



UNDERSTANDING LEARNING DISABILITIES, CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION AND
LEGAL OPERATIONS

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Introduction

Each year parochial school teachers encounter students who struggle and appear to need some outside intervention in order to function well at school. In many cases extensive protocols are required in order to get the necessary student support from the public school system.

Throughout my teaching career I noticed an increase in the number of children with learning disabilities (LD) in my classroom. Lutheran Elementary Schools (LES) today mirror the national percentages for number of students with LD. National averages show that nearly six percent of a school's enrolled students will have some type of learning disability (Learner, 2003). In order to address this increasing challenge in the self contained classroom, I set a personal goal of broadening my knowledge in the area of special education, specifically of understanding LD and how to best serve all students within my classroom. The ultimate goal was to increase expertise in creating positive learning experiences for the children with LD in my school. In addition, I decided my school needed a special education liaison who could direct parents to appropriate help when needed, and who could act as a pseudo-specialist to address issues with other classroom teachers within the school. To accomplish these goals, I began to explore the possibility of doing an educational internship at a local public school.

The educational internship was an opportunity that allowed me access to a specific population for the purposes of study and professional growth (Sweitzer & King, 2008). An internship in a special education classroom with a primary caseload of

students with LD was an ideal situation in which I could apply information acquired through coursework taken in the master's degree program. The Master's Degree Capstone Internship provided an opportunity to apply learned skills in a setting where certified special education teachers were present for guidance. Regular classroom teachers need help navigating the legal procedures and policies that can vary from district to district (White & Mason, 2003).

Completing the internship in a public school setting provided exposure to many types of disabilities that may not be encountered in the private school setting. The internship also provided access to different assessment and teaching tools that are used by public school special education teachers. The purpose of the internship was to study the process of identifying, planning and implementing instruction, and assessing children with learning disabilities.

The internship addressed four specific questions. 1) How are students identified to receive special education services? 2) What instructional planning is implemented based on assessment? 3) How is instruction carried out? 4) What assessment is carried out that impacts future planning and instruction?

Secondary questions that were explored as a result of the internship experience included: What role does technology play in instructing students with LD? How does the amount of time a special education teacher has to work with students in the inclusive classroom coincide with the needs of the students in that class?

Internship Design

The internship occurred at a local public middle school August 24, through December 11, 2009, in the San Diego Unified School District. The school was a magnet

for students with special needs in that neighborhood. I spent 15-20 hours per week at the middle school and 25-30 hours per week fulfilling the duties of a 7th and 8th grade Lutheran elementary school (LES) teacher.

This middle school was chosen because it serves children 11-15 years of age, which corresponds to the ages of the children in my classroom, and because no Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) Lutheran schools in San Diego County have a special education program. The classroom structure of this public middle school approximated that of the LES where students with learning disabilities are included in the general education classroom. Consequently, very little instruction was carried out in a separate classroom for students with LD at this public middle school. The head of the special education department at the middle school agreed to mentor me for the duration of the internship. The middle school principal granted me permission to observe and to interact with the staff, faculty, and student body.

An anecdotal journal was used to document my observations and teaching related activities during the internship (See Appendix B).

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this Internship Project the terms are defined as follows:

Ability/achievement discrepancy: A mathematical calculation for quantifying the discrepancy between the student's current achievement and his or her potential.

Assessment: Testing done (multidisciplinary evaluation) to help in decision making (the case conference or the IEP meeting).

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC): An organization for professionals working with students with special needs.

Differentiated instruction: Instruction that consistently assesses student understanding in varied and meaningful ways. Instruction that responds to student needs.

Eligibility criteria: Standards for determining whether a student can be classified as having learning disabilities and will be eligible for learning disabilities services.

Individualized education program (IEP): A written educational plan developed for each school-aged student eligible for special education.

IDEIA: Acronym for the 2007 Individuals with Disabilities Educational Improvement Act

Learning center: A designated room or area where students go to receive specialized instruction.

Learning disability (LD): (1) A disorder in one or more of the basic processes involved in understanding spoken or written language. The term does not include mental retardation, physical or emotional handicaps. (2) The IDEA 2004 definition of a Learning Disability/Specific Learning Disability is: The child does not achieve adequately for the child's age or to meet State-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas, when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the child's age or State-approved grade-level standards.

- (i) Oral expression
- (ii) Listening comprehension
- (iii) Written expression
- (iv) Basic reading skill
- (v) Reading fluency skills
- (vi) Reading comprehension
- (vii) Mathematics calculation
- (viii) Mathematics problem solving.

Low achieving (LA): A student with below average test scores or grades that may or may not qualify for special services.

Multidisciplinary team: Specialists called in to evaluate student eligibility for special education services. (school psychologist, social worker, school nurse, speech and language pathologist, reading specialist, physical therapist, et.)

Positive behavior support (PBS): Methods that assist as the child learns new ways of behaving.

Pre-referral team: A peer group of colleagues in the classroom teacher's school who help the teacher analyze the student's academic and/or behavioral problems. They recommend interventions and accommodations for the classroom.

Response to intervention (RTI): Response to intervention integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and reduce behavior problems. With RTI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities.

Section 504 (1973): Section of the Rehabilitation Act, a civil rights law, that requires that accommodations be made for individuals with disabilities in institutions that receive federal funds.

Special education liaison: A person who coordinates communication between the multidisciplinary team members and the parents.

Special education services: Services spelled out on a student's IEP such as speech and language pathology, physical therapy, reading specialist, and learning center et.

Specific learning disability (SLD): (1) See learning disability (2) Refers to a student's inability to participate successfully in certain aspects of the learning task or in certain types of learning. Specific abilities that these students may lack are attention, perception, memory, and the processes of receiving, associating, and expressing information.

Literature Review

Disability Identification

Identification of children who qualify for special education services traditionally is done after repeated teacher observation of student failures. A pre-referral team is assembled who assist the teacher in evaluating the student's academic and/or behavioral issues. If the pre-referral team is unable to effect any positive change then a multidisciplinary team is assembled whose job is to confirm by formal assessments such as an IQ test and an achievement test that the student is eligible for special education services (Kavale, Kauffman, Bachmeier & LeFever, 2008).

The ability-achievement discrepancy method of identifying students with learning disabilities however, is not used in a consistent and predictable way by most schools (Shinn, 2007). The resulting situation is the confusion that exists over who is eligible for services based on the millions who have been labeled as having a specific learning disability (SLD) over the past 20 years (Shinn, 2007). It should be noted that the terms SLD and LD are used interchangeably in special education literature. A clarification of the terms LD, SLD and low achieving (LA) may be helpful (see definition of terms pp. 4-5). Some students with specific learning disabilities (SLD) and low achieving students (LA) may not qualify for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Improvement Act (IDEIA, 2004), but may still receive some services under Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act (1973), a civil rights law. Those identified as having learning disabilities (LD) qualify for IDEIA services as delineated in their individualized educational program (IEP).

Response to Intervention and Assessment in Special Education

Since the 2004 restructuring of the IDEIA (PL 108-446), response to intervention (RTI) is the new standard for determining which student will qualify for special education services including learning disabilities according to the U.S. Department of Education's office of special education programs. RTI allows a student to bypass years of aptitude-achievement discrepancy before being considered for LD services (Stecker, Fuchs, Fuchs, 2008). RTI is slowly changing the way a classroom population is structured because, in theory, children with LD in the general education classroom can be identified more quickly and given help (Bradley, Danielson & Doolittle, 2007).

RTI works effectively when the classroom teacher is competently implementing a quality curriculum to students. In order to correctly identify a struggling student as LD, a teacher needs to know what to look for and then how to work with the child in obtaining a favorable educational outcome (Stecker, Fuchs & Fuchs, 2008). The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) lists assessment of learner behavior, identification of those who need specialized educational instruction, as an objective of those who intern in special education classrooms (see Standard Eight Appendix A).

Regular follow-up assessments must be done in order to determine the effectiveness of the planned instructional interventions. The assessments can take the form of daily progress monitoring or tests given at the end of stated periods set in the annual goals and benchmarks sections of the IEP. Assessment data should be used in the construction of an IEP and act as baseline information against which progress towards goals should be measured (Capizzi, 2008). According to recent legislation (IDEIA, 2007), teachers must use current assessment data when evaluating a student's

IEP. The law stresses actively measuring student progress in an ongoing manner as well as using relevant and current data to meet the legal requirements of progress monitoring (Standard Eight Appendix A; Capizzi, 2008).

Instructional Planning for LD

The planning process begins once a student is identified as LD and is qualified for special education services. Initially the pre-referral and assessment is done by the regular classroom teacher. If the pre-referral team decides further testing is required for disability eligibility, the student is referred to and tested by educational specialists. The results are discussed in a multidisciplinary team evaluation meeting. The information that is gathered at this evaluation is used to write an IEP. The IEP is the instrument by which individualized instruction is spelled out for each student (McLoughlin & Lewis, 2005). The IEP includes the student's present level of performance, measureable annual goals and short-term bench marks, special services needed, modifications, and measures of progress (Learner, 2000). Teachers use the content of the IEP to discover student strengths and weaknesses and to decide what teaching plan is appropriate for this student. "Planning strategies require that teachers have a broad knowledge of methods, materials, approaches, curriculum areas, child development, and most important, the student themselves" (Learner, 2000). The CEC also states in its guidelines that program planning by interns should demonstrate understanding of the learner and his/her educational needs (see Standard Seven Appendix A).

Components of Instruction

The implementation of the IEP involves many key areas of which three are discussed here: differentiated instruction, socio-emotional and behavioral supports, and

collaboration (Hoover & Patton, 2008). Differentiated instruction is instruction that constantly assesses a student's understanding, is responsive to the student's needs, and enables a student to demonstrate competence in varied, meaningful ways (Broderick, Mehta-Parekh & Reid, 2005). Differentiation is a response to modify instruction in light of student differences, acknowledging that all teachers make such modifications in small but significant ways throughout the school day. The challenge, however, is to embrace the concept on a scale and scope that will positively enhance student achievement (Tomlinson, 2001). Interns are required to demonstrate competence in effective teaching procedures and use of technology (Standards Three, Four & Five Appendix A).

Teachers report that student behavior is their number one difficulty (Coates, 1989). Both special and general education teachers deal with a variety of challenging behaviors every day. Positive behavior supports (PBS) is a comprehensive, research-based, proactive approach to behavioral support aimed at producing comprehensive change for students with challenging behavior (Ruef, 1998). PBS does not seek to "eliminate" behavior, but it seeks to understand the behavior's purpose. PBS helps students to learn positive ways to make their feelings and needs known. The CEC guidelines state that an intern should be able to demonstrate classroom management and the ability to impact the classroom in a positive manner using PBS (Standard Five Appendix A).

The teacher role of collaborator is especially important in today's educational setting where special and general education teachers must work together in increasingly inclusive settings (Sindelar, 1995). Teachers' communication and

collaboration skills demonstrate the ability to work with students, parents, teachers and other paraprofessionals to the benefit of all (CEC, 2004). The classroom teacher must be able to interact effectively and support other teachers of those students in their care who are at risk or who have already been identified as LD (Hoover & Patton, 2008; Standards Six & Ten Appendix A).

Further Assessment and Instruction

The effectiveness of the instructional plan cannot be measured unless a teacher is continuously assessing the students in the classroom. These ongoing assessments can include formal assessments like criterion-referenced tests or informal assessments such as observations, analysis of work samples and informal inventories. Students who have IEPs typically are assessed at least twice per week over a nine to twelve week evaluation period (Shinn, 2007).

Based on these continuous assessments instruction evolves around the needs of the student. At minimum an IEP must be reviewed on an annual basis. In this review the team evaluates the student's progress toward the annual goals. Data from assessments, observations and interviews is used to decide whether the educational program described in the IEP should be continued, modified or discontinued. The student's fate depends on this constant monitoring of his or her progress (McLoughlin & Lewis, 2005; Standard Eight Appendix A).

The process described in this literature review is that of identifying and planning for students with LD. It also addresses instructing and assessing such students.

Internship Journal

The anecdotal journal which follows describes how these four components, posed in question form, were addressed during the internship.

1. How are students identified to receive special education services?

Identification of those individual students who are failing or who are at risk for failure in the public school system is a complicated issue. Here it must be noted that I was observing 12-15 year old students in middle school. This means that most of the students who attended the learning center already had IEP's. However, there were some instances of students who had not been identified for special education services (SPED), but came to the learning center as well. One student in particular exemplifies how a person is identified for services. This student was actually in the gifted program at the school, but was referred to the learning center by his teachers because of behavioral issues. One of this student's teachers came to the learning center teacher to discuss what to do about his lack of success. The learning center teacher realized that he needed her help and agreed to take on his case. Upon testing him it was discovered that he was functionally illiterate. He was able to fake his way through courses for years because of his superior intellect and yet, he could barely read. Attention deficit issues had been identified earlier in his educational history, and that was the primary focus for this student until this school year (Standards two and three Appendix A; see Appendix B, 9/23, 9/28).

