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Communicating Effective Teaching Strategies to ADHD Students

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Abstract

ADHD, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, is a neurological disorder that is presently sweeping the country. School age children are heavily affected by this condition. The disorder has a number of side effects that are known to alter one's quality of life. Some of the known effects are as follows: lack of attention span, nervousness, emotionally unbalanced, and a host of many others. Due to the many drawbacks associated with the disorder, many educators are finding it to be extremely difficult to meet the needs of this population. However, the key to meeting the needs of ADHD students lie within the boundaries of effective teaching strategies, along with effective communication strategies, between educators, ADHD students, as well as parents. In an effort to join forces, change is definitely possible.

Introduction

ADHD, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, is classified as a mental condition that affects one's ability to focus and stay on task. The condition is quite prevalent within the United States (Jitendra, 2007); therefore, educators, in some cases, are finding it quite difficult to meet the needs of this population (Vereb, 2004). In other words, what are the most effective communication strategies, in relation to teaching that will best serve the needs of ADHD students? In essence, students tend to perform better when they are in a stable, comfortable environment (DuPal, 2007). Therefore, as a starting point, the surrounding environment must be one that is pleasant and inviting (Peck, 2005). Indeed, the presence of a solid foundation could possibly lead to endless opportunities (Heiman, 2003). With that being said, what methods of communication stand to, outright, serve the needs of ADHD students? Furthermore, as a means to bridge the gap within the communication process between educators and students, as well as parents, what are the best interactive measures, possible, that would stand to benefit the majority of ADHD students? The purpose of this paper is to explore various academic based teaching strategies as well as behavioral based teaching strategies. The combination of both methods will in fact, increase the likelihood of overall student success. As well, the paper will address effective communication strategies between educators, ADHD students, and parents that are necessary to promote learning. Lastly, this information would be conveyed in a workshop that I am purposing to educators, ADHD students, and parents.

Literature Review

Effective Academic Based Teaching Strategies

Academic based teaching strategies are educational based tools designed to enhance the quality of education for special needs students. Since that ADHD students fall within this

spectrum, these resources are designed to meet the needs of struggling ADHD students (Davis, 2004). In particular, educators within this sector are extremely skilled and they strive to incorporate various styles of teaching, which are all geared toward increasing one's knowledge (Martin, 2005). Furthermore, these tools are to be implemented within structured settings to increase the likelihood of student success (Schultz, 2009). For instance, verbal prompts are methods of communication that allow educators the opportunity to reinforce a set of given instructions. Children who suffer from ADHD are often easily distracted (Davis, 2004), which causes them to become instantly annoyed. As a result, conflicts do transpire within the class setting. Regardless of the fact, if distractions occur, educators often use verbal prompts as a measure to regain a sense of control within the given setting (DuPaul, 2007).

According to recent statistics, verbal prompts are most effective when they are communicated in a calm, pleasant, and upbeat manner (Peck, 2005). To further explain, if students suddenly become agitated and lose their sense of self control, the educator would provide a series of verbal prompts to get students back on track. However, if students are not aroused by the educator's initial attempt, then the educator would more than likely implement additional verbal prompts (Jitendra, 2007). For instance, the educator might suggest to students to move their seats to a different location within the classroom to provide them with a change of scenery. The overall objective is to provide students with a series of positive verbal prompts, which will assist in the reinforcement of a designated task. In most cases, children, suffering from ADHD are more responsive to verbal prompts when the commands are stated in a firm, repetitive manner (Heiman, 2003). Therefore, in cases similar to the above scenarios, it is imperative to address the needs of children appropriately (Martin, 2005), being that the needs of each student is simply different from the next. On that note, this point of reference would be

heavily stressed in the workshop that I am purposing, which would address educators, ADHD students, and parents.

One-on-one assistance is a method of communication that is highly utilized by educators as a means to offer support to struggling ADHD students (DuPal, 2007). Current statistics tell us that students diagnosed with ADHD tend to struggle, academically, far more than mainstream students (Schultz, 2009). As a result, various educators have adapted to the concept of offering additional resources, as a means to bridge the gap between struggling students versus exceptional students.

Martin's study (2005) suggests if ADHD students are experiencing difficulty in a given subject, the educator would take it upon herself to guide the student, as needed. Often times, special needs students struggle, academically, so much so that they are provided with one-on-one assistance. Strategies to combat the short attention span include explaining assignments, speaking clearly, and speaking systematically to enhance student comprehension of the educator's material (Pliszka, 2007). After the fact, the educator would review the noted material with students encouraging them to bring forward concerns or questions before allowing them to work on their own. Indeed, the communication methods listed above are designed to assist in building a heighten level of confidence, increasing the chances of student success. ADHD students can be challenging to work with; therefore, the concept of patience would be stressed within the workshop setting that I am proposing to educators, ADHD students, and parents.

Specifically, the concept known as modifications are strategies utilized by educators that act as guides, in the teaching process for ADHD students. Educators may adjust assignment requirements if they see their students are struggling with assignment lengths. ADHD students are better able to focus for a shorter span of time rather than a longer span of time ("Helping the

student with ADHD in the classroom, 1998”). The Gureasko study (2007) reinforces the point by mentioning that this measure will lessen the possibility of frustration that may arise due to becoming overwhelmed.

Research suggests ADHD students benefit from assignment modifications. The Jacobson study (2010) expands on a widely used modification, “shortening the intended lesson,” in which it found that struggling ADHD students perform better due to the use of modifications. The act itself, allows ADHD students the opportunity to relax, take their time, and maintain a sense of focus. In doing so, students would stand a greater chance of completing assignments as oppose to experiencing a sense of anxiety along the way (Dawson, 2007).

The Nadeem study (2009) expands on the usefulness of modifications, in relation to the completion of group work or special projects. For instance, if ADHD students are asked to work in group settings with their classmates and they refuse to do so, an educator may take students to the side and display a sense of concern in relation to the matter. All the while, the educator would possibly convey to students the importance of group involvement and social interaction. Also, it would be important to stress the impact of the assignment which could affect their overall grade point averages. However, if for some reason students fail to adhere to the initial demands, the educator could take it upon herself to offer an alternative to assist in meeting the needs of students.

