

The Role of Engagement in Learning The Case of "Maya"

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1

Role of Engagement

- degree of attention, curiosity, interest, and passion that a student shows when they are learning or being taught (edglossary.org Feb 2016)
- extends to a student's internal motivation to learn connections between "non-cognitive factors" (*Martin, F. & Bolliger, D.U., 2018*)
 - interest
 - curiosity
 - responsibility
 - determination
 - perseverance
 - attitude
 - work habits
 - self-regulation
- especially necessary in the online space (*Banna, et al., 2015*)

2



3

Research on Engagement

- ❖ benefits of student engagement = 6,207 articles
- ❖ psychological benefits = 1,047 articles
- ❖ level of participation = 5,447 articles
- ❖ time on task = 789 articles

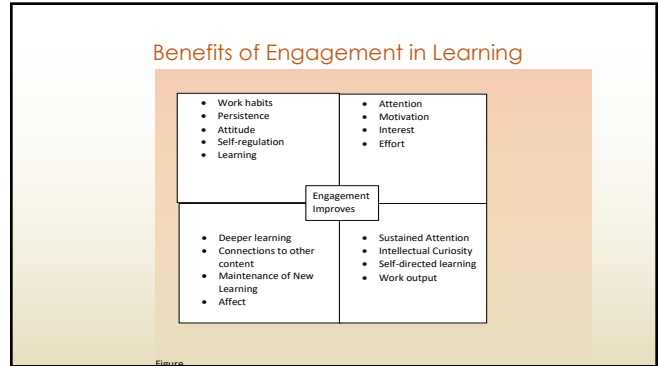
4

Engagement as an ET's tool because it fosters learning

- increases motivation to learn (*Harackiewicz, et al, 2016*)
- enhances focus & attention (*Immordino-Yang & Faeth, 2016*)
- sustained attention (*Immordino-Yang & Faeth, 2016*)
- emotional engagement – especially for a student who is “unmotivated or reluctant” (*Hidi, S. & Harackiewicz, J. M., 2000*)

Effort is a matter of choice. (*Bergin, 1999; Krapp 1999; Dweck, 2002*)

5



6

What do you notice?

The Black Footed Penguins are...
 The numbers of Black Footed Penguins have declined by 80% over the last 25 yrs.
 There are now only 21,000 penguins.
 In 2010, the species was classed as endangered.
 The drop is due to oil spills and over fishing.
 In conclusion, we need to save the Black Footed Penguin.

7

Initial Impressions

- sitting on her bed
- cautiously cooperative
- able to engage for 30 minutes
- shared readily
- very clear about her views of her education - school is a “total waste”

8

Case Background

- "Maya" 13 years old; beginning 7th grade at a public school
- Parents in a disagreement with the school district re: IEP status
- Advocate had been hired
- recent assessment by a neuropsychologist who had recommended an ET work with Maya (IEE)

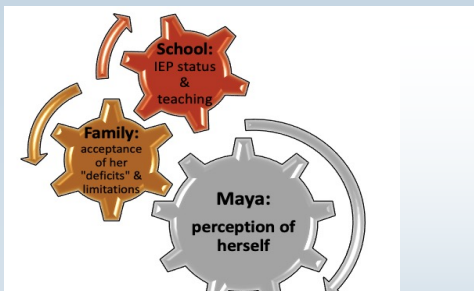
9

Do you have a writing process?

"No. Not really. I just write until I run out of things to say."

10

Three Clients with Differing Needs



11

the Case of Maya

- difficulties with attention were well-documented in the neuropsychologist's report
- engagement was key
- determine how long she could attend
- engage her deeply
- to foster new learning
- to aid in retention of new learning
- create motivation to read and write
- discover Maya's interests and leverage them
- all the educational therapy work was done in the virtual space via Zoom

12

Neuropsychological Assessment

Child and Adolescent Memory Profile (CHAMP):	
Verbal Memory Index	
Lists	7
Lists Delayed	5
Instructions	5
Instructions Delayed	2
Visual Memory Index	
Objects	5
Objects Delayed	1
Places	6
Places Delayed	3
Verbal Memory Index	69
Visual Memory Index	65
Immediate Memory	73
Delayed Memory	54

“very significant attentional difficulties”

“often invisible because....”

Verbal Memory Index 2%ile

Visual Memory Index 1%ile

Immediate Memory 4%ile

Delayed Memory < 0.1%ile

Children’s Memory Scale (2 stories)

Immediate recall = 10%

Delayed recall = 5%

13

Academic Assessment by the NP

Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement-3 (KTEA-3)		
Subtests	Standard Score	Grade Equivalent
Letter-Word Recognition	106	8.6
Reading Comprehension	87	4.11
Math Concepts and Applications	84	4.2
Math Computation	90	5.6
Written Expression	70	2.2
Spelling	92	5.8

Test of Written Language-4 (TOWL-4):	
Subtest	Standard Score
Contextual Conventions	7
Story Composition	6
Standard Score	79

14

Conclusions from NP

Qualifies for continued special education services:

1. Average intelligence – difficult retaining new information “is significant”
2. SLD written language disorder – discrepancy between intelligence & written output; dysgraphia
3. OHI- ADHD combined type
4. LD is moderate to severe “necessitating intensive and specific instruction”

Work with an ET

Continue with RS support 1 period a day

15

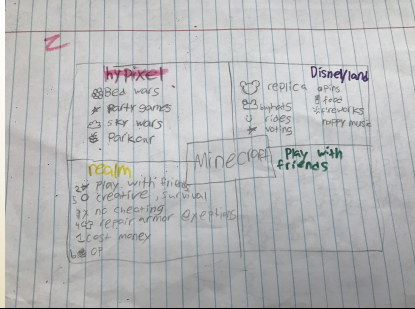
Principles Employed (many are NP)

- engagement
- pace
- numerosity
- explicit establishment of the *Learning Purpose*
- clear demarcations in learning new content (or re-teaching)
- parts to Whole Learning (details) vs. Gestalt
- *Saliency Determination*
- a “Process Approach” to Educational Therapy

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16

Maya in teacher role



17

Cadence in sessions established

Could concentrate for 10-12 minutes
 What is a sentence "a complete thought"
 What is a paragraph?
 Punctuation

Gold Star Maya!

