

# UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE, ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY

## BACHELOR'S DEGREE STUDY PROGRAM

### ESSAY - 2

### COMPREHENSIVE ESSAY READING - Part 1

### THE BRAIN, LEARNING & EDUCATION

### MODULE - 8

#### CHAPTER 1 - MUSIC AS A TOOL FOR LEARNING

#### CHAPTER 2 - EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF CHILDREN WITH BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS

*[Instructions: Read the essay and when you encounter each set of questions,  
indicate your answer on the separate sheet.]*

#### **Chapter 1 - "Music's Effect on the Mind"**

*By: Nathanael J. Briggs*

Music is a pleasurable experience for most people. The effects of music on our minds and bodies are astonishing. “Numerous studies have shown that music affects emotions and mood states and can also modify physiological responses.”<sup>22</sup> In this chapter we will examine some aspects of music that can be used as an educational aid. Keep in mind the information pertaining to our brains and the structure of language while reading this chapter. We will look at the structure of music and its effects on the brain. We will also look at some of the psychological changes that music creates within our bodies. We’ll see if some of these changes can be used to aid in teaching. By learning the benefits of music on our minds and bodies, it is hoped we will see the connection with preceding points brought out in the last two chapters.

## **MUSIC IMMERSION**

When listening to music, one's mind often becomes immersed in the song. If one is trying to learn English and can't travel to an English-speaking country, what better way to surround oneself with English than to listen to a lot of lyrics spoken in English? This provides two benefits that people learning English as a second language really need if they are to be successful. First of all, the sounds necessary to speak English are contained in music just as often as in regular conversation. Also, the same rules apply in lyrics as to words used in everyday English conversation. But music can sometimes be more advantageous to listen to than conversation with regard to these two aspects. We have seen that the brain likes patterns. A good rhythm can sometimes get “stuck” in our minds. When listening to

music and hearing a foreign language, a particular tune along with its words can make an impact on our minds. We can repeat aloud the pattern even if we don't know what the individual words mean. "The positive effects of music upon rote memorization are well-documented."<sup>23</sup> This provides our brains with the hard wiring necessary to process the sounds of another language we haven't spoken before.

Vocabulary is essential to speaking a language fluently. Even if we don't know the meaning of some words but we hear them often, these will be remembered in our minds. Then later, when we have learned the meaning, we can use these words correctly in a conversation. "A musical medium promotes language acquisition to the same extent as a non-musical medium. Stated differently, the same amount of vocabulary is acquired from listening to a song as listening to a story."<sup>24</sup> This acquisition of vocabulary is an important step to mastering a language. Not only do you hear new words, but you also hear them in relation to other words.

□ Which statement is the most accurate?

81. Numerous studies have shown that music affects emotions and moods. Music can also modify physiological responses; therefore, it should always be used as an aid to teach any subject more effectively.
82. A good rhythm often gets "embedded" in our minds. Thus, it is effective in learning a new language because when listening to music in a foreign language, a particular tune can make more of an impact on our minds than just the spoken word.
83. A musical medium promotes language acquisition more than a non-musical medium does. In fact, more vocabulary is acquired from listening to a song than from listening to a story.
84. Although it is not well documented, there are those who believe that there are many positive effects of music on rote memorization.

Having a large vocabulary is certainly beneficial to speaking a language fluently. But more is needed than simply knowing what the words mean. By listening to music that is full of lyrics the listener can learn how to pronounce the words correctly. Even more important, the listener can hear the words being used correctly in association with other words. This quality of music can certainly be used to learn lexical phrases, as just one example illustrates: a baby starts learning language by simply listening to it and trying to imitate what it hears. Music can provide the same experience for those learning English (or any other language) as a second language.

## **STRUCTURAL SIMILARITIES**

Well, up to this point we have discussed the structure and function of the human brain. We have looked briefly at the structure of language in the last chapter. Hopefully you can see where I'm heading with this topic: to discuss the structure of music. In recent years, music has been used frequently as an educational aid in one specific respect, namely, in information recall. Some researchers have coined the term "The Mozart Effect" to describe the effect of listening to Mozart's music before some brain-intensive activity, such as test taking. "The 'Mozart Effect' is the name given to the basic link that was found between Mozart's music and the resulting test scores of students. At the University of California, Irvine, researchers Dr. Francis Rauscher, Ph.D, and Dr. Gordon Shaw discovered this relationship in one of their experiments. They took a group of 36 students and had them listen to one of either Mozart's Sonata for Two Pianos in D

Major (K448), a relaxation tape or just silence. They then gave the students IQ tests. The results were that the students who listened to Mozart did best, increasing their IQ scores by 8-9 points over their original scores obtained before the experiment. The effect lasted for the duration of the testing (approximately 10-15 minutes).”<sup>25</sup> However, these findings are highly controversial. Some have criticized this approach, saying that the effects last only for about 10 minutes. And there doesn’t seem to be any reasonable explanation for why this effect takes place.

Can simply listening to music make students smarter? Well, I don’t feel that they are any smarter than they were before. However, I do feel that there is a link between listening to Mozart, or to music of a similar structure, and increased academic performance. Even if this effect lasts only for a short time, I think that there are some long-term effects on the brain. The reason I believe this is, not only due to this experiment, but also because of the information previously discussed regarding the effect that playing chess has on the mind. Before making this connection, let’s consider what we do when we listen to music.

Music such as Mozart’s is based on a very solid mathematical basis. There are distinct patterns that make up the composition. Certain instrumental patterns are repeated to create a rhythm. When we listen to the music we start to guess what is coming next based on what we have heard. If we hear similar patterns repeated throughout a composition, then at any given moment during the composition one can, to some extent, predict what is coming next. Why is Mozart so effective at bringing out this reaction in our brains? “The particular sonata was

carefully selected for its incredible use of the features of symmetries and perhaps natural sequences of patterns.”<sup>26</sup> The brain likes patterns and symmetry. By listening to music that has these two qualities we are actually schooling our minds to associate sequences of patterns together. Based on these patterns we can then begin to guess what sound is going to come next from a given point in the sonata.

□ Which statement is the most accurate?

85. More is needed than just knowing what words mean. When we listen to lyrics sung in the target language, we can learn how to pronounce the words correctly. Even more importantly, we can hear the words being used correctly in association with other words.
86. All music provides the same experience for those learning a second language, especially if they listen to lullabies and think of themselves as learning like babies do.
87. Students who listened to Mozart did better on tests. They increased their IQ scores by 18-19 points over their first results. The effect lasted for the duration of the testing (approximately 10-15 minutes).
88. Mozart is so effective because his particular sonata makes incredible use of symmetry and of the unnatural sequence of patterns. The brain likes patterns and symmetry.

Chess requires critical and very good assessment skills. When we are playing chess we are training our brains to recognize certain patterns and react quickly to these. The player recognizes familiar positions on the chessboard and recalls preceding successful and unsuccessful moves. This happens very quickly and oftentimes without too much exertion. As we have considered, grand masters can recognize chess configurations and decide on a successful move in five seconds!<sup>27</sup> The same effect is taking place when listening to music structured as in Mozart’s sonatas. Our minds quickly become attuned to recognizing certain patterns. Then, as we hear the beginnings of these patterns, our brains are

finishing them based on what we have already heard. Whereas this skill in itself may seem useless outside of listening to music, more is taking place that will affect other academic skills.

“Recent experiments demonstrate that music can enhance reasoning.”<sup>28</sup>

Well, the reason for this is because when we are guessing the next note based on a musical pattern, we are also teaching our brains how to wire between these types of associations. Since there are other areas of learning that require making these associations, our minds will know how to make the connections easier and more quickly due to the practice gained through listening to such music. The ability to make these kinds of connections is called spatial-temporal (ST) reasoning.

“To dramatically illustrate the importance of ST reasoning, we present some aspects of the first author's almost entire reliance on ST reasoning. A very high-functioning person with autism (Grandin) describes her exceptional abilities to think in pictures (ST reasoning) as an interactive, virtual reality.”(8) She is a top structural designer and has revolutionized certain areas of structural design that have traditionally been problematic because of the difficulty of visualizing the underlying problems. For example, she is the world expert in the design of livestock handling facilities. Her designs are revolutionary in that her structures interact with the animals in such a natural way that livestock can be effortlessly directed in a calm and humane manner. In designing the handling facilities, she is able to visualize herself as the animal going through one of her systems and thus is able to anticipate and correct problematic patterns that might develop. In her imagination, she walks around and through the structure and can fly over it in an

imaginary helicopter. She moves herself around and through the structure instead of rotating the structure in her imagination.<sup>29</sup> Based on certain information, this person can draw on previously gained mental images, or only parts thereof, and construct the resulting structure in her mind. So how does this apply to language learning?

□ Which statement is the most accurate?

89. Playing chess while listening to Mozart trains our brains to recognize certain patterns and react quickly to these. Our minds quickly become familiar with such patterns and we are sure to improve our game.
90. Triggered by certain information, some people can draw on previously learned mental images and construct the resulting structure in their mind.
91. Our minds quickly become attuned to certain patterns in Mozart sonatas. Thus, each time we hear the beginnings of these patterns, our brains are finishing them by building on what we have already heard. Therefore, we do well to listen to Mozart while learning a new language.
92. Although music is effective in playing chess and learning a new language, thus far there is no evidence that it can enhance reasoning.

