.
- Model or demonstrate each step. Have students check off each step as it is completed.
- Present the key points of a lecture at the beginning of your talk, then summarize.
- Divide longer orally assigned tasks into shorter ones.
- Very gradually help the student learn to take orally presented notes.
- Provide example of completed item.
- Give the student extra time to respond to oral questions.
- Provide only one portion of the assignment at a time.
- Provide an outline of your lectures; use graphs and tables to reinforce concepts.
- Provide practice in noticing, describing, and comparing details.
- Provide visual displays such as - flowcharts, webs, pictorials, pre-reading questions, and keyword note-taking organizers frequently to help students listen and follow directions.
- Use a buddy system to clarify directions.
- Use cooperative learning activities.
- Use mnemonic aids to signal steps.
- Introduce only one concept at a time and provide scaffolding within your instruction.
- Reteach concepts frequently by varying the instructional approach.

Problems with Memory/Recall

Before, during and following instruction:
- Provide the student with a written out schedule of classroom routines and timelines.
- Chunk pieces of information together. (For example have students learn the number facts in sets of three).
- Provide a balance of visual and auditory stimuli in your instruction.
- Provide multiple opportunities for practice in different formats.
  - Use flashcards for individual or group review.
  - Use songs, rhymes, or rhythms to help remember information.
- Use acronyms to remember words or phrases.
- Use mnemonics like "Please excuse my dear Aunt Sally" (order of operations) to remember sequenced steps.
- Play memory games.
- Use semantic maps and diagrams to help students remember the connections between concepts.
- Introduce only one concept at a time and provide scaffolding within your instruction.
- Reteach concepts frequently by varying the instructional approach.
Problems with Reading/Decoding Access

Before reading:
- Teach students to read strategically – e.g., review title/chapter headings; locate main ideas, etc.
- Reduce amount to be read
- Adjust allotted time for assignment
- Present several versions of the same story
- Locate high interest/low reading level materials at library, etc. – to facilitate fluency in reading
- Enhance/adapt/modify books:
  - Enlarge print materials – on photocopier
  - Rewrite text in simplified form and paste over original text associated with graphic – to allow student to read independently
  - Use objects and actions to enhance meaning of text, specific vocabulary – toys or other objects and role playing can be used to provide cues to meanings of words.
  - Cut apart and remake books, which have graphics but no text – for student to “tell” the story from the pictures.
  - Make props – cut graphics out of one copy of a book, put Velcro on back of graphics/pictures and Velcro on the pages of a second copy of the book, the book becomes interactive, e.g., students can match characters/objects to the picture in the book, choose the correct picture when asked by teacher, do interactive worksheets, etc.
  - Use clear drawings/photos – which correspond to text or relate to content
  - Cut & paste Picture Communication Symbols – place over text so student “reads” via the symbols or place under text to facilitate reading of text
- Extensive reading preview – vocabulary development, story line, background information, etc.
- Label items/spaces around the classroom
- Provide adaptive surfaces for reading materials (slant boards, easels, non-slip padding)
- Have needed books on CD-ROM, videotaped, or audio taped if possible
- Have computer generated text available if possible

During reading:
- Enhance meaning of reading with gestures, exaggerated facial expressions and intonation during group reading
- Use choral reading or singing of words/text – music, rhythm and rhyme are memory enhancers
- Peer tutor – or adult, to support or read to student
- Discuss what is depicted in the drawings – how it relates to the text; location of specific vocabulary within the illustrations
- Highlight target vocabulary words from a larger field of text – removable transparent highlighter tape, highlighters, etc.
• Use a magnifying glass, word windows, mini-flashlight – for visual tracking of words/letters
• Segment components of stories/words – so they can be physically manipulated (stickies, index cards, sentence strips, etc.), e.g., sequencing parts of stories, manipulating word families, etc.
• Colored acetate filters laid over text – can make a tremendous difference for students who have Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome (SSS – a sensitivity to light which affects depth perception); especially helpful for students with Autism/Asperger’s Syndrome, e.g. Transparency Pockets (office supply stores) or filter kit from See It Right which includes multi-colored sets & instructions (See It Right); special colored glasses – may be necessary for some students with severe SSS
• Color code word targets to match answer location – e.g., put yellow arrow sticky in section of text where answer will be found
• Colored pens for note-taking – to differentiate vocabulary, types of information, sections etc. or to highlight after the fact
• Graphic Organizers – to preview/review story narrative, vocabulary, characterization, etc.; e.g., concept maps, Venn Diagrams, story boards, sequence grids, & webs (webs are effective for brainstorming ideas individually or in groups by choosing a topic placed in a circle in middle of page; free associate quickly; list all responses without judgment; related ideas branch out from the topic and can later be grouped into clusters; pictures/symbols can also be used as templates, e.g., spider, tree, flower, etc.)
• Have books on tape or in digital format for students to hear/review story content or to read along with text.
• Video taped versions of stories – to motivate, make story come alive, and to preview/review story content
• Hand-held talking dictionary/speller – e.g., Franklin Homework Wiz & Speaking Homework Wiz, dictionary/thesaurus; spell check; create personal word list; words appear on small screen; target words, definitions, & synonyms can be pronounced aloud if speaking version; offers practice in cursive and print handwriting; arithmetic tutor & calculator

