

Addressing School Adjustment Problems

(<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/practicenotes/schooladjustmentproblems.pdf>)

Addressing school adjustment problems is of widespread concern since student mobility is a fact of school life all year long.

Some Guidelines

- C Through enhanced personal contacts, build a positive working relationship with the youngster and family.
- C Focus first on assets (e.g. positive attributes, outside interests, hobbies, what the youngster likes at school and in class).
- C Ask about what the youngster doesn't like at school.
- C Explore the reasons for "dislikes" (e.g., Are assignments seen as too hard? as uninteresting? Is the youngster embarrassed because others will think s/he does not have the ability to do assignments? Is the youngster picked on? rejected? alienated?)
- C Explore other possible causal factors.
- C Explore what the youngster and those in the home think can be done to make things better (including extra support from a volunteer, a peer, friend, etc.).

Some Basic Strategies

Try new strategies in the classroom – based on the best information about what is causing the problem. Enhance student engagement through (a) an emphasis on learning and enrichment options that are of current greatest interest and which the student indicates (s)he wants to and can pursue and (b) a temporary deemphasis on areas that are not of high interest.

The Center offers a set of Guidance Notes that delineate things to do if a student

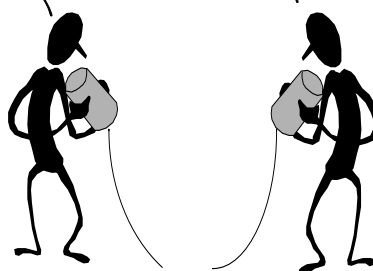
- T** seems easily distracted
- T** needs more direction
- T** has difficulty finishing tasks as scheduled

See –

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/adjustmentproblems.pdf>

I heard you only passed one class.

Yea, but it's OK. I'm planning to be a specialist.



To accomplish the work, the school can enhance use of aides, volunteers, peer tutors/coaches, mentors, those in the home, etc. not only to help support student efforts to learn and perform, but to enhance the student's social support network. It can also encourage structured staff discussions and staff development about what teachers can do and what other staff (mentors, student support staff, resource teachers, etc.) can do to team with teachers in their classrooms to enable school adjustment.

What Else?

- > If the new strategies don't work, it is important to *talk to others* at school to learn about approaches they find helpful (e.g., reach out for support/mentoring/coaching; participate with others in clusters and teams; observe how others teach in ways that effectively address differences in motivation and capability; request additional staff development on working with such youngsters).
- > After trying all the above, add some tutoring designed to enhance student engagement in learning and to facilitate learning of specific academic and social skills that are seen as barriers to effective classroom performance and learning.
- > Only after all this is done and has not worked is it time to use the school's referral processes to ask for additional support services. As such services are added, it of course becomes essential to coordinate them with what is going on in the classroom, school-wide, and at home.

Finally, the guidance provides links to a variety of resources related to this concern.

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