2. What instructional planning is implemented based on assessment?

Much of the first 10 weeks of the school year was devoted to retesting the students in the learning center who had IEP's and testing new students without IEP's to determine placement within the reading program. My mentor and I tested the boys in the learning center group using different reading assessments. I worked with the Informal Reading Comprehension Checklist for narrative and expository text which paired well with the guided novel reading unit that I was doing with the students. My mentor's tests were geared for the two reading programs that she was preparing the students to use: Read 180 from Scholastic and the Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing (LiPS) program. Based on the results of these tests the boys were placed in an appropriate reading group and were taught level specific skills. In addition, the speech and language pathologist used the information from the student's IEP's and our testing to design specific activities for the group. For instance, it was obvious that the boys lacked age appropriate social skills and that they struggled with communication in general. The speech and language pathologist (SLP) provided this component within the greater continuum of services provided to most of these students (Standards six and eight Appendix A; see Appendix B, 9/09, 9/14-16, 9/21, 10/28).

3. How is instruction carried out?

Instruction was carried out in a variety of ways depending on the level of care that the student needed. What I observed at this middle school was that instruction was not static, and that it was constantly changing and evolving based on the information at hand. This was especially true of the students under the care of the SPED team. They worked tirelessly to place students in appropriate educational settings and to ensure

that they were getting the services spelled out in their IEP's (See Appendix B, 9/17, 9/21-23).

There were a number of students who had autism in this school. The new district policy was to place these students in regular classrooms upon entering middle school regardless of the severity of their condition. One little girl with extreme autism literally had a team of teachers taking her to her classes each day. They patiently tried to get her to do basic things like hold a pencil or a marker and make letters. She wanted to run around the room or to sit on someone's lap. However, the district mandate said that she had to go to classes just like the regular education students. Fortunately, at her IEP review, her case manager and teachers were able to convince the district that this student be placed in a self-contained special classroom at a different public school site to better meet the needs of one with severe autism (Standard five Appendix A; see Appendix B, 9/22, 10/02, 10/09, 10/20, 10/22, 11/13, 12/03).

Co-teaching was another form of instruction that I was able to both observe and experience. The middle school paired my mentor with a regular education history teacher for the purpose of providing support in a large size class which also included many students with special needs. History was not my mentor's area of expertise.

Apparently that was not uncommon for random pairings to occur in this new model of instruction that the district was trying out. As it turned out, these two teachers were able to work quite effectively together as a team. My mentor's expertise in special education complimented the other teacher's abilities in history which provided benefits to all of the students in the class. For instance, the history teacher was very disorganized at first. She had all kinds of wonderful materials planned for her units, but the structure of the

lessons and the way the materials were presented was often overwhelming and confusing to the students. The SPED teacher was able to take the materials and stream-line them so that they were more organized. Deadlines for completion and grading became more concrete and fewer students fell behind as a result (Standard ten Appendix A; see Appendix B, 9/10, 9/21, 10/01, 10/05, 10/07, 10/08, 10/14, 10/20, 10/21, 10/29, 11/18, 11/20, 11/30, 12/02, 12/09).

One last example of how instruction was carried out involved a boy in the learning center group who was especially troubled. He had been in and out of many schools and had recently spent time at juvenile hall. At 15 years old he still could read only the most basic of words. We worked with him on his reading in small groups every day.

Unfortunately, he began to bully some of the smaller students in the class so my mentor asked me to work with him one-on-one. For this student, it seemed to be the answer. He needed someone to give him that personal attention that he was lacking in his life. For once he actually tried to do the exercises we had designed for him. Previously he had tried everything to get out of participating in class (Standards two and three Appendix A; see Appendix B, 10/27, 11/18, 12/3, 12/09).

To summarize, there were many different types of instruction carried out at this school. Large group, small group, one-on-one, technology-assisted and individualized instruction were utilized.

4. What assessment is carried out that impacts future planning and instruction?

During the course of this internship the assessments observed were on-going. The students were being assessed based on their success or failure in performing the skills that were being taught. Each day, for example, a grammar question was posted

on the board to which the students were asked to write out the answer. In this way writing was practiced and their understanding of grammar principles from previous lessons were checked. The formal assessments that were done at the beginning of the school year were not repeated during the time I was at the school. However, I was able to experience an IEP review meeting which set up planning and instruction for that specific student (See Appendix B, 10/08, 10/23, 12/10).

The IEP meeting that I attended involved a boy with cerebral palsy, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and Asperger's syndrome. The focus of the meeting was to determine whether the student could function without a full time aid, and if so, what accommodations would have to be made in order for him to attend classes on his own. An advocate, hired by the boy's parents, was present at the meeting along with all of his classroom teachers, aides, therapists and other specialists. Eighteen people in all discussed this boy's needs for over three hours. I was impressed by the professionalism and care displayed by all involved. In the end the IEP was changed to meet the goal of greater independence for this student. During the meeting, all of these professionals put their heads together and came up with some creative ways to help this student become a self-functioning member of his class. The physical education teacher suggested the use of a special bicycle so that he could stay with his group, get some much needed exercise, and not have to sit on a bench the entire class period. The advocate pressed the group to set deadlines for implementation of all the various accommodations to ensure that the revised IEP would be in effect sooner rather than later (Standards seven, eight, nine & ten Appendix A; see Appendix B, 10/13).

Traditional assessments like unit specific tests and portfolios were used in the history classroom. Student progress in this classroom was based on the amount of items that were completed in the unit notebook. The students were responsible for taking notes, filling in charts, completing maps and diagrams, and reporting on their group's topic from the unit (See Appendix B, 10/05, 10/08, 10/14, 10/20, 11/2, 12/02).

Reflective Essay

Interning at a public school was not something that I would have thought possible. There were so many obstacles that had to be overcome in order to make this a reality, and yet somehow everything seemed to fall into place once I really decided that this was the best capstone for my masters program. Prior to the internship beginning, there were times when I wondered whether doing an internship would really be beneficial to me and my school.

The internship experience was both fulfilling and enlightening. Although I may not have been afforded the in-depth look into some of my questions, other topics of interest were explored that I had not anticipated.

Collaboration and co-teaching were very evident during this internship. I wrote about the collaboration between my mentor and the history teacher many times in my journal. They began the process of melding their two different teaching styles and backgrounds from the very first day, September 9, 2010. Fortunately, theirs was a success story.

Observing these two women in action gave some insight into what it takes to have a successful co-teaching experience. First, both parties have to be invested in the idea. Both these teachers were ready to do whatever it took to be successful in their classroom. Second, ego was not part of the equation. Both of these women were experienced teachers, but from different fields. My mentor's specialty besides SPED was science. The classroom she was assigned to co-teach in was a seventh grade history classroom. This could have been a problem, but it wasn't because both teachers relied on the other's strength to develop and teach the lessons for each unit. Finally,

both teachers were highly professional in their approach. They enrolled in workshops to help them develop plans together and they requested extra time from the administration so that they could actually get the planning/ preparation done for their classes. One other piece to their success was an exceptionally supportive principal who made sure that they had whatever they needed in time and materials for the job.

While this co-teaching was going on at the public school, I was engaged in a similar situation at my school. In order to do the internship I had to have a teacher come in and teach for about three hours a day in my classroom. This meant doing lesson plans together each week and collaborating on what each of us was going to teach in language arts. Co-teaching worked well for the same reasons that it worked at the public school. In both cases I believe the students benefited from having the two teachers working together in the classroom. I found the experience very enjoyable despite the time it took to plan lessons out. "Good teachers can work with one another to provide for students in general education classrooms" (Sindelar, 1995).

The use of technology in the classroom was another area observed during this internship. The fact that the middle school where I interned was in the process of giving laptops to all of its students was interesting to me. Unfortunately, the laptops did not arrive until almost the end of my internship. I was able to observe the eighth graders with them for a few weeks. The laptops were used most for checking progress on grades and assignments. The more computer savvy students were doing homework with them. The students in the learning center seemed excited to have the laptops, but I did not observe them doing anything extraordinary with them. I do think that this type of

technology has great potential in the classroom provided all the stakeholders have the proper training in using the devices.

Smart board technology was in use in the history classroom. There were many fascinating applications of notes with embedded videos and power point presentations used there. It was interesting that the special education teachers did not have the latest technology in their classrooms.

One issue that seemed to be prevalent was the amount of time the SPED teachers had to work with the children compared to the amount of time that they spent on doing administrative tasks like writing IEP's and other reports for the district. My mentor was the head of the SPED department at the school so maybe she was being asked to do more than the average SPED teacher. However, it seemed like she was never done with reports and meetings and that she was constantly being interrupted by staff and district personnel during her classes. I honestly don't know how she got anything done with her students with all of the outside distractions going on. She did have an intern to help her, and I hope she got another one after I left, but even then it seemed her work load was extreme.

The students that I worked with came from all different backgrounds and ethnicities. They had moderate to severe disabilities. Oddly enough only one girl was in the learning center group. However, I did observe other girls with learning disabilities at the school. A common theme among the boys in the learning center was that they came from chaotic and often broken homes. School was not their biggest problem. It occurred to me that learning to cope with their life situation was probably more important than learning to read for these students.

In the CEC's definition of a well-prepared special educator it states that teaching skill is at the heart of special education (Appendix A). This internship provided an opportunity to observe and work with skilled professional teachers. Each student was evaluated based on his strengths and weaknesses. Teachers discussed the child's background and school history. They took into consideration family history and cultural differences. They assessed learning differences and made instructional decisions based on what they found. They took the time to find the most comfortable and appropriate learning environment for each child. The teachers I observed collaborated with families, teachers, administrators, therapists, advocates, and other related service providers to provide the best possible educational experience for the child in their care (See Appendix A CEC standards).

The special education teachers did all of this despite heavy case loads and with little or no support from the school district. In fact the only real negative of my whole internship was witnessing the lack of district level support for these teachers and their students.

I went into this internship not really knowing what to expect. When it was over I found myself wanting to stay on and see how everything turned out for the students and teachers that I came to know there. It was hard to leave. I found the teachers to be exactly what a teacher should be - caring and professional.

I would recommend doing an internship to anyone who is interested in getting a broadened perspective on teaching, especially when it comes to working with students who have learning disabilities. Additionally, I believe this internship helped me realize

one of my goals, which was to create a link to the public school system that may later prove useful in navigating district special education policy.

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[ProfessionalStandards/mip_g_manual_11pt.pdf](http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/ProfessionalDevelopment/ProfessionalStandards/mip_g_manual_11pt.pdf)

Appendix A

THE COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN
DEFINITION OF A WELL-PREPARED
SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER
CEC BOARD OF DIRECTORS
APRIL 2004 pages 1-7

CEC DEFINITION OF A WELL-PREPARED SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER

As the largest professional organization of special educators, the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) has taken seriously its professional responsibility for defining the criteria for a competent beginning special educator. As part of this responsibility, CEC has developed and continues to update and maintain professional standards for entry-level special education teachers. CEC has also developed standards for advanced roles in special education and standards for special education paraprofessionals. These standards delineate what beginning special education teachers need to know and be able to do to practice safely and effectively.

The CEC Standards for Beginning Special Education Teachers are research-based, pedagogically grounded, and have been rigorously validated using a process that ensures that practitioners in the field have a primary voice in their development. Over the past twelve years, CEC has validated the knowledge and skills that are essential for high quality beginning special educators. This process involved thousands of practicing special educators in consonance with a national committee representing the seventeen national divisions of CEC. The result is the most rigorous and comprehensive set of national standards available anywhere for the preparation of high quality special educators.

CEC works at state and national levels to ensure that preparation programs incorporate the CEC standards into their curricula, and state and provincial jurisdictions incorporate the standards into their licensing requirements. It is through professional standards used by preparation programs and aligned with licensing systems that the public can be assured that special educators are appropriately prepared and are ready to enter practice.

The professional careers of special educators can be thought of as a continuum, including initial preparation, induction, and continuing professional growth. CEC has developed standards and guidelines relevant to each part of the continuum. These are described in the following pages beginning with the preparation standards for pedagogy and content and ending with the guidelines for continuing and advanced professional growth.

Beginning Special Educator Standards

CEC expects at a minimum that entry-level special educators possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, have mastered appropriate core academic subject matter content, can demonstrate that they have mastered the knowledge and skills in the CEC Common Core and an appropriate Area of Specialization.

Pedagogy or teaching skill is at the heart of special education. Special educators have always recognized that the individualized learning needs of children are at the center of

instruction. The CEC preparation standards (which follow) are developed around ten domains that describe the minimum knowledge, skills, and dispositions shared by all special educators—they provide a picture of the qualified beginning special educator. While these standards are identical across special education specialty areas, distinct sets of validated knowledge and skills have been developed that inform and differentiate the respective specialty areas (e.g. early childhood, mild/moderate, developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, etc.) and provide minimum knowledge and skills that special educators must master for safe and effective practice. Each of the specialized knowledge and skill sets can be found on the CEC website at www.cec.sped.org.

