Exploring Teachers' Perspectives of Developing Creativity in Students With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A Hermeneutic Phenomenology

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The Washington DC Conference on Education 2026
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to interpret the lived experience of teachers developing the creativity of students with ADHD in the southern United States. At this stage in the research, high school students with ADHD were generally defined as students who have been formally diagnosed with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. The theory guiding this study was Karwowski's theory of creative growth mindset. The central research question for this study was: What are the lived experiences of teachers developing the creativity of high school students with ADHD? This study was a hermeneutic phenomenology that explored the experiences of 10–15 high school teachers whose students include those who are diagnosed with ADHD. Data were collected through individual interviews, journal prompts, and focus groups. The data were analyzed following van Manen's wholistic, selective, and detailed reading approaches. The data revealed five themes: (a) students with ADHD are most creative within structure, (b) students with diverse ADHD have diverse creative qualities, (c) students with ADHD process information differently than others, (d) students with ADHD need safety and trust, and (e) teachers can develop creativity in their students with ADHD. The findings were interpreted as: (a) students with ADHD need creativity in the classroom, (b) creativity in the classroom does not have to be elaborate, (c) creative strategies help build safety and trust in the classroom, (d) structure is necessary for developing creativity, and (e) teachers need training to be effective in developing creativity.

Keywords: attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, creative growth mindset, developing

Introduction

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to understand the lived experience of teachers developing the creativity of students with ADHD at a charter school district in the southern United States. This article starts with a review of the scholarly research related to this topic, including Karwowski's (2014) theory of creative growth mindset (CGM) and how it relates to students with ADHD. The article includes the methodology of the study, as well as the results, discussion, and recommendations that came from the data.

Literature Review

The problem is that students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) continue to achieve lower than their school peers (Cheesman et al., 2022; Lawrence et al., 2021; Visser et al., 2020). The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to understand the lived experience of teachers developing the creativity of students with ADHD in the United States. Recent research confirms that students with ADHD exhibit many positive traits, including creativity, that could be included in the classroom to increase learning (Schippers et al., 2022; Steglich-Petersen & Varga, 2023). Using Karwowski's (2014) theory of creative growth mindset, this study explored how teachers' growth attitudes toward their students with ADHD can positively affect academic achievement. Gralewski and Karwowski (2019) defined creativity as a set of characteristics that allow individuals to solve problems and generate new and appropriate ideas within a certain context, and this definition will be used for this study.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was the creative growth mindset (CGM) (Karwowski, 2014). CGM builds on Dweck's (1999) mindset theory. He defined the creative mindset as "beliefs about the stable versus malleable character and nature of creativity" (Karwowski, 2014, p. 62). Karwowski's (2014, 2018, 2022) research consistently revealed that beliefs about creativity can be encouraged and developed, making it malleable. Karwowski and Beghetto (2019) studied creative behaviors and found that they result from a person's intentional actions, which are influenced by the person's beliefs. If people believe their creativity can be developed, their attitudes and behavior towards creative tasks grow (Karwowski & Beghetto, 2019). CGM is the belief that creativity can grow as a person's beliefs about their own creativity are nurtured (Karwowski, 2014).

Stigmas Associated With ADHD

Students diagnosed with ADHD are stigmatized by their peers and teachers (Carr-Fanning, 2020; O'Connor et al., 2022). In many cases, the diagnosis, not the behaviors displayed, leads to a negative stigma (O'Connor et al., 2022). The stigmas associated with ADHD include low academic expectations, social rejection, expectations of bad behavior, assumptions of laziness, and overall negative repute (Metzger & Hamilton, 2021; Schoeman & Voges, 2022; Speerforck et al., 2019). Consequently, parents often avoid pursuing a diagnosis of ADHD for their children because of the fear of stigma (Schoeman & Voges, 2022; Speerforck et al., 2019).

