Internal and External Factors that Influence Availability to Learn

A student’s availability to learn changes moment by moment based on the balance between what is happening inside him and what is happening outside him.

Factors

External factors:
- Lighting (location and type)
- Background noise
- Smells
- The number of people and their movement around the student
- Tactual input
- Physical supports, positioning, or equipment

Internal factors:
- How the student feels physically and emotionally
- Medical conditions
- Illness or pain
- Impact of medications
- Amount of sleep the night before
- Impact of visual, auditory, and tactile abilities on learning
- Sensory processing or sensory
- Integration difficulties
Supportive strategies to promote availability to learn:

- Use the student’s preferences (likes and dislikes)
- Use the student’s strongest sensory channels
- Give him time to process information
- Provide opportunities for him to participate in activities
- Help her anticipate what is going to happen
- Provide information at a pace she can handle
- Follow the student’s lead
- Acknowledge his communication attempts using imitation