



Bridging the Gap



Strategies and interventions to help students with learning disabilities, AD/HD and emotional disorders meet the Standards in regular ed classrooms

This site has been created by Special Education teacher Anne Sepe with a mini-grant from the Rural Education Advisory Committee



Tasking: starting, continuing, completing

*Getting started and staying on-task is hard for LD, AD/HD and ED students
This section focuses on helping students get started, remain on-task and complete assignments.*

- Make sure you have student's attention before presenting information or giving instruction. *(Say the student's name or use an introductory phrase like, "Pay attention, this is important". Establish eye contact. Stand near the student.)*
- Give verbal directions slowly, using as few words as possible. Define each step (*First, Next, After that*). Have student repeat instructions back to you. Use demonstrations and key-word-highlighted written directions to reinforce verbal instructions.
- Make tasks as engaging as possible.
- Break assignments into manageable chunks. Make sure student knows the steps needed to complete each segment. Check work in progress. Confirm that student knows what to do next. Let student turn in each section of work as it's completed.
- Success generates more success. Structure workload so student can succeed. Present lessons at the instructional level, give homework and worksheets at the independent level. Avoid assigning work at the frustration level. Make sure the student feels able to do the task. Allow enough time for student to complete assignment. Help student with first few items.
- Provide "hurdle help" to get student started (*"Sometimes multiplying decimals can be confusing. Let's try the first one together". Now you try the next one while I watch"*).
- Expect well-done work. Convey, model, teach the necessary steps to meet your expectations (*Under-stand and follow directions, take your time, ask questions, check your work, correct mistakes, etc.*) Go over student's work together, have student revise hastily done work to meet teacher expectations.

- Monitor progress. Modify assignment length if needed. Make sure student has needed materials. Hold student accountable for work not completed.
- The brain can't produce beyond what the seat can endure; alternate seat work with activity (*interactive discussion, group work, teaching games, hands-on assignments*). Structure your approach to teach to a variety of learning modalities, styles and intelligences.
- Tangibly reinforce on-task behaviors. Use small edible treats, or tokens that can be redeemed for rewards (*bingo chips, paper clips, etc.*). Accompany each reinforcer with brief, specific, positive verbal feedback. Exchange tokens for rewards regularly. Whether privileges or tangible items, choose rewards that have meaning to the students.
- Don't reinforce negative behavior by making it the focus of attention. Highlight those who demonstrate on-task behavior (*"I like how Tara has her materials out and is starting her work"*). Use planned ignoring to extinguish off-task behavior.
- Use selective seating so distractible students are surrounded by positive role models who won't encourage inappropriate behavior. Provide a study carrel for extremely distractible students.
- Assign compatible, positive role model peers as work partners and group members.
- If student is off-task and distracting others, use an unobtrusive reminder (*eye contact, proximity, a previously agreed-on signal*) to get back on task. Sometimes a change of location (*move student closer to you, surrounded by good role model peers, etc.*) will redirect the student.
- Make sure student understands how much time is available to complete task. Where appropriate, a timer can be used to help student self-monitor progress.
- Allow student choices (*Solve 7 out of 10 problems on page 17, answer 2 of the 3 essay questions*).
- Be visible and available. Respond to help requests as soon as possible. Make sure the student knows what to do until you are free to help (*read directions, try again, go on to next problem, sit quietly*).
- Communicate regularly with parents so they can encourage and reward student for on-task behavior and good quality completed work.

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