



TBI Tips



Memory in Students with TBI

Following a brain injury, memory can be compromised. Sometimes, the deficits are lifelong and severe; other times they are relatively minor and improve over time. To be successful in a classroom, students with TBI often require some level of supports or accommodations for memory challenges.

Supports & Strategies to Try

No two students with TBI are alike. Each student can face unique challenges after an injury. Accommodations should vary depending on individual student needs. Decisions about which accommodations to use should be made for each student by that student's educational team.

Understand the Individual Student

To implement effective accommodations, you need a good understanding of how the brain injury is impacting the individual student and areas in which that student is struggling. Questions to consider are:

1. How does memory impact the student's ability to learn?
2. Is the student's ability to recall information affected? If so, how?
3. Do the memory challenges affect new learning, prior knowledge, or both?
4. Is the student's short-term or long-term memory impacted?
5. How are these challenges reflected in the student's school work?
6. What specific supports or accommodations would compensate for these challenges and allow the student to be successful?

- Try relating new information to content the student already knows. Building associations can facilitate recall and retrieval by creating multiple paths to get to the information.
- Use error-free learning. Be sure that all learning trials are correct. Incorrect trials for a student with TBI can lead to wrong or incomplete learning.
- Use external reminders and organizers e.g., datebooks, calendars, memory aides, smartphone apps, etc.
- Try rhymes as aids, e.g., "Id is the kid!" for part of Freud's personality theory.
- Acronyms can sometimes be helpful aides for memory, e.g., Roy G. Biv for the colors in the spectrum.
- Use visual images. Associating information with striking visual images sometimes facilitates retrieval.
- Try using the method of loci. Items to be remembered are placed in a series of locations that can then be mentally reviewed at the time of retrieval. [Learn more about the method of loci.](#)