

An exploration of 1:1
teaching assistant
intervention to
support improved
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Introduction.

This assignment will explore the use of a 1-1 teaching assistant to support improved learning behaviours for a child with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The behaviours shown by children with ADHD will be explored and how this may affect the child's relationship with others and self.

The child who will be of focus in this assignment has a diagnosis of ADHD he does however have other special educational needs (Autism). The ADHD is the biggest barrier to his learning compared to the Autism, therefore strategies for the ADHD will be looked at rather than strategies for Autism.

Behaviour for learning and relationships.

Powell and Tod (2004) produced a diagram which represents the theoretical framework of how theories describe learning behaviours in school context. From this framework came the expansion of learning behaviours and these can be influenced by social, emotional and cognitive factors.

Ellis and Todd (2013) explain how teaching staff are able to use the framework to identify behaviours in their pupils that they wish to develop and to understand what influences these behaviours have on the child. It is vital that teaching staff understand the influences in order to use correct strategies to promote positive learning behaviours.

Within the behaviour for learning framework there are three relationships, these relationships reinforce the promotion of behaviour for learning. Ellis

and Todd (2013) describe these three relationships as; relationship with self, relationship with others and relationship with the curriculum.

Due to the complexity of the three relationships interconnecting Adams (2009) recognises that it may be difficult to define the specific learning behaviours. Powell and Tod (2004) on the other hand define learning behaviours as; self-esteem, responsibility, motivation, independence and engagement.

Ellis and Tod (2013) explain how relationship with self includes a pupils perception of their own identity, self-confidence and esteem and their motivation. In order for a child to develop their relationship with self, the learning environment should allow the child to discover their emotions and feelings.

Powell and Tod (2004) recognise the relationship that a child has with self will play a vital role in learning behaviours such as; independence, motivation and engagement.

It has been researched by that if a child has low self-efficacy and low attainment that these are linked to disruptive behaviour (Powell and Tod, 2004).

Relationship with others concerns how children interact with family, teachers, other adult and peers. By developing positive relationships it can empower children to work collaboratively, be comfortable sharing opinion and solve problems.

By ensuring that more spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning is combined into the curriculum can lead to more of a emphasis on a child's social development which can lead to positive learning behaviours (Adams, 2009).

Research suggests that the positive relationship between child and teacher is key for establishing positive behaviour for learning Serow and Solomon (1979) explain how children tend to develop more positive attitudes and behaviours to learning when they have good relationships with their teacher.

Ellis and Tod (2013) state how that a good relationship with the curriculum involves the child being able, willing to access, process and respond the information available from the curriculum.

There is a great importance for children to be able to access the curriculum and for some that are unable to access this may result in negative behaviours, which in turn can affect the child's sense of self. It is vital that teaching staff are able to offer a curriculum that enables children to have opportunities and develop positive relationships.

Review of ADHD.

Children who are diagnosed as ADHD will tend to demonstrate hyperactivity, impulsiveness and a lack of concentration or short attention span. These behaviours will negatively affect their educational functioning and their peer and family relationships may be poor because of these behaviours.

The American Psychiatric Association (APA, 1994) divides the diagnosis into four groups. These are; hyperactive, impulsive, inattentive and all three
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combined. The child who will be the focus in this assignment has shown behaviours from all three groups therefore fits into the combined group.

Kewley (2001) explains that ADHD is recognised world wide as a medical condition that effects the brain. Thus, resulting in behaviours that may be deemed inappropriate, uncontrollable impulses and lack of concentration, which in turn will result in educational and other behavioural difficulties.

The child of focus shows many behaviours that can negatively affect their learning. Thapar and Cooper (2016) list a range of different behaviours that children with ADHD can show, the list below is all the behaviours that the child of focus shows from those given by Thapar and Cooper (2016) on a daily or weekly basis. It is evident from the list how these behaviours can and do affect the learning of the child and those around them.

- Does not give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes
- Has poor attention on tasks or play activities
- Does not seem to listen or respond when spoken to
- Does not follow instructions when asked
- difficulties organising and starting tasks
- Loses things needed for tasks or activities
- Easily distracted
- Fidgets with or taps hands or feet, or squirms in seat
- Leaves seat in situations when staying seated is expected
- Runs about or climbs
- Unable to play or undertake leisure activities quietly
- “ On the go”, acting as if “ driven by a motor”

Brown (2000) along with Sales (2000) explain how Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder also known as ADHD affects from 3 to 5 percent of school aged children and 50 percent of those children will have symptoms that can continue till adolescence. Therefore, the great importance on early intervention and strategies to improve learning behaviours and basic skills that can be carried on into adult life.

According to Kollins et al (2001) children with ADHD are at higher risk of having learning, behavioural and emotional difficulties. This can also lead to a low occupational status and a greater chance of psychiatric problems or even substance abuse. They also tend to have poor social interactions, this can even occur with family members. Erk (2000) also states that children with ADHD can be socially withdrawn and will perform below their peers academically and physically.

Review of 1-1 teaching support.

There have been two recent reviews within literature, these are by Farrell (1997) and Hunt and Goetz (1997). Also, two research reports by Mencap (1999) and Farrell et al (1999). These have concluded how important teaching assistants are within inclusive education. The findings do however give caution, stressing that the support from teaching assistants need to be well organised, planned and monitored to be successful and effective.

There is some literature on how 1 to 1 teaching assistant (TA) support can be detrimental to children with SEN. Janney and Snell (1997) and Thomas et al (1998) explain how some 1 to 1 TA's can hinder inclusion by coming between the child with SEN and their peers and even prevent the child's

independence skills (Giancreco et al, 1997) consequently resulting in learned helplessness (Seligman, 1975).

OFSTEAD (1996) gives warning around 1 to 1 TA support, explaining how it is not helpful for the child if the TA gives too much support and, in some instances, completing a lot of the work for the child.

Lorenz (1998) criticised the use of 1 to 1 TA support and the relationship that can be built up between TA and child as counterproductive, this can occur if the 1 to 1 TA is absent, leaving the child without a good bond/relationship with any other staff which could upset the child or lead to an outburst of poor behaviours.

It has been suggested that if a TA is given more than one child or a small group of children it is more beneficial than 1 to 1 support. This can encourage more independence within the child but also supports the learning of the other children within the class (O'Hanlon and Turner, 1998. Farrell et al 1999).

Conclusion.

Teaching assistants need to be good at judging the level of support and intervention needed by the child. They should know when to withdraw support allowing the child to partake in natural interactions with others and when needed, give more support. The teaching assistant should feel a valued part of the team, have good communication with the class teacher to plan and understand what is expected of their role. This good working

practice links closely with the literature on the effective support of pupils with SEN in general (Fox, 1998 and Lorenz, 1998).

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