Standard #1 Foundations

Special educators understand the field as an evolving and changing discipline based on philosophies, evidence-based principles and theories, relevant laws and policies, diverse and historical points of view, and human issues that have historically influenced and continue to influence the field of special education and the education and treatment of individuals with exceptional needs both in school and society. Special educators understand how these influence professional practice, including assessment, instructional planning, implementation, and program evaluation. Special educators understand how issues of human diversity can impact families, cultures, and schools, and how these complex human issues can interact with issues in the delivery of special education services. They understand the relationships of organizations of special education to the organizations and functions of schools, school systems, and other agencies. Special educators use this knowledge as a ground upon which to construct their own personal understandings and philosophies of special education.

Standard #2: Development and Characteristics of Learners

Special educators know and demonstrate respect for their students first as unique human beings. Special educators understand the similarities and differences in human development and the characteristics between and among individuals with and without exceptional learning needs. Moreover, special educators understand how exceptional conditions can interact with the domains of human development and they use this knowledge to respond to the varying abilities and behaviors of individual's with exceptional learning needs. Special educators understand how the experiences of individuals with exceptional learning needs can impact families, as well as the individual's ability to learn, interact socially, and live as fulfilled contributing members of the community.

Standard #3: Individual Learning Differences

Special educators understand the effects that an exceptional condition can have on an individual's learning in school and throughout life. Special educators understand that the beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures can affect relationships among and between students, their families, and the school community. Moreover, special educators are active and resourceful in seeking to understand how primary language, culture, and familial backgrounds interact with the individual's exceptional condition to impact the individual's academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, and career options. The understanding of these learning differences and their possible interactions provides the foundation upon which special educators individualize instruction to provide meaningful and challenging learning for individuals with exceptional learning needs.

Standard #4: Instructional Strategies

Special educators possess a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to individualize instruction for individuals with exceptional learning needs. Special educators select, adapt, and use these instructional strategies to promote positive learning results in general and special curricula and to appropriately modify learning environments for individuals with exceptional learning needs. They enhance the learning of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills of individuals with exceptional learning needs, and increase their self-awareness, self-management, self-control, self-reliance, and self-esteem. Moreover, special educators emphasize the development, maintenance, and generalization of knowledge and skills across environments, settings, and the lifespan.

Standard #5: Learning Environments and Social Interactions

Special educators actively create learning environments for individuals with exceptional learning needs that foster cultural understanding, safety and emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and active engagement of individuals with exceptional learning needs. In addition, special educators foster environments in which diversity is valued and individuals are taught to live harmoniously and productively in a culturally diverse world. Special educators shape environments to encourage the independence, self-motivation, self-direction, personal empowerment, and self-advocacy of individuals with exceptional learning needs. Special educators help their general education colleagues integrate individuals with exceptional learning needs in regular environments and engage them in meaningful learning activities and interactions. Special educators use direct motivational and instructional interventions with individuals with exceptional learning needs to teach them to respond effectively to current expectations. When necessary, special educators can safely intervene with individuals with exceptional learning needs in crisis. Special educators coordinate all these efforts and provide guidance and direction to paraeducators and others, such as classroom volunteers and tutors.

Standard #6: Communication

Special educators understand typical and atypical language development and the ways in which exceptional conditions can interact with an individual's experience with and use of language. Special educators use individualized strategies to enhance language development and teach communication skills to individuals with exceptional learning needs. Special educators are familiar with augmentative, alternative, and assistive technologies to support and enhance communication of individuals with exceptional needs. Special educators match their communication methods to an individual's language proficiency and cultural and linguistic differences. Special educators provide effective language models and they use communication strategies and resources to facilitate understanding of subject matter for individuals with exceptional learning needs whose primary language is not English.

Standard #7: Instructional Planning

Individualized decision-making and instruction is at the center of special education practice. Special educators develop long-range individualized instructional plans anchored in both general and special curricula. In addition, special educators systematically translate these individualized plans into carefully selected shorter-range goals and objectives taking into consideration an individual's abilities and needs, the learning environment, and a myriad of cultural and linguistic factors. Individualized instructional plans emphasize explicit modeling and efficient guided practice to assure acquisition and fluency through maintenance and

generalization. Understanding of these factors as well as the implications of an individual's exceptional condition, guides the special educator's selection, adaptation, and creation of materials, and the use of powerful instructional variables. Instructional plans are modified based on ongoing analysis of the individual's learning progress. Moreover, special educators facilitate this instructional planning in a collaborative context including the individuals with exceptionalities, families, professional colleagues, and personnel from other agencies as appropriate. Special educators also develop a variety of individualized transition plans, such as transitions from preschool to elementary school and from secondary settings to a variety of postsecondary work and learning contexts. Special educators are comfortable using appropriate technologies to support instructional planning and individualized instruction.

Standard #8: Assessment

Assessment is integral to the decision-making and teaching of special educators and special educators use multiple types of assessment information for a variety of educational decisions. Special educators use the results of assessments to help identify exceptional learning needs and to develop and implement individualized instructional programs, as well as to adjust instruction in response to ongoing learning progress. Special educators understand the legal policies and ethical principles of measurement and assessment related to referral, eligibility, program planning, instruction, and placement for individuals with exceptional learning needs, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Special educators understand measurement theory and practices for addressing issues of validity, reliability, norms, bias, and interpretation of assessment results. In addition, special educators understand the appropriate use and limitations of various types of assessments. Special educators collaborate with families and other colleagues to assure non-biased, meaningful assessments and decision-making. Special educators conduct formal and informal assessments of behavior, learning, achievement, and environments to design learning experiences that support the growth and development of individuals with exceptional learning needs. Special educators use assessment information to identify supports and adaptations required for individuals with exceptional learning needs to access the general curriculum and to participate in school, system, and statewide assessment programs. Special educators regularly monitor the progress of individuals with exceptional learning needs in general and special curricula. Special educators use appropriate technologies to support their assessments.

Standard #9: Professional and Ethical Practice

Special educators are guided by the profession's ethical and professional practice standards. Special educators practice in multiple roles and complex situations across wide age and developmental ranges. Their practice requires ongoing attention to legal matters along with serious professional and ethical considerations. Special educators engage in professional activities and participate in learning communities that benefit individuals with exceptional learning needs, their families, colleagues, and their own professional growth. Special educators view themselves as lifelong learners and regularly reflect on and adjust their practice. Special educators are aware of how their own and others attitudes, behaviors, and ways of communicating can influence their practice. Special educators understand that culture and language can interact with exceptionalities, and are sensitive to the many aspects of diversity of individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families. Special educators actively plan and engage in activities that foster their professional growth and keep them current with evidence-based best practices. Special educators know their own limits of practice and practice within them.

Standard #10: Collaboration

Special educators routinely and effectively collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways. This collaboration assures that the needs of individuals with exceptional learning needs are addressed throughout schooling. Moreover, special educators embrace their special role as advocate for individuals with exceptional learning needs. Special educators promote and advocate the learning and well being of individuals with exceptional learning needs across a wide range of settings and a range of different learning experiences. Special educators are viewed as specialists by a myriad of people who actively seek their collaboration to effectively include and teach individuals with exceptional learning needs. Special educators are a resource to their colleagues in understanding the laws and policies relevant to Individuals with exceptional learning needs. Special educators use collaboration to facilitate the successful transitions of individuals with exceptional learning needs across settings and services.

Core academic subject matter content

CEC expects all special educators to have a solid grounding in the liberal arts curriculum ensuring proficiency in reading, written and oral communications, calculating, problem solving, and thinking. All special educators should also possess a solid base of understanding of the general content area curricula, i.e., math, reading, English/language arts, science, social studies, and the arts, sufficient to collaborate with general educators in:

- Teaching or co-teaching academic subject matter content of the general curriculum to students with exceptional learning needs across a wide range of performance levels.
- Designing appropriate learning and performance accommodations and modifications for students with exceptional learning needs in academic subject matter content of the general curriculum.

Because of the significant role that content specific subject matter knowledge plays at the secondary level, special education teachers routinely teach secondary level academic subject matter content classes in consultation or collaboration with one or more general education teachers appropriately licensed in the respective content area. However, when a special education teacher assumes sole responsibility for teaching a core academic subject matter class at the secondary level, the special educator must have a solid knowledge base in the subject matter content sufficient to assure the students can meet state curriculum standards.

Induction and Mentoring

Even with well-designed and implemented preparation, the beginning special educator faces a myriad of challenges in applying and generalizing learned skills during their beginning teaching. Like other professionals, special educators who have the focused support of veteran colleagues, i.e. mentors, become proficient more quickly, and are more likely to remain in the profession. Every new professional in special education should receive an intensive focused induction program under a mentor during the first year or so of special education practice. The mentor must be an accomplished special educator in the same or a similar role to the mentored individual who can provide expertise and support on a continuing basis throughout the induction.

The goals of the mentorship program include:

- Facilitating the application of knowledge and skills learned;

- Conveying advanced knowledge and skills;
- Acculturating into the school's learning communities;
- Reducing job stress and enhancing job satisfaction; and,
- Supporting professional induction.

In addition, whenever special educators begin practice in a new area of licensure, they also should have the opportunity to work with mentors who are accomplished professionals in similar roles. The purpose of mentors is to provide expertise and support to the individual on a continuing basis for at least the first year of practice in that area of licensure. The mentorship is a professional relationship between the individual in a new area of practice and an accomplished individual in the area who supports the individual in further developing knowledge and skills in the given area of licensure and provides the support required to sustain the individual in practice. The mentorship must be collegial rather than supervisory. It is essential that the mentor have accomplished knowledge, skills, and experience relevant to the position in order to provide the expertise and support required to practice effectively.

Mentorship can be an effective part of career ladders. Veterans of the special education profession are expected to periodically serve as mentors as part of their professional responsibility, and they must receive the resources and support necessary to carry out this responsibility effectively

Appendix B

Professional Journal of the Internship Experience

Internship Journal

9/09 Drew up the daily schedules on chart paper.

Monitored the copy machine for Janice

Assisted with study skills session by helping students talk about the “How smart are you?” inventories that they filled out.

Learning Center Group (LCG) Watched Janice give a reading skills test to one student

Assisted with teaching the classroom rules to the students and demonstrated one positive and one negative example of the rules

Observed a girl with autism and her handlers

Observed a boy with lung impairment that uses an oxygen tank

9/10 Watched Janice network with her co-teacher in the history class and her fellow special educators in the math classroom

Ran copies for Janice

Read the syllabus to the LC class and explained it to them

Assisted the students in filling out a cognitive function exercise

Helped Lincoln read his cognitive function exercise sheets

Observed the student in section two (remedial history) doing their rule role playing exercise

Watched Obama’s education speech

9/11 Read about special education personnel and their classification in SDUSD

Looked for a chapter book to read to the remedial reading group second period in the school library

Led a guided reading with the remedial reading group of *Among the Hidden*

Used the informal reading checklist to check for comprehension

Assisted with group project (must write 30 words about either the heading America or History) group had to put their words on a poster and include appropriate art work

Observed twin speak in two of the boys in the remedial history group tried to help them with their poster assignment

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu

9/26/09 2:29 PM From what I can see, you are off to a good start. The first week is a great deal of setting up and determining the baseline for the students. I appreciate the way you were able go work with the children right away.

9/14 Talked about the importance of filling out their planner

Janice continued individual reading assessments

Guided reading *Among the Hidden*

Informal checklist assessment

Learning center students filled out self behavior evaluation chart

History section filled out planner

History students discussed their syllabus

Worked on history posters

The twins were stemming on cartoon characters that they keep drawing

Assisted students with finding/finishing the images on their posters

There are two sets of twins in the history group. One set has twin speak issues and autism characteristics. The other twins display delays in learning plus one twin seems to have some autism tendencies.

Another boy with autism joined the history group today. He has issues with being in the regular classroom.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 9/26/09 2:32 PM How interesting to have two sets of twins. I anticipate how the twins will react to each other and the others in the class. I also look forward to your working with children with Autism. Structure and routine are very important for children with Autism.

9/15 Filed student IEP and related information in binders for Janice

Reinforced filling out planners for LCG

Janice continued to test learning center students individually

Led vocabulary activity (find one word from the novel that you don't know the meaning)

Led guided reading of *Among the Hidden*

Students filled out self behavior chart (some were not completely honest about how their day went) I changed their mark if it was not quite right

The history students filled out their planners

Last chance to finish posters

Groups presented their poster to the class (they needed to tell about their favorite item from the poster)

The students were instructed to fill out a right brain left brain worksheet

The newest autistic boy had a complete melt down and could not complete his sheet – he was stressed over the word “test” which appeared in the title of the sheet, homework and test seem to be trigger words for him.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 9/26/09 2:35 PM The boy with Autism will likely have a number of antecedent events which will precipitate in tantrumming. It appears the child gets stuck in the neurological processing and the result of a meltdown. Being aware of the antecedents will help with his overall behavior.

Several other students needed a lot of help to read the worksheet and understand what to choose for themselves.

9/16 Finished filing student information in binders

Some of the LC students are still resisting filling out their planner

Looked at difficult vocabulary words from the novel

Some of the students were misbehaving with the sticky notes, I intervened, but this group is easily distracted by noise from outside or even just having the window shades open

Janice continues to test individuals while I lead the guided reading session

Today one boy was making a joke out of his lack of reading ability – it was sort of sad to see

History group filled in planners and did a map activity on the computers

The group seemed to enjoy working on the computers and stayed on task fairly well. There were fewer disruptions today from new student arrivals or other staff coming into the room with students.