Consider one of the important aspects of learning a language fluently. Think of the associations that must be made between words. The term for this, as we have learned, is lexical phrases. But even this aspect doesn't go far enough in describing the associations that are made between words. Certain words seem always to follow other words. Whether it just sounds better in that order, or if they fall into that pattern for grammatical reasons, there are distinct patterns that are followed regularly. When speaking or listening to a conversation our mind is also guessing ahead. We are thinking of what the next word will be based on previous patterns that we have been exposed to. This skill is enhanced by activities such as chess or listening to music that has a structure similar to Mozart's. Even though

there is no direct link between music or chess and learning the structures in language, the skills that are involved in each activity are very similar. Application of this relationship will be considered in the final chapter.

## **EVIDENCE OF THE CONNECTION**

The connection between skills gained through listening to Mozart and learning a language may seem somewhat dubious. However, there are studies that suggest this link to be factual. We have to say they “suggest” this is true, rather than say they have “proof,” because as yet there is so little really known about what happens in the brain. Even though we have looked quite in-depth into the functioning of the brain in the first chapter, we really have only covered the basic principles. Now, as we look at the skills gained through listening to Mozart, we cannot say with absolute certainty precisely what happens. Nevertheless, despite the lack of concrete evidence proving the link between Mozart and ST reasoning, there are many case studies showing that a link does indeed exist.

“Investigators divided the children into four groups. One group of preschoolers took private, 12 to 15 minute piano lessons each week. Another group took 30-minute singing lessons five days a week, and a third group was trained on computers. The remaining children received no special lessons. All of the children took tests designed to measure a range of spatial abilities both at the start of the experiment and again six to eight months later. By the end of the study period, the piano-trained children had improved their scores by 34 percent on a task requiring them to put together a puzzle of a camel. But on a task measuring

spatial recognition – a different type of spatial skill that is practiced more commonly in the course of daily life – there was no change. For that task, children were asked to point to a matching picture of a square intersected by a line. This time, however, the benefits lasted at least until the next day. That is enough time, the researchers said, to suggest that piano lessons may be spurring more permanent changes in the brain's hard wiring.”<sup>30</sup> These tests seem to indicate that there are long-term changes to the hard wiring of the brain due to playing music. There are many other studies that seem to indicate the same type of “Mozart effect.” And of course there are critics pointing to other evidence concerning the short-term benefits of this effect. However, at present, this effect is being used in only rudimentary ways. Suggestions on how this effect might be put to practical applications will be presented in the next section.

□ Which statement is the most accurate?

93. When speaking or listening to a conversation, our mind is also guessing ahead to what the next word will be. This is called the “Mozart effect.”
94. Scientists today have a more comprehensive understanding of the brain and have hitherto confirmed without a doubt the connection between listening to Mozart and learning a language.
95. Children who were piano trained showed a higher range of spatial abilities. They could assemble puzzles 34 percent faster than their peers. Music improves the brain’s ability to think faster.
96. Investigators found that preschoolers who took piano lessons did better on spatial ability tests than those who took computer lessons

**GET INTO IT!**

“Negative emotions that are produced through listening to music are considered by most to be a pleasurable, positive, or sought after experience.”<sup>31</sup>

Music can evoke many emotions within each of us in various ways. The source just

quoted goes on to say that the feelings drawn up by music “aren’t real.” He regards them as “a sort of mirror of a real emotion.”<sup>32</sup> Regardless of the details about how real our emotions are while listening to music, the effect they have on our minds and bodies is very real. We may feel down and distraught when we hear the blues. Or perhaps we become anxious and excited when we’re listening to a faster-paced piece of music. There is actually music produced with the specific purpose of evoking a specific emotional and physiological response. “*Heart Zones* was specifically designed to facilitate stress reduction, boost vitality and increase buoyancy and clarity. The music has been described as a ‘mental and emotional workout’ and is intended to produce a ‘calm yet energetic alertness’ in the listener.”<sup>33</sup> It’s obvious that music can draw out emotions in the listener based on the content and style of the music.

In the previous chapter, we saw that speaking with emotions is an important part of speaking English fluently. But it’s also quite difficult to teach this type of speaking to a student due to the unnatural process used. The teacher says a sentence with some type of feeling, but usually this feeling is extremely bland. It is clear to the student that the teacher isn’t using any real emotion. Besides this, the students have their own way of expressing their emotions. They shouldn’t have to try to imitate the teacher’s way of doing so. Rather, they should be finding out what works for them. Trying to do this with a foreign language is oftentimes quite difficult, as not all of the words are understood. Music can draw out emotions for any circumstance. And by using music, the student will be able to express his or her own emotions and thereby speak English with real feeling

## MODULE – 9

### **EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF CHILDREN WITH BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS**

By: Andrew Ash

Behavior Problems and How to Recognize Them in Children

#### General Guidelines for Normal Behavior

##### **Children under Two**

You will probably never have to teach children of this age; however, this information may be useful if you ever find yourself working with small children, such as in daycare. Children of this age generally do not need much discipline. They are exploring the world by means of their five senses. Their communication skills are not developed so “they communicate through feelings by crying, cooing and babbling.”<sup>1</sup> They need to touch and feel, and even though they may break things or turn things over, this is all part of their process of discovering the world. Children of this age need love, care and a feeling of safety.

##### **Children Ages Two to Five**

Children of preschool age are naturally lively and full of adventure. They need a lot of space to run around and to use the energy they have. They also may have a competitive nature and will usually fight with each other over such things as games and materials. They use play as a way to discover the world, to develop their social skills and to come to terms with their fears and feelings. They need to start to

understand how they should behave with others and how to overcome problems. In addition, they need to understand the difference between fact, real life and fantasy.

### **Children Ages Six to Twelve**

“School-aged children are industrious and are starting to become responsible and independent from their parents. They will try hard to develop their skills at anything they are set to do, as long as they feel it is in their grasp to achieve it.”<sup>2</sup> In addition, children of this age need to work within their own natural expectations; in other words we should not push them beyond what they can realistically achieve. The school classroom is a place where they can develop confidence and self-esteem, and it is up to the teacher to develop this. They should have learned by now some behavioral responses that the teacher can further nurture.

### **Children Ages Thirteen to Eighteen**

Children at this age are now developing into young adults; they are developing social and communication skills that will last them for the rest of their life. They do this by sharing their achievements, disappointments and problems with others, especially their friends. Teenagers are developing their identity and independence. “Teenagers need a great amount of freedom in order to test the waters of adulthood.”<sup>3</sup>. As with all children of school age, they need to know the rules and what is considered acceptable behavior in a disciplined environment.

#### **Which statement is the most accurate?**

97. Kindergarten level children need to touch and feel things. And even though they may break things or turn things over, this is part of their discovery process. Children of this age need love, care and strict discipline to set them on the right course for the rest of their life.

98. Children of preschool age are naturally lively and often need a lot of room to run around and use the energy they have. They use play as a way to discover the world, to develop their social skills and to come to terms with their fears and feelings. Encourage them to fight, because at this age they have a competitive nature and need to fight with each other as part of their play.
99. The school classroom is a place where thirteen- to eighteen-year-olds can develop self-esteem; the teacher can play a major role in helping students do this.
100. Teenagers need to know the rules and what is considered acceptable behavior in a disciplined environment. They should be given only limited freedom at this time or they may “fall into the waters of adulthood” too soon.

### Behavioral and Mood Disorders in Children

If all of your students came from well adjusted environments where the family consisted of two loving parents who gave them quality time and well balanced discipline mixed with wholesome and enjoyable recreation then you would probably not have to worry about many behavioral problems in your classroom. Unfortunately, many of our children today come from homes far different than that. “Some are severely bruised and neglected, persuaded beyond doubt that the world is brutal and deserves their mistrust. They may have come from a home that consists of harsh, impulsive and sadistic mothers and fathers who are more interested in their own welfare and not the welfare of their children and where love is in short supply.”<sup>4</sup>

These children show up in the classroom with such bad behavior, we wonder if there is anything we can do for them. Some of these children are suffering from mental disorders caused by their home environment; on the other hand, some may have a congenital behavioral disorder.

Have you experienced childhood disorders? Are you able to recognize children with a known disorder? Are the children you teach suffering from a disorder, or are they just being difficult? Could the students be testing you to see how far you will go? To answer these questions we will analyze the causes and signs of known mood and behavioral disorders.

There are many names for child behavior disorders. Some of the main ones are Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), and Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD). These disorders are diagnosed through “maladaptive behavior disorders that have lasted six months or more.” These behaviors, according to Gregory Bodenhamer, include “inattention to detail, careless mistakes, not following directions, not finishing schoolwork or chores, being disorganized, losing things frequently (ADD), often interrupting others, talking excessively, frequent fidgeting, frequent outbursts, frequent arguing or acts of defiance (ODD).”<sup>5</sup> Lets look at these disorders in more detail, though I will be concentrating on ADD/ADHD. We will use the term ADHD as many professionals do today.

### Oppositional Defiance Disorder and Conduct Disorder

Oppositional Defiance Disorder affects children who are of preschool age. They are very difficult to handle and their behavior is defiant all the time. Children with this disorder are very “fussy” about almost all things. It is very difficult to control them. These behaviors, according to Gregory Bodenhamer, include “often interrupting others, talking excessively, frequent fidgeting, frequent outbursts, frequent arguing

or acts of defiance.” 6 If all these factors are present, and this defiant and difficult behavior has gone on for more than six months, then they may be suffering from Oppositional Defiance Disorder.

