

Trainable Mentally Impaired (TMI)

General Description of Population

Students who qualify for special education services in the area of trainable mentally impaired demonstrate a significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior manifested during the developmental period, which adversely affects their educational performance. Trainable mentally impaired students function cognitively at approximately 3 to 4 1/2 standard deviations below the mean (average intelligence).

Common Characteristics

- learning level is 1/3 to 1/2 of chronological age
- understanding of concepts seems to be more concrete
- immature social skills (tend to model immediate peer group)
- delayed fine and gross motor skills
- distractible
- respond best to one- to two-step directions
- visual perception difficulty
- delays in expressive and receptive language
- poor retention skills
- require consistent program structure
- some students have seizure disorders
- auditory processing delays
- some students may have difficulties with vision and/or hearing
- impulsive

Instructional Strategies

- require demonstrated vs. verbal directions
- use of multisensory approaches (tactile, verbal, and auditory materials)
- use concrete rather than abstract materials
- facilitate work in small groups for specific objectives
- use manipulative materials
- base curriculum on functional life skills

Instructional Strategies (continued)

- break down objectives into small parts (task analysis)
- use repetition and drill often for maximum retention
- use of peer tutors in modeling
- partial participation in large group activities
- skills are learned best when practiced in concrete situations frequently
- keep an open mind, think positive, and be willing to take risks
- maintain a sense of humor
- be willing to make a commitment towards mainstreaming
- work as part of a team between special and general education

Behavioral Strategies

- be consistent
- use consequences for both appropriate and inappropriate behavior
- utilize various approaches to build self-esteem
- use of reinforcers (behavior modification)
- students should be expected to follow the rules and behavioral expectations of their general education peer group
- work with parents on home/school behavioral expectations and standards
- recognize the importance of peer modeling
- utilize a circle of friends to reinforce and support positive behaviors
- use common sense and general principles when working with these students

Support Staff

- Audiologist
- Occupational Therapist
- Physical Therapist
- School Nurse
- School Psychologist
- School Social Worker
- Teacher of Adaptive Physical Education
- Teacher of Mentally Impaired
- Teacher of Speech and Language Impaired
- Teacher Consultant for Mentally Impaired
- Teacher Consultant for Visually Impaired