

Classroom Management and the ADHD Student 1

Classroom Management and the ADHD Student

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Abstract

Meeting the academic needs of a student with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) can be taxing on teachers and students. This research highlights classroom management strategies that general education teachers might include in their teaching to support the academic growth students with ADHD, while continuing to support all students in the class.

Classroom teachers and a resource teacher were interviewed to discuss their beliefs and strategies on dealing with students with ADHD. Results indicated that it is important for teachers to have strategies that address the unique learning needs of this population. Adult attitudes and approach to this situation is important. Adults had to think about the student with ADHD and remind themselves that this population learns differently. The research highlights the importance of adapting the classroom management strategies in place without compromising the education of others.

## Chapter One Introduction

How teachers handle classroom management in their class can impact the school year. Classroom management sets the tone from the moment the student walks through the classroom door.

As a new teacher I want to have all the necessary tools and strategies in place when faced with the challenge of a student with ADHD. ADHD is a condition that is characterized by hyperactivity, with inability to concentrate and a tendency toward impulsive or inappropriate behavior. This research documents strategies that support the academic growth of the student with ADHD. The inspiration behind this research was generated from an experienced teacher feels the need for an enhanced understanding of how to support the academic growth of a student with ADHD through classroom management strategies.

Increasing numbers of children are being diagnosed with ADHD. The U. S Center for Disease Control stated that 7.8 percent of U.S Children from ages 4-17 are diagnosed with ADHD and that in turn means many teachers will have a least a few students with ADHD in every class taught (Brown, 2007). The intention of this research is to share strategies that are effective with students with ADHD.

### Statement of Problem

Meeting the academic needs of a student with ADHD in a regular classroom setting is challenging for any teacher. While adapting classroom management strategies some teachers find that the results of the adaptations impact the academic growth of other student in their classes.

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There are many questions facing teachers today on how to manage students who have been diagnosed with ADHD. How do teachers handle the students who are always fidgeting in their seat? How do teachers deal with children who are constantly playing with items on their desk and what can teachers do to focus students on their schoolwork? How do teachers prevent students with ADHD from continuously calling out all the time? These are some of the questions facing teachers today with the increase of students being diagnosed with ADHD.

### Purpose

The purpose of this research is to document the effects that classroom management strategies have on the academic growth of a student with ADHD. What are some of the strategies that teachers can incorporate in teaching to better support the academic growth of a student with ADHD, while continuing to teach all the students in the class? How can teachers adapt their current classroom management strategies to support the academic needs of the students with ADHD while continuing to address the academic needs of the other students in the classroom?

### Research Question

What classroom management strategies help a teacher meet the academic needs of the ADHD student while not impacting the rest of the class? Classroom management includes methods and strategies to maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to the student's success and academic learning (McCreary, 2010). By establishing certain practice teachers may promote appropriate behaviors in students. Establishing respect between students and teachers is important.

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Teachers want to have in place on the first day of school a classroom management system that insures the classroom will run smoothly. It is important that students diagnosed with ADHD are in a structured environment, that the teachers keep their classroom management strategies and adapted those strategies to meet the needs of the ADHD students. If teachers have one system in place for the class and another for the students with ADHD, this could be confusing to the students.

### Theoretical Rationale

According to Mastropiere and Scruggs (2000) teachers need a plan for managing classroom behavior. Behavioral Intervention is the term given to a set of strategies that use the principles of consistent behavior management. Student behaviors are first analyzed with respect to antecedent and consequent events. Strategies are implemented systematically based on that analysis. These authors further describe Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions that use the same principles of behavioral intervention but in addition, add a self-instruction and self-monitoring component to the intervention.

### Assumptions

It is my assumption that when teachers open their doors on the first day of school, they have in place effective classroom management system. Regular classroom teachers need to be able to adapt classroom management strategies to meet the needs of all students, including those students with ADHD. When adapting the strategies to meet the needs of the students with ADHD the teacher needs not negatively impact the needs of the rest of the class.

## Background and Need

In the United States more and more children are being diagnosed yearly with ADHD. The impact of children being diagnosed with ADHD means that many teachers face the challenges of teaching at least one student with ADHD each year. Learning how to work with students with a diagnosis of ADHD can prove to be challenging. A child with ADHD can affect the learning environment in a classroom by causing frequent distractions and exhibiting disrupting behavior that will impact teachers and other students. Due to the increase in children that are being diagnosed with ADHD, teachers need to increase their classroom management strategies to better support the academic growth of these students, while not impacting the rest of the class (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006).

