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Student teaching- TED5780

Sandra Rall- Instructional Coach

Case Study

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| **Observations** | **Interpretations** | **Hypothesis** | **Academic/Behavioral Interventions** | **Outcome/Reflections** |
| **February 20th** John has become especially talkative as of late. His volume during group work exceeds classroom norms, and when the direction is given to stop talking, he ignores it and continues his conversation. Other students have asked to sit at another table so they do not get in trouble when John does not stop talking. | Perhaps something is going on at home and he is not getting the attention he is used to having which is causing him to talk more. John might be very interested in the lesson and want to share his ideas. | If I take the time first thing in the morning to give John a few minutes to talk to me about anything he wants, then he will be less likely to talk at inappropriate times throughout the day. | I have begun using the 2 x 10 strategy, where I take two (sometimes three) minutes every day for ten days to simply talk to John. He can talk about anything he would like.  | Using this strategy was especially helpful in the mornings for John. By getting those two or three minutes every day to talk about whatever he wanted to, he was less tempted to talk at inappropriate instructional times. John still had difficulty in the afternoons with not talking when he was not supposed to. After recess and lunch, John struggles significantly with calming down and going back into instructional time.  |
| **February 22nd** John is not working cooperatively with friends at this table. He has taken materials from friends at his table and is not showing empathy, which is a pillar of the school. He has now been moved to a desk by himself. | Maybe the new seating assignment we created placed him with people he struggles to work cooperatively with. Could the behavior be antagonized by another student? | If I begin a behavior chart with clear goals, John will work harder to follow the directions to achieve his goals.Will having John at a table by himself benefit him academically and/or behaviorally?  | I have started using a behavior chart on John’s desk. I introduced this to him with a conversation where we set clear goals for the chart. After he earns 5 marks on his chart, he can eat lunch with us teachers, as this was the goal he wanted to set for himself. Once he earns 10 marks on his chart, he can try sitting with his table again. Whether he can stay at the table depends on his behavior. If he should move back to his own seat, the chart begins again.  | This behavior chart worked great for John. By having the chart on his desk, he had a constant visual reminder of the goals he was working towards. He earned his lunch with teachers very quickly. He has gone back and forth from his own desk to his table with other classmates, but when he is told he must go back to his own desk, he is quick to follow directions to meet his goals again.  |
| **February 27th** John has extreme difficulty in condensing his thoughts and staying on topic when called on to answer a question. He will “talk in circles” around his answer and sometimes never arrive at what the question was asking.  | Since John is an only child, perhaps he is accustomed to receiving all the attention and always having the opportunity to share everything he wants to say.Maybe he is unsure of what the specific question is asking so he just shares everything he has been thinking in hopes of answering the question.  | If I tell John that I am going to ask a question soon and call on him to answer, will giving him the question and think time allow him to narrow his thoughts down?Will the accountable talk starter bookmark I found online help John begin his thoughts and answer concisely?  | I found a bookmark online (called the accountable talk starters) that gives students sentence stems that get students started when answering questions.I have also started going over to John and putting a post-it note on his desk with the question I am going to ask shortly if I plan on calling on him. I tell him “Start thinking about this question so I can call on you to answer it.” | John used the accountable talk starter bookmark quite often and it helped about 80% of the time. By placing the post-it note on his desk with the question I was going to be asking shortly, I could see him writing what he wanted to say and that helped much more.  |
| **March 2nd** During guided reading, I noticed that John is having a hard time comprehending the books we are reading. He struggled more with nonfiction texts, but also has difficulty with retelling events of a story in order that they occur.  | Maybe the texts that were used simply did not interest him, therefore he was not engaged in the lesson activity.  | If I begin using graphic organizers during guided reading, he will have a clearer understanding of the focus of the lesson. Will these graphic organizers be more helpful to John for nonfiction or fiction texts?  | I have begun utilizing many more graphic organizers, both in my guided reading groups, and in whole class instruction for John.  | The graphic organizers definitely helped John. He did much better on the current interim assessment on sequencing events than he did on the last one. During lessons, the visual aspect of the graphic organizer helped him to see what we were focusing on. |
| **March 6th**Ever since we returned from the holiday break, John has become easily frustrated during lessons in the mornings. It occurs less often in the afternoons. When this happens, he is very quick to give up and shut down.  | Perhaps something at home happened over the break that has left John upset. Maybe since he moved farther away from the school, he is getting up earlier and getting less sleep, making him tired and cranky in the mornings.  | If I notice that John is becoming frustrated with a lesson, I will have him take a break and walk around the village to cool off and re-focus his attention and engagement. Doing this should keep him on task and prevent him from shutting down. | I have started asking John to take a break and walk around village with me when I notice him becoming frustrated. When he returns, I will provide more one-on-one support.  | By having John take a break and walk around the village when he became frustrated, he was able to relax for a minute, and refocus his attention onto the lesson and not give up on what we are working on. |

