

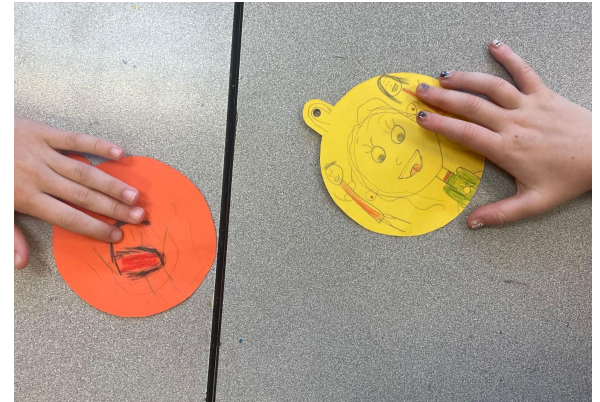
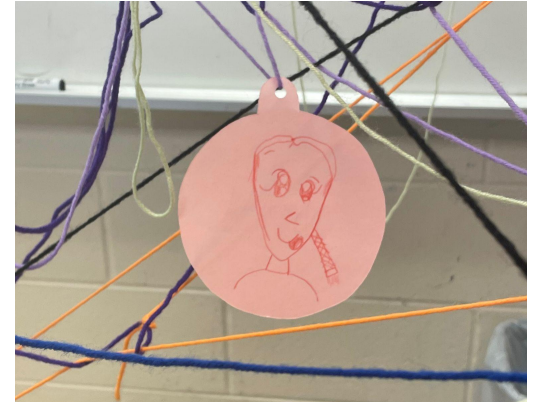
Attention

Learning Needs Case Study:
High Shoals Elementary

Alix, Mia, & Sadie

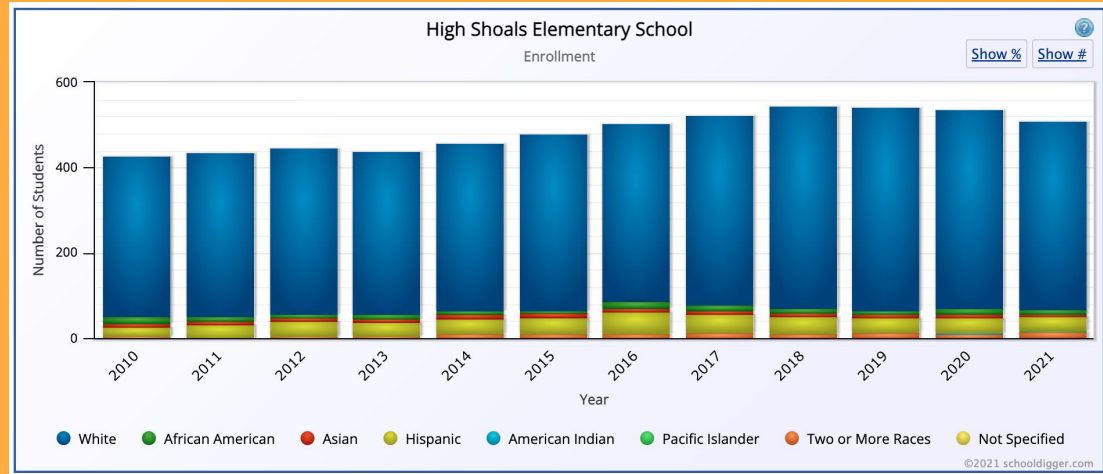
High Shoals Elementary School

- We observed First Grade and Kindergarten students
 - Spend an entire week in art and rotate every five-weeks
 - Teacher alluded to grouping by ability
- Student-teacher for five weeks
 - Observed changes in framework and instruction throughout weeks
- Mr.Clinkenbeard for last three
 - Mostly “Filler” projects
 - Art Club



High Shoals Elementary School Demographics

- Mostly middle-class white students on average.
- We did not directly observe any English Language Learner students or students with disabilities.
- It should be noted that we only saw first grade and kindergarten, so most students are not diagnosed at this age.
- It is a rural area, so that can impact students culture, values, and background.



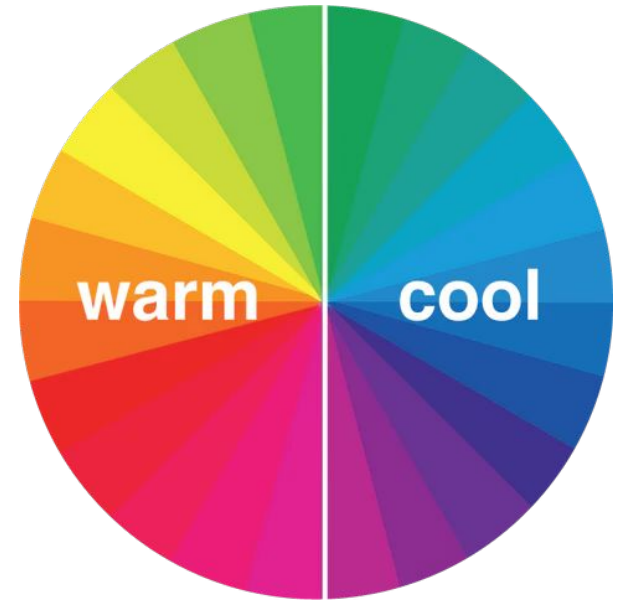


What we noticed in our class:

- The main learning need we observed in our students was a lack of attention or need to further grasp the attention of the students.
 - The younger students did not stay engaged in the lesson for extended periods of time. The student-teacher expressed adjustments she made for shorter presentations and demos, but when we observed students often still had trouble sitting still or focusing on the information.
 - Use of examples and specific ideas was helpful in gaining excitement about a project and keeping the students engaged during work time. We realized certain instructional strategies shifting could engage these students attention.

