



Instructional Modifications

Cueing Questions

Questions can be a constant source of irritation for the learning disabled child. Fortunately there are many techniques available that can relieve this irritation: ask more common questions, ask fewer questions, reword in easier terms, avoid essay type questions, utilize matching, true or false, and multiple choice questions, or allow more time for response. If these choices do not appeal to you, you may want to try one or more of these options.

- Next to the question, write down on what page the information may be found. This would work really well on information that has been color coded.
- Number the paragraphs of a chapter and cue answer with number of paragraph.
- Same as above, but underline or color-code answer in the paragraph.
- As questions occur either within the context of the chapter or at the end of the chapter, list the questions with the correct answer. Record the page number where the question/answer may be found.

Example: Questions Unit 1
p.15 Do you know?
1. What is a community?
(p. 2) a group of people living together.

Cueing Questions

Study Sheets/ Guides and Test Modifications

Students with learning problems often need study sheets in order to focus on the important elements of information to be learned. Some examples are:

- Provide students with review outlines to guide their studying.
- List steps in a mathematical process or a lab activity so that the student knows exactly what he/she is to do. (ETP: Clear Information)
- Ask the student to create his/her own study sheet by listing important people, events or facts. Then ask him/her to list relationships between the items. (*ETP: Effective Teaching Practice)

- Have students write their own study questions after lectures, discussions and reading assignments. (ETP: Questions/Prompts)
- Teach students to recognize signal words in lectures and written material to guide studying. Example: “most of all,” “a key feature,” “a major event,” “above all,” “especially valuable,” “remember that,” “the principal item,” etc. (ETP: Increase Meaning)
- Teach students to recognize conclusion words to guide their study time. Example: “therefore,” “as a result,” “consequently,” “in addition,” “for instance,” etc.

*ETP - Effective Teaching Practice

Study Sheets/Guides and Test Modifications

Test Modifications: Lower The Readability

Original	Revised
Compare and contrast the deciduous forest and the tundra	How are the deciduous forest and tundra alike? How are they different?
Plants respond to things in their environment. List three stimuli to which most plants respond	Name three things to which plants respond.
Name those structures that are found in both plant cells and animal cells	What parts do animal cells and plant cells have in common?
Distinguish between a nuclear reaction and a chemical reaction	What is a nuclear reaction? What is a chemical reaction?

Original	Revised
Identify some of the plants and animals that live in freshwater habits and some that live in marine habits	Name a plant and animal that lives in the freshwater habitat. Name a plant and animal that lives in the marine habitat.
Discuss reasons why animals hibernate	Why do certain animals hibernate during the winter?
Volcanoes are produced by what conditions?	What causes volcanoes?
Laura Thomas needs insurance for her personal belongings, but not for her residence, since she lives in an apartment. If her semi annual insurance premium is \$47.00, what amount will she have paid in two years?	Laura Thomas lives in an apartment and needs to insure her belongings. The insurance premium costs \$47.00 every six months (semiannually). How much will she pay in two years?

Shortened Assignments

When students have learning difficulties, it often takes them more time to complete assignments. Shortened assignments that still provide necessary practice allow the student to complete work in a reasonable time period without undue pressure and frustration. Students with physical handicaps always require more time to complete assignments.

- Identify terminology, concepts and skills that are most important and require that these items be completed first.
- Star the essential items, allowing bonus points for other items completed.
- Reduce the number of questions or problems to be done at one time. Shorter assignments made more frequently provide the same amount of practice.

- Allow the student to tape responses or give answers to a classmate who can write them for the student.
- Give slower readers modified or related stories that teach the same concepts.
- Cut a long worksheet into smaller segments and give the student one segment at a time. When one strip is completed, hand out the next. Follow this procedure until all segments are completed. When tasks are long or complex, many students have difficulty completing them.
- Provide a card file for the student that contains definitions of frequently used words.
- Providing dittos with fill-in-the-blank tasks can shorten assignments as well as promote learning of new words.

Shortened Assignments

Note-Taking

Students who have poor writing skills, hearing impairments or visual impairments need assistance taking study notes in class.

- Provide a skeleton outline (advance organizer) that includes main ideas. Ask students to complete the supporting details.
- Ask a reliable note-taker to write on two-part NCT paper while the special needs student takes notes on his/her own paper. A copy of the reliable notes can be given to the special needs student to supplement his notes.
- Allow time at the end of the class for students to compare notes with classmates.
- Use a handout or an overhead transparency to show a model set of notes before note-taking is completed.
- Have students skilled in note-taking sit near the special needs student. This encourages note-sharing.

