Strategies for Learning and Teaching

- Develop empathy with the student and understand that you are not the cause of defiance, but rather an outlet for it.
- It is important to remain objective when interacting with the student.
- Identify skills or attributes that you can reinforce.
- Remain positive; give praise and positive reinforcement when the student demonstrates flexibility and/or co-operation.
- Be approachable and act as a positive role model.
- Display classroom rules and a daily schedule so the student knows what to expect. Add visual cues to the rules to provide for students who may have literacy difficulties. Prioritising rules for the student is also useful.
- Consistency of application of agreed rules by all stakeholders in the school is needed with students with CD. Rules need to be realistic, specific, consistent and proactive.
- Differentiate learning and teaching.
- Programmes that deal with anger management and foster emotional intelligence may be effective.
- It is important to work in partnership with parents and/or carers.
- Put a reward system in place where the student values the outcome.
- Set targets for behaviour and learning that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and within a timescale (SMART).
- Create workstations where the student can listen to his/her choice of music for example and work independently. Earphones with controlled volume can be used to avoid disruption to the rest of the class.
- Peer mentoring with other students may be effective, particularly for organisational purposes.
- Devise an exit strategy (e.g. provide the student with a red card to display if he/she needs a time out).
- Build relationships with other students through Circle Time activities, Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), drama, role play and peer mediation.
- Remember rewards work better than sanctions.
- Implement a behaviour contract with the student and ask for the student’s help in improving matters.
- Minimise distractions.
- Minimise transitions and where transitions are necessary ensure they are clearly signalled. Consider the use of a song, a sound, a gesture or an object.
- Try to establish if there are triggers for the student’s behaviour through recording the antecedents (what happened before the problem behaviour), the behaviour itself and the consequences (what happened after the behaviour). This is often referred to as establishing the ABC’s.
- Give the student additional responsibilities. Begin by getting the student used to carrying out small and reasonable requests.
- Provide the student with a choice of outcomes where possible.
Allow the student to help others in his/her areas of strength.
Develop a self-esteem programme and explicitly teach social skills.
Seat the student near a good role model.
Reward short periods of success.
Reward effort as much as achievement.
Break tasks into small manageable chunks for the student.
Agree methods by which the student can engage your attention.
Allocate clear roles when organising group work.
Focus on the incident not the student and focus on as few as possible behaviours at a time. Decide what behaviour you will ignore and what you will not accept. Clearly communicate the consequences for the behaviours you will not accept.
Avoid raising your voice or exhibiting any emotion. Be neutral and speak calmly, saying something similar to ‘As you broke this rule this is what you will have to do’. Be like a referee, who simply states the consequence and holds the player accountable.
Try not to allow the student an opportunity to argue.
For students who have difficulties with change consider the use of a visual timetable/schedule. This may have sequential pictures/photographs of the activities/lessons for the day. Examples of visual timetables/schedules are presented here.

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