Following reading:
• Songs – teach students original or other songs, then use overhead device with song lyrics on the overlays; students read as a group; students take turns tracking the words with a pointer
• Word walls – to reinforce frequently used words and topic/story vocabulary; create on blackboard, whiteboard, or cards posted on walls; words may be grouped together by category and color-coded
  Word dice made from milk cartons – for sight word development, vocabulary, synonyms, etc.
• Word searches & crossword puzzles
• Letter tiles, Scrabble tiles, magnetic letters – to form words/sentences
• Magnetic word sets – to create sentences, poems, etc.
• Modify worksheets – simplify format; reduce amount of text; reword in simplified language
• Reteach concepts frequently by varying the instructional approach.
Problems with Understanding/Comprehension

Teach the students:
- The meaning of key vocabulary words.
- How the textbook is organized and the format for each page or section.
- How to verbalize as they complete or work through problems.

Before, during, and following instruction:
- Teach in small chunks so students get lots of practice with one step at a time.
- Model and teach metacognitive strategies (Model and verbalize procedure, guide students through verbalization of problem computation, monitor student verbalizations as they complete procedure, periodic reviews provided).
- Provide an example of a correctly solved problem at the beginning of the lesson.
- Provide visual cues to help students who may have difficulty visualizing shapes, dimensions and sizes.
- Provide learning aids such as calculators to help students focus on conceptual understanding.
- Provide many practice opportunities and include problem solving, reasoning, and real-life application to help with transfer of information.
- Use cooperative learning techniques such as "jigsaw" or "think-pair-share".
- Use taped textbooks.
- Introduce only one concept at a time and provide scaffolding within your instruction.
- Reteach concepts frequently by varying the instructional approach.
Problems with the Mechanics of Writing/Drawing

Make accommodations for writing through the following strategies:
- Allow more time to complete assignments
- Reduce quantity of final product
- Explore different forms of writing – for example, don’t restrict writing to cursive

Consider using an adapted writing surface:
- Enhanced line paper – commercial raised line paper or adapt your own paper by printing lines in a color, then laminating the paper and gluing over the lines to enhance.
- Variety of tactile writing surfaces – e.g. sandpaper, screen, etc.
- White board or small chalkboard

Consider using adapted writing tools:
- Pencil grips stabilize a student’s grip on pen or pencil. These can be commercially made or make your own with a piece of foam or non-slip material.
- Use adapted pens/pencils such as triangular pencils, Squiggle Wiggle Writer, triangular shaped, vibrating or the Nightwriter lighted pen.
- Experiment with a variety of writing implements by trying markers, paints, fat crayons/pencils, grease pencils.
- Use rubber stamps & stamp pad – for letters/numbers/name.
- Use magnetic alphabet letter sets – sticks to any magnetic surface, e.g., cookie sheet
- Scrabble or other letter tiles – for writing, spelling
- Highlighter markers or tapes, colored dots, correction tape – to “take notes” in text by highlighting important points or to indicate margins or start/end points on the writing paper (office supply)
- Use computers with touch screens or switch access if available

For positioning try:
- Shifting the position of paper – the standard positioning may not work for all students
- Using a clipboard to hold paper or tape paper to desk – to hold writing paper steady
- Using a three ring binder or slant board.
- Use adaptive equipment for posture: booster seats, arm rests, phone books, etc.

For longer assignments, taking notes, or completing worksheets try using:
- Prewritten words/phrases on labels/cards/paper
- A peer/aide takes notes for student – use carbon paper, NCR paper
- “fill-in-the-blank” answer format.
- Modified worksheets by making templates for student to complete
- Use multiple choice answer format
• Word walls – to reinforce frequently used words and topic/story vocabulary; create on blackboard, whiteboard, or cards posted on walls; words may be grouped together by category and color-coded
• Correction/cover-up tapes – to correct mistakes in writing if erasing is a problem (office supply)

**Links and Resources**

History and Social Science Resources and the Virginia Department of Education
http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/sol.html#history

Teaching and Learning Virginia k-3 Virginia History and Social Science Standards of Learning - http://k3hss.pwnet.org/

The Story of Virginia - An American Experience - Virginia - www.vahistorical.org/storyofvirginia.htm

KidsCommonwealth: All About Virginia
www.kidscommonwealth.virginia.gov/AllAboutVA/VaHistory.asp


The US50 - A guide to the state of **Virginia - History** - www.theus50.com/virginia/

Social Studies Lessons www.csun.edu/~hcedu013/plans.html

**Teaching Social Studies** with the Internet. ... www.kidsource.com/education/teaching.ss.internet.html **Social Studies** Education: National

Council for the **Social Studies** - www.ncss.org

Social Studies. Org www.socialstudies.org/standards/teachers