



Provide Opportunities for Success

If you think a student in your class may have working memory deficits, there are several things you can do. First, consider the following checklist items to determine if the behaviors the student displays are related to working memory. Then, consult with a professional for specific academic testing. Strategies for alleviating working memory deficits in the classroom will be discussed in the next issue, so stay tuned!

WORKING MEMORY CHECKLISTS

The following items have been compiled from a variety of sources including Dr. Tracy Packiam Alloway and Dr. Milton Dehn.

- ❖ Difficulties in following instructions
 - Specifically multi-step directions
 - Instruction span is short
 - Forgets part(s) of directions
- ❖ Short attention span
- ❖ Place Keeping Difficulties
 - Loses place in complicated tasks
 - Loses place in counting
- ❖ Appears to not be paying attention or is easily distracted
 - High distractibility
 - Attention issues
- ❖ Completes tasks incorrectly
 - Does not follow instructions accurately
 - Carries out some but not all steps
- ❖ Fails to complete assignments
 - Abandons activities before completion
- ❖ Forgets how to complete an activity that has been started even when the teacher has explained
- ❖ Puts hand up to answer a question but can not remember what they were going to say
- ❖ Fails to complete common classroom activities that require large amounts of information to be held in mind



Landmark Teaching Principle™ #1

- ❖ Incomplete recall of information or events
- ❖ Benefits from continued teacher support during lengthy activities
- ❖ Depends on neighbor to remind them of the current task
- ❖ Reserved in group activities
 - Rarely volunteers answers, sometimes doesn't answer direct questions
- ❖ Poor monitoring of quality of work
- ❖ Cannot sequence during rehearsal
- ❖ Poor academic progress
 - Particularly in reading and math

WORKING MEMORY ASSESSMENTS

If you believe that a student is presenting working memory deficits, consult with a professional. Academic assessments ask the students to complete a variety of tasks that explore their ability to hold and manipulate information. One such sub-test is the Digit Span that asks students to repeat a string of numbers from memory. The following assessments are available for determining working memory scales.

- Wide Range Assessment of Memory and Learning
- Working Memory Index- WISC IV
- The Automated Working Memory Assessment (4-22 years)
- Working Memory Test Battery for Children (4-15 years)

HOW IS THIS PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS?

The more knowledgeable the classroom teacher is about working memory deficits and recognizing those signs in students, the better the teacher can prepare the classroom environment, instruction, and materials. This understanding will allow students to be taught at an appropriate pace and level without overburdening their working memory capabilities, which will ultimately allow students to be successful within the classroom.