

CASE STUDY

**The Education of a Special Education Student:
with
Parental Disallowance of
Prescribed Psychological Drugs**

By

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*CASE STUDY JOHN

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*Last name changed to protect student identity

Intake Data

He is an African American Special Education student labeled ADHD. The foster father states that he contracted with the courts and the Department of Social Service at age 3 as a foster parent. John was considered a "drug baby" with an extremely traumatic childhood background. At age two John's step father used him for prostitution where he received cigarette burns and various other sexual abuses. The court removed John from his mother's care at age 2 ½. John's foster parent was a single African American male at the time. Since then, he married and had two (2) children of his own. The foster father became concerned for the safety of his other children because of John's violent punching and kicking behavior. John had been "kicked out" of every pre school and elementary school placement in Los Angeles City Schools. The father refused to give the child drugs, therefore no school would accept him without these drugs.

John was interviewed at age "7". His attention span for non-attending activity was approximately 20 seconds. He asked question after question without pausing more than 2 seconds to receive a response. I gave John several kindergarten tasks to observe his on task behavior. Each task was attended to less than 10 seconds before moving on to something else. During the interview, John constantly picked up items and played with them put them down and picked up other items. When his foster father sternly corrected him, he became discouraged. After that he became very "antsy" he began climbing under the table and displaying various other out of seat behaviors.

During the interview, the foster father suggested he was considering letting John return to the court foster care system. I took John on as a non public school counselor and placed him in a school that I was closely affiliated with at the time. Informal evaluations and school I.E.P's

indicated John was operating at a kindergarten and early first grade level in most basic math and language arts skills.

Evolution of a one-to-one tutorial program

After observing John in his first day in class, it was apparent that following the kicking of a student, punching another student in the stomach, and causing disruption to every activity the teacher tried to perform, John was not ready for a formal group learning situation.

I set up a one-to-one tutorial program that started with a baseline expectation of 10 seconds of on task attending. The tutor was paid to implement personally designed plans curriculum to instruct him at his exact skill level. After wearing out four (4) tutors his attention span had improved only to two (2) minutes of on-task attending.

At this point, after one month of individual tutoring, I began to personally work with John on a daily basis for several hours. Using techniques that I had learned over the past 15 years I was able to increase his attending behavior to 15 minutes on academic task. Gradually one student at a time was brought into the tutorial room for a short time and then a longer period of time until a second student was introduced and eventually the whole class was brought to the tutorial room. At that time John and the students requested he be allowed to be in the classroom. John was given the conditions that he must behave and continue with his sessions with me. The peer influence worked temporarily until the teacher began to complain of problems in the classroom and they all would seem to find their trail back to John. Within the year the private school classroom went from 15 students to just 5 students, John and four (4) other students. At the expense of the other 10 ten students we were able to increase John's test scores to the second grade level in both reading and mathematics. Over the summer though the problems became worse and worse. The private school teachers and officials began to resort to high degrees of force, threats, punishments and other suppressive methods which caused John to take his behavior underground when teachers were not looking. The father became disturbed, John became disturbed and soon the private school and John parted.

I actually was beginning to think that for the first time in my professional life, I had met a student that really needed psychological drugs. But, I had been investigating a program called Study Tech through H.E.L.P. (Hollywood Education and Literacy International, an Applied Scholastic Program, for the past six months, and I became convinced that it had credibility. I was willing to give it a try. It became obvious that John responded best to one-to-one tutoring.

Dream Builders One-on-one Tutoring Incorporates “Study Tech”

We made the decision to enroll John in the H.E.L.P. program. Dream Builders again assigned a full time tutor to work with John on a daily basis while he attended H.E.L.P. International. John did well for a while but the H.E.L.P. program was only designed to tutor students for two (2) hours per day, although they desired to do more. We finally rented a space in a building in Inglewood where for a year John was the only student.

Daily, we worked with John. John’s tutor and I spent hour after hour trying out the study technology as a possible solution. We spent time before every session discussing the purpose, importance and reason for the planned activities of the day. John had to be convinced in his world that the plans were important. We implemented the principles of “Study Tech” precisely as outlined in the Study Tech and HELP manuals. His favorite book was Learning How to Learn, which we worked on daily for much of the year. John began to understand the Study Tech so well that when he passed a misunderstood he could associate it with the description of manifested barrier to learning. He would let us know his stomach hurt and he must have a lack of mass (experience with the real thing). When he felt nervous he would tell us he thinks he has a misunderstood word. This developed a real cooperative relationship in the learning process between student and tutor.

