



AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Students with significant verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction difficulties that result in adverse effects to the student's educational performance that are evident prior to age 3.

Characteristics of Students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder:

- Difficulty understanding social etiquette and rules
- Trouble making and keeping friendships
- Preoccupation with a topic or topics of interest
- Concrete and/or literal thinking
- Insistence on sameness or routines

Autism Spectrum Disorder makes up about 7% of disabilities

Instructional Implications:

1. Use visual aids.
2. Teach student how to use a planner or other organizer.
3. Be concise and direct in your instructions.
4. Use visual timers, clock or watch to help with time management and transitioning from one task to another.
5. Provide specific concrete feedback.
6. Support transitions.
7. Decrease stimuli in environment and provide structure.
8. Consider handwriting alternatives.
9. Teach specific social rules and skills.
10. Give clear choices.
11. Recognize that changes in behavior or manner may indicate anxiety.
12. Try to link work to student's interests.
13. Don't take rude comments or aggressive behavior personally.
14. Divide work into smaller units.



COGNITIVE DISORDERS

Students who have significantly below average intellectual functioning paired with deficits in adaptive behavior skills.

Characteristics of Students with Cognitive Disorders:

- Slower learning rate and requires more repetition
- May have difficulty saying what they mean or how they feel
- Difficulty generalizing skills in one context to another
- May not determine right from wrong when someone tells them to do something
- May need to be taught skills necessary to take care of oneself

Cognitive Disorder makes up about 0.1% of disabilities

Instructional Implications:

1. Teach one concept or activity component at a time.
2. Teach student in small groups or one-on-one.
3. Provide multiple opportunities to practice skills in a variety of settings.
4. Use physical and verbal prompting to guide responses.
5. Use specific verbal praise.
6. Instructional strategies and materials designed with student interests and strengths in mind.
7. Teach one-step at a time to support memory and sequencing.
8. May require a modified curriculum and direct teaching of functional skills.
9. Use less complex language when instructing or giving directions.
10. Teach complex concepts over time, one component at a time.
11. Provide opportunities for students to interact directly with each other.
12. Provide alternate tasks at skill level.
13. Explicitly teach life skill and social skills.

ORTHOPEDIC IMPAIRMENT

Students who have an orthopedic impairment which may interfere with their ability to walk, write, or perform other physical tasks in the classroom and other settings.

Characteristics of Students with an Orthopedic Impairment:

- Paralysis, unsteady gait, poor muscle control, loss of limb, etc. (causes limited mobility)
- Speech production and expressive language may be delayed or impaired
- Motor deficits might result in a diminished ability to write, speak, sort, organize materials, sit, walk, climb stairs, eat or drink independently, participate in learning games, or participate in athletic activities
- Conditions vary from person to person and may not have any cognitive, learning, perceptual, language, or sensory issues

**Orthopedic Impairment
makes up about 0.3% of
disabilities**

Instructional Implications:

1. Be patient with student. Rest breaks may be needed or larger assignments may take longer to complete.
2. Seating arrangements should make sure the student is comfortable and able to participate.
3. Encourage participation at all times.
4. Focus instruction on development of gross and fine motor skills with access to equipment or assistive devices (pencil grips, slant board, grip mats, etc.)
5. Use of assistive technology-such as dictation software, computers/keyboards, or communication software.
6. Allow additional time for passing or transition periods.
7. Provide copy of notes or written assignments to limit the requirement of writing.
8. Allow the use of oral responses or a scribe.
9. Provide frequent breaks to prevent fatigue.
10. Use wheelchair, walkers, and other equipment to encourage movement. Monitor the condition and safety of equipment.



DEAF-BLINDNESS

Students who have a Deaf-Blindness disability may experience major difficulties in acquiring communication and motor skills, mobility, and appropriate social skills.

Characteristics of Students with Deaf-Blindness:

- Difficulty communicating with others
- Difficulty understanding the whole picture or relating one element to the whole
- May not know how to anticipate certain situations because of missed cues
- Prefer hands-on and individualized experiences
- Sensory deficits can easily mislead educators into underestimating/overestimating intelligence and constructing inappropriate programs

Deaf-Blindness makes up about 0.1% of disabilities

Instructional Implications:

1. Utilize what vision and hearing the student has by knowing what they can or cannot see or hear.
2. Use of all five senses-the student may use touch more than other senses.
3. Encourage participation at all times.
4. Allow extra time for reactions and decisions.
5. Allow student to make choices.
6. Immediate feedback in all situations.
7. Provide opportunities where the student has to use problem solving techniques.
8. Teach practical activities that can be learned in the natural routines of the day.
9. Provide classroom routines and expectations.
10. Provide communication systems and/or Braille materials or other assistive technology materials to help with materials.
11. Teach orientation and mobility for independent movement through the environment.



