



Quality First Teaching

Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in the Classroom





The purpose of this booklet is to support and promote Quality First Teaching and the development of targeted strategies and classroom-based intervention for students with a variety of Special Educational Needs (SEN). It will provide ideas for adapting classroom practice to ensure that all students make progress.

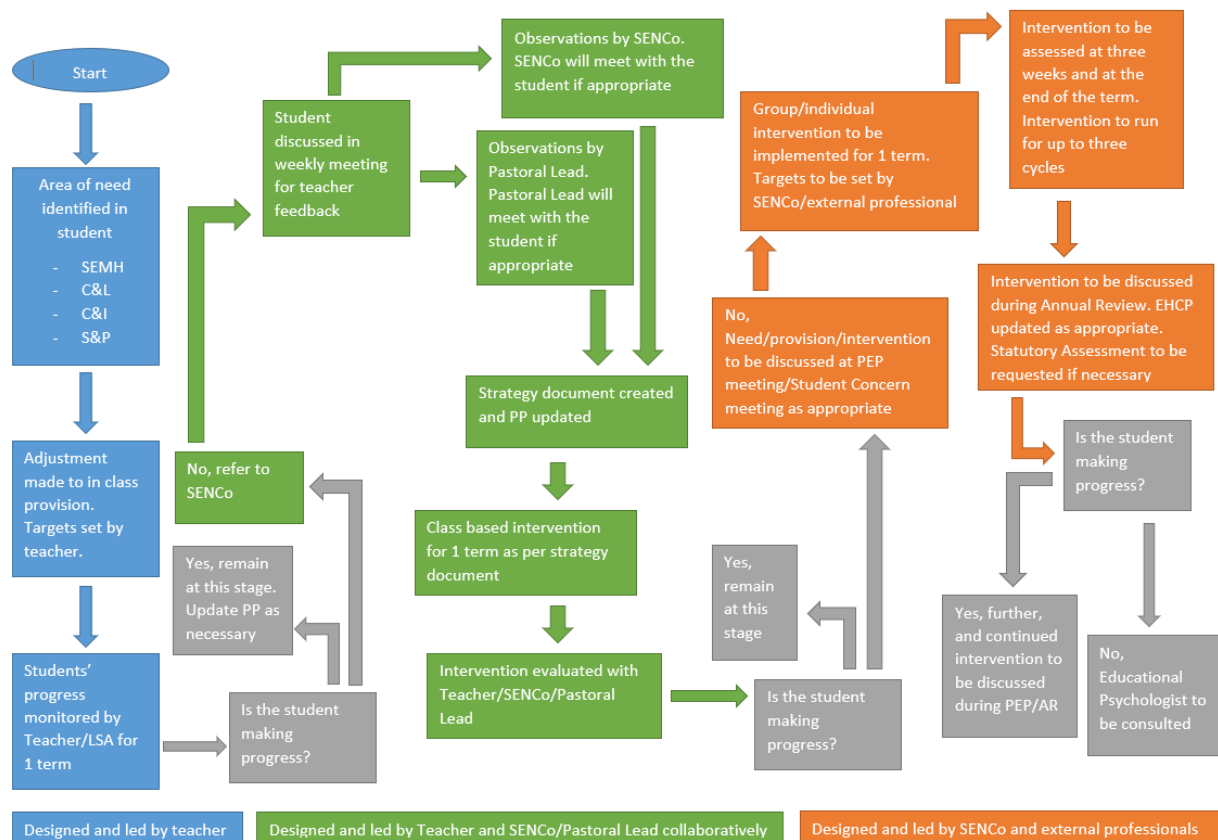
Encourage and praise effort - students who have difficulties will certainly have low self- esteem. We have to make sure we praise the effort as well as the achievement, with maximum effort they will make progress. By praising the effort students will feel a sense of achievement and this in turn will help build confidence in themselves.

Carol Dweck *Growth Mindset - The New Psychology of Success*

The Old Priory School Provision Map clearly sets out that the first wave of intervention and support for any student takes place within the classroom, managed by the Teacher, and supported by Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). This is achieved through reasonable adjustment and Quality First Teaching.

Area of Need	All students – Quality First Teaching and reasonable adjustment
<i>Cognition and Learning</i>	Differentiated curriculum Increased visual aids Pre-learning and overlearning Seating plan LSA support 1 Noise cancelling headphones
<i>Communication and Interaction</i>	Differentiated curriculum Key vocabulary support Word mapping Visual timetable Blanks questioning LSA support 1 Seating plan
<i>Emotional, Behavioural and Social</i>	Restorative and resolution sessions Whole school reward system (vouchers) Reward chart Raffle tickets Mentoring Daily handovers Seating plan LSA support 1
<i>Sensory and Physical</i>	Seating plan Fiddle toys Noise cancelling headphones

Often, students who are experiencing specific difficulties or who have a diagnosis of SEN can have their educational needs met within the classroom. The flow chart below shows the Graduated Response and the process through which students are supported across the three waves of intervention and support.



This handbook contains details of a range of needs and difficulties that students may experience with suggested strategies and adjustments that Teachers and LSAs can make within the classroom. It also sets out the process of assessment, evaluation, and referral so that the needs of all students can be met.

Promoting growth Mindset in the classroom

Students who can develop a Growth Mindset:

- perform better than students with a fixed mindset, significantly outscoring them in the areas of math and literacy
- are more likely to recognise the importance of effort in academic success
- seek out challenging academic tasks to enhance learning
- value critical feedback.

