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|  | **TEACHER’S GUIDE:**  **Supporting**  **APD Students**  **in the Classroom** | **Pamela Best, Au.D., CCC-A**  **Doctor of Audiology/APD Specialist**  [**BestHearingSanDiego.com**](http://www.BestHearingSanDiego.com)  **APDSpecialtyGroup.com** |

**Auditory Processing Disorder (APD)** is a type of hearing loss. Our *peripheral* (sensory) auditory system (ear & auditory nerve) is designed to detect sound. Our *central* auditory processing system is designed to process or recognize and make sense out of what we’ve heard. Individuals with APD will most often have normal sensory hearing but will have hearing loss in the perceptual processing of auditory stimuli & the neurobiological activity underlying that processing*.* Competing background noise, degraded speech, large volumes of auditory discourse, lack of nonverbal cues, new topics, unfamiliar speakers, rapid changes in subject matter, unfamiliar vocabulary, abstract concepts, among many others are listening situations that will be challenging with APD.

**I. ADAPTING THE LISTENING ENVIRONMENT: Methods to help improve student’s access to auditory info**

**a. Preferential seating:** Seat student closest to teacher, with direct line of sight, away from known auditory distractions and competing noises. Placing student in a smaller group or 1:1 instruction (in quiet area) is very helpful when background noise cannot be adequately controlled. Be aware that when there are multiple small groups working simultaneously within the same classroom this will result in increased background noise and increased communication difficulty for individuals with APD.

1. **Use of assisting listening devices:** Individual ear-levelFM systems can be used to improve signal-noise ratio of teacher’s voice vs. competing noise and improves processing and reduces auditory fatigue.

**II. INSTRUCTIONAL ADAPTATIONS: Purposeful adaptations made by the speaker**

1. **Instructional Transitions:** Reviewing past material before beginning new lessons; Pre-tuning techniques to focus the student’s attention on the subject coming up (Words such as listen, ready, and remember this one).
2. **Extended time on tests or untimed testing:** APD will affect the RATE at which a student can process a question, formulate an answer, and write the response.
3. **Delivery style:** Gaining attention prior to speaking; Speaking at a slower pace; Gestures & visual aids.
4. **Time to process auditory information;** It is helpful during classroom participation Q&A to make sure to give the APD student additional time to process auditory inputs due to difficulty quickly and accurately processing speech.
5. **Reduce motor activities during verbal presentations:** Avoid giving complicated directions during physical activity
6. **Buddy system:** A buddy system can be started by seating APD student near a student who is strong in auditory processing-Assistance may include note taking support, assistance/repetition of instructions, study groups, etc.
7. **Listening breaks:** Occasional breaks (non-auditory tasks) to avoid auditory fatigue.
8. **Frequent checks for comprehension of instructions or directions:** The teacher can watch for signs of inattention, decreased concentration or understanding and provide quick checks for comprehension or quick subject review for benefit of APD student & entire class**.**
9. **Repetition;** Instruct speakers to repeat rather than rephrase– same message is presented verbatim, with enhanced enunciation or more slowly, as speaking rate can influence comprehension. Repetition allows for the filling in of the missing components, whereas rephrasing provides a whole new message with new “holes” to be filled. Repetition of classmate’s responses-verifying student has heard question or response made by other students.
10. **Pre-teach new vocabulary and new concepts:** Pre-reading or review of next day’s coursework will help when introducing new concepts.
11. **Provision of copies of class notes:** Students with APD will have great difficulty simultaneously taking notes and listening/processing auditory information. This can cause notes to be inaccurate, incomplete, or illegible. To assure student gets home with information they are responsible for learning provide student with information in written form (snapshot of classmate/buddy notes; copy of teacher’s outline; access to all required info online; notetaker). Direct line of sight for A/V presentations is beneficial.
12. **Employment of multimodality cues and hands-on demonstrations to augment verbally presented information:** Presented sequentially rather than simultaneously.