

Hannah Bradt

Mr. Speice

ISM 3A

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Interview Assessment 4

Dr. Liz Olson

Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP)

Planting Seeds Counseling and Coaching

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As I continued to conduct interviews, I decided that I would benefit from meeting with an LSSP, or a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology. In order to have the ability to conduct this type of interview, I talked with my mom, who works as a counselor and knows a psychologist. I was able to reach Dr. Liz Olson of Planting Seeds Counseling and Coaching, and set an interview for late November. Through this interview, I was hoping to gain a better understanding of the ways that I could personally help to accommodate students with learning disabilities or mental disorders in my future personal classroom. With this knowledge, I will later be able to incorporate these ideas into my music classroom, ultimately creating a safe space that is open for all students to enjoy music class, no matter their level of functioning.

Through this interview, I was able to gain some beneficial advice based on the ways to interact and accommodate children in a classroom. While this information remained very basic, it has proven to be a successful way to assist the population of children affected by learning

disabilities, while still remaining easily accessible to teachers. Some of these simple methods include creating some form of 'token system' with which to reward students with a physical object, allowing them to directly see that they are receiving praise. Aside from this, it is always important to have a specific structure in a classroom. While Dr. Olson did acknowledge that this may be more difficult in a music classroom, she stressed the importance of having a routine, which will assist in maintaining safety and comfort of children in my classroom. Along with this, it may be helpful to have a sort of check-in sheet for each student who suffers from a learning disability or mental disorder. When these students have received positive feedback on their sheets, they would receive some sort of small reward, such as a sticker. If the behaviors in my classroom did not receive a positive report, I learned that it is extremely important to find the purpose of the behavior, rather than referring only on the disorder that has been diagnosed.

As a method to prevent negative behavior, one suggestion offered by Dr. Olson was to place students in designated seats, so that a small routine is established. Each class, the students would go directly to their assigned seats, so that there would be no confusion in this sense. When students behave in ways that do not follow expectations and are seeming to be very agitated or restless, there are some ways that a teacher can provide objects to alleviate these occurrences. Dr. Olson mentioned the use of velcro or bands in order to allow students to 'fidget' with them, ultimately increasing focus, despite what many have been lead to believe. Aside from fidget toys, weighted vest and weighted blankets allow a feeling of security in children who may be experiencing agitation or unrest. If these objects are provided for intervention, it is important that a teacher slowly begins to decrease the use of these by each student, so that they do not become dependent on these toys or objects.

Overall, this interview was very successful and provided a great deal of information based on the topic of dealing with and accommodating students who suffer from either learning disabilities or mental disorders.