## Chapter Two Review of the Literature

### Historical Context

The first mention of ADHD was in a poem by Heinrich Hoffman in 1865 when he wrote about “fidgety Philip as one who won’t sit still, wriggles, giggles, swing backward and forwards, tilts up his chair growing rude and wild” (Myttas, 2001, p.1).

In 1902 an English pediatrician named George Still first describe what has become know as ADHD. He defined 20 to 43 children as being defiant, resistant to discipline, exceeding emotional and passionate. These children showed signs of having a serious issue with attention and were unable to learn in school. Many of the determining characteristics founded by Still and Tredgold are consider valid today (Myttas, 2001).

In 1917-1918 an encephalitis epidemic had occurred. Following this event ADHD was referred to as “post encephalitic behavior disorder”. Many of the children who survived this epidemic showed symptoms that today are considered as part of diagnoses of ADHD (Turner & Walls, 1998).

ADHD has been reclassified over its history. In the 1950s children who showed signs of ADHD were diagnosed as having “hyperkinetic impulse disorder.” The definition of hyperkinetic impulse disorder is hyperactivity as a brain damage syndrome. In 1960 Chess classified ADHD as “Hyperactive Child Syndrome” and defined activity as an essential component and “the concept of a syndrome of hyperactivity was separated from that of a brain damage syndrome” (Turner & Walls, 1998, p. 2).

In 1980 the DSM-II first established ADHD as Hyperkinetic Reaction of Childhood disorder. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is defined as “developmentally inappropriate

degree of inattention, impulsiveness and hyperactivity that is evident in the home, school and social situations varying with the degree of demand on the child and external controls and reinforcements” (Dossetor, 2007, p.1).

ADHD is the most common diagnosed behavioral disorder in children. There is a higher ratio of boys to girls who have been diagnosed with this disorder. ADHD knows no boundaries as it occurs in all cultures, but with the most cases diagnosed in the Western cultures. There are 9.5 million adults that have been diagnosed with ADHD (Turner & Walls, 1998).

On November 29, 1975 Public Law 94-142 Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975 was passed which insured that all “handicapped children have available to them, within the time period specified in section 612 (2) (B) a free appropriate public education which emphasizes special education and related service designed to meet their unique needs, to assure that the rights of handicapped children and their parents are protected, to assist States and localities to provide for the education of all handicapped children and to assess and assure the effectiveness of efforts to educate handicapped children”(Ventura County, 1975 p.2). This law assures that all children with ADHD will receive a free public education despite being diagnosed with this disorder and that the school will make accommodations to meet the academic needs of these students.

“In 1991 the Department of Education issued a policy regarding students who have been diagnosed with ADHD that state that a “school must provide appropriate educational service to students who have been identified as having ADHD” (Kidsource, 2009, para 4). This policy was intended to clarify what the state and local responsibilities are under the current federal law to assure that the educational needs of these children are met. Meeting the needs of students with ADHD rest with the entire educational system. The Department of Education, by issuing this

policy, is insuring that the academic needs of these children will be met either through general or special education programs.

There are two Federal laws in place to assure that a child with ADHD receives an appropriate public education; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which provides coverage for students who have been diagnosed with ADHD. If ADHD affects a student's educational performance, then the course of action would be to look at special education services as needed. But if the student is not affected academically, but shows signs that this disorder has an impact in school, then the course of action would to develop a plan consistent with Section 504 (Kidsource, 2009).

#### Review of the Previous Literature

##### *Theme One: Understanding ADHD*

Reif (2005) highlights key aspects surrounding the challenges for students with either ADD or ADHD. The book provides a complete overview of information regarding a student who has been diagnosed with either ADD or ADHD, which includes strategies for the child at school and home.

##### Strengths and Weakness

The strengths of the book are that it provides key background information for understanding ADD/ADHD and managing the challenging behaviors of a student with this disorder. Included in the book are instructional and academic strategies, which include strategies for classroom management.

### Methodology, Participants, Strategies and Theoretical Rationale

The author provides guidance on how all participants involved can be engaged in the positive education of children who have been diagnosed with either ADD or ADHD. The section on classroom management provides information on how to practice positive classroom management and discipline practices.