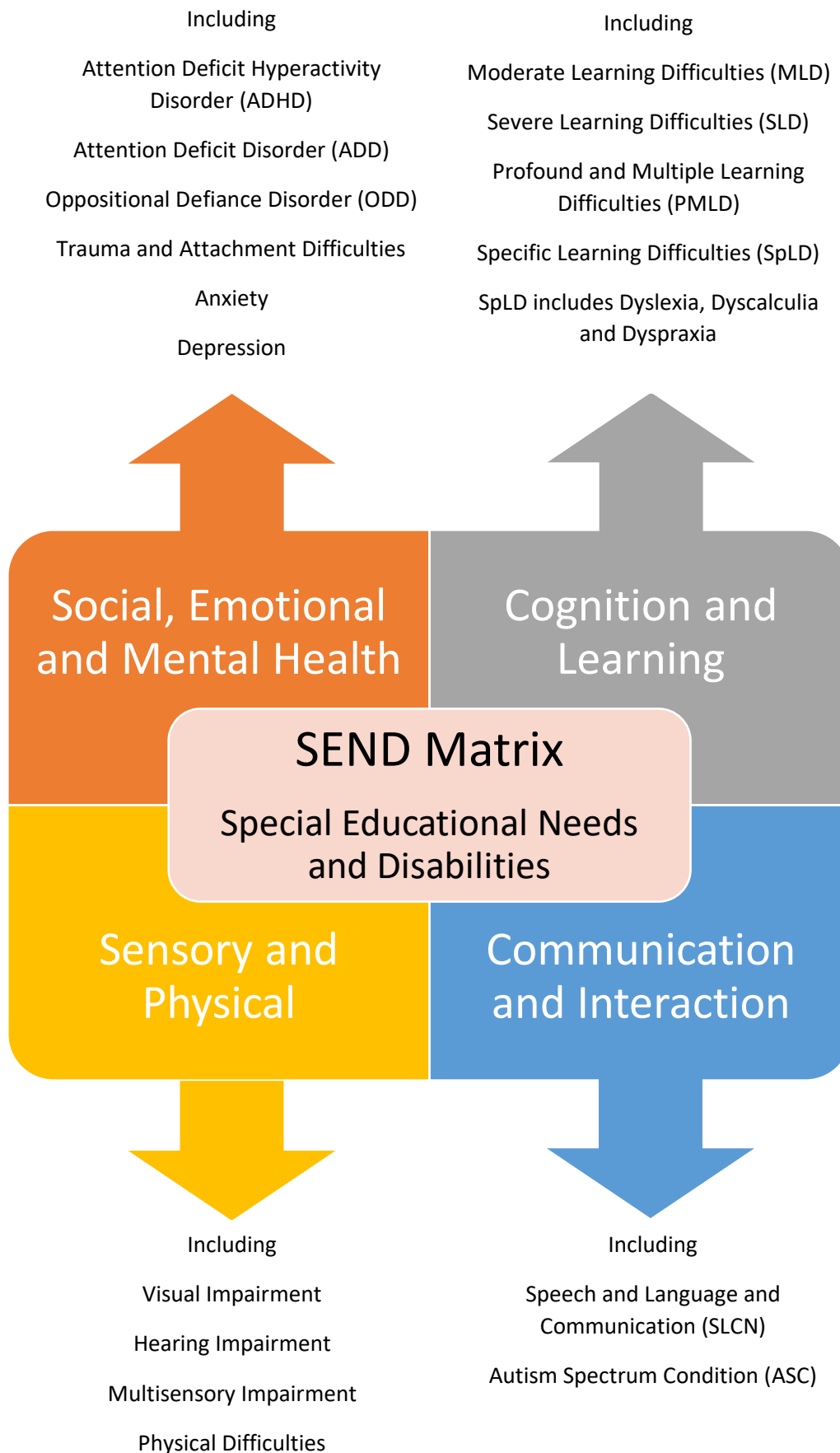


Claro & Paunesku (2014) *Mindset Gap among SES Groups*

Supporting Growth Mindset in the classroom

- Conduct activities that give students the chance to practice phrases that promote growth mindset
- Display visible reminders of the Growth Mindset vocabulary using posters, display material and feedback in books
- Use reflection questions and personal challenges to end lessons. This will help students to evaluate their attitudes and processes related to classwork, build a strong work ethic, and focus on the positive aspects of the class. The academic points system is perfect for this.
- Model Growth Mindset in the classroom.

Instead of...	Try thinking...
I give up / I can't do it	I can use a different strategy / I am going to train my brain
Its good enough / I can't do better	Is this really my best effort? How can I improve this?
This is too hard	This might take me a bit longer to master
I will never be clever	I can learn how to do this
My plan A didn't work	There is always a plan B
My friend can do it	I will learn from them, ask them how they did it



The Inclusive Classroom Checklist

In the simplest terms, inclusion in education means ensuring every child, no matter what their individual needs or barriers to learning, has equal access to learning and the same opportunities to achieve.

Inclusion in schools is not just about providing additional support to children with special educational needs. It's about creating a learning environment that works for all students.



#1 Define clear minimum standards for behaviour

Every child in your class should be absolutely clear about what the **minimum**, basic acceptable levels of behaviour are. These should be absolutes – rules which, you tell your students, are not hard to follow, and should not ever be broken.

Keep these short and simple, so everyone can understand them. Try to make these rules not about learning, specifically, but about ensuring everyone feels safe and respected.

#2 Enforce rules consistently, with proportionate consequences

Just as you must make the basic rules absolutely clear and understood, you must also have straightforward consequences for breaking those rules. These consequences must be proportionate (talking over another child once or twice would not be grounds for being sent out of the room, for example), and consistently applied.

Remember: the rules for behaviour are the minimum of what is acceptable in your classroom. Think about the more serious consequences you would have for more serious, repeated rule-breaking, and apply those consistently, too.

#3 Manage students who break the rules in an empathetic way

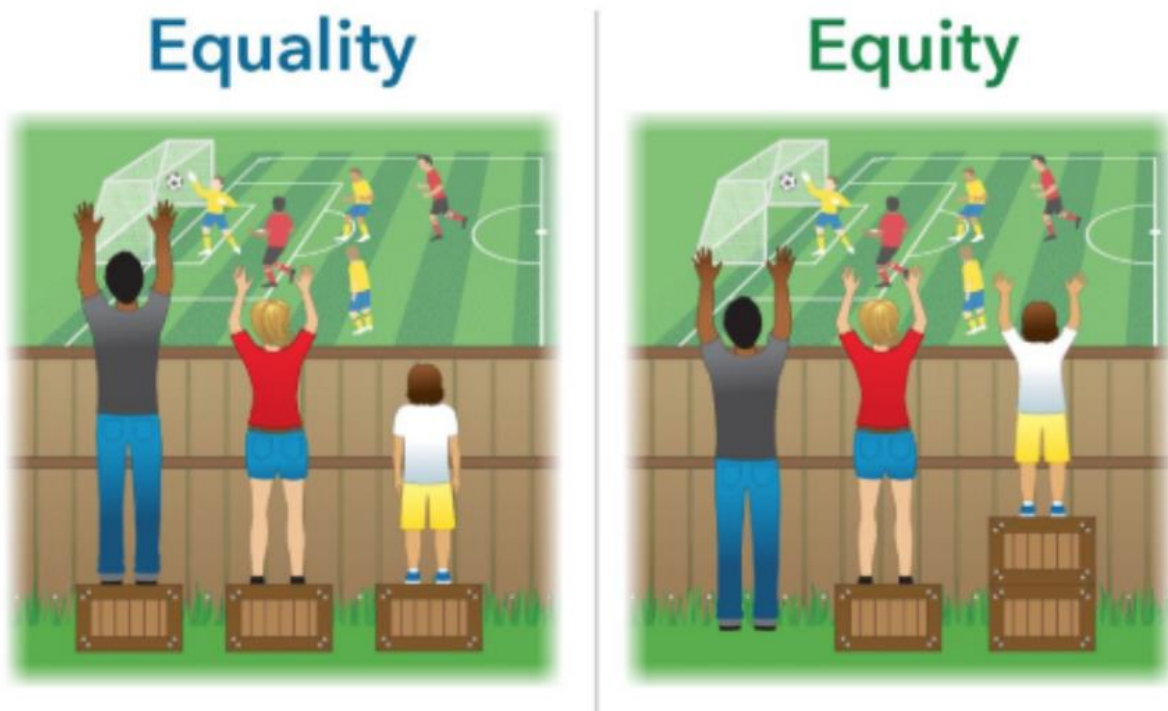
We have to start from the premise that every child is doing their best, given the situation. This is called Unconditional Positive Regard. It is the belief that the student is managing in the best way that they can, given their past trauma, individual circumstances, learning needs, social emotional needs and immediate environment.

