

ADHD and Group Instruction

The following tips are adapted from suggestions for working with children with ADHD in an academic setting. Although these ideas were developed for students with ADHD, all children can benefit from these strategies.

Introducing activities:

- **Review previous activities.**
- **Set learning expectations.**
- **Set behavioral expectations.**
- **State needed materials.**
- **Simplify instructions, choices, and scheduling.**

Conducting activities:

When they are prepared for transitions, children are more likely to respond and to stay on task. The following set of strategies may help:

- **Be predictable.**
- **Support the student's participation in the classroom.**
Provide students with ADHD with private, discreet cues to stay on task.
- **Help students correct their own mistakes.**
- **Lower noise level.**
- **Divide work into smaller units.**
- **Use cooperative learning strategies.**

Concluding activities:

- **Provide advance warnings.**
Provide advance warning that a lesson is about to end. You may also want to tell students at the beginning of the lesson how much time they will have to complete it.
- **Preview the next activity.**
For example, inform children that they need to put away their textbooks and come to the front of the room for a large-group spelling lesson.

ADHD - The Good, the Bad, & the Hidden
A Student's Thoughts
By: Keenan Bosworth

I spent my life in school struggling because of a hidden, often doubted, condition known as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Focusing on the teachers while they were lecturing was nearly impossible. I couldn't separate the information I was supposed to learn from the other words they said. The clock would catch my attention just as easily as a squirrel outside or a person two rows in front of me tying their shoe. I wasn't avoiding paying attention, rather I was paying attention to EVERYTHING around me. To top it off, I drove the teachers crazy by tapping my pencil, shifting in my seat, doodling, or tapping my leg. Often, I didn't know I was even doing this. I would talk out or answer questions without raising my hand and generally act impulsively.

However, I found certain benefits to the condition as well. For instance, because I was distractible, I know I generally saw more of what was going on than my friends did and I picked up on unusual things. In this way, distractibility is a good thing. I was also able to do several things at the same time and had a lot of energy. As you may have figured out, I am also quite creative. If you can find ways to capitalize on the benefits of ADHD, having a student with it in the classroom can become enjoyable.

Here are some things for teachers and students, both with ADHD and without it to consider. First, my advice to the teachers:

- Sit ADHD students in the front, middle of the room. Both of you will benefit because the student will be more focused and you will be able to see the student more easily.
- Try to incorporate a variety of learning activities into your classes. I learned more easily from videos than from lectures. I was able to be an active learner when we did discussion activities. My ability to stay focused is higher if I am actively involved in learning.
- Use the tactic of keeping your eye on students. There seem to be two major ways teachers deal with problems. Either they ignore them or they constantly monitor them. Even though I hated being watched during class, I think I learned more from teachers who kept me under control. (I think this is better for all the students in the class!)
- Keep the classroom door closed. Limit any kind of noise or activity so that it is less likely for ADHD students to become distracted.
- Learn more about ADHD. Don't just glance at the literature that is coming across your desk. By understanding the condition, you'll understand your students more.
- Don't use ADHD as a cop out for your students. Make them do the same work as everyone else. People with ADHD have to learn to control their impulsiveness and school is one place they can practice their control.
- Work with your ADHD students one-on-one if you can. Both of you will benefit from the experience. You will have to keep up with the student in a nice way. Both of you will have to work hard to maintain a positive relationship.
- Never let the student think that you don't want to deal with him or her because of ADHD. This will only frustrate the student and lead to more problems in the classroom.