



Slowed Processing Speed Strategies

The second most common impact of a concussion is slowed processing speed. This might be reflected in speech, speed of thinking, writing, driving, etc. The student may still be very capable of learning, they are just taking a longer time in their ability to demonstrate it. This might feel very frustrating for the student as things that used to come easily for him/her, might not come easily right now:

“I used to be a math whiz, now I can barely get through a multiplication problem”!

Obviously, if a student is moving in slower motion, he/she is not able to cover as much territory. This is why REMOVAL of non-essential work and REDUCTION of semi-essential work are THE most helpful academic interventions a teacher can give a student with a concussion. These adjustments keep the most essential learning going (albeit in smaller amounts) for weeks on end, while keeping symptoms and frustration down. It's a WIN-WIN!

Strategies:

- ◆ Cut back on the amount of work. Grade completed work! Do not penalize (mark down a grade) for work exempted
- ◆ Go for quality, not quantity of work
- ◆ Go for comprehension of material, not memorization of material
- ◆ Prioritize what is most important:
 - ◆ To teach during the (potential) four weeks of recovery and
 - ◆ For student to learn during the (potential) four weeks of recovery
 - ◆ What needs to be “covered” to earn a fair grade by semester end and for advancement to the next level?
- ◆ It is not possible for students with a concussion to make-up all missed work (especially if the student has missed a number of days/periods from school)
- ◆ Therefore, quickly make a reasonable make-up work plan (REMOVAL of non-essential make-up work and REDUCTION of semi-essential make-up work)
- ◆ Do not let make-up work start to pile up – it leads to ANXIETY!
- ◆ Once a reasonable plan for make-up work has been determined, put PRIORITY on keeping up with **current learning**. As weeks pass, continue to determine with student – what non-essential current work can be removed? What semi-essential current work can be reduced?
- ◆ Expect student to have less symptoms over two to three to four weeks, and expect them to have more energy and to be able to keep up with more current work as weeks pass
- ◆ Do not expect the student to struggle in every single academic class. The brain may not be taxed at all by art class or history, but it may be taxed by calculus and computers. Allow academic supports in the classes where the brain energy is struggling (as manifested by symptoms) but keep the student progressing typically in classes where the brain energy seems high.

