Supporting Neurodivergent Students

Neurodivergence refers to neurological differences in how people process information, learn, or communicate. Common examples include **Autism**, **ADHD**, and **Dyslexia**.



Below are some strategies to support these students.

Supporting Students with Autism

1 Keep classroom routines clear & consistent



- Keep classroom routines clear and consistent.
- Provide guidance during transitions and unstructured times.
- Give advance notice if you are aware of any disruption or changes in class schedule.

2 Avoid assumptions about attention ☒



- Do not assume that the student is not listening if they avoid eye contact.
- Individuals with autism concentrate better without direct eye contact, and forcing them to look at you may actually break their concentration.

3 Use clear and direct language

- Use clear and direct language when explaining thoughts, feelings, or instructions.
- Many individuals with autism may find it difficult to understand another person's perspectives.
- Avoid vague instructions, idioms, metaphors and sarcasm.

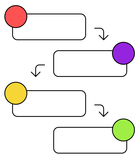
Instead of...	Try...
"Go there"	"Please stand in front of the table"
"It is raining cats and dogs"	"It is raining heavily now"

4 Establish a safe place



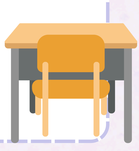
- Identify a quiet and safe area where the student can retreat to if they experience sensory overload or if they feel overwhelmed.

5 Provide visual support for learning



- Use visual supports such as written instructions, schedules, diagrams, and flowcharts, as many individuals with autism are visual learners and process information more effectively when it is presented visually.

6 Provide flexible adjustments



- Offer flexible participation options and accommodations, such as flexible seating and the use of noise-cancelling headphones, to support diverse learning and sensory needs.

Supporting Students with ADHD

1 Provide clear structure and organisation



- Provide clear expectations by outlining learning objectives, assignment requirements, and deadlines, while breaking complex tasks into smaller, manageable steps



2 Allow additional time



- Some individuals with ADHD may require additional time to process information and respond.
- Allow time for them to formulate their thoughts rather than expecting immediate answers.



3 Highlight and reinforce key information



- Summarise main points, repeat important instructions, and draw attention to essential concepts and deadlines.



4 Present information in multiple formats



- A combination of verbal explanations, written instructions, visual aids, and hands-on activities will help to support learning preferences and sustain attention.



5 Support executive functioning skills



- Provide checklists, planning tools, reminders, and guidance on prioritising tasks and managing time effectively.



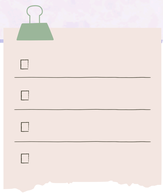
6 Make learning materials available in advance



- Provide access to lecture slides, readings, and key resources in advance to support the student's preparation and reduce their cognitive load.

Supporting Students with Dyslexia

1 Provide accessible learning materials



- Use accessible formatting, including clear fonts, adequate font sizes, sufficient spacing, and good colour contrast.
- Organise content using headings, bullet points, and short paragraphs to improve readability and reduce cognitive load.



2 Highlight key information

- Clearly identify essential concepts, instructions, deadlines, and required readings.
- Use headings, summaries, or bold text to help students focus on essential information.



3 Provide learning materials in advance

- Share lecture slides, readings, or key resources in advance where possible. This gives students more time to read, prepare, and engage during class.



4 Offer different ways to demonstrate learning

- Where appropriate, provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding through oral responses, presentations, or other approved formats.





5 Allow additional time

- Allow additional time for reading and processing written information, as students with dyslexia may require more time to decode and comprehend text.



6 Check for understanding

- Provide opportunities for students to ask questions, discuss key concepts, and clarify their understanding.





For more info on supporting students with accessibility needs, visit suss.edu.sg/sas or email Student Accessibility Support (SAS) at sas@suss.edu.sg