SPRING 2024

# Power of Problems – Solved

Imagine living in a world where everything is outside of your control-a place where you feel helpless in solving problems, where you face an onslaught of problems without any ability to solve them. For some of us and many of our students, this is the perception of reality! But it doesn't have to be! There's significant power in solving problems; the best part is this power is within us all. Autonomy in our ability to solve problems is key to not only becoming an effective educator who can move learning barriers for our students but also to protect and improving our own health! Read on to explore the power of problems - SOLVED!

Read on to learn more!
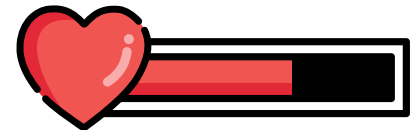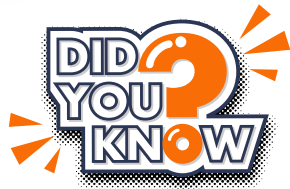




Did you know that working to solve problems is good for our health? Psychologists' research suggests that the power gained by solving problems is one way to help control anxiety, depression, and other health issues!

It's simple: problem-solving gives us control over our stressors, provides motivation, and helps improve our self-esteem!

Explore strategies you can use to help your students discover the power of problem-solving

"The Power of Problem-Solving: An Essential Skill for Kids with Anxiety"

-Helena Madsen

CLICK HERE

briefly counseling

## Tell me the story...

### A teacher recognizes a problem

Mrs. H. notices that Sophie is struggling in her social studies class. The problem is getting bigger as Sophie is starting to show her frustration with an increase in off-task behaviors, including talking to her peers and resisting completing assignments. It's time to solve the problem before it gets any bigger!

Concerned over Sophie's escalating behavior, Mrs. H. approaches Mrs. Williams, Sophie's IEP case manager, "Hey Cami, how are you today?" "Oh, I'm doing okay for a Tuesday. What's up, Kaitlyn?" Kaitlyn replied, "I've noticed that Sophie is starting to struggle in my classroom. She's spending more time off-task, especially during writing assignments. I'm curious if you could find a little time to stop by to collect some data for me to verify my observations." "Oh, Mrs. H, you know I would be happy to stop by! I'll swing by tomorrow," Mrs. Williams replies with a smile.

The next day, Mrs. Williams observes Sophie in social studies class and collects some time-on-task (<u>frequency</u>) data on Sophie's involvement. The data verifies Mrs. H.'s hunch; during regular class time, Sophie is on task 85% of the time. However, during an assignment that requires writing, she's only on task 32% of the time. Mrs. Williams shares this data with her colleague. "I knew it, Cami! It seems like I need to take a look at the accommodations I'm using in my classroom. Thank you for your help!"

Mrs. H. revisits her support plan for Sophie. Instead of completing long written reports, she believes that she will encourage Sophie to create an outline of writing assignments that shows connections to social studies topics. Additionally, to assist her in providing responses to support her writing challenges on shorter assignments, she would like to begin providing sentence stems. These accommodations fit the two places where Mrs. H. has observed Sophie struggling and can easily be worked into her specific classroom strategies, making them a natural fit.

### Remember!

Accomods provides insight to help you solve behavioral, curricular, learning, and assessment challenges!



accomods

## What's the context?

### Solving problems is empowering

Far too often, we may depend on someone else to solve the challenges that students in our classrooms face. However, teachers who embrace and refine their ability to recognize and solve problems on their own develop solutions that are much more likely to be effective. By embracing this opportunity, educators create solutions that fit their instructional setting early - before small problems become big ones. This doesn't mean we shouldn't rely on our team to help us solve these problems; using other's strengths to help us along is part of learning and collaborating. However, nothing is more empowering than working to solve your own problems!

# Get to the point...

## You're the perfect person to solve the problem

The best person to develop solutions to the challenges <u>you</u> see is…you! No one can see the problem as well as you do, no one can create a solution that fits your methods as well as you can, your own solutions will work better for you, and there's nothing more empowering than owning the effective solution to a problem - especially one that is hard-earned!

# The story continues...

## Problem-solving is good for everyone

Mrs. H. meets with Sophie over lunch the following week. "Hey Sophie, I noticed that it seems like you've not been enjoying the writing assignments I've been giving you in class. Am I right?" Sophie replies with a nod, "I'm not very good at writing, so when I have to write, I get so lost in the capital letters, punctuation, and grammar that I lose track of all the social studies stuff and get frustrated."

The team proceeds to discuss the solutions Mrs. H. is proposing. Sophie appreciates that Mrs. H. recognized the problem and is so willing to help her learn social studies content without her writing challenges standing in the way. Further, Mrs. H. feels significant pride and accomplishment in her ongoing effort to meet the needs of her students. Both teammates are proud to be working together to achieve a common educational goal. The next day, Mrs. H. shares this input with Mrs. Williams, who schedules an IEP revision meeting with Sophie, her parents, and other teammates to discuss and record the changes. This type of ownership of solutions is exactly what the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act envisions, as it directs the involvement of general education teachers in a child's IEP.

# Be action-driven...

1. Think about your students' performance. Can you identify a student in your class who isn't achieving their potential due to a barrier? Consider accommodations to support them around the barrier that also fits your instructional methods.
2. Take your observations to a colleague you know can help you identify solutions to the student achievement problems you see in your classroom.
3. Jump into Accomods and explore accommodations that align with a learner's barrier. Consider how you might partner with the learner to select and implement potential support.

# Learning to Solve Problems

Remember when you were a little kid in first grade learning to add, and the first problem you solved was:

$$Solve: 3,807 + 769.03 =$$

**NO, YOU DON'T!** Because when you develop problem-solving skills, you start with easier problems, knowing that your skills will progress to solving harder ones!

It works the same way when you're working to solve the educational, behavioral, and social problems of the students in your classroom. Don't start with the most challenging situation! Practice and hone your skills on a manageable problem that's just beyond your current skills, then push yourself to solve more challenging ones.

# Action-Driven Professional Development

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Action Driven Education offered "Heroes…" as the closing keynote for the 2024 Pennsylvania Corrections Education Association Annual Conference. Michele Jennings, event organizer and Regional Corrections Liaison, said, "There was no bit@#ing on the way out, and that is unheard of for corrections!"

# Featured Accommodation:

L6 - Use word-for-word sentence fill-ins is an excellent accommodation to support a student who works to take notes but needs help capturing accurate details.

Learn More

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