

Auditory Processing Disorder in the United Kingdom (APDUK)

Ideas to be Considered Prior to Creating an IEP for an APD

Always ensure the learner with APD is looking at you when you speak to them this allows them to lip-read more easily, a common strategy in those with APD, and to ensure they know you are talking to them.

Speak clearly and ensure they have understood what you have said, not just by repeating it back to you, which can be done without comprehension.

Seat the learner with APD at the front of the class to allow them to lip-read what the teacher says more easily.

Ensure that the learner has a clear view of any board used to provide written information.

Always provide written information on the board when speaking and always provide written additional instructions on paper for the learner to refer to when they are attempting a piece of work.

This will ensure :-

- (i) that the learner has visual reinforcement of the oral instructions, should they forget or experience a delay in processing the information, and transferring the instructions to the kinaesthetic, the action of performing the task.**
- (ii) that the learner is given a sense of security in an area that has previously been a situation of failure.**

**Try to explain the purpose of the task you want the learner to perform, as many APDs are visual spatial learners who respond better to the whole concept, rather than asking them to perform an abstract exercise
E.g. if they are to practise spellings or “wr” words tell them the purpose is to distinguish them from “r” spelling words etc.**

Use the same vocabulary for specific task requests, and be very precise with your instructions, allowing the learner to complete each stage before going on to the next.

E.g. Ask the learner to “put his pencils in the pot” and then “put his book on the pile”, instead of asking him to “tidy up”.

There is a need to build up a process of associations so that general requests can eventually be used.

Always present instructions in small easy steps to avoid confusion, allowing sufficient time to complete one section before going on to the next.

Make sure the learner understands what they are expected to do and encourage them to ask for help. As a precautionary measure check with them in case they do not have the confidence to do so.

Those with APD are not immediately aware that they have not understood something that has just been explained to them.

Many can train themselves to just listen to a speaker, and try to record the message in their long-term memories and then replay it later to try and make sense of what was said.

When doing this they will not try to ask questions as it stops the recording flow, and cannot answer questions asked of them.

- (i) Oral information may, at first, appear to have made sense, but when they have to reproduce this information they may have not have fully understood or processed (retained) all the information needed to gain a full understanding.**
- (ii) Sometimes they will have not processed part of the message, and will be unaware of this, e.g. they may go away and complete a task but miss out a vital component.**
- (iii) Sometimes they will not have processed any part of the message. They will be totally unaware that they have missed anything, until they are asked about that message at a later date. They will act as if they have not heard it.**
- (iv) It has been noted that the delayed processing coping strategy has been developed by adults with APD and by teenagers with APD. Most adults have developed subconsciously, but some teenagers may have developed it and may have been encouraged to use this skill to help themselves.
This delayed processing is done using the long term memory like a video recorder, but like most filing systems it sometimes takes a long time to find the correct file, with the right contents, just when you need it.**
- (v) APD learners use their short-term memories for their daily coping routines; which they need for their priority survival needs and young children do instinctively.**

Adults may be able to select their priority routines with regard to

their careers, or whatever they consider to be their main life priority, and that priority governs the use of the short - term memory (coping strategies and correction routines) everything else is secondary until that task is finished.

Allow extra time to complete tasks to allow for delays in processing and transference of information.

It may help to ask the APD learner a question, and prefix by saying I will ask you this question and come back to you in a moment for your answer. (The teacher could then go on to ask another pupil a different question, and then come return for the APD learners answer)

This will give the APD learner an some extra time to process the question; and to formulate and process an answer

Ensure the learner has a quiet working environment as many can be easily distracted by background noise and conversation by other pupils. Try to ensure that other pupils understand that they should not be disturbed when working.

Some APDs like to use music as a continuous and predictable background noise, which also helps eliminate other random distracting background noises.

Some APDs find FM audio systems useful in classroom / lecture environments as it concentrates the message, and eliminates background noise.

Often APDs have a short attention span due to the amount of effort needed to try and follow what is happening in the classroom.

As a result of all the extra effort needed they can become very tired, or irritable and their behaviour may suffer.

They may have episodes of daydreaming or “switching off” for a while when things become too much.

Susceptibility to background noise and bright lights can lead to headaches and lapses in concentration.

APD learners will most certainly be lacking self-esteem and confidence in both educational and social settings. They are often called lazy, slow, stupid or told that the difficulties they are experiencing is a direct result of a bad attitude.