- Allow time at the end of the class for note reviewing.
 - *Teacher directed:* Provide drill in finding subheadings to determine if students noted all main ideas. Show completed notes on the overhead.
 - *Student directed:* Allow students time to correct notes, review concepts and/or read another student's notes to check for note completion.
- Assist the special needs student by highlighting important sections of class notes.
- Have the student take notes from the highlighted text to improve note-taking skills and comprehension of the material.
- Provide a partially completed outline and emphasize topics to be filled in while lecturing and using an overhead projector or other visual aids.
- Reinforce the student and student assistant by rewarding both for cooperatively completing note-taking tasks.

Note-Taking Assistance

Preparing Assignment Sheets

Students with special learning needs perform better when assignments are structured. Providing time for the student to fill out an assignment sheet daily with relevant information will help to provide this structure. In order to succeed in the task of preparing assignment sheets, the student needs instructions in how to look at assignments and how to complete them in an organized way. In learning how to correctly prepare assignment sheets, the students will be able to strengthen their ability to remember to take adequate materials and information home in order to complete homework assignments.

Teach students to follow the “Rules for Writing Assignments.” Rules should then be displayed in the classroom.

Rules for Writing Assignments:

- Write the assignment exactly as your teacher gives it.
- Write the word “book,” “workbook,” or “ditto.”
- Write the page number.
- Write all important information such as Part A, number 1-10.
- Write the date the assignment is due.
- Have parents initial the assignment sheet daily.

Preparing Assignment Sheets

Pre-Teach Content Vocabulary

Students need to:

- Learn and recognize terms that are unique to content area
- Learn specialized meaning of common words
- Learn symbols and abbreviations unique to subject
- Learn word connotations
- Understand that words change in meaning and pronunciation
- Learn skills to continue increasing vocabulary independently

Decide which words to teach:

- List key concepts
- Pick out the most crucial terms
- Find out which words they already know
- Teach words that will lead to the learning of additional words

Teaching content vocabulary:

- Teach meaning - Tie to concepts
- Avoid lists of words
- Avoid unrelated exercises
- Teach strategies for learning new words
- Use new words repeatedly in conversation
- Teach use of dictionary
- Teach ways to figure out new words
 - context clues
 - phonic analysis
 - structural analysis
 - combination
 - authority

Pre-Teach Content Vocabulary

Vocabulary Sheets

Extract all boldfaced, italicized or new concept words from the chapter. The words should be listed in the order they occur within the chapter. The corresponding page number can be recorded to the left of the word.

Example - Unit 1

- pg. 2 Community – a group of people living together.
- pg. 3 Village – a collection of houses in a rural area.
- pg. 3 Town – a collection of houses and other buildings that is larger than a village yet smaller than a city.
- pg. 4 City – a large, organized community that has a charter from the state.

Using the vocabulary sheet, place all vocabulary words for the chapter on 3x5 cards. File in card box by chapters.

Using the vocabulary sheets developed for all chapters, place the words on 3x5 cards and file in alphabetical order.

Record on tape the vocabulary words for each chapter. Procedure for recording:

- State the word - page number where the word may be initially found - restate the word.
- State the definition as recorded on the vocabulary sheet.

Vocabulary Sheets

Highlighted Texts and Materials, Visual Aids

Visual aids assist many students in the learning process. It is estimated that approximately 60% of all students learn best visually, or with a multi-sensory approach.

- Use markers to highlight important material in texts or handouts. This will help to make the most important information clear to the student.
 - Highlight key words
 - Highlight main ideas
 - Highlight graphs, maps, charts, boldface type, terms, important names, dates, places, vocabulary and picture captions
 - Different colors can be used to emphasize important elements, such as red to underline names and green to underline places.
 - Teach identification of key points by starring them. Highlight the corresponding details. This will emphasize meaning and increase student interest.
- Use marker to highlight overhead transparencies.
- Write directions on handouts, overhead or chalkboard and leave them for future reference.
- Use colored chalk to differentiate activities.

- Use charts, posters, flash cards, sentence strips and other visual aids to increase interest and meaning.
- Have students watch television shows or videotapes which reinforce important concepts. Set time limits and designate the program and channel location.
- Teach highlighting techniques: Provide exercises which allow students to work together in highlighting important information.
- Have students make visual models of maps, charts, graphs and other items, using playdough, clay or other mediums. Using this multi-sensory approach will increase meaning and interest. This could be used as a means of reinforcement by giving extra credit for the project.

