

## Simple ways to support students with difficulties in class

Below is a table that describes common difficulties that students can have in class, and what these difficulties look like when they are mild, moderate or severe. Observe your class for one week and confidentially note down students who *consistently* display the below characteristics (note: some students can have multiple challenges at the same time). Then use the tips in the right-hand column to provide targeted support to these students. The strategies will address many difficulties and improve learning quickly!

Student has difficulty with:	Mild difficulty:	Moderate difficulty:	Severe difficulty:	Tips to help support the student in class:
<b>Reading and writing</b>	Reads slowly in a word-by-word manner, is reluctant to read, has weak spelling, writes far less than others	Has trouble recognising words, has difficulty writing and sounding out unknown words	Cannot recognise letters, recall the sounds of letters, cannot write or rhyme words	<p><b>Opening:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain concepts and tasks clearly. Observe the student's facial expressions and body language to see if they understand. If they don't, follow up one to one later.</li> </ol> <p><b>Introduction to New Material:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Don't ask them to read in front of others. Be sensitive and treat these student with respect.</li> </ol> <p><b>Guided/Independent Practice:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Find the student a 'buddy' who can sometimes can read aloud for them. The buddy can also share their notes with the student if they aren't able to write everything down.</li> <li>4. Think of alternatives to written tasks – for instance, can the pupils make oral presentations or voice record their work?</li> <li>5. Don't expect them to read or write a lot of text, especially in a short amount of time.</li> <li>6. Be encouraging: praise them for hard work and effort</li> </ol> <p><b>Closing:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Try to provide the additional support they require. If you have time after class, sit with them and have them show you words or sentences that they find challenging.</li> </ol>
<b>Name(s) of students who need support:</b>	<i>Eg., Michael Nallo</i>			
<b>Understanding and keeping up with lessons</b>	Takes longer to speak and to understand others, or doesn't like to speak at all	Has a very limited vocabulary, struggles to solve simple problems, cannot socialise with others	Finds it difficult to do everyday tasks such as speak, dress, feed, or wash themselves	<p><b>Opening:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use the student's mother-tongue whenever possible/appropriate.</li> </ol> <p><b>Introduction to New Material:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Don't try to teach the student everything all at once. Introduce new topics gradually, one step at a time until the student becomes more skilled and confident. If you don't have time to give this support in class, try to do so after class.</li> <li>3. Allow the student to learn through experience – through touching, seeing, hearing and doing.</li> </ol> <p><b>Guided/Independent Practice:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Reinforce learning. Don't just teach something new and move on. Provide students with plenty of opportunities to practice new skills on their own, in pairs and in groups.</li> <li>5. Find the student a 'buddy' or group of buddies that can go through steps again with the student. Praise the buddies for being good teachers.</li> <li>6. Monitor the student's progress. Make sure you know what the student knows and what they still find difficult so that you can focus on supporting their weaknesses.</li> </ol> <p><b>Closing/After school:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Talk to the student's parents. The parents can provide you with background info. They can also reinforce what you are doing at home so that together you can help the student.</li> </ol>
<b>Name(s) of students who need support:</b>				

Student has difficulty with:	Mild difficulty:	Moderate difficulty:	Severe difficulty:	Tips to help support the student in class:
<b>Concentrating, finishing tasks, sitting still</b>	Cannot sit still and cannot focus for long periods of time	Has limited self-control, speaks out of turn, has temper tantrums and mood swings	Can have erratic behaviour, severe impulsivity, hyperactivity, and inattention	<p><b>Opening:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many students are highly intelligent and their inability to concentrate is not their fault. They are often misinterpreted as being troublesome. Instead, be sympathetic and patient.</li> </ol> <p><b>Introduction to New Material:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be creative: try to make your lessons as stimulating and varied as possible. If the student is bored, he/she will pay even less attention.</li> <li>If they talk a lot, acknowledge their opinion but explain that others need a turn to speak.</li> </ol> <p><b>Guided/Independent Practice:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rather than punish the student, try to turn their extra energy into something beneficial. Give them an extra task on a topic or activity they enjoy.</li> <li>Try to use positive reinforcement to manage behaviour – have a ‘student of the week’ competition: have students contribute ideas on what good behaviours lead to winning.</li> <li>Encourage: praise effort as much as achievement</li> </ol> <p><b>Closing:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will learn better if they are treated with respect and consideration.</li> </ol>
<b>Name(s) of students who need support:</b>				
<b>Relating and speaking to others</b>	Doesn't smile when smiled at, has poor eye contact, seems to prefer to be alone/keep to themselves, may not speak much	Gets "stuck" doing the same things over and over (like repeating words), spends time putting things in a certain order	Has unusual movements, throws intense tantrums, is uncooperative, or resistant, overly sensitive to noise	<p><b>Opening:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask simple, short and clear questions that require short answers or just a nod/shake of head.</li> </ol> <p><b>Introduction to New Material:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain concepts and tasks clearly. Observe the student's facial expressions and body language to see if they understand. If they don't, follow up one to one later.</li> <li>When possible, use visual aids and pictures to make yourself clear.</li> <li>Don't force the student to speak in front of the rest of the class, but gently encourage the student to participate in class discussions.</li> <li>Don't expect the student to listen for long periods of time.</li> </ol> <p><b>Guided/Independent Practice and Closing:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure students understand the tasks. Check understanding by looking at what they are doing and what they are writing.</li> <li>If you think you have not been understood, don't just keep repeating a sentence or instruction. Instead, rephrase the sentence/instruction so that your meaning is clearer.</li> <li>If you don't understand what the student is saying, ask them to repeat or re-phrase.</li> </ol> <p><b>Closing/After school:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk to the student's parents. The parents can provide you with background info. They can also reinforce what you are doing at home so that together you can help the student.</li> </ol>
<b>Name(s) of students who need support:</b>				