Some teachers reported feelings of stress and irritation toward their students with ADHD (Mulholland et al., 2023). They found students diagnosed with ADHD to be difficult to teach and believe them to be willfully disobedient (Adamis et al., 2024; Mulholland et al., 2023; Wijerathna et al., 2023). In some cases, teachers attribute every negative behavior in the

classroom to ADHD (Adamis et al., 2024). Some teachers believe that students with ADHD use their symptoms as an excuse for non-compliance in the classroom (Mansfield & Soni, 2024). They also believe that an ADHD diagnosis is too easily obtained from a doctor or specialist, and those who do not want to comply seek out the diagnosis as a way to avoid school work (Lynch & Davison, 2024). Many teachers also believe that students with ADHD have a negative impact on the learning of other students (Mansfield & Soni, 2024). Students with ADHD report feeling overwhelmed when they realize their teacher has a negative perception of them (Mansfield & Soni, 2024). An ADHD diagnosis can cause teachers to expect disruptive behaviors and academic struggles (Metzger & Hamilton, 2021; Speerforck et al., 2019). Teachers with negative attitudes toward their students with ADHD are much less likely to be successful with classroom interventions that aim to help those students (Yang et al., 2024). Gaining insight into the creative attributes of students with ADHD could help reduce some of the negative issues those students face.

Teacher Positive Beliefs and Attitudes About ADHD

What teachers believe shapes their thinking and actions, affecting what the learning environment produces (Braude & Dwarika, 2020; Mulholland et al., 2023). Many teachers have positive attitudes toward students with ADHD, but their beliefs about ADHD can diminish their enthusiasm (McDougal et al., 2023; Mohr-Jensen et al., 2019; Mulholland et al., 2023; Wijerathna et al., 2023). Most teachers can articulate the significant symptoms of ADHD but have minimal extensive knowledge about ADHD (Adamis et al., 2024; Mohr-Jensen et al., 2019). Therefore, their beliefs about ADHD can be based on half-truths or opinions (Mohr-Jensen et al., 2019). Teachers who have the most consistently positive attitudes toward students diagnosed with ADHD are those who have training in and knowledge of ADHD and also tend to be under 45 years old (Adamis et al., 2024; Akdag, 2023; Mulholland et al., 2023; Ward et al., 2021). One explanation for the age factor is that increasing age can lead to lower tolerance; another is that younger teachers are part of the cultural shift toward more understanding of children with special needs (Adamis et al., 2024). Another key factor for having a positive attitude about students with ADHD is prior experience with those students (Akdag, 2023; Braude & Dwarika, 2020; Mulholland et al., 2023). Researchers consistently conclude that teachers' lack of training and knowledge regarding ADHD, so those who have taught students with ADHD feel more knowledgeable and, therefore, have more positive attitudes (Akdag, 2023; Braude & Dwarika, 2020; Mohr-Jensen et al., 2019; Mulholland et al., 2023; Ward et al., 2021).

Creativity and ADHD

One of the positive traits of ADHD is creativity (Gronneberg et al., 2024; Nordby et al., 2023; Schippers et al., 2022). ADHD is positively linked to increased creativity in students (Zaghi et al., 2023). Increased creativity in students with ADHD could be caused by a wider attention filter (Zaghi et al., 2023). More original ideas can form when more information is processed through the wider attention filter (Stearns, 2015; Zaghi et al., 2023). Increased creativity in students with ADHD could also be caused by a preference for information exploration when searching for solutions (Steglich-Petersen & Varga, 2023; Zaghi et al., 2023). Taking advantage of the increased creativity of students with ADHD can build their resilience, intrinsic motivation, and the ability to focus on school tasks (Hai & Climie, 2022; Moreno & Jurado, 2023). Instead of seeing students with ADHD as underachievers, teachers can engage and motivate those students by recognizing their natural creativity (Akpur, 2020; Zaghi et al., 2023). Through strategies like exploration, real-world problem-solving, and hands-on learning,

students with ADHD can use their natural curiosity positively (Steglich-Petersen & Varga, 2023; Zaghi et al., 2023).