Highlighted Texts and Materials, Visual Aids

If student has difficulty -- then try this!

If student has difficulty	Then try this
Becoming interested	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Tell stories which relate to their lives▪ Establish relevancy▪ Provide concrete experiences▪ Read story or article aloud to stimulate interest▪ Seat student close to teacher
Getting started – give cue to begin work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Give work in smaller amounts▪ Provide immediate feedback▪ Sequence work▪ Provide time suggestions▪ Check on progress▪ Peer mentor or peer tutor
Paying attention to spoken work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Give explanations in small distinct steps▪ Provide written backup to oral directions▪ Have student repeat directions▪ Use buddies, tape directions▪ Shorten the listening time▪ Alternate spoken with written manipulative tasks▪ Look directly at student; place hand on student's shoulder

If student has difficulty	Then try this
Following directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use fewer words ▪ Provide examples ▪ Repeat ▪ Have student repeat ▪ Use auditory and visual directions
Keeping track of materials or assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use notebook ▪ Use large envelope for each subject ▪ Keep extra assignment sheet to resource teacher and parents ▪ Have student carry a mailbag ▪ Write assignment on board ▪ Give rewards for bringing supplies
Paying attention to printed word	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Select a text ▪ Highlight ▪ Underline, number ▪ Keep desk clear of extras ▪ Face desk to wall or use carrel ▪ Overhead transparency

If student has difficulty -- then try this!

If student has difficulty	Then try this
Reading textbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use lower level or adaptive text – if available ▪ Taped text ▪ Shorten amount of required reading ▪ Have students read aloud in small groups ▪ Allow extra time for reading ▪ Omit reading requirements ▪ Put main ideas on index cards ▪ Oral tests ▪ Use a buddy or allow group work ▪ Pre-teach vocabulary ▪ Give take-home tests ▪ Use larger type
Completing tasks on time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce amount to be accomplished ▪ Allow more time ▪ Write schedules ▪ Provide checklists ▪ Provide closure at points along the way ▪ Break task up into smaller parts
Expressing him/herself verbally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accept alternate form of information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written report; artwork; exhibit; chart/graph; bulletin board; photos ▪ Ask questions ▪ Provide prompts ▪ Give rules for class discussion ▪ Teach students to ask questions in class ▪ Question at the teaching level ▪ Break him/her in gradually by “speaking” in smaller groups ▪ Allow taped reports

If student has difficulty	Then try this
Staying on task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce distraction ▪ Increase reinforcements ▪ Provide checklist ▪ Reduce amount of work ▪ Give time out ▪ Provide quiet alternatives for a short time
Learning by listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide visuals ▪ Use flash cards ▪ Have student close his eyes and visualize the information ▪ Spell by visualizing the whole word ▪ Teach the use of acronyms ▪ Give explanations in small distinct steps ▪ Remove extra words ▪ Provide study guide
Working in groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a partner ▪ Provide a student with a responsibility or position of leadership ▪ Provide more structure by defining tasks and listing steps
Working independently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assign a task at appropriate level ▪ Be certain the student can see an end to the task ▪ Give precise directions ▪ Reinforce often ▪ Provide a variety of types of work within the assignment

If student has difficulty	Then try this
Understanding what is read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce the language level ▪ Become more concrete ▪ Reduce amount of new ideas ▪ Provide experiences for a frame of reference ▪ Provide study guide ▪ Give organizational help ▪ Provide alternate media ▪ Remove extra words, "Jane, please sit." Not "Jane, would you please sit in your chair?" ▪ Use the fill in the blank technique
Writing legibly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use formats low on writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multiple choice • fill in • programmed ▪ Use manipulatives ▪ Have student type ▪ Allow use of tape recorder ▪ Use graph paper ▪ Save papers for two weeks and then have students read what they wrote ▪ Teach writing diligently

If student has difficulty	Then try this
Spelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Dictate word; ask student to repeat it▪ Avoid traditional spelling lists▪ Teach short, easy words in context:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• on and on• right on• on account of▪ Have students make flash cards▪ Teach words by spelling patterns▪ Avoid penalizing for spelling errors▪ Hang words from ceiling during study time or post on board or walls for constant visual cues▪ Provide a tactile aide to spelling (letter of sandpaper; saltbox, etc.)
Understanding cause/effect: anticipating consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Use concrete examples▪ Use real life situations▪ Teach cause/effect directly<ul style="list-style-type: none">• brainstorming• role playing• simulation▪ Have students use their imaginations