### How the Research Relates

There is a detailed description on key information regarding what ADD/ADHD is and how challenging this can prove for the student and teacher. The author also includes stories about adults who have been diagnosed with ADHD after completing their formal education and how this lack of diagnoses impacted their education.

### *Theme Two: Behaviors and Challenges of a Student with ADHD*

#### Summary

Glass (2000) addresses the views of twenty-five teachers concerning their perceptions of students that have been diagnosed with ADHD. Glass also shares the information about how a child that has been diagnosed with ADHD is not held accountable in academic areas by the parents.

#### Strengths and Weakness

Many teachers in the study do not see that ADHD is both a behavior and educational issue. A classroom is where the behavior is the most noticeable and that some teachers see this as only a behavioral issue rather than an educational issue.

### Methodology, Participants, Strategies and Theoretical Rationale

Glass addresses twenty-five teachers who share their views on students that have been diagnosed with ADHD. Glass includes teacher opinions on intervention and how this related to classroom management.

### How the Research Relates

This research provides insight into the feelings and views of teachers regarding ADHD. The focus of the article is how the behavior of a child with ADHD can affect the classroom and the other students.

### Summary

Gardill's (1996) research offers ideas for teachers who feel overwhelmed and frustrated while teaching. The author presents strategies to help teachers deal with the challenging behavior of a student who has been diagnosed with ADHD.

### Strengths and Weakness

Presented within the article are new strategies for dealing with students with ADHD. The research includes how to arrange the classroom, establish a routine and structure in the daily schedule. The research explains how it is important for teachers to vary their presentation of the material. Teachers are prompted to give the student feedback and make academic tasks brief. There are also examples of how to use both varying verbal cues and peer tutoring to support students.

### Methodology, Participants, Strategies and Theoretical Rationale

The author describes in detail the issues that surround the behavior of a student with ADHD and how this behavior affects other students in the classroom. The author identifies several behavioral strategies as beneficial for the academic growth of the student with ADHD. The article also covers cognitive-behavioral interventions with the use of self-evaluation, self-monitoring strategies, self-reinforcement strategies and creating goals for the student with ADHD.

### How the Research Relates

This article provides different strategies to be used in the classroom by teachers to ensure the academic growth of a student with ADHD. The strategies cover antecedent manipulations, consequent manipulations, and cognitive-behavioral interventions. One of the highlights of the article was the different reward system to reinforce positive behavior, which included a reinforcement system for the whole class.

### Article Summary

Brand and Greb (2002) describe the different learning styles of students with ADHD. The author presents a description of the different kinds of behaviors a student might exhibit and how these behaviors might affect a student with ADHD.

### Strengths and Weakness

The authors present two research studies that identify the different learning styles of students, but only included one student of elementary age. This study does provide background

information on the students. Within the content of the article are some ideas on how to manage students with ADHD.

#### Methodology, Participants, Strategies and Theoretical Rationale

The authors presented two research studies identifying the different learning styles of students with ADHD. This study showed the differences in the learning style of students based on gender and how this can affect how the student learns.

#### How the Research Relates

The author identifies different learning styles of ADHD students and strategies on how to manage these students in the classroom based on the student's learning style. The study also isolated differential behavior between boys and girls. This provided different insight on how to deal with students with ADHD.

#### *Theme 3: Strategies*

#### Article Summary

Reis (2002) in this article relate the ways that teachers can use strategies to meet the academic needs of students with ADD/ADHD. This article has to do with the issue of how ADHD can affect the attention level of the student.

### Strengths and Weakness

The author shares current research finding regarding six classroom management strategies. Incorporated in the article are the six strategies for a student who has been given a diagnosed with ADD or ADHD. Examples are described as to how a teacher can implement these strategies into the daily routine in the classroom to support the issue surrounding the attention of a student with a diagnosis of ADD/ADHD.

### Methodology, Participants, Strategies and Theoretical Rationale

The author describes each of the strategies in terms of how to implement them into the classroom. Included in the research are six strategies for students with ADD/ADHD. The six strategies are: increase the role of positive reinforcements, how to bridge previously taught concepts to the new concepts taught, to provide students the opportunity to apply the concepts learned, to incorporate various cueing systems, to use contingency-based self-management techniques, and to use self-monitoring of attention to increase on-task behaviors.

### How the Research Relates

This article covers the issue of the attention level of a student who has been diagnosed with ADHD. All the strategies found came as the results of a field study by the author.

