

CORE STUDY SKILLS PROGRAMME –TIPS FOR SCHOOL STAFF

This programme is intended for children who get little work recorded in written form but who appear to have adequate literacy/numeracy skills, indicating that they could do more.

As the success of this programme is dependent upon parents'/carers' co-operation, they should be consulted at the outset, informing them of their child's strengths or weaknesses in literacy/numeracy, their 'study skills' problem and how they can work in co-operation with the teacher.

What To Do

1. Establish a core consistent daily routine.
2. Set daily assignments. These paper/pencil assignments:
 - Will be well within the child's level of competence.
 - Do not require the child to seek additional information.
 - Can be completed in a set period of time if the child attends consistently to the task.
3. As wide a range as possible of assignments should be set. It would be normal to include, for example, one in Mathematics, Story, Handwriting and Project work. It is often a good idea to include at least one assignment which the child will find easy and will be successful at.
4. Arrange for a table and chair to be available so that distractions are kept to a minimum (for example, not overlooking other children, away from windows or interesting equipment).
5. At the beginning of the day explain to the child what assignments will be expected of them during the day. There will usually be three or four assignments and they will often be those set for the remainder of the class. It is often useful to write the assignments down for the child, either on a card, in a notebook or on the whiteboard. A notebook is probably most useful, as incomplete assignments will be sent home to be completed at night.
6. If assignments are not returned from home, you should have a further discussion with the parents/carers. If they still fail to materialise you could set further assignments on the same topic to be completed during a break time or during a high interest classroom subject.
7. A set period of time is allocated to each of the assignments. This is not necessarily the same for each piece of work but the child must be clearly aware of what is to be achieved.
8. At the end of the time period the work stops.
9. You will need to arrange a parental interview so that they will be aware that they need to give individual supervision to the child to ensure that they complete this set assignment that night. All assignments must be returned to school the following morning for correction.
10. Normal classroom rewards (such as praise and written comments on the work) should be given for individual assignments. If, however, a child achieves all their assignments in one day then a more powerful reward may be used. This might include visiting the Head teacher, a letter home to the parents, a special certificate, a mention at assembly, a special treat in class such as doing a job for the teacher, free time, the right to work in another class.
11. The programme would normally be faded after a child has completed ten consecutive days of 100% achievement. It is probably best to use a natural break such as a holiday in order to stop the programme altogether.

If you do not achieve success with the programme...

1. You should consider increasing the child's motivation by the use of a token economy, which would fix the rewards more closely to the production of the work.

2. You should also consider setting assignments which are shorter but more of them. In other words, instead of setting a mathematics exercise lasting twenty minutes you would set three, each lasting seven minutes.
3. Finally ensure that parents share in the success when progress is made. They will usually be as worried about the child's lack of attainment as you are.

(Special thanks to Dr. Allan Sigston, who prepared the first 'An Outline of a Core Study Skills Programme).

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