A positive learning environment is essential.

Every effort should be made to promote a sense of self-worth.

The lack of confidence and self-esteem in learners with APD means that in many circumstances they may leave things to the last minute.

This is caused by confusion in ascertaining what is expected.

**This sometimes means learners find starting a task difficult and this can be misconstrued as laziness or negative behaviour.
They may need a great deal of help in planning a piece of work.**

**Learners with APD are very vulnerable in a social setting because of their difficulty in processing conversation, and in word retrieval.
Which makes them more susceptible to bullying.
Any negativity in this respect shown to them by a teacher can spread to their peers, and this should be not be tolerated.**

**APD learners may have some problems absorbing information from text.
Allow time for delayed processing.
Use a more visual approach to teaching, such as picture associations, coloured text, and different formatting of text to make information stand out.**

**Provide a printed homework timetable for the learner and a copy for parents. So that they can help the learner understand what they have to do, and explain it in terms that they can more easily understand.
Parents cannot help if they do not know what the learner is expected to do.**

**Provide a home/school book so that the parents can provide feedback. This can provide a means of communication between the parents and teachers.
Enabling the parents to explaining what the learner has found easy or difficult, and the coping strategies they use to complete the task.
Thus helping the teacher build up a better picture of the way the learner learns and increasing the teacher's ability to accommodate their learning style.**

**Help the learner to build coping routines, daily and weekly.
Coping routines are built on life experiences and at a young age this is difficult as the learner does not have too many to fall back on.
But small routines can grow.
Also the APD learner needs to continually review these routines both new and old, as some new routines may bypass existing routines. (One day able to do a task using a coping routine, but not able to do it the next day).
Ask the learner how they coping with a new task.
Both learner and teacher should be involved in this development process.**

**APD learners find it difficult to process more than one source of auditory input.
So group conversations and debates are difficult, if not impossible, to**

process as they happen.

Many Adult APDs have subconsciously developed the skill of Delayed Processing. (Which has been noted amongst adults and some teenagers with APD.)

This skill may be accelerated if younger APDs are aware of the nature of their disability at an early stage of their development.

APD learners will need to be able to advocate their disability amongst their peers and they may need help in this.

They may appear to others to be slow in understanding verbal instructions or conversations.

They need to understand and make others aware that they will always be like this, and they will need to be able to explain that they have a disability to friends, teachers, and adults.

They will need to know something about the nature of their disability. Some of the advantages and disadvantages, the latter will be obvious to all.

The advantages will not be so apparent and less obvious to identify. As they develop their own coping strategies, they also develop the compensating skills from their own personal talents, such as a heightened visual perception.

APD learners may have to work out the basic concept of what any theory means from basics each time they want to use it.

And any interruption or break from their thought patterns during this process may require them to restart their understanding from the beginning all over again.

This is particularly relevant to the learning of Mathematics.

This is why some prefer to start a project and see it through to its conclusion, regardless of any time factors. This is partly because it has taken them so long to plan and start the task that they may forget what to do if it is left unfinished.

Multiplication tables sometimes present problems for APD learners.

If the learner understands the basic theory for the existence of tables (a practical use, as a visual guide) then they can begin to build a list of associations, which give meaning to tables and can create some coping strategies.

If learning tables is an ongoing problem, provide the learner with a ready-printed multiplication square to use, as many learners may never learn them.

APD learners will always have a problem in reproductive speech.

This is not because they have problems with speech or do not know what

they want to say, but are simply trying to retrieve the word they want from their long-term memory.

Word retrieval is also a major problem in producing written work.

APD learners may also try to explain something over and over again, repeating themselves in the process.

This is part of the re-assurance process in which they

(i) Try to show others that they understand something about the topic by going over it in their mind

(ii) Aid their understanding of the topic

(iii) Seek reassurance that they have understood the topic by repeating it in their own words.

APD learners have problems using Telephones.

One of the main reasons why individuals with APD cannot understand speech on the telephone is that the phone companies send only part of the speech signal through the lines. The signal is degraded before it even gets to the recipient phone.

Individuals with processing disorder often have problems understanding degraded signals and phone conversations can be complicated by this fact. Also, there are neither facial nor body cues to help the processing-impaired individual to compensate for what they have not processed.

This needs to be explained to their friends who may wish to communicate by telephone.