Since one of the strengths of students with ADHD is creativity, it makes sense that promoting creativity in schools could provide positive experiences for them (Gronneberg et al., 2024; Nordby et al., 2023; Schippers et al., 2022). Many students with ADHD lack motivation and engagement in traditional classroom activities (Almulla, 2023; Cerezo et al., 2024). However, they exhibit high levels of engagement in tasks that require creativity (Cerezo et al., 2024). Students with ADHD view themselves as highly creative and believe they excel at generating new ideas (Girard-Joyal & Gauthier, 2022). In addition, they believe they excel at generating new ideas (Steele et al., 2021). When creativity is promoted in the classroom culture, students with ADHD feel emotional relief because they believe their needs are met (Kim & Chung, 2024).

Academic Achievement and Creativity

In recent years, creativity has been closely tied to academic achievement (Akpur, 2020; Almulla, 2023; Guo et al., 2021; Tzachrista et al., 2023). Creativity helps with critical thinking and problem-solving, which are 21st-century skills that aid academic success (Akpur, 2020). Students in learning environments that foster creativity and inquisitiveness can develop necessary critical thinking skills (Akpur, 2020). Creativity also enhances memory abilities, reduces stress, and improves communication, all of which can be linked to better academic outcomes (Tzachrista et al., 2023). Creative activities help students become independent learners who can problem-solve independently (Tzachrista et al., 2023). Independence in learning tasks, which is necessary for achievement, has been linked with creativity, and self-efficacy in creativity is a key factor in feeling confident to work independently (Du et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021). Students need teamwork, creative tasks, and assignments that require critical thinking to improve their academic success (Almulla, 2023). The collaboration that comes with teamwork aids in increasing critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills (You, 2021). Students need to be able to work through the issues they face daily, and creative teaching practices help students build those skills while enhancing learning (Moreno & Jurado, 2023).

Classroom Strategies for Creativity

One aspect of hidden potential in students with ADHD is creativity (Beliard et al., 2019; Stearns, 2015). When that creativity is nurtured, students with ADHD thrive (Stearns, 2015). Educators who incorporate creativity into their teaching and assessment practices offer students with ADHD an outlet for their creative tendencies that match their neurodivergent brain (Zaghi et al., 2023). Creative activities in the classroom help students diagnosed with ADHD better engage with and retain more of the content (Zaghi et al., 2023). Since students with ADHD are naturally curious, creativity in the classroom setting gives them an outlet for their innate neurodiversity (Steglich-Petersen & Varga, 2023).

There are many ways that creativity can be used in the classroom. Teaching practices that promote creativity are typically less strict, less structured, and more experiential, with more elements of choice (Conradty et al., 2020). A less structured classroom environment may be difficult for some students with ADHD, so the teacher must remain the director of the classroom experience, ensuring the classroom culture remains positive, collaborative, and safe for all learners (Conradty et al., 2020). The teacher must also be the knowledge expert and the

role model, guiding learners as needed through mistakes and disruptive behaviors (Conradty et al., 2020). Conradty et al. (2020) found that less structured activities increase creativity and motivation in students through problem-solving. Experiential activities, like science labs, role-playing, field trips, and scavenger hunts, can take mundane content to a creative level once the students have enough background information to complete the tasks (Amorati & Hajek, 2021; Ferguson & Prain, 2020; Prasath et al., 2023). Creativity is fostered when students can imagine, explore, experiment, test, manipulate, and speculate in a science lab or on a field trip (Conradty et al., 2020). The teacher becomes the facilitator who directs and manages the students as needed and provides clear directions and limits for the activity (Amorati & Hajek, 2021). Amorati and Hajek (2021) found that experiential experiences increase student motivation, increase students' real-world understanding of the content, and provide an outlet for creativity. Reflective writing assignments allow students to describe their thoughts creatively on any topic and give their explanations or solutions (Daher, 2022; Prasath et al., 2023). Group work and project-based learning naturally strengthen creativity and provide positive challenges for students (Daher, 2022). Daher found that essential elements of successful group work include freedom, positive challenge, supervisory encouragement, group support, and sufficient resources. The teacher's role in facilitating each element is vital to the group's success. As students work together to sort out the problem and develop solutions, they learn how to think creatively (Daher, 2022; Eddles-Hirsch et al., 2020). Creative strategies can be as simple as offering choices, like taking a test or writing an essay to show mastery of content (Amorati & Hajek, 2021; Daher, 2022). Another simple creative strategy is asking students a what-if question in response to a history lesson or short story (Daher, 2022).