For instance, when a child has a strong and inappropriate response to being asked to complete a learning activity, the chances are that there is a reasonable explanation for that response. It is our job to acknowledge that and support that individual past the behaviour, addressing the need instead. If the student is sent out the of the classroom instead, you lose this opportunity.

#4 Create opportunities to listen to all students

This is especially important when resolving conflicts in your classroom. Allow time for the children involved to fully explain how they believe the incident arose, as well as what has upset them and why. It may be that their interpretation is completely inconsistent with your own and that of the others in the classroom but that does not make it any less valid. Providing a opportunity for the student to be heard and having their emotional response acknowledged is far more important than convincing them that they were wrong.

One of the most common responses from students in the Return to School Consultation forms was that they really enjoyed have some autonomy over their learning. They liked deciding which lessons to do and when, completing tasks at their own pace and making decisions about their immediate learning environment. We have to find ways to allow the students some measure of autonomy on their return to formal lessons; both because we want to achieve a smooth transition, and because having a measure of control over their learning is a good and healthy route to engagement and aspiration.



#5 Develop a 'scaffolded' approach to learning

In the simplest terms, scaffolding means giving support so that all students can access the same learning. Scaffolding is absolutely key to creating an inclusive learning environment. You want all of the children in your class to be accessing the same information during a lesson (even if you slightly differentiate your resources and activities). If you set totally different tasks for some children because they cannot access what you have planned for the rest of the class, you are excluding them.

#6 Be aware of the specific needs of every student in your class



For a truly inclusive classroom, it's not enough just to know which of your children have specific Special Educational Needs.

You need to be fully aware of the strategies and resources recommended for each student. Every adult in the room needs to be familiar with the Student Passports and the individual responses and triggers and for each student. A thorough understanding of these will inform seating plans, LSA deployment, text and literature choices and differentiated activities.

Knowing this will help you consider every aspect of your classroom, and how you make it inclusive, safe and purposeful.

#7 Provide support that benefits every student in your classroom

Some inclusion strategies are so universally beneficial for all students, that they are worth doing in every classroom! For example, many children with dyslexic traits struggle to read pure black text on a pure white background. Simply changing the colours, you use on your slides, avoiding black on white, can help not only children with a dyslexia diagnosis, but all children. What if you have children with mild dyslexic traits that are unlikely to be diagnosed? Changing your slides will help them, too! Changing the colours of your slides to ones which are less high contrast makes them less tiring to view and read, too: better for everyone – you included! This is just one example of an inclusive change which benefits all children, but there are many, many others.

#8 Create a calm, purposeful learning environment

To fully promote inclusion in the classroom, we need to create a calm environment that works for all students. For us, that can be a challenging, and sometimes daunting task. Ensuring that students know, understand, and respect the minimum standards of behaviour, feel valued and heard and know their individual needs are understood and accommodated will help your classroom feel like a calm learning environment.

#9 Clearly display key information and vocabulary

Students with dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD, ADD, poor working memory, low literacy and speech and language needs require key information and vocabulary aids that are clearly displayed and accessible to them. This helps to support autonomy and independence, allows them to feel more comfortable and confident in the classroom and more secure in their learning.

#10 Use pre-assessment to inform your planning

You might be thinking to yourself: 'What has this got to do with inclusion?' Well, again, this is about engaging students and making them feel like they have a say in their own learning. Don't just assume what your students already know or don't know when you're planning a new topic; ask them! That way you'll identify areas which children are curious to learn more about and avoid going over very familiar learning. Pre-assessing student's prior knowledge, and interests around a subject, in this way shows them that they have been listened to and included in their own learning. It's a powerful tool for inclusion in the classroom.

#11 Let students choose how to show you what they have learned

Inclusion works by finding the best way to ensure all students can access the learning and can achieve. Setting the same task for all children may not help you to achieve that, particularly when it comes to assessing learning. When it comes to demonstrating their understanding of new learning, it

may be tempting to rely on written work every time. Instead, offer students a choice of ways of presenting what they have learned. Of course, you will need to provide sufficient resources and support, plus encourage students to choose a way of showing their learning which plays to their own strengths. Giving students a choice empowers them. It's inclusive, because it creates equal opportunities to show learning and progress.

#12 Don't compare the progress of one student to another

For some students with additional needs, the comparison between themselves and others in their class can feel stark, and disheartening. Don't do this. What's the point, anyway? How can comparing the attainment of one learner to another possibly help either of them? Instead, focus entirely on children's personal progress, and encourage them to do the same. Ask: 'Can you do even better than you did last time?', 'What do you want to focus on that you found tricky the last time we looked at this?', or 'What's changed from when we started learning about this, to now?'. Even if a student hasn't made progress, they can identify ways in which they want to. Teach children that identifying their own shortcomings, or areas for improvement is learning. By doing so, they are still actively engaging with the learning and including themselves in it.

Try not to...	because...	Instead...
Exclude students from the classroom for anything other than dangerous behaviour	This prevents them from being included in learning and reinforces negative perceptions of self	Make changes to your classroom and teaching that provision for, and meet the needs of, all students
Exclude students from the classroom because of the language they use	Poor language is a defensive mechanism, sometimes exhibited as avoidant behaviour	Seek the cause of the students behaviour and address this, ignoring the language as much as possible
Exclude a student from the room for not following specific dress codes	For some students wearing their coat, for instance, is a defensive behaviour. It provides safety and security	Promote a secure, inclusive classroom where the behaviour doesn't need to be displayed
Exclude a student from the room if they refuse to complete a specific learning activity	There may be a very good reason for this, it may tap into a fear, a perceived deficit, it may just be too difficult or not right for them on that day	Have a bank of alternatives available and acknowledge that compliance isn't the most important thing in the classroom
Exclude a student from the classroom for making low level verbal threats (without any physical behaviours)	Again, this is likely to be defensive behaviour demonstrated because the student feels threatened, either by a peer, or by an expectation	Promote minimum behaviour expectations for all, explore support or alternatives for the learning activity, offer time out and other agreed intervention
Exclude a student from the classroom for low level disruptive behaviour	This is an avoidant behaviour that stems from a need that is not being met	Promote minimum behaviour expectations for all, explore support or alternatives for the learning activity, offer time out and other agreed intervention
Remember – do not use threats, these heighten anxiety and have little to no chance of making a positive impact. This includes: threatening to remove points, stating that students have lost points, threatening to call the residential home, threatening to report behaviour to the tutor. Rephrase these to positive and encouraging statements that engage the student.		

Social, Emotional and Mental Health



Difficulties that students might experience

- Students with social emotional or behavioural difficulties exhibit behaviours which make it difficult for them to function effectively at school and may disrupt the education of other students.
- Students may be withdrawn, have low self-esteem, exhibit anti-social or uncooperative or aggressive behaviour.
- Many students with social emotional and behavioural difficulties have special needs as great as those with a more obvious disability.
- They desperately need to develop a sense of worth before they can benefit from their education.
- Underneath, these students want to be liked, accepted and to feel successful.

