



Helping Students with Brain Injury

Brain injury frequently affects sensory-motor functioning, such as visual processing, which can significantly alter school performance. When the rate of processing visual information is reduced, the student is able to grasp only part of what has been presented. This affects all aspects of processing information whether it involves listening to a teacher, watching a slide show, or interacting with peers. The result is often misunderstanding, confusion, and subsequent inappropriate comments by the student.

The following are sample strategies you can use. It is important to remember that all brain injuries are unique and that all students have different strengths and weaknesses, therefore different strategies may or may not work depending on the student, the class, and the time of day, among other factors. It is important to remain flexible in trying different strategies until you find one that works for that student, and to always keep in mind the ultimate goal of moving students towards independence. Once you have found a strategy that works use it consistently and share it with others who work with that student.

Difficulty with...	Strategy/Accommodation	Example
Visual challenges (tracking, scanning, field cuts, integrating visual info)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Extended time on tests and in-class assignments ➤ Track with a finger or index card ➤ Avoid bubble response tests ➤ Highlighting ➤ Books on tape ➤ Page stabilizer with tracking/highlighting capability 	<p>Doug often loses spot on page where he is reading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Doug's teacher allows him to stay after class to finish assignments. ➤ Doug uses an index card to track sentences as he reads and block out the rest of the information. ➤ Dave circles the actual answer and not just the letter. ➤ Doug highlights key points in his textbook utilizing the teacher prepared outline. ➤ Doug utilizes books on tape since physical impairments make it difficult for him to track with his finger, an index card or highlighter ➤ Doug uses a page stabilizer with a built in highlighter to follow along and highlight key information
Processing simultaneous information – visual and		Sally cannot write down notes from a projector and listen to teacher.

auditory at the same time

- Call up prior knowledge-link new learning to existing knowledge
- Use visual supports to support instruction
- Direct teaching of study skills, including taking notes from a text or reviewing vocabulary for a unit
- Provide a copy of the PowerPoint will possible fill in areas
- Bob's teacher reminds him of the earlier math concepts, referring him to his formula match index cards as a primer.
- Sally's teacher uses an overhead projector that has pictures to depict what is being taught.
- Bob keeps notes on a teacher prepared outline while reading from each of his textbooks.
- Sally's teacher provides her with a copy of the PowerPoint but leaves fill in the blank areas to ensure she pays attention during the lecture

Pragmatics –not respecting personal space

- Utilize social skill groups or a circle of friends (with non-disabled peers) to teach social skills
- Lisa stands too close during conversations and doesn't read the body language when others pull back.
- Lisa attends a social skills group and her school social worker role plays with her to identify body language triggers.

Adapting the strategies for the IEP

The IEP focuses on academic and/or functional areas affected in the school setting, with the goal of establishing measurable academic and/or functional goals. These goals include benchmark or short-term objectives, as well as criteria for measuring and evaluating the objective. It also includes modifications and supplementary aids, including assistive technology devices and services. As there have been numerous advancements in technology in recent years an assistive technology evaluation should be a consideration for all areas of impairment, including physical and cognitive impairments. *It is important to keep in mind that the IEP should be a fluid document, re-assessed regularly and able to be modified if strategies being utilized are not having the desired effect.*

Example:

Academic and/or Functional Area: Visual and Information processing

Annual Measurable Academic and/or Functional Goal: Student independently uses an index card for tracking while reading by June 15.

Benchmark or Short-Term Objectives: Student uses index card for tracking while reading 50% of the time by November 30, with teacher cueing the remaining 50% of the time.

Criteria: Teacher observations.

Evaluation: 3 out of 5 trials/observations reported on quarterly progress reports.

Modification/Supplementary Aid: Student does not receive scantron/bubble response tests.

Academic and/or Functional Area: _____

Annual Measurable Academic and/or Functional Goal: _____

Benchmark or Short-Term Objectives: _____

Criteria: _____

Evaluation: _____

Modification/Supplementary Aid: _____