9/17 Janice and I talked about how she was collaborating with other teachers to put the history group boys in regular education classes so that the sets of twins would be separated from one another and so that the upper level students in the group would get a more challenging curriculum.

Janice left to work out the details of rearranging the history group students while I led the LC students in their continued guided reading of *Among the Hidden*. Today we used question starters to help spark comprehension discussing after we read each chapter.

The group responded well to this activity since the questions were written on game like cards and I let them choose the cards randomly after each section was read.

Janice came back in to lead the history group lesson on maps.

Unfortunately our newest autistic boy was having a bad day and caused some disruption. He was able to calm himself after a while and to continue with the computer skills part of the lesson.

The district special education department head came in to view the classroom while our autistic boy was making a fuss. I felt sorry for Janice.

Two other ladies came into the room at about the same time. They did not identify themselves. After observing the class for a few minutes they left and then the Dept. head left. Janice said all the commotion is normal for the first month of school in special ed. Classes. I helped Janice finish correcting some history quizzes from the history class that she co-teaches.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 9/26/09 2:39 PM Your comments in your journal are getting longer. I know you are doing more and more with the children. I also know Janice has to be moving all the time to get her work accomplished. Whew! Starting a whole new school seems to be a daunting task. I know the wrinkles will get worked out as the year progresses. It was so helpful for me to meet with you and Janice to see the set up for the school and the anticipated challenges for the school year. From what you say, the flow of the school year seems to be progressing well.

9/21 Janice and I discussed the collaboration/inclusion model that was at work in the transfer of the 3rd period special ed. History group into 3rd period regular ed. History classes. Janice gave me a booklet that detailed what leading educators in San Diego propose should be the model for all classrooms when it comes to inclusion.

The LC students still are being tested so I did more guided reading activities with the other students while Janice worked with those who still haven't finished being tested. We worked on vocab. and comprehension. Behavior issues are becoming more common in this group as some are not being challenged by the novel since they have already read it and some are not skilled enough at reading to be able to follow along effectively. We continue to work on their self monitoring skills with a behavior check list.

The new third period student was in the regular 7th grade history class in which Janice is co-teaching with the regular classroom teacher. It did not go well since we were trying to transition one of the special ed. Students with autism into the class and he was not having any of

it. Janice is thinking we may have to put him in a much smaller group if we are going to get any where with him. The rest of the class did not seem to notice our student having trouble thankfully. He was behind a barrier of sorts in the back of the room for most of the class period. Janice told me that most special ed. Teachers spend only about 10 percent of their time teaching and the rest of the time doing administrative type activities due to all the politics involved with these kids in the district. Sad – I commend them all for continuing to provide an education for their students.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 9/26/09 2:43 PM Your concluding comment is a big concern for SPED teachers. I have talked to a number of SPED teachers who have indicated the amount of paperwork is daunting. Teachers want to teach and be in front of real live children. SPED teachers are in the field because they have a special place in their heart for children with special needs. On a positive note, the flexibility of moving student to a place where he or she will be successful is really cool.

9/22 Janice continues to try and work bugs out of the school year schedule for the students in her care. It seems to be a very complicated process to get every student in the exact right classes. I wish I could help her more with this very involved task.

We assisted a female student with autism who needed help getting off of the bus. It was the first time she had ridden to school on the bus this year.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 9/26/09 2:46 PM A real triumph!!!

The LC students and I continue to read through our chapter book. They were more attentive today until the end of the period. Two of the boys are really not interested in this book, but they were at least listening for most of the period. Janice is almost finished testing the students so we should be able to begin Read 180 soon. My questions to the group were met with varying degrees of answers some legit and some were mostly wanting to just talk. I was satisfied that most of the group wanted to discuss the major themes that are occurring in our book. The third period history class went well today. Our boy with autism was much improved and was able to participate with his group today. The principal walked with him to the class where Janice and I met him. He was able to sit at a table with other students and then transfer to a different classroom where there were more computers available. Janice commented on how he seemed to do better when we weren't hovering around him. It should be interesting to see if he can participate tomorrow. The rest of the students were engaged in a group study project that was assigned by the classroom teacher and was being co-taught by Janice. The students seem to be responding well to the dual teacher model.

type here -spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 9/26/09 2:47 PM Co-teaching has wonderful benefits. The literature supports co-teaching as a strong support for student achievement. I am really happy the team approach is working.

9/23 Janice has many balls up in the air right now with some of her students. Today she spoke to a counselor about one student and then we went to speak to the principal about another student who is currently in advanced classes, but who is functionally illiterate. He can read some words,

but has had people reading things to him up until now. Janice wants to include him in the Read 180 group in order to fill in the gaps in his reading skills.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 9/26/09 2:50 PM I was not familiar with Read 180 so I looked it up. Read 180 sounds like a comprehensive package. I think the students' will enjoy the intervention, especially because it is computer based. I see the program has an assessment component to keep track of the student's progress.

Janice attended to administrative items while I taught the LC students. We continue to try to finish our chapter book. One student displayed inappropriate behavior by exploding my white board pen during the lesson. Janice wrote him up. I am anxious to see what happens with this group when we really get down to business and help them with their reading skills on an individual basis.

Janice was pleased that Luke who carries the oxygen around with him was on time to class today. She has spent many hours trying to get to know this student and his family and had sent instructions to all of his teachers about his needs.

The third period history class worked on their group project. The boy with autism (Rene) had a very good day and was able to really contribute to his group. He seems to be more trusting of Janice and I.

The fourth period history section was a challenge for me since I had a boy who seemed totally unable to focus on the assignment. We spent the entire period trying to get on the right topic on the computer. He was very behaviorally challenged as well as being easily distracted. Janice says he is the most challenged student in the group and yet he doesn't have an IEP while several others in that period do. Strange!

9/24 Janice was working on getting all of the instructional aid schedules finalized. She also showed me how she is able to track the student's with IEPs on the computer.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 9/26/09 2:54 PM I know interacting with an IEP was one of your goals. Yea!!

Today the speech and language pathologist came in and taught the LC group. I observed and tried to help her keep the boys on task while Janice did her administrative running. The SLP did an activity with the group which focused on listening, memory and oral language skills. The boys paired up and then had to tell each other something about their summer vacation. Then she had each group come up to the front of the class and each partner had to tell the other partner's story. It was interesting to see which of the students had good recall skill and oral language abilities. Most were able to recall the stories, but some struggled with details and others were very reluctant to speak much in front of the group. The same student from yesterday continues to act out by being generally uncooperative. Janice hopes he will settle down once the real schedule begins next week.

The third period class is still working on their world history project. Rene had another good day and was able to put his pictures onto his group's Power Point.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 9/26/09 2:55 PM I have never meet a SLP that did not have a huge spot in his or heart for children. I have utmost respect for SLP's. I believe you will learn a great deal from observing and working side-by-side with them

9/25 This morning Janice had the vocabulary words from the chapter book all printed on a sheet with instructions for the LC group to find the meanings for as many words on the list as they could. Meaning was worth 1 point, writing the word correctly in a sentence was worth 2 pts. and using a word that no one else used was worth a bonus of 5 points. The person with the most points at the end of the class would get a prize. The boys seemed willing to try this activity and in fact because the OT's showed up and the instructional aids for our girl with autism and Luke's mom we had almost more adults in the room than students. I think the boys enjoyed the challenge. I helped Luis get started and then helped Lincoln with his list since he has a very low reading level at this time. I can't wait to see Janice do the *Lips* program with the LC students.

The third period history class stayed on course with their ancient civilizations project. I noticed that there are two boys in this class who have some trouble doing the research. They were always getting stuck. I wonder if they are having any trouble in other classes. Terrell was not on task and spent the whole period trying to get some imaginary Tic Tacs from Amanda. The regular classroom teacher was absent so a sub was there in her place. This did not seem to make a difference in how the class went about their tasks probably because their other teacher, Janice, was still there.

I was able to acquire the sequel to the chapter book that we are reading so we have a backup next week in case the Read 180 still is not up on the net. I am finding it very interesting that so many people work with these kids each day and yet so many are so far behind. How are these kids getting to junior high without being able to read?

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 9/26/09 2:57 PM Week two and you are well into your internship. From what I can see, you had a wide variety of experiences and challenges. Good for you!! I hope you will have a great weekend and be back working well on Monday. I am sure Janice will enjoy the weekend as well. NOTE: As you can see, I did finally work matters out so I can comment on your experience. I will try hard to respond on a regular basis in the future.

9/28 I began reading the manual for the LiPS program so that I have a better understanding of what Janice will be doing with the students. Janice was able to begin the LiPS (Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing) program with the students today. The LiPS program was developed by Patricia Lindamood and Phyllis Lindamood. Janice usually does a rotation with the students so that she can concentrate on one or two students at a time with the LiPS. The other students go to the independent reading station or the Read 180 stations while she works on LiPS. Unfortunately, the Read 180 still is not up and running so I did guided reading with one group while Janice worked on LiPS with the other group. Janice was able to move one of our learning center students to an English class where he will get the comprehension help that he needs. He is able to read words fine so he really didn't fit with the group that we have in the LC who have trouble processing sounds. The advanced placement boy, who cannot read, was able to change his schedule so that he could come in the LC for LiPS training.

The LiPS approach is multi-sensory and should prove interesting to observe for the next several months.

The third period history group is finishing up their Power Point projects. Janice and I have identified two other boys in that class period who seem to be at risk. They do not have IEP's.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 9/29/09 4:43 PM I have hear of Lindamood before but never investigated the approach. I look forward to your report on how the children are doing using the LiPS system. When children reach the middle school level, choosing to remediate or choosing a bypass strategy (Melvin Levine, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) is a big consideration. Using bypass strategies such as those suggested by Don Deshler at the University of Kansas is an interesting philosophical consideration. I do not advocate one over the other. I believe what is the "best fit" for the student is the determiner.

9/29 We discussed the reasons why some students come into the school with obvious learning difficulties and yet they have no IEP. Some causes for this are that students may be able to cope with the concrete instruction of lower grades, but then struggle when they get to the abstract concepts of the middle grades and beyond. Another reason is the transient nature of many of these families. They move from school to school and their child never has a chance to get help. Finally, there is the issue of immigrant families who move here from other countries, namely Mexico, who are difficult to help because of the language barriers.

Janice decided to do the whole LC group at once since some of the students were absent and the group was already small. I was able to participate in the LiPS activity. :) We learned how consonant sounds feel on our tongue, lips and teeth. She showed us pictures of a mouth forming the different sounds and we came up with mnemonic descriptions of each picture. Janice had the students play a game to help us learn the consonant sounds, the place in the mouth where they are formed and the type of sound it was based on the picture.

Third period we helped the students put their Power Point presentations together. It was evident that having everyone do Power Point slides in each group was not the most efficient way to put the group Power Point together since most of the students do not seem to have the technical/typing skills to be able to merge their Power Point with their group mate's. Next time each group should have only one Power Point under construction that each member adds to as they find their material.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 9/29/09 4:50 PM I really like the idea of children doing Power Point. A number of skills are needed to build a Power Point successfully. When you first work with a group of children, you have to determine the skills sets they bring into an activity. Flexibility is the key. Teachers need to be flexible to accommodate what the children bring into the setting. When working with skills, the process may be just as important as the context or content. NOTE: Kris, your journaling is going well in my estimation. I can tell by your jottings you are working with a number of children with a great variety of needs. Good for you!! Tell Janice I appreciate her work on your behalf.

9/30 Janice showed me an IEP of one of our students that she is working on. It was interesting how the goals must be 8th grade state standards if they are to received modified state testing accommodations. This makes no sense whatsoever because the reason they need the modified testing is because they cannot meet the state standards and therefore have an IEP. Janice has to write student appropriate goals and state standard goals on the same IEP. We also noticed that this student has some vision problems documented in the IEP which made us wonder whether some of his reading issue is related to his vision.

On a side note Janice invited me to be in on an IEP meeting in two weeks. I am trying to gather kernels of information about IEPs that she can give me before this meeting. Apparently there is a lawsuit involved with this student so it will be an especially interesting meeting.

The LC group was divided into two groups today. Lincoln, who was absent the day before and needed to catch up, and Mark worked on LiPS with Janice while I finished reading the chapter book to the other students. They were a captive audience today because we had arrived at the climax of the book and there was a cliffhanger ending. John and Devon read independently since John joined our group late and didn't know what was going in the book and Devin had read the book before so he was reading the sequel.

The third and fourth period history groups studied some geography today and were given one final chance to fix their Power Point presentations on ancient civilizations. Rene, our boy with autism, is doing very well in the history class. He was sharing materials with his group mates and asking what he needed to do to get a good grade. The inclusion model is working for him it seems.

