

Epilepsy-typical areas of impact on learning

memory and processing

- difficulty in remembering verbal instructions/information delivered verbally revision
- difficulty in remembering facts/formulae, concepts
- forgetting what he has said
- difficulty in retrieving information/concepts from long-term memory
- may forget homework/equipment
- cannot copy from the board/take notes from speech
- difficulty may impact on the acquisition of literacy and/or numeracy skills.
- May lose concentration
- cannot process large amounts of verbal or written information
- may 'get lost' during verbal explanation
- may have problems with sequencing (alphabet, timestables) and may get lost
- during sequential task (solving problems in maths and following stages in science experiments for example)
- slow speed of working (reading, writing and practical tasks)
- may have difficulty in planning and structuring work
- may have problems with organisation (work, equipment, self)

language and communication

- speech may be delayed
- speech may be blurred
- student may be unable to communicate (for example during a partial complex seizure)
- may have difficulty in following conversations difficulty in processing verbal information problems with word retrieval (cannot 'find' words that he wishes to use which disrupts the flow of speech and sometimes thought, has words on tip of his tongue')

motor skills

- may affect handwriting
- may impact on fine motor skills-drawing, painting, modelling, sewing some medications can cause a tremor which will affect motor skills

All of the above may be sporadic or permanent depending on cause. many students can have good and bad days (or part of the day) which can be frustrating for them and there teachers.

teacher/tutor checklist for students with epilepsy

Questions for parents/carers and students

- Type(s) of seizures
- what is actually seen – duration
recovery time
how will you know recovery has occurred?
Behaviour (and changes)
other indications.
- Seizure frequency
- any pattern
- any trigger
- any aura or warning sign – visual, auditory or olfactory disturbances
'strange' sensations in stomach
feeling energetic or excited
'drifting'
- medication- changes/side effects
- first aid needs

Educational issues-key focuses

- access to all areas of the curriculum including school trips, p.e. Science, design and technology
- access to all social activities
- process and monitoring
- disclosure to teachers/tutors, other staff and peers

possible impacts on learning

- decrease/increase in legibility of writing
- decrease/increase in work rate
- changes in concentration/awareness
- changes in fine/gross motor control
- errors made in mid-section of repetitive work
- errors made in sequences of answers (oral or written)
- changes in mood/attitude on a regular/cyclical basis
- improvement in work after eating
- atypical profiles in test battery results (e.g. WI SC or other psychological test)
- lapses in memory/long term memory difficulties
- slow speed of processing information
- erratic punctuality
- depression
- under-achievement and resultant frustration
- fears for future (social and employment)