**Rationale for the Case:**

I chose John, the pseudonym given for the purpose of this paper, for multiple reasons. I have been in his classroom since the beginning of the school year and he has always stood out to me. He is the most talkative child I have ever met, and one of the sweetest. The reason I chose him for my case study is because his behavioral issues get in the way of his academic performance. He is very strong in math, but struggles significantly with reading comprehension. However, my mentor teacher believes that his reading comprehension would be much stronger if he was more able to stay on task without becoming distracted. The biggest reason why I wanted to work more individually with John is because I often noticed him becoming easily frustrated, and when this would happen, he would shut down for the rest of the day and his behavior issues would only get worse until the end of the day. This would cause him to miss instruction, and I wanted to significantly minimize the amount of time he missed out on classroom activities because of his behavior.

**Description of the Student**:

John is an 8-year-old third grade student at UPA Mark Murray Elementary School. He is extremely outgoing and has many friends throughout the school. John’s previous teachers from first and second grade describe him as “the sweetest child ever” and “an absolute delight to have in the classroom.” He loves dinosaurs and super hero movies. He lives with both his mother and father, and is an only child. His parents are very involved in the school and have developed strong relationships with the principal and dean of culture. They both regularly communicate with his classroom teacher.

John is easily distracted and loves to talk with anyone at school, even at times when he knows he is not supposed to. His classroom behavior causes him to get in trouble quite often at school. He is frequently talking when he is not supposed to and then argues with the teacher about being punished for doing so. John has a tendency to become easily frustrated or discouraged during classroom activities. When this happens he emotionally shuts down for the rest of the school day and his behavioral problems only get worse. He struggles with self-control, one of the pillars of the school. He has not been diagnosed with anything up to this point.

**Observations:**

The first observation I made of John, from the first day of this school year, was how talkative he was. Obviously when working with 8-year-old children you expect them to be chatty, but John exceeded those expectations. At the beginning of the year, we thought it was just because the classroom norms were still being clearly established. However, we are now in March and he still is the most talkative student in our class, including the students with diagnosed ADHD and other behavioral issues. He will be given multiple reminders and still will not follow directions. It has come to the point where other students do not want to sit by him because they do not want to get in trouble when he starts talking to friends at his table. My mentor teacher decided to move him to his own desk where he sat alone. He was extremely upset about this and often said “it was not fair.” The first few days that we implemented this new seating arrangement, he completely shut down and pouted about it. He was sent to the dean of culture for insubordination in this time. There is a trend of shutting down with John: whenever he gets frustrated or discouraged, he gives up and emotionally shuts down for the rest of the day. My mentor teacher has brought this to the attention of his parents and they just said that it happens at home too, but were not specific about what they do to fix this problem. Academically, John excels in math but struggles with ELA, specifically reading comprehension. He is reading on grade level, but has difficulty in comprehending and explaining what he is learning. He has average grades, which could be improved if he took more responsibility for turning in his homework every day.

**Interpretations/Hypothesis:**

My main hypothesis as to why John is so eager to share his ideas, even at inappropriate times, is because he is an only child and is used to receiving all his parent’s attention at home. Because of this, it is possible that it is hard for him to understand that teachers have 20 other students to pay attention to, not just John. In our interactions with Johns parents, at both parent-teacher conferences and during a field trip to the zoo, it is evident that John is extremely babied at home and is often not made to do anything on his own. John is an extremely friendly child, and he is so eager to talk to all his friends in all grades at school that sometimes, I believe, he forgets that when he is at school his job is to learn and participate in what he is told to, not to socialize with friends.

I also believe that the curriculum that this school uses may not be engaging for John, and honestly all the students. Math seems to come very easy to him, but he must work harder in ELA. Almost all the ELA lessons are very structured, rigid, and repetitive. I think that John becomes disengaged when he is not interested in the content and the delivery of the lessons and it becomes extremely hard for him to stay on task and show self-control. When there is an activity or lesson that interests him, he may still be chatty, but he is engaged and following directions much of the time.