If student has difficulty	Then try this
Seeing relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Directly point out relationships ▪ Draw arrows on worksheets or test to show that ideas are related ▪ Teach directly, relations of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • function • category • opposition • sequence ▪ Provide direct practice ▪ Provide headings or a partially filled-in chart for an example ▪ Use a banner with symbols for ideas/events
Expressing him/herself in writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accept alternate forms of reporting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oral report • tape recorded interview • maps • photographic essay • panel discussion ▪ Have student dictate work to someone else ▪ Have student prepare only notes or outline on subject ▪ Shorten amount required ▪ Provide practice with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • story starters • open-ended stories

If student has difficulty	Then try this
Drawing conclusions and making differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Teach thinking skills directly▪ Draw a parallel to a situation that the student might have experienced in problem solving
Remembering	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Provide a checklist▪ Provide cues▪ Have students make notes to self▪ Teach memory skills▪ Teach use of acronyms and other mnemonic devices

The Role of a Teacher

The teacher's role is crucial in creating an environment that leads students to success. This is accomplished by modeling and by assisting students in developing attainable goals, providing consistent feedback, and eliciting self-evaluative information concerning performance. A structured, purposeful approach is vital to the process of self-regulation and remediation.

Students with reading difficulties must learn to apply self-regulating skills steadily and consistently in attempting increasingly challenging and sometimes stressful assignments. Teachers must help students gain confidence in attempting more difficult tasks.

Immediate success is essential for students who have a history of difficulty or failure. However, these students gradually learn to struggle with adversity and to overcome their problems, even if they do encounter occasional failure.

Eventually, students learn that their difficulty or failure may be more attributable to a lack of effort than to a lack of ability or to external factors. Research on learned helplessness indicates that, with few exceptions, more difficulties result from students' lack of effort than from their lack of ability. Thus, the issue is not whether teachers can always prevent adversity or stress but how they can help students cope when it occurs.

Teachers need to work with students in the following ways:

- Students need to identify their maladaptive stress reaction to and develop more strategies – such as goal setting, incentives and self-monitoring – to deal with problems. Only then can they experience success.
- Students need to be shown how to apply the necessary skills to complete assignments successfully. This means more than mastering isolated skills; it means developing the necessary self-control to study and process written information for purposes of taking tests, taking oral and written reports and contributing to class discussions.
- This included helping them overcome their fear or anger toward a subject by identifying and reinforcing purposeful activities, mastering incremental learning steps and establishing a schedule for accomplishing the work.

The Role of a Teacher

The “Slow Learner”

The “slow learner” is a child who is too intelligent to be classified as disabled, but cannot cope adequately with traditional academic work. It is a term used for instructional purposes rather than labeling.

I.Q. Range: 76-89 on individual intelligence test

Number: 20% or 1 of every 5 students

General potential: By age 17, to have achieved 8th grade level

Comparison to other students: Grade 3 will be at least one year behind; Grade 7 will probably be about 3 years behind.

General school programs: Retention in grade; Ability grouping; Remedial classes.

Retention is **not** successful and very careful considerations to other options should be studied.

Slow learners are **not** eligible for Special Education.

Possible causes:

- Heredity
- Lack of Environmental stimulation
- Physical or health responses
- Rejection by parents, peers, teachers and other persons
- Low nutrition
- Inadequate educational experiences
- Minor neurological deficiencies and other variables

Characteristics:

- Slow in academic learning
- Often has skills in mechanical or artistic activities, in physical activities or in social situations
- May have short attention span or be easily distracted by outside stimuli
- May not be able to generalize
- May be withdrawn and not participate voluntarily
- May try to compensate for lack of school success by disruptive aggression
- Will require more exposure to understand a concept
- With adequate instruction, can be taught skills which are important to society and encourage feelings of self worth.

Typically school systems do not provide for this child. Since these pupils are not eligible for Special Education classes, their needs have to be met within “regular” classes. Ability grouping in “low” classes generally has not proven successful because they are given the same curriculum as other grade-level students who are more able. Most teachers have not had training in teaching the “slow” learner and have difficulty in adjusting their expectations to student potential. Such children obtain fewer positive reinforcements from their teachers and parents than their “normal” classmates. The result has been that these pupils sense this negative attitude toward them, and their already low self-concept falls lower. They often “drop-out” either physically or through lack of involvement in school experiences. Thus, for those who require maximum education, they actually receive some of the least; the disabled student is sometimes educated until twenty-one years of age, while the low average children may exit school at sixteen years of age.

