

Assignment Two

Report for Student Behaviour Management

by

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for

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EST303 – Special Needs in the Classroom

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Introduction

Inclusive pedagogy's development and improvement is critical to the classroom in mainstream schools. It is important in all setting so that all students have access to the education that provides them the opportunity to succeed in life. (Hyde et al., 2013) This "access" is not only physical, that is by removing or mitigating physical barriers and obstacles, but also emotional, social, economic and intellectual. Therefore, though critical analysis of current, new and emerging teaching practices, classrooms can be modified to meet various student needs. This is not restrictive to the teacher to student relationship within the classroom, but the full breadth of interactive relationships between two or more individuals.

Whilst there are and increasing number of disorders, disabilities and behaviours that require specific attention in the classroom and school environments, this essay will address a single specific student, with one diagnosis, presenting in limited behaviour patterns, Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD). This report will identify how the student behaves and how to treat or mitigate this behaviour, so that it is not disruptive to her, and others', learning and relationships.

Further to the context of this report, this is an articulation of the recommendations to the Special Education Teacher. There would likely be a meeting between key faculty members to clearly define issues with the student's behaviour or learning, before meeting with the student and other key parties, such as, parents or guardians. From that meeting, an Individual Education Plan (IAP) would be constructed to assist the student and staff in developing and monitoring the student's progress.

ODD is defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) as "A pattern of angry/irritable mood, argumentative/defiant behavior, or vindictiveness lasting at least 6 months as evidenced by at least four symptoms from any of the following categories, and exhibited during interaction with at least one individual who is not a sibling."

This is also specified with easily annoyed, losing one's temper, argumentative behaviour, shifting blame to others and vindictiveness. (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The Victorian Government estimates that one in ten children under the age of 12 have ODD, with the disorder occurring twice as often in boys than girls. (Better Health, 2014).

Student Background

Sarah is a 16-year-old student at Darwin High School and has been diagnosed with ODD. Sarah is currently enrolled in Year 10 and enrolled subjects are Maths, English, Science, Computing, Media Studies and Community Studies. Sarah previously studied at Darwin Middle School and limited information about her was sent by the school.

Sarah lives with both her parents and one younger sister. Both parents are employed in full-time jobs, with one in a professional role and the other in an administrative role. Both children have been quite independent once they began secondary school. The family only speak English at home and is their first language.

Sarah's observed behaviour, relating to her diagnosis of ODD, are argumentative behaviour following general and specific direction, deliberately annoying other students and staff, becoming easily annoyed and angry and transferring blame away from herself. Further, through conversation and reports by Sarah's parents, other ODD behaviour overserved at home and within the family setting have been consistent with those observed by school staff and students.

Classroom context

The Computing unit that Sarah is participating in is a class of 18 students, 11 boys and 7 girls. Two students have English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D) and attend specific programs within the school to assist with their learning and ensure they are meeting requirements in their units.

The classroom is set up in the computer lab; each student has their own workstation and all classes are conducted in this room. Issues often arise from this arrangement, such as, students being able to use the computers for internet searches that are not related to the curriculum or becoming easily distracted, however, in this case the Classroom Teachers are required to be extra vigilant and set firm expectations about use of school property.

Student Learning Strengths and needs

Sarah is highly intelligent and clearly understands the content during classes, when she participates and applies herself. This is evident through some of her in class work and assignment submissions. Although, ongoing assessments, within class and not specific to Sarah, will continue and be used to assess whether other academic and/or learning adjustments are required. (Australian Curriculum and Reporting Agency, n.d.)

Primary areas of concern for Sarah are not with her academic ability, whilst this suffers somewhat, her interactions with staff and students have been disruptive and distracting from the content being taught. Whilst Sarah is aware that her behaviour is disruptive, she redirects blame to others most of the time or refuses to attempt to resolve any negative interactions with staff or other students.

Recommended Goals for Sarah's behaviour and learning in the classroom

Goals will be progressive and discussed and confirmed with the Special Education Teacher (SET) and Sarah, at a minimum, however, may also include, Sarah's parents, any Senior Teachers, Assistant Principals and external specialists. These goals are recommendations to the SET and Sarah for modification and/or acceptance. It is critical that Sarah is intimately involved in the development, acceptance and refinement of the goals and management plan, to ensure she takes ownership of them, thereby being responsible for their success (Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2017). This also adds further opportunity for individual decision making and critical thinking to enhance Sarah's learning experience. (Australian Curriculum and Reporting Agency, n.d. Hyde et al., 2013)

Sarah will move to a separate room to work individually when told she is being disruptive. This will occur for three weeks. If Sarah is able to recognise that her behaviour is unacceptable and move to a space that allows other students and staff to continue without disruption, 90 percent of the time after two weeks, we will progress to a subsequent goal.