EMOTIONAL DISABILITY

Students who have a behavioral disorder that impacts their ability to be happy, control their emotions, make relationships and attend in school.

Characteristics of Students with an Emotional Disability:

- Inappropriate actions or emotions under normal circumstances
- Difficulty with interpersonal interactions
- General feeling of unhappiness or depression
- Feelings of fear and anxiety related to personal factors or school
- Difficulty with learning that cannot be explained by other factors

**Emotional Disability
makes up about 6.5% of
disabilities**

Instructional Implications:

1. Rules and routines that are predictable.
2. Identify positive behaviors or attributes that you can reinforce.
3. Behavior management techniques such as positive reinforcement, token economy and contracts.
4. Systematic teaching of social skills.
5. Focus energy on preventative strategies.
6. Develop a relationship with the student.
7. Follow low interest activities with high interest activities
8. Give choices.
9. Differentiate learning and teaching.
10. Make lesson objectives clear.
11. Display classroom rules and daily schedules.
12. Don't take rude comments or aggressive behavior personally.
13. Divide work into smaller units.
14. Peer mentoring.



HEARING LOSS

Students who have hearing loss miss out on sounds that help with talking and learning. Missing these sounds can cause problems with speaking, reading, school success, and social skills.

Characteristics of Students with Hearing Loss:

- Delayed speech and language skills
- Learning problems in school
- Favors one ear over the other
- Lack of follow through with directions

Instructional Implications:

1. Teach note taking techniques such as sketch and speak or Cornell Notes.
2. Simplicity, visuals, oral practice, and repeated opportunities during instructional time.
3. Use listening devices to maximize teachers voice.
4. Repeat instructional objectives or lesson outcomes. Teach self-advocacy to express own instructional needs or instructional confusion.
5. Class discussions to build the students background knowledge of concepts and to summarize key points.
6. Vocabulary focus using systematic approach.
7. Pre-teach concepts.
8. Differentiate learning and teaching.
9. Make lesson objectives clear.
10. Peer mentoring or someone for the student to access during class time to reinforce concepts being taught.
11. Classroom routine.
12. Write all assignments on board and provide written text of discussions.
13. Present materials in front of class where students can see you speaking. Consider preferential seating and orientation of speaker.

Hearing Loss makes up about 0.4% of disabilities



ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER

Students with ADHD/ADD have limited strength, vitality or alertness, including heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment.

Characteristics of Students with ADHD & ADD:

- May have difficulty attention and organization
- May require medication, school nurse, and/or health services
- May miss school due to health condition
- Memory may be affected
- Medication side effects

ADHD & ADD make up about 15% of disabilities

Instructional Implications:

1. Give directions verbally and visually.
2. Teach student how to use a planner or other organizer.
3. Break up text and embed questions.
4. Use visual timers, clock or watch to help with time management.
5. Provide an advanced organizer or graphic organizer.
6. Review previous information or lessons prior to learning new material.
7. Decrease stimuli in environment.
8. Define the behavior when giving praise.
9. Provide checklist of frequent mistakes and have student apply checklist to own work.
10. Designate one teacher as advisor or coordinator for the student.
11. Use graph paper and manipulates in math.
12. Eliminate or reduce frequency of timed tests.
13. Use of voice to text for writing.
14. Divide work into smaller units.

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY

Students who have a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do math.

Characteristics of Students with a Specific Learning Disability:

- Difficulties in reading, math, writing, oral expression and/or listening comprehension
- Lack of cognitive strategies needed for efficient learning
- May have poor motor abilities, social skill deficits and/or attention difficulties
- Psychological processes deficits or information processing problems

Specific Learning Disability makes up about 38% of disabilities

Instructional Implications:

Short Term and Working Memory

1. Organize and scaffold course material to reduce working memory load.
2. Provide visual supports and memory aides that reduce cognitive demands.
3. Keep instructions linguistically simple.

Long Term Retrieval

1. Activate prior knowledge to facilitate associations with new information.
2. Limit amount of material or pacing of content delivery to allow for overlearning, review and repetition to build multiple representations in long term memory and enhance recall.
3. Embed comprehension questions into smaller units of reading.

Processing Speed

1. Provide activities to increase rate of fluency.
2. Allow “hands on” products for students to demonstrate mastery.
3. Prioritize content and introduce most critical material first.