To enhance skills within the school setting, the article, “Helping the Student with ADHD” (1998) expands on the many benefits of encouraging modifications to be implemented within the home setting. ADHD students often struggle when interacting with others. This is a widespread concern that often affects one’s ability to advance academically. Therefore, if students are having a hard time fitting into a group setting within the classroom because they feel

awkward or out of place, ADHD students could model various behaviors in the home setting which could provide a sense of structure and balance. Furthermore, students could transfer learned skills into the school setting (Sheridan, 2009). Overall, the intended outcome would be centered on the students' ability to work within a given setting as well as to develop a sense of security and competence. This factor constitutes whether or not a student is on the road to success or failure (Martin, 2005). In order to expand on the importance of modifications, the workshop setting that I am purposing would emphasize to educators, ADHD students, and parents, how one's ability to interact with others, plays a major role on their ability to succeed.

Equally important, according to the Volpe study (2009) educators have been known to incorporate games into the curriculum to promote learning. ADHD students often isolate themselves from others, which hinders the learning process. To counteract such circumstances, while promoting learning and social interaction, educators may utilize fun activities to spark an initial interest in students and thereafter encourage students even more so by providing verbal praise. To be specific, an educator may design a lesson, incorporating a student's ability to listen, comprehend, and work in a group setting. Team building exercises are utilized by educators as a resourceful tool (Volpe, 2006). Within a team building exercise, an educator may instruct a group of classmates to work together to solve a problem. In other words, the educator would provide a step-by-step process as to how each team should carry out a specific task. Therefore, the educator would verbally instruct groups as to how they should conduct and or maneuver themselves. In doing so, teams would be formed, allowing students the opportunity to work effectively. The entire process allows each student to build their verbal, listening, comprehension, and social skills. In fact, these concepts will all be stressed within the workshop setting that I am purposing to educators, ADHD students, and parents alike. Learning should be

fun as well as informative (Jitendra, 2007), which is a reference that would be brought into the public view as well.

In addition, the Dawson study (2007) expands on the effectiveness of exposing ADHD students to an active classroom setting. Educators often strive to incorporate active educational activities as a means to encourage students to become more involved. To emphasize, if the educator is focusing on a Language Arts activity, she may instruct students to read an article or a short story in a group setting. Then, the educator would prompt students to participate in a group discussion, by asking the entire class a series of questions. Various questions that may spark an interest may include: Where is the story taking place?; Who are the main characters within the story?; What is the main idea of the story? While taking this approach, the educator is allowing each student to actively participate, within the class setting. Also, educators often utilize hands-on projects as measures to spark various interests in ADHD students. In particular, if an educator is providing instruction within an art setting, she would encourage students to be creative. To incorporate personal involvement with students, the educator could prompt them to paint a personal portrait of themselves. The educator would work side-by-side with students as they develop their work, encouraging class participation. The Schultz study (2009) clearly defines this measure as a therapeutic tool, highly effective in the instruction process for ADHD students. Surely, this exercise allows students to reflect on their work, while interacting with others around them. Overall, the educator could take this opportunity to utilize verbal praise, as a means to encourage students. As well, the workshop that I am proposing will be geared toward educators, ADHD students, and parents and would explore the many benefits of verbal praise. This tactic is widely utilized within active classrooms settings across the country, as a token to inspire learning (DuPal, 2007).

To add, it is a well known fact that the use of color in the classroom acts as a stimulant that prompts learning (*Quantum learning for teachers*, 2008). To point out, the use of color activates the brain which leads to an enhanced way of thinking (Ellis, 2005). Due to these statistics, educators across the country have adopted these practices as a valuable strategy when seeking to enhance ADHD students (Zentall, 2005). In utilizing this method of teaching, many educators use colored markers when providing instruction. To explain, if an educator were to create a timeline to explain a segment in history class, the educator would design a colorful graph to depict the significance between each period. In doing so, the use of color would allow each student to see the drastic differences between each span of time. In an effort to explain this strategy further, the workshop setting that I am purposing would focus on various ways to utilize color in the classroom. Educators, ADHD students, and parents would be informed of the basic processes taking place within the brain that are stimulated due to the use of color. In addition, the overall benefits of color would be conveyed as well.

In a like manner, according to the source, *Quatum Learning for Teachers* (2008) the incorporation of music in the classroom can be resourceful as a foundation to prompt learning. The concept of music can be utilized in a number of ways to enhance the learning process for ADHD students. For example, music can be used as a signal to start or stop a designated assignment. Therefore, as an indicator, the educator would convey to a group of students the assignment at hand and thereafter present the parameters. Students would start working as soon as the music starts and would stop working as soon as the music ends. This process allows students to brainstorm about certain concepts for a certain time span and then a break would be provided, which would allow students to reflect on their work.

Music can be a motivating factor for struggling ADHD students, those who lack confidence and a sense of security (Hannaford, 2005). In this manner, music can be used as a therapeutic tool to arouse one's mind. Therefore, if students are instructed to work on a designated project and they are in need of a motivating force, music can actually act as a vehicle to excite one's thoughts. A high pitched, upbeat rhythm would be beneficial to arouse the senses of the group. This type of stimulation is commonly used among educators today and is classified as highly effective (*Quantum learning for teachers*, 2008).

As well, music can also be incorporated as a calming mechanism. If students have lost their sense of focus, music could be used to encourage students to relax. A soft, subtle melody could be used to calm the atmosphere, allowing students to prepare for any upcoming activities. The concept of music would allow the educator to bring forth a change within the environment, by arousing students in a pleasant manner as oppose to taking a harsh approach. To inspire the use of music within the classroom, the workshop setting that I am purposing would focus on the various types of music that are appropriate for school aged children, along with emphasis of how music can be incorporated into particular lessons. Educators, ADHD students, and parents would be granted an opportunity to become enlightened about this subject matter.

whole group, small group, side by side approach. Another helpful strategy, designed to assist in the process of drawing ADHD students into an intended lesson is coined, the whole group, small group, side-by-side approach (Allen, 2009). The strategy is broken into three different segments and each component plays a vital role in connecting with the others. For instance, the first segment, whole group, is designed to provide instructions to the entire group. The educator would prompt the entire group to participate. The second segment, small group, provides the educator the opportunity to reinforce the lesson, by breaking students into a group

setting. This process allows students the opportunity to advance their thoughts, due to the discussion that would take place within the group setting. Lastly, the educator would provide a side-by-side approach, allowing students to work on their own to complete an individual assignment. At that point, the educator would assist students with individual questions, by using a side-by-side approach. During this time frame the educator would provide feedback, on a one-on-one basis. The entire process provides ADHD students with the structure needed to increase their listening, reading, and comprehension skills. In fact, most ADHD students tend to suffer, academically, due to a lack of enhanced skills (Zentall, 2005). Furthermore, ADHD students often struggle with being able to relate to various subject matters; therefore, they often lose interest and begin to stray from the intended lesson. As a result, students often become bored or begin to day dream. As a means to meet their needs, the above concept is highly recommended by professionals across the country (*Quantum learning for teachers*, 2008).