John responded by improving his on task attention span to up to 15 minutes and an ability to get through more actual course data than ever before. John was able to get through a whole day of study completing his assignment in all of his courses. However, the problem of John’s restlessness continued through out the one-to-one tutoring. We took frequent breaks to allow John time to run, exercise and sometimes just stare out of the window, which he liked to do. We had his parents give him “B” vitamins and Calm, a vitamin supplement, and we carefully

watched his sugar intake. With all this our instructional periods were generally only 15 minutes at a time.

Key to Special Education Needs and Results

It was recommended to us to try a program called Communication is Fun, based on the learning principals of L. Ron Hubbard. This proved to be the key for John. The treatment in Communication is Fun was training the student to “be there” comfortably. “Be there” means to be where you are at that point in time without your mind or emotions wondering. Along with his academic studies, the Communication Is Fun Program took a few months to complete. We began to observe an impact on his academic. His attention span began to increase during his academic study periods. We observed that his focus and even his reasoning in his academics improved. A student who at one time could not be still for over ten seconds now sat down and held a conversation with an older student for 45 minutes straight without wiggling around or jumping into some physical activity. John completed only one-half of the Communication is Fun activities. John increased his on task attention span to 25 to 45 minutes depending on how much he liked the subject matter. John improved his reading skills to the 3rd grade 5th month per California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) and the 3rd grade level in math . His learning was accelerating quickly; so quickly that the Social Services supervisor was considering removing John from the Special Needs” category. The positive was that John was about to shed a negative label; the negative was that his foster parents would lose hundreds of dollars monthly from Social Services. We gradually brought other students in to begin phasing John back into a group setting. Unfortunately, John’s foster parents started an early childhood education school and removed John to be a mentor to the students and to do home study.

Findings from the Case Study

The most important findings were that the Hubbard Communications Technology combined with the Study Tech program in Learning How to Learn increased not only Johns learning but also his learning capability. The treatment has special significance for Special Education students labeled ADHD that are currently taking psychological drugs as a aid to their educational support and adjustment. In this study, we tried many behavioral methodologies that provided only short-

term success. The most stable results came with the application of the Hubbard Study Tech and the Communications Skills Technology. Since this treatment, we have tried the approach with several other Special Education students classified as ADHD and each time we have consistently had success in improving the student's grades and adjustment in the school and classroom.

Implications of Case Study for Peer Tutoring

Also noteworthy was the early positive results received from peer support and tutoring that John received from several of his classmates. Dream Builders has since then studied the peer tutoring using the Hubbard Technology with numerous other students. We experienced a great degree of success with students that we seemed to be losing. With Special Education students, peer tutoring seemed to reach them, especially in the early phases of tutoring. Peer tutors were trained and certified in the Hubbard Study Tech and in the Hubbard Communication Skills Technology before providing peer tutoring.

Implications for Teacher-student Relationships

Of special interest to teachers is the type of relationship that evolved between the tutor and John. One of the major problems facing educators today is involving students in their own education. Instead of John running away and displaying negative reactions when he ran into learning obstacles or difficulties, he gradually began to identify which feelings he was having and what specific barriers he was experiencing. As John learned the barrier names and their related feelings in the Learning How to Learn book, he would quickly let the tutor know so the correct formula for overcoming the barrier could be applied. As John, most children will quickly associate the release of pain with the associated concept labels. L. Ron Hubbard tested these reactions with thousands of children and adults and found these reactions to be consistent manifestations of the three (3) barriers to learning,

Hubbard identified Barrier one (1) as Lack of Mass, which is the absence of a student's experience with the real thing being studied. Barrier two (2) is called the Skipped Gradient, which means the student has skipped one or more previous steps in the learning experience. Barrier three (3) is called the Misunderstood Word, which means the student has passed a word that is not clearly understood or is wrongly understood. In the three years we worked with John

the manifested feelings of these three barriers were so accurate in identifying and overcoming his learning barriers that John began to trust in the procedures completely.

Since John, Dream Builders has been very successful in the Study Tech practice of other students identifying their barriers through recognizing their physical reactions. We have noticed that each of these students began to blame themselves less and less for their educational difficulties, but began to view them as learning barriers that could be overcome.

Teachers in the educational setting should especially find these procedures useful in building constructive teacher and student classroom relationships. Implementing these procedures as a solution to the wide spread negative relationships between teachers and students in public schools could revolutionize the educational system.

Implications for the Foster Care System

Parents that are diligent to improve their children from “Special Needs” to normal functioning should be rewarded rather than punished by a loss of family income. This would motivate parents to improve students without reservation. A lump sum reward would, in the long run, save the Social Service Agency dollars and provide a financial adjustment period for parents. As it is, it is a financial benefit to the parents for the children to remain “Special Needs”.