

Classroom Strategies for Students with Slow Processing Speed



Children with slow processing speed face many struggles at school. While they may never become exceptionally quick or efficient, teachers and parents can help them to improve their pace of processing information and capacity to keep up with their peers. We can provide skills, strategies, and shortcuts that can empower them to use technologies like typing, dictation, and time management apps to boost their productivity. Practice with academics, improving visual scanning abilities, and competition can also improve processing speed. Additionally, playing certain types of video games can directly improve some types of processing speed. Developing classroom strategies for children with slow processing speed can be a very powerful educational support.

However, making significant improvements in processing speed is a time-consuming process. In the classroom it is important to make adjustments to expectations (accommodations) that acknowledge that slow processing speed is not purposeful. These accommodations eliminate or at least reduce some of the self-esteem and motivational side effects of students who identify themselves as less capable than their peers.



Here are some strategies for supporting students with slow processing speed in the classroom:

1. **Provide Additional Time Discreetly:** Offer students extra time to complete tests and assignments without drawing attention to it as this can cause children to feel singled out or put on the spot in front of their peers.
2. **Leverage Technology:** Encourage the use of technology to help students with slow processing speed work more efficiently. Consider tools like typing, dictation, or a scribe to boost their productivity.
3. **Repetition for Familiarity:** Use consistent materials, books, software, and instructions to help students become familiar with tasks, reducing the need to slow down for new approaches. Consistency and repetition can help kids create routine and aid in their processing.
4. **Simplify Tasks:** At both home and school, simplify tasks to minimize frustration and boost self-esteem. Provide private instructions that allow students to complete fewer examples.
5. **Exercise Patience:** Allow students ample time to formulate responses, complete assignments, and make decisions. Feeling rushed can cause students to feel insecure and overwhelmed.

6. Present the Big Picture Early: Offer an overview of learning objectives and tasks. Use pre-teaching and organizers to help students set personal goals for task completion.
7. Maintain Supportive Expectations: Be understanding of slow processing speed while encouraging sustained effort and improvement. Recognize that while full task completion may not always be feasible, consistent effort is essential.
8. Utilize Peer Models: Pair students with peers who excel in executive-functioning skills like task initiation, persistence, and time management. Observing and interacting with capable peers can help students develop these skills through modeling and guided practice.
9. Provide Resources at Home: Allow students to keep a second set of school books at home to reduce time spent gathering materials. Share homework and school activities electronically with parents so they can assist their child in task completion.
10. Share Educational Materials: Provide lecture notes, PowerPoints, and examples of completed assignments to reduce writing and memory demands. Having learning materials easily accessible will help students to complete their work more efficiently.
11. Incorporate Technology Tools: Use tools like Siri, Notability, and Google Docs to assist with processing speed. These technologies require training to be effective, but can greatly assist in a child's ability to complete assignments.
12. Encourage Additional Support: Recommend tutoring and extra academic support for students who need help catching up.

13. Enhance Reading Speed with Technology: Use reading apps that highlight and blackout words or scroll text at varying speeds to gradually increase reading speed.
14. Teach Typing Skills: Practice dictation to improve processing speed. Have students transcribe spoken words into a digital format to enhance typing skills and auditory processing. Consider programs like TapTyping and Burning Fingers for keyboarding practice.

For those seeking additional support and resources on enhancing processing speed, South County Child and Family Consultants offers a wealth of information and expertise. By visiting our website, you can access a curated selection of books and materials, connect with knowledgeable specialists, and find tailored advice to help you or your child navigate the complexities of processing speed. Whether you're looking for strategies to improve cognitive efficiency, educational accommodations, executive functioning, or to simply better understand the impact of processing speed on daily activities, South County Child and Family Consultants is an invaluable resource for empowering individuals and families.