10/1 We discussed the problems with large group projects early in the school year. The history teacher that Janice co-teaches with periods 3-6 did not feel that the Power Point presentation were of sufficient quality to be able to review content for the 8th graders who have to take the state history exam. Janice felt that there was not enough scaffolding of skills required to do the project before the project was begun. Additionally it was difficult to group the students because the teachers do not know the students coming in to their classes at the beginning of the year. Some students needed to be with strong leaders to keep them on task. I mentioned that group projects are not as daunting for me because I generally know my students well when they come into my room. Also we (RLS) require that all the students take keyboarding classes in the lower grades and they are required to do Power Point presentations in grades 5 & 6.

Janice was able to work with all the LC students at once today because some students were absent again. (Lincoln, our group home student, has been absent most of this week.) We played a game that involved the students having to name the feeling rather than the letter that they were holding. This exercise really makes you think! The game was similar to "Go Fish". The group seems to be making progress with identifying the sounds and the part of their mouth that they are coming from. I am still having trouble with this. ;) The visual learning in me only wants to see the letters and not feel the sounds.

Janice walked Luke over to science class. On the way he had a breathing incident where he felt really dizzy. Kind of scary. Makes you aware of just how much some of these kids are dealing with on a daily basis.

The history sections are taking a pre-test on Roman history today. Janice and I checked on Rene to make sure that the "test" did not set him off. Christine, the history teacher, had it under control when we arrived. She had assigned Rene to help her in a different area of the room so that he would not feel like he was being tested. Good catch! Since Janice had a free period due to the testing going on we continue to work on filing the paperwork for each of her IEP students for the rest of third period.

Speaking of filing, I need to come up with a way to start organizing this journal so I can write the final paper.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 10/1/09 4:45 PM I will have to ponder your question about the organization of your journal. I believe you could use your four questions (categories) and provide evidence from your experience in the four areas. The other though would be

to include the journal as an appendix with different colored highlighting reflecting the categories. The reflection of the experience with referencing to the journal may be a good way to bringing your experience all together in the Reflective Essay, chapter four of your paper. Let me ponder the matter a bit more for suggestions.

My categories are represented, but I am unsure how to go about coding all of this, any thoughts?

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 10/1/09 4:37 PM The last two entries are full of very, very interesting happenings. Whew! You have a number of children with such a wide variety of issues. For example, absenteeism is a big problem. Not only does the child miss out on instruction in school, the child also does not practice the skills he or she missed - double trouble. I also note a number of seemingly little interventions which pay big dividends. Placement of the child in the classroom during tests seems like a little thing. However, the benefit for the child is huge. I think you experiencing the little things will help you in your own classroom and gives you a great deal of practical application you could share with other teachers. On another note, I look forward to your reflection on the upcoming IEP meeting. I think you will find the process fascinating. You will also find out why the development of an IEP is a time consuming and costly process. The IEP is the driver of the child's education so it needs to be done correctly and to the benefit of the child. How will the child be best served is the question.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 10/1/09 4:48 PM Keep up you very good work in your journal. I know it takes time and a lot of effort to journal daily, yet the end result is very good quality. Hope all is going well in both settings.

10/2 Today Janice was installing LiPS software onto the computers so I sat at one of the computers and practices my skills using the software program. It was very helpful because the mouth simulation part was much easier to see than the posters that Janice shows in class. When the LC group arrived Janice had the boys work on the computers to practice their skills first and then they played another game of "Go Fish" to demonstrate whether they understood the sounds and where they are produced in the mouth. The boys were much better at this than the previous day and the game seemed to be very competitive.

While the game was going on our girl with autism came and got me to help her with her blocks. She is mostly non-verbal and likes to run when she gets outside the classroom. Her aid gets a workout every day. It was neat to work with her for a little while and to see how she responded to the commands that her aid gave her.

The third period history group had to finish their test on the fall of the Roman Empire so there wasn't any instruction going on. Instead most of the period was spent getting planners and grades sorted out to go home. Rene was not in the classroom due to having an incident the previous period. That was too bad because he had been doing so well. The students took their test on-line so we had to go to the computer lab. A few of the students who are ELL really were struggling with this test. I question the purpose of having them take a test that they most surely will fail because they can't read/understand the words. But it was only a pre-test so maybe it was just about exposure?

10/5 Janice has an IEP due tomorrow plus someone is coming to evaluate her team teaching situation with the history teacher so she is very busy today. She has to get everyone's input for this IEP before she can finish her part. This is not a new IEP, but an update of an old one, but there still seems to be a lot of work that goes into these documents.

Christine, the co-history teacher, came in and discussed the lessons for this week and what needed to get done. Janice suggested some alternate ways of presenting the material so that more students would grasp the material. Christine was concerned that her history sections were not all at the same place in the material. She wanted to come up with a strategy to get everyone on the same part of the curriculum. Also Janice and Christine were trying to prepare for this district evaluation that is coming this week.

The LC group was divided into two groups today. I read the novel with the boys while Janice worked on LiPS with them. We are still waiting for Read180 to be up and running. Luke was absent (oxygen tank). Hope he is ok.

Third period history was spent getting notebooks updated with papers that they needed to put in there and then taking notes on Power Point slides that Christine was presenting. The students were having trouble staying focused on the slides. The pacing of the class seemed too slow for most of the students and they quickly became bored. Others who struggle anyway were ok for awhile, but then lost interest as well. It is so hard to make ancient history interesting to students. The class only took notes on two slides the entire period. Rene did not take notes on his own. Janice helped him with the first slide. Hugo another student who struggles was also getting some help from us.

10/6 This morning the Physical Education teacher came into our classroom and said that one boy was having a meltdown out on the black top because she had taken his jacket away from him. The P.E. teacher wanted Janice to talk to the boy while she went back to the other 60 kids she had in her section that period. Janice and I went out to the blacktop to find a boy sitting cross-legged with his head down. Janice asked him if he was having a bad day, but he was not responding. I went to get one of the school counselors while Janice stayed and talked to the boy. Janice did not know who this boy was. The counselor was able to get the boy to go to the counseling center with her. She said that the boy has an IEP for emotional/behavioral issues. Janice also discovered that she knew the boy's older brother who also has emotional issues.

The LC group worked on a writing activity today. Janice had them edit a sentence that she had written on the board by re-writing it into a notebook with corrections. In this case she was trying to get them to work on their capitalization skills. The rest of the period was split between LiPS and reading the novel. Jon was really wiggly today and had trouble concentrating on the novel. He said that he had just come from P.E. which made him hyper.

Before the P.E. teacher came in Christine had come in to discuss the plan for history that day. She mentioned that she and the other 7th grade history teacher decided that next year they wouldn't spend so long previewing the unit. The history period was short. We went through one more slide and then there was an assembly for the students. They had quit an impressive video and speaker encouraging the students to raise money for the school. Very professional and loud - must have cost the district a lot of money to produce the video and have the professional speaker come out and entertain/sell the kids on selling magazines and cookie dough.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 10/7/09 10:18 AM I am really impressed concerning the wide variety in your experience. Dealing with children with EBD is a tricky task. I believe having a counselor on site is a positive for all the children. I would hope the counseling

session with the child with EBD seeks to find the etiology of the difficulty. Dealing with the symptoms and not finding the root cause is a daunting task. I am also glad you had an opportunity to view the promotional video. The results of the video viewing will be interesting to see if it produces the results desired. Concerning your 10/5 journaling, dealing with children habituating during class is a puzzle to figure out. The children live in a world of sound and visual bites, so a presentation with longevity will often result in the children habituating. Do to the children becoming bored; the teacher needs to "chunk" the lesson into bites to match the student's attention level. Over the course of the semester and ultimately the school year, the length of time the children are able to attend to a task should lengthen. Usually the children at this level have an attention span about 5-7 minutes, the length between commercials on TV. I am also interested in the IEP re-evaluation. I hope you have an opportunity to see what goes on when the IEP is re-visited as well as see just what is involved in the teaming process to help the child maximize his education potential. I wonder if you will have any input into the goals and objectives of the IEP. NOTE: keep up your journaling. I am getting a pretty clear picture of your experience. YEA!

10/7 Janice told me about the Stull evaluation that she and Christine will be going through soon. This is the state mandated biannual evaluation that all teachers must go through. The principal does the evaluation. Janice and Christine were granted a release day so that they could prepare for the Stull. This is important because they are part of a select group developing the co-teaching model for the district and need to show that they are truly working as a team and not like the old model of teacher and supportive aid.

The LC group worked on another warm-up which is correcting a sentence that is written on the white board by writing it correctly into their notebooks. Janice did LiPS and I did the novel. Adam brought in all seven of the books that go with this series that we are reading. He is really into the book! Great to see a kid who doesn't like reading get into reading. Mark was feeling better today. He had to go to the nurse yesterday.

Janice had administrative duties to attend to 3rd and 4th periods so I supported (was her aid) Christine in the history classroom. We had the kids do a mind map of what it takes to make a civilization and then we had them write a story based on the vocabulary found in the unit. All of these activities are prior to actually studying the material so some of the kids were struggling to figure out what to do. The 4th period has one boy, Ernesto, who is having a lot of trouble academically and behaviorally in the class. He does not have an IEP, but probably should have one based on what we have seen so far. He was using some inappropriate language at the start of the period and then continued to fool around after being asked to do his work. Another boy at the same table joined in the fun by hitting another boy with a ruler that he had borrowed from me. Christine made him apologize and I moved Ernesto to a different table where he did not have an audience. After class he thanked me for helping him.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 10/8/09 4:21 PM I had to look up the Stull Performance Evaluation on the internet. I had not heard of Stull before, or if did, I did not remember what it meant. I have downloaded information and will read it over tonight. On another topic, I want to comment on the boy who was hitting the other boy. The hitting, bumping, and punching behaviors in boys are quite typical. The behaviors may be due to the brains wiring differently as well as hormones. The book, Why Gender Matters, is an

excellent treatise on the topic. If you get a chance to read the book, I think you would enjoy the slant the author takes based on the brain research. It is great that the boy thanked you for helping him out. I think you make a connection!

10/8 Janice, Christine and I talked about the co-teacher situation here at iMiddle. Christine and Janice both feel fortunate that their partnership seems to be working so well. They mentioned that other co-teachers in the school are not having positive experiences with this model. Christine and Janice work well together because they are both humble women and because both have many years experience teaching. They understand the value of learning from someone else's experience and not assuming that they themselves have figured everything out. Like that would ever happen. ha! In addition they are both skilled communicators which helps them figure out problems together. They like to share with each other.

LC was the same schedule of writing the sentence, LiPS and listening to the novel. We had some trouble when one boy discovered that his Pingel pounds were missing. Janice rewards the boys for doing classroom jobs and maintaining their self evaluations by giving them paper money. They can exchange it for iMiddle money or redeem it for something in her basket of goodies twice per month. Anyway Lincoln, the boy who lives in the group home, gave all of his money to Luke, the boy whose money was missing. It was a very sweet gesture on his part. Janice rewarded all of the boys for their honesty. We think someone from Janice's advisory was the culprit.

3rd period history was divided into two groups - one with Christine and one with Janice in her room. They were working on a chapter walk which is a sheet of questions which guides them through the main headings and topics of their chapter. They were supposed to do the activity using the online text book, but due to not having enough computers to go around in Janice's room we had to go back and get the actual text book and had some of the students do the assignment that way. The text book method seemed to go faster. All of the students are being trained on how to use their personal laptops which have not been distributed yet. Eventually they will not need text books in their classes if all goes well with the laptop experiment.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 10/8/09 4:25 PM Co-teaching has powerful research to back up the approach to instruction. However, the teachers must really mesh and be willing to appreciate each other. If egos get involved, ouch. I hope you will get a strong sense of the power of co-teaching. Your comment on text books is interesting - things seem to go faster! Hummm? Have a great day! I hope you received my email the other day.

10/9 I have to tie up some loose ends from yesterday. I forgot to mention that Vorada, our girl with autism, was not being cooperative yesterday and decided to plunk herself down on the floor and not move. Janice mentioned today that they are seeking a more institutionalized situation for her since she is very low functioning and being at a middle school is doing absolutely nothing for her.

Another interesting development has to do with the missing money. Apparently, Lincoln has been accused of stealing money from another boy in a different classroom. So that made us think that he was the one who stole Luke's money yesterday, but then gave it back. We will have to keep our eyes on him. He is very street smart and this is the way he survived for years before his incarceration for battery.

The LC group was very excited today because they were able to purchase items from Janice's store with their Pingel pounds. They had a review of the consonant sounds first and then read the novel with me. After that they were allowed to go to the store. It was interesting to watch these big guys go through all of the things in the basket. They were very interested in the magic cards that she had in the basket.

The boys also picked new jobs for the next week and did their warm up activity.

The history group worked on a vocabulary activity in which they had to make a picture flash card out of colored paper for seven different vocabulary words and glue it into their notebook for future reference. This seemed like a lot of work to me for just a study aid for a test on material that hasn't been taught yet. We are spending so much time on previewing this chapter that the kids are going to be sick of the whole thing before we even start. Maybe I will be surprised by the end result. They all better get A's on this final test. Terrell continues to struggle. He cut his cards wrong and had to start over. I was helping him get caught up when he wandered off and spent the rest of the period fooling around by the pencil sharpener. He doesn't want to be helped.