The concept termed as whole group is a strategy in which the educator seeks the attention of the entire group. Specifically, the educator would seek to engage the group in small talk first as a measure to gain the group's attention. For example, if the educator is focusing on teaching Literacy, the educator may prompt the group to openly discuss the topic at hand before actually diving into the lesson. This process allows students to connect to the content, indirectly. In doing so, the educator may ask the group a series of questions, relevant to the subject matter. Overall, the process provides students with the opportunity to grasp the intended idea.

After exposing ADHD students to the subject matter, the intended lesson would be presented to the group. Therefore, after becoming familiar with the topic, the educator would instruct the group to take turns reading out loud, as a means to build listening skills. All the while, the educator may convey to students to highlight any sections that are of importance,

along the way. In fact, studies have shown, this style of teaching is quite beneficial, which leads to long term growth and development (Winebrenner, 2003).

Secondly, the concept small group is a teaching method that encourages educators to break ADHD students into small groups, to discuss a lesson at hand (Allen, 2009). To explain, the concept small group, enables ADHD students to engage in group discussions, relevant to the original lesson that was presented. While doing so, students are prompted to examine the topic from different angles. For instance, students may question the topic further, in search of truth and understanding. A question that may surface could be: Why did the author use certain terms in the text to convey his/her thoughts? Another question may reference the following: Why did the author describe the characters in such a fashion? These and other questions may be brought to the forefront, in order to connect with the storyline. In this fashion, students are able to work together, collectively.

Small group could act as a networking system that allows ADHD students to become more in touch with their emotions. As noted in the Jitendra study (2007) students tend to express themselves far more with their peers than they do with her teachers. Peer involvement is a necessary factor that allows the learning process to flow at ease. To illustrate further, educators often utilize this element of structure to encourage students to become in touch with their inner feelings. To prompt learning, the educator may encourage students to openly discuss their feelings about the subject matter. Students could take the discussion further to incorporate the following: how the story made them feel, how they felt about the characters, as well as how they felt about the behaviors of the characters. Again, this method of instruction allows students to connect with the subject matter to reinforce the concept of learning.

In addition, small group provides ADHD students with the opportunity to determine the important elements within the text. On one hand, students could pull information from one another to allow them to sort the facts from the text versus the interesting details. Certainly, the story may incorporate important dates or historical facts, relevant to the subject matter. Consequently, students are more likely to make solid connections when working within a group setting as oppose to working by themselves (Taylor, 2004).

The side-by-side concept provides ADHD students the opportunity to return to their assigned seats, away from the group setting (Allen, 2009). Students would begin to reconnect with all of their thoughts, feelings, reactions, and beliefs. Students would begin to assess their findings by reconnecting with their thoughts. Valid connections from the text, along with findings from the group setting would be analyzed. This phase would allow students to think independently while searching for answers. Indeed, the aspect is quite different from the first two phases because there is no social interaction taking place between students. However, educators would make themselves available to students, prompting them with small talk. To better direct students, educators would ask students a series of questions: Are you struggling with the content?; Do you need me to clarify any parts of the lesson? Educators would seize the opportunity to connect with students during this time frame. This is a vital factor, being that most ADHD students lack communication skills (Kern, 2007). In an effort to connect with students, many educators find this source to be valuable as a continued attempt to inspire learning (Davis, 2004).

Throughout the side-by-side approach, educators would be extremely attentive towards the needs of those who may be experiencing a delay of some sort. However, to eliminate any unwanted stressors or nervousness, educators would circle the room in an orderly fashion,

focusing on students who appear to be in need. In an attempt to create a comfort zone, educators would provide students with a space cushion to enable them to feel totally at ease. Subsequently, this strategy would be sending positive messages to the group. Ultimately, the one true goal would be to connect with students effectively. On that same note, the importance of each phase would thereafter be conveyed to educators, ADHD students, and parents, within the workshop setting that I am purposing. Attendees would be informed that the technique is widely used throughout the country and is deemed as a highly effective strategy that generally enhances the learning process (Allen, 2009). To add, the use of the technique along with examples for each phase would be provided to clarify the differences between each approach.

Movement is classified as an “essential element to learning and to the manifestation of life itself” (Hannaford, 2005, p. 107). Above all, movement is a process that takes shape long before birth occurs. For instance, an unborn child is subjected to movement on a daily basis, such as: the mother’s breathing patterns as well as her heart rhythm. In other words, movement is a part of daily life. Likewise, movement is tied to smell, sound, touch, and taste. Movement is a major component, which allows ADHD students to manipulate the world around them. In essence, movement is a process that shapes one’s visions and their overall perceptions of the world. The act of movement anchors thought, which is why it is an important element to incorporate when providing instructions to ADHD students. Surely, the benefits of movement are endless. The process allows ADHD students to incorporate a sense of learning, while remaining in an inviting atmosphere.

Early on, the learning process of many ADHD students may have been hindered. These factors could be related to a combination of physical and/or environmental factors. As a result, these circumstances may have interrupted the learning process which may have led to learning

deficiencies. In order to bridge the gap in the learning process, it is suggested that the use of movement be made available to ADHD students in the classroom setting. In fact, this tool has been proven to produce outstanding results (Hannaford, 2005). Furthermore, as noted in the text, *Smart Moves* (2005) the incorporation of movement does not have to be structured in a sophisticated manner. In truth, activities that are often simple can still be quite effective, such as: “stretching, walking, dancing, skipping, hopping, twirling, Tai Chi, Yoga, and even rough and tumble play appears to contribute to the minor adjustments necessary to enable the system to proceed with the learning process” (Hannaford, 2005, p. 123). For this reason, students are at an extreme advantage when they are exposed to physical exercises. Thus, educators can implement these measures in a number of ways all throughout the day to assist in stimulating the mind as well as the body. For instance, in between each subject educators could instruct students to stand up and move around. Students could jog in place, stretch from side to side, hop in a circle, twirl their arms and walk around the room. The educator would communicate these strategies to students as a measure to enhance their educational experience.