### Administrative Records

When teaching students with special needs such as ADHD, teachers are required by the state to teach to the standards and to assess their students to see if they have meet the required state standards. Students with special needs are assessed in the same traditional manner as students in a general education classroom. The Department of Education Special Needs Division

has provided a toolkit that provides information and guidelines on teaching students with special needs (California Department of Education, 2005).

With the passages of No Child Left Behind Act (CDE, 2005) and Reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act (CDE, 2005) there is an increase in the awareness of accountability and data driven instruction of all students. Teachers who are teaching students with special needs use assessment to identify both the progress a student is making in meeting the state standards and to assess the current needs of the student with special needs. With NCLB and IDEA students with special needs are being held to the same standards as students in the general education classroom. Along with the students being assessed based on the standards, teachers are being held accountable for making sure that these students are meeting the standards or making progress towards meeting the state standards (CDE, 2005).

Schools that have in place a system for mainstreaming special needs students into the general classroom, along with having high expectations of these students, have shown to be most effective in teaching special needs students. Students who have been mainstreamed into the general education classroom are required to have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that is designed to reflect the student's participation and progress in meeting the state standard and progress in the general education classroom. The goals of the IEP are put in place to support the student in acquiring the skills and competencies that will facilitate the student's involvement in the general education classroom (CDE, 2005).

Determining the goals of an IEP is based on the statewide assessment that each student with special needs is required to meet. Teachers need to understand the importance of the link between curriculum and assessment with students with special needs. The team that sets up the IEP for the student must first determine what statewide assessment the students will be

participating in. Students who have special needs are still required to take part in the STAR testing (CDE, 2005). These toolkits provided by the Department of Special Education break down information on standards, assessments, standard-based IEPs, mastery teaching and learning and activities. Toolkits provide assistance to teachers with standard-based instruction and developing IEP for students with special needs.

### Special Collection

There are many issues facing both parents and teachers of students with special needs and one of those is the lack of support for these students. The Marin Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) is organization set up to support the needs of special needs students in Marin County. The policies that the Marin SELPA has put in place are to support local school districts in providing free appropriate public education for special needs students. (LaLonde, 2010)

The mission statement for Marin SELPA is: “The Marin SELPA will ensure appropriate programs for individuals with exceptional needs through strong, effective leadership and support to local school districts, families and agencies within Marin County. The SELPA believes that all students will contributing members of their community and will complete their education career prepared for adult life.” (La Londe, 2010, p.6) The Marin Special Education Local Plan assist as many as 3,000 plus special education students from the time of birth unit the age of 21. All nineteen school districts in Marin County are part of the Marin SELPA and the Marin County office of Education is the administrator of this organization. The Marin SELPA is responsible for providing staff development and is able to assist the staff in all aspects of special education.

The Marin SELPA also provides trainings yearly for staff and parents. Some of the training involve how to develop a successful behavior plans, how to plan for an IEP meeting and

the Customer is always Right-Parent Revocation. There are also workshops for both parents and teachers one this past October had to do with ADD/ADHD: Evidence Based Instruction. This workshop covered how ADD/ADHD behavior is different from normal behavior, covered the latest brain research regarding ADD/ADHD, understanding the issues surrounding medication and how both parents and teachers can create a positive learning environment.

One section of the Marin SELPA handbooks concerns the safeguards that must be in place for a student that has been referred for special education. The handbook provides a break down on how parents can prepare for an IEP meeting, gives examples of IEP team meeting agendas, IEP team meeting agenda annual review meeting and legal aspects of an IEP. There is a section on how to write goals for your child and 20 tips to make sure that your child's school district is in compliance with the IEP.

The Marin SELPA and the handbook are both a wonderful and supportive resource for both parents and teachers. Any parent who has had their child referred to special education could use this handbook as a means to guide them through the process of learning the ins and outs of special education and making sure that their child's needs are met in the appropriate manner to support their academic growth. This handbook is also a wonderful resource for all teachers.