In many cases such students also experience significant difficulty in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills and often function at a frustration level and therefore feel that they fail all the time.

Implications for classroom practice

Recommendations to raise the achievement of students:

- PRASIE, PRAISE, PRAISE!
- Be fair and consistent, don't make idle threats.
- Target specific behaviour (e.g. calling out). Don't expect to put everything right at once – progress will be slow.
- Be sparing with sanctions - they rarely work and can be counterproductive.
- Ask them what they think would be appropriate sanction.
- Notice and respond positively to student's good behaviour.
- Praise is often more effective in private or can be a series of unobtrusive signals - thumbs up, wink, nod.
- Set ground rules in the classroom so students know what is expected of them, be prepared to remind frequently.
- Emphasise the positive, individual praise for good behaviour as well as good work.
- Make sure that work is at the right level so students can succeed.
- Take an interest in the student as an individual.
- Use humour to create a positive classroom atmosphere.
- Avoid confrontational situations - reprimand in private wherever possible, avoid sarcasm.
- Tactically ignore some unwanted behaviour while praising even small successes.
- Give them time to chill out, they decide when to return (but within acceptable time frame.)
- Focus on the behaviour not the child's personality.
- Use school and year group reward systems in addition to the points system it might help to use a contract and/or special rewards for individual students.
- Ensure targets are very specific.
- Discuss problems with other staff, class tutor.
- Give them vocabulary to express their emotions.

Recommendations to improve behaviour

- Speak to SLT and Home Staff about your concerns – discuss things which can be done at home and at school – so there is consistency.
- Give direct modelling of acceptable behaviour and suggest alternative ways of dealing with a situation.

- Reinforce rules frequently.
- Give clear, precise instructions.
- Stress positive, desirable outcomes.
- Provide frequent feedback and reinforcement.
- Ensure all information, including successes are recorded on the handover sheet
- Negotiate targets and reward the student for meeting them.
- Praise and encouragement should be used as much as possible.
- Praise appropriate behaviour which is taking place nearby, to student who is behaving inappropriately.
- Target certain behaviour that all staff deem to be a priority, and work on changing that.
- Give a clear message to keep a student on task.
- Negotiate a clear set of rules within the classroom.
- Ensure that rules are recorded for class viewing.
- Praise and reprimand based on these rules.
- Give a student a verbal warning and offer a strategy to avoid escalation of the problem.
- Reward a student for improved effort and attitude as well as achievement – break this into VERY SMALL chunks of time
- Invalidate the behaviour at times by use of humour, redirection or isolation.
- Avoid confrontation.
- Give non-verbal signal, stare, and move nearer to student.
- Ignore
- Follow behaviour management system - ensuring that they are thinking of new strategies are an essential part of the process.





Students with Low Self-Esteem

Difficulties that students might experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May be withdrawn• May be very vocal• May say things like 'I'm rubbish at maths, and I can't do it'• May be unkind towards others• May avoid learning• Frequent visits to the toilet in lesson time• In and out of the lesson• Spending a lot of time out of class or avoiding lesson altogether
Implications for classroom practice
Recommendation to build self-esteem: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growth Mindset• Develop whole class ethos where every child helps each other• Give small structured targets and responsibilities• Recognise strengths, have realistic expectations and praise for effort• Encourage the student to recognise strengths as well as weaknesses• Negotiate targets and give a tangible reward when they are met• Recognise if a pupil has good oral skills and place the pupil with others of similar ability• Give responsibilities within the classroom• Identify core elements of topics to be completed so that the pupil is not overloaded• Give negotiated periods of working independently with peers• Ensure all staff are alert to pupil's sensitivity and encourage positive comments• Try to think positively about each pupil, to look for the best so that they may become aware of their good points• Provide opportunities for pupils to support each other as far as possible, admonish or discipline a pupil away from others• Encourage the child to be a specialist for other children –e.g. construction or reading• Record success on the daily handover sheet



Students who Seek Attention

Difficulties that students might experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continually engages in behaviour that demands excessive attention from teacher and peers Frequently disturbs teacher and peers Talks out of turn Makes silly noises Constantly gets out of seat Interrupts lessons with attention-seeking behaviour Works only when receiving attention
Implications for classroom practice
<p>Recommendations for pupils who need attention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The child who needs attention will look for whatever kind of attention he/she can get from the teacher whether it's positive or negative. In order to help this child succeed you need to plan to give them the maximum amount of positive attention to reinforce the behaviour you want. When you give lots of attention for positive behaviour and minimal attention for negative behaviour, the child will learn to get the attention they need in an appropriate way. Teachers can determine these goals by analysing their own feelings and reactions to pupils' behaviour, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To feel annoyed To feel irritated "For goodness sake stop!" Feeling of relief when the annoying behaviour ceases. Pupils misbehave because they know how teachers will react. Teachers' reactions can sustain and strengthen undesirable behaviour; therefore, they must learn not to follow their first impulse as this could feed the mistaken goal. Having identified a mistaken goal, a teacher can employ a number of strategies to help pupils develop better ways of behaving and one is to teach appropriate behaviour. <p>Step 1: Complete ABC Sheet for two weeks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children who have behavioural difficulties may not understand the teacher's expectations for different activities and may need to be taught specific appropriate behaviour. To help children be more successful you need to identify the exact circumstances in which they behave inappropriately and develop a behaviour profile. It will include the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The activities during which the child is non-compliant The specific behaviour that occurs during those activities. The appropriate behaviour you want the child to engage in. <p>Step 2: Teaching appropriate behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to the child individually when no other children are around. Discuss the exact nature of the problem. Choose 1 area to work on at a time. Give an explanation about behaviour e.g. "when you talk during individual work time you don't finish your work and you stop other children from getting on with theirs. State the exact behaviour that you expect from the child during a specific activity. Check that the child has understood the instructions. Get them to repeat the behaviour you are expecting. Remind the child of appropriate behaviour before each activity.

- Reinforce the child as soon as they behave appropriately.