Movement is a vital factor in relation to learning and understanding. As the body is in motion the mind is stimulated. Thereafter, the process of absorbing new information is possible. According to *Quantum Learning for Teachers* (2008) movement is a highly recommended teaching strategy for ADHD students. Educators have found it to be useful to utilize movement in the form of physical activities. ADHD students stand to benefit, tremendously, by remaining physically and mentally active all throughout the course of the day.

The use of movement stimulates the brain which increases the likelihood of learning readiness. As the mind and body join forces, they begin to work together as a team. In order for ADHD students to remain open-minded and active, there is a need for educators to continue to

manipulate the surrounding environment. Surely, the integration of movement decreases the likelihood of failure (Hannaford, 2005). The process can be tedious, but the long-term outcome would be rewarding. Movement would be stressed within the workshop that I am proposing to educators, ADHD students, and parents. An overview of the endless rewards associated with this concept would be explained. As well, the speaker would model various physical techniques to provide clarity and an in-depth perspective of the topic itself.

The teaching strategies above are all designed to meet the needs of ADHD students, but four strategies in particular, truly stand out, which are: modifications, one-on-one assistance, verbal prompts, and conveying clear, precise instructions. These strategies outweigh the others in a number of ways. For example, it is essential to adjust assignments to offer extra support and to provide structure and balance (Marin, 2005). Without the use of this set foundation, it would be nearly impossible to implement the other suggested strategies (Jun, 2009). Again, these factors would be stressed within the workshop setting that I am proposing.

Above all, the number one objective is to enhance the lives of students (Power, 2009). In carrying out such an enormous role, educators are often faced with the task of conveying clear, precise instructions to students. While seeking to fulfill such a big task, the challenge starts with the ability to communicate. Educators have often found it to be helpful to repeat a set of given instructions to a group as a means of reinforcement (Gureaske, 2007). For example, exercising the ability to follow simple classroom rules can often pose challenges for ADHD students (Jacobson, 2010). In this case, repeating the classroom rule list several times, throughout the course of the day could act as a measure of reinforcement. As well, the very same tactic could be used to reexplain an assignment. For instance, if the educator is instructing a group of ADHD students in the science lab, she may utilize this measure more than once as a means to reinforce

each step. The process itself may be painstaking, but the outcome has the potential to yield great results (Peck, 2005).

As indicated, ADHD students are often confronted with various obstacles that interfere with the learning process. In any case, students who are afforded the proper education are more likely to excel. The benefits of quality educators, alongside special needs students are endless. To add, academic based teaching strategies, geared toward the needs of ADHD students will increase the likelihood of student success. Furthermore, the workshop setting that I am purposing would provide various resources for educators, ADHD students, and parents. As a result, the above parties would be better informed about present teaching strategies that are highly recommended by professionals today.

Effective Behavioral Based Teaching Strategies

In a like manner, behavioral based teaching strategies are designed as well to meet the needs of struggling ADHD students. However, the measure of intervention is centered on various notable behaviors that are displayed often, which prevent students from functioning within the classroom setting. As discussed in the Findling study (2008) disruptive students, those who choose to purposefully act out, to avoid completing assignments are quite challenging for educators. In this case, as an effort to create more of a relaxed and comfortable setting, educators would assess the needs of certain students to make note of various behavioral patterns. After the fact, educators would be better able to assist students. In particular, short breaks in between class assignments would allow students an opportunity to release any built up tension. In this case educators could inform students that if they finish an intended assignment, they could take a few minutes to relax. This method provides students with a positive outlet, which may ultimately lead to less severe behavioral concerns. Certainly, these concerns would be addressed

within the workshop setting that I am purposing. Educators, ADHD students, and parents would become openly aware of some of the reasons behind disruptive behaviors in the class setting and alternative methods to counteract such behaviors would be addressed as well.

In addition, defiant behaviors are also a major concern that many educators are confronted with. The Jun study (2009) discusses circumstances relevant to ADHD students, who often lack the ability to listen and follow instructions. These behaviors often lead to chaos, a reflection of disrespect and a total disregard for authority. In an effort to reduce the tension, behavioral teaching strategies serve as useful measures. For instance, if there are students that are unwilling to lower their voices, other students may not be able to handle this situation. To rectify the issue, the educator would more than likely attempt to calm the atmosphere by speaking to the disruptive students in a mild and respectable manner. The educator would seek to assess the situation by prompting students, stating: "Can you please lower your voices and have a seat?" In the meantime, if the disruptive students remain in the exact same state for an extended period of time the teacher may suggest to the other students to pick up their work materials and move to a different location within the building, until the situation subsides (DuPaul, 2007). By utilizing this tactic, the educator is providing an outlet for the remaining students instead of subjecting them to a chaotic situation, which may eventually spiral out of control. In other words, to avoid the possibility of additional behaviors, the educator would usher her students out of the noted setting into a calm atmosphere. Likewise, within the workshop that I am purposing, this strategy would be brought to the attention of educators, ADHD students, and parents as an illustration of how to defuse defiant behaviors within the classroom setting. Of course, members would have the option to ask questions and receive feedback.

Educators often find themselves shortening quizzes as well as tests because ADHD students often struggle with the ability to sit still for periods of time (DuPaul, 2007). Quizzes and tests generally require a great deal of time which often poses a huge concern for a large number of ADHD students (Vereb, 2004). In an effort to lessen the probability of behaviors, educators often find comfort by communicating to students that if issues arise various accommodations can be provided. To discuss further, if students are displaying signs that they are having a difficult time completing a test, the educator may suggest to students to relax and breathe easy. However, if the concern continues, the educator may intervene a second time. If students are struggling to understand the material, the educator may ask these students if they need additional assistance. As well, the educator could reexplain the test requirements to students in an effort to put them back on track. Again, this step-by-step process would be thoroughly explained to educators, ADHD students, and parents within the workshop that I am purposing as a means to stress the importance that ADHD students should always seek out positive options as oppose to negative ones when they are confronted with frustrating circumstances.