Key Insight #1: Purposeful Design of Lesson Plan

- Considering student interests when planning a lesson is important for maintaining attention. If a unit or lesson is focused only on formal tools (such as the color wheel) and there is not much room for students to explore with the content, they may lose attention quickly.
- Also, the lessons may have been more engaging if they were adapted to each grade level. The same lesson being used between all ages did not provide adaptations for younger students or creative freedom for older students.



The lesson we saw repeated was a comparison of warm and cool colors through printmaking with foam shapes. It aligned with DBAE focus on building a toolkit of technical knowledge.

Key Insight #2: Delivery of Instruction

- Details in instruction such as slideshow formatting, dialogue, environment, and demonstration logistics had a direct influence on students attention.
- When the teacher was excited and engaged in dialogue with the students they were more attentive. When she was standing away from the slideshow display and less enthusiastic, students more frequently interrupted and lost interest.



This video is a song about warm and cool colors that was played every lesson. What did it add to the lesson? Was it the best resource to engage with students?

Key Insight #3: Creative Freedom

- When students were restricted by too many parameters they were less engaged and excited.
- When students were instead given generative questions and themes to build on, they were followed inquiry and engaged more deeply with the content. This also involves recognizing and respects students' innate creativity and interests in their art-making.



For our second lesson attempt we provided a list of themes instead of the self-portrait

Journal Articles

Attention Problems and Mindfulness

By: Yi-Wen Su, Jacqueline M. Swank

This article presents research supporting mindfulness interventions on students attention and focus in the classroom. The paper explains the intervention process and implications.

Engaging Students on the First Day and Every Day

By: Michael Roberto

This journal article outlines 7 obtainable steps to ensure there is engagement in your classroom year around. Some steps include getting to really know your students, pacing your lesson plans, and showing students you care.

Impact of short bouts of physical activity on attention-to-task in elementary school children

By: Matthew T. Mahar

This article presents research supporting short bouts of physical activity and movement breaks related to the educational activity at hand can improve on-task behavior in elementary students.

“Because of the positive effects of physical activity on attention-to-task, it is recommended that elementary school teachers consider implementing physical activity sessions throughout the school day in the form of recess and classroom-based physical activities”
(Maher, 2014).

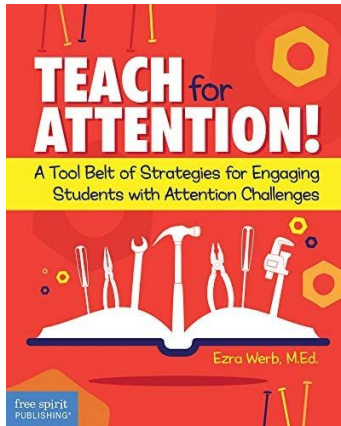


Related Books

Teach for Attention

By: Ezra Werb

This book talks about practical engagement strategies for students with attention problems. Ezra speaks on dozens of true classroom stories where these strategies are in action.

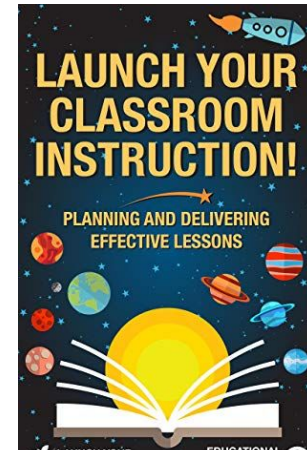


Launch Your Classroom Instruction!

Planning and Delivering Effective Lessons

By: Educational Partners International LLC, Anthony Scannella, Sharon McCarthy

This book dives into how to deliver lesson plans to maximize student engagement among all students and their varying learning styles.