“Conduct Disorder” affects about 10 percent of all children and adolescents. Conduct Disorder in children is usually only found in children of school age. How do you know if a child has or is developing Conduct Disorder? Are any of the children in your care repeatedly aggressive, and do they attack other children, adults or animals? Do they destroy their own property or the property of others? Are they involved in acts of wanton vandalism? Do they tell lies frequently? Do they play truant from school or break the school rules without showing any remorse? Do they show signs of hyperactivity? Do they show signs of anxiety? Do they show signs of depression? Do they have problems with their studies and their peers? Have they had these problems for more than six months? Have they had some kind of traumatic experience? “Then they could be suffering from serious emotional disturbances.”7 You can therefore conclude that he or she may be suffering from Conduct Disorder.

□ **Which statement is the most accurate?**

101. Most students do not come from well-adjusted environments where the family consisted of two loving parents who gave them quality time, well balanced discipline, and wholesome recreation. This being the case, you as the teacher will probably have to role-play the parents in the classroom when students display behavioral problems.
102. Oppositional Defiance Disorder affects children who are past preschool age. They are very difficult to handle and their behavior is defiant all the time. Children with this disorder are very “fussy” about almost everything. It is very difficult to control them.
103. Children suffering from Conduct Disorder often attack other children, adults or animals and tell lies frequently. They may destroy their own

property or the property of others. Also, they may break the school rules on a whim. Anxiety, hyperactivity, depression, and serious emotional disturbances are also common with such ones.

104. Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) is diagnosed through “maladaptive behavior disorders that have lasted six months or more.” According to Gregory Bodenhamer, these behavior disorders include: excessive attention to detail, repeated mistakes, not following directions, finishing schoolwork or chores late, and often being disorganized.

What are the causes of Conduct Disorder? It is the environment of the child that causes this disorder. If the child is given little love by its parents or discipline is harsh or inconsistent; if he/she lives in poverty, has suffered abuse or neglect, then exposure to that kind of environment could cause such a child to develop Conduct Disorder. There is still no evidence to support biological factors in this disorder.

### **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

What is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder? According to the book *The ADHD Checklist*, this disorder affects two million children in the United States of America alone. In addition, *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV)* estimates that “ADHD affects three to five percent of the student population. This figure may be even higher, as a study of thirteen community studies of the prevalence of ADHD indicated that anywhere from 1.6% to 16% of children have ADHD.”<sup>8</sup>

“ADHD is a developmental disorder characterized by inappropriate degrees of attention. It is also a neurological disorder.”<sup>9</sup> The child’s environment is not the main cause of ADHD, but as with any disorder, the environmental surroundings of a child can either make the condition better or worse, depending on the stimulation the child receives in his or her surroundings. The surroundings can relate to school

life or home life.

The probable causes of ADHD are many. In studies of children and adults with ADHD, some of the factors causing the disorder were based on the heredity of the person; many children with ADHD had some relative with the disorder. Often when parents take their ADHD child to the doctor, it's discovered that the parent also suffers from ADHD. Typically, says Dr. Larry Silver, "parents will bring in a child for treatment and say, 'I was the same when I was a kid.' Then they admit they still have problems waiting in line."<sup>10</sup>

ADHD is a brain disorder of the frontal lobe, which is responsible for "attention, inhibiting impulses, motor control, activity, and handwriting. It was found that in the brains of adults with ADHD, the frontal lobe of the brain had less brain activity, a lower rate of metabolizing glucose, and that the flow of blood was reduced in that area."<sup>11</sup> When mothers smoke, drink alcohol or are exposed to lead during pregnancy the brain can suffer trauma; this in turn can cause ADHD. As the brain has an inability to use its neurotransmitters, ADHD is thought for the most part to be a neurobiological disorder.

ADHD has many forms but is mostly regarded as a hyperactivity disorder; hence the name, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. ADHD can be broken up into different parts and shows up in "difficulties of attention, mental effort, excessive activity levels, excessive distractibility, excessive responsiveness, emotional reactions and self-control."<sup>12</sup>

Students with the “Hyperactivity and Impulsivity” type of ADHD are unable to process information effectively, especially written information. It is not that they do not know how to learn. The problem is that these children have difficulty making use of the information that they are trying to process. Some days they may excel in their assignments, and quite often they do. They are creative, intelligent, and some have high potential. On the other hand, though, on any given day they may fall flat on their face when it comes to performance. They can be recognized by their “constant inconsistency.”<sup>13</sup> It is not that they do not know the information; it’s that they cannot act on what they know.

□ **Which statement is the most accurate?**

105. Conduct Disorder, according to studies, is basically caused by the environment the child has been raised in. Lack of parental love, harsh and inconsistent discipline, even poverty and neglect can lead to Conduct Disorder.
106. Rarely do parents who take their ADHD child to the doctor find out that they too suffer from ADHD. Dr. Larry Silver states: “Parents will bring in a child for treatment and say, ‘I was the same when I was a kid.’”
107. It was found that there was less activity of the frontal lobe in the brains of adults with ADHD. Adding more glucose to the sufferer’s diet, which increased blood flow to the affected area, solved the problem.
108. Written information especially poses a problem for students with the ADHD characterized by hyperactivity and impulsivity. It is not that they do not know how to learn; the problem is that these children have difficulty making use of the information they are trying to process.

Even though more boys are known to have this disorder (on the average, six times more than girls do), it is thought that Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) may affect more girls than the data suggests. According to Sandra Reif, the reason for this conclusion is that many girls are overlooked, because girls tend to “exhibit fewer of the disruptive behaviors associated with hyperactivity and

impulsivity.”<sup>14</sup> Girls in this category may be suffering what is known as the “Inattentive Type” of ADHD.

Children with the inattentive type of ADHD may not show signs of hyperactivity at all. However, they still may be suffering from ADHD. Dr Russell Barkeley, one of the leading experts in this field, says the problem for this type of ADHD is in the “slower cognitive processing speeds, they take longer to get it no matter how intelligent they are.”<sup>15</sup>

### **My Experiences with Behavioral Problems**

I have been teaching at various schools in and around the Tokyo area of Japan for the last three and a half years. The age range of my students is from three-year-old kindergarten or preschoolers up to eighteen-year-old high school students. However, most of the students I have been teaching are elementary school students. Some of those students have behavioral problems or at least show the signs of behavioral problems.

I would now like to share with the reader some observations of my own students and the behavior they have shown. However, I am not saying that these students do or do not have ADHD; rather, I would like to use their behavior to explain some of the traits of ADHD so that educators and parents can determine if the children they teach or their own children, respectively, have the symptoms of ADHD. On this matter, it is important to remember, educators should never tell a parent that his or her child has a behavioral disorder; since only trained professionals in this field can make a diagnosis. However, educators can bring it to the attention of a member of the school staff with training in ADHD when a child shows the symptoms of ADHD.

These are some of the behavior patterns of the elementary students in my classes. One boy in my English class simply cannot stop moving. He is always on the move, and I am constantly telling him to stop moving around. He is always fidgeting, constantly standing up, always grabbing something or someone; he cannot sit still for more than a few minutes – a total distraction to the class.

Another child in my class seems to be in a world of his own; he never stops talking, interrupts all the time, cannot wait to be asked or directed. He is tactless in his speech when speaking to other children. When assigned to do something, he tries to finish as hurriedly as possible, no matter whether the result is good or bad. Although I'm not saying these children have ADHD, but these are some of the characteristics of hyperactive ADHD children. Dr. Gordon Serfontein writes in his book, *The Hidden Handicap*: "Careful observation will reveal some form of continuous movement involving the legs, feet, arms, hands, lips or tongue."<sup>16</sup>

A girl in one class is often temperamental, easily getting upset over small things, and is very immature for her age. When there is a game, the child gets extremely upset if she does not win and constantly wants to have her go at the game, oblivious to the rest of the team. She is constantly standing up and speaking out of turn and is often clumsy. She is always running ahead of her brain, acting first and thinking second. "The ADHD child acts before he thinks, without considering the consequences. The child shows poor planning and judgment, and at times, his or her actions are dangerous. The child rushes into the street, onto the ledge, up the tree. As a result the child receives more than his share of cuts, bruises, abrasions, and trips to the doctor," writes Dr. Paul Wender.<sup>17</sup>

Another boy is very difficult to discipline. He often gets frustrated when he has difficulty in doing an assignment, even if it is relatively easy. Compared to the other students, he displays little maturity and in fact, they find him extremely childish. He can become aggressive easily when he thinks things are not going well for him.

All of these children show signs of “impulsive” behavior or “Impulsivity” ADHD. Dr. Ronald Goldberg explains, “ADD/ADHD can occur *without* any hyperactivity at all. Or it can occur with any *degree* of hyperactivity from barely noticeable, through rather annoying, to highly disabling.”<sup>18</sup> Again, I cannot diagnose such children as suffering from ADHD, but if a child is showing several of the cited symptoms, then that child is showing many signs of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). All of the children mentioned above are between six and ten years old.