10/13 Today was a very heavy day due to Janice having to give a deposition for a previous case from last year where a dad is threatening a lawsuit and because she had to get ready for an annual IEP meeting for a current student.

The LC group and I did the warm-up and the guided reading while Janice had her deposition. The students like to do the guided reading since they don't have to do a lot. The history section worked on finishing their vocabulary matchbooks. Half the class was not done so they worked on completing last week's work while the rest of the class was able to use the Promethean board clickers. They used the clickers to text answers to a quiz based on their vocabulary words. Neat technology if you have one of these interactive boards.

The IEP meeting began at 2:45 PM and lasted until 6:00 PM. There were 18 people in attendance for the meeting although some of the team members came late and others had to leave early. Janice said that there normally are not quite so many people for these meetings, but because this student's parents hired an advocate the school made sure that all the different teachers were present to give their input. There were the student's, parents, classroom teachers, the OT, the PT, the SLP, the autism specialists, people from PH/DIS, adapted physical education, the principal, his case manager which is Janice and myself. Janice ran the meeting.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 10/14/09 12:49 PM I can see why the IEP Meeting lasted so long. All the people needed to give their input as well as share their expertise.

Janice had everyone introduce themselves because many people were not familiar with each.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 10/14/09 12:51 PM I hope you get a sense of what is involved in the IEP. The IEP should be a living document that is the driver of the child's education. As the IEP breaths, the child should be gaining value from their education. If something interferes with the child's learning, the document needs to be changed. If the changes need to be made, the team needs to reconvene to make the changes (a very expensive process). Getting the IEP right the first time is very valuable, to the child as well as the team. The purpose of the meeting was to update this student's IEP since he had changed from his previous school to iMiddle and to make sure that his needs were being met in an

appropriate way for a junior high student. Janice began by going over the procedural safeguards with everyone.

Then we spent a lot of time going over what was in the IEP from last year: the goals, the performance profile and his identified needs. After that each team member shared their observations of the students and identified needs or addressed concerns presented by the parents and their advocate. The parents seemed very supportive and were very willing to work with this new team. The advocate made sure that everyone knew what the parent's goal was in providing for their son. It became apparent that their main focus was weaning their son from the full time aid so that their son could have a greater measure of Independence. It was observed by all the teachers that the student was not making use of the aid other than to assist in carrying his backpack. The student has cerebral palsy and walks with braces and crutches. The other main focus area was in SLP because the student is on the spectrum. His ADHD and Asperger's make it difficult for him to interact with his peers and teachers at times. After talking about academic and behavioral supports the team discussed the goals and objectives for this year and whether to make changes in the previously published goals from last year. After some discussion the team did amend several of the old goals and added some new ones dealing with the independence theme. It was also decided that the Physical Education teacher needed to time the student to determine how much of the period he was spending just watching the other kids. The parents agreed to bring in a hand bike so that the student could be more active in class especially when the rest of the group was running the mile. All other action items were reviewed and the advocate pressed for a timetable so that the items would be done as soon as possible.

I wanted to mention here that before the meeting started Janice and I went to the speech pathologist's office where the two women and I said a prayer. This was amazing to me because I didn't think I would be praying at a public school. We were behind a closed door, but still it was great to know that Christians everywhere have the same method of operation when it comes to dealing with stressful situations in their lives. If only the students were allowed to take their cares to God as well!

10/14 Janice and Christine planned today's activities. The LC group is working on the vowel circle in the LiPS program. Janice did LiPS and I continued working on reading using the novel with one group and having Lincoln read the directions for making paper airplanes during the other session. Lincoln was very interested in making a delta shaped plane. I said he could work on the plane only if he read the directions to me while he made the plane. This was difficult for him, but he did it.

Christine is having the history sections complete their notebook pages. So far there are supposed to be 17 pages in their notebooks including title pages and pasted in pages. Many students have missing pages or do not have them labeled correctly. Christine had them paste a rubric for grading the notebook onto the front inside cover. They are supposed to take their notebooks home and have their parents give them a grade. I wonder how well this will work since many of the students seem to forget to bring things back and forth from home. At the end of the period those who didn't get to do the clicker quiz yesterday were allowed to use the clickers.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 10/14/09 3:14 PM From what I am reading, you are getting into a routine with the children. Everyone likes to have structure and routines in their lives because life becomes somewhat predicible. I believe children with special needs are

very routine oriented. They may complain about sameness (I'm not sure this is a word, but it fits); yet get the child with a disability out of the routine and many cannot cope. I can see from your entry that you are becoming routine oriented - great!

On another note, little successes often lead to bigger successes. Lincoln being able to read the directions as he is working on the plane was successful. He is likely to take a chance and do another project because of the success on his directions and building project. Having a child multi-task requires crossing the brain through the Corpus Callosum which is excellent training of the brain. Recent research indicated girls are able to cross the mid-line of the brain through the Corpus Callosum better than boys. Lincoln, being able to do the two tasks, forced the brain to make the cross connection. You had a great idea to have Lincoln do the task as assigned. I am happy you are progressing well. I look forward to talking about your work next week.

10/15 Today was exciting for two reasons, Janice was sick and a visiting teacher (sub) came in and we had an earthquake drill. Janice has the flu so today I got the LC group started and then surprise! The SLP came in and did her lesson with the boys which took me off the hook. Some of the boys were not thrilled to have to do the SLP class because they have done it before or they don't have speech issues according to them. Heidi made it fun though so they got on board. The sub and I talked about how terrible history texts are in the schools today. Third period we helped Christine check on students who were doing a map assignment. At the end of the period the fire/earthquake drill happened. It was a long exercise, but all seemed to go pretty well.

10/16 Janice had planned for this to be the day she and Christine worked on their Stull. However, she is sick so a sub will be there to teach and I will be at Reformation to watch Miriam in my classroom.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 10/19/09 11:35 AM You cannot help if someone is sick. I hope you had a restful day at Reformation. I will continue to check up on you and see how you are progressing with all the changes due to illness. I forgot to mention what I learned about my classroom when Miriam is teaching. She did not seem very comfortable having me in the room especially during the literature lesson. That is understandable since it was one that had created it for the class. So I taught the lesson. Otherwise the class seems very comfortable having her teach. It is not easy trying to be someone else. :) I wonder what the literature lesson would have been like if I had stayed out of the planning?

10/19 Janice and Christine worked on their Stull preparations today. I took the LC students to the library so that they could use the classroom to work. We did the warm-up which was writing pronouns and then we went to the library where I read the chapter book to most of them. A few wanted to browse the books on their own and one boy wanted to finish homework. A substitute was in the third period classroom so I helped Luke get situated today. He is being transferred to our third period history class soon, but for now we found a class where he can just study. Luke was in a science class clear across campus which didn't suit his needs. He was tired just walking over there due to his restricted lung capacity.

We went into the third period remedial history class which has one of the sets of twins and another boy, Josh, who has emotional issues. He and Lincoln were getting into it and the teacher was having a hard time getting Josh to calm down. I offered to take him to the counseling office where he could cool off. The counseling office was already full of kids so we went to the library instead. Josh was telling me the other boy called him names. He also mentioned that he used to steal things and that he always gets into trouble at school. I am not sure why he shared this. We were just walking to the library and I was not really trying to get information from him.

10/20 This morning Janice was excited about the progress she and Christine had made getting their history class organized. Their partnership was formed late in the summer and they did not have much time to get ready for the year so things had been rather disorganized when it came to lessons. Janice is hopeful that the work they did yesterday will clear up the problems with organization that they have been having and provide a framework for their co-teaching for the rest of the year.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 10/20/09 3:14 PM Janice must be felling ok to have completed all the activities she has accomplished the last couple of days. She must be a fast healer or just too busy to be sick. I hope you can stay healthy - lots of illness in the schools in Minnesota. In fact one school district is closed for the rest of the week due to the flu. The last couple of days you have been working one-on-one with students. I am not surprised the students open up to you in a one-on-one situation. Children do not have the inhibitory control in the executive part of the brain due to lack of maturation. Being one-on-one is a comfortable time for children to tell it all, so to speak. I am very pleased the children trust you. You must have a good rapport with the children kudos to you. As you become more comfortable with the school and the children, start making a list of activities or experience you would like to achieve the rest of your internship. I think you are familiar with the school, teachers, etc. to start looking for items which will enhance your abilities to reach children in your own setting as well as building your repertoire to share with other teachers when you do presentations at conferences. The goal is to help you become a Master Teacher as well. When you get your Masters, other around you will have (and rightly so) higher expectations. Think about what you would like to achieve in your internship to help future children and teachers.

In LC group Vorada had a small seizure while I was working with her. Stacy her aid called the case manager so that they could take her back to her room where Vorada could rest. She had actually vocalized the words "two eyes" before the seizure which was new to her vocabulary. The boys in our group are not doing well grade-wise so Janice was trying to get them to work on homework in their classes where they are failing. I helped Jon with his algebra. He told me that he lives with his grandmother and that his mother never calls him and that dad is too poor to raise him. Sad. Lincoln got a phone call to his group home because he wasn't cooperating with us.

In history we helped the students get their Cornell notes up to date. Janice redid the seating arrangement so that we would have better groups at the tables.

Good idea - I have been thinking about that very thing trying to pull everything that I have been doing here at iMiddle together with what is happening at Reformation.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 10/23/09 11:26 AM I am happy you are finding ideas and strategies you can tuck away for immediate and future use. Specifically, seating arrangements have a big impact on behavior as well as student learning. Strategic placement of students is a big environmental consideration.

10/21 Christine and Janice continue to work hard to get the 7th grade history sections organized for the rest of the year. I am not sure who the man was who came in today, but I know that he works for the district in special ed. He sort of threw off our game plan today for the LC group because he stayed and talked to Janice for most of the period. We did warm up and then Janice told the boys to work on their homework again. This really only works for two of the boys as the rest of the group is too immature to get anything done on their own. Very frustrating! Lincoln is still claiming that someone took his ID from yesterday's class. He had thrown it at my table and I saw it briefly, but paid no attention to it at the time. We're not sure what game Lincoln is playing right now. Luke was absent again which is not good for him since he is supposed to be getting used to a new schedule. The history groups had a test today. Christine sort of taught to the test to give them a heads up on what was going to be on it. It was an essay test. I thought it was interesting that they would do an essay test in a classroom where many students are ELL or have IEPs. I generally give tests that require a lot more reading than writing. I am not sure if either is better. I would think that an essay test would be harder than a multiple choice or matching test any day. I was able to catch up on some correcting of my own while the students wrote the test.

10/22 Heidi the SLP is coming in today to do her language enrichment activities with the LC group. Even though these activities are meant to re-mediate the problems these boys have with speech and language development I feel that these activities would benefit any student. They challenge the students, yet they are fun. She tries hard to make the students get involved in the activity. Yesterday was all about descriptive words. I did a little bit of work with Vorada and Stacy her aid. Vorada is a fascinating person to watch. She has been having seizures on a regular basis which is a source of concern, but since it appears that it has been going on for awhile and everyone is aware of the situation the staff is dealing with it. Mark worked on homework during the first part of the speech presentation. He must have had the same presentation in a different section. He seems like such a bright boy and yet he struggles so much with reading and with having a positive attitude. Janice redid the boys self-behavior monitoring sheets because as she put it we must have had model students in here for the past two weeks if she were to leave the slips the way the boys marked them. They were not being honest about their behavior for the most part. Interesting how self monitoring is not an easy skill for most people. The history group was split into two sections yesterday. Our group got to sit and listen while Janice read a story/script about the rise and fall of the Roman Empire. It was interesting. The kids were asked to either write 3 items that struck them from the reading or they could draw a picture about what they heard. They had a paper divided into six sections on which they were to do their writing/drawing. I liked this idea and will try it with my students sometime.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 10/23/09 11:29 AM I am really happy you had a chance to work with an SLP. Every SLP I had an opportunity to work with was a person who loved children very much and would go to the wall to accommodate the student, the teacher, and the school setting. SLP's often practice "role release" wherein the SLP will give the teacher strategies and techniques to use with the child with a speech or language

problem. Often, the whole class would participate in the strategy or technique so one child would not be singled out as having the disability. I agree with your comment, "that these activities would benefit any student." On another topic, self-monitoring of behavior has some very good literature supporting the concept as well as the strategies used. Sometimes, the strategy may not work at a particular time, yet will work later in the year. If the strategy to help the child with behavior is not effective, try the idea again later. Teachers often give up if what they did was not effective.

10/23 Janice and I had a discussion about how students at this school are identified for extra help in content and skill areas. During the first 7 weeks they are given tests like the one they had in history to help identify strengths and weaknesses. After all the diagnostic tests are completed the students are then assigned to either extension (remedial) or enrichment (reward) classes for the remainder of the year.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 10/23/09 11:37 AM I was wondering if next Wednesday would work for Janice and yourself for the mid-semester review. I need to know in advance if the teleconference will work so I can have the administrative assistant set up the conference call. Give me a call on my cell this weekend if you know if the meeting is OK at 9:00 am on Wednesday, October 28th.

