



How to: Focus Students With ADHD Through Antecedent Teaching Strategies: Cuing

Because of inattention, students with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) often perform below their level of ability on academic tasks such as math computation, word problems, or reading comprehension. However, teachers can often use simple verbal or visual cuing techniques to substantially improve these students' academic performance. Cuing techniques are considered to be positive antecedents that set the student up for greater success (Kern, Choutka, & Sokol, 2002). Such techniques are time-efficient, quick-acting, and non-intrusive.

Here is a sampling of ideas for cuing student attention to improve academic performance:

Academic Strategy Examples: Visual & Verbal Attentional Cuing	
<p>❑ VISUAL CUIING: MATH COMPUTATION: STUDENT HIGHLIGHTING. Students who are inattentive or impulsive can improve their accuracy and fluency on math computation problems through student-performed highlighting. The student is given highlighters of several colors and a math computation sheet. Before completing the worksheet, the student is directed to color-code the problems on the sheet in a manner of his or her choosing (e.g., by level of difficulty, by math operation). The student then completes the highlighted worksheet.</p>	<p>Kercood, S., & Grskovic, J. A. (2009). The effects of highlighting on the math computation performance and off-task behavior of students with attention problems. <i>Education and Treatment of Children, 32</i>, 231-241.</p>
<p>❑ VISUAL CUIING: MATH WORD PROBLEMS: HIGHLIGHT KEY TERMS. Students who have difficulties with inattention or impulsivity can increase rates of on-task behavior and accuracy on math word problems through highlighting of key terms. The teacher prepares the worksheet by using a colored highlighter to highlight a combination of 8-11 key words and numbers for each math word problem. The student then completes the highlighted worksheet.</p>	<p>Kercood, S., Zentall, S. S., Vinh, M., & Tom-Wright, K. (2012). Attentional cuing in math word problems for girls at-risk for ADHD and their peers in general education settings. <i>Contemporary Educational Psychology, 37</i>, 106-112.</p>
<p>❑ VISUAL CUIING: WRITING: USE COLORED PAPER TO INCREASE WRITING LEGIBILITY. Students with attention or impulsivity issues may improve the legibility of handwriting for spelling and writing tasks through use of colored writing paper. In preparation, the student is offered a range of colored paper choices ranging from pastels to bright, highly saturated (neon) hues. The paper in the color chosen by the student is then prepared by adding ruled lines for writing. Whenever the student has an important writing task in which legibility is important, he or she is encouraged to use writing paper of the preferred color.</p>	<p>Imhof, M. (2004). Effects of color stimulation on handwriting performance of children with ADHD without and with additional learning disabilities. <i>European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 13</i>, 191-198.</p>
<p>❑ VERBAL CUIING: READING COMPREHENSION: PROMPT WITH INCENTIVE. To boost student comprehension of a passage, use a verbal prompt before the reading paired with an incentive. Before the student begins reading a story or informational-text passage, the</p>	<p>O'Shea, L. J., Sindelar, P. T., & O'Shea, D. J. (1985). The effects of repeated reading and</p>



teacher says: "Read this story/passage out loud. Try to remember as much as you can about the story/passage. Then I will have you retell the main points of the story/passage. If you remember enough of the reading, you will get a sticker [or other prize or incentive]." If the student needs a reminder during the reading, the teacher says: "Work on remembering as much of the reading as you can." At the end of the reading, the student is told to recount the main points of the passage and is awarded the promised incentive at the discretion of the teacher.

attentional cues on reading fluency and comprehension. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 17(2), 129-142.

Some of the strategies presented here can also be adapted for use with groups. For example, students could pair off to discuss and highlight math computation worksheets. Or the teacher could use an overhead projector to highlight key terms in assigned math word problems, while the students highlight the same terms on their own worksheets.

Reference

Kern, L., Choutka, C. M., & Sokol, N. G. (2002). Assessment-based antecedent interventions used in natural settings to reduce challenging behavior: An analysis of the literature. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 25(1), 113-130.