Analysis and Reflection Paper

ADHD and Occupational Therapy

INTASC principle two focuses on the fact that teachers understand how children learn and develop as well as providing the opportunities to support their individual development. The purpose of this paper is to show how teachers can improve the learning environment for children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder through the different forms of occupational therapy. This paper is based off of Ball State University’s Conceptual Framework for Professional Education. There are three main themes which are expertise, which is the understanding, engagement, which is the communication and strategies, and context, which is the reflection and participation of the teacher. These three themes are a major piece of knowledge that each teacher must understand and apply to aid in the learning process of his or her children.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is defined as having three different forms of the condition. The first is hyperactivity, which produces a child who cannot pay attention, who disobeys orders, and who cannot sit still long enough to complete schoolwork (Samuels, C.A. 2005). These children are the hardest to handle in a classroom setting and require the most effort in their learning environment. The second is inattentiveness, which produces a "daydreaming" child who may not be disruptive, but may have difficulty paying attention to details (Samuels, C.A. 2005). These children are easier to have in class, but are extremely difficult to keep on track in their learning environment. The third and final form is a combination of both hyperactivity and inattentiveness. These children are the hardest children to teach and enhance their learning environment. Since they are so disruptive but also have a hard time focusing, it is a challenge to keep them on the correct learning path. All forms of ADHD will affect the child’s ability to
develop if they are not taught correctly. Now, teachers can be trained in all areas of the condition and have new ways to help the children stay focused and develop their full potential.

Teaching children with the condition of ADHD is a very complicated task that the teacher must overcome and master while working in his or her classroom. This is where the theme of expertise comes into play. The teacher must understand and master the development of a child with ADHD. There are several ways to develop the learning environment of a child with this condition. ADHD is not a mental disorder in itself, but the complications that come with the condition may qualify the child as having a developmental challenge. This means that the ADHD child has problems developing as fast as the other children. The new Dore program is being introduced on the west coast of the country. Some schools have implemented an after-school program to administer the Dore procedure to the children with this condition (Samuels, C.A.). This concept does not have teachers being hands on about the child’s learning environment, but they are taught what to do to continue the Dore treatment in their classroom to help the children associate the methods with real life situations. Every treatment is different for each child. The teacher can pick general treatments to practice in his or her classroom to help the children continue their therapy. This practice in the classroom will help the child develop even further than just in the treatments they receive after school. The treatment is an assortment of occupational therapies that involve listening. The ear is the battery to the mind according to Dr. Dore (Samuels, C.A.). Overall, the entire developmental practice for teachers is to implement what the children are taught in the treatment sessions and help them realize how to apply it to their lives to further develop their learning skills.

According to Developmental Standard number one of Teachers of Adolescence and Adulthood standards, the teacher creates positive classroom environments where individual
developmental differences are respected and supported. A teacher that has ADHD children in their classroom must use the engagement theme to give each of their children the appropriate learning environment. Having children participate in class is one way to give children an equal opportunity in their education. This is a goal for my personal development in the classroom. Participation is a way to show what the children have learned and it is also a way for them to figure out on their own what the answer may be. Children being able to use these skills requires the teacher to be able to apply the knowledge portion of Standard one, which is knows how to create learning activities that take into consideration the developmental characteristics of adolescents and young adults. The participation in the classroom also requires the teacher to apply part of Standard number two, Maintains effective classroom management, which enables students to become self-directed. Giving them the opportunity to speak out and give their opinions gives the ADHD affected child the opportunity to showcase what they have learned. To provide the instructional strategy part of the engagement theme, the teacher must learn how occupational therapy works. In therapy, the therapist instructs the child to do a certain task such as bouncing a ball, and in the middle of the task, they give them an instruction like bounce three more times (Young, R. 2007). This forces the child to pay attention and follow the directions. Teachers can implement the same task by making the child focus on something and then focus on their instruction. This keeps the child’s ADHD in check and they are able to focus on the task at hand.

As part of the engagement theme as well, the teacher is to motivate his or her student in every way possible. One of my goals for development in the classroom is to showcase each child’s talent, no matter what it may be. This also correlates with standard number one under performance which is Provides opportunities for students to experience successes through their
own talents and strengths. I believe that if a child can learn through using their talent, the information will play a larger role in their lives because they will be able to apply it to their everyday life. As a teacher, I would encourage the ADHD prone children to show the class their talent, which would give them confidence as well as teaching them valuable speaking skills. Using this technique, the children will not be scared to be in front of their peers because they will be showing their unique talent. ADHD children are habitually nervous to speak in front of others. This technique will discreetly teach them ways and give them confidence for public speaking.

The theme of context correlates well with Standard number four Curriculum under the section of performances which is Develops a curriculum that encompasses activities which address students' individual learning styles, multiple intelligences, and skill needs. Students with ADHD still must meet the standards of learning that every child must meet, but the teacher must be willing to aid in the support of their learning. The teacher cannot now just teach the group of students as a whole. There must now be specific times for the challenged students to be on the same level as the average student (Ramsay, J. 2010). Teachers can now put the practice of groups in to their everyday lessons. Teaching the group as a whole, and then splitting into groups designated by learning ability would allow the teacher to focus attention and help on the children who need assistance, such as those with ADHD. In this certain group, there could be more hands on learning putting the act of occupational therapy into the learning process (Dineen, P.P. 2010). Using this specific technique would allow the ADHD and challenged children to learn at the same rate, while not holding the other children back.

A large part of teaching a classroom with ADHD children is a part of Standard number four, the teacher utilizes real life situations that encourage students to develop an awareness of diverse perspectives through observation, experience, questioning, and interpreting ideas. ADHD
children do not realize that what goes on in the school setting applies to what is out in the real world (Gutman, S.A. 2005). The teacher needs to bring in real life situations when teaching the subject instead of just following a book format. Visualization is key when teaching children with ADHD new material (Gutman, S.A. 2005). So if the teacher brought in elements such as shopping at the grocery store for math, or roller coasters at an amusement park for geometry, the ADHD student would be much likely to grasp the concept if they were able to visualize the problem. Students with this condition learn best when they can be the most hands on and figure the problem out for themselves. Overall, teachers supporting this learning environment will produce the most productive learners.

The context theme focuses mainly on the practice of the teacher and how they accomplish the standards as well as how their teaching applies in the community. Teachers who have ADHD students must learn specific ways to practice their teaching and gear it toward their most challenging student. Grades are not the most important subject of teaching, but they must be included. My goal for development in my professional career is to take my most challenging student and be able to have him get close to the same grade as one of the regular students. I believe that there should be no child who does not understand what I have taught in class. Each child should have attention geared towards their needs to produce the best grades possible.

According to INTASC principle two, the teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development. Teaching is not just giving out the information to students, and leaving them to discover and understand what you have given them. While learning the material themselves is an important aspect of their development, the teacher must give them the proper information to get them to that point (Gallagher, R. 2010). I believe the teacher should assist
their students and aid them to be the best student they can be. Using occupational therapy techniques in the classroom will help the child develop and move up the levels of development as the information starts to apply to their lives.

In conclusion, every student needs to be given the attention they need to help them succeed. Whether it is ADHD and occupational therapy techniques, or any other learning challenge a student has, each student deserves a chance to excel in their learning environment.
References