#### Statistics

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention 4.5 million children have been diagnosed with ADHD since 2006. The children range in age between 5-17 years of age. More boys than girls have been diagnosed with ADHD with boys at 11 percent and girls at 4 percent. (CDCP, 2006)

From the years 1997 to 2006 the percent of children being diagnosed with ADHD has slowly increased with children between the ages of 6-17. The average increase yearly was three percent from 1997-2006. (CDCP, 2006)

Birth weight can be a factor in a child's diagnoses of ADHD. Children with a low birth weight are diagnosed at 11.7 percent while; children with a higher birth weight are diagnosed at 8.8 percent. (CDCP, 2006)

Children who are raised in a family where the average income is less than \$20,000 a year, are twice as likely to be diagnosed with ADHD than is a child who is raised in a family where the income is \$75,000 or more a year. Another factor regarding ADHD is the health of a child. Children who are either in fair or poor health are three times as likely to be diagnosed with ADHD than children in good health. Nineteen percent of boys and seven percent of girls in fair or poor health are diagnosed with ADHD (CDCP, 2006).

Race and ethnicity are a factor in the diagnoses of ADHD. Children who are Non-Hispanic white are diagnosed with ADHD at 9.8 percent. Children who are Non-Hispanic black are the next highest group with an 8.6 percent of being diagnosed with ADHD. Children who are Hispanic are diagnosed at a percent of 5.3. The statistics show that children who speak primarily English are more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD (CDCP, 2006).

The state with the highest percent of children diagnosed with ADHD is Alabama with 11.9 children being diagnosed with ADHD. The lowest is Colorado with 4.95 percent of children being diagnosed with ADHD. In the state of California 5.34 percent of children have been diagnosed with ADHD. Nationwide the percentage of children being diagnosed with ADHD is 7.74 (CDCP, 2006).

### Interview with an Expert

I met with the Special Education Coordinator in a small school district within an urban community on March 29, 2010 in his office. I found him to be very friendly and outgoing. Before we started the interview I had him read and sign the consent form. I used a tape recorder to capture the vital information that he shared with me.

I started the interview off by asking him how he felt a student with ADD and ADHD can impact the general education classroom. He shared that each student would present differently in the general education classroom. Based on the new information he shared with me I was able to redefine my topic to just a student with ADHD and classroom management. He explained that a child with a diagnoses of ADD will not impacted the classroom with behavior issue, that the main concern for this student would be that they would fall under the radar academically because of being quite. A child with a diagnosis of ADHD would impact a classroom by their behavior because they will be moving more that a teacher is use to handling and thus causing distractions to the learning environment.

Next we moved to the discussion of how classroom management systems can support the academic needs of a student with ADHD. One concern he shared is how much the student is pulled away from instruction either by themselves both physical or cognitively. That for a teachers it is important to use strategies to check in with the student to make sure that they are present or bring them back into focus on what is going on in the classroom.

We next talked about how a teacher in a general education classroom could support the student with ADHD without impacting the rest of the class. He talked about how it was important that a teacher not treat the student with ADHD differently than the rest of the students. That it was important for the teacher to use the current classroom management system in place

and for the student with ADHD to build on it by scaffolding other strategies to help the student with ADHD.

We next moved to different strategies that might work with a student with ADHD. A couple of the strategies that he suggested were the “drive bys” – walk by and tap a child on the shoulder, making sure that the teacher is moving around and is in close physical proximity to the student. Where the student is placed in the classroom up close to the teacher or more in the back of the room. Understanding and learning about the behaviors that a the student with ADHD can displays and then choosing which of these behaviors to address and which one can be left alone.

We then spoke about how teachers might need special training to deal with a student with ADHD due to the increase of students being diagnosed each year. He shared that there are workshops available regarding ADHD. A general education teacher needs to have a basic understanding of what cause ADHD and that the student has no control over their behavior that they are not meaning to misbehave. A teacher needs to be aware of the many options for the students. Teachers need to teach themselves what kinds of practical tools to use in the classroom. They also need to learn and understand what behavior the student with ADHD exhibits that need addressing and what one can be over looked to insure that the classroom runs smoothly.

Another resource each school site will have is a support team that is there to help the teacher deal with students with special needs. There is always the option of speaking to the student’s teacher from the previous year to see what strategies worked with the student.

At the end of the interview I thank him for his time and valuable information. We also spent a few minutes talking about the idea of continuing my education and getting my special

education credential. He was very supportive and encouraged me to look into continuing my education.

### Summary

Addressing the needs of a student with ADHD can prove to be very challenging for a teacher. Three themes came into focus when doing my research. First, what is ADHD and how does this disorder impact a classroom by the behaviors that a student with ADHD exhibits? Teachers need to build their toolbox of strategies to better prepare themselves in dealing with such students. There is a need to understand what ADHD is, what are the causes of this disorder and to understand that the student is not purposely trying to misbehave.