Similarly, if students are displaying signs that they are unable to focus when completing a quiz or test, the educator may suggest to students to take a short “time out” to regain a sense of self control. Thereafter, the educator may prompt students to take their quizzes verbally as oppose to a written format. The educator would be put in a position to verbally interact with students, by reading select questions to them and prompting them to respond, accordingly. To add, the educator may utilize a second option by reading select questions to students, prompting them to record their answers.

By the same token, if students are displaying difficulty because they are in need of additional time to complete an assigned quiz or test, the educator would consult with students to identify any underlying factors. For example, the educator may ask students, “Is there a certain spot in the room where you would be more comfortable, when taking quizzes or tests?” Also, concerns may surface, such as: “Are there any distractions taking place around you that can be promptly removed?” After assessing the situation, the educator would move toward various alternatives to meet the needs of the students. Perhaps on quiz and test days the educator would relocate students to a different location. Certainly, if needed, the educator may opt to revise or shorten the quiz or test or simply provide students additional time to complete the task. Regardless of the option, the main focus would be on students. Surely, the educator’s main objective is to communicate effective strategies that would serve to benefit students. The workshop setting that I am purposing would also emphasize to educators, ADHD students, and parents the relevance of assessing student concerns to rectify any existing problems up front.

As well, a broadly used teaching strategy of great significance for ADHD students is centered on the knowledge of being victorious as oppose to being a victim (*Quantum learning for teachers*, 2008). The consequences of one’s actions are solely based on choice; therefore, educators often find it helpful to implement behavioral teaching strategies designed to heighten one’s self esteem. Specifically, educators find it to be of importance to focus on creating social settings to intensify one’s thinking patterns, in relation to making wise choices, taking responsibility for one’s actions, and ultimately, taking ownership of one’s life. While conveying positive messages to students, the overall objective is to prevent students from falling into a state of self pity. The ultimate goal is to encourage students to take full rein over their state of being instead of feeding into negative factors. This point of reference is “key” in relation to managing

behavioral concerns, which would be expressed as well within the workshop that I am proposing to educators, ADHD students, and parents. In fact, students are more prone to obtain success if they have developed a high sense of self-esteem and have learned to maintain a sense of self control (Martin, 2005).

The above behavioral options are all essential when seeking to meet the needs of ADHD students. However, the foundation of behavioral based teaching strategies are mainly centered on the following aspects: the educator's ability to remain calm, the need for the educator to convey firm directions to students, the need for the educator to allow students to maintain a sense of personal space, during confrontational episodes, and lastly, the need for educators to seize the opportunity to incorporate teachable moments to aid in building each student's self-confidence. One's self esteem is a key component that would be spotlighted within the workshop that I am purposing to educators, ADHD students, as well as parents. This aspect is quite significant because students tend to show drastic improvements when they have a positive self-image (Zentall, 2005).

To reiterate, behavioral based teaching strategies are teaching methods designed to assist in the learning process. ADHD students tend to exemplify behavioral concerns while in the classroom setting which is why it is imperative to incorporate measures of intervention (Winebrenner, 2003). While doing so, educators are generally able to build a solid rapport with students to promote growth and continuous development. As well, the need to incorporate behavioral based teaching strategies on a daily basis is indeed a vital factor. To heighten the potential success rate of ADHD students, these strategies are deemed as true necessities (Kern, 2007). To add, ADHD students respond well to structure (DuPal, 2007); therefore, the lack of structure within the educational setting would lessen the student success rate (Heiman, 2003).

Behavioral based teaching strategies would benefit educators, ADHD students, and parents and this point of reference would be stressed within the workshop I am purposing.

Effective Communication Strategies

Comparatively, in addition to effective teaching strategies, effective communication strategies are imperative as well, in relation to educators, ADHD students, and parental relationships. In order to bridge the gap between the school setting and the home setting, an open line of communication is an essential component. Educators should always convey clear concerns to students as well as parents (Eccles, 1993). As well, educators should always communicate in a manner to inspire feedback from students and parents, whenever concerns arise (Graham, 2005). However, in spite of this factor, educators often experience difficulty when seeking to reach out to families, whose children suffer from ADHD (Dawson, 2007). Often times, family members are too embarrassed to ask questions or they have become overwhelmed by their child's overall condition. Despite any underlying factors, the reality remains, the level of communication between educators, ADHD students, and parents must remain open in order to set the stage for student success.

Due to such widespread concerns, there are educators who seek to connect to the families of their students, quite often, depending upon behavioral concerns (Miretzky, 2004). While putting forth the effort to connect with the family, educators generally exercise a great deal of caution. Parents can be quite sensitive when it comes to the care of their children (Knight, 2007). As well, educators tend to find it helpful to not only connect with the families of their students, when they are acting out, but also, they find it to be a quite beneficial to connect with their students when they are behaving properly as well (DuPaul, 2007). In this case, this allows the educator an opportunity to convey positive thoughts to the parents, in hopes to build a stronger

rapport. To clarify, this tactic would be utilized as a measure to keep the line of communication open, which sets the foundation for a continuous dialogue to take place between educators, ADHD students, and parents. While implementing this tactic, the objective is for parents to feel at ease, comfortable enough to address concerns when needed. Even more so, ADHD students would benefit from educators because there would be a continuous effort in place that would act as a guide for students. Furthermore, in the workshop setting that I am purposing, educators, ADHD students, and parents would be enlightened about the importance of bridging the gap between educators, students, and parents. As well, the importance of maintaining an active relationship would be thoroughly explained as a vital concept that would stand to increase the likelihood of student success (Vereb, 2004).

