

Sam Dowd
EDUC-998
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Field Experience Setting Information

1. I did my fieldwork at the Clinton Elementary School. The school serves grades K-3.
2. I did my fieldwork in a Kindergarten classroom, they were working on vocabulary.
3. The classroom that I worked in was made up of just about an equal number of boys to girls. Racially the class was pretty diverse. About 75% of the students were white, and the rest were either Hispanic or Black. There were about 20 students there on the day that I was there and there was one teacher in the room. I also noted that there was a significant focus in this classroom on ELL students because of the Hispanic population. The teacher was not bilingual but the Speech/Language Pathologist that I worked with was.

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Field Experience Report

Part I

1. I worked with the students on increasing their vocabulary skills. The objective was to have the students learn the correct names of various animals.
2. For most of the activity that I worked with them on, they were shown a figurine of an animal and had to raise their hands to identify it. Following this, the students had to return to their desks and work on a worksheet which showed images and names of animals and the students had to practice their writing by copying the letters.
3. It was interesting to see that many of the hispanic, (also ELL) students were sitting together on the carpet when they were all identifying the animals. There seemed to be a clique that had formed amongst the Hispanic students. I noticed that the Hispanic students were not as apt to respond to the showing of figurines as the white and even black students. Most of the Hispanic students still paid good attention to the activity and even got excited at various animals that they recognized. However, there were a few who just sat still and did not really participate in the activity. When the students returned to their desks it was obvious that the teacher had sat them in a way that would integrate the Hispanic students with the white and black students. Again, the Hispanic students tended to turn around and talk to the other Hispanic students instead of interacting with their seating group. As I was walking around helping the students with their worksheet I paid careful attention to the progress being made by the Hispanic students as compared to the rest of the class. Overall they were struggling far more than the native English speakers.
4. As I mentioned above, the ELL students were generally non-participative in the naming activity on the carpet. However, the teacher at times would ask the students who had already answered to sit quietly and she would ask the ELL students to identify the animal. They were usually successful, but struggled with pronunciation and were often timid. When I spoke with the teacher before the worksheet activity she mentioned that I should pay close attention to the ELL students and help them because she knew they would definitely need help. I noticed that the teacher spent a lot of time hovering over the shoulders of the ELL students in each seating group, while also making sure to keep an eye on the non-ELL students.

Part II

1. My instructional goal as described by the teacher was to circulate throughout the room and help the ELL students with their worksheet. She told me that if a non-ELL student had a problem I could certainly help them, but that I should focus on the ELL students. I was supposed to help the ELL students with identifying the animal, pronouncing its

name, and then helping them to write the name by copying the letters on the worksheet. The teacher mentioned that some of the ELL students will talk to each other in Spanish and she wanted me to enforce that they speak English at all times.

2. (See above)
3. This was a very difficult exercise for me. I have very little teaching experience and I don't intend to go into teaching. So for one, I had difficulty connecting to the assignment in a way that someone who is passionate about teaching might. In a corporate setting we have several language barriers to deal with, but it's generally up to the employee to seek help learning English than for me to help them directly. That being said, I enjoyed the experience of watching the class and working with the ELL students.

While I was working with the ELL students I was able to apply several parts of the readings and class activities that we did. For one, the ELL students were at a significant disadvantage in terms of their ability to learn because for some of them they were speaking Spanish at home. It was clear which students spoke Spanish at home because they were significantly behind the others. They were the ones that sat quietly on the carpet, and did not respond to the naming activity. They were also the ones that needed the most help when I was helping with the worksheet activity.

I also noted the struggle of a Speech/Language Pathologist to identify potential problems with a student's speech development because they are already at a disadvantage. So, are there legitimate speech development issues, or are they behind just because English isn't their first language. Clinton Elementary School was lucky enough to have a bilingual Speech/Language Pathologist who could administer tests in Spanish and identify the students who were really developmentally disabled and the ones who were just struggling with English.

I don't believe that I was helpful in achieving the instructional goals. I was able to help the ELL students identify the animals and copy the names, but I don't feel that I was very effective in teaching them how to recognize the animal. For example, how to tell the difference between a dog and a cat. The students that I worked with had seemed to have figured out that they could just copy the letters from under the animal and that was enough. I wasn't prepared to teach them how to do the assignment properly, but I did let the teacher know and she offered some remediation.

Overall, this was a hard assignment, and I don't think I made anything worse, but I certainly didn't see the benefit for the students. In terms of benefits for me they were limited. It was not an experience that will contribute towards my professional career, but at the same time it was nice to spend a few hours with the kids and experience a little bit of Kindergarten again.