Teachers must encourage dialogue and discussion as solutions are worked out and ideas are rejected (Daher, 2022). Students need direction, boundaries, encouragement, and affirmation to reach their creative potential (Daher, 2022; Kalantari et al., 2023). However, boundaries that increase creativity must be instructive, guiding, and needed instead of restrictive, domineering, and unnecessary (Daher, 2022). Students also need trust and rapport with the teacher to be comfortable sharing their creative ideas (Kalantari et al., 2023).

Adults with ADHD, including many who are famous, reported encouraging news regarding the positive ways ADHD has impacted their lives (Nordby et al., 2023). By examining a creative growth mindset and how it can promote the natural creativity of students with ADHD, this study sought to understand teachers' perceptions of how creativity could impact their teaching strategies.

Methodology

Setting

The setting for this study was anywhere in the United States where teachers taught students with ADHD. Social media groups for teachers of students with ADHD were targeted for this study, as they provide valuable resources and support for teachers. Members of those groups indicated their interest in students with ADHD when they joined the group.

Participants

The participants in this study were 10 teachers from various regions of the United States. There were seven female and three male participants, exemplifying teachers from different grade levels and content areas.

Data Collection Plan

The first data collection method for this study was individual interviews. Interviewing the participants individually allowed me to understand the experiences of teaching students with ADHD from the teachers' perspective (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The second data collection method was a journal prompt. The purpose of a journal prompt was to complement the data gathered from the interviews (Yin, 2015). The final data collection method was focus groups. Focus groups allowed me to mediate as the group members answered the questions. (Yin, 2015). The participants were assigned to one of three focus groups, with varying numbers in each group based on when each participant was available. Multiple focus groups provided the richest data (Yin, 2015).

Table 1

Individual Interview Questions

1. Please describe your educational background and career through your current position.
2. Describe your experiences when working with students with AHDH in your classes.
3. Describe successful practices you use when working with students in your classes.
4. Define creativity as it relates to your process of teaching.
5. What creative qualities do you see in students with ADHD?
6. What experiences have you had that prepared you to work with students diagnosed with ADHD as a teacher?
7. Describe an activity (or activities) that you did with the students with ADHD that required them to problem-solve.
8. What were the results of the activity in #6?
9. Describe an activity (or activities) that you did with your students with ADHD that required them to develop new ideas.
10. What were the results of the activity in #8?
11. What teaching practices have you used that tapped into the creative qualities you see in your students diagnosed with ADHD?
12. What activities do you do with your students with ADHD that promote a creative growth mindset?
13. How do your students with ADHD respond to activities requiring creativity in your classroom?
14. What professional development would you like to have to better meet the needs of your students with ADHD?
15. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with students diagnosed with ADHD that we haven’t discussed?

Table 2

Journal Prompt

1. Using 200–300 words, describe in detail a day in your classroom that was a successful learning experience for your students diagnosed with ADHD. Include teaching strategies, behavior support, other interventions, and how you incorporated problem-solving skills and generated new ideas.

Table 3

Focus Group Questions

1. What is your understanding of the creative growth mindset?
2. How does your understanding of the creative growth mindset reflect in your daily teaching practices?
3. How can you encourage each other in teaching students with ADHD?
4. What teaching strategies can we agree on to best meet the needs of students with ADHD?
5. Describe the ways you see students diagnosed with ADHD being creative.
6. What ideas or actions can you share to help design creative experiences for your students with ADHD?
7. What else would you like to add to the discussion of ADHD and creative growth mindset?

Results

The data from this study revealed five overall themes. The first is that students with ADHD are most creative within structure. The second is that students with diverse ADHD have diverse creative qualities. The third theme is that students with ADHD process information differently than others. The last two themes are that students with ADHD need safety and trust, and teachers can develop creativity in their students with ADHD.