**Interventions and Results/Discussion:**

The first behavioral intervention I tried was the 2x10 strategy. This is where, for two to three minutes every day for 10 days, I pulled John aside and let him talk to me freely about whatever he wanted to. By giving John the time to talk about whatever he wanted, he was less tempted to talk during instruction or in the hallway when he passed a friend. John still had difficulty in the afternoons with not talking when he was not supposed to. He has difficulty reigning in his behavior after lunch and recess to refocus on school, not on socializing. He seemed to really enjoy having time to talk about whatever he wanted. In these conversations, I have learned about his family members, his favorite restaurants, favorite movies, and about all his interesting dinosaur information. Another possible alternative to the 2x10 strategy, would be to give John a notepad where he could write all his thoughts that he would usually interrupt class time with. I will try this in my remaining time with him this semester to see if it works.

The second intervention was creating and using a behavior chart that was kept on John’s desk. I had a conversation with him when it was created in which we established clear goals. The first goal that he chose was to have lunch with us, teachers. The second goal I suggested was to be able to move back and work with his table. He liked this idea, since he was not happy about being by himself in the first place. This was probably the most successful intervention I used. By having the chart on his desk every day, he had a constant visual reminder of the goals he was working for. He earned his first lunch with teachers very quickly and has gone back and forth from his own desk to his table with other classmates. When he is told he must go back to his own desk, he knows this starts his log over again, and he is quick to follow the directions in order to meet his goals once again.

The third intervention was using accountable talk sentence stems and post-it notes that allowed him to prepare for the upcoming question before it was asked. The accountable talk sentences starters helped about 80% of the time. He sometimes would still struggle to answer the question being asked, but it definitely was better with them than without them. By placing the post-it note on his desk with the question I was going to be asking before I asked it, I could see him writing what he wanted to say. This helped him much more than the sentence starters. He wrote down all his thoughts, and when the question was asked he could give a clear and concise answer that answered specifically what the question was asking.

The fourth intervention was using graphic organizers. John struggles with organizing all his thoughts into meaningful pieces of information, so graphic organizers seemed to be a logical place to start to help that. On the first interim test, he performed very poorly on sequencing events questions. Since that test, I began implementing the use graphic organizers during guided reading time to show him how he can use these to organize his thoughts. He did much better on the current interim assessment on this type of questions than he did before. In his test booklet, he drew the little symbols that are on the graphic organizer we used to sequence events. During regular whole group lessons, the visual aspect of the graphic organizer helped him to see what we were focusing on more clearly than the note-cater the curriculum provides.

The fifth and final intervention I tried was having John take a break and walk around the village to calm down. This is something that the dean of culture recommends to teachers because of its successes, and I saw how powerfully it worked with John. Since I have worked with John since the beginning of the school year, it is easy for me to notice when I see him start to become frustrated with the task at hand. When this happened, I would walk over to him, get down on his level, and ask him to go take a break and walk around the village. At first, he seemed frustrated with this. Once I explained that he is not in trouble, I just noticed he could use a minute to cool off, he did not mind his breaks. Once he returned to the classroom, I would come over and sit at his desk or next to him at his table and refocus his attention on the lesson or task being completed. I would give him any directions or supports he missed while on his break. Before releasing him back to work, I always asked if he was ok, and if he wanted to talk. There were times where he wanted to talk about whatever had begun to frustrate him, and other times he came back in ready to work. Everyone, including children, has bad days. Sometimes a quick 2-minute break is all you need to breath, relax, and refocus.

**Professional Reflection**:

One of my biggest take-away messages from this case study is to not get down on myself when things do not work as well as you had planned that they would. I learned that even the smallest things can make a big difference. Just by taking those two minutes every morning to talk to John, I noticed a big improvement in his behavior. Also by doing this, I developed a very strong relationship with him. I could list his favorite toys, movies, video games, and interests. I learned all about his family who lives out of state, and how he has always wished for a younger sibling. By building this rapport with John, I was faced with the realization that in my career I need to do my best to build that kind of relationship with all of my students. By truly knowing and understanding my students, I will be much more suited to develop interventions that are most likely to be successful with a child. To address academic or behavioral needs, evidence is needed. It does not make sense to just begin an intervention without assessing whether it is necessary and beneficial for that student. The framework used for this case study is one I will keep for future use throughout my career. I believe that as teachers, we must always do what is best for our students. Innovative, evidence-based interventions are something that can make all the difference for a student, and I now feel completely comfortable doing more in my career.