**SCHOOL EXPERIENCE**

**EDUC 250 REFLECTION JOURNAL CHRISTIE STUCKER**

**CHAPTER 2 - LEARNING, COGNITION, AND MEMORY**

**RESPONSE- The** one thing that comes to mind is the morning board work. Every student comes to the round rug and sits together. They take turns with a pointer each day by drawing names. On the long term memory side, they do this EVERY day! This particular activity goes in the same order, going over the same items with minor exceptions like date and weather. It starts out by going over the date and two ways to write it, the calendar, weather, number chart from 1 to 100 or farther (repeated out loud daily), then on to the decimal points, then vocabulary words and vowel sounds. At the beginning of the school year they reviewed the previous year. Then they moved on to newer and more challenging information. This was built up to where the teacher wanted it, and then it became a daily routine. This repeating locked it into the long term memory of students who knew it and allowed slower students to catch up and being a group participant. Other things that helped was that they not only recited it, but they got to touch it with a pointer and then see it visually on the wall aids

**REFLECTION-** I used this method in my daycare before I ever stepped into a classroom and know firsthand that it works. I put the idea together in my ECD courses when I was trying to get state certified. I was dealing with ages 0 thru 5. I created my own curriculum and own charts (it was much cheaper!) Repetition is defiantly a big factor, along with using all 5 senses when introducing it.

**CHAPTER 3 – LEARNING IN CONTEXT**

**RESPONSE-** In my time spent in the classroom there was a special needs student that participated almost as much as the general students. She participated, did homework, followed the same schedule, had lunch time, recess and even had her own desk. However, she could not speak and could barely respond other than smiling or pointing a finger. She had a hard time controlling her emotions. I was told stories from the teacher and the aide about problems they’ve had with her. When she doesn’t get her way she will scream/cry. It really upsets the students in the class. At first they would push her in her wheelchair to the hallway to get their away from the class. It was supposed to be a punishment for her. Instead they realized she liked it and was doing it on purpose so she could go out there. While I was there for the 2 days, I was told that they had to change things a month or two prior. She began to have a fit because she hates math and it was time to do it, She starts screaming/crying and after numerous attempts to get her to stop, they ended up turning her chair around to where she has to stare at the chalkboard by herself.

**REFLECTION-** My reflection on this situation at first, I felt was cruel and rude. I really didn’t care for it at all. However, my ears were still ringing from her screaming. After about 5 to 7 minutes of screaming and kicking the wall she finally stopped. The aide told me that she wants attention and does it by throwing her fits to get students to look at her. I had changed my mind about the punishment gave to her. I am not an aide and don’t have the training for it, but I’m sure there are other options.

**CHAPTER 4 – HIGHER LEVEL COGNITIVE PROCESSES**

**RESPONSE-** During the tutoring session there were many opportunities for students to practice self-regulated learning. One instance was during activity time. They had a name board and the teacher already had names where she wanted them. The students would go to the stations and do the activity for 5 ten minutes, then, when the timer ran they would rotate. Every student was on their own to do what they were supposed to except the ones group meeting with the teacher at her desk. I noticed they were actually doing things, then filling out the worksheet on it and then turning it in.

Another but lesser example is during morning work. They are to come straight in, calm down, hang coats back packs, turn in homework, make lunch choice, and start the morning worksheet. It is a lot to do, but they all seemed to be in the groove with things.

**REFLECTION-** There were students who would forget homework, not sit right down and get to business, or goof off and get way off the path. The students were rewarded by stickers on a chart for good behavior. I noticed that a handful of students were rewarded for end of the week performance for getting a sticker for EVERY day. Those students got to pick something out of the treasure chest. This was like happy hour for the classroom! You could see the look on the others faces who earlier that morning did not follow the self- led instructions. They were really wanting in the treasure chest at this point.

**CHAPTER 5 - COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT**

**RESPONSE-** In respect to multiple intelligences, I believe that every teacher tries to use every tool available to get the material understood. This is how my college classes have taught me. I’m sure there are others who don’t and should! Everyone does learn at different paces and in different ways. Using tools like technology mixed with the 5 senses are a good way to utilize all strategies that encourage development. Assessments do not have to be a pencil, paper, and timed event. In fact, a lot of students lock up with anxiety and don’t perform well. New methods of teaching and assessments make lessons more enhanced and interactive.

