

# *Platteville Alternative High School*

*Diversity understand how children learn different*

*The teacher understands how pupils differ in their approaches to learning and the barriers that impede learning and can adapt instruction to meet the diverse needs of pupils including those with disabilities and exceptionalities.*

**Date Experience completed:** October 2009-November 2009

**Describe your educational artifact:**

In fall 2009 I was able to visit Platteville Alternative High School there I worked with students who were troubled or had learning disabilities. My artifact is a copy of the final evaluation sheet filled out by Mrs. Tessmann the alternative high school teacher.

**Alignment:**

**\*Wisconsin Teaching Standard 3 – Diversity – Teachers understand that children learn different**

This experience aligns with standard three: Diversity understand how children learn different The teacher understands how pupils differ in their approaches to learning and the barriers that impede learning and can adapt instruction to meet the diverse needs of pupils including those with disabilities and exceptionalities. It aligns with standard three because the five students in the alternative high school all had different learning style and approaches to learning. The students in Mrs. Tessmanns classroom were students who were not able to function and learn in the traditional classroom setting. All of the students had learning disabilities. One student had slight autism. For this student I spent my time keeping him focused working on his GED practice test or career packet. The career packets was a packet where students learned how to fill out job applications, resume's and find websites where they could find jobs or research interview tips excreta. Two other students in the classroom were boys who had gotten into trouble with substances and had behavioral issues causing them to loose their drivers license until their twenties. These two students were also working on their GDE practice test and career packets. To help these two students, I reviewed their math and writing practice GDE tests. Each student and I went over their results and corrected the wrong math problems or wrong grammatical errors.

The students in the GED program were required to have 90% attendance throughout the semester. There was one student who missed to many days so she stayed in the classroom she was only allowed to work on the career book. I also helped her focus and work on the projects in the Career text book. This was a difficult challenge as she could literally not apply herself for more than a few minuets and continuous talked to the other students or sent texts. There was also another student who was not coming to class and was under the Wisconsin high school dropout age so Mrs. Tessmann told me that she will have to report this student and the student will have to go to an institution since she legally has to be in school.

Mrs. Tessmann had taught me how to adapt to these students with learning disabilities by working with them hands-on to meet their needs. I worked with students one-on-one by sitting down with students and working out math problems or explaining grammar rules. I sat down and helped each student to answer the questions they got wrong on their GED practice test. This one one-on-one helped students learn in the areas they lacked. To teach the students I learned how to find the areas students struggled in the most. One way I did this was to help them in math or commas in writing, I scored and analyzed their GED tests. By reviewing the wrong areas of the GED test I was able to help students with fractions, geometry, grammar mistakes. By sitting down with students one-on-one I was able to

help meet their individual needs. These students practiced their GED tests multiple times and could only move to a new content area if they had a high score three times in a row. Mrs. Tessmann knew that if the students scored a certain number in class they would score a high enough number to pass their GED tests. I definitely think this experience was helpful in understanding and recognizing the students who are falling behind in classes. I realized that not all students know how to grammatically use apostrophes or periods. All of the students at Platteville alternative high school had missed too many days of school and fallen behind. It was evident that falling behind is what made it impossible for these students to succeed in a regular classroom. I also learned that the students in this classroom are smart and are able to learn important knowledge in getting their GED and attending college. I know these students are capable of getting their GED through the practice and push they need by being able to learn everything they missed out on in high school the students are smart enough to get a GED and attend at least a two year college. I realized these students just need a little extra push to get them motivated.

**\*UW-Platteville – Knowledge, Skills and Disposition Standards: Manages Student Behavior**

This experience aligns with the KSD because the students had disciplinary problems. Students had to be reminded that they needed to stay on task.

There were multiple times when I had to tell students to stop talking or texting one another and concentrate on their career packets. When I was reviewing the practice test with students, I had to make sure they were paying attention to what the right answer was because they often didn't care what they did wrong. I would ask the students a question about what they were working on if they looked like they were getting side tracked. I would also ask students what they thought the answer was or suggest other sections to work on if students felt like they needed a talking/texting break. The student with autism often got distracted talking to other students or reading the newspaper. It was extremely hard for him to stay on task. When he was not on task I would tell him that he needs to focus and give him a new project related to school to work on. Often times he was distracted because he lost interest in his current task. By giving the student with autism new tasks related to school, he was able to work on old tasks after taking a break from a different task he became bored doing.

**Secondary KSD Alignments**

KSD1.a Demonstrates Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy

KSD3.e. Demonstrates Flexibility and Responsiveness

KSD.2a. Creates an Environment of Respect and Rapport

KSD1.b. Demonstrates Knowledge of Students

**Explain what you learned about teaching/learning from this experience:**

From this experience I learned that it can be hard to keep students on task. It may take constant work and repetition to make sure students with disabilities are motivated and given lessons that help keep the student on task. From this experience, I learned that teachers may need to create lesson plans that meet the needs of the students. For example students in the alternative high school learned best by hands-on and descriptive lessons rather than a lesson in which they are being lectured and taking notes. This has taught me to not make my lectures one solid session of students sitting but rather students sit for half the class period, do a five minute activity that involves moving and then students sit the rest of the class period. I learned classroom interaction of movement like lecturing for 15 minutes and an activity for ten minutes can help stimulate students to continuously learn and hold their attention spans.

**What I learned about myself as a prospective educator:**

I learned that students with disabilities may need more time. I now know these students may need adapted lesson plans. This would affect me because I may need to make tests shorter for those who need more time or change a lesson presentation so that students aren't only taking notes but engaging in a lesson. I also was able to see how these students are different than the "normal" student in the classroom and that these students often get forgotten or pushed to the side. I also learned that these students can be some of the brightest students if they are given an aqueduct learning environment.

I feel that I can help the exceptional learner by challenging them one step further. I can give them more challenging questions on daily homework. I can give the exceptional learner a harder topic or question them more on papers and larger projects. I know the exceptional learner needs an extra challenge to stay motivated and not get bored. I think that I will do my best to see the student who is bright and bored with their work by getting it done fast and getting good grades. As an educator, I will also work hard to continuing learning how I can help students who are exceptional learners as, well as challenge students who are not.