Why did Maya choose spelling
 (words in isolation) as her "brain break"?



18

Reading & Writing are Related

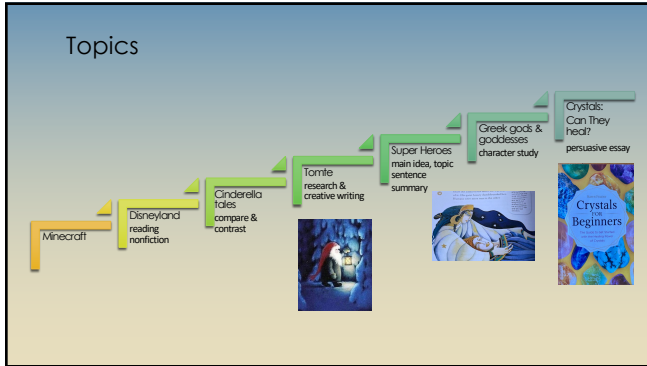
- Panicked over science research paper
- skipping over bold headings
- recall of facts & details but could not state the main idea
- topic sentence
- summarizing
- conclusion
- What do bold headings do, Maya?
- "cross training" effective

19

Connecting and extending beyond her direct experience.



20



21

MM: "You can write in complete sentences with capitalization & punctuation now. Are you doing it at school?"

Maya: "Sometimes. No, not really."

MM: "Why not?"

Maya: "Because they don't care."

22

Preparation for trial

❖ **Positive discoveries**

- a medicated Maya was a very different learner
- keen visual processing; noticed visual details
- could visualize exceptionally well
- could always sequence work & writing within a paragraph
- long-standing friendships
- knew herself well
- always honest; not evasive

23

❖ **Negative discoveries**

- no feedback for work
- no camera on; no actual knowledge of her
- hadn't read a book since 3rd grade; no novels
- no documentation that she had achieved her IEP goals
- submissions were edited by teachers - "just accept the changes"

Trial Outcomes

24

Summer work

Executive Functioning:
planning, initiation, gauging progress, deadlines

reading novels
annotated notetaking

25

2 other techniques

- o teaching annotation using "colored sticky notes"; demonstration
- o "Mark and Defend" (Marion Marshall, 2014) technique for saliency determination; demonstration

26

WIAT III "Essay Composition" conducted by district

Claimed she was now scoring at the 12th grade level!

Protocol is "lost" that would have set new baseline and establish new IEP goals

Family decided to have Maya re-assessed by NP. 1 year later

On TOWL-4, Maya now scores at 61st percentile rank (8% previously) **while unmedicated**

NP report states "remarkable gains"

27

Before 8th grade began...

1. read books
2. listen to music
3. watch movies



"I love reading!"

28

Getting "lost" in books



29

Maya's Accomplishments

- able to organize longer pieces of writing
- better able to edit as she writes
- now can self-correct her writing
- as writing improved so did her written vocabulary
- Maya became a voracious reader (completed 1st novels)
- self-directed learning emerged (in & out of sessions)
- analytical thinking demonstrated clearly
- real talent for creative writing – especially in characterization & dialogue
- now prefers writing over reading!
- still a procrastinator but has developed some strategies
- able to attend her public high school
- has maintained all of her long-term friendships & is making new friends

30

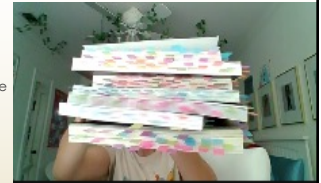
Final Thoughts

Her family's acumen & financial resources to pursue an IEE, hire a lawyer, employ an EI, & challenge the district's special education decision
 "Micro-practice"
 Documentation & notetaking
 Trust your own clinical impressions
 Experience with IEP Process
 Working virtually
 Maya as my partner

31

2 years later...

- reading grade level novels
- analyzing poetry expertly
- is writing poetry (> 100 to date)
- studying Japanese, as her elective



she is **FLOUSHING** in high school

32

Virtual Educational Therapy: A Case Study of Clinical Supports and Advocacy

The story that you tell and the outcomes that you reach is a credit to your skills as a practitioner and to the tenets of the field. And it is a moving journey on the part of the student.

The book is exemplary of the field's close, personal attunement to and relationship-building with children in need and to the further roles of advocacy that are possible.

~ Daniel Schwartz, Editor, Education, Routledge

Free shipping from the publisher (Routledge) or it is on Amazon.

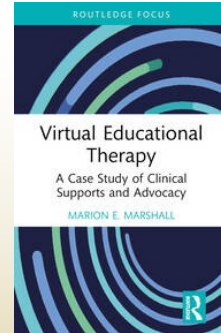
Full articles resource list is available upon request.

33

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