Student has difficulty with:	Mild difficulty:	Moderate difficulty:	Severe difficulty:	Tips to help support the student in class:
<b>Walking, standing, holding things</b>	Cannot walk easily, or has a hard time holding their head up, or carrying/ lifting things	Walks with great difficulty, or finds it hard to keep their head up, or cannot use hands/arms for complex tasks	Cannot walk independently, no head control, cannot use hands for grasping or reaching	<p><b>Before class:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If a student has a mild difficulty or has crutches, have them sit close to the door or board. Try out different seats with them before class to see which is the most comfortable.</li> <li>2. Make your classroom as tidy as possible. Insist bags and chairs are put away.</li> <li>3. If you think the student would benefit from a crutch or wheelchair, notify your SSO so that they can link the student with health services and NGOs working with disability.</li> <li>4. Work with the Principal to see if there are ways to make classrooms and toilets easier to use and more accessible (can ramps and/or handrails be put in?).</li> </ol> <p><b>Opening/ Introduction to New Material/Practice/Closing:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Set up buddy systems in your class and school. Buddies can help physically disabled students with certain tasks and vice versa. They can share homework and notes if needed .</li> <li>6. Children with physical difficulties are just as intelligent as children without, so continue to be clear, patient and encouraging.</li> <li>7. However, children with a physical disability or disfigurement may experience bullying and teasing from the other students. Monitor your classroom to make sure this is not happening. Encourage the students to treat each other with respect and consideration.</li> </ol>
<b>Name(s) of students who need support:</b>				
<b>Seeing</b>	Squints to see the board or reads things very close to their face. Some may tilt their head or close one eye to see better	Most things are blurry, can't see the board from far away, colours may be difficult to see. Student may get headaches	Cannot see at all but can perceive light and dark	<p><b>Before class:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If a student has difficulty seeing, have them sit close to the board. Try out different seats with them before class to see which seat the student can see best in.</li> <li>2. Make your classroom as tidy as possible. Insist bags and chairs are put away.</li> <li>3. Students with low vision may benefit from glasses – if they don't have a pair, notify your SSO so that they can link the student with health services and appropriate NGOs.</li> <li>4. Students with low vision may benefit from reading materials in large print and writing on wide-lined paper. They may also benefit from voice recording the lesson and listening after school. Ask your SSO if these resources are available.</li> </ol> <p><b>Opening/ Introduction to New Material:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Make sure your writing on the blackboard is large enough for them to read.</li> </ol> <p><b>Guided/Independent Practice and Closing:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Students with visual impairments should take part in the same learning activities as the other students. Adapt learning activities so they are accessible as possible for them. Focus on what these students can do, not what they find it difficult or impossible to do.</li> <li>7. Set up buddy systems in your class and school. Fully-sighted students will be able to help blind children with certain tasks and vice versa.</li> <li>8. Students with visual impairments will find it particularly hard to read or write large quantities of text. Given them less to read/write or have a buddy read/write for them.</li> <li>9. Remember, students with difficulty seeing may experience bullying and teasing from the others. Constantly monitor your classroom to make sure this is not happening. Encourage the other pupils to treat these students with respect and consideration.</li> </ol>
<b>Name(s) of students who need support:</b>				

Student has difficulty with:	Mild difficulty:	Moderate difficulty:	Severe difficulty:	Tips to help support the student in class:
<b>Hearing</b>	Misunderstands questions/statements, often says 'what?', sometimes can only hear out of one ear and thus points it forward	Student has difficulty speaking, or speaks more loudly or softly than others, cannot tell where noises come from	Cannot hear at all but can sense vibrations	<p><b>Before class:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If a student has difficulty hearing, have them sit closer to the board. Try out different seats before class to see which seat the student can hear best in.</li> <li>2. Make sure they sit somewhere where they can always see your face and mouth. Make sure you're also facing the window so that they can see you speak as clearly as possible.</li> <li>3. If the student uses through sign language, do not worry that you don't know sign language! The student might understand by watching you speak – confirm this with them.</li> </ol> <p><b>Opening/ Introduction to New Material:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Reduce background noise in the classroom so the student can hear you as best they can.</li> <li>5. Make sure to get the child's attention before you start talking. You and the student can come up with your own hand sign for this.</li> <li>6. Make sure you face the student when speaking and keep eye contact as much as possible.</li> <li>7. Speak clearly and where appropriate use facial expression to communicate meaning.</li> <li>8. Use your normal rhythm of speech - it is not helpful to mouth words slowly.</li> <li>9. Use visual aids and pictures whenever possible.</li> <li>10. Write important information on the blackboard. Also provide supplementary notes.</li> </ol> <p><b>Guided/Independent Practice and Closing:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. It is important that students speak one at a time during discussions.</li> <li>12. Remember, students who cannot hear may experience bullying and teasing from the others. Constantly monitor your classroom to make sure this is not happening. Encourage the other pupils to treat these students with respect and consideration.</li> </ol>
<b>Name(s) of students who need support:</b>				