I would like to use another student, this time a girl who I teach at a high school, as an example of someone who displays some of the characteristics of another type of ADHD. This girl always seems to be miles away; she is easily unfocused, and she seems to have difficulty in concentrating on any work she has to do. She has great difficulty understanding instructions. When she has understood the instructions, she still makes errors due to her disinterest and indifference, often being late with her assignments. It is an English class, so reading is involved. For her this is a nightmare. She often loses her place in reading and reads in a low voice, with little or no enthusiasm. She finds most things boring and is usually half asleep during the class. She is often late. She just may not like English lessons, but these are some of the classic characteristics of “Inattentive Type” of ADHD. According to Dr Russell Barkeley, girls suffering from this inattentive type of ADHD “take longer to

get it, and it is believed that girls who are labeled *space cadets* may actually have this type of ADHD.”<sup>19</sup> The student I am referring to did not have the label of being a spaced-out girl. As with all the previous students, I am not concluding that she necessarily has ADHD.

As with all the students I have mentioned, we have to remember that most students show *some* of these signs now and again. What we need to look out for is a history and regular pattern of many of these symptoms.

### **Depression in Children**

Everybody feels down sometimes, even children. Even though it is common in adults, it is not so prevalent in children. However, it is recognized that depression in children and adolescents is generally undiagnosed. The latest estimates for depression in children report that there are about “two percent of elementary school children suffering from depression. In adolescents, it is even higher at around five percent.”<sup>20</sup> If one of your students is constantly underachieving, then maybe they are suffering from some form of depression.

One high school girl once wrote that she hates her family, especially her father who, as with most Japanese businessmen, is dutiful to his job. She had no interest in almost anything. She looked sullen, down most of the time, and spent most of the lesson with her head on the desk. She was not disruptive, but she made no effort to get involved in the lesson or to interact with the other students. She often said that no one understood her. She displayed many of the signs of depression.

### **General Behavior Problems**

As educators, we will all experience some difficulties with the students we teach. As a teacher, you may have many different teaching positions throughout your life. You may decide to only teach at a certain level, be it preschoolers or kindergarten, elementary or primary school, high school, college, university or at some type of educational facility. Whatever career you decide, you will usually experience times when the discipline or attention of your students is not what you desire or expect. Let's look at some of the normal behavioral problems you may experience, which are not usually the result of problems associated with behavioral disorder.

### **Preschooler and Kindergarten Children**

When teaching such young children, it is difficult to keep their attention to the assignment at hand for any period of time. They are also full of the joys and energy of young children, which we do not want to restrict. On the other hand, there has to be some kind of structure to the lesson, and certain behavior levels need to be anticipated. The main problem with preschoolers is that their energy levels are very high. Preschoolers are also very impressionable and will take the lead from each other; so if one child is misbehaving, then other children will follow.

There is an expression in English that says "*boys will be boys*," and this is so true. From my experience, girls are easier to control. They like to try new things, they like to learn and study; however, boys like to play, and given the chance, they will ignore the task at hand. I teach English to a variety of preschoolers. For some, the first day is a nervous time and it is a challenge to get them to do anything at all; for others, the chance to play with many other children is just too tempting, and they

run around anywhere and everywhere, getting into anything and everything.

□ **Which statement is the most accurate?**

109. Boys suffer from ADHD an average of six times more than girls do. A reason for this may be that many girls are overlooked because they tend to better control hyperactive and disruptive behavior than boys do.
110. A child has to show many signs of ADHD before you can say that he is suffering from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).
111. Some estimates indicate that about two percent of adolescents and elementary school children suffer from depression. If one of your students is constantly underachieving, then maybe he/she is suffering from some form of depression.
112. Because preschoolers have so much energy, they often will *act up*, disrupting the whole class. Endeavor to use courses that will tire them out as much as possible. Discourage them from eating sugar-laden foods that make children hyperactive and hard to control.

Another problem with the preschooler's behavior is concentration. Preschoolers are easily bored, and this leads to their minds wandering on to something else. They start walking into the corner of the room, looking out of the window or they start looking in their bags for their pencils so they can draw something when I want them to listen to me. Some children decide that the boy or girl next to them is more fun and tries to get their attention; this leads to more children being distracted.

When games are played as part of learning, there is usually an element of competition involved in the game. This sometimes presents a challenge as particular children will excel beyond their peers. For the ones who have less ability, the result may be their resorting to tantrums, being selfish, or getting upset when they do not succeed in the game. This can be displayed by shouting, screaming, moping, or at worst, showing verbal or physical violence to the other children.

Some children seem to enjoy poking or hitting other children during the lesson.

### **Elementary School Children**

Children who are at the elementary age are now becoming accustomed to a more structured form of study, and the play theme of teaching is somewhat diminished. This does not mean that there are no games or fun activities for the children, but the major part of the lesson is formal study. However, some of the students are still immature and tend to dislike any kind of formal study. This can result in refusal to carry out tasks that they find difficult or uninteresting, even if the rest of the students are enjoying or completing the tasks.

When teaching English to elementary students, I find these students will deliberately do the opposite to the instructions that are communicated to them, even if they are able to carry out the task. Again as with the younger children, some of the children try to distract others in order to get them to play. At this age, the children's native language ability is now developing rapidly. Therefore, the students like to talk, no matter whether the teacher permits this or not. So students' talking over the teacher's voice to each other is another problem that I have encountered. Boys have a lot of energy and therefore have difficulty sitting still. Some of them may rock back and tilt forward on their chairs to the point of falling off, or stand up, go and speak to other children, or even sit on the floor.

Both boys and girls now are starting to gain self-confidence and may talk back to the teacher, although in general I find this happens mostly with boys. Girls, in general, are still nervous around other children, especially in the classroom environment. The nervous girls may want to push themselves forward but can

be very reticent in doing so. In some cases, if they are very lacking in self-confidence and feel they cannot do a particular task, they may even be reduced to tears.

### **Junior High School and High School Students**

When it comes to secondary-level students and behavioral problems, this group is a lot more difficult to deal with, especially for the inexperienced teacher. **Generally, at this age**, children have become accustomed to learning in the academic environment and know what is expected of them. Therefore, we can say that the general discipline problems described in relation to elementary school teaching will be relatively few. This does not mean that teachers will not experience problems; in fact, the kind of problems that junior high and high school educators have to face with their students can be much more severe.

Adolescents are going through many changes in their lives. Their bodies are changing and their minds are preoccupied with many new feelings and moods. Adolescents are not sure how to handle the new emotions they are experiencing. According to Kathy McCoy and Charles Wibbelsman, “feelings abound in the adolescent years. This moodiness is, to some extent, part of being an adolescent. Part of this has to do with the stress of all the changes adolescents are experiencing in their teenage years.”<sup>21</sup> These emotions can make adolescents especially vulnerable to and easily affected by stress related situations. High school students in particular are under a lot of stress from the pressure to pass examinations and get into their chosen universities. This pressure can come not only from parents but also from the students themselves.

Another thing that can affect secondary, junior high or high school students are the emotional problems related to the budding desire to pair up with the opposite sex. This can play a big part in causing some students' emotional instability. Teenagers in junior high school or the lower years of secondary education are still too emotionally immature to deal with the emotions that are involved in relationships with the opposite sex. Such emotional issues can have a great impact on their general behavior, especially if the students are having problems in a relationship at school. Since very few schools these days are not mixed-sex, or co-ed schools, educators should therefore be aware that some of their students may be having emotional problems due to their relationships with the opposite sex.

In junior high and high schools today, there are many new problems and pressures that would not have had to be considered in years past. One of these problems is violence. Violence is an ever-increasing problem for school children today. A *New York Times* report stated: "Twenty percent of students in New York City carry arms. The head of New York City schools from 1990 to 1992, Joseph Fernandez, admitted: 'I have never seen anything like the violence we now have in our big-city schools ... I could not imagine when I accepted the chancellorship in New York in 1990 that it would be so bad.'"<sup>22</sup> With headlines like this, it is not surprising that some students are having problems at some junior high and high schools. Add to this the reports of sexual harassment of girls, incidents of rape and the ever-present menace of illegal drugs. All these things can affect the performance and behavior of junior high and high school students.

**Which statement is the most accurate?**

113. Nervous girls may be disinclined to push themselves forward and can be very quiet. In some cases, if they feel very insecure and that they cannot do a particular task, it is best to push them a little – even if it causes them to cry at times.
114. Students become more responsible in junior and high school, so teachers will not experience many behavioral problems from them.
115. Reports of sexual harassment of girls, incidents of rape and the ever-present menace of illegal drugs are common in many schools today. All these things can affect the performance and behavior of junior high and high school students.
116. Feelings and moods can cause adolescents to get easily affected by stress-related situations. High school students in particular are under a lot of stress from the pressure to pass examinations, buy a car, get into a specific university and make plans for marriage.

## **MODULE - 10**

### **Some Other Reasons for Problems in Schools**

#### **No Breakfast**

Many students eat little or no breakfast. Research has recently shown that the children who have a good breakfast tend to perform better in school. In what ways do the students benefit from eating a good breakfast? According to the *ADA Information Services* website, “they have a higher than average school attendance than those who skip breakfast. They have less tardiness and have fewer stomach aches in the morning during school time.”<sup>23</sup> Another thing the research shows is that children have better concentration in the classes if they eat a good breakfast. What the content of the breakfast is does not seem to matter, as long as they don’t

skip on this important meal.