The LC group was given time to work on getting missing assignments completed or get help on current assignments since there is a grading period coming up soon. If they completed their work then they were allowed to play a phonics game with Janice. I worked with students on their homework issues and then filled in for Janice in the phonics game when she was called away to a meeting with the principal. The history class had a sub today so after I escorted Luke to his class (I do this most days now because we are concerned about his walking very far. He had a scary incident where he almost passed out walking to class.) I went to assist the sub. Janice was at her meeting the whole period. The sub and I were able to keep the students on task and most completed their timeline assignment before the bell rang. Rene did not have a good day probably because there was a sub and any change in plan can set him off. He was able to calm himself so it worked out.

Wednesday will work for us. I will call you. :)

10/26 Janice and Christine are at district training for positive behavioral supports today. I helped both of the subs in each class period. The LC group split into two groups. One did a writing activity and the other played the phonics card game with me. It went ok until Lincoln and Jon decided to act up for the sub. They are so easily set off sometimes. They just would not get on task and were fooling around. I will make sure their behavior sheets reflect how they did. The history class went fine except that they had a surprise fire drill right in the middle of the period which threw off the showing of a movie about the Roman empire that they were supposed to watch. I am meeting with Janice tomorrow morning to get ready for our teleconference and then Reformation has a field trip to the USS Midway aircraft carrier at 9:30 AM that I have to help chaperone. I have been getting some questions from church members about my internship which I find interesting that they want to know what is going on. We have such nice people at this congregation. They can't believe that I am doing the internship and teaching at Reformation at the same time.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 10/29/09 8:40 AM From what I read, I can tell you are quite involved in the teaching and managing of the class. I am very happy you are getting a well rounded experience. You mention behavior sheets. I am interested in how the behavior sheets are working with students who have behavior beyond the norm. Discipline with neuro-typical children can be daunting. I can hardly imagine disciplining when the children are susceptible to out-bursts, melt-downs, or internalizing. WHEW!

10/27 Janice and I discussed Lincoln's recent string of behavior issues. He is acting out in other classes besides ours. His behaviors tend to mimic violent personal attacks and the use of bad language like that of gang characters. We will have to keep our eyes open around him and try to steer him in a positive direction. We are hoping that the mid term conference is happening tomorrow. We also discuss some days next month when each of us will be absent from this classroom.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 10/29/09 8:45 AM Sorry I was sick and unable to set up the teleconference. I did get your email this morning and will set the conference for Monday, November 2nd. The protocol for the conference will be to follow the evaluation sheet provided. If you need further direction, let me know.

10/28 The teleconference had to be rescheduled due to another one of us getting the flu. This has been a bad year for flu already. Janice and Christine had their morning brief on the day's schedule. Janice was able to administer the Scholastic Reading Inventory to the LC group yesterday which is the pretest for the Read 180 program. The test determines reading level and ability. We noticed that some of the boys scored so low that they don't have a reading level. Janice decided to retest those boys in hopes of getting a truer score from them since she suspected that they did not focus on the test but rather guessed at it. The boys who finished the test yesterday or who finished early today were told to play the phonics card game with me or they could do homework. A couple of boys played Scrabble instead because they like that game better than the phonics game. I noticed that Janice was more insistent on getting their behavior sheets filled out correctly and that she did not let them completely self monitor since they have not been honest about this in the past. During the warm up the new boy displayed some rude behaviors which Janice addressed. He is an eighth grader who was in the LC last year so Janice knows his story. I will have to catch up on him. One of the decks needed to play the Phonics game was missing so we had to address the issue of stealing things from the classroom with the boys. It is such a shame when people do not respect other's property.

The history sections watched the end of the Roman Empire movie while the three of us teachers graded their notebooks. It was disappointing that so many of the students did not keep their notebooks up to date. Many students were missing key parts. I am not sure if they will be giving any more chances to bring their note books up to date. I found the grading rubric somewhat ambiguous because it started at 10 and went down to 5. There was no true bottom or middle. I am not sure why this was because I wasn't there when the rubric was created.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 10/29/09 8:50 AM I do not have much to comment on for your journal entry today. I do not see how you, Janice, and the other teachers keep "so many balls in the air." To keep track of the individual needs of the students is a daunting task.

How can children learn when their behavior gets in the way of their learning? How can the children learn when they do not give an honest effort? How can children learn when they have so many social issues? Lots of questions with multifaceted answers. I give all of you kudos for the work you do to help the children be successful. NOTE: I am having the administrative assistant set up the teleconference for Monday, November 2nd at 7:00 am your time as I am finishing this entry. I will email and call with the particulars as soon as I find out the telephone number to call and the code you need for the teleconference.

10/29 The history sections are starting a unit on the Middle East and Islam so I helped get the materials ready for class. Janice and the principal had a brief meeting about a student with autism who had a break down yesterday in another teacher's class. To quote Janice "it was like tripping the student and then saying they were in trouble for falling". The teacher apparently would not back down on a request and the student reacted badly because he felt threatened. It didn't sound like a good situation. This was a special ed. teacher too so she should have known better than to back the student into a corner with her demands. In the LC group Janice worked on vowels using the LiPS program and I worked on silent e using the phonics card game. It seemed to go very well today. I don't think it was a coincidence that the boys behaved when Lincoln was absent. One thing I have noticed about these students who struggle with phonics is that they try to fake it frequently. I find it amusing that they are faking it even when we are trying to practice the very thing that they struggle with. It has become a learned behavior. Janice and Christine have been working hard to organize the history units for the rest of the year. It was evident today as the third period group did so much better with their notebooks and where things were supposed to go. They even were able to get most of the chapter walk done today which did not happen at the beginning of the year. Luke was here today so he finished the SRI test at LC and then went to history with us. I walked him to his next class and called it a day for iMiddle.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 10/30/09 2:19 PM I sent an email to both you and Janice concerning the teleconference on Monday morning. I know the time changes this weekend, but that should not present a problem. I have it scheduled from 9:00 - 10:00am + Central Daylight Saving Time. Teachers can exhibit behaviors that do not make a lot of sense and then blame the student for reacting negatively. Many times, the teacher needs to look inward when the child is misbehaving. I am a very enthusiastic teacher and I know I really get the children riled up. I can hardly blame the children for being off the wall because of my behavior. I also know that sometimes the teacher has to win at all costs. If the teacher picks a battle to win, then the teacher must win or lose credibility. Maybe the teacher you talked about felt a need to win at all costs. I hope both you and Janice have a great weekend. I will talk to you on Monday. Call me if you have a question.

10/30 Janice and I discussed the day's lessons briefly. In the LC we divided into our groups after the warm up. I had the phonics game groups. This game was about vowel pairs so it presented more of a challenge for the boys to read. They struggle with decoding so having the two vowels together was puzzling to them at times. Janice did the LiPS on the computer. She supervised what the boys listened to so that they would stay on task. In history the students did their warm up in their notebooks. We watched a movie about Islam. An instructional aid came in

to monitor the class while Christine and Janice went out to work on getting the materials for the unit compiled. I stayed with the aid to help him keep the group on task. They had to answer questions as the movie was playing.

11/2 The teleconference with Dr. Spurgin took place this morning. I think it went well. Dr. Spurgin said that he would email the form that Janice needs to fill out for my internship. Janice and I will video tape one of our LC periods soon and send the tape to Dr. Spurgin. I will continue to journal and look for ways to get the information that I am seeking about special services and I will continue to participate in the co-teaching model at iMiddle. The SLP came in and wanted Janice's opinion about a student. She wanted to know if she could discontinue services without having to test her at the end of the year. The student is doing well in school and does not seem to need the service any more. However, discontinuing services is risky because if the student digresses without the service it may be difficult to reinstate the program that she is currently on. LC group Janice introduced the Read 180 rotations. She had the students help move furniture and books to make the classroom more Read 180 friendly. They did a book pass activity before the end of the period. In history we began the rotations for the new unit on Islam. Each group completes a separate section of the unit for their notebook. It will take them six class periods to get the information from each station. This is a different approach from the last unit where everyone did the activities together. It was very hard to monitor that way. Rene did not want to go with his group so I had to smooth things over so that he was willing to travel to the other classroom so that he could be with his group. He did not do the activity, however, but chose to sit on the floor and read a book that he had brought with him.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 11/3/09 4:06 PM I sent the email with the form attached yesterday, November 2nd, in the afternoon. I hope you received the email and my notations made sense. I look forward to your video to be arriving in the near future. I also am very interested in how the different station work will progress. I can imagine trying to help the students be successful at each station! I am sure you will have to encourage the students to complete work in a timely fashion to keep the process going. Too bad about the child who refused to cooperate. Ultimately, the child is the one who looses in the process.

11/3 Janice had a meeting today so I worked with the LC group on my own until Janice arrived towards the end of the period. I had them do a warm up to begin the day. I could tell right away that they were going to be harder to manage because Lincoln was there and he was in a mischievous mood. They all finally did the warm up. Next we did a book pass which did not go very well because Adam decided to take over the bean bag chairs which are in front of the books. Devon also wanted a bean bag and then of course Lincoln wanted one too. It took awhile to get everyone back to the tables to look at the books they had picked out. Sometimes even a small group can be a handful if they don't buy into what you are trying to accomplish for the day. Once the routine gets re-established I think they will get back to business instead of fooling around. I marked everyone's behavior sheets way down because of all the nonsense that went on. The history class rotated to the next station and did their work very efficiently. Many students were done early today. So far the rotation idea is a success. Rene came to class on his own today. He sat on the bean bags and went to sleep. He slept through the entire period. A couple of the students asked why he got to sleep on the bean bag chairs. I didn't give them a reason other than

that it's Rene and Rene is Rene. They seemed to know what I meant without me having to go into detail about Rene's status. One of the stations in the history rotation is about comparing Christianity, Islam and Judaism. There have been some interesting discussions about religion going on at that table especially since Janice and I have had to supply several of the answers on the sheets to the students. It amazes me how little these students know about religion in general.

I will be out the rest of the week due to the AZ/CA teacher's conference this week in Arizona. Janice has a pizza party planned on Friday for the LC group although after today I don't know if that is appropriate. They were good students this past Friday when the district official visited the classroom.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 11/3/09 4:14 PM Today sounds like a mixed day with positives and negatives. Try to focus on the positives as you take time off to go to the teachers' conference. Have safe travels and I look forward to reading your journal next week.

11/08 Janice was going over the schedule with a new aid this morning when I came in. This new aid will be working with Luke from now on which is great because Luke needs a lot of assistance. (He has oxygen tanks to deal with among other issues.) After the aid left we quickly readied the room for the LC group. Today they were introduced to the rotations that they will be doing with Read 180 on Monday, Tuesday and Friday. We went over how to rotate and how to view the sections on the computer. I did the preview section in their reading workbooks. Finally they need to choose books to read during the independent reading rotation based on their Lexile scores and the books shares that we did last week. Tomorrow should be our first complete rotation for Read 180. I can't wait to see how the students respond to this program. Lincoln was absent so there was no major behavior issue. Adam was very talkative as usual. He was responding to the previews with a lot of enthusiasm. The history class is continuing their work on the notebook. We are still doing stations for each section of the notebook. Janice and I went around and spot checked the notebooks to see where the students are at in getting things completed by the Nov. 12 deadline. It doesn't look like very many had everything done or even in their notebooks at this point. Some had the work done, but had not glued it into the notebook. Janice wondered whether gluing everything in at the beginning and then working on it would be a better strategy.

11/09 The new aid that Janice trained yesterday did not show up today so Janice had to take an existing aid out of a different classroom and reassign her to Luke so that he would have the same person each day. Janice did not seem to be surprised by the situation. I was very confused when I came in this morning and heard what was happening. It seems like there is an endless stream of support people who come in and out of this school. Most do not seem very reliable. Luke's new aid has been at iMiddle for more than a year so she is reliable. Working with the aids and scheduling them is a big part of what Janice does. She has too much to coordinate with her limited amount of prep time each day. The administration needs to look at the amount of time that her position spends doing administrative tasks compared to actual classroom teaching. I think that Janice would prefer less administrative duties and be allowed to really prepare for helping the students. Janice had to fill out a report so she had me and the newest aid run the LC. I did the phonics game with one group while the aid helped the boys pick out independent reading books for that part of the rotation. After about 25 minutes the boys switched places. Lincoln was

here today and he was cooperative with most activities. He gets excited when he doesn't understand something or if the other boys make an aggressive move. Overall it was a calm day. We still have not done a complete rotation with Read 180. Maybe it will happen on Friday? The history classes are down to their last period before their notebooks are due. The aid and I tried to help Luke get caught up which is pretty impossible considering how much school he misses each week. Janice told me just to give students the answers so that they get done. There is no more time for research. It will be interesting to see if this strategy of doing the rotations produced more completed notebooks than last unit.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 11/11/09 2:52 PM I am excited to read your journal because each time you have something new and interesting. The Read 180 should work out well when it is up and running. Read 180 has a continual assessment component which will tell the teacher what skills the child has mastered and what needs work. I look forward to see how well the program works in real time with real students. I am sorry to hear the difficulties the children are having with their notebooks. I wonder if the information gleaned to be put in the notebooks could be put in computer documents. Using the computer may be motivational for the students (or they may not). Maybe that will be an option when the individual computers are up and running.