Additionally, the behaviors of students with ADHD can impact the classroom. What are the issues that arise from a student with ADHD and how these issues can affect both the students and teachers?

Finally, I encountered different strategies that teachers use when dealing with a student with ADHD. I found in my research that many of the strategies were the same throughout the different articles, but I did find some new and interesting strategies that teachers have used in the classroom.

## Chapter Three Method

### Description of Method

The method is qualitative, using narrative design by interviewing several teachers. My intent was to discover teachers' thoughts regarding dealing with the ADHD student. I interviewed teachers from two different schools within the same small urban school district.

### Sample and Site

I examined the possible outcomes of classroom management on the academic growth of students with ADHD. I interviewed the teachers based on their experiences of dealing with a student with ADHD. My questions for the teachers addressed the three major themes I encountered during my review of the research: How does a student with ADHD effect the classroom, what are some of the major concerns and issues for both student and themselves and finally what strategies have worked with such students.

### Ethical Standards

This study adheres to the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association in protection of Human subject used in research. Additionally the researcher completed the Dominican University application for Institution Review Board For Protection of Human Subjects. The application was submitted to the program director for review and received approval.

### Access and Permission

The first school sites I interviewed teachers at I worked at the childcare on campus for 15 years and have since this past year become a substitute teacher at this school. The second school site is where I student taught during the past school year. I have continued to still be a part of the school by substitute teaching and volunteering when not working. At both schools I have established strong working relationships with the teachers and principals and look forward to their thoughts on my research topic.

### Data Gathering and Strategies

I gathered the information for my research topic by interviewing teachers from two school sites. I asked questions that cover the major themes regarding my research topic of ADHD. I used an interview format that included the following items:

1. Please explain to me how you see a student who has been diagnosed with ADHD impacting a general education classroom?
2. Based on your experiences in the field of teaching how do you see classroom management systems supporting the academic needs of a student with ADHD?
3. In what ways do you see yourself as a teacher support the academic needs of a student with ADHD through classroom management without impacting the rest of the class?
4. Please describe a few strategies that you have found that have worked for you currently.
5. With the increase of children being diagnosed each year with ADHD what type of special training to you feel will be necessary to educate teachers to better serve the needs of these children?

6. What types of support systems and resources are available for teachers to use to incorporate into their classroom management systems to better support the academic growth of a student with ADHD and are these resources in place currently?

## Chapter Four Analysis

As part of my research I conducted six interviews with elementary teachers from a small urban school district. The teachers ranged in teaching experiences from two years to up to twenty years. The interviewees were teachers who currently are teaching kindergarten, first, third, fourth, fifth grade, and resource. The teachers were all provide with copies of the questions prior to being interview. The interviews all took place in the teacher's classroom after school.

### Student and Teacher Perspectives

There were several common threads of thoughts regarding how a classroom management system plays a role in teaching a student with ADHD. One theme that came up several times during the interviews was that as educators it is important to remember that these students express themselves differently than other students. Their impulse control is not like the other students and they will often call out instead of waiting to be called on. These students want to be treated the same way as their peers. It was expressed by one of the teachers that students with ADHD will show respect if treated the same as their peers. By treating them the same as other students teachers are not impacting their self-image in a negative fashion. It is important to use the label of ADHD and turn it into a strength rather than a negative.

A couple of the teachers expressed that they take some time daily to reflect on the fact that they have a student with ADHD and that this student will need to be allowed variations to performance in the classroom. One strategy suggested was that teachers should check-in with students to see how their day is going. Checking in as a practice provides teachers with an understanding of how a student's day has been impacted prior to arriving at school. This information can guide the teacher on how to approach the day with the student at school.

Understanding the mood of the student is a vital aspect to guide the teacher on how to impact the student's learning for the day. What was shared by many of the teachers is that it is important to make a connection with the student. The student then understands that the teacher expresses empathy and demonstrates awareness of the difficult road they have in the learning process.

### Strategies

Another theme that was expressed often throughout the interviews is that it is important to play to the strengths of students with ADHD. For teachers this means believing that, instead of thinking of ADHD as a negative, think of ways to bring out the student's gifts. While teaching a student with ADHD it is important to bring out the student's strengths during direct teaching and group chats. It is recommended that teachers play to student strengths, tailor some of the instruction to bring focus to the student with ADHD, and encourage interest in areas where they can shine among their peers.

