“Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)” By Brandon Douglas

This speech was performed by Brandon Douglas during the 2011-2012 Season. He took 2nd Place at Stoa’s National Invitational Tournament of Champions, 1st Place at Sonoma County Classic, 3rd Place at Heart of the Valley, and he ranked 2nd in Expos/Illustrated Oratory on Speech Ranks for the 2010-2011 season

# Intro to Platform

Expository is one of those speeches that is a “must do” in your speech career. About 2 years ago, I suddenly had the urge to do an Expository speech. What? Me? Do an Expository? I am definitely an interp kind of guy. (What can I say, I like to act!) Regardless, my mom wanted me to do an Expository, so I decided to pick a topic on something I love. Filmmaking was the topic I chose. But how can you do filmmaking with no video? That idea and subsequent speech quickly went down the drain. I kept searching, looking for an idea for a speech that would fit me and my personality. Nothing came to mind. A whole school year went by and I never did an Expos. Then at the end of that year a topic came to mind: ADD! Yes! Something that not very many people understand, it was definitely relevant to me, and I could also make it funny!

Personally, I know I have ADD. I was diagnosed with it as a kid, and it shows all throughout my life. ADD as a speech topic stuck in my head all summer. By the time the school year started, I was working out the details. I mainly chose the topic to entertain people with facts, laughs and the positive side of ADD, but also to give them a sense of what it is like to have this disorder. The ADD speech was my first time doing an Expository, or even a Platform speech, for that matter. The season started, and I missed the first tournament. The Highlands tournament came, and I decided to go. It was the first time I delivered my speech the entire way through. Not the brightest idea. In both prelim rounds, my boards were falling over, I was dropping things and the worst part was that I did not even have the ending memorized yet. Everything was just thrown together at the last moment. It was a mess. Taking 26th out of thirty people is not all that much to talk about.

I went home and was determined to make it better. I changed some things, took other things out, and fixed my boards; I gave it more personality. I then entered into the Sonoma County Classic and placed 1st in my club’s own tournament. I had never taken 1st in any speech category ever! It was an amazing feeling.

Again I took it home worked on it. I entered into the Heart of the Valley tournament in Modesto, California, and ended up taking 3rd there. It was there I received my second check mark telling me I could go to Nationals! Nationals came weeks later and I ended up placing 2nd there, sending me to the top of the nation on Speech Ranks. I was truly blessed! Now I am happy to share my thoughts and wisdom of what I have learned over this amazing experience!

# Into the Platform

Pay attention! Stop fooling around! Focus! Do you remember these phrases when you were a kid?  Or Have you ever had one of those days when you can’t find something like your keys, or phone? Or you just can’t complete anything you start?  I’m sure you all have had days like that.   But for someone like me these kinds of days are just a normal day rather than just a random event.

I am extremely distracted and forgetful. When I was seven I lost my retainer… twice. My dad, at his wit’s end, drilled a hole in the case, put some string through it and tied it around my neck.  I had to walk around everywhere with a retainer case bumping around on my chest, so I would remember where to put it. Quite embarrassing I might say.

Why am I so forgetful and distracted you ask? Well, I have what is known as, ADD.

I’m sure you have heard the term - A – D – D and most people know that it stands for – Attention Deficit Disorder. But what really is ADD: Today we will explore the history, the myths, the symptoms, the treatments, and the wonderful abilities inside the disability. I’ll leave you to decide… Is ADD: a disorder? Or an ADDed dimension?? (Kelly and Ramundo 410)

The history of ADD began in the early 1900’s when Dr. Still, worked in a psychiatric hospital with hyperactive, and inattentive patients.  He believed that a brain issue caused the problem when most people believed that bad manners and improper upbringing was the cause. More research began and over the 20th century many names were given to the disorder – names I can hardly say!  Like: Post – Encephalitic Disorder and Hyper kinesis and others like that. (Kelly and Ramundo 8)