Students With ADHD Are Most Creative Within Structure

The participants all agreed that structure is necessary for students with ADHD. The need for structure was coded in vivo 124 times and was articulated in all three methods of data collection. Jane said, “They [students with ADHD] must know what to expect, and that is good for all students.” Heather said, “Structure is good. Even if you have loose moments, structure allows you to get back on track.” Austyn commented, “You have to provide scaffolding so your students with ADHD can do creative tasks well.”

Students With ADHD Have Diverse Creative Qualities

The next theme was that students with ADHD have diverse creative qualities. All 10 participants agreed that creativity is a trait they find in their students diagnosed with ADHD. Diverse creative qualities were coded in vivo 112 times and were discussed in all three data collection methods. Holly said very simply, ”Actually, I find students with ADHD to be extraordinarily creative.” The participants described numerous ways in which creativity is evident in their students with ADHD. In her interview, Jane said, “When I get out of the way, anything my students with ADHD come up with will be ten times better than what I would have come up with.” Students with ADHD were diversely creative, as evident across all three sources of data, and were coded in vivo 90 times.

Students With ADHD Process Information Differently Than Others

All 10 participants articulated different ways their students with AHDH process information. The diverse ways students with ADHD process information were coded in vivo 102 times and were evident in all three data collection methods. John, who teaches math, said, “My students

with ADHD often surprise me with different ways of solving math problems. The process I teach does not always make sense to my students with ADHD, so they find a way that works for them." Mary Jane agreed with John, saying, "The linear process I use to teach solving math problems does not work for all of my students with ADHD. I tell them that as long as they can explain their process for finding the answer, I am fine with it." All of the participants recognized that students with ADHD have brains that work differently. They were intentional about finding strategies that work for the brains of individuals with ADHD.

Students With ADHD Need Safety and Trust

All 10 participants indicated that students with ADHD have needs that must be met in order to function creatively. The needs of students with ADHD were coded in vivo 131 times and were discussed in each of the three data collection methods. The need for safety and trust in the classroom was mentioned by all 10 of the participants. John said, "If I want my students with ADHD to succeed, the classroom must be a safe place to learn." Heather quipped, "It all starts with everyone being respectful of each other." Mary Jane expressed, "Students with ADHD have to believe that no one is judging them or critiquing them."

Teachers Can Develop Creativity in Students With ADHD

All 10 of the participants agreed that teachers can develop creativity in students with ADHD. The ways the participants developed creativity were coded in vivo 125 times across all three data collection types. Growing creativity in students begins with building a creative culture. Elle said, "Whole brain teaching offers many opportunities for a creative classroom culture. They can create an attention-getter or rename aspects of the whole-brain teaching curriculum. It really gives them many ways to be creative." Mary Jane fosters a creative culture in her classroom by encouraging students to make suggestions about topics or assignments. She said, "The students will say, 'Why can't we do it this way?' and I will say, 'Let's try it!' Sometimes their suggestion works, sometimes it doesn't."

Discussion

This section contains the interpretations from the findings of the study. The five interpretations from the study were (a) students with ADHD need creativity in the classroom, (b) creativity in the classroom does not have to be elaborate, (c) creative strategies help build safety and trust in the classroom, (d) structure is necessary for developing creativity, and (e) teachers need training to be effective in developing creativity. Empirical and theoretical sources helped confirm and provide context for the interpretations. The interpretations are based on the codes and themes that emerged from the data.

Students With ADHD Need Creativity in the Classroom

The data revealed that creativity in the classroom addresses many of the needs of students with ADHD. It was also clear from the data that students with ADHD have brains that work differently than other students. Previous literature indicated that when creativity is nurtured, students with ADHD tend to thrive (Stearns, 2015). In addition, when educators incorporate creativity into their teaching and assessment practices, they offer students with ADHD an outlet for their creative tendencies that match their neurodivergent brain (Zaghi et al., 2023). Teachers who understand the creative aspects of ADHD can create classroom environments that better suit their neurodivergent students (Hatak et al., 2021). The data showed that classroom

environments that work best for neurodivergent students are safe, full of trust, and allow for creativity.