Also important is making sure that the student receives positive feedback during the course of the day. Students with ADHD have a window of 15 to 20 minutes of focus time so it is vital to break the student's day down into sections to allow a student the opportunity for success. One strategy is to place a student on an individual behavior plan and break down the student's day into time periods, such as, before recess, after recess, after lunch, and so on.

The school day is long and it is important for both student and family to see that the student had some success during the course of the day. A teacher needs to plan on checking in with the child at the end of each time period, providing feedback on behavior within the time period. A key component to make this plan work will be important to have the family as a support system. Having the family engaged in the process is a key factor in insuring the child's

success in school. Not having the family involved makes the process more of a struggle for the student.

Teachers need to re-evaluate each day and make modifications to adapt approaches when needed. There are going to be times when the student with ADHD is not present mentally in the classroom, and it is important for the teacher to step back and understand that there will be time to revisit the lesson. Trying to force the student to do the lesson will prove frustrating to both student and teacher. When adapting the workload of the student with ADHD it is important to remember that these students have a window of 15 to 20 minutes focus time and if they understand the concept then have them do a couple of these problems verse 20 to 30 of these problems.

When teaching a student with ADHD it is important to have a classroom management system in place prior to the student entering the classroom. From that classroom management system the teacher can modify or adapt based on the needs of the student. It is important that a student with ADHD understands from the beginning of school the expectations for classroom behavior, and a teacher will need to follow through if expectations are not met.

Also important to the student with ADHD is that there is a routine in place. A routine allows the student to understand and focus on how the day is organized. An important aspect of the routine is to have the daily schedule posted on the board and to go over that schedule daily. A schedule provides students with a break down of their day and allows them to focus on what is acceptable during a give block of time.

Teaching a student with ADHD requires the understanding that this student can only focused for a period of 15 to 20 minutes at a time. When teaching a student with ADHD teachers need to allow for leeway and flexibility for these students. Some of the strategies

shared by the teachers which they have found that worked for them in the past was to allow the students to stand, wiggle, have something in their hands to squeeze, use a check list and timer to keep the student focus, and allow the student to get up and move around the room.

Teachers need to understand that each student learns differently, and teachers must be flexible in adjusting classroom routines, such as allowing a student to stand while taking a test or reading. These adjustments might be the only way that this student can focus on the assignment. A teacher needs to be clear with students if there are times that they need to sit for a test by announcing this ahead of time, alerting them that they will need to plan on sitting for a specific time period.

A key point that was brought up was that it is important for a teacher to learn how each of the students learns and performs. A good teacher learns what trigger each of the students to learn. Based on that information a teacher has a set of expectation for each individual student. Because ADHD is an annoying behavior and it can be bothersome to the teachers and other students in the room, it will be very important to share with other adults who work in the classroom what strategies work best for the student ADHD. The teachers interviewed also allow for flexibility with assignments and prompt the students more often.

### Classroom Set Up

Another theme that came up during the interviews how to set up the student in the classroom to promoted success. Some strategies shared were to place the student in a table group where the other students are very focused and will not be distracted by the student with ADHD and will thus also help to focus that student. Set the student up with a table buddy to help make the student write down their homework, turn in their homework, and to keep on task. When doing group work have the student's part in the group project play to their strengths. With

younger student another strategy for seating the students is to have a space between each student. For example at each table have six chairs but have the students sit with a chair between them. Most of the teachers interviewed used the strategy of sitting the students in the back and providing them with a clear path so as not to disturb the other students.

Using both individual and team points hold the student with ADHD accountable for behavior in the classroom. The student with ADHD does not want to be responsible for keeping their tablemates from receiving points. They too also want to earn points for themselves. To build on the self-esteem of the student with ADHD give out class points when this student does something positive. For younger students using a check system, as a means of holding the students accountable for their behavior in the classroom. Student names are written on the board and receive a check, for example, if they call out without raising their hand. If students receive three checks then they would lose 2 minutes of their recess time. This is a method of holding them accountable for their behavior not impacting the rest of the class and is a way to remind them not for example to call out.

Another strategy is to have the student work in small groups. When working with small group, teachers need to play to that student's strengths, continuing to build on the positive of what that student has to offer to the group setting. Again if other adults are working with the small group teachers need to inform them of the modifications.

