

Strategy Chart

Find what you are seeing on the left. Work across.

What you are seeing	What is likely underneath	What you do in session	What goes home
Cannot get started; avoids, delays, freezes	Task feels unbounded. Fear of doing it badly. Executive function load.	Pick one: Pomodoro at 12 minutes, the five-minute rule, or an implementation intention. Write the cue, action, and place together.	A timer. One written if-then sentence taped where the cue happens.
Reads it but retains nothing	Passive re-reading. No retrieval. Possibly no prior framework to attach to.	Teach the pre-reading pass — title, structure, summary, graphics, finger skim. Then retrieval: close the book, write what you recall.	The six-step pre-reading sequence on a card. One self-test before the next session.
Crams the night before	No spacing. Belief that one long session equals study.	Four short sessions across four days rather than one long one. Show the difference rather than asserting it.	A four-box weekly grid. Revisit older material briefly each time.
"I am bad at math"	Low self-efficacy. Math anxiety consuming working memory.	Body math first — establish existing competence before any content. Then treat the anxiety as anxiety.	Family notices daily-life math the client already does well.
Panics in tests but knows the material	Test anxiety. Working memory taken by threat monitoring.	Separate "do you know this" from "can you show it under these conditions." Regulation, then graded rehearsal under test-like conditions.	Practice under timed conditions once regulation is established.
Cannot sit still to study	Movement need. Seated study is the wrong container, not the wrong student.	Standing, walking, balance surface. Card sorts on the floor. Explain material aloud while pacing.	Cards, floor space, permission to move.
Notes are a wall of words	Single-channel encoding. No structure visible.	Rebuild as a graphic organizer — client chooses the shape and builds it. Color, symbols, small drawings.	Colored pens. One organizer rebuilt from memory before next session.
Overwhelmed by a whole course	No plan. One explanation that is not landing.	Build a learning plan: second textbook, a video instructor who suits them, a targeted playlist for pre-study and review.	The playlist, saved. Opened full screen, not searched.
Tired, foggy, cannot concentrate	Sleep, circadian timing, or blood sugar — before any study-skill issue.	Check the foundation before teaching technique. Morning light and sleep timing first; refer where indicated.	One change only — usually a consistent wake time or morning light.
Does the work but grades do not move	Effort aimed at the wrong target. Studying by re-reading.	Switch the effort to retrieval and spacing. Track the behavior, not the grade.	Success chart with three behavioral indicators.
Sensory overload in the learning setting	One channel is costly or unreliable. Adding stimulation will make it worse.	Reduce rather than enrich. Eyes following along with audio, or reorganize into a chart. Quieter setting.	Headphones, a quieter space, material supplied in advance.
Behind before the lesson starts	Arrives at new material with no prior familiarity.	Pursue preview access to the curriculum — two weeks ahead — documented in a 504 Plan or IEP.	Materials supplied ahead. Ten-minute preview before each class.

Teach one strategy at a time. A client who leaves with a single technique they will use is ahead of one who leaves with a list.