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Case Study Presentation

The first gifted student, Emily, was a student I had in the fifth grade who frequently did not complete classwork or homework. The second student, Zoe, is a current student in third grade.

Emily turned in homework only two or three times over the course of the entire school year. Even when I gave her consequences such as missing recess, she would not complete her homework. In addition, she frequently would not complete classwork. She would sit at her desk with her head down and fall asleep, even if I continuously prompted her to get started. She would work more consistently when given an individual work project, but even when she was given choice in an assignment, she still frequently would put her head down and fall asleep, or complete a project that was far from the requirements that I'd set for her. If given material that she did not already know, she would not attempt to study the material and would subsequently fail. For example, toward the end of the year, I gave the students quizzes on state capitals. Emily received failing grades on every test because she would not study the material.

To attempt to help Emily, I tried to meet with her parents, but was not given a response. I referred her to the guidance counselor, who was able to meet with the parents, but found that they did not set boundaries for her at home regarding completion of assignments and setting an appropriate bedtime. It was very difficult to meet Emily's needs in the classroom because her needs were not being met at home, and because she was the only gifted student in a classroom of generally low-achieving students.

To help Emily, I would suggest a program in which she is able to be surrounded with students of similar ability. She should be given the opportunity to do independent projects, but it should be in the context of strict academic goals and guidelines, and she should not be permitted to continue working independently if she proves she is not able to do so.

Zoe is a very perfectionistic, people-pleasing child. She demonstrates classic perfectionistic behavior in that she frequently takes a long time to get started on an assignment, and requires a lot of approval from me on trivial aspects of the assignment. For

example, she will sit with her hand up for several minutes, and when I see what she needs, she will ask a question about if she can underline the title or where to start her indentation. Even though I have repeatedly stated that I check homework for completion and not correctness, Zoe always will come up to me in the morning to tell me that she couldn't figure a particular problem out or that her mom told her to do it a different way than I taught. She has test anxiety and burst into tears during the first test that I gave the students, despite repeated assurances that the test was a district-mandated test and would not count for a score.

To help meet Zoe's needs, I brought her mother in for a conference. Her mother stated that she had told Zoe that As were the only acceptable grade, and also stated that her daughter had not missed a single spelling word on a spelling test during all of second grade. The guidance counselor, who had sat in on the meeting, commented that her mother's rigid expectations may be contributing to Zoe's perfectionism.

I believe that Zoe needs an intervention in which she is able to work to overcome test anxiety by using some cognitive-behavioral techniques. Cognitive behavioral therapy has consistently been shown to help reduce anxiety in children (Sayed, 2014). Cognitive behavioral therapy could also help to overcome some of her perfectionistic characteristics, allowing her to focus her energies into more important efforts, like the content of her writing assignment rather than the number of lines she skipped, where she wrote her name and the date, and how big of an indentation she put on the paper.

Works Cited

Sehrish Sayed, Sarah R. Horn, James W. Murrough. (2014) Current Treatments for Anxiety and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders. *Current Treatment Options in Psychiatry* **1**:3, 248-262