

Faculty Tip Sheet for Working with Students with ADHD

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a behavioral disorder characterized by short attention span, excessive impulsiveness, and inappropriate hyperactivity. Symptoms of hyperactivity, impulsivity, and inattentive behavior must have been present and caused impairment in two or more social, academic, or occupational settings. The exact cause of ADHD is not known.

Basically, a college student with ADHD is entitled to the protection he or she needs so that access to education is not unjustifiably restricted because of disabilities.

ADD is both a gift and a struggle. Although everyone is different, many people are:

- Creative thinkers - great at coming up with new ideas
- Capable of giving undivided and sustained attention to things they enjoy
- Very intuitive and able to get to the gist of things right away
- Willing to take risks and think “outside the box”
- Friendly and talkative
- Imaginative
- Great in situations that require quick thinking
- Often funny and witty – without even trying
- Naturally curious with a love of learning (As long as they aren’t bored or frustrated!)

And many people struggle with:

- Clutter – in their environment and their minds
- Being chronically late
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Jumping from thing to thing and having difficulty finishing tasks or projects
- Making impulsive decisions that aren’t always the best
- Constantly procrastinating
- Not knowing how to plan for the future, prioritize, or keep track of commitments
- Misplacing or losing things
- Blanking out or losing focus during a conversation
- Difficulties with memory and learning

Checklist for teaching:

Teaching students with learning disabilities and/or attention deficit disorders can be challenging which is why you'll find this checklist valuable. This checklist will help you to support LD and ADHD students in the classroom.

Do you:

- Have very clear expectations for all tasks written into the syllabus?
- Keep transitions flowing smoothly and provide assistance at transitional times?
- Do your student(s) know how to get your attention appropriately?
- Do you provide motivating learning opportunities to help the student to remain engaged?
- Do you provide help with review?
- Are you providing appropriate cues and prompts that help focus your student(s)?
- Are you providing adequate accommodations and encouraging the student to use his/her accommodations?
- Are you “checking-in” to make sure the student is not struggling with the curriculum?
- Have you made sure you're addressing the specific students learning styles within your program?
- Do you allow extra time for processing and comprehending information?

If you can answer yes to most of these questions, you're well on your way to meeting the needs of ADD and LD students. Keep up the great work! It is important for professors to check in periodically to offer support and guidance. The unfortunate reality is that students with ADHD have to work harder at the skills many others take for granted. But that extra effort to establish effective routines can lead to a more successful college experience.

Students with ADHD- Ideas and Suggestions:

Education on ADHD/ Learning Disability Diagnosis:

- Learn more about your diagnosis
- It is important for students with ADHD to seek help. Students should be prepared to speak openly and honestly with their teachers about how having ADHD affects their work
- Learn more about your learning styles and preferences

- Assistive technology such as books on CD and voice-activated software can help ADHD students cope with challenges they face. Meet with the Disability Services Office to learn more about assistive technologies

Time management:

- Learn to use a planner, or a calendar in your phone
- Schedule consistent study time and use a cell phone calendar to remind you of study time, papers due, test scheduling days, etc.
- Get help with procrastination
- Arrive to school at least 15 minutes before the first class begins

Note-taking skills:

- Learn a good system of note-taking
- Get help with organization of notes
- Get help with not writing too much or too little
- Learn to review and edit notes after each lecture

Study skills:

- Study in a distraction-free environment
- Some students with ADHD may need to leave their dorm (or house) to study in a quiet space in the library, while others may find that playing music or turning on a fan or other source of white noise helps them to focus. Working alone as much as possible can reduce the chances of peers interrupting the level of concentration that students often need to maintain while studying
- Reading, highlighting, and summarizing textbooks or using E-text (digital format books on CD)
- Study strategies and test preparation

Use Strategies to Stay Engaged in Class:

- The doodling that once got students with ADHD into trouble can actually help a student stay focused during a lecture. Doing two things at once, particularly if the other activity

is a physical one such as chewing gum or doodling can reduce daydreaming in class. Students with ADHD may also have short-term memory issues, so note-taking during lectures as well as reading assignments can help them retain more of what they have studied

- Test-taking: help with objective tests (multiple choice tests), help with essay tests
- Getting support with writing a research paper- The MVCC Learning Center is an enormous assistance for students with their academics. However, the space is busy and sometimes distractible. It is important to communicate your needs with the tutor assisting you in the learning center so they understand. Try to sit away from the doors, with your back to the majority of the visual/audio distractions. Wearing earplugs is also an idea.