Other strategies for children who are attention seeking:

- Encourage other children to reinforce good behaviours – “I like it when you sit quietly”.
- Use planned ignoring. Ignore the child behaving inappropriately and praise a child nearby who is behaving appropriately.
- "What gets attention will increase." Acknowledge and reinforce appropriate behaviour.
- Sometimes do the opposite of what is expected - give permission to a child to continue unwanted behaviour. This works best where behaviour was intended to irritate, antagonise or annoy the adult. If permitted openly the activity loses all its attraction.
- Make expectations about behaviour very clear. Establish rules and boundaries and reward compliance.
- Use stickers, certificates, badges and comments on the daily handover sheet.
- Develop a whole class reward system. This will encourage a feeling of belonging and working towards a common goal.
- Label the behaviour and not the child as this will keep their self-esteem intact. Use “I” statements and acknowledge feelings: "When you talk during story time I feel very irritated and the other children cannot hear the story."
- Offer consequences for misbehaviour as a choice: "If you continue to poke Michael you will have to sit by yourself. The choice is yours. "I am disappointed Wayne, but I did speak to you about letting Michael get on with his work. You have chosen to sit by yourself." This makes children responsible for their behaviour and takes the stress of failure away from the teacher.
- Take an interest in the child and their hobbies. Share relevant information about common out of school activities.
- Foster a sense of belonging where every member is valued and valuable. Create an environment where it is safe to take risks and make mistakes.
- Give as much unconditional positive strokes as possible. This means the child gets lots of positive regard 'just for being themselves' - they don't have to do anything to earn it.
- Extend feelings vocabulary, as when expressed appropriately they will be a powerful tool in getting needs met
- Plan for success and celebrate when it happens.
- Focus on children's abilities and strengths rather than on disabilities and weaknesses.





Students who need to be in Control

Difficulties that students might experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May call out a lot• Will always want to be at the front of the line• Will rush to get ahead of everyone• Might barge others out of the way• Might appear to deliberately defy an adult.• Will do things in their own time – rather than the teacher's time
Implications for classroom practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give them options which allow them to 'feel' in control.• Keep calm! Avoid a power struggle with the child.• If the child is off-task, redirect and then walk away - as if you expect the child will do what you've directed. This is called 'expectation of compliance' (Bill Rogers 1992) and is powerful as it avoids a confrontational situation and allows the child to 'save face'.• Be careful not to praise too soon. The child will not want to appear to be working to please you, so delay your reaction. A casual nod or smile will often reinforce the behaviour you want.• Keep praise low-key. The child will not want to appear to conform and so a 'quiet word in the ear' will be more effective than praise in front of the whole class.• Give power to the child in the form of special responsibilities.• Organise opportunities for the child to feel important - help younger children with their work.• Give control to the child by statements such as "You're working quietly", instead of "I like the way you're working quietly".• Establish firm limits and boundaries. Negotiate rules so that the child feels ownership.• Use logical consequences that are applied to the whole class and therefore seen as 'being fair'.• Develop a positive friendly manner and don't take the child's behaviour personally.• Be prepared to listen rather than accuse.• Avoid audiences. Speak to the child about inappropriate behaviour privately.• 'Reframe' their actions and attribute positive reasons for their behaviour. "I can see you're not joining in the group discussion but that's probably because you need some extra thinking time".



ADHD

ADHD stands for “Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder”. Students will often have difficulty in paying attention and may demonstrate behaviour that is overactive and impulsive. ADHD is a medical condition with a medical diagnosis.

Strategies

- Sit near the teacher or support staff, at the front of the room
- Reduce the amount of changes/disruptions as far as possible. Provide notice of any changes that are unavoidable
- **Use Task Management** boards to organise tasks and monitor progress
- Have pre-known and displayed rewards and consequences for positive and negative behaviour and use them consistently. Work with the student to determine these and make good use of the academic points system
- Use a timer to measure and extend time on task
- Allow student to scribble, draw, squeeze stress ball whilst you talk, or something that will allow them to fiddle (but only if they can do this sensibly), encourage highlighting and underlining
- Stay calm and clear if student’s behaviour is poor
- Reinforce positive behaviour and establish a system to signal desirable and undesirable, for example, hand gestures
- Give a set time for writing and do not extend into breaks between tasks as the student will need these breaks
- Use student’s name and give eye contact before giving instructions
- Chunk instructions and support with visual cues, ask student to **paraphrase** to check understanding
- Check regularly that the student is on task
- Give the student credit for any improvement and efforts made
- Give the student credit for the amount of time and effort spent on work
- Consider marking the student’s correct answers instead of their mistakes.

Cognition and Learning

Difficulties that students might experience

- Poor fine motor co-ordination which will result in untidy handwriting and presentation of work
- Poor working memory, both visual and auditory, which will affect their ability to follow instructions, take down dictation, and copy text from either book or board, learn spellings or tables
- Poor organisation that will affect their ability to organise their thoughts into written work
- Poor sequencing skills which can affect their ability to learn tables or spellings
- Typically, they are students who learn some things easily while other aspects of their work present them with persistent difficulties.
- They will often be able to make valuable contributions to class discussions but find it difficult to present those ideas in the written form.
- Written work will often have taken these students much longer to complete than a similar piece written by peers or will be incomplete.
- The completed work often has a significantly restricted vocabulary when compared to the student's oral vocabulary. These problems can lead to frustration, poor self-image and sometimes result in behaviour problems.

Implications for classroom practice

- Ensure glasses are worn appropriately.
- Where there are fine motor problems - encourage the use of ICT where possible/appropriate.
- Recognise that effort will not reflect output. Work may often be incomplete, or when complete, may be the result of substantial extra time and effort on the student's part.
- To avoid unfinished work, help the student to complete core elements of the work.
- If copying from the board or dictating, allow the student additional time and speak more slowly to accommodate the student with a short working visual or auditory memory. Have an LSA write the board work onto a small white board, possibly reduced text.
- Quick ways to identify information that is required from a text.
- Try to access as many different memories (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic - see it, hear it, write it or draw it) to give the student the maximum opportunity to learn new vocabulary.
- Ensure that there are regular opportunities to reuse/recap key concepts and vocabulary to help compensate for poor memory.
- Praise and reward effort and achievement.
- It can be helpful to enlarge text, cut a text into paragraphs or cover some of the text to reduce the amount of text that the student needs to focus on.
- Some students find coloured paper for photocopied information helpful.
- Consider using colour overlays
- Use visuals to replace words they cannot read.

Recommendations for specific learning difficulties

Reading:

- Encourage shared paired reading to develop fluency and understanding and to maintain enjoyment.
- Paired reading may also be useful to enable reading at a higher interest level.
- Give technical vocabulary prior to the introduction of topics.



- Texts will need to be differentiated.

Spelling:

- Use a supportive marking policy which identifies high frequency words that need learning.
- Ensure that a student is using a multi-sensory method to learn spellings – look, say, cover, write, check.
- Encourage proof reading; encouraging the student to identify words he thinks are wrong.
- When students are learning to proofread encourage them to identify 3 miscues only.
- Encourage the use of cursive handwriting to learn letter strings and word families.

Writing:

- Provide a word bank to support free writing with visuals.
- Use planning and writing frameworks.
- Allow time for discussion with scribing as appropriate.
- Allow modified or limited outcomes.
- Allow represented materials, e.g. lists, charts, flow diagrams, cartoons.
- Encourage vocabulary extension and spelling correction at the planning stage.
- Use pair work with one partner writing.
- Give extra time to take into account the student's slower rate of reading and writing.
- Try different coloured paper to write on.

Handwriting:

- Check pencil grip, the student may benefit from using a triangle to correct hold.
- Encourage larger cursive writing.
- If writing is slow, encourage the development of keyboarding skills.
- Give a range of ways of representing large chunks of information. For example, storyboards, resequencing activities, writing frames, and multiple choice.
- Use scribing to ease frustration if appropriate.