Then during all the research in the 60’s, 70’s, and 80’s, scientists concluded that ADD was a defect with the central nervous system of the brain.   Having millions of nerve cells, the central nervous system works like a command center to coordinate messages to every area in the human body sort of how electrical wires would transmit electricity from one place to another.  I don’t have time to bore you with a complete anatomy lesson of the brain, so let’s just say that those messages just get all mixed up!!  (Kelly and Ramundo 8)

Researchers still don’t know exactly what causes these mixed up connections in the brain but they do know that this imbalance causes problems with three main areas. The first is behavior which includes staying focused or paying attention. The second is Motor control which includes eye-hand coordination making it hard to control impulsive movement like constantly having to touch something (like finger tapping) – I like playing with cards.  And third memory which is difficulty storing it.  In other wards, we basically have short-term memory loss constantly like Dorey from Finding Nemo.  (Kelly and Ramundo 17-18)

Now let’s put on our myth buster hat and explore previous myths associated with ADD.

Myths:

1. ADD is not a real disorder, but just an excuse to be lazy.  FALSE!  Research over the last 100 years has consistently shown biological evidence. Officially ADD is now recognized by US Congress, and the National Institute of Health. BUSTED!

2. ADD is just a lack of discipline or poor parenting. False! Research has concluded that ADD has biological causes that impacts behavior, specifically self-control. BUSTED!

3. It's not possible to diagnose ADD. False! Doctors now use a combination of medical tests to accurately diagnose it.  BUSTED!

4. Consuming too much sugar can cause ADD. False! Studies showed that only 5% of people experienced a decrease in symptoms after being on a special diet free of sugar. BUSTED!

5. ADD is a curse for life!  Well it doesn’t have to be! In Ps. 139: 13-14 of the Bible it says God “created my inmost being; He knit me together . . . and I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”  If that is true, than no one person is a mistake. After all, if God made us all alike, life would be boring!! (Jacobs and Wendel 28-29)

The symptoms of ADD are very different in every person causing it to be difficult to diagnose but The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Health Survey has created a quick diagnostic test to see if you might have ADD. (What is ADD. 4)

You might think that you are always doing some of these things because let’s face it, we all lose our brain sometimes, but you must do 6 out of these 9 characteristics constantly making life dysfunctional on a daily basis:

1. seems not to listen

2.  can’t pay attention for very long

3. easily distracted

4. fails to follow instructions (my biggest saying “Oh, I forgot)

5.  NOT . . . . HA! . . . . .  detailed

6. difficulty organizing or planning

7. difficulties with schoolwork

8.  forgetful about daily activities, such as eating

9.  and misplaces things often like money or clothes

Scientists have also concluded that ADD always begins in childhood and may or may not continue into adulthood. (What is ADD. 4)

Then if you add the secondary symptoms of talking excessively; acting "on the go” constantly; easily excited, it would be ADD plus hyperactivity which becomes ADHD. (Jacobs and Wendel, 258)

Not only is ADD a neurological cause, but researchers have also discovered that it is highly genetic. They don’t completely understand the scientific details of the genetic cause, but they agree that if one parent has ADD, there is a 40% chance that the child will inherit it, and if both parents have it, there is an 80% chance that the child will inherit the condition. As you can see I get it from my dad.  Statistics also state that 7% percent of the American population have actually been diagnoses with ADD. You may be thinking, “That’s all, I thought the percentage would be higher,” but way too many kids have been given the label of ADD without a proper diagnosis, and so it seems that every other kid has ADD when they are just rambunctious kids. (Jacob and Wendel 13-14)

Because scientists have done so much research, there are many different types of treatments now. The overall goal of treatment is to help a person function more efficiently and improve their everyday life, not to cure ADD. Usually everyone thinks immediately of taking medication such as Ritalin or ADDeral, but that is only one of the many solutions. Unfortunately this medication is over prescribed and many kids are losing their individuality and their God given gifts. I personally do not take medication and I like my individuality, even though I drive my parents crazy.  Some other treatments are behavior modification, talk therapy, because talking to someone always helps; getting adequate sleep because we can “nod” off when we are bored; a diet high in proteins, grains and vegetables will prevent wild fluctuations in blood sugars that make you feel wired or exhausted;  and regular exercise increases focus and attention.  (Jacobs and Wendell 91-110)

