

Weekly Report I

Date: 13 August, 2023

Date(s) of field work: 10 August, 2023 & 11 August, 2023

Name of the student: Latha Giddaluru

Name of the organization: Little Angels Inclusive School, Sonipat, Haryana

Description of activity:

I was assigned to the classroom Pre-Vocational II in the Little Angels Inclusive School. The class teacher suggested that I work mainly with students Arnika and Kritik, both of whom are diagnosed with ASD and ADHD with mild to moderate intelligence.

Day 1:

I observed class sessions while sitting by Arnika. Arnika was assigned the following work, which was supervised by me; dictation work in Hindi, consisting reading simple sentences out from a book; reading out loud and writing words in English (Doctor, Nurse, Police, etc) four times each; coloring work, where I drew Arnika an image of a hut, which she was tasked to color in a specific stroke direction (left to right and right to left).

I was also introduced to Kritik and informed of his learning style and what his classwork consists of by the teacher.

After lunch (11:30 AM - 12:00 PM), Arnika was sent to occupational therapy (12:00 PM- 12:30 PM), where I accompanied her. Kritik was sent to occupational therapy later (12:30 PM - 1:00 PM), during which I observed him with minimal interaction.

Day 2:

I observed Arnika during her computer class, where she was assigned typing practice which consisted of typing out the sentences written on the screen. The activity measured her

accuracy rate and words per minute, and was timed. After computer class, I supervised Arnika's class activities, which consisted of the following: dictation, matching one word to the same word in the next column, dictation and writing practice of the words 'school' and 'bank', dictation and writing practice of numbers and their written forms (which ranged from 20-29), and a pasting task, where Arnika was required to tear and paste green colored paper onto a drawing of a tree.

Kritik was assigned the following class work, supervised by me: writing numbers from 140-160, matching object pictures to object names, circling the dictated word on the paper, and the same tear and paste task assigned to Arnika previously.

Other students in class were given their own individual work, and the class teacher taught topics such as national symbols, and English grammar. Class was often interrupted or had less students due to preparations for an Independence Day event, which meant most students were busy practicing.

After lunch, I observed both Arnika and Kritik during their OT (occupational therapy) time.

Observations:

The classroom Pre-Vocational II consists of students at various levels academically. Specific attention and tasks are assigned to students such as Arnika and Kritik, whose IQ scores are lower, while the other students are taught from the board or assigned individual work that matches their academic level. The class enables functional learning, where the students are given practical learning, including life skills that they can employ to navigate everyday life. For example, learning how to read stop signs, important warnings, how to identify grocery items like toothpaste, etc.

With regards to Arnika, I have observed that her ADHD manifests differently from other observed ADHD cases; for example, Arnika has a tendency to be distracted and has attempted to leave the classroom when she knows she can get away, while another student Arnav tends to shift seats within the classroom when he does not want to focus on his task. Additionally, I have observed that Arnika is unable to focus on her task without individual attention and the focus of an authority figure on her. Hence, tasks such as the coloring task and the tear & paste task have been assigned to her; according to the class teacher, they are designed to focus her attention and also tire her out so that her tendency to be distracted is reduced.

During occupational therapy students are given exercises to complete. These exercises, for example, may serve to improve motor skills (fine and gross), perception, body awareness, coordination, movement, etc. Some examples of these activities include trampoline exercises, ball toss, ball bearing, wall climbing, etc.

There was a noticeable difference in attitude between how Arnika and Kritik did their OT: Arnika was enthusiastic and seemed to view it as a fun activity, while Kritik was more hesitant and scared of getting hurt. Arnika was very interactive with me during OT, and urged me to participate with her, doing activities such as jumping jacks together and playing catch. During day 2, I observed Arnika instead of participating with her, and noticed her tendency to treat her OT as a fun activity manifest when she would do the exercises improperly and would not perform them at all unless specifically supervised by me or any other authority figure.

On the other hand, Kritik was timid and unable to perform his exercise (wall climb) with me there; he was probably intimidated by a new presence and felt stage fear, hence rendering him unable to continue with an activity he was otherwise proficient in. During day 2, Kritik was less intimidated by my presence, and was able to participate in a group activity in OT.

Everyone in the classroom is assigned different levels of tasks, which are graded individually by the teacher. The students are supportive of each other and help each other when needed. For example, I have observed that students have habitually prompted Arnika to do her work when she is distracted, and students have also encouraged Kritik when he is unsure about participating (specifically, I have observed such an interaction take place during OT).

Overall, we can see that these students are assigned work that are fit for them specifically that they are able to benefit from and learn from.

Learnings from the activity:

This particular field work assignment comes as a challenge to me, as I am more inclined to working with young adults or adults. Working with children is completely different from what I assume working with older individuals would be. First, I have had to exercise a lot of patience and a lot more focus than I am used to. It is important to note the kind of language I am meant to use to encourage the students. It is also important to watch my tone and body language, and make sure that I appear encouraging so that the students are not threatened by me.

The most difficult thing to learn, which I still have to get used to, is the amount of focus I have to have on the student that I am interacting with; if I am not paying attention to them, they may abandon their task or exercise or exhibit harmful behaviour.

I learned that the tasks assigned to the students are designed to help them with their attention deficiency and exhaust them so they are able to focus better; for example, the tear & paste activity. Moreover, the classwork they are assigned are repetitive in order to condition the students into remembering vital information that is important in day to day living. From this, I can infer that the main goal of this classroom is to improve their quality of life so that they are able to live as independently as they can. This is an accurate reflection of what I must do in my

professional career as well, and observing the school-level interventions are helping these special needs students is an important step.