Academic Accommodation to Minimize Frustration

THE PROBLEM

Aggressive or confrontational behavior, whether physical or verbal, is disruptive to the daily classroom routine, making it difficult for all to learn, and in the worst cases can cause risks to the health and safety of the student and to others. Uncontrolled behavioral difficulties commonly result in lost opportunities to develop positive relationships with others, and can result in removal from the classroom.

CAUSES

Students with TBI can be easily frustrated with academic tasks. Many students with brain injury get upset with the perceived disparity between what they could do prior to injury and what they can do after their injury. They also have difficulty with the differences between their abilities and those of their peers. The combination of the neurological effects of brain injury and the feelings of loss and frustration often results in difficulties controlling behavior when under stress, as is the case when academic work is challenging.

SOLUTION

Provide instruction that minimizes errors, which can provoke negative behaviors and interfere with learning. In addition, teach strategies for identifying and managing situations that might result in problems before they emerge.

Strategies

- Success is key

Start each activity with a task the student can do successfully.

Example: If you are teaching 2-step multiplication as a new lesson, start the lesson with a review of 1-step multiplication that you know the student has mastered.

© 2023 University of Oregon. Use for personal educational purposes only. No further copying or distribution is allowed.

- Break apart tasks

Break larger tasks into smaller steps to create small successes along the way.

Example: If your student struggles with maintaining focus but needs to take a long test, break the test into sections that you know your student can complete. Put each section on its own piece of paper.

- Use a systematic process for each task

It is important that students completely understand what they are being asked to do. Using a systematic process for each task will help your student to complete the task.

- Provide clear examples of what each step of the task will require in order to complete it successfully.
- Model the entire sequence of steps, step-by-step.
- Verbally review the steps with the student and have them verbalize each step before beginning.
- Provide specific and meaningful feedback after the student completes each step.
- Ask the student how they thought they did and if they need any help.
- Continually re-evaluate with the student the next set of achievable steps.

© 2023 University of Oregon. Use for personal educational purposes only. No further copying or distribution is allowed.