



Using Positive Pedagogy to Support Neurodiverse Law Students

Introduction

Estimates suggest as many as 1 in 7 people are neurodivergent.

Studies indicate ADHD students perform less well in time-limited exams and have lower overall academic achievement (Sedgwick-Müller 2022).

Neurodiversity is a wide spectrum of neurological conditions that lead an individual to think and learn differently. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one example of neurodiversity characterised by behavioural patterns of inattention and hyperactivity.

It is estimated ADHD has a co-morbidity with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) of approximately 22%. Law students face an intensive cycle of timed assessments to achieve professional qualifications.

Positive pedagogical practices can act to establish and reinforce positive emotions and learning behaviours.

Research contention positive pedagogical practices in a law school environment can improve learning outcomes for ADHD students.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The aim of this action research is to examine whether by applying positive pedagogy to formative assessments and problem-based group activities the result is improvement in educational outcomes for ADHD law students.



METHODS

- Identifying practices to promote positivity in student self-perception and confidence
- Critical incident questionnaire
- Collecting data on formative assessment pre-session interventions



CONCLUSIONS

The research will contribute to data on the response of ADHD students in HEI law school environments to positive pedagogic practices. Analysis will direct further research into how students can influence and improve educational outcomes for ADHD law students.



Expected Outcomes

1. Data investigating if reward structures for completing session activities act as positive reinforcement for ADHD students.
2. Data investigating if test anxiety in ADHD students would be reduced by pre-session recorded instructions with examples.
3. Pilot data analysis to support and inform further research into positive pedagogy to focus self-directed learning for neurodiverse students.

References

1. Main, B. (2009). *ADHD and the Power of Positive Thinking*. [online] ADDitude. Available at: <https://www.additudemag.com/adhd-and-the-power-of-positive-thinking>.
2. O'Brien, M. and Blue, L. (2017). Towards a positive pedagogy: designing pedagogical practices that facilitate positivity within the classroom. *Educational Action Research*, 26(3), pp.365-384. doi:10.1080/09650792.2017.1339620.
3. Samuel, A. and Conceição, S. (2022). Using the Critical Incident Questionnaire as a Formative Evaluation Tool to Inform Online Course Design: A Qualitative Study. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 23(2), pp.151–169. doi:10.19173/irrodl.v23i2.5959.
4. Sedgwick-Müller-Sedgwick, U., Adamou, M., Catani, M., Champ, R., Gudjónsson, G., Hank, D., Pitts, M., Young, S. and Asherson, P (2022). University students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); a consensus statement from the UK Adult ADHD Network (UKAAN). *BMC Psychiatry*, 22(1). Doi:10.1186/s12888-022-03898-z.