### **Not Enough Sleep**

I asked the students in my high school classes in, “What time do you go to bed?” In most cases the answer was around midnight. I further investigated their evening routines and found that it’s not that they are studying late into the night. Rather, many of them were staying out late in town or at the shopping centers, at video game arcades or enjoying club activities. However, the biggest reason I found for their staying up late was either to watch television or to play computer or video games. According to researchers, even when children or adults go to bed at a reasonable time, if they have been watching television, working on the computer or playing video games, their minds can still be very active for up to another whole hour after going to bed, thus inhibiting sleep.

### **Lunchtime Eating Habits**

Another reason for their tiredness, I found from my research, was that many of the students’ lunchtime diets consisted of junk food, usually bought at the local shop, supermarket or school vending machine. The students usually chose the junk food, even though there were many healthy alternatives. The problem according to the latest studies as reported in *The Japan Times* is that “the kids buy these snacks in the lunch break, get a sugar rush, then their heads just hit the desks and fall asleep.”<sup>24</sup> This is hardly conducive to concentrated study in the classroom.

### **The Problem of Disturbance**

Some of the students seem to ignore completely the teacher, not by sleeping, but

by being distracting in other ways during the lesson. Some of the students I observed were writing letters to their friends; these letters are then passed through the class to the intended reader. This is not disturbing in itself, but it does not equate to a good study experience or environment. Some of the other situations I observed were such things as the female students putting makeup on during the lesson, eating food in class and drawing cartoons on the desks.

The biggest problem I experienced was that of noise. The students would talk amongst themselves about things not even remotely related to the lesson. This kind of behavior can be very problematic as the educator is competing with the students for their attention and participation during the time of instruction. This is one of the most frequent complaints of Assistant English Teachers in Japan. This is a problem in any lesson, no matter what the subject. This problem is common to many schools in almost every country in the world.

#### Other Problems That Educators May Face When Teaching

There are other problems educators may face, especially in high school, but these are too complex and varied, beyond the scope of this thesis. However, many of the problems educators experience are associated with the society we live in today. These include such things as student violence toward other students, violence against teachers, bullying, theft, vandalism, cheating at tests and sexual harassment. In some schools, there are reports of rape and murder. However common these problems may be in schools, I will concentrate on the behavioral problems inside the classroom.

**Which sentence below is the most accurate?**

117. Research has recently shown that children who have a good breakfast tend to perform better in school. According to the *ADA Information Services* website: “They have a higher than average concentration ability than those who skip breakfast. They have less tardiness and have fewer headaches in the morning during school time.”
118. As a teacher, the author found that many of his students are not studying late into the night. However, they still go to bed late because of staying out on the streets or in shopping centers. Others play video games, watch TV or help their parents with a part-time job.
119. *The Japan Times* reported that students are eating too much junk food, which gives them a sugar rush. When they return to the classroom, they are overactive and cannot sit still.
120. A teacher working in a public school system needs to be prepared to face such things as student violence towards other students, violence towards the teacher, bullying, vandalism, cheating at tests, even murder, rape and sexual harassment.

**The Solutions to Behavioral Problems**

The problems I will be discussing in this thesis are generally associated with elementary and primary school students. However, this teaching methodology can be adapted to any teaching situation whether it be students in kindergarten, junior high or high schools. The ideas in this thesis are designed to help all teachers have more enthusiastic, well-structured and beneficial lessons. In addition, I want to relate the information concerning behavioral disorders such as ADD/ADHD. But the information I am going to consider now can relate to teaching ALL students, whether they have particular behavior problems due to ADD/ADHD or not.

**The First Day in the Classroom**

You walk into a new class and you are dealing with new students. Whatever age

they are, no doubt some will not behave as you expect them to. We as adults generally know how to behave and even very young children sometimes seem to be responsible and intelligent. Unless you are an experienced teacher or have had your own, most of the children you've met till now **were not your own and** generally appeared well behaved. However, when children of any age get together, the good behavior they demonstrate on their own can suddenly go out the window. They seem to have no idea of order or discipline when they find themselves in front of their peers. Young children, for example, have a built-in desire to show how daring they are in front of others, especially in the classroom environment. Words such as *behave*, *be good* and *discipline* are suddenly missing from their vocabulary. How will you, the educator, deal with this situation?

If you look nervous and unsure of yourself, your students will soon notice. Maybe on the first day you can get away with it, but as we all know, first impressions count. You may want to show that you will stand for no dissent, enforcing an ironhanded regime wherein any students who step out of line will suffer the consequences. At the other end of the spectrum, you may want to be the “kind, caring, “anything-goes” educator, as long as the students do their assigned work and tasks – what many call “the organized chaos classroom.”<sup>25</sup> However, to be realistic, somewhere in-between the two is probably the best compromise. If you remember the disciplinarian educator when you were at school, did you recall enjoying that subject and excelling in the lesson? I remember that kind of educator when I was at school. It was a French class. I did not enjoy studying French until I was older. Do you have a similar experience of the lessons and teaching style you

enjoyed and that you excelled at the most? Whatever kind of teacher you want to be, your personality will probably be your best guide; you cannot be what you are not.

The best thing I have found from my teaching experience is to “set the rules from the first day.”<sup>26</sup> If you want them to stand up when they answer, if you want them to say thank you every time you give them a hand out, or if you want classroom assistants to do chores like collecting work, whatever it is, instill it from the first day. I can assure you, it is possible to instill it later, but it takes longer to get them to do it naturally.

### **The Classroom Environment**

The first thing you need to do is to look at the classroom itself. Is it neat, orderly, clean and bright, or is it dirty, cluttered, distracting or dark? Look around your classroom and have a good look. Clear away or throw out anything that does not relate to the classroom (last year’s posters). Arrange for the students to get involved in making the classroom look attractive for the lesson; in this way they will feel responsible for keeping it tidy. If possible, adjust the lighting so that all students can see clearly.

Children with behavior problems such as ADHD will become easily distracted by anything or anyone. How can educators keep the children’s attention focused on the material and information of the lesson? How can the children’s attention remain on the educator? The first thing to do is to look at the seating arrangement. Make sure that all students are facing you during times you are giving instruction, and that the students can see the board comfortably from where they are sitting.

Check and ensure that all seating is in good order and correctly adjusted to the correct height for each student. If there is no carpeted area, provide carpet squares; place these on the floor when needed. Do not be frightened to adjust the seating in order to accommodate for different teaching styles and lessons. This will provide for a more organized and comfortable class for the students and will put less exertion on you, the educator.

Seat any students with behavior problems near the center of instruction away from any distracting objects or disturbing students. Keep them away from windows and areas of busy traffic. Seat such behaviorally challenged students next to students that are good role models. This will have a positive effect on the students with recognized behavioral difficulties. Arrange desks into a neat and orderly system, and establish rules to coincide with the boundaries of desk placement. The desk surfaces should be neat, having only the essential items for that lesson, no more.

**Which sentence below is the most accurate?**

121. When children of any age get together, though they may usually be well behaved, they will often challenge the teacher in front of their classmates to see how far they can go.
122. Even if you look nervous and unsure of yourself, your younger students will not notice.
123. You may want to show from the very first day that you will stand for no dissent, iron-handedly showing that any student who steps out of line will suffer the consequences. Alternatively, as a teacher you never want to give the impression that anything goes, just as long as the students do their assigned work and tasks. This only leads to so-called “organized classroom chaos.”
124. Keep the children’s attention on the lesson material. Be sure to seat any students with behavior problems near windows and/or areas of busy traffic. Seat the students with behavior problems next to students who are good role models.

These days even children as young as six years old may have cell, or mobile, telephones; therefore, make sure these are left in the lockers and are not available to play with. This advice goes for any other electronic gadgets students may have brought to school.

Places for items students use in the classroom should be correctly and clearly labeled so all students know where everything is and where things should be returned once they're finished using them. Color-coding is particularly useful in this regard; it ensures that all students, with or without behavior problems, can distinguish with relative ease where things should go and where they should not. Students with behavior problems, especially with ADD/ADHD, have problems remembering things, so this will benefit them greatly. In addition, having a schedule of the **days and weeks' activities** is essential. In this way, all students **know where and when they are expected to be** and what is required of them. "Give a copy of the schedule to each student, which must be on the students' desks at all times."<sup>27</sup> There should be an area in the classroom where this schedule and any other important notices are displayed, such as a calendar of upcoming events. This area should be free from any other less important notices. As for displaying children's work, which is also essential, this should be displayed clearly in another area of the classroom.

In some schools, it is the general practice to call the students by their family names. Whether this is true or not in the school that you teach in, I advocate that you always refer to the students by their first name. Why? I found from my

experience that students respond much better to instruction if they are called by their first names. Of course, some students may have the same name. In that case, I call them by both first and family name. Of course, you can keep both students on their toes if you don't. One of the things I do is instruct the students to make their own name cards, which are then placed facing the teacher on each student's desk. This makes it easy for the teacher to remember the names of all the students, no matter how many classes they teach.

### **Supplies of Needed Materials**

Have you ever been frustrated when you ask the students to take out the materials for the next assigned task and find that a number of students do not have the items required? To overcome this, it is essential to instruct the students on the first day of class exactly what they are required to have for every lesson. There should be no exceptions to this rule. Enforcing it is very important, for if the educator is lax in this area, the students will soon get into the habit of forgetting items and expecting the educator to provide temporary replacements.

What if particular students often forget items, as students with ADHD often do? What can the educator do? The parents need to be informed that their child is unable to remember the materials for the classes. Help the parent to take accountability for making sure all items for each day's classes are in their child's school bag. Of course, with children having ADHD, the educator may make some exceptions. All students should have a basic pack of items needed, and this should include all textbooks. But what else is required?