Concentration Difficulties

Concentration issues may come hand in hand with other needs, for example, ADHD. The student may find it difficult to maintain focus for an extended period of time, or may be easily distracted by others around them. Poor concentration may also be an indication of other issues, such as literacy difficulties or even poor hearing or vision.

Strategies

- Use seating plans so that students are positioned away from distraction (chatty friends/windows etc.)
- Tasks should be short with clear expectations
- Use of a timer to complete tasks (egg timer/digital timer on desk)
- Very short and clear explanations of task
- Break lessons into 4 or 5 short activities where possible
- Re-focus tasks as lesson goes on, or re-focus student individually every 5/10 minutes ie. what have you done so far, next you should...
- Ensure the task is fully understood, make use of **paraphrasing** and use **visual aids** such as now..../next.... so they are clear what they need to do.
- Use **Task Management Boards**
- Provide lots of praise for effort rather than just achievement

Difficulties that students might experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May fidget or fiddle with things a lot• May find it hard to sit still on a chair• May want to call out all the time• May be a 'daydreamer'• May only complete part of a task given• May distract other learners
Implications for classroom practice
Recommendation to improve concentration skills <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a fiddle toy• Link learning to the child's interest.• To finish tasks within allotted time, give 10-minute checks; i.e. outline amount of work you expect student to complete in this time and check.• Give praise/rewards for completion of tasks.• Use student self-monitoring for certain lessons to identify whether work is being completed on time.• Provide regular feedback on performance in class• Ensure eye contact when giving key instructions to these students.• Ask student to repeat instructions/explain their understanding of a concept to a peer or teacher.• Ensure that the student is sitting away from distraction, e.g. traffic areas, materials.• Work at availability/positioning of equipment which may distract.• Give cues that vital instructions are about to be given• Ensure that the student is sitting in a suitable position in the classroom, close to teacher, with easy eye contact.• Ensure that there is a quiet area where the student may work.

- Give brain gym breaks/ movement breaks – developing gross motor movements regularly over the school day
- Give a time frame to complete the activity – use a timer to keep focus.
- Buddy up with a more able student.
- Ask the child to repeat back the learning.
- Use reward systems.





Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling. Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory, and verbal processing speed. Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities. It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points. Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration, and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, makers of dyslexia. A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded intervention.

Strategies

- Maintain a tidy, organised classroom.
- Change the part of the classroom in which you are teaching, for example writing on the desk, floor or whiteboard.
- Sit the student with dyslexia at the front of the class.
- Provide handouts with key points highlighted rather than expect students to copy from the board.
- Set up a buddy system for support.
- Provide teaching assistant support to help the student get organised and check their understanding of instructions.
- Individual personalised dictionaries, with the area of the word they find difficult to spell highlighted
- Writing frames
- Lists of sentence starters
- Lists of linking words, for example after, before, despite, if, only
- A record of words generated during the lesson
- Whiteboards and coloured pens
- Pastel coloured paper and notebooks
- A selection of pens and Post-it notes
- Relevant reminders to support individual learning activities
- Handouts to support tasks, for example a visual checklist.

For students with visual stress

The main considerations for meeting the needs of a student with visual stress include reducing the contrast between black text and white background and limiting the amount of visual information to be processed. Consider using some of the following:

- Coloured overlays
- Cream paper for handouts and exercise books
- Pastel or cream background for computers and PowerPoint presentations
- Font size: minimum 12 point for paper and 28 point for PowerPoint
- Texts in a sans serif font such as Verdana, Century Gothic, Tahoma, Arial, Comic Sans, Trebuchet, Calibri
- Left-justified text
- Bold to emphasise text; avoiding italics or underlining or TEXT WRITTEN IN CAPITALS
- 1.5 line spacing.



Key strategies for reading

Students with dyslexia can become fluent readers, although the speed at which they read and their ability to comprehend long, complex texts can remain impaired. They may have to read a text several times to reach the same level of understanding as other students. Strategies to support reading difficulties include:

- Only ask a student to read aloud if you know they want to.
- Ensure that books are at the right level of difficulty for students.
- Use audio books when appropriate.
- Teach reading skills, such as skimming, scanning and closed reading, and when to use them.
- Limit the quantity of reading they have to do by guiding students to relevant strategies.
- Provide texts before the lesson so that students can prepare for them.
- Encourage students to condense and make sense of what they read, for example by making mind maps and drawing diagrams and flow charts.
- Pre-teach key vocabulary.
- Encourage the students to take a metacognitive approach:
 - Question the writer's intentions.
 - Reflect on the writer's approach and ask if it could be improved.
 - Consider your own views in relation to the text read and whether your opinions have changed.
 - Ascertain what you have learnt and how you will transfer this new learning.
- Instill in your students a desire to read by providing reading materials that are of interest to them.
- Ensure that there are books of high interest and low ability available.
- Use paired reading approaches.
- Lead students into the book using questioning techniques.

Key strategies for spelling

Spelling will remain a persistent difficulty for students with dyslexia. It is important that spelling difficulties do not impede students' creativity and ability to demonstrate their knowledge. It is important to encourage the use of ambitious words and teach students to spell key curricular words.

- Provide subject-specific key words in classroom handouts.
- Encourage the use of personalised dictionaries.
- Encourage students to take risks with their spelling, suggesting that they underline these words.
- Teach the spelling of key words in a multi-sensory way.
- Encourage a metacognitive approach by asking students to:
 - analyse the spelling mistakes and identify the learning required
 - decide what they will change to ensure that they spell that word correctly in future.

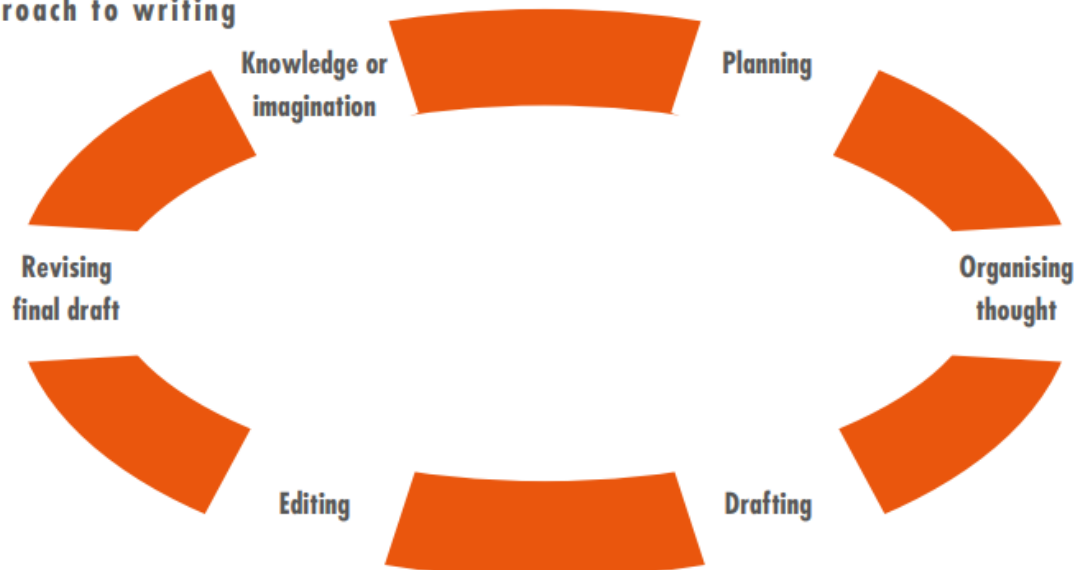
Key strategies for writing

Writing is a difficult medium for students with dyslexia to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and creativity. They find it hard to interpret the questions and understand how much

to write and what to include. Other barriers to writing include spelling, sequencing ideas, grammar and remembering their ideas long enough to record them. The time, effort and lack of awareness make proofreading a challenging conclusion to the process.

