

Madi Hawkins

Field Experience Reflection

For my field experience for teaching exceptional students I teacher aided for a special education teacher, Kendra Scheiber at the Seward Elementary School. While I was in the classroom she worked with groups of three to five students of third and fourth grade children who had specific learning disabilities in reading. They were pulled out of their regular classroom once a day to work with her.

Looking at a typical day, each group of students came in for half an hour. At the beginning they would each have a timed section of reading to do out loud and a bell ringer reviewing something they had learned recently. Then they would move on to the main section where they would work on a certain area in reading or writing, such as reading comprehension or working with words with blends. Then they got to work on either AR (Accelerated Reader) on their own or play a game as a group that was a vocabulary builder or a similar-type game.

The first few times I was there I simply observed and participated minimally. I slowly got to take over teaching, from first only teaching part of the lesson, to teaching the entire lesson. I went got to teach first from watching her do so with the first group and imitating her, to being told what I was going to teach, but getting to teach it all on my own. I went in on Tuesdays and Fridays. When I went on Tuesdays there was two groups, and on Fridays there were three groups. On Fridays especially, one thing I especially think was a benefit to me was getting to watch and/or teach a lesson multiple times, and getting the experience of figuring out how to improve on how I taught something. Usually there was a noticeable improvement in my eyes on how a lesson went, in comparison of the first time to the second or third time it was taught.

I really enjoyed this field experience assignment. I learned a lot from it, and I also loved working with the students in the classroom. I liked the small classroom size where I got to know all of the students individually. It was an eye-opening experience working with the students who were in the special education room. Some of the students who were there were there simply because they had tested below-average in reading, and there wasn't any clear explanation to why. Some of the other students though had external factors that seemed to have an influence on their education. A good chunk of the students there came from troubled homes, where they either had parents who didn't support them like they should, or who weren't even there, because one of the parents was in jail. Some of the students clearly came from unstable homes, which I found out by hearing from the teacher, from what the student themselves said, or from what I experienced from how they acted. A few of the students were also dealing with ADHD, which could be a challenge to work with when they would become a distraction to the others and get off-task.

The teacher in the classroom cared immensely for the students that she worked with, and she was sometimes frustrated by some of the challenges that hindered her being able to help all the students who did need special education, but either weren't receiving it yet, or they had other things getting in the way of their ability to succeed not only in the classroom, but in their lives. The importance of a teacher and a classroom providing a stable, safe, and nurturing environment was notably evident with the students that she worked with. Every student is a child of God, and it is important to help every child succeed and have the best possible life.