

Action Research Analysis Paper 1

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In Lincoln, Nebraska, there is one public school system that employees majority of teachers in the city. Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) has a total of 40,935 students in its district. Among those students 67.2% of them identify as White, that's roughly 26,457 students. The rest of the district's students' ethnicities are spread between Hispanic (13.3% or 5,229 students), African American (6.3% or 2,460 students), Asian (4.6% or 1,809 students), American Indian (0.7% or 265 students) and other (7.9% or 3,109 students). Out of the 40,935 students in the district there are 20,207 students in elementary school, 9,051 students in middle school and 11,677 students in high school. Among those students in the LPS school district, 6,836 (14.7%) are labeled as special education students and 831 of them diagnosed with "Other Health Impairment." Also among the students in LPS, 4,761 (12.1%) are identified as "Gifted" with 596 (1.5%) of them being considered "Highly" Gifted.

As stated before, there are 9,051 students in the LPS district that are in middle school. From those students in middle school, 496 of them attend Dawes middle school and 633 of them attend Lefler middle school. Of those that attend Dawes, 176 are in sixth grade, 164 are in seventh grade and 153 are in eighth grade. Also, of the students that attend Dawes, 315 (63.5%) are white, 68 (13.7%) are Hispanic, 36 (7.3%) are African American, 14 (2.8%) are Asian and the rest are "other." From the students that go to Dawes, 64 (12.9%) are identified as "Gifted" with 0 being recognized as "Highly" Gifted.

Of those that attend Lefler, 206 are in sixth grade, 223 are in seventh grade and 204 are in eighth grade. Of those that attend Lefler, 394 (62.2%) are white, 89 (14.1%) are Hispanic, 46 (7.3%) are African American, 29 (4.6%) are Asian and the

rest are “other.” From the students that go to Lefler, 102 (16.1%) are identified as “Gifted” with 8 being recognized as “Highly” Gifted.

Mr. Wheeler is an LPS gifted mentor for LPS’s gifted program. On average, he travels to two different schools a day and works with different gifted students in the subject of mathematics. He starts his day off by going to Dawes to work with two students in their media center. The first student is a gifted eighth grader who is currently working on algebra. They work together for roughly an hour and have the goal to get him through algebra and geometry by the end of the school year. After he meets with the first student, he has about a twenty-minute gap where he grades tests, homework or creates lesson plans. His second student is a gifted sixth grader who is currently working on sixth grade diff math. This student is apart of LPS’s 2% of students who are labeled with an “Other Health Impairment.” After he is done with work at Dawes, he has a two-hour gap before he heads to Lefler and works with his third student, another eighth grader. His third student is one of the eight “highly” gifted students at Lefler. They work on algebra and plan on completing algebra and geometry by the end of the school year.

At the beginning of Mr. Wheeler’s day, he goes to Dawes middle school and works in the media center. This area is open with nine squared tables set up in a three-by-three grid on the east side of the media center. He occupies one of the squared tables with his students. He sits on the south side of the table facing a bookshelf and the west side of the media center where a class is usually being taught. His students sit on the west side of the table so that they are facing two bookshelves, which allow them to stay focus.

To start each period, him and his students walk to the main office to check in with the secretary. On the way they fill the time with stories from the previous day. Once they check in, they head back to the media center and begin the lesson. Most of the time, they work out of the textbook, which allow them to move quickly through lessons, since it does not take long for the gifted students to grasp the material. At the end of the period, Mr. Wheeler and his students walk back to the main office and checks out and then his students go to their next class.

After he goes to Dawes, he heads to Lefler middle school. At Lefler, he also goes to their media center. This area is spread out with about sixteen squared tables set up in a four-by-four grid that takes up the front two-thirds of the center, the back third is occupied by bookshelves and the media center checkout desk. Here he takes up one of the tables on the south side of the media center. He sits on the south side of the table so that he is facing the rest of the media center and his student sits on the north side of the table so that he is facing bookshelves. During the time Mr. Wheeler is working with his student, the media center is half full with three other mentors and a couple of Teammate's mentors.

To start each period, him and his student hunt the good things. After that, they start with the lesson. They work through the textbook so that they can cover as many sections as possible. Mr. Wheeler often writes out example problems on a small white board and allows his student to workout the problem on the white board. He finds student are more engaged with the lesson if they are writing on a fun material. Mid way through his lesson, he gives his student a five-minute break

(since they work for almost two hours). At the end of the period, his student goes home and Mr. Wheeler checks out with the main office.

Since Mr. Wheeler works with gifted students, there are not much many challenges that the students face. The students are extremely bright; they pick up on material after seeing it once or twice. They usually do not have many questions, and when they do, a simple explanation is all that they need. The students are also aware of their learning so they can communicate when they are struggling or need help.

However, the students do face a few challenges – one of which is showing their work. None of his three students show their work on tests. Showing work is not always necessary, for example, simple arithmetic. However, once the math becomes more difficult it is a necessity to show work. After each assessment, Mr. Wheeler goes through each problem that the students missed. He makes his students write out the work so that they can learn more from their mistakes. Mr. Wheeler found that about 75% of the missed problems came from students not showing work on their assessments.

Student A has missed a total of 18 questions out of 210 on all of the assessments, all of which came from questions that he had no work shown. Going back through the tests with Mr. Wheeler, he was able to do 14 of the problems, which works out to about 80% of the problems missed could have been avoided if Student A showed his work on the test.

Similarly, Student B and Student C have missed 22 and 13 questions out of 205 and 140, respectively. When Mr. Wheeler went through the questions missed with Student B and C, making the students show their work, they both were able to

do 15 and 10 questions, respectively, which means Student B and C could have avoided about 70% and 75% of the problems that they missed.

These findings are remarkable and if they are addressed, the students can improve their scores and get a higher grade, which is important to gifted students and their parents. Also the students can perform better on standardized test. On top of doing better on tests, if these findings are addressed, it will help the students go through the steps and solve problems effectively and it will increase their comprehension, which is also applicable to other subjects.