

TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

LEARNING SUPPORT ACTIVITIES • TEACHER RESOURCE

Students with intellectual disabilities benefit from instruction that is clear, structured, repetitive, and engaging. Effective teaching strategies help students build confidence, develop communication skills, and make meaningful progress while maintaining high expectations and focusing on the same learning objectives.

Teach One Concept at a Time

- Introduce small amounts of new information.
- Focus on one ASL concept before adding another.
- Build new skills on previously mastered concepts.
- Review frequently throughout the lesson.

Use Explicit Modeling

- Demonstrate each sign and skill clearly.
- Model expected responses before independent practice.
- Use pictures, videos, and visual examples.
- Think aloud while demonstrating when appropriate.

Provide Repetition & Guided Practice

- Practice new vocabulary multiple times.
- Use structured partner and teacher-guided activities.
- Reinforce learning through games and review activities.
- Allow students multiple opportunities to experience success.

Use Visual & Hands-On Supports

- Incorporate visual schedules and graphic organizers.
- Pair signs with pictures or real objects.
- Use manipulatives and interactive activities when appropriate.
- Keep instruction engaging and concrete.

Encourage Independence

- Gradually reduce prompts as students gain confidence.
- Celebrate effort and progress.
- Encourage self-monitoring when appropriate.
- Build confidence through consistent success.

ASL Classroom Considerations

- Maintain predictable classroom routines.
- Provide additional processing time.
- Maximize visual access throughout instruction.
- Focus on meaningful communication and practical application of ASL.

★ Key Takeaway

Students with intellectual disabilities learn best when instruction is explicit, visual, structured, and reinforced through meaningful practice. High expectations, consistent support, and positive encouragement help every student grow and succeed in the ASL classroom.