



Cognitive Activities to Enhance Academic Performance

Pirate Game

FOR: visual and auditory memory, simultaneous processing, motor planning, sequencing, planning, processing speed, timing, rhythm, attention

Sit across from student. Each of you has a capped marker. If the student is right handed, put YOUR right hand on the board with the marker in your left.

- ◆ Tell the student, "Watch me first and when I'm done and point at you to start, I want you to copy what I did."
- ◆ Put your hand, fingers spread, on the white board. With a steady rhythm, tap the marker to the left of your thumb then between your thumb and forefinger, tap back to the left of your thumb, then between your forefinger and middle finger, back to thumb and between middle and ring finger, back to thumb, between ring finger and pinkie, back to thumb then to the right of your pinkie and point at the student to start.
- ◆ Let the student finish their turn (do not interrupt if they make a mistake!) and provide feedback about what needs to be changed if they made a mistake.
- ◆ If they made a mistake, tell/show them what needs to be fixed, show them the pattern again then have them do it again. Once they do it correctly, move to the next step:
- ◆ Do the same pattern forward and then backward. Correct as needed.
- ◆ The left of the thumb is always 'home' with only one tap there but now change the pattern/number of taps between the fingers. This time do 1,2,1,2,1. Coach if needed.
- ◆ The next pattern do 1,2,3,2,1
- ◆ Once they can do this pattern smoothly and with a rhythm you do not need to do this activity again.

Memory for Numbers

FOR: visual and auditory memory, simultaneous processing, sequencing, processing speed, timing, rhythm

Stand across from student and do the following:

- ◆ Tell student, "I'm going to touch my fingers and say some numbers, then you'll tell me the numbers."
- ◆ Do not use numbers in order such as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 (You may want to write down the numbers so you remember them!)
- ◆ Touch the fingers of your right hand with your left pointer finger as you say numbers, 1 second at a time (too slow and they won't remember). Turn right palm toward you, so you are touching from your right to left.
- ◆ Do not pause or talk at all as you are doing this.
- ◆ Start with 4 one digit numbers then move to 5 (don't go in order). If 4 numbers are too challenging, move down to 3 temporarily.
- ◆ If the student is having difficulty remembering, have them touch their OWN fingers as you say the numbers.
- ◆ If they miss a number, tell them (by pointing at that finger) which one they need to pay attention to and then repeat the numbers as you touch your fingers in order.
- ◆ Do this for a few minutes a day until students can remember 5 numbers easily.





Boyfriend Patty (Cross Claps)

FOR: simultaneous processing, motor planning, sequencing, processing speed, timing, rhythm, gross motor, impulsivity

- ◆ Have student cross the midline with either touching their knees or cross clapping with you.
- ◆ It is CRUCIAL that you do this to a beat (counting to a rhythm or singing a song to keep a beat).
- ◆ You may need to do this broken down into steps at first. Students who struggle typically do not like to cross in one direction.
- ◆ Do it the 1st time without counting or singing.

Jumping Jacks

FOR: simultaneous processing, motor planning, sequencing, processing speed, timing, rhythm, gross motor

- ◆ Ask every student you work with to do 5 jumping jacks
- ◆ IF THEY ARE UNABLE TO DO THEM CORRECTLY, you need to demonstrate and teach them how to do jumping jacks in broken down into the each step (you model and explain, then they do that step):
- ◆ Arms down, legs together
- ◆ Arms up, legs apart

Itsy Bitsy Spider

FOR: simultaneous processing, motor planning, fine motor, sequencing, planning

Sit across from student and do the following:

- ◆ Hold thumb and pointer finger of each hand up in the shape of an L.
- ◆ Turn your right hand so the thumb is up, the pointer finger down.
- ◆ Touch the right thumb to the left pointer finger (at top) and the left thumb to the right pointer finger (at the bottom).
- ◆ Tap the bottom thumb and finger against each other 3 times (to orient student visually and kinesthetically).
- ◆ Say "Move your bottom thumb toward you, curving upward, and your bottom finger upward toward me, curving upward, and have them touch together again at the top."

** If they really struggle after only verbal instruction (which is common!), then repeat the instruction (saying the words) while you SHOW them what it looks like.*

** You may have to hold their top fingers together*

- ◆ Do this a few minutes each session until it is automatic.
- ◆ You can then teach them the same process backward (top to bottom instead of bottom to top).





Other Helpful Activities

- ◆ skipping
- ◆ mazes
- ◆ balancing on one foot
- ◆ walking heel to toe
- ◆ memory for numbers (either showing the numbers or only have them listen)
- ◆ repeat a sentence (keep increasing # words)
- ◆ Add on to a sentence. Start with a short sentence. Ex: "The dog ran." Then take turns adding a word: The big dog ran. The big spotted dog ran.
- ◆ grocery store game "I went to the store"
- ◆ words in order
- ◆ lists of numbers

Remember!

When you are teaching the students ANYTHING (reading, math, these activities), use the process of Mediated Learning:

1. **I do** (show them what you want to do)
2. **We do** (do it together and break the task down into easily manageable steps if necessary)
3. **You do** (ask the student to do it on their own)
4. **Once they understand the skill/ concept, they must PRACTICE so the skill/concept becomes automatic.**

If a student continues to struggle, you must move back a step temporarily to be sure they grasp the activity, skill, or concept.

Use concise wording and modeling (showing them how before they do it) when giving explanations. Talking interferes with learner's thinking and processing.

Give students 5 seconds of processing time. Don't jump in right away with more instruction until they have up to 5 seconds to process and respond!!! Don't wait longer than 5 seconds before redirecting.

