

Strategies that Help All Students Improve Their Learning

These instructional and learning strategies are provided to highlight and reinforce those that are already in your repertoire. Particular attention is drawn to these strategies in order to showcase how they are not only beneficial for students with disabilities but can improve learning for all of your students. The presence of students with disabilities in your class does not require a major alteration in your teaching style.

How to help students get the most out of class:

- Take the initiative in seeking an ongoing dialogue with your students.
- Encourage class participation and questions.
- Permit the use of recorders in the classroom to facilitate note-taking.
- Provide notes on line for each class.
- Assist the students in teaming up with a classmate to exchange copies of notes and review materials.
- At the start of classes, provide a brief review of the previous class session and an overview of what is to come. At the end of class, briefly summarize the day's main points.
- Take care to include time for questions, discussions, and requests for further examples.
- Highlight major concepts and terminology, both orally and visually, remembering to read aloud material on the blackboard, transparencies, or handouts. Present new vocabulary in writing and use the words in context a number of times during the class.
- When forming groups in the class, try to use an objective process such as first four students, or every other, etc. Students with disabilities are often excluded when student choice is used.
- Give assignments both orally and in writing.

How to help students study:

- Remind students often of your available office hours for clarification of lectures, readings, or assignments.
- Encourage the formation of study groups. Providing some amount of in-class time for such groups can be beneficial for both you and the students.
- Provide explicit feedback, both oral and written, about the strengths and weaknesses of the student's work so that his or her follow-up efforts will be well focused.
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How to help students demonstrate what has been learned:

- Permit oral or taped presentations to supplement written assignments.
- Offer to critique early drafts of assignments to provide pointers and encouragement for rewriting.
- Provide exam study questions that illustrate both format and content. Explain what you expect for a good answer and why.
- Encourage students to request clarification of the intent of exam questions. The student may know the information and be able to offer it fully but may have difficulty interpreting the question.
- In all questioning, avoid unnecessarily intricate sentence structure, double negatives, and questions embedded within questions.
- Separate evaluation of essay exams into two categories: content and mechanics. Grade each separately, allowing the mechanics to be re-done outside of class and resubmitted for a revised grade.
- Allow the use of four-function calculators, scratch paper, pocket spellers, and dictionaries. Provide additional scratch paper to help students with overly large or poor handwriting.
- Allow students to write directly on exam papers. Many students need the ability to underline, highlight, or visually dissect questions in order to fully understand them.