Sarah will recognise when she is being disruptive, with assistance from the Classroom Teacher or other staff member. She will then either move to a space where she is unable to disrupt others or, preferably, cease the behaviour and refocus on classwork or assigned tasks. This goal is recommended to occur for three weeks and after two weeks, if the behaviour occurs for 90 percent of the time, we will progress to a subsequent goal.

The final goal for this behaviour, will be a duplicate of the previous goals, however, will not include input from the Classroom Teacher or another staff member. The aim is to transition Sarah to self-manage her behaviour, identifying when she has become disruptive and either, move to an area where she is unlikely to disrupt others or cease the behaviour.

The achievement of these goals will be monitored through the use of the school internal student reporting tool, that staff have access to, as appropriate, or through a specifically

designed template to record and monitor the behaviour. Further, at each three week period, it will be recommended to revisit whether the goal has been met and whether Sarah can progress to the next goal. At each of these meetings, Sarah may be able to adjust her goals, independent of whether they have been achieved.

A key factor in ensuring Sarah's success, is to include positive language and behaviours in the reports entered by each individual teacher. Whilst the natural tendency is to focus on what negative behaviour occurred, this develops prejudices and biases among other staff that may or may not have had interactions with an individual student. Any preconceived information and therefore opinion of a student can manipulate the behaviour of the staff or classroom teacher, by initiating defensive behaviour or negative opinions without allowing the student to make natural mistakes, learn from them and correct or be corrected, in a positive and constructive manner. (Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2017).

Pedagogy and Inclusive principles

The use of language to encourage positive behaviour rather than discourage negative behaviour is one key area to be highlighted to staff through the development of learning for Sarah and all students in general.

This also includes ignoring negative behaviour, which is difficult for individuals and more so for students that are not directly invested in changing others' behaviour that will eventually benefit their learning environment.

Inclusive pedagogy is not only critical to the full human development of the child or student with a disability (McCollow et al., 2015), but also to the development of other students exposed to the interactions with those individuals. Classroom Teachers must, as often as possible, demonstrate the behaviour expected of civilised society and, through this demonstration, ensure all students are educated to behave in a similar and humane manner.

By encouraging positive behaviour for all students, we establish an inclusive environment that does not highlight the diagnosis of a single individual. This will also seek to redirect any behaviour that detracts from others' learning, as the disruptive behaviour of any student can be distracting or detrimental to the learning and development of others. (Hyde et al., 2013. United Nations, 2006).

Extra-curricular support, community

Due to Sarah's parent's situation, being both full-time employees, parent training programs may or may not be feasible, however, this can be proposed to Sarah's parents so that they may learn techniques to manage and modify her behaviour. Parent training programs are a cost-effective method to treat children with ODD, through engagement with professional therapists and/or counsellors. (Dretzke et al., 2005)

Treatment through mindfulness training have been shown to reduce children's attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and ODD related behaviour, therefore improving psychological inflexibility, sustained attention and intentional direction of attention (Muratori, 2021). As Sarah has not exhibited any physically disruptive or violent behaviour, mindfulness activities may provide an avenue for behaviour management.

Due to potential comorbidities associated with Conduct Disorders such as ODD, engagement with necessary counsellors, paediatricians, psychiatrists and psychologists may be necessary as need arises. (Burke, & Loeber, 2010). This will also be done in consultation with Sarah and her parents, to provide them with the best information possible, so that they can make a well-informed decision about how best to proceed with or without any treatments external to the school system.

As discussed by McCollow & Hoffman (2019), pivotal response training may be effective in developing interpersonal communications skills to develop a student's ability to

self-manage behaviour. This would require some professional development by staff to understand how to apply this model to an individual student. Whilst this may be considered too significant an investment for a single student, the teachers or staff that learn these skills will be forearmed to use this and other methods with other students, with the same or similar disabilities or disorders in the future. Within this student example, pivotal response training is aimed to teach Sarah to reorient her disruptive, possibly anxious, behaviour to other areas, so that she does not disrupt others and can use time and space to regain focus on the classroom and subject content.

Conclusion

Secondary school education is a critical period for growth and experience for students to move into further or higher education and into the workforce (Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2017). Therefore, whilst the subjects need to reflect student's chosen interests and educate them in that content, they also need to develop socially and behaviourally to have the tools to interact with other members of society in a positive manner. This report seeks to support the SET and Sarah's development of a behaviour management plan, which aims to redirect adverse behaviour and instil responsibility within the student.

This student, whilst academically unhindered, the disruptive social behaviours can become a barrier to her and other's educational development, as well as their social development. Whilst the recommendations in this report are to manage Sarah's behaviour, this is to ensure that her and other's academic, social and human development are given maximum opportunity and support for their full development. Further, it will aim to ensure that all students' learning and development is fostered in a conducive learning environment.

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