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Name

Case Study

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Modifying Instruction Case Study

Description of case-study student

Jane (pseudonym used throughout the paper) is a seventh grade student at a (*Name of county*) county middle school. *Jane* was born in Spain, but her family moved to the United States when she was three years old. *Jane*'s entire family is of Spanish heritage. *Jane* is now thirteen. Her mother is very active in her life. However, *Jane*'s attitude towards her has shifted during the past few years, as many adolescents views of their parents change.

Jane is a well-mannered student. She rarely causes any trouble for her teachers. *Jane*'s attendance has been consistent. She shows up for school on time and arrives at her classes promptly. *Jane* has done fairly well throughout the semester in her classes. However, *Jane* struggles to keep attention and focus during class and take her work seriously. *Jane*'s interests include listening to music and singing. She thinks of herself as a "fun and crazy person" and loves to hangout with her friends. In the classroom, *Jane* is not quite the enthusiastic person that one might see in the halls or the cafeteria of the school. She seems to almost shut down when she comes to class. She rarely offers an answer unless a teacher has called on her specifically.

Jane has a yearly IEP meeting at the school. *Jane* did not inform her mother of her last IEP meeting through the letters that were sent home from the school. However, the mother was called on the day of the IEP meeting and agreed to conference call the IEP meeting so she would be able to have a voice in the meeting for her daughter. *Jane*'s teachers try to achieve positive communication with the parents of the different students

on the team. Jane's parents have had communication with the teachers; however, it is not a consistent communication.

Rationale for selection

Jane was chosen for this case study for a few reasons. First, Jane is not originally from this country. Her family primarily speaks Spanish in the home, but they are fluent in English. While she has lived in the United States for most of her life, her family's culture and customs are a bit different than the typical Caucasian family from the United States. In addition to this, she also is labeled BED through special education services at her school. Jane does not seem like the typical BED student; she is always fairly cooperative and seems to have control over her behavior. However, she can get off task easily. Jane's accommodations defined by her IEP include extended time on assignments and preferential seating.

Recommendations for case-study student

Environment: I believe that Jane's preferential seating gives her a great advantage to choose to be near the front of the classroom. To enhance this even further, I think that carefully considering the students who are seated near her will also be a help to create an environment in which she feels comfortable and willing to participate consistently.

Instructional Strategies: I would suggest trying to use her love of music to encourage and facilitate her learning. Perhaps a project could include writing lyrics that explain how the circulatory and respiratory systems work together to essentially create energy for the different cells of the body. I also would incorporate more group activities in my lessons that would allow interpersonal interaction. Jane seems to thrive on that. If

she were paired up with people who would not completely deter her from the assignment, I believe that it could have an enormous effect on her learning—especially with the attention that she would give to her school work. Also, using response cards might be a great approach to ensure that she is more actively participated during the class (O’Brien, 2007).

Curriculum: I feel that Jane is able to be successful with the curriculum. She will have the opportunity to take a little more time to process the information. This fits in with the extended time that she already receives for her different assignments.

Assessment: Many times, I will choose to use different forms of assessment. This will allow her and other students in my classes to display their knowledge without always taking a test. Many students do not perform well on tests, so this will give Jane (as well as her classmates) a chance to show what they truly know without stressing over a test.

Collaboration: I will be collaborating on a continual level with the ESL teacher at my school to accommodate the differences that I may encounter culturally. Also, I will be in direct contact with special education teachers. They probably have some great ideas about how to cater the presentation of the lesson so that it is more effective for Jane.

Reflections

This case study, more than anything else, makes me realize that there is so much involved with each of my students. I realize that if I take the time to learn just a little about their background, I can really do a much better job as a teacher. I think that one of the most important characteristics about any good teacher is their ability to reach the kids in their classes. It is definitely not going to be an easy task; one, it does take much time

and two, I will be student teaching over ninety students in the spring. While this will be a lot of work for me, I feel that the results will be dynamic. If I can tap into my students' interests and make connections that they can understand and enjoy, I believe that the class will be more engaged and more willing to respond.

From this experience, I also see the significance of collaboration with other professionals. They have so many great ideas and they possess wealth of knowledge that they can share. Knowing that these people are great resources and have dealt with many of these issues before is a great way to enhance the accommodations that I administer to my students.

References

- O'Brien, C. (2007). Active Participation Strategies: Response Cards. Online Notes
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