Here is a sample list of basic supplies the students need to bring: "Pad of standard

notebook paper, three-ringed binder, sharpened pencils, erasers, pencil sharpeners, a ruler, crayons, glue stick, scissors, calculator, dictionary, colored pencils, pencil case, paper clips, colored index cards and highlighter pens.”<sup>28</sup> Give a printed list to each student addressed to the parent, so the parent can buy the necessary items. Remind any students with ADHD as they leave the class to give it to their parent that day. If all the children have these items in their possession, then any behavior problems that might occur by not having the required items and associated wasted time is avoided. Still, some children will not have everything that is mandatory, so backup supplies are needed. These should not be new since this may give the impression that the children can get a nice new pencil or other item to use if they forget theirs. Use old, plain pencils, crayons, and paper to reinforce the idea of bringing their own.

### **The Attitude of the Educator as a Role Model**

Students are looking to the teacher for direction, for guidance, for support and for discipline. “Children often behave in ways teachers find inappropriate.”<sup>29</sup> Children often imitate others, usually those adults closest to them, their parents and their teachers. Therefore, “modeling appropriate behavior is one of the best ways”<sup>30</sup> to teach children the correct and acceptable way of behaving. The teacher has to show confidence that he or she is the person in charge and that he/she will deal firmly but fairly with all students. This is done without discrimination toward any student, no matter what their race, religion, color, sex, or disability. In some cases, you as the teacher will have to make allowances for students with behavioral disorders such as **ADHD/ADD**, etc. In general, though, the educator should try his

or her best to treat all students the same. How can this be done in a way that benefits all, including the students with recognized behavioral problems? The key is your relationship with the students and the attitude and personality you display towards them.

You, as the teacher, need to show dignity and respect to your students. Speak in a firm, calm voice at all times, whether you are instructing or disciplining your students. Shouting at the top of your voice shows you have not only lost control, but this may terrify some of the more sensitive students. Always be positive, creative and energetic in your instruction. Your students should see you as approachable, someone they can speak to when they need to voice concerns. Try to be understanding and show empathy. Make your lessons interesting and enjoyable. Try “many different teaching methods, not everything will work, so do not be afraid to go back to the drawing board if certain ideas are not working as well as you would like.”<sup>31</sup>

**Which statement is the most accurate?**

125. Give each student a schedule, which must be on their desks at all times. There should be an area in the classroom where this schedule and any other important notices like a calendar of upcoming events are displayed. Color-coding is particularly useful for this.
126. It is recommended that you always refer to the students by their first name. Students respond much better to instruction if they are called by their first names; however, if they misbehave, then it is recommended that you use their full name.
127. It is also recommended to have the students make their own name cards, which are then placed on their desks facing other fellow students. This makes it easy for the teacher to remember the names of all the students – no matter how many classes they teach.
128. The teacher needs to accord the students dignity and respect. Whether you are instructing or disciplining your students, at all times endeavor to speak in a calm yet firm voice. Shouting out loud shows that you have lost

control, and it may frighten some of the more sensitive students.

### **Using Humor in the Classroom**

Using humor in the classroom is essential. An old saying says, “Laugh and the world laughs with you.” This is also true in the classroom. According to the book *Fun Facts* (Corridan and Hoch, page 80), children laugh four hundred times a day. As we get older we become more serious and forget to laugh. Laughter has been medically proven to overcome stress. Humor can help the educator overcome discipline problems in the classroom no matter how large the problem. In fact, in large classes humor is very effective. Kim Tracy reports that she dresses up as a substitute teacher, “Professor *Deci mal*,” to inject humor into her mathematics classes. She also recommends “playing lively music to get the students’ thinking patterns working.” She says, “Humor in the classroom will foster youngsters who will feel at ease in the classroom.”<sup>32</sup> Students in your class have a natural sense of joy, so the educator can use this natural joy and humor to enliven and enrich their lessons. Humor is a fantastic way to relieve the stress in you and your students. “Laughter releases chemicals in the body, which reduce tension and pain.”<sup>33</sup> Humor will make learning for the students – and teaching for the educator – an effective and enjoyable experience.

### The Behavior of the Students

In every group of students there will be some who do not need any direction in how to behave. Unfortunately, though, most students need guidance in this area. The

more students in the class, the more direction they will need. Some students will probably have recognized behavioral problems such as ADD/ADHD. How can you, the educator, use preventive measures to minimize the potential behavioral problems?

*“The earlier the better,”* and *“do not put off till tomorrow what you can do today, for tomorrow never comes,”* are two popular old sayings. The same thinking should apply when you are instructing your class on the behavior you expect. The educator should not underestimate the need to establish defined rules and instructions as soon as possible. As the students come into the class stand by the door, greet each one, and expect an appropriate response. In addition, instruct the students to greet each other as they enter the room. If you are teaching a language, say the greeting in the language the students are studying. When defining rules and behavior to the students, rather than merely verbally giving the rule, model the particular action and demonstrate it visually. Then instruct the students to imitate your example. Now let’s consider some examples of modeling patterns of behavior.

If you want the students to stand when answering a question or reading, you could model with a student first; then after that, always reinforce the action. If you want the students to say “thank you” when receiving assignments, you could first model this yourself by example, then wait for their appropriate reply. Another rule you may wish to establish may be that of having the **students** stand up before class is dismissed. In anycase, wait until all students are standing before dismissing them. They will soon get into the habit of standing quickly if they know that dismissal

will be delayed if they are not ready.

Establish “off-limits” areas in the classroom. Role-play all expected behavior patterns, and establish the consequences of not fully carrying them out. In addition, role-play social skills; then, all students will understand how and why they should conduct themselves when interacting with other students. Often, students with recognized behavioral problems such as ADHD will interrupt you or the lesson. Try to maintain the attention of the other students, or these may start disrupting the lesson. To prevent this, try to role-play potential situations that could occur so that all the students recognize this behavior as unacceptable. In addition, role-play expected replies. For example, if a student is late teach the student that it is appropriate to approach the teacher and say, “I am sorry I am late,” followed with the reason.

#### Praise, Reprimand, Reward and Punishment

There is nothing worse for a student than to think that he or she is always the one getting the punishment. Children do not like criticism. When a child is criticized, according to the book *Gentle Discipline* by Dawn Lighter M.A., he or she will often “feel angry and defensive.”<sup>34</sup> Consequently, the child will be less likely to cooperate. Therefore, when you are reprimanding someone, try to avoid any potential conflict that might occur by beginning with a positive statement. For example, if a Japanese student is speaking his native tongue in English class, you might say, “you speak Japanese very well, Kazuhiro, but we are studying English now.”

We need to give appropriate praise whenever we have the opportunity. Therefore, try to catch the students being good and praise them for doing so. When reprimanding, always do this in a calm but firm voice. This area of behavioral instruction is particularly important, especially for students with recognized behavioral problems such as ADHD. If possible, try to anticipate any potential problems and act accordingly. At times, the educator may have to curtail one activity and change to another at short notice if some of the students are showing signs of aggression, tension or stress. This will keep the situation in the classroom under control. If the educator carries out these actions it will prevent the inappropriate behavior from occurring in the first place and, in turn, reduce the need for discipline.

**Which statement is the most accurate?**

- 129. Children laugh up to four hundred times a day; however, as we get older we become more serious and laugh only four times a day.
- 130. Laughter has been medically proven to overcome stress. Humor can help the educator overcome discipline problems in the classroom – even in large classes. In many cases humor is very effective.
- 131. Studies show that laughter releases chemicals in the body, reducing tension and pain. However, too much humor will cause problems in the classroom. When this happens, teachers are in danger of losing control – not an enjoyable experience.
- 132. In every group of students there will be some who do not need any direction as to how to behave. Unfortunately, most students need guidance. In fact, you can expect that the fewer students in the class, the more direction they will need.

**Reprimanding the Students**

Whatever way you decide to reprimand your students for bad behavior, the most important thing is consistency. It is very difficult to establish discipline in the class

without consistency. Young students are learning how to behave; therefore, if you are inconsistent in the way you reprimand or whom you reprimand, it will send a confused signal to your students who are looking to you to guide them on their behavior. Children are always trying to establish the limits of their behavior, and until the educator or parent sets these limits the children will constantly try to test their authority. One thing to remember is that not all behavior needs to be punished or reprimanded. Minor misbehavior that does not affect the class and is not deliberate can usually be ignored.

When giving reprimands try not to nag children since this gives them a feeling of being picked on. Never use sarcasm – this is something to be avoided – and try not to raise your voice. In fact it is better to lower your voice, which actually *gains* the student's attention. Make the reprimand short and to the point. Always keep eye contact during the reprimand, as this will make the students realize you are concerned about their behavior and prevent their ignoring the point you are making.

When it is possible, take the student out of the classroom and speak to them in private. This does not necessarily mean leaving the reprimand till later, as it needs to be addressed there and then. In the case of students with recognized behavioral problems such as ADHD, they will need more instructions on their behavior. You can do this with prearranged signals rather than using your voice; a touch on the chin or a look is all that you will need in many cases. If you employ these methods, you will avoid unnecessarily disconcerting the student in front of their peers. In addition, the student will appreciate your tact and will be more willing to listen to

your counsel.

