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MAT 115R

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Project: Help Students With ADD/ADHD

Being someone who grew up struggling with ADD, one of the most daunting tasks for me during the school years was completing my homework. There were so many different instances where I would forget to finish my homework, or would take several hours to complete something simple like read 2 chapters & write a brief summary. I constantly find myself getting distracted, or just zoning out completely & struggling to get myself to focus again.

This past fall, I started working at an elementary school as a Para Professional (teacher's aide) for preschool. In my class I have children ages 3-5 with needs such as speech, hearing, autism, ADHD, cerebral palsy, or fine motor skill issues in need of extra assistance to prepare them for kindergarten. I fell in love with my job, which helped me make a big decision to go back to college after almost 20 years to get an early childhood education degree.

One of my biggest fears with starting back in college was having my ADD issues distracting me again so I would fall behind or struggle with homework or studying. Thankfully though, I came up with a great solution to allow me to focus all my attention on what I need to get done for school. Enter in my wheel of success!

I created a rotational symmetric wheel that has 15, 30, & 45 sections on there. When it's time for me to sit down in the evening for homework, I pull up the wheel & spin it. Whatever number I land on, that's how much time I devote to the assignment. Then, when the timer goes off, I spin the wheel again to see how long of a break I take before getting back to the assignment

I am working on. For example, say I'm sitting down to study for an upcoming math quiz. I spin the wheel & it lands on 30. I set my alarm, & the next 30 minutes I sit down, go thru my notes & practice what we learned that week. When the timer goes off, I spin the wheel again. This time it lands on 15, I leave the area I'm working (usually the dining room table) & find somewhere to relax. I then set a new timer, and allow myself to get distracted by reading, watching tv, or let's be honest- mindlessly scroll thru social media. The 15 minute timer goes off, & I go back to the table to study for another 30 minutes. I'll repeat the 30 minutes studying/15 minute break until I've completed the assignments.

Knowing that I only have to sit for a certain amount of time to study, I don't feel like I have such a strong urge of giving into the temptation to start looking around the room or pick up my phone to look at my notifications. It helps me feel like I can finish my task in that short amount of time. Knowing I won't be working on assignments for more than 45 minutes, the pressure of sitting for an extended period of time until I finish isn't there.

This is also something that I plan on implementing with my students for tasks during the school day. I feel like the kids will enjoy spinning the wheel, & the times will be drastically shorter for them (1, 3, 5 minutes). I can have them sit & work on the goals they have for their learning plans- identifying numbers/letters/colors or completing a puzzle to help with motor skills to name a few examples. With the wheel of success, anyone can feel like ADD/ADHD is no longer a hindrance for competing tasks!

