

WHAT CAN YOU DO IN THE CLASSROOM? – Classroom Practices

Teaching Practices

Early Stage One and Stage One

- **Start each unit of work with an outline** – give the ‘big picture’ of what they will be learning and why.
- Present the lesson material in **clear, easy to follow sequence**.
- **Speak slowly and clearly** – SLD students often need more time to process language accurately.
- **Give verbal cues** to emphasise when **something is important** eg ”this is really important – BUT reserve such cues for really important material.”
- **Relate new concepts** to past experiences.
- Use a **variety of teaching styles and methods** when presenting (appeal to seeing, hearing and doing ways of learning).
- For the visual learner **use lots of visual aids** eg diagrams, demonstrations, overheads, videos, highlighting, colour.
- **Describe verbally** all visual materials for the auditory learner; use songs, rhymes, chants.
- The oral learner needs to be able to **discuss the learning material**; allow them to repeat things under their breath.
- Allow the kinaesthetic learner to learn through **concrete materials** eg. letter and word cards, include movement and rhythm into the class.
- Begin teaching spatial concepts with concrete materials and the body eg Simon says game.
- **Review what you have done** during each lesson.
- Keep instructions clear and **one step at a time** — get the SLD student to repeat the instructions to show they have understood.
- Provide **stretch breaks** at intervals throughout the lesson
- Ensure the student is attending by **giving a word of encouragement** or use pre-arranged cues

Stage Two and Stage Three

- Start the lesson with a **preview of what you intend to cover** – put it in writing in the corner of the board and tick off as you go along.
- Give **clear objectives** (outcomes) for the lesson.
- Ensure that students **know the purpose** of the lesson.
- Break down information into **smaller chunks**.
- Use words such as ‘now’, ‘then’, ‘next’ to **help students organise thinking**
- Take every opportunity to **extend vocabulary** – link to prior knowledge

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- Encourage **student use of visual and AV resources** when giving a presentation – charts, pictures, overhead projector, white board, tape recorder, video, 3D models
- Allow the **oral learner to do oral presentations** for a group or class to explain what has been learned.
- Allow **the kinaesthetic learner to demonstrate** the activity to others, include excursions in the class program.
- Explain complex ideas clearly and simply and in different ways – **repeat and summarise** information.
- **Allow time** for students to process information and questions before asking for a response
- It may be necessary **to put instructions in writing** as well as saying them
- **Be very positive**, give praise for realistic, actual achievements – to build confidence, students must explicitly understand why they are being praised

Learning Skills

Early Stage One and Stage One

- Have the SLD student **sit beside someone** who would be happy to explain instructions, peer mentors
- Help the students to **recognise their individual styles** – visual, auditory, oral, kinaesthetic or cognitive
- Teach the **use of memory techniques** eg mind mapping, pictorial representations, colour **highlighting of important points in text**, key words, mnemonics etc teach the SLD student to ask questions and how to do so
- **Keep the student/parent informed** about how they are going – let them know when they have done something well but also inform them as early as possible if they are not reaching required standards
- Make sure the student **knows basic information** eg daily routines, teachers' names, times of different activities
- **Prepare the child ahead for a change** in routine eg excursions
- Have the child bring a **special 'home' book** to the teacher at the end of each day so messages can be sent home eg homework, equipment needed, school notes etc encourage and help with the learning and use of all interactive learning material

DET LINK:

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/strat_direction/strat_plans/disaplan.pdf

Stage Two and Stage Three

- Teach the student to **confirm information by paraphrasing** “So you said...”
- Teach student to **find main ideas and supporting details**, decide what is fiction, fact and opinion, make comparisons

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- **Explicitly teach** use of reference materials
- **Write the daily routine** where it is easy to see give out homework before the end of the lesson so the SLD student has time to take it in and to write it down
- **Give plenty of time** for homework rather than next day deadlines
- Organise groups of students to work as **cooperative learning groups** helping each other with assignments etc. Group together students with different skills.
- Encourage the use of **diaries and timetables** and teach organisational skills – have the student write in their own ‘**home**’ book things that need to be remembered. The teacher will need to check this daily in the beginning and occasionally after that.
- Encourage students to **reflect and discuss what has helped them to succeed** when they do well – discuss how they can use these strengths elsewhere

Demonstration of knowledge and learning

Early Stage one/Stage one

- **Give all homework tasks in writing** – this allows parents to be able to be of more help at home
- Include clear guidelines for what is required, include **step by step list** of material that you need to be included
- Include a model of what is required
- Encourage students to **ask questions** and ask for help when required
- Allow presentation of information in **different modes** – include using colour, mind mapping, audio tapes, oral presentation, models, sketches etc
- **Allow time extensions** where necessary as SLD students work at a much slower pace; & praise genuine achievements, however small

Stage 2 / Stage 3

- Encourage **use of a computer** for presentation of homework tasks and make sure the student knows how to use all facilities that will assist them in presenting good work
- **Mark for content**, not spelling or grammar
- Encourage use of **various AV equipment** to present work eg audio tape, white board and/or video prepared when not stressed by facing the class

Behaviour

Early Stage One and Stage One

- negotiate class rules, **make sure the SLD student understands the rules**
- make sure they **know the consequences of breaking the rules**
- **actively teach social skills** and self assessment of their own behaviour
- negotiate a **behaviour contract** if behaviour problems occur
- be aware that SLD kids are **often the victims of bullying**, educate all students about accepting differences in people

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- recognise that SLD students will **take longer to learn and will tire quickly**. They have to try harder which will be exhausting. You may see them yawning often.
- SLD students have good days and bad days – **performance is inconsistent**
- don't make the SLD child stay in at playtime to complete work
- don't use computer time as a reward for finishing work as **SLD children rarely get this privilege**

Stage Two and Stage Three

- **encourage risk taking in the classroom** – SLD students often lose the confidence to try something new or to put themselves on show in front of others
- teach the student **positive 'self talk'** eg 'I can do this.'
- teach them **breath control** to relieve stress and anxiety
- always **reward partial success** to help shape the whole – “this part is ...”
- look for **spontaneous good behaviour** and praise
- ensure SLD students understand **exactly what is expected** of them – SLD students **respond to regular routines**, especially if they have had a part in the planning.
- help students define what is the problem, how did it happen, plan a solution and then **stick to the plan** – role playing is a good way to work through situations and learn through experience.

Classroom Resources

Early Stage One and Stage One

- **Acquire concrete resources** eg models, materials to demonstrate numeracy principles
- Use **multi media resources** which allow multiple opportunities to access information

Stage Two and Stage Three

- Encourage learning **keyboard and word processing** skills also scanners for voice back computer software and voice recognition software.
- Some **good packages are available** that the school could buy and the student could use at school or at home.

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Physical Environment

Suggestions:

- Sit the SLD student **at the front of the class** so you can observe if they have understood instructions and also to minimise distractions.
- Where possible **minimise noise and visual distractions** inside and outside the classroom.
- Provide good lighting, don't allow lights to flicker. If the classroom has fluorescent lighting try to sit the SLD learner **near some natural light**.
- Provide fidgets with materials to manipulate – choose something that is not going to be a distraction to others **eg pen and paper for doodling**. Depriving those who require the physical sensory stimulation of manipulating objects just makes them search for something else.
- **Clearly mark resources** in the classroom, keep things neatly arranged; make sure the SLD kids are taught to replace things where they found them so **good tidy habits** are formed.
- **Allow students who need to, move around**. Choose them to hand out books, clean the board, go and get a drink.

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