The “Slow Learner”

Behavioral Intervention

Cooling off period:

Students who are reactive benefit from a cooling off period. Students under real or perceived stress require structure outside of themselves to maintain appropriate behaviors in the classroom.

- When the student appears tense and/or out of control, diffuse the situation by providing a cooling off location or time period to prevent a serious outburst. (ETP: Differentiate Instruction, Clear Information)
- After an outburst, ask the student to remove himself /herself from the area, and go to a pre-designated area in or outside of the room. Give him/her time to “cool off” before dealing with behavior and the consequence. (ETP: Establish Routine)
- The student cannot hear or think clearly while emotionally upset.
- The teacher can handle the disruptive student better when the class is settled and back to work.
- Have a designated “thinking” chair or office area for students who need to be isolated to regain composure. (ETP: Establish Routine)
- Establish a “readiness” area in the room - a place to go to “get ready to go back to work.” Then if the student does not regain behavioral control, state the class rule(s) broken and apply consequences. (ETP: Establish Routine)

Behavioral Intervention

Crisis Intervention

Many behavior disordered students have extreme difficulties in the schools which can result in crisis situations. These situations are those where danger is present to the student or others around him/her. Obviously, the IEP can not be checked prior to dealing with these instances. The two priorities during these times are to protect the people (students and staff) in close proximity from harm and to lower the activity of the student who is losing control. The following tips from Crane/Reynolds, Inc. can help those authorities who must confront and defuse the crisis.

In addressing a student who is exhibiting violent or aggressive behavior, teachers should be aware of the guidelines:

- Never grab or touch acting-out or violent students unless they are causing harm to another person or themselves.
- Send for assistance. (If possible, always wait for help if you perceive that there may be physical involvement.)
- If a student is threatening, keep a normal distance from him/her.
- Keep your voice tone normal. Repeat any instructions until the student complies. (Try to remain calm.) If a student is violent or about to hurt another, yell "stop" and the student's name, then lower your voice. Screaming many words or threatening only confuses or further elevates the student's activity level.
- Immediately try to get the aggressive student into isolation where he/she can calm down. Talk to him/her in a low, calm voice or remain silent.
- Do not leave the student alone until he/she visibly calms down. (You might have another adult stay with the student if you cannot.)
- Discuss the student's behavior and the consequences of the behavior only after he/she has become calm.

Crisis Intervention

Suggestions for Parents

Help your child understand the nature of his/her difficulty

- Read books on the subject
- Emphasize child's abilities instead of "disabilities"

Reassure your child of his/her self-worth

- Help child become aware of his/her own special unique talents
- Don't pressure
- Praise when it is deserved
- Avoid negative remarks, e.g.:
 - “Can't you do a simple thing like this?”
 - “I've told you that twenty times already.”
 - “If you don't bring up those grades, you'll be grounded for six weeks.”
 - “You could do it if you just try harder.”
 - “You're just being lazy.”

Help your child locate and develop other talents

- Sports
- Art
- Music
- Mechanics
- Hobbies

Structure your child's time at home

- Regular routine: meals, play, T.V., chores, bedtime, etc.
- Keep belongings in the same place
 - Help the child remember where to put them
 - Remind him/her as often as necessary
 - Use visual reminders
 - Be patient when he/she forgets
- Keep instructions simple - one at a time
 - Be sure he/she understands
 - Ask him/her to repeat instructions
 - Give your child time to think
- Break tasks into small parts, or steps; give steps one step at a time

Help improve your child's self-image and confidence

- Give tasks your child can master
- Build on what he/she knows
- Don't assume anything; if a child doesn't understand, show him/her

Help your child with schoolwork

- Provide a place to study with minimal distraction
- Help plan long term assignments
- Help schedule your child's homework; include breaks
- Read assignments to him/her
- Ask questions; discuss his/her work
- Act as your child's secretary; write assignments as he/she dictates

Work closely with your child's teachers

- Explain his/her difficulty to them
- Ask for lighter homework loads
- Ask for permission for you to write assignments for your child
- Ask that he/she be allowed to do more oral than written work
- Request that your child be assigned projects instead of written work
- Ask the teacher not to call on your child to read aloud