Creativity in the Classroom Does Not Have to Be Elaborate

The data from this study highlighted different ways that creativity can be incorporated into the classroom setting. The data revealed that simple tasks that encourage creativity meet the creative needs of students with ADHD. Creativity in the classroom can be as simple as allowing students to solve problems using their own methods, as long as they get the correct answer. Other creative options from the data that are easy to implement include illustrating spelling words, using colored paper for handouts, or working with partners. The literature confirmed that creative activities in the classroom help students diagnosed with ADHD engage more effectively with and retain more of the content (Zaghi et al., 2023).

Creativity Strategies Help Build Safety and Trust in the Classroom

The data from this study revealed that students with ADHD need to feel safe in the classroom. The data further showed that creativity in the classroom adds the safety and trust that is necessary. The literature confirmed that students with ADHD need a supportive school environment (Hite et al., 2021; Krtkova et al., 2023). They want their teachers to value their input and listen to their ideas (Gibbs et al., 2023). According to the literature, teachers need to connect with students with ADHD (Saulsberry et al., 2020). Suggested ways to build connections with students included (a) understanding and accepting that they are different from their peers, (b) understanding that traditional teaching practices may not be effective for students with ADHD, (c) connecting through protection, which includes understanding the potential harm that could affect the student and how to avoid it, and (d) understanding the positive correlation between creativity and well-being (Acar et al., 2021; Li & Wu, 2024; Saulsberry et al., 2020).

Structure is Necessary for Developing Creativity

The data from this study indicated that students with ADHD require structure to complete creative tasks. This aligns with the literature, which states that the teacher becomes the facilitator, directing and managing students as needed and providing clear directions and limits for the activity (Amorati & Hajek, 2021). The literature showed that teaching practices that promote creativity are typically less strict, less structured, and more experiential, with a greater emphasis on elements of choice (Conradty et al., 2020). However, the literature also revealed that a less structured classroom environment may be difficult for some students with ADHD, so the teacher must remain the director of the classroom experience, ensuring the classroom culture remains positive, collaborative, and safe for all learners (Conradty et al., 2020).

Teachers Need Training to Be Effective in Developing Creativity

The data revealed that teachers recognize their need to stay informed and up-to-date about current teaching practices for students with ADHD. The data also showed that teachers need to be creative themselves to best manage creative activities. The literature supports the idea that for teachers to believe their experiences with students with ADHD can be positive, they need adequate training and exposure to ADHD (Mulholland et al., 2023; Ward et al., 2021). To increase creativity in teachers, the literature encouraged creativity training that typically

focuses on building creative self-efficacy, which enhances their feelings about their ability to be creative (Stolz et al., 2022).

Implications

The implications for policy are aimed at schools and school districts that have the ability to implement professional development and training for teachers. The first implication for policy is to provide creativity training for teachers. The literature suggested several components that should be in incorporated in creativity training, which included focusing on building creative self-efficacy, obtaining a theoretical understanding of creativity, encouraging divergent thinking, and guiding the selection of the best solution (Fletcher et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2020; Sio & Lortie-Forgues, 2024; Sun et al., 2020). The second implication for policy is to offer training in creative strategies for teachers. The data from this study suggest that teachers want time to collaborate informally with their peers, as well as formal training to better serve students with ADHD. The third implication for policy is to allow teachers to offer creative options for summative assessments. This study's data showed that teachers recognize that students with ADHD flourish when allowed to use art, music, and other creative talents to express their understanding of what they have learned.

The implications for practice are aimed at teachers. The first implication for practice is to prioritize building relationships with all students. The data were clear that students with ADHD need trust and safety, and that it works for all students. The second implication for practice is to start with small, creative options. Both the data and the literature indicate that creative tasks in the classroom do not have to be complicated or expensive. The third implication for practice is to incorporate choice into your formative assessments. Teachers can allow students to demonstrate understanding of the content by writing a song or drawing a picture, rather than writing a summary for homework.

