

ANXIETY: TEACHING STRATEGIES

LEARNING SUPPORT ACTIVITIES • TEACHER RESOURCE

Students experiencing anxiety often learn best in classrooms that are predictable, supportive, and emotionally safe. The following teaching strategies are designed to reduce barriers to participation while maintaining high expectations for learning.

Create a Predictable Environment

- Establish consistent classroom routines.
- Explain daily objectives before instruction begins.
- Provide visual schedules when possible.
- Give advance notice of changes to routines.

Encourage Participation

- Allow students to practice before presenting to the class.
- Offer choices for demonstrating learning.
- Encourage participation without forcing it.
- Celebrate progress, not perfection.

Support Communication

- Give students time to process before responding.
- Model signs before asking students to perform.
- Use positive, encouraging language.
- Pair students with supportive partners for activities.

Reduce Stress During Assessments

- Review expectations ahead of time.
- Allow additional processing time when appropriate.
- Break larger assessments into smaller sections.
- Offer alternative assessment formats when documented.

Build Confidence

- Recognize effort as well as achievement.
- Provide frequent, specific feedback.
- Create opportunities for early success.
- Foster a classroom culture where mistakes are viewed as part of learning.

Teacher Reminders

- Remain calm and patient.
- Protect student privacy.
- Collaborate with families and support staff when appropriate.
- Follow accommodations outlined in the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan.

★ Key Takeaway

A supportive classroom does not lower expectations—it provides students with the confidence and structure they need to reach them. Small changes in instruction can have a meaningful impact on student participation and success.