## Resources

The final two questions that I ask had to do with the rise in ADHD students, if any special training would be helpful for teachers and what support system are available for teachers to use. What came out of the interviews is that teachers need to pay attention to the students to understand how they perform and learn. If the academics are not affected by the ADHD then it

is the job of the teacher to learn how to live with the student and make adaptations when needed. If the academics are affected then the teacher could depending how well they know the parents suggest that the child be taken their physician or to an expert. What is important is that the teacher themselves does not diagnose the student but uses the resource available on site to diagnose the student and then make a plan of action to best support the students.

On the school site teachers have many resource available to them to use to develop strategies to support the academic needs of the student. Teacher can speak to the grade level team, check in with them to see what kinds of strategies have worked for them in the past when dealing with a ADHD student. Speaking to the prior teachers helps see what kinds of strategies worked for them or to see if others noticed the behavior the prior year. Brain storming with other teachers on site is a great wealth of resources and support for both student and teacher.

It is important for the community of the school to be involved, the principal, the instructional aide, speech teacher, occupational therapist, special education teacher, and resource teacher to best support the student with ADHD. Also important is for the family to be on board and be supportive of the modification needed for the students. If the parents are not supportive of the plan put in place for the student then it will be a difficult path for both teacher and student.

Resources available outside of school are conferences, information on the web, and books. By far what the teachers interviewed said was the most valuable resource was the members of their own staff who they could brainstorm and develop strategies to support the ADHD students. Because of the increase in students identified as ADHD, this field is new and developing.

## Chapter Five Discussion

### Relationship of Literature to Research Findings

The research relates to the literature in several ways. In both the literature and interviews it was suggested that it is important to build on the positives with students with ADHD. A teacher needs to play to the student's strengths during both direct teaching and group projects, in an attempt the label of being ADHD into a positive rather than a negative.

In both the literature and interviews the student's attention level was discussed as playing a role in the student's ability to perform in the classroom. Students with ADHD have a small amount of focus time usually only 15-20 minutes. Teachers need to use that time in a manner to best support the academic growth of the student. All students have different learning styles and it was stated in both the literature and interviews that the teacher needs teach to the different styles of learning.

In both the interviews and research there was the discussion on how to arrange the classroom to better support the student with ADHD. Such discussion includes where to place the student within the classroom setting to best support their academic growth and to also lessen the amount of disruption for the other students. Furthermore, within this content of both the interviews and the research is the belief that an established routine and schedule needs to be in place for the student with ADHD. Teachers need to have an established classroom management system in place and then modify this system to best meet the needs of the student with ADHD.

### Major Themes and Findings

There were several themes and findings that came out of the interviews with the teachers with regards to classroom management and the ADHD student. The first theme that re-occurred

often was the role of the teacher and how their approach to the student with ADHD can affect the academics of this student. ADHD is a very distracting behavior to both the teacher and students. How a teacher approaches and deals with these students can determine how the student's academic lives will be affected. Being both positive and showing empathy towards the student will go a long way in building a connection and trust between the student and teacher.

Teachers need to understand that children with ADHD do not want to behave in the manner that they are behaving. They have no control and ADHD is not only frustrating for those around them, but for them as well. It is important to find ways to teach to the strengths of the ADHD student and to foster those strengths during teaching. Finding what triggers a student to learn and perform is key for the success of a student with ADHD, as it is with any student. Learning how the student learns and performs and setting learning exceptions based on this information is an important job for a teacher.

Remembering to modify and adapt the academics for the student with ADHD is an important component for the success of the student. Students with ADHD have a window of 15 to 20 minutes of focus time, modifying the lesson or assignments to maximize the learning experience is important for the success of the student. When a teacher can assess with five problems that a student has clearly understanding of a concept then why have them do 20 to 30 problems? Modify and move on to the next section of the lesson to keep the student's focus.

A daily check-in to remind oneself of the fact that one of the students in the classroom has ADHD is very important for the teacher because ADHD can prove to be challenging to deal with. Making a connection with the student and providing the student with the understanding that you have empathy for them and an understanding of what they face on a daily basis can play a role in getting that student to buy into what you need them to do.

In conclusion, one of the most important aspects I learned from my research is how the role of the teacher can affect the student with ADHD. A teacher must remember that it is vitally important to be positive and to find ways to teach to the student's strengths. ADHD has such a negative label and it is important to turn that label into a positive one by finding what triggers that student to learn and perform well in the classroom. All students learn differently and finding out how to reach a student with ADHD could affect the student's overall learning experience. As a new teacher researching this topic it helped me to understand how ADHD can impact both the teacher and students.

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