

INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER / ADDITIONAL NEEDS RELATION TO CONCENTRATION / WORKING MEMORY AND IMPULSIVITY

Strategies are broken down into two parts. Those dealing primarily with attention deficit i.e. limited concentration / working memory and those dealing with hyperactivity disorder i.e. impulsivity and disruptive behaviour.

Limited Concentration	Establish a set seat for the student. Ideally, seat the student near the front with their back to the majority of the class and, if possible, between two settled students who can act as good role models. Present as a supportive rather than punitive measure, <i>"Joe, I am doing this because you concentrate better here."</i>
	Seat student in an area of the classroom free from busy displays and distractions. Try to keep the area around the whiteboard / IWB 'clutter free'.
	During teacher-talk, allow the student to fiddle with a piece of blu-tac, rubber band, squeeze ball or another chosen object (something quiet!) whilst maintaining eye contact.
	Give instructions simply and clearly. Make sure the student is looking at you first. Check that he or she has understood them.
	Ask the student to repeat instructions back to you. Try to ask them to show you what they should be doing, rather than asking them to tell you.
	During class discussions, proactively 'retune' the student back into the lesson by interspersing more challenging questions with simple questions addressed directly to those who tend to 'drift off'.
	Rather than relying on a 'hands up if you can tell me' routine during class discussion, instead put all students' names on cards and pick them at random. This pressure, when used sensitively, can keep students focused who otherwise allow others to take leading roles during class discussion.
	Use a timer to help the student complete a task in a specified period of time.
	Devise a private signal system to let the student know when they are off task.
	Plan in 'settling time' at the start of lessons. Ask for 2minutes of silence at the start whilst they write down the title, learning objective etc. With groups in which you have a good relationship, allow students to put their head in their hands or show a slow moving picture slideshow (ideally relating to the lesson).
	Give clear guidelines: <i>"I <u>expect</u> you to have produced at least three lines by ten past ten; I will be asking you then to share these with your writing partner."</i> Present as though you assume they will complete it, not as a request to complete it.
	Give regular updates on time remaining for tasks to ensure pace. Otherwise the student is likely to 'drift off'. A digital clock / watch will work more effectively than a standard clock as there is a high prevalence of students with concentration difficulties not being able to consistently tell the time on a standard clock.

Impulsivity

Try to seat the student well away from areas other students need to walk through. Also try to limit opportunity for them to 'roam' around the classroom (such as handing out books etc.)

Use visual prompts to remind students about the type of learning taking place. i.e. have a picture of a student working on their own for 'quiet working' tasks and a picture of students with their hands up for class discussion tasks.

During longer tasks and longer periods of teacher-talk / Q&A, work in a 'movement break' with a clear parameter – i.e. give them a specific errand (such as asking them to fetch stationary from next door) or allow them to go to the toilet (sometimes they will request this as a way of self-managing their restlessness).

Establish a quiet place where the student can go to work should they become overly excited or agitated.

Students will often engage in disruptive behaviour when they find a task too difficult and become off-task, particularly during extended writing activities. Provide support in the form of writing frames, word mats and prompts such as a display board with ideas for 'Five things to do if you are stuck'.

To reduce 'unstructured time' in which impulsive behaviour is likely to occur, try to have a set of familiar task types that students are familiar with (such as highlighting key words in a text, word puzzles, number puzzles, cutting and sorting exercises, cloze procedure etc.) which can be used at the start of lesson and at the end of lesson if there is time remaining – and possibly as a back-up should there be inappropriate behaviour and a student needs to work elsewhere.

Aim for a ratio of three positive comments to one negative and teach student how to reward themselves: 'You managed to concentrate on your work very well just then; give yourself a pat on the back'.

With a student who has fallen into a pattern of disruptive behaviour, try to work on step-by-step change by setting a clear behaviour target for two weeks (such as "put our hands up when we want to speak") and offering tangible rewards for meeting it. Then move to another target, and so on.

Actively teach/use clear classroom routines, e.g. have all students hold an object when it is their turn to talk.

Display classroom rules and routines for student to refer to. Illustrate them visually - for example, use a traffic-light system to indicate whether students can talk or not, or symbols for different noise levels (partner voices, group voices, classroom voice, outside voices).

Remind the student of a rule, rather than telling them off - "*N, our rule is we put up our hand to answer*". Or make a point of praising a student who is keeping the rule-"*A, I like the way you put your hand up when you knew the answer*".

When correcting unacceptable behaviour, say what you want him or her to do, rather than what you don't – "*N., I want you to keep your hands on the table.*" instead of "*N, stop bothering P*".

Use language that labels the behaviour but not the student – i.e. “N, turn your volume down please.” rather than “N, you are really noisy at the moment.” Most students who present with high-impulsivity will tend to switch off or respond with anger if they perceive they are being ‘picked on’ or “got at yet again”.

Use the language of choice, reminding pupils of the consequences of the various behavioural choices open to them.

Some impulsive behaviour can be driven by a habit of trying to gain adult and peer attention. One way to counter this is tactically ignore such behaviour and praise good behaviour. A further strategy, if the disruption is escalating, is to isolate the student temporarily and deny them the attention of others – this, when managed carefully, can act as a deterrent for inappropriate attention-seeking.

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