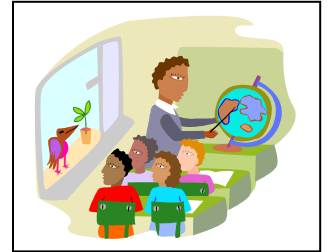


Reducing Classroom Distractions

Some students are easily distracted by sights, sounds and movement in their environment. This can impact their ability to listen effectively and complete their work. Listed below are a few suggestions that may be used in the classroom to help reduce distractions and provide students with a calmer environment in which to complete their work.



Suggestions

- Ensure classroom stimulation is not overwhelming. Remove all but the necessary materials from the student's desk surface.
- Try to minimize distracting visual displays, hanging mobiles, etc.
- Try to have a closed-door storage area to store excess classroom materials.
- Ensure the student is not seated by major classroom "traffic areas". For example, near the pencil sharpener, door, teacher's desk, computer station, etc.
- Ensure classroom lighting does not cause a glare, hum or flicker.
- Try to maintain a neutral classroom temperature (not too cold or too warm).
- Try to minimize distracting classroom sounds (i.e., ticking clocks, heaters, fans, pipes, slamming doors etc.). You can reduce the noise made by sliding chairs by placing old tennis balls on each leg of the chair.
- Use headphones or earplugs during independent work.
- Consider allowing the student to work in a study carrel or behind a divider during independent work.
- You may set up a "chill out" space in your classroom. This space can be used by any student who has become over-stimulated. You can use a quiet corner in the classroom that is separated by a small divider. You can have several pillows or a beanbag chair and/or a blanket and/or rocking chair. Try using low, soothing music. Dim the lights around the space if possible. Have a few quiet activities that the student can engage in. Try not to use this space as "punishment" (i.e., as a consequence for bad behavior). Rather, use it as more of a reward (most students like to sit in the beanbag chair and listen to music). In this way, students who are over-stimulated should enjoy their "chill out" time and look forward to it, as opposed to perceiving it as "punishment".