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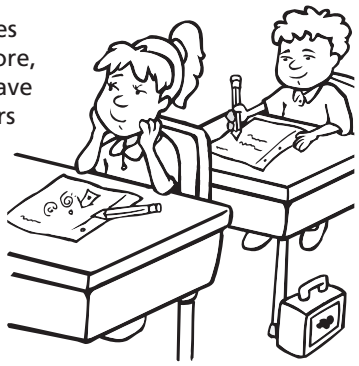
Helpful Classroom Strategies for Students with Language-Auditory Processing Disorder

by Becky L. Spivey, M.Ed.



Students with a language or auditory processing disorder (APD) react to changes in their environment differently. No two students have exactly the same deficits; therefore, using the same classroom strategies for all APD students will not work. Teachers must have a treasure trove of different strategies for different needs of different students! Teachers should familiarize themselves with their students' individual profiles of strengths and weaknesses. The school's speech-language pathologist (SLP) or an audiologist can be instrumental in suggesting and helping teachers implement strategies that are not only appropriate for APD students, but for **all** students.

Get Students' Attention

- Establish eye contact and speak at the students' eye level. Get close, face the students, and gain their visual as well as auditory attention before speaking.
- Use a cueing system to help students refocus when they are not paying attention. Use words like "listen," "get ready," and "you'll want to remember this one" when you are about to present key information.
- Assign a peer partner to assist students needing help with getting assignments down correctly, completing group projects, taking notes, and preparing for tests. Because it is difficult for APD students to watch and take notes simultaneously, give students a copy of the teacher's notes, a study guide, or another student's notes. Allow students to tape lessons for future reference and study.
- Give APD students more time to transition between activities. Name the new activity and explain in a few steps what is going to happen. Review and close the activity by summarizing what the students should have learned before transitioning to the next activity.

Preferential Seating Arrangements

- Seat APD students as close as three, but not farther than eight feet away from the teacher, sound source, or activity to maximize auditory/visual information. Allow students to move around for different activities and sit wherever they are able to attend and actively participate.
- Seat APD students away from distracting noises (fish tank, doors, bathrooms, windows, etc.).
- Provide quiet or isolated places for study and work to minimize distractions.
- Use a daily routine or schedule to keep students focused and organized.
- Allow APD students to use earplugs or earmuffs while doing seatwork to eliminate noise or distractions.
- Use a personal or sound amplification system, but an audiologist should make this recommendation. The teacher must take in-service training on using certain systems.

Focused Instruction

- Speak at a rate and volume level loud enough for students to follow. Vary loudness to increase students' attention using intonation and stress, but never over-exaggerate your speech. Repeat important words and use gestures to enhance instruction and comprehension.
- Alert distracted students by calling their name or giving a cue, and repeat their name periodically to keep their attention.
- Define a purpose for different activities and give direct, uncomplicated, and age-appropriate instructions for the task. Reduce verbal instruction. Repeat instructions step by step if necessary and allow time for students to process the information.
- Provide examples by modeling or demonstrating and leave the example on display. Emphasize key words. Encourage students to ask questions. Check students' comprehension by asking questions periodically.

- Boost self-confidence by giving students positive feedback.
- Repeat or paraphrase instructions. Ask students to explain the directions to you to confirm their understanding.
- Review the first few items of the task at hand to help keep students focused. Watch for signs of inattention or decreased concentration. Intervene with questions to keep students focused.
- Allow students to read quietly or repeat directions to themselves (subvocalize).

Preview and Review Consistently

- Preview, review, and summarize all new and previous lessons including vocabulary words and concepts. Relate new material to previous lessons and experiences.
- Provide pre-assigned readings and homework before introducing new material and/or topics.
- Provide a short preview, outline, list of new vocabulary, and key points for class discussion and as a guide for parents to help with homework and review for tests.
- Keep parents and resource teachers informed of the upcoming topics and lessons.
- Encourage students to express their opinions, answer questions, read aloud, etc. in all activities.

Flexible Time

- Give short breaks between activities to help students avoid fatigue.
- Allow extended time for APD students to complete tasks.
- Give students adequate time to respond to questions that include comprehension, generalizing information, or explaining a process.

Organization in the Classroom

- Encourage using an agenda or other organizer for recording assignments, test dates, important school events, field trips, etc. Teachers or peer helpers can check the agenda daily to make sure assignments and other information have been written correctly. Have students' parents/caregivers initial the agenda periodically to keep ongoing communication. (This is a great way to send frequent notes and comments to parents!)
- Make sure students understand organizational expectations in the classroom (e.g., where to place homework assignments, folders, and classroom tools). Label these places with cue cards if necessary.

Resources

Florida Department of Education. (2001). Technical Assistance Paper 10967: Appendix C. *Suggestions for successful management of students with central auditory processing disorder (CAPD)*: Tips for the teacher. Retrieved September 2012. http://shs.asu.edu/files/ASU-SHS-Clinic_CAPD-TipsForTeachers.pdf

Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center Language. 2012. Health Topics. *Language/auditory processing disorder.* Retrieved September 2012. http://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/health/a/auditory-processing/

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Helpful Products

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HearBuilder Auditory Processing
Item# HBPE-377

HearBuilder Following Directions
Item# HBHE-133

Auditory Processing Chipper Chat
Item# CC-44

Look Who's Listening
Item# GB-512

Leap Into Listening
Item# BK-228

Auditory Adventures Activities Pack
Item# GB-654