

A Quick Guide to Working with Students with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

Characteristics of the Condition

- Motor activity:
 - Excessive motor activity (e.g., leg bouncing, finger or pencil tapping)
 - Restlessness; difficulty remaining seated, inclination to pace
 - Difficulty sitting down and getting started on independent work
- Impulsivity:
 - Interrupting others when talking
 - Talking a lot, but seeming to talk in circles
 - Inclination to move quickly from task to task
 - Apparent "carelessness" in work habits
 - Impatience with solutions that are not "quick fixes"
- Inattentiveness:
 - Difficulty sustaining concentration on a task (though sometimes hyper-focusing)
 - Appearing not to be listening when spoken to, as mind wanders
 - Overt inattention (e.g., staring out the window during class or study session)
 - Failure to maintain eye contact during conversation, or offering replies tangential to subject
- Organization/Time Management:
 - Difficulty meeting deadlines, keeping appointments
 - Losing materials, equipment, other possessions
 - Misunderstanding assignments, requirements, expectations despite instructions
 - Trouble making decisions, sticking with plans

Impact on Classroom Performance/Writing

- Arriving late to class; missing appointments
- Misunderstanding assignments, instructions, test questions
- Assignments are turned in late or not at all
- Difficulty taking useful notes in class
- RE: writing -
 - Illegible or highly variable handwriting
 - Sentence fragments, poor sentence structure, run-on sentences, spelling errors
 - Simple sentence structure, OR, rambling, convoluted, ungrammatical multi-clausal structures
 - Ambiguous or obscure pronoun reference
 - Words missing from a sentence (which the student may have trouble detecting)
 - Inconsistency of tense; more rarely, errors in number, case agreement
 - Lack of clear thesis statement; content disorganization; unexpected shifts and digressions
 - Absence of coherent argument or expository structure (e.g., no stated conclusion)
 - Anomalous quantities of writing in either direction: i.e., large amounts of linear, disorganized and repetitive writing ("tunnel writing") or

meager production, especially given the knowledge the student can articulate

Interaction with Student

- Suggest organization and planning strategies for study, reading and writing projects
- Suggest reading strategies that aim at active, purposeful information gathering
- Provide coaching on pre-writing activities that help structure information
- Suggest assisted proof-reading of work: e.g., computer or another person reads passages exactly as written; this allows the student to hear and potentially identify errors that may not be detected in silent proof-reading.
- Provide suggestions for organization and time management, then follow up to see if they are being used.