



Building a Teacher's Toolbox
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Top of the mornin' to you, all! I hope that the luck of the Irish is shining down upon you today!

Here is the first newsletter in the new format that I wrote about last week. I hope that this is more "user-friendly" to you and that you can actually get the chance to read the bulleted information, participate with me and other readers in the activity, and then join in the discussion of the activity, and possibly the blog question.

Again, if you are not comfortable with going out to my blog, would you please send me an email and I can forward your comments onto the blog, with your permission of course. I really intend for this to become a more interactive approach to the newsletter, and that it would give us all an opportunity to share ideas.

You will find the bullet notes on oppositional defiant disorder, or ODD, on pages 2-3.

You will find the activity to try in your class on page 4.

You will find the blog question on page 5.

Please let me know what you thought of this new format and let me know if it is more manageable for you as a reader of the newsletter, and that, hopefully, it has more practical applications for your work.

Oppositional Defiant Disorder

ODD is a psychiatric disorder affecting behavior.

Three characteristics of the individual who has ODD are:

- Aggression
- Defiance
- The constant need to irritate others.

When documenting the individual's behavior, characteristics or behavior patterns should be in place for at **least 6 months**. The behaviors will have a negative impact on social and academic functioning. It is important to look for the following characteristics:

- The individual often loses his/her temper
- The individual is defiant and doesn't obey rules/routines
- The individual argues often with adults and peers
- The individual seems to go out of his/her way to annoy others in very bothersome ways
- The individual is often lacking accountability and blames others for inappropriate behaviors
- The individual often seems angry, spiteful and vindictive
- The individual is often prone to tantrums and will be non-compliant

It is important to exercise caution when reading lists of characteristics, and it is key to remember that in determining ODD, it is the frequency of the characteristics that leads to the diagnosis of ODD.

How ODD is diagnosed

Psychiatric disorders are diagnosed by:

- a review of medical history
- ruling out other disorders
- medical tests
- ongoing observation.

Good documentation from both parents and teachers over a period of time about the individual's behavior is critical for the practitioner.

Although there's no clearly understood cause, ODD is believed to be:

- a combination of genetics
- environment
- medical problems.

The onset of the pattern of behaviors often starts early from toddler/pre-school ages and is believed to effect both females and males. Some children will have both ODD and ADD, however, a child with just ODD does have the ability to sit still which isn't the case with the child with ADD or ADHD.

Material taken from and modified:

<http://special.ed.about.com/od/behavioremotional/a/odd.htm>

Activity to try in class and possibly share on my blog

N2SSWTSW

You might be asking yourself, “what the heck is that”? Well, many years ago, I attended a workshop and the presenter had this on the overhead. Yes, at that time, there were no laptops and overhead projectors were “the technology” of the times!

The presenter told us that she had that posted all over her classroom, and it stood for:

N-no

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S-sentences

S-start

W-with

T-the

S-same

W-word

This is a great way to teach students to not continually start their sentences in the same way. It is a fun way to show them creativity and variety in their writing. Instead of starting every sentence with “the”, or “I”, they have to move their sentences around and change it up.

Are you willing to give it a try?

Let me know how it goes either via email or my blog.

Blog Question

I am not going to be new and original on this one, for this week, anyway.

I would like to continue to pursue the idea of “learner persistence”. At this time of year, how do we continue to motivate students to do the best that they can at all times, and to continue to come, especially if they are in an ABE program, and it just doesn't seem like they will be passing the GED this year. What is the point in coming?

What are your thoughts on persisting in learning?

Join in the discussion on my blog. There is a dialogue already up and running.