Another thing to remember is that it is the student's behavior that is in question, not the student himself; therefore, always focus on the inappropriate *action* rather than the person. In addition, one extremely important thing for all educators to remember is that they should always stay calm and unemotional when giving a reprimand, and never take personal offense.

### **Praise is Important**

Praise, praise, praise. Yes, this is so important for any student, no matter what age the students or what kind of lesson the educator is teaching. Educators need to praise the good behavior and actions of the students whenever possible. Educators need to show a very positive attitude and tone of voice when administering praise. An educator who is deeply involved with his or her students, who uses a hands-on approach to teaching, and keeps a close eye on the students will find many opportunities for praise. A kind and appreciative word can go a long way, a "*well done*" or "*that's good work*" will let the students know that their hard work and good behavior is recognized and appreciated. Try not to over-praise particular students who always show good behavior as this may, 1) embarrass that student, and, 2) cause jealousy in the other students. Try to balance your praise amongst the students. Always give positive feedback when a student is displaying good behavior. Sometimes the plaudits can be in the form of a note or letter, given before or after the class. Older students especially may feel embarrassment by too much public praise.

### **Rewarding Good Behavior**

Rewards are a useful weapon in overcoming inappropriate behavior. The introduction of rewards into the school lesson is relatively easy. The rewards can consist of anything; for example, sweets, chocolate or candy are good rewards for young children. In addition, the educator can use classroom materials, stickers or small toys. However, the rewards do not have to be material items. For instance, the reward could be an extended break, the choice to leave early, extra time on some favorite activity, or just something appropriate for the effort. The students could earn the reward over a short or long period of time. In addition, some rewards may involve the whole class.

Whatever rewards you decide to introduce for students, these should be displayed on *good behavior* wall charts on the notice board or an accessible place, and in this way all students can see their good behavior progress on a daily basis. The good behavior wall chart is best if it is colorful, bright, easy to understand, and large enough for all students to see their progress.

The rewards can consist of short-term and long-term rewards. However, the educator should gradually reduce the rewards as the desired behavior of students is achieved. In the case of children with ADHD, the reward system may not always guarantee achievement of the desired effect. There are different opinions on the idea of reward and punishment for children who have a recognized behavioral disorder such as ADHD. According to Gregory Bodenhamer on his Internet web book, *Free to Thrive, Curing, ADHD, ADD, and ODD*, “reward and punishment is

not effective for children with ADHD.”<sup>35</sup> Whether we agree or disagree with rewarding good behavior in the classroom, educators need to remember that many have had success with a reward system. Educators should at least try a reward method in their classes.

**Which statement is the most accurate?**

- 133. Children need regular constructive criticism. However, bear in mind that when a child is criticized, he or she will often “feel angry and defensive.”
- 134. Whenever they have the opportunity, teachers should try to praise instead of criticize. However they should never pretend not to see the bad; instead, catch the students being good and praise them for it. When reprimanding, always do this in a calm but firm voice.
- 135. When you can, it is best to anticipate potential problems and do something about them before they happen. At times, if some students are showing signs of aggression, tension or stress, the educator may have to change activities at short notice. Thus, the educator will prevent inappropriate behavior from occurring in the first place and, correspondingly, limit the need for discipline.
- 136. There are several ways to reprimand your students for bad behavior. Whatever method you choose, however, the most important thing is consistency. Without consistency it is very difficult to get discipline in the classroom.

Whatever way you decide to reprimand your students for bad behavior, the most important thing is consistency. It is very difficult to get discipline in the class without consistency.

**Punishment of Bad Behavior**

Consistency is the key word when it comes to many things connected with teaching and corrective behavior. Educators and parents always need to be consistent when disciplining the children in their care. This is a must. The educator

has to find the kinds of punishment that are most effective. An effective punishment for one child does not necessarily work for another.

Hitting a child that is behaving badly used to be a common form of punishment. According to studies in the book, *Attitudes of Primary Care toward Corporal Punishment*, “hitting is [an] ineffective way to discipline a child,”<sup>36</sup> though other authorities may beg to differ. Whatever the research and opinions show, however, where educators are concerned, hitting students under any circumstances is not acceptable these days and should never be used.

The types of punishment that are both acceptable and effective are verbal reprimands, removal of privileges and periods of isolation. When using periods of isolation, you should always have the child in physical view. One way to isolate the child is to sit him or her on a chair in the corner of the room. In addition, the book *Gentle Discipline* by Dawn Lighter, M.A., suggests an ideal amount of time for a child to be put into an isolation situation. She recommends “one minute for each year of the child’s age. Children under the age of three ... are too young for this type of discipline, as it could cause emotional trauma.”<sup>37</sup> So this applies only to children of three years or older.

When administering any form of punishment, an important thing you should always remember is that you should not get emotional, no matter how traumatic the situation. This means in practical terms that when giving a verbal reprimand, you do not shout or scream at the child. Always speak in a calm but firm voice and

manner. When speaking to the child the educator's body language indicates the seriousness of the situation and must be indicative of the message and consistent with the educator's words. There are many ways to correct badly behaved students. It is up to the teacher to decide which is best for the child in question; however do not give extra written work as a punishment, as this serves no useful purpose.

### Parents and Educators Need to Understand Each Other

Parents and Educators need to respect each others' positions in relation to the teaching and behavioral responsibilities toward the students. Parents need to respect the educator, his or her teaching methods, and understand that in the classroom the teacher is responsible for everything that happens. In turn, the teacher should keep the parents informed of any problems with their children.

There needs to be excellent communication between the teachers and parents. Parents also need to help the teacher by following his or her instructions in relation to behavioral problems and solutions. One example is homework. Parents need to make sure that the child does the homework as early as possible after the child gets home from school, doing so away from the television in a quiet place. In addition, the parents need to ensure their children get sufficient sleep. According to Dr. Mary Carskadon, Director of the Sleep Research Laboratory of Bradley Hospital in Providence, Rhode Island (U.S.), "Around the ages of eleven to thirteen the human body changes. As students move into puberty they need more sleep."<sup>38</sup> Therefore, parents need to make sure their children are getting the required eight hours of

sleep each night.

### Teaching Methods to Keep the Students Attentive and Focused

Keeping the young students' attention on the lesson and the information you want to impart to them is one of the age-old problems of teaching. The younger the students, the more difficult it is to keep their attention. It is especially difficult for students with behavioral problems such as ADHD. In what ways can educators help not only children with behavioral problems but all of the students to pay attention to the lesson?

The world we live in today is visual, and the children you teach are accustomed to this visual world. Children have access to a broad array of visual media – computer games and software, television, videos, DVDs, colorful magazines and books. If we present our lesson in a non-visual, black-and-white form, their attention will soon wane. Therefore, educators need to present lessons in a way that captures the attention of such visually oriented learners; this means being creative in making their lessons.

### **Visual Teaching**

According to the book, *Teaching the Two Sided Mind*, by Linda Verlee Williams, the brain is specialized for different but complementary forms of processing. Unfortunately, the school system seems to cater only to the left side of the brain, the non-visual side, which processes information systematically. This way of teaching relates to the textbook oriented system that is important, but it neglects the other half of the brain. The world is full of visual things and this is associated

with the right side of the brain. In one exercise by Diane Streeter, an English teacher in California, she found that many students “could not easily understand English grammar taught in the conventional way. After the so-called brighter students moved up to a higher class, she tried a teaching style that utilizes the right side of the brain on the students left in the class.”<sup>39</sup> She asked the students to visualize that they *were* a particular verb or noun. Then she asked the students how they felt. In addition, she asked the students to interact with each other to visualize how verbs, nouns and adjectives connect and interact to each other. What was the result of this visual teaching? The students scored higher on the tests than the so-called brighter students.

Using this information, what are some practical ways educators can present their lessons in an exciting and creative way to capture the attention of their students and keep the students’ minds on the lessons? As we have already concluded, in order to use the brain the lesson needs to be presented in a visual way. To start with, use color. Color focuses the minds of the students, so have available color markers, pens and chalks. Use these colors in the presentation of the lesson and material. As for the whiteboard or blackboard itself, keep it free of clutter so the students are only looking at the material the educator is conveying. One more point to remember is not to teach too much information at one time; instead, try to give the students time to assimilate the information being imparted before moving on.

### **Using an Overhead Projector**

If educators have access to an overhead projector, this will be a great advantage in keeping the students’ attention. An overhead projector helps the educator to focus

on the students rather than on the board. If you are using an overhead projector, it will be advantageous to prepare the acetate beforehand. When presenting the material, you should expose only the material you want the students to focus on, gradually uncovering the material as it becomes relevant to the lesson.

### **The Pace of the Lesson**

Educators who have slow, uninteresting, monotonous and mind-numbing lessons will soon lose the attention of the student. Therefore educators need to teach in an animated style. Therefore, vary the speed and pace of the lesson. However, do not present the lesson at too fast a pace as you will lose the slower students and their attention. In addition, keep the vocabulary of the lesson at a level all the students can understand. If the students cannot understand your instructions, once again, you will lose their attention.

### **Speaking With the Appropriate Volume When Teaching**

Educators need to pay attention to their voice. Are you a quiet or loud speaker? This is an important question in regard to the projection of the educator's voice. If the educator speaks too quietly, the students will not be able to hear, and will soon start to ignore the educator. If the educator speaks too vociferously, the students will soon feel tired by the loud manner and speech. To overcome this problem, appropriate volume is important. This volume needs to be appropriate to every situation. The volume should be appropriate to the size and shape of the room. In addition, the educator "needs to be aware of varying conditions under which he or she speaks,"<sup>40</sup> by taking into account any background noise such as building work, traffic or adverse weather. How can educators know if the volume is appropriate?