- Check understanding of the task.
- Teach 'questioning the question' approaches, for example isolating the topic area, limiting words and directives.
- Provide a glossary of directives.
- Provide examples and model good practice.
- Break down a writing task into manageable chunks.
- Teach and encourage students to plan.
- Encourage a metacognitive approach at each stage of the process of writing, reflecting, reviewing, monitoring, and transferring new learning.
- Reward achievement at each stage of the writing process.
- Give specific feedback at each stage so the students know what to repeat or improve.
- Provide written and verbal feedback.
- Use alternatives to written outcomes.
- Improve proofreading by:
 - building in proofreading time in lessons
 - using a 'buddying' system
 - teaching and modelling strategies during lessons
 - providing proofreading checklists
 - encouraging students to read work aloud
 - leaving time between writing and proofreading
 - rewarding improvements.

A metacognitive approach to writing



Dyscalculia

Dyscalculia is a specific learning disability literally 'difficulty with mathematics'.

Identifying dyscalculic learning difficulties.

- Number:
 - Difficulty linking words with numbers
 - Difficulty transferring from concrete to abstract ideas
 - Difficulty with place value, sequences, time, money, counting backwards
- Memory:
 - Difficulty holding ideas long enough to make sense of a task or question
- Language:
 - Difficulty understanding maths terms and abbreviations. Difficulty with worded maths problems
- Work:
 - The students' work is often messy. Numbers sometimes reversed. Columns don't line up

Strategies

- Provide concrete objects to aid calculation. Age appropriate bricks, blocks, counters
- Play maths games
- At the beginning of each topic, use word banks displayed on the wall in alphabetical order
- Provide a list of maths symbols (as we do with punctuation)
- Provide photocopies rather than expect students to copy from the board
- Make extended use of calculators
- Praise and reward to try to reduce anxiety associated with maths





Dyspraxia

The word “dyspraxia” comes from the Greek words “dys” meaning bad and “praxis”, meaning action or deed. Dyspraxia is also known as Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD). It has been described as a “difficulty getting our bodies to do what we want, when we want them to do it”, a difficulty that can be considered significant when it interferes with the normal range of activities expected of a child of their age. Dyspraxia can adversely affect speech and language, fine motor control and gross motor coordination.

Strategies

- Give the student as much encouragement as possible
- Be aware that handwritten work may cause frustration
- Ensure that the student’s pen and pencil grip is comfortable (grips are available from the SEN room)
- Offer alternative ways of recording work—laptop / word pad / use of mind maps / story boards etc. where appropriate
- Allow extra time to complete tasks, particularly where there is lengthy writing, technical drawing etc.
- Do not provide too many verbal or visual instructions at once
- Give step by step instructions and use **paraphrasing**, check they are understood
- If necessary, place simple written instructions on the student’s desk
- Sit the student near the board
- Use checklists and story planners
- Allow access to computer technology where appropriate
- Use lined paper with margins to allow students to consider how to set out their writing
- In Mathematics, use squared paper
- In PE, a new skill may have to be fully demonstrated and repeated before the student can perform the task
- Students may struggle with getting changed quickly before and after PE so allow additional time
- In practical subjects, they may need support to manipulate equipment



Memory Difficulties

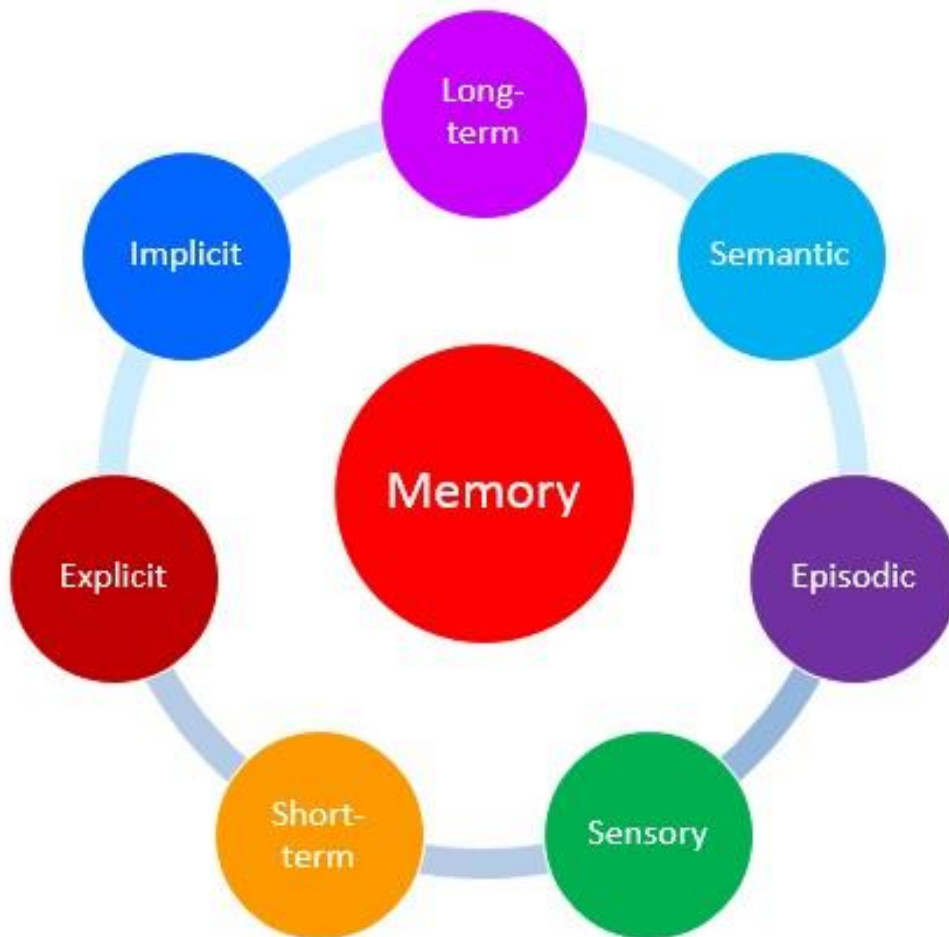
Poor memory is often a result of another need, for example, students with dyslexia or a speech and language difficulty will often have difficulty with either retaining information or retrieving information. Poor working memory (for example the ability to hold information in your head and manipulate it mentally) can often be mistaken for poor cognition. Poor working memory impacts students as they need this on a daily basis for a variety of tasks in school such as following instructions or remembering what to write down.