Additionally, due to such widespread use of technology, along with demanding work schedules, many educators make use of email (see Appendix, page 33). Educators and parents would benefit from this method of communication if they work long or awkward hours (Bloch, 2002). In this manner, educators and parents could take it upon themselves to address concerns according to their personal schedules as oppose to taking time out of their day, which may not be convenient for them. Of course, one should keep in mind that the use of email is an official document; therefore, it is of importance to avoid the revelation of detailed information, instead, it would be in the educator's best interest to just state the main concern (Bloch, 2002). The reasoning behind this concern is that it is better to aire on the side of caution than to be too explicit. The majority of educators totally agree with this tactic because it is better to refrain from providing too much information via email; such as, making detailed statements or insinuating judgments without providing a thorough explanation in person (Martin, 2005). Therefore, email is a great source of communication between parties, but should be utilized

sparingly (Bloch, 2002). Within the workshop setting that I am purposing, the importance of email would be expressed, but emphasis would be place on the importance of confidentiality, where vital information should remain undisclosed, until a face to face meeting can be arranged.

Equally important, the concept of sending home daily and weekly reports (see Appendix, page 34-36) serve to benefit educators, ADHD students, and parents as well (Miretzy, 2004). To clarify, a daily or weekly report would be an overview of concerns relevant to one's behaviors and work related issues. For instance, if John's parents were to receive a daily or weekly report, they would be able to better assess any areas of concern. Again, this measure would allow the educator to communicate with the parents, which would ultimately affect John's needs. Daily and weekly reports are simply alternative methods of communication. These reports would provide a detailed account, upfront, if for some reason parents were unable to access their emails on a consistent basis. Therefore, the workshop that I am purposing would stress the importance of daily and weekly reports, as an option that is widely used by educators today to assist in serving the needs of ADHD students (Davis, 2004).

As well, the tactic of utilizing an open door policy to promote an open line of communication could also be utilized as an option to serve the needs of ADHD students (Graham, 2005). To point out, parents would have the option to visit the classroom setting throughout the course of the day. At that point, parents would be granted the option to either interact within the classroom or simply sit on the sideline as an observer. For example, due to the past history of John, his parents may have grown overly concerned. Due to these circumstances John's parents may desire to visit his classroom without any prior notice. In doing so, the observation (see Appendix, page 37) itself could possibly promote an improvement in John's overall behavior (Vereb, 2004). Surely, the act could stimulate John to want to improve.

Equally important, this method allows the educator to once again make contact with the parents, and those concerns would thereafter be conveyed to the student. In the long run, John would benefit from these interactions. Current studies do show that ADHD students whose parents maintain an active relationship with educators, tend to excel more so than those who are not exposed to the very same resources (Graham, 2005). Also, as a means to address educators, ADHD students, and parents, the importance of communication would be discussed within the workshop that I am purposing. Emphasis would be placed on the value of constant parental involvement, in relation to the success rate of ADHD students.

Lastly, due to the overwhelming demands placed upon parents they often find it difficult to relate to educators (Eccles, 1993). In this case, parent/teacher conferences (see Appendix, page 38) would provide endless opportunities for educators, parents, and ADHD students. These prearranged meetings could provide further insight into teacher/parental concerns. Teachers could provide a detailed list of concerns to parents, along with a plan of action to aid in preventing future issues. In addition, a portfolio could be presented to parents as a display of their child's current efforts. The educator would continue to assess the situation by evaluating the various triggers that may very well set the behaviors in motion. In conjunction with these efforts, the educator may advise the parents to seek out additional services, such as consulting with a local social service agency that could possibly provide referrals for a host of other services. Above all, these techniques would assist in the communication process, between the educator, the parents, and the student. To add, the workshop that I am purposing would incorporate a list of objectives that would serve to meet the needs of ADHD students, in relation to the benefits of parent/teacher conferences. A point of reference would be incorporated as well, indicating that a majority of educator/parental relationships are strained due to the many

affects that students are confronted with (Hoover, 2001). Overall, the workshop would stress that parent/teacher conferences provide the structure needed to aid in long term student success (Davis, 2004).

As shown above, the techniques mentioned are all geared toward enhancing the mode of communication. However, in spite of the strategies mentioned, the key factor is centered on educators and their ability to create a comfort zone with parents to inspire them to express their concerns honestly and openly (Graham, 2005). Certainly, in order to incorporate any of these strategies on a consistent basis, parents must be willing participants. Indeed, the success rate of ADHD students depend heavily on the educator, parent, student relationship (Heiman, 2003). To illustrate further, ADHD students are more likely to excel, academically, if the proper support systems are in place (Sheridan, 2009). Therefore, in order to bridge the gap between educators, ADHD students, and parents, the use of interactive measures are imperative. To include, the useful communication strategies discussed in this segment would be tied to the workshop that I am purposing, by informing educators, ADHD students, and parents of the benefits of each strategy and details would be provided to incorporate more insight as to why these strategies are of great significance. As well, various resources would be provided to the audience as a means of keep them well-informed, in connection to current and future findings on ADHD.

Conclusion

In any event, educators often find it difficult, when working with ADHD students. However, in spite of the many challenges, the need to incorporate effective teaching strategies, along with interactive measures, to enhance the communication process between educators, ADHD students, and parents, are all vital factors that will stand to benefit ADHD students (*Quantum learning for teachers*, 2008). In particular, some of the most successful teaching

strategies, when working with ADHD students seek to allow students to express themselves in a creative manner, but must also be structured activities that promote learning as well as social involvement (“Helping the Student with ADHD,” 1998). The process of incorporating an open line of communication between educators, ADHD students, and parents, play a vital role in the achievement process as well. Ultimately, the exposure to effective teaching strategies, along with effective communication strategies will determine whether or not ADHD students will in fact defeat the existing odds that they are faced with (Jitendra, 2007). As an added extension, the workshop model that I am purposing would provide an overview of each teaching strategy, along with various behavioral strategies. As well, a listing of communication factors between educators, ADHD students, and parents would be brought to the forefront too. Emphasis would be stressed to imply that these components are all essential elements that are needed to ensure a heightened student success rate. In reality, without the proper components in place, ADHD students are more likely to fail than to succeed (Martin, 2005).

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Appendix**Effective Communication Examples and Resources**

Page 36	Communication Strategy/Email Example
Page 37-39	Communication Strategy/Daily/Weekly Report Example
Page 40	Communication Strategy/Class Observation Example
Page 41	Communication Strategy/Parent/Teacher Conference Example
Page 42	ADHD Related Websites

Communication Strategy

Email Example

Hello Mr. and Mrs. Doe:

Jamie has been experiencing various noticeable behaviors since the start of the school year and I would like to speak with the both of you, in hopes to rectify those issues. Please feel free to contact me by phone, Monday thru Friday, between 3-4 p.m. I am looking forward to speaking with you both. Please enjoy your day.