Watch the students at the back of the room, look at their faces. Are they looking keenly at you, do their faces look like they are straining to hear your voice? These indicators will be your guide to the appropriate volume of your voice.

### **The Need for Eye Contact**

Educators can get into the habit of talking to the students with their back to them when writing on the board. When imparting information, educators need to face the students at all times. If you do not face the students when imparting information, it will be a signal for the students to ignore you. Let the students know you are speaking to each one personally by keeping regular eye contact with as many of them as possible. This may be difficult with a large class. In that case, look around the class and look at a different student every thirty seconds. When giving directions, you should always keep the directions clear and uncomplicated. Additionally, do not give too many instructions at one time. Students with behavioral problems such as ADHD will forget all of the instructions if there are too many. In addition, the other students will only remember a limited amount of the information or instructions.

### **Keeping the Students' Minds Active**

Students can easily become unfocused from the learning experience when they have nothing to do. Usually this starts at the beginning of the class as students are waiting for instructions for the upcoming lesson, so always have something prepared for students who are waiting for you or other students to get ready. Once you are ready, do not give any instruction until you have the full attention of the students. It may be a waiting game; however, there is nothing worse than trying to

give instructions over a raucous class. While clarifying instructions use positive comments rather than negative comments by highlighting a student who is acting correctly rather than a student who is not doing so.

□ **Which statement is the most accurate?**

137. Even minor misconduct affects the class and so it usually should not be ignored. One thing to remember is that if the child misbehaves a little now, in time it will misbehave a lot.
138. Another thing to remember is that it is the student's behavior that is in question – not the student personally. Therefore, always focus more on the inappropriate action than on the person doing it.
139. Rewarding students is an effective way to control behavior. *Good Behavior* wall charts should be used so that everyone can see who is good and who is bad. Indicate good behavior with bright colors and negative behavior with dark colors; thus all the students can see their progress.
140. If one form of punishment works for one age group then stick to it, because it will work for others in the class too.

### The Lesson, Assignments and Homework

You have taught your students the rules of the classroom; you have modeled and practiced these rules with your students. Your students have become quiet as they await your words. You have a bright, well-organized and equipped classroom. All the students know where everything is stored and where to replace anything they use. The students have schedules and behavior charts on the walls and know fully how to use them.

Now comes the teaching and instructing of the students. When you give the instructions, be positive, lively and enthusiastic. If you show enthusiasm, then so will your students. The students are individuals, so be flexible and adjust your lessons to the individuals before you. In addition do not blanket teach, but give

relative equal and individual attention to the students.

How will you present the material? I have already discussed that color is effective in keeping attention. So use a variety of colors to make it interesting for your students. Also the use of pictures, drawings, illustrations and stories is very effective. Encourage the students to take notes by explaining that you will ask questions throughout the lesson. When you talk to the students do not talk for a long time with no response; get them involved in the lesson. Keep teacher talking time low and student talking time high. Try not to be predictable; instead, keep the students on their toes. This means the use of random questioning; then, they never know who is going to be called on next to give a response to your many and varied open-ended questions.

Always move around the classroom and keep a high visual profile, giving the appropriate help and checking and rechecking on the students' progress. Students who have behavioral problems need constant directions to keep them focused on the lesson. Arrange some unspoken signals so you do not have to publicly interrupt the flow of the lesson. In the pace of the lesson, keep it at a lively and enjoyable speed.

### **Pictures and Drawings**

*"Pictures paint a thousand words."* Yes, pictures are excellent ways of keeping your students focused on and enjoying what the educator is doing. Pictures can help students visualize in their minds information much better than words or speech. Pass the pictures around the class so the students can hold and touch them, rather than just putting them on the board. This implants the images much

better into the students' minds. Additionally, organize games with the pictures with associated questions; this will make the lesson exciting and interesting for the students.

Drawings, in the same way as pictures, can help focus the students' minds and keep them interested. If you cannot draw it doesn't matter. In fact, bad or strange drawings can create humor in the class; therefore, the more humorous the drawings, the better. In addition get the students drawing either on the board, on prepared paper or in their notebooks. Drawings and pictures are great ways to use visual media to keep the attention of the students and keep their behavioral problems in check.

□ **Which statement is the most accurate?**

141. These days, research and opinions dictate that it is not permissible for educators to hit students; this should never be done.
142. Some students understand the lesson better and will finish their assignments before other students. Allow these students to leave the room; otherwise, there will be the potential for distracting elements to arise in the classroom.
143. Remember: When it comes to discipline do not get emotional, no matter how angry you might feel. When giving a verbal reprimand, do not yell and scream at the child. Always speak in a calm but firm voice and manner.
144. Parents should keep an eye on their child and on the educator. However, they need to respect the educator and his/her teaching methods. They need to understand that in the classroom, it is the teacher who is responsible. He or she needs the parent's support.

### **Moving Around the Classroom**

Young students will find it difficult to stay in one place at a time. Therefore, build into the lesson elements that give the students a reason to get up and move

around. If this is not possible, then get the students to do a few organized exercises. In addition, if the lesson is scheduled to be very long, arrange breaks so the students can get up and move around, have a snack, or go to the toilet. One point to keep in mind: make sure the breaks are kept to strict time limits and are rigorously enforced. As for you, the educator, do not stand in one place like a manikin; move around, use animated gestures and be exciting.

### **Classroom Assignments**

When the students are doing classroom assignments, keep the classroom atmosphere relaxed by playing some light music. This will also keep the students focused on their tasks. On the other hand, so that the students don't become too tranquil, set time limits on all classroom assignments. In order to keep the students on schedule with the assignments, arrange a timer such as a bell to remind them of the time limit to the exercise. One thing to remember is to keep a close eye on all the students' abilities to complete the assignment in the allotted time and without any help. If you find certain students are struggling with the assignments, then either adjust the assignments for those particular students to less difficult assignments or appoint a capable helper for them.

You will find that some students will do the assignments very quickly, but there is no need to give these students assignments that are more difficult. There is a need, though, to make sure the assignment is carried out correctly according to your instructions. Some students will finish their assignments before others do. To prevent boredom, have additional work for those students to do. Otherwise, there

will be a potential for distracting elements to arise in the classroom.

### **Rules for Homework**

Homework is an important part of the learning experience and useful for developing good personal study habits. Typically, children should be able to complete the homework assignments in less than thirty minutes, so bear this in mind when setting the amount you require your students to complete. As for students with ADHD, they will take much longer so make exceptions by reducing the amount of homework or make allowances for the results. Do not assign homework as a punishment, since this serves no useful purpose. Always keep up to date on collecting, marking and returning homework. This will show that you consider their homework to be an important assignment.

### **Which statement is the most accurate?**

145. Unfortunately, the school system seems to cater only to the right, non-visual, side of the brain that processes information systematically. This way of teaching relates to a textbook-oriented system, which, although important, neglects the other half of the brain.
146. One more point to remember is: Teach a few things at one time; otherwise, the lesson will get tedious and boring.
147. It is not recommended to assign homework as punishment. Students ought not to think of it as such. Always keep up to date on the collecting, marking and returning of homework.
148. Even in a large classroom, keep regular eye contact with as many students as possible. Look at a different student at least every ten seconds.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

All educators have an accountability to help all the students achieve their potential. Therefore, any students with behavioral problems, whether medically recognized or not, need to study in an environment that will help them triumph over these

problems to the best of their ability. Having such a study environment will benefit not only those students with behavioral problems but all students in the class. The reasons are evident in this study, as the classroom will become a center for development and study. It is possible for all students to overcome the problems they are experiencing at school with their behavior; however, the solutions are in the educators' and parents' hands.

If we can teach these children from an early age how to control their behavior, then they can have a successful life in school and long after they leave. Unfortunately, if children who have behavioral problems leave school and have not worked out how to control their behavior, they probably will never get the help they need and may drift in and out of one job after another. They will probably never realize their potential and have an unsuccessful and unfulfilled life. On the other hand, if they can realize their potential with the help of educators who are prepared to look for and recognize these children and their problems and then give them the necessary help, consideration and attention they need, then they can and will be able to have the same opportunities as all other students – behavior problems or not. It is our responsibility as educators to help, as much as we are able to, all of the students in our care.

**Which statement is the most accurate?**

149. Once everyone is ready, then give instructions. Play the “waiting game,” because there is nothing worse than trying to give instruction to a class that is not listening.
150. Try not to be predictable; instead, keep the students alert. This means the use of random questioning, in order that the students may never know

- who is going to be called on to participate next.
151. If you can draw, then use pictures to help students to focus their minds. However, if you are not a good drawer, skip this method; otherwise your attempts could make the students laugh and joke to the point that you lose control of the class.
  152. In addition, if the lesson is scheduled to be very long then arrange breaks; let the students get up, move around and go to the toilet. Snacks, however, are not recommended. Another point to keep in mind is to make sure that breaks are kept to strict, rigorously enforced time limits.
  153. One thing to remember is: Keep a close eye on the abilities of all the students to complete an assignment unassisted and in the allotted time. If you find some of the students are struggling, then either adjust the assignments for those particular students to less difficult assignments or appoint a capable helper for them.

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