Have you heard this saying before?: “is your glass half-empty, or half-full? If you look at the glass as half empty, you probably tend to have a more negative attitude. But it you look at the glass as half full you are more positive in life and tend to be more successful. This is the attitude needed when looking at ADD. If you take the “dis” out of disabilities, you are left with the word “abilities.” So lets take a new look at the ADD disabilities and discover the abilities inside of them. (Jacobs and Wendel 259)

Inattention can help you move between projects easier without worrying too much and we get things done quicker. Lack of memory allows us the freedom to forgive and “forget” because we don’t even remember what the offended us in the first place. Impulsivity can help you take leaps of faith without thinking too deeply about it – these are many of our heroes.   Other bonus qualities are we stay young at heart when they are older, with great energy and enthusiasm.  Also, it is a fact that generally people with ADD tend to be more creative than the “average” person.

Just imagine the world without great leaders, inventors, writers or artists; or without sports, music or entertainment. Let’s open the history book and look at just a handful of famous people who have struggled with ADD but have used their creativity and unique abilities to achieve great things. These are a few of my favorites: like Abraham Lincoln,  Benjamin Franklin; Ernest Hemingway; Van Gough; Michael Phelps; Walt Disney, Elvis Presley; and Steven Spielberg. All of these famous people inspire me to do my best to overcome my weaknesses and discover to abilities within me. (Honos-Webb 15) (Famous People with ADD 1-2)

Hopefully, you have learned something new today about ADD, and understand that it is truly a biological and genetic disorder. But is it a disorder? Because people like me are much more than a person with a disability. Yes, we struggle in areas of attention, impulsiveness, and memory, but we also have unique and valuable ability’s that God has given us. I like that I have to constantly touch something like cards because I’m always entertaining people. I am pleasantly surprised due to finding clothing or money that I had forgotten about. Someone once asked me if I could push a button and be normal what would I do? I honestly don’t think I would. Sometimes you just have to look life in the eye and say “look there goes a chicken.”

## Works Cited

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# Interesting Things to Know

I had a ton of fun with this speech! I love making people laugh. It is one of my favorite things to do! To see people happy and find enjoyment from my speech makes me happy also! I put my full personally into it this speech and just let it go. I think that is really what helped me do so well. I just let God take over and let him move my mouth.

Most people think of ADD as a negative thing, so decided to put all of the positives of ADD into my speech. I received one comment that said, “You make everyone want ADD!” I believe looking at the positives has a greater impact than looking at the negatives. Trying to make people feel bad for you is not a bad thing, but it does depend on your speech. If your speech is on “Starvation” then be my guest, go right ahead!

Before you jump right in and start hacking away on an Expos of your own, you need to sit down and write your speech. Without good material, you will not have a good speech –– no matter how good your boards are. After you have written your speech, you can start on your boards. Boards are a huge element in Expos; without good boards you will not have a good speech. (It goes back and forth.) This is where you need to get creative! Remember that this is Expository, and you can do whatever you want! From tables to boards, carts to the floor, you have the freedom with props to bring in and use whatever you like! (Well, besides live animals and explosives, but that is a given.) You can do a whole 10-minute Expos on Cantaloupe if you can make it good!

This is something I made up for you to think about when deciding what to include for props in Expos ––The Fours P's:

* Pull out's
* Put on’s
* Pull down’s
* Pull-offs

They pretty much explain it all. You always need to catch the eye of the judge so try to be as creative as possible!

# Influential Ideas

Expository is truly an amazing category! I strongly recommend it! A quick little tip– Always have glue and tape with you at all times. I learned that the hard way! Trying to make a small prop for my speech 5 minutes before you are about to go in the room is quite nerve wrecking! When it comes to boards you always need to make sure they are in top shape before you compete. Have fun with it! There are endless possibilities. Just remember to be creative.