The empirical implications of this study are evident in their connections to previous literature. The first empirical implication was that previous literature indicated that teachers do not always have positive beliefs about students with ADHD (McDougal et al., 2023; Mohr-Jensen et al., 2019; Mulholland et al., 2023; Wijerathna et al., 2023). This study contributes to the literature by confirming the positive beliefs teachers hold about students with ADHD and their creativity. The second empirical implication is that previous literature found that students with ADHD need safety and trust in the classroom (Daher, 2022; Kalantari et al., 2023). This study confirmed that safety and trust are necessary for students with ADHD. This study also extends the literature by finding that safety and trust are enhanced by creative strategies. The third empirical implication of this study is that creative strategies do not have to be complicated. Previous literature found that teachers who incorporate creative strategies in their classrooms create an outlet for the neurodivergent brains of students with ADHD (Zaghi et al., 2023).

The theoretical implications for this study relate to the theoretical framework. The creative growth mindset (CGM) was the theoretical framework for this study. CGM is defined as beliefs about the stable versus malleable character and nature of creativity (Karwowski, 2014). Gralewski and Karwowski (2019) defined creativity as a set of characteristics that enable individuals to solve problems and generate new and relevant ideas within a specific context. The data from this study revealed that teachers believe they can develop creativity in their students with ADHD. That belief aligns with the malleable character and nature of creativity identified in CGM. Karwowski's (2014, 2018, 2022) research consistently revealed that beliefs about creativity can be encouraged and developed, making it malleable. Data also showed that

students with ADHD need structure to develop creativity. The need for structure aligns with the definition of creativity, which stipulates that creativity occurs within a specific context. This study further extends the theory of CGM by specifically examining the development of creativity in the school setting for students with ADHD. The data from this study showed that creativity is not just an option for students with ADHD. Creative strategies are necessary for students with ADHD.

Conclusion

Summary

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to interpret the lived experience of developing the creativity of students with ADHD for teachers in the United States. Creativity in students with ADHD was generally defined as the ability to generate products or ideas that are novel, useful, and appropriate at the same time (Gralewski & Karwowski, 2019). The theory guiding this study was Karwowski's (2014) creative growth mindset. Participants were recruited using convenience sampling and a screening survey to determine their eligibility. Data was collected using individual interviews, a journal prompt, and focus groups. Data was analyzed using van Manen's (2018) four steps for data analysis. The data revealed five themes of: (a) students with ADHD are most creative within structure, (b) students with diverse ADHD have diverse creative qualities, (c) students with ADHD process information differently than others, (d) students with ADHD need safety and trust, and (e) teachers can develop creativity in their students with ADHD. The interpretations of the data were: (a) students with ADHD need creativity in the classroom, (b) creativity in the classroom does not have to be elaborate, (c) creative strategies help build safety and trust in the classroom, (d) structure is necessary for developing creativity, and (e) teachers need training to be effective in developing creativity. Recommendations for future research include studying creativity in adults with ADHD and doing a longitudinal study of students with ADHD and creativity.This results of this study confirmed what students with ADHD already know about themselves; creativity is important to their well-being and academic success.

Recommendations

The first recommendation for future research is to conduct a similar qualitative study of adults with ADHD who are creative to understand how their creativity was developed. The second recommendation for future research is to consider a qualitative study of creativity from the perspective of school administrators. The third recommendation for future research is to conduct a longitudinal study examining the relationship between students with ADHD and creativity. Observing creativity in students over a long period of time could add significantly to the literature regarding ADHD and creativity. The final recommendation for future research is a quantitative study that measures effects of creativity on academic achievement.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

The author declares that Grammarly, an AI-assisted writing software, was used in proofreading and refining the language used in the manuscript. The usage was limited to correcting grammatical and spelling errors and rephrasing statements for accuracy and clarity. The author further declares that, apart from Grammarly, no other AI or AI-assisted technologies have been used to generate content in writing the manuscript. The ideas, design, procedures, findings,

analyses, and discussion are originally written and derived from careful and systematic conduct of the research.

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