**REFLECTION-** I remember that in my classes in grade school, that if it included doing things with my hands or an activity that got us out of our seats, I almost always succeeded at it. If it was like math or history where it was a sit down pen and paper with lecture atmosphere, I scored poorly on it. Maybe if teachers then, knew to look at a student’s individual intelligence and learning styles our generation would be full of successful people.

**CHAPTER 6 – MOTIVATION AND AFFECT**

**RESPONSE-** I spent a whole day in the second grade classroom before I was allowed alone with them in the hallway for tutoring. I quickly realized the levels of each of the students, who was serious and who was not, who was high functioning and who needed help. I personally couldn’t see the ending goal for this classroom as far as accomplishments because they were all on different performance levels. I’m sure she had it in a file somewhere. You could almost tell the difference by watching them though. I noticed the ones who were diligently working on the activities during self-led time, I noticed who didn’t care much to be there, and the ones in the middle who have a hard time focusing, yet are very willing. All students were very attentive and positive during individual RTI time, especially when they understood or you gave them a “secret” pointer to help them.

**REFLECTION-** I remember my time in school when I struggled with math and how I felt. I could see myself as a couple of those students. I tried, without being bias, to serve each individual need so they could progress. I did notice that even in the lower group that I had, there would be one student who didn’t catch on and the rest did. You could see the frustration. It is sad that they couldn’t have one to one time.

**CHAPTER 7 – PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**RESPONSE-** In the review of sense of self, I had a couple things come to mind. On one occasion I was standing behind the back row of students. They didn’t know I was there. I was watching them typing in information on the ipads as the teacher explained it. One girl, who I later found out has family disruptions at home, was supposed to be typing in a title for a book that included the word girl. All she typed in was girl and she had the ipad setting on images instead of web. This setting will show pictures only. Even though the ipads are regulated for content through the school, there were still images of girls in thin bikinis and bra and panty sets. She didn’t know I was behind her, and I watched her stray completely off course and type in hot girl. It wasn’t long till she had gotten into images that weren’t pornographic or nude, but was definitely not suited for her age. I whispered in her ear that she might want to get back on track. (mind you….this is the same girl who was cheating on her AR test with the ipad that I mentioned on another answer.

Another thought that came to mind was a boy who kept pretending to be sword fighting with another student. I had forgotten about it until a little later when he passed me and asked if I had any kids. I told him yes, I have three, two girls and a teenage boy. He said what does him like. Without thinking I said he likes video games and his ipad. The student responded what games does he like? I was not about to name specific games off to him because this was only a second grader, however, I told him that he likes army games and stuff with zombies in it. Instantly he popped off with the name of two games that I just this year found ok for my teen son to be playing. Apparently, he has it and plays it often. He went into detail about guns knives and what they were called. I didn’t notice any negative attitudes in any of the children in the class. They are in the stage where it will start influencing their behaviors. Unfortunately, the students that caught my attention with surprise activity, were the ones, I would find out later would be single parent, no parent, or grandparent risen children.

**REFLECTION-** In the category of personal and social development, I truly believe that the main figure in their life will influence the manner in which their morals and behaviors mimic. It’s so sickening, and sad to know that these poor kids don’t have a choice. Their life has already been formed without their consent or choice. Whether they would know it or not it will shape the rest of their lives

**CHAPTER 8 – INSTRUCTIIONAL STRATEGIES**

**RESPONSE-** In the book they talk about RTI which is response to intervention. I’m going to give an example and I hope it fits this description. This setting was in the general education room, but it was with a special needs student. This student was VERY smart. She had the same emotional and cognitive abilities as us, but she just couldn’t speak or completely use her body. She could make facial expressions, turn her head, and point…Oh….she can kick too!At one point, the class was working on vocabulary words. By, the way, she had her school issued ipad and her own from home which was VERY nice! It had functions on it for special needs students. During vocabulary time the aide turned on a feature that was a landscape view of large letters. They put a glove on her right (pointing) hand. This was from the therapist because she couldn’t open her hands all the way sometimes. Anyway, when the teacher would say the word the gen ed students typed it into a word program of some kind, and she would (one letter at a time) poke out the words. She had good control over where her hand went and how to land her finger. She couldn’t do the whole list of words because it took her quite a bit longer to spell them. However, it proves that she has the same capability as the other students. Towards the end of the vocab lesson, she was burnt out with it and wanted to do her own thing. They only had a couple of words to go. She (VERY QUICKLY) like any other human toughed the back button and a few others and was headed out into the start page. She tapped on the animal icon, which on her ipad did animal pictures, sounds, songs, and stories. After two or three wars between her and the aid over the ipad , she was told it was going to get taken away. Apparently they have an old school method of teaching that was before ipads. She made it apparent that she didn’t want that, yet continued to exit to the other software function. It was eventually taken away and she had to revert to the dinosaur method. (Pen and paper)