Sincerely,

Mrs. X

***A follow up phone call should be made to Jamie's parents, if they do not respond to the above email within 24 hours.**

Communication Strategy

Weekly Report Example

Student: John Doe

Monday

Behaviors: acting out; not listening/following directions; was not able to stay on task

Tuesday

Behaviors: was unable to stay on task for periods of time

Wednesday

Behaviors: was able to complete assignments, by use of verbal praise; major improvement displayed (work and behavioral related)

Thursday

Behaviors: completed all assignments, by means of redirection; was able to listen and stay on task, for the majority of the day

Friday

Behaviors: great day; completed all assignments, independently; was able to participate in a fun activity

***Behaviors should be communicated by phone, initially, at the start of the week, and once again, as an update, at the end of the week.**

Communication Strategy

Daily Report Example

Student: Jamie Doe

Monday

Behaviors: refused to listen and follow instructions; yelling in class

Interventions Used: phone call home; sent to time out; sent to the social worker for counseling

Tuesday

Behaviors: unable to focus and stay on task; heated encounters with staff and students

Interventions Used: phone call home; time out; extra time given to calm down; one on one assistance

Wednesday

Behaviors: struggling to keep up with work related demands; disrespectful to staff; throwing spit balls; mocking students

Interventions Used: phone call home; sent to time out; one-on-one assistance; sent to the social worker for counseling

Thursday

Behaviors: talking back to staff; poking fun at other students; disregarding staff; refusing to complete work

Interventions Used: phone call home; sent to time out; extra time given to calm down; one on one assistance; removal from the room to a different setting

Friday

Behaviors: verbal/physical aggression toward staff and students; refusing to complete assignments; attempting to spit at classmates; refusing to listen/follow directions

Interventions Used: phone call home; sent to time out; sent to the social worker for counseling; removal from the room into a different setting; phone call home, a second time; student received an early dismissal, due to extensive behaviors displayed

***The above concerns should be noted and sent home for review, on a daily basis, but should also be communicated, verbally, by phone as well.**

Communication Strategy

Class Observation Example

Student: John Doe

Noted Behaviors:

***John's parents would make note of any behaviors, witnessed, throughout the course of the observation and would later relay those concerns to John's teacher.**

Communication Strategy

Parent/Teacher Conference Example

Student: Jamie Doe

Detailed Concerns: acting out; being disrespectful towards staff and students; inability to focus and stay on task; exercising physical aggression

Plan of Action:

1st Attempt: verbal warning

2nd Attempt: redirect the student

3rd Attempt: phone call home

4th Attempt: allow additional time to get back on task

5th Attempt: seek out assistance from the school's social worker

6th Attempt: follow up phone call home

7th Attempt: advise parents to seek out additional resources from the school's social worker, such as: counseling services and recreation services

***The educator would discuss the above concerns with the parents, at the time of the conference.**

ADHD Related Websites**Resources**

www.add.org

www.chadd.org

www.newideas.net

www.PediatricNeurology.com

www.ADDvance.com

www.ADDchoices.com

www.ADHDnews.com

www.helpforADD.com

www.ADDresource.com

www.mentalhealth.com

www.add.about.com

www.oneaddplace.com

www.edutechsbs.com/adhd

www.adhd.com

www.schwablearning.org

Workshop Schedule

Planned Events:

Location: Governors State University
1 University Parkway
University Park, IL

Date: 6/1/2012

Time: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Title: ADHD: Communicating Effective Teaching Strategies to ADHD Students

Agenda

Segment 1 9 a.m. - 12 p.m Academic Based Teaching Strategies

Lunch 12 p.m. - 1 p.m.

Segment 2 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. Behavioral Based Teaching Strategies

Segment 3 3 p.m. - 4 p.m. Effective Communication Strategies

Segment 4 4 p.m - 5 p.m. ADHD Resources

ADHD

Communicating Effective Teaching
Strategies to ADHD Students

Preview Questions

- Please refer to handout #1 for further instructions

What is ADHD?

- Neurological disorder
- Affects on school age children
- Related symptoms
- Quality of life
- Defeating the odds

Academic Based Concerns

Segment 1

Academic Based Concerns

- Easily distracted
- Nervousness
- Poor listening skills
- Poor comprehension skills

Academic Based Concerns

- Poor time management skills
- Poor communication skills
- Lack of confidence

Academic Based Teaching Strategies

Segment 1

Academic Based Teaching Strategies

- Verbal prompts
- One-on-one assistance
- Modifications
- Incorporating games
- Creating an active classroom setting

Academic Based Teaching Strategies

- Incorporating the use of color
- Incorporate music
- Whole group, small group, side-by-side approach
- Movement
- Communicating effectively

Spotlight

Segment 1

Academic Based Teaching Strategies

Spotlight

- Modifications
- One-on-one assistance
- Verbal prompts
- Precise instructions

Think Tank

- Please refer to handout #2 for further instructions

Whole Group, Small Group, Side by Side Approach

Segment 1

See Handout #7

Behavioral Based Concerns

Segment 2

Behavioral Based Concerns

- Disruptive behaviors
- Defiant behaviors
- Inability to sit still
- Unable to focus
- Frustration
- Negative thinking patterns

Behavioral Based Teaching Strategies

Segment 2

Behavioral Based Teaching Strategies

- Short breaks
- Calming the environment
- Isolation
- Shortening assignments
- Providing support

Behavioral Based Teaching Strategies

- Time out
- Alternative testing methods
- Investigate underlying factors
- Taking ownership

Spotlight

Segment 2

Behavioral Based Teaching Strategies

Spotlight

- Calm atmosphere
- Firm directions
- Personal space
- Teachable moments
- Solid rapport
- Consistency

Think Tank

- Please refer to handout #3 for further instructions

Communication Based Concerns

Segment 3

Communication Based Concerns

- Embarrassment
- Sensitivity
- Strong rapport
- Irregular contact
- Confidentiality
- Prompting parental involvement

