

Sitting Smart



*S*it up tall

*L*ean forward

*A*ctivate your thinking

*N*ote key ideas

*T*rack the talker

USING THE "SITTING SMART" OR SLANT* APPROACH

The SLANT* strategy is useful to use with all students, but it works especially well for students with ADD or ADHD. The one word SLANT* instantly gets the reaction from a student that the teacher is looking for without the constant nagging and unresponsiveness.

In the SLANT* strategy, the S stands for "Sit up straight or tall", the L stands for "Lean forward", the A stands for "Activate your thinking", the N stands for "Note important information or key ideas" (for littler ones, "Nod and smile" works better), the T stands for "Track the talker".

So to teach this strategy you would want to place posters of it around in the room to remind the students and also take the time to go over the strategy in detail with them. Preferably, at the beginning of the year, the first day works beautifully, however, you could start it any time. When you teach the strategy, go over one letter at a time, model what you are talking about, and then have the students practice each aspect. Get the students buy in by telling them that you are going to teach them a strategy that will help them learn better.

The SLANT* posters should be similar to the following example. Of course, pictures make it so much more visual! You can even put note cards with the SLANT* strategy taped on their desks. Whenever they look down at their desk, they will be reminded of what they should do.

S - Sit up tall
L - Lean forward
A - Activate your thinking
N - Note key ideas
T - Track the talker

So once you have the buy in and explain the strategy, model and practice by saying the S stands for "Sit up straight", so everyone please sit up straight. The L stands for "Lean forward" so everyone please lean forward in their chairs. The A stands for "Activate your thinking" so everyone turn on their thinking caps. The N stands for "Note key ideas" so everyone knows we are talking about SLANT* right now. The T stands for "Track the talker" so everyone look straight at whoever has the floor and is talking right now. Bring some fun in it with "Track the talker". Walk around the room, stand in the back, even get under a desk, and have the students track you and your words wherever you move about.

The beauty of this strategy is that when the students aren't paying attention, or

listening or taking notes, instead of constantly saying pay attention, or sit up, or stop talking out, you can just say "SLANT*" or "Everyone needs to SLANT*" and they will immediately know what you mean. Others who come into your room will be truly amazed to see this strategy in action. When your students are "SLANT*ing" they are truly primed and ready for fully engaging in the learning process.

Every time I have used or seen an acronym method used in any subject matter, the results were phenomenal when compared to just trying to retain or memorize. For example, when I was in college learning the ins and outs of electronics, we had to learn the color code for resistors. This color code was stamped on the resistor and indicated what its resistance was. There were no other markings, so it was imperative you knew the color code.

The colors went in this order, black, brown, red, orange, yellow, blue, violet, green, white. If you mis-read a resistor size, then your whole circuit could blow up in your face. Talk about a pressure cooker! The teacher taught us a little saying to remember the colors and the order they came in. It went like this... Blackie Brown Romances Our Young Girls Behind Victory Garden Walls. Each first letter corresponds to the color and order of the resistor color code. Blackie Brown was to help you remember that the black came first and then the brown. To this day, I can still remember the resistor color codes, but only when I repeat the saying and match up the letters.

Whether it is the SLANT* strategy or the one I learned in college to remember resistor color codes, the outcome is always the same. Increased learning, increased knowledge, and increased retention. Try using the SLANT* strategy yourself and see how it works. You can even try making up and using different acronyms to apply to your own situations, I bet you will see the similar results to what I have had the opportunity to witness and experience.

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