

Five Effective Instructional Strategies: Students with Intellectual Disability (ID) in the Classroom

What are instructional strategies?

Instructional strategies refer to the learning techniques a teacher uses to help students learn or gain a better understanding of the course material (Persaud, 2020).

1. Use Organizational Tools:

Students with ID often have trouble organizing their academic material and schedules. A problem with organization in students with ID is due to cognitive impairment that results in a deficit in executive functioning. Using organizational planners and visual reminders can help students with ID stay organized.

2. Use Positive, Repetitive Feedback for Behavior:

Students with ID can have difficulties with self-regulation. Teachers can help to reinforce self-regulatory behaviors by using positive feedback when they “catch” the student exercising self-control. Logical consequences and positive interventions will need to be repeated, as students with ID have difficulty remembering cause and effect.

3. Break Assignments Down into Small Components:

Students ID have difficulty with sequential directions and complex thinking, so they need to have assignments, instruction and directions broken down into small, manageable steps.

4. Differentiate Instruction:

Students with ID need individualized learning plans that deliver instruction at their pace and level. Trying to force students with ID to work at a pace and level that is too accelerated for them may negatively affect their self-esteem and frustration tolerance.

5. Provide Opportunities for Inclusion:

Students with ID are at risk for mistreatment by peers due to their developmental differences, and their impairments can also lead them to feel that they are less accomplished than their neurotypical peers. It is important for teachers to model inclusion in the classroom and provide students with ID opportunities to participate in activities that give them a sense of accomplishment.