Fluid Reasoning

1. Use graphic organizers to find and show relationships
2. Provide examples and use visuals to make abstract concepts more concrete.
3. Use peer tutors and reciprocal teaching to model thinking and problem solving.

SPEECH OR LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT

Speech or language impairment is a communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language disorder, or a voice disorder that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Characteristics of Students with a Speech or Language Impairment:

- Articulation-errors in production of sounds
- Fluency-difficulties with the rhythm and timing of speech (hesitations, repetitions, prolongations of sounds, syllables, words, or phrases)
- Voice-problem with the quality or use of one's voice (vocal quality, pitch, loudness, resonance, and/or duration)
- Language-impairment in the ability to understand and/or use words in context, both verbally and nonverbally

Speech or Language Impairment makes up about 19% of disabilities

Instructional Implications:

Language Disorder

1. Shorten and/or modify oral directions.
2. Ask student to repeat or rephrase the directions.
3. Provide visuals to enhance explanation of new materials.
4. Give directions in multiple ways (written and oral)-make sure the student is paying attention to the speaker during directions.
5. Be mindful of vocabulary, idioms, figures of speech.

Voice Disorder

1. Encourage appropriate use of voice.
2. Help student reduce the instances of yelling or throat clearing.
3. Reduce the amount of background noise in the classroom.

Fluency Disorder

1. Allow for longer oral response time.
2. Reduce amount of pressure to communicate in the classroom.
3. Avoid telling student to "slow down" when participating in group discussions.
4. Have the student practice any oral assignment before presenting to the large class.

Articulation Disorder

1. Allow for longer response time.
2. Allow the student time to express themselves without interrupting.
3. Preferential seating next to a peer or teacher.
4. Have the student practice any oral assignment before presenting to the large class.



TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

Students who have sustained a TBI may exhibit a wide range of newly acquired deficits or alterations in cognition, physical mobility, self-care skills, and communication skills as well as changes in emotional and behavioral regulation.

Characteristics of Students with a Traumatic Brain Injury:

- Experience difficulty with executive function-includes attentional process, self-regulation, goal setting, initiating, and behavior/social problems.
- May show problems in organization, planning, prioritizing, analyzing task, and completing multi-step sequence activities
- Cognitive impairments may be present-slowed processing, memory loss (recalling and retaining information), and language disturbance
- Physical functioning- decreased motor speed, spasticity, poor coordination with fine or gross motor movements

**Traumatic Brain Injury
makes up about 0.3% of
disabilities**



Instructional Implications:

1. Classes and expectations should be based on students' current academic performance.
2. Allow time to relearn concepts or regain skills.
3. Noise and activity levels should be minimized (lights, movement, etc.).
4. Larger assessments or task may need to be broken down into smaller sections.
5. Student may need a space to decompress from all of the stimulus.
6. Prioritize content and introduce most critical material first.
7. Allow additional time for passing or transition periods.
8. Provide a daily routine and expectations to limit confusion.
9. Simplified instructions, written or picture checklist, maps, or signs to complete task.
10. Provide opportunities for student response and practice content at appropriate pace for the student.
11. Provide immediate feedback that is positive and systematic.





VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Students who have a Visual Impairment have limited ability to learn incidentally from their environment. Students are taught compensatory skills or methods from their other senses.

Characteristics of Students with a Visual Impairment:

- Difficulties may include limited access to information, fluctuation vision, visual fatigue, and safety concerns
- May appear to be “clumsy” or “fumbling” during activities and it may take several attempts
- Each eye condition is unique to each student and can affect students differently but learning will rely on their other senses or what vision the student does have

**Visual Impairment makes
up about 0.3% of
disabilities**

Instructional Implications:

1. Eliminate all glaring and/or squinting for student.
2. Use high contrast materials for all students (use white paper, make materials so they can easily be seen across the room, etc.).
3. Provide extra support on activities such as word searches, mazes, board games, or outdoor activities.
4. Avoid “clutter” on visual presentations.
5. Avoid lamination or glossy finish paper to eliminate glare.
6. Provide copy of notes or written assignments to limit fatigue.
7. Assistive technology-use of videos, movies, audio-visual displays, communication software, copiers/scanner, hand-held magnifiers, computer software that enlarges text.
8. Provide large print or Braille materials.
9. Use highlighted lined paper to help in locating correct line for writing assignments.
10. Practice safety drills or situations so student is familiar with all possible obstacles.
11. Minimize eye fatigue by providing an oral reader or use of audio books.