Online Sources

ADDitude

This online resource focuses specifically on providing information on ADHD. Though we are focusing on attention in young students in general with no specific label, these resources can be useful to differentiate instruction for those having trouble focusing. There is a page specifically for educators that includes articles such as:

- 12 Teacher Strategies to Inspire Listening, Learning and Self-Control
- No Motivation? 5 Steps to Build Drive and Confidence

Cult of Pedagogy

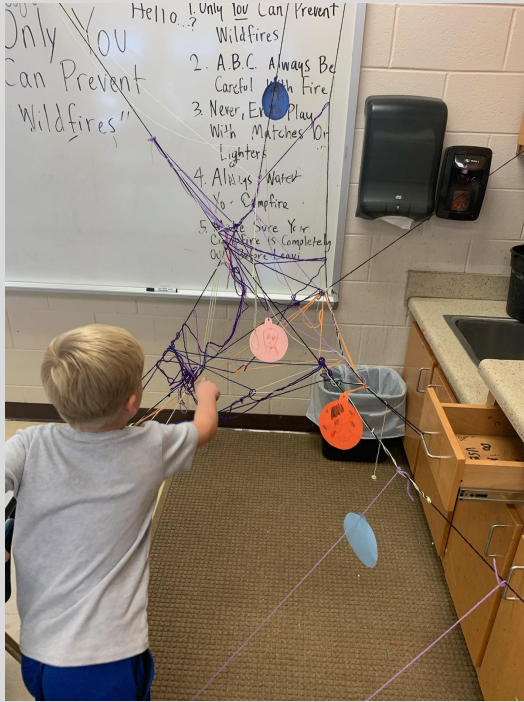
They have tons of podcasts about keeping students attentive and how to deliver instruction to students. Some notable podcasts include:

- Classroom Management: 4 Keys to Starting the Year off Right
 - When Students Won't Stop Talking
- Using Playlists to Differentiate Instruction

Instructional Strategies (Research-Based)

- **Mindfulness:**
 - Teaching strategies such as “mindful breathing, sensory awareness, being nonjudgmental, and choosing to respond instead of reacting” (Su, 2019). These can give students a better understanding of their own thinking and behaviors and provide them with scaffolding to self-regulate and redirect.
- **Movement and Physical Activity:**
 - Movement in the classroom can channel energy and provide stimulation that young students need to focus on tasks. Structuring movement breaks into classroom routine provides a structured reward or relief for students who are working hard to pay attention in class. (Mahar, 2011)
- **Differentiated Instruction:**
 - Providing choice-based assignments, different forms of instruction, and varying forms of assessment can aid students struggling to stay engaged with traditional content formatting. (Werb, 2022)

Instructional Strategies (Experience-Based)

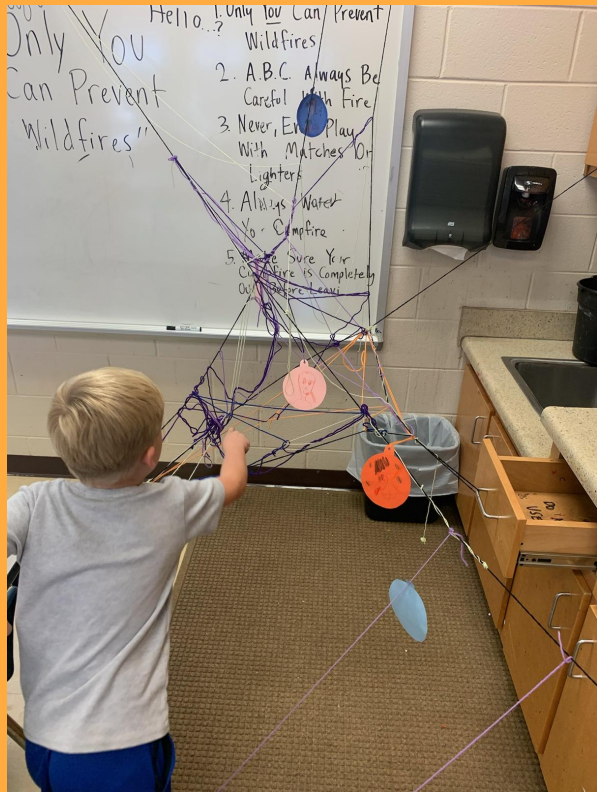


- Be excited about the project we are about to do, and bring enthusiasm to the presentation
- Ask engaging questions, and know when to cut answers short in order to continue with the lesson
- Add creative choice to projects- there can still be constructive guidelines for a specific finished product, but allow students to take an idea and make it their own
- Be mindful of skill-sets of certain grade levels

Classroom Environment Adaptations

- Consider varying forms of content delivery to provide student choice (Audio books/ textbook / video).
- Allow and facilitate movement and activity.
- Create freedom and self-regulation strategies through independence with classroom routine and rules.
- Use the front of the room to our advantage- students paid more attention when the instructor was in that position.
- Split into groups- smaller groups for more concentrated instruction and variety of ideas.
- Create a space during lesson time for students to contribute- ask questions and let them answer.





Resources

Engaging Students on the First Day and Every Day (Michael Roberto)

<https://hbsp.harvard.edu/inspiring-minds/engaging-students-on-the-first-day-and-every-day>

Attention Problems and Mindfulness (Yi-Wen Su, Jacqueline M. Swank)

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2156759X19850559>

Impact of short bouts of physical activity on attention-to-task in elementary school children (By: Matthew T. Mahar)

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0091743511000545>

ADDitude: Universal Design for Learning (Ezra Werb)

<https://www.additudemag.com/universal-design-for-learning-strategies-adhd/>

Cult of Pedagogy

<https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/>

Teach for Attention (Ezra Werb)

Launch Your Classroom Instruction! Planning and Delivering Effective Lessons

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