Strategies

- Give clear instructions in short chunks, no more than 2 at a time
- Use **Task Management Boards** to allow student to tick off once task is complete
- Use short tasks, and refocus after 5 minutes to ensure the student knows what to do
- 'Chunk' texts into 2 or 3 pieces maximum
- Allow for repetition and practice, repeat key points
- In order for information to be stored to long term memory the information needs to be linked to something meaningful so link to existing topics/information/create vivid personal examples that students can relate to, this will help recall in the future
- Use mnemonics to help remember e.g. 'My very fat cat with furry paws' (minerals, vitamins, fat, carbohydrates, water, fiber and protein). Allow students to create their own - perhaps even draw pictures to link to them.
- Make visual records of ideas and key words, make use of **mind maps**
- Record ideas and listen back to them to help revise
- Make key word cards with definitions, use these at beginning of lessons to revise key ideas. Keep it short and sharp and revise them every so often to help store in long term memory
- Use cards - write question on one side/answer on the other—ask students to test each other.

Difficulties that students might experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slow to pick up sounds/ tricky words in reading• Forgets words from one page to the next in a book• Unable to follow simple 3 step instruction such as go and get me the red pen and put it on the blue table
Implications for classroom practice
Recommendations to support students with weak auditory and/or visual memory <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multi-sensory presentation of information.• The students will learn best in small steps with frequent review of the key points.• Encourage small group reinforcement of key points.• Reduce the amount of copying of information from the board.• Use Task Management Boards• Present the structure of the lesson at the beginning.• When the working memory is limited give aural information in short chunks.• Encourage the student/class to build up a concept map of a topic over a period of weeks to enable connections to be drawn.• Look for times when a student is off task or distracted since this may be a signal that he has not heard or recalled instructions given earlier.• Repeat verbal instructions slowly and ask the student to repeat them to a peer.

- Be aware that a student with memory difficulties can easily become frustrated.
- For students with visual memory problems give the student small amounts of visual information at a time by covering part of a page with paper.
- Highlight or underline vital information and instructions.
- Use the exact sheet the child will be recording on for the modelling.
- Encourage the use of the learning wall to remind of previous steps of learning.
- Sing instructions and encourage chanting.
- Develop a core of three step instruction and then change one factor to develop memory retention.
- Play Kim's game – hide 5 items under a blanket and the child has to remember them...build this up to 10 items.



Sensory and Physical

Difficulties that students might experience

Common Signs of Sensory Processing Problems

Out-of-proportion reactions to touch, sounds, sights, movement, tastes, or smells, including:

- Bothered by clothing fabrics, labels, tags, etc.
- Distressed by light touch or unexpected touch
- Dislikes getting messy
- Resists grooming activities
- Very sensitive to sounds (volume or frequency)
- Squints, blinks, or rubs eyes frequently
- Bothered by lights or patterns
- High activity level or very sedentary
- Unusually high or low pain threshold

Motor skill and body awareness difficulties, including:

- Fine motor delays (e.g., crayons, buttons/snaps, beading, scissors)
- Gross motor delays (e.g., walking, running, climbing stairs, catching a ball)
- Illegible handwriting
- Moves awkwardly or seems clumsy
- Low or high muscle tone

Oral motor and feeding problems, including:

- Oral hypersensitivity
- Frequent drooling or gagging
- “Picky eating”
- Speech and language delays
- Poor attention and focus: often “tunes out” or “acts up”

Implications for classroom practice

A sensory diet at school might include:

- **Walking.** Taking a brief walk at specified intervals, perhaps accompanied by an aide.
- **Fidgeting with objects.** Fidgets such as a Koosh ball, fabric tab sewn into a pocket, or even a hair band can keep a student’s hands busy so they can focus better. A band of stretchy material around front chair legs that they can push their shins and ankles against may help. A carpet square or piece soft cloth they can touch attached to the underside of the desk or an inflatable cushion to sit on can make attending for long periods easier for every child.
- **Objects for chewing.** Objects to chew on such as a Pencil Topper, ChewEase, or Chewable Jewel can provide soothing oral input to keep a student focused on learning rather than sensory cravings.
- **Push-ups and jumping jacks.** Jumping jacks or just jumping in place, and push-ups done in a chair or against a wall provide organizing proprioceptive input at school.
- **Stretching.** Stretching wakes up the body after a quiet activity. Everyone can benefit from stretching after sitting, but it’s even more important for a child with sensory issues.

- **Appropriate demand for eye contact.** A child with sensory issues may need to “block off” his visual sense in order to listen more effectively. They should **not be required** to maintain eye contact when answering a question requiring concentration. If increasing eye contact is a goal, it should be worked on at other times, not, for example, when they are making a nerve-wracking oral presentation.
- **Prepare for intense sensory experiences.** The sensitive child should be warned in advance about fire drills, for instance, so they can be prepared for the intensity. They should be permitted to wear earplugs or sound blocking earmuffs during such a sensory onslaught.
- **Special place in line.** When lining up with other children, the child should always be at the front or end of the line, so they aren’t disturbed by other children crowding or bumping into them.
- **Allocated seating.** A sensitive child needs a well-considered seat location in the classroom and other rooms. Children with sensory issues often do best in the front of the classroom close to the teacher, away from distractions such as direct sunlight and vents and noisy radiators. A student may also need to sit where she can’t see out the door or windows, or next to a wall for a sense of security.



Expressive Language difficulties

Difficulties that students might experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May mispronounce certain sounds • May speak with a lisp • A reluctance to speak in a group situation • Have limited vocabulary • Find it hard to put a word to things. <p>May be hesitant speaker – taking time to “find the words”</p>
Implications for classroom practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role model the correct way of saying the word or sound. • Don’t ask the child to repeat it. • Encourage them to use visuals – to get their point across. • Support them with simple signing. • Check that the child understands the question. • Check they have the vocabulary for what you are asking. • Give them time to speak. • Comment on what is happening, rather than asking the child about what is happening. • Give them a choice of answer – so they don’t have to “word find” • Use the words in a context • Use Task Management Boards

Receptive Language difficulties

Difficulties that students might experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May appear not to be listening to instructions • May have a limited vocabulary • May find lengthy tasks hard to complete
Implications for classroom practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give them simple one step instruction and if they can follow this increase the level. • Paired learning – so they learn with a peer. • Chunk learning into small steps. • Use visuals to support the steps of learning. • Give them extra time to complete a task. • Encourage them to practice their instruction following skills. • Pre-learning of words related to the learning should be done. • Ensure they understand abstract words like before, after, if, except, after that. • Encourage them to ask for instructions to be repeated. • Use a timer to support the activity completion. • Use Task Management Boards