Communication Based Strategies

Segment 3

Communication Based Strategies

- Connecting to families
- Use of email
- Daily reports
- Weekly reports
- Open door policy
- Parent/teacher conferences

Spotlight

Segment 3

Communication Based Strategies

Spotlight

- Comfort zone
- Willing participants
- Overall relationship
- Interactive measures

Think Tank

- Please refer to handout # 4 for further instructions

ADHD Resources

Segment 4

Current Findings

www.add.org

- Awareness
- Resources and support
- Conferences
- Current events

www.add.org

- Legislative action
- Webinars
- Scholarship programs
- Memberships

www.chadd.org

- About CHADD
- Understanding ADHD
- Training
- Resources

www.chadd.org

- Magazine archives
- ADHD medication shortages
- Online family training
- Support groups

www.newideas.net

- Statistics
- Treatments
- Alternative measures
- Diagnoses
- Articles

www.newideas.net

- Articles
- Neurology reports
- Medical advances

www.pediatricneurology.com

- Referrals
- Helpful literature sources
- Learning disabilities
- Stress reduction
- Lectures
- Developmental resources

www.addvance.com

- Answer friendly
- Center for girls and women
- Informational links
- ADD multimedia library
- Advocacy organizations
- Upcoming events

www.adhdnews.com

- Information site
- Specialists
- Natural medicines
- Brain games
- Current treatments
- Message boards

Additional Resources

- www.helpforADD.com
- www.ADDresource.com
- www.mentalhealth.com
- www.add.about.com

Additional Resources

- www.oneaddplace.com
- www.edutechsbs.com/adhd
- www.adhd.com
- www.schwablearning.org

Think Tank

- Please refer to handout #5 for further instructions

Final Project

- Please refer to handout #6 for further instructions

Conclusion

- In order to defeat the odds, ADHD students need to be exposed to effective teaching strategies, along with effective communication strategies. In reality, without the proper components in place, ADHD students are more likely to fail than to succeed (Martin, 2005).

Handout #1 Previewing the Topic

Name:

Date:

Lesson Objective: To become familiar with the subject matter, as a means to connect with the topic at hand. Two preview questions will be asked, initially, as a measure to evoke the thought process. Students will raise their hands, when asked, and an open discussion will follow.

Preview Questions:

Name some common stigmas associated with the disorder, ADHD?

Have you or any of your family members or friends ever been impacted by any stigmas associated with the disorder, ADHD? If so, how did you or your family members or friends react to the situation. Please explain.

Handout #2 Problem Solving Activity

Name:

Date:

Lesson Objective: The lesson is designed to increase one's awareness of existing academic based teaching strategies. Students will join forces, in groups, in order to identify with the circumstances at hand and thereafter, each group will address the needs of the mock student, by use of a plan of action. Each group will present their results in class.

Scenario:

James arrives to school, late, daily. He tends to have a hard time falling into the routine of **completing work, somewhat, due in part to his tardiness. However, James' listening skills are** compromised as well and often times he is unable to follow along, when the directions are given. Within your group setting, discuss the various academic based teaching strategies that would best **serve James' needs. Discuss your thoughts in detail.**

Handout #3 Role Playing Activity

Name:

Date:

Lesson Objective: Students will be required to interact in a role playing scene, which will allow them to receive first hand knowledge, as to how situations often spiral out of control, but educators have to maintain a sense of focus, even in the midst of chaos.

Scenario: The entire class, with the exception of four students will be working on a brain teasing puzzle, which requires a great deal of skill and concentration. Two students will be given the role to act as though they are irate. Apparently, the students do not want to work together in a group setting and a heated argument has resulted. The following two students will play the role of educators. These two students will be required to make attempts to difuse the situation, by using behavioral based strategies. All the while, the remaining students, will seek to remain focused, even in the midst of chaos. After the fact, a group discussion will take place, as means to disucss the matter, openly, in search of what strategies were effective as oppose to those that were not.

Handout #4 Building Communication Skills

Name:

Date:

Lesson Objective: The exercise is designed to allow each student to become better in touch with their inner self, which in turn would prompt students to become enlightened and to also look outward as well. In other words, the exercise is designed to prompt students to search within, but would also prompt them to express themselves, as to the needs that they may be lacking or needs that they are in search of. This project is designed to build one's overall communication skills, with the intent to make them better communicators

Directions: Each student will create a project referred to as an "I" statement. Each student will receive a cardboard cut out of the letter "I." After the fact, each student will search through magazines and will cut out pictures and will glue them onto the cardboard, that are self reflections of their personalities. After the fact, each student will provide a 3 minute presentation on their collage, referencng the pictures they chose and why. This project will allow students to openly communicate, which will build one's communication skills.

Handout #5 Web Based Summary

Name:

Date:

Lesson Objective: The lesson is designed for students to search throughout the many web based sites and locate information that they were unaware of. After the fact, students would write a one page summary about the new facts that they discovered. The lesson would allow students the opportunity to navigate throughout the different sites, which would be helpful for future purposes.

Directions: After reviewing the sites listed, write a one page summary about the topic of discussion that was most interesting to you.

Handout #6 Final Project

Name:

Date:

Lesson Objective: Create a lesson plan utilizing a series of academic and behavioral based concepts. The lesson plan must state an objective or a purpose statement. In addition, the lesson plan must be written in a systematic fashion, indicating the time of day and the intended concept due to take place during that block of time. The lesson plan must start at 8 a.m. and end at 3 p.m. Please indicate the following subjects within the lesson: Language Arts, Literacy, Math, Spelling, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, Art, and Music. Please provide a detailed description of the events to take place, within each block of time. Furthermore, discuss any methods of intervention that would take place, if behaviors occur. Lastly, the lesson plan should be typed, 12 point font, double spaced, with 1 inch margins. Please feel free to choose the font style of your choice.

Handout #7 Whole Group, Small Group, Side-by-Side Instructional Exercise

Name:

Date:

Lesson Objective: The educator would model the teaching approach to give students a better understanding of this style of teaching. Students would interact accordingly.

Lesson Details:

Phase #1 The educator would prompt students with preview questions as an entire group and the main topic would be introduced.

Phase #2 Students would be broken into groups for further discussion.

Phase #3 Students would be prompted to work alone, on an individual assignment. The educator would provide one-on-one assistance.