**REFLECTION-** Reflecting on this moment, I remember I almost had to walk out because of laughing. This girl has a total mind of her own and knew what she was doing and the consequences. She had a sense of humor, that’s for sure. The aid said watch the difference of how she does the work she wants and the work she doesn’t want. She can get there just as fast as you and I when she wants too! I thought this girl was great! She made my day. I could not believe how intelligent she was. When she was punished for things, it would take her time, but she would be back in the game again and happy at it.

**CHAPTER 9 – STRATEGIES FOR CREATING AN EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**

**RESPONSE-**  I noticed in the special needs room; it seemed they had everything a hospital would need in physical therapy. I couldn’t even name the tools or furniture used much less count them. There were floor mats for stretching or reading time, a table to lay them on that straightens legs, and even had a promethean board. This is the tool I found very interesting. They sat in their wheelchairs and had circle time just like a gen ed room in front of the board. One of the students had hand control so they would let her use the touch pen and touch the board for interaction. They would say days of week, month, weather, and sing.

**REFLECTION-** I was impartial at first about special needs. I’ve never been around them and didn’t really believe in inclusion. However, I witness a few things in my time of being there that helped change my mind. When we went to art with 2 of the students, they chose their colors for painting, even though the teacher would do it. She would ask if he wanted a square or triangle and he would smile to answer. When we went to music, there was a little girl in a wheel chair (she was an absolute doll)...anyway, as soon as they started the music she would rock back and forth so hard she had the chair on 2 wheels ! She was stirred up and screaming (with joy) the whole time. When we got back to class, she passed out from exhaustion.

**CHAPTER 10 – ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES**

**RESPONSE-** During my stay there were many different types of assessments used. In AR or accelerated reading, the students were to read a book then get on the ipad to answer AR quizzes. This posed as a problem because the teacher can only be at one place at a time. I caught the students not reading and keeping their books open and searching for the answers.

I also used a one on one assessment with students in a math session. It turned out to be successful when they were willing to participate and not goof off.

**REFLECTION-** I do believe there are many varieties of assessments, and that it is important to use them. Not all students learn in the same way, and using different tools allows u to see where each person succeeds or fails. For example, with the ipad AR testing, there were a handful of students who were utilizing it correctly and seemed to do really well with it. When we started the math sessions, the same student would not do as well.

**FINAL REFLECTION –**

**1.** I have been in many classrooms before and even worked at a school. However, this observation has helped to readministor ideas that were forgotten. Every person who can spend time in a school or class setting before making it a profession should. It should be done before even starting college courses. It will definitely let a person know if they want to do this occupation for sure or not. The special needs half of my observation completely changed my mind about how I felt about inclusion. It was an eye opener, and anyone able to be included, should be!

**2.** I guess this question goes back to number one. I have completely changed my point of view on special needs. I felt that they were a hindrance to the classroom and teachers time that could be spent with students that were fully functional. I was raised in a school where you didn’t see the “”Retarted” students. There was a huge classroom in the back with all the amenities for them. They were hardly seen out of the room. When you walked by, if the doors were open, it seemed like complete chaos. I couldn’t ever imagine having them in a room with me. I also never was raised around anyone with needs. It is almost a culture shock to a person to be put in that situation and it’s uncomfortable. On the flipside, my observation showed me how society and technology has advanced and allowed them to show their true selves and be a part of the general population. It’s sad to think that there were probably students who were completely aware and capable to be in a classroom and knew where they were. They could comprehend what was going on, yet they couldn’t or didn’t have a say or way to prove them. Now, I feel guilty for the thoughts I had even though they were involuntary. It’s like someone raised to use the bathroom on a toilet, not knowing there is another world out there of people who get along just fine and do not have plumbing. It’s a complete change of thinking process.