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Self-Regulation: Strategies for Student Success

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Course Objectives:

• Identify self-regulation and arousal states
• Describe the process to change a student’s arousal state
• Identify activities and resources for student-directed self-regulation
**Self-Regulation** (self-reg **u** la **t** ion)

*noun*

the fact of something such as an organization regulating itself without intervention from external

- Self-regulation is the ability to attain, maintain and adjust arousal levels appropriately depending on the situation and the stimuli presented. (Shellenberger and Williams 1994)
- When difficulties in self-regulation occur, a student will have trouble changing arousal levels which directly affect optimal functioning and learning.
- Arousal can be considered the range of the nervous system, describing how alert one feels.

**Arousal Levels**

- **Low**
- **Normal or “Just Right”**
- **High**

- Students with self-regulation difficulties are unable to change the degree of alertness they feel therefore, function is impaired.
- Sensory defensiveness causes flight, fright, or fight.
Inhibition Levels

Top-Down Approach
• Efficient for temporary concentration or self-regulation
• Isn’t a successful strategy for an entire day

Bottom-Up Approach
• Efficient for long-term self-regulation
• Requires deep proprioceptive input (i.e. Heavy Work)
  • Heavy work will work to both calm and alert the student

Heavy Work Strategies

For Home
• Pushing or Pulling games (i.e. tug-o-war)
• Wrestling or Football
• Raking leaves
• Moving furniture
• Pushing weighted carts

continued™
**Heavy Work**

*For the Classroom*

- Pushing hands together
- Wall or chair pushups
- Moving heavy books or items
- Chew tools or gum
- Hand fidgets

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**Changing Arousal Levels** is often an unconscious process!

- Therapists, teachers, and parents need to develop observation skills, understanding, and respect of student’s sensory-processing preferences in order to direct learning.
- Everyone has an innate drive to seek and receive sensory input that their bodies and brains need.
Sensory Diet

Adults
- Fidget with jewelry or a pen
- Shift in chair
- Bounce leg
- Bite or suck inside of lip

Children
- Twist or suck hair
- Chew on pencils or shirt collar
- Tip back chair
- Stand while writing
- Wiggle and squirm in seat

Children focus better when they are still.

True
False
Detective Work

Watch for subtle cues that indicate what types of sensory-processing strategies are being used for self-regulation
(Shellenberger and Williams 1996)

Step One

Figure out the strategy the student independently uses and labels it for the child

Step Two

Substitute the strategy to change the arousal level; use the trial and error method

Step Three

Student-directed self-regulation in multiple settings with limited options

Student-Directed

1. Students need to learn to identify their appropriate arousal levels
2. Students need to choose a tool or strategy to change that level
3. Students need to learn to implement that strategy effectively throughout settings
Functional Classroom Strategies

Ready Bodies Learning Minds
- www.readybodies.com
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUv5Y1UwmY&list=PLrMevG8CVHCZ5FvKwsvk7PCXx68PKdaG
- Reflex integration
- Bilateral coordination
- Heavy work

The Alert Program
- How Does Your Engine Run?
  - www.alertprogram.com
  - Relates arousal to engine levels
  - Engine Speedometer
  - Checklists
  - Take Five!

Yoga 4 Classrooms
- www.yoga4classrooms.com
- Creates calm, relaxed comfortable classrooms
- Increases mind and body awareness
- Increases listening and organizations skills

Brain Gym
- www.braingym.org
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VL4an7Uc3wA
- Promotes “learning through movement”
- 26 movements that coordinate eyes, ears, hands and whole body
Functional Classroom Strategies

MeMoves
- www.thinkingmoves.com
- Digital download $129.95 for 2 years
- Single Purchase USB $189.99
- Music and movement to clam and focus students
- Focus: children with Autism

YouTube
- www.youtube.com
- Go Noodle
- The Learning Station
- Pancake Manor

Classroom Adaptations

T-Stool
Kore $49.99

DIY Desk Swing
- Made with rope or bungee, velcro, and PVC Pipe
Classroom Adaptations

DIY Dynamic Seat
- Partially inflated beach ball as cushion and foot fidget

DIY Foot Fidget
- Bike tube or Bungee cords (with pool noodles, PVC pipe, or tennis balls)

Classroom Adaptations

Read in Laundry Baskets

DIY Ball Chairs
- Ball in laundry basket
Classroom Adaptations

Straddle Chair

Shirt over back of the Chair

Proprioceptive Input

Animal Walks

- Bear, Crab, Snake, Kangaroo, Frog

Body Sock

$29.99
Proprioceptive Input

DIY Cuddle Loop
• Sewn spandex or lycra strip

Small Weighted Backpack

Proprioceptive Input

DIY Sweatshirt Hug
• Rice sewn into sleeves

DIY Weighted Lap Pad
• Car Wash Mitt filled with Rice
For the Mouth

Sport Top Water Bottles

Refrigerated Gum

For the Mouth

Vibrating Toothbrush

Crunch or Chewy Foods
- Veggie chips, Cheese crackers
- Carrots, Celery, Bell Peppers
- Nuts (if possible)
- Granola Bars, Bagels
- Raisins, Dried Cranberries
Tactile Input

Playdough in a balloon

Sticky Bubbles

• For those who sew:

Water bead balloon

Fabric Marble Maze
References

- Pfeiffer, B. (2012) *Sensory Hypersensitivity and Anxiety: The Chicken or the Egg?* AOTA, Special Interest Section Quarterly: Sensory Integration.

Thank you for your time!

Questions???
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