Educational aids (EA) / paras play a valuable role in the education of children in America today. Too bad the turnover rate of paras is statistically high. I know the paras are usually good with the students, yet it may be the work for the money or the emotional commitment which is hard for the para. The children with special needs steal your heart and some people do not take the emotional piece well. On the other hand, continuity of care is also a big issue. Having the same para with the same child is really important. The connection between the child and the para can be very tight; therefore the para must be available for the child to help him or her optimize their educational potential. Children do not do well when people simply walk out of their lives. The school must be a safe and nurturing environment emotionally as well as academically. On a side note: I hope your trip to Arizona went well. Did you present something at the conference? If you did not this year, plan on presenting something from your SPED information to the conference. You have lots to offer.

Janice, I admire you for your work and organizational skills as you work on the many facets of your job. I do not know how you can keep to many balls in the air. Keep up your advocacy for the child with special needs. Celebrate the little victories and small steps children do make under your care.

11/12 iMiddle did not have school yesterday so I spent the time at Reformation getting caught up with grades and make up work. Our first trimester ends next week. We went to trimesters last year and so far it is working well to have longer grading periods. Janice is going to a conference tomorrow so I will be working with the substitute in both classes. The SLP came in today and worked on descriptive language with most of the group. They had to use adverbs correctly and then they began to write a descriptive paragraph. I worked with Lincoln one on one since he had already done the SLP activities in a previous class session. Lincoln wanted me to read the ending of the novel we had been reading a few weeks ago so we read the end of the book together. He cannot read with any fluency so he enjoys listening to others read. He asked a lot of good questions about what was happening in the story. I think he would enjoy reading the next book in

the series. The history section has to finish their notebook today. About half of the group was not done with several sections. The other half had just one thing to finish or less. Janice and Christine were discussing the lack of critical reading ability among most of the students which makes all of these independent assignments difficult for them to complete when I arrived this morning. They discussed their game plan for the next unit. Janice was suggesting more direct instruction and less independent reading because of the gaps that are present in their reading comprehension abilities. Luke was absent today so the para educator helped with the various sections. Janice said that the family may have contracted the H1N1 virus. Hope not!

11/13 Janice and Christine are both at a conference on differential teaching today. They each have a substitute so I worked with the subs today. In the LC we were supposed to watch a video and then play the phonics game. The video player was not hooked to the television so that did not happen. By the time we figured out that we could not do the phonics video the boys had already started playing Monopoly so we just went with it since it is Friday. Luke's aid and I and Adam decided to play scrabble instead. The principal tried to fix the VCR but to no avail. The history sections are watching a video today so I think I will head back to Reformation early since there really isn't much for me to do here. The OT came for Luke, but he is absent again. Vorada has an additional person with her these days. I forgot to ask Janice why there are two people with Vorada now. What a tremendous drain on resources to have to have two people with one student all day long. I had an interesting conversation with the substitute for Janice before class today. It seems like most of the subs are not really sure they want to be full time teachers. In fact most are just transitioning to other careers. The subs I have spoken to have all been subbing for a couple of years already and seem to have lost hope of finding full time employment or they like the fact that subbing is flexible and it must pay well. Lincoln did his usual of fooling around until we made him sit down. He wanted to check his grades so we let him work on the computer. It turns out he was making a fake report card to show some friends. Interesting guy that Lincoln. I am concerned that the students are not getting enough direct instruction for this program to really help them. It has taken so long to get up and running and then when it seemed like we would finally get running Janice is either called away from the classroom or has some other distraction. I guess I was expecting a much more intense program in the LC since it is a small group and there is only the one period designated for this type of remedial reading instruction all day. I think I need to see what the other specialists are doing in their classrooms to see if they have as many disruptions.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 11/13/09 3:13 PM You have had a couple of really interesting days. I think you have to step back and look at the bigger picture. You have been in the trenches for a while. Step back and see the progress to date. Look at the connections you have made with the students. Look at the insights you have gained into the lives of significantly exceptional children. You need to look at the progress from a number of facets: academic, social, behavioral, and psychological. One example: I think it is neat how you have Lincoln's number. You can read him like a book. I am sure you are two steps ahead of Lincoln and know how to push his buttons. I also want you to look at the positive side of the picture. In addition, I am thinking about the book I suggested for you to read concerning internships. I think you are in the stage where you want to solve all the problems because in a couple of weeks you are going to be leaving the setting. You have experienced so much. All I have to do is to look at your previous entries and see

your growth. I consider your internship a success already. Whatever you gain from now on is icing on the cake.

I am interested in your work on your lessons for me to look over. I hope you have a plan of action in place so you get the taping done expediently. I know you have a couple of weeks left so the taping is not imminent. I just want you to put the project on the front burner.

Have a wonderful weekend!

11/16 You are right about getting to the bigger picture. I was thinking about how much there is to reflect on with this internship and how difficult it is going to be to pull it all together for the paper. Janice and I decided that we are going to do the taping the first week of December because the LC group has just started READ 180 and they need to be well established before we try doing a video of them. Janice talked with me about how important the phonics training that she has done with LiPS and I have been doing with the game is to their future success in READ 180. Some of the students like Lincoln have actually been coming after school to get more help with phonics which is great. Also because Janice has set up supports in all the classrooms where students with IEPs reside other direct instruction is going on that I have not observed since I have stuck mainly to Janice's schedule. Today the LC group was able to do a complete rotation of the READ 180 program. I was impressed by how well it went and the fact that the independent work is supported by direct instruction in the small group part of the rotation. Other than not knowing how to use the computer component the boys did really well. They were on task and seemed to be paying attention. Janice said that the program is very expensive. It would be such a great resource for any school. The history section did the activity "*the history of the world*" with Janice. She read the story of Mohammad and they were supposed to draw pictures or make a comment on the sections that she read. After the activity the student's notebooks were graded. Those who were not done had to try to get their missing pages filled. I assisted the students with their missing work. Janice is very excited about the next unit that she and Christine have planned. They are going to take a slightly different approach to the notebook and use more of a portfolio approach to collect the various artifacts of the unit.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 11/17/09 9:35 AM I will look forward to your video coming in early December. It will be neat to see the students working and being successful. I like the idea of small group instruction using DI. I think a lot can be accomplished in a short period of time when using small groups and the teacher scaffolding instruction for the students.

Concerning your bringing your journaling all together at the end, I think I will contact the others on the committee for ideas. I wonder if you would do well to reflect on the overall experience and actually report on key pieces in some detail. The journal will be part of the appendices so you can direct the readers of your paper to the appendix on your journal rather than write things all out. I will ponder the problem and look to others on the committee for ideas. I hope you are having a great week.

11/17 Janice finished the compliance report that was due and did all of the para's schedules this morning. We are having some technical difficulties with the recording part of READ 180 on the computers which is a shame since the boys want to move on to new levels and they can't until the program records them reading. The LC group did another complete rotation today. The

independent instruction varied by group. Janice did the READ 180 materials with one group and the LiPS with the other group today. She didn't say but I think this is because the second group is better at comprehension, but not decoding. The history section lesson was similar to yesterday only today I read the story to the class and they did their notes/drawings. After the story we helped the ones who still are not finished with the notebooks get more pages completed. Tomorrow is the test. We will hope for the best!

I will try to figure out what the key pieces are that I want to write about in the paper. There are so many topics that I could cover. Where do I start? :) Hope you are having a good week too!

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 11/18/09 4:19 PM I will keep thinking about how you can refine your work into a manageable piece. I have not contacted Dr. Klindworth and Dr. Angell for their advice. I hope to contact both of them soon.

11/18 Janice and Christine were discussing how to grade the notebooks when I arrived this morning. It was interesting to see how the two of them negotiated their views towards a mutual agreement on the points to be used for grading. The debate was smiley face verses stars for certain point values. Since it's a minimum day on Wednesdays Janice has decided to do the student store and then for the rest of the period we divided into three groups and played the phonics game. I worked with Lincoln and John on silent e words. Lincoln has a tough time with vowel sounds in general. John is doing well but it is difficult to pair others in the class with Lincoln because of behavior issues. The day went well except for a minor disturbance when Marc decided to use the bubbles he had purchased at the store. The history sections had their test online this morning so I decided to drop in on the counseling office to see what was happening there. Christy was with a student when I came in so I observed another student who was waiting to be seen. He needed help organizing his school work. Christy came out to help the student organize his work when another student came in with a teacher. He explained that the student had disrupted the class. He was a substitute and the aide had prior experience with this student's behavior issues. The sub left and Christy asked the student to sit down and wait while she finished with the student she was working with. The student's behavior escalated as she claimed that she only coughed and that she should be allowed to go back to class. She continued to be disruptive and to mutter obscenities under her breath. Christy radioed for the vice-principal to come and handle this student since she was not able to deal with her directly. The bad attitude was so evident in this student. Christy and Janice were supposed to have an IEP meeting this morning, but the parent did not show up so I went back to Janice's room where we discussed the fact that some students with IEPs do not really qualify for them. These types of students just need a little extra support which can be provided by the para's that are already in the room for the other IEP students.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 11/18/09 4:23 PM I find it very interesting to see how the chain of command is established and carried out. I am sure the school has a master management and discipline plan that was put into play before school started. I would imagine in each step, the consequences increase.

I would be interested to know Janice's reaction to some of the children on IEP's. I know some children are put on IEP because of extenuating situations, such as home life or social settings. I would hope the IEP addresses issues beyond the academics because

behavior and other issues, like I just mentioned, need to be addressed before the child can maximize his or her learning potential. You may find it interesting to see what the current protocol is for a child to be removed from the IEP. The IEP can be the death nail for children if they do not have a way to get beyond the need for intervention and access their educational opportunities on their own.

On another note, I believe you have a great situation where all caregivers work together and are not territorial or cannot compromise. The children benefit so much for the collaboration and consultation which goes on between cooperating teachers and staff. After all, it is all for the kids!!!!

11/19 Today we worked on getting the history notebooks graded. This was a challenge since many of the pieces that were required were not completed so you only had partial assignments to grade within the notebook. The grading scale was easier to understand than last time so at least the final score was somewhat easier to figure out. LC had SLP today. She worked on their paragraph writing skills some more. Lincoln refused to participate and was generally uncooperative today. Marc was allowed to go to a different class for today since he has already taken the SLP's class previously. Heidi, the SLP, voiced her frustration after class that some of the teachers were not allowing students to go to her classes despite their IEP requirements. She also mentioned that special educators were not being treated the same as classroom teachers when it came to the type of computers and other equipment that they were given. Her computers were very old apparently. The computers in Janice's room are old as well, but at least they work. :) I have observed that it is such a waste of time for a para if their assigned student does not come to school. Luke has been out for two days again. What does a para do when their student is not at school? Janice has Luke follow his schedule anyway and has her try to support other students in the class who need help. The history section worked on a mind map using Inspiration software. They are taking their test tomorrow and will be allowed to use their maps and notebooks I believe. I have always wanted to try doing some mind maps for notes, but we do not have the user friendly software program yet.

11/20 Janice and Christine took second period to plan for history. So I took the LC group to the library where we did independent reading. They were allowed to bring their READ 180 audio books with them. Most continued to follow along with their audio books. Lincoln did not want to bring his book instead he chose a book from off of the library shelf. It was a book about world records which was above his reading level so he continually asked me to read his book for him. I was trying to get him to read one of the chapter books that we had been working on last month with me since the reading level was more appropriate for him. He still doesn't get that he needs to work at his reading skill with practice that is appropriate for his level. The history sections were taking an online test today. It was really difficult to get everyone set up and then at the end there were some problems with saving and printing. Sometimes I think that just running off a paper and pencil test would have been more efficient. :) Technology is great, but it can slow things down if it doesn't work the way you think it is going to work. iMiddle doesn't have school all of next week so I won't have any entries until November 30. Happy Thanksgiving!

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 11/20/09 2:32 PM Notes on 11/19 - The importance of having all teachers and other care providers on an equal plain is essential for the child to succeed. I find it disheartening when everyone is not treated as equals. I have some

sympathies with the SLP who has to work with inferior equipment. What the SLP does to maximize the child's potential is important.

Lincoln will continue to be a source of concern. He will be a concern for the entire year and beyond. I would imagine you have a good notion to the etiology of Lincoln's issues. If the core issues are not resolved (home life, SES, etc.) Lincoln will very likely meander along. I am very concerned about his behavior issues which may escalate as he matures and the hormones really kick in.

Notes on 11/20 - How does one get the child to read at his or her level? I know the stock answer is to secure high interest/ low reading level books. The answer is obvious, yet not always practical. Book companies do provide the high interest/ low readability materials, yet not all books match the interests of the child. I doubt a heart-to-heart discussion on the importance of reading as a life skill will be beneficial. Lincoln is trying to survive from day-to-day.

I am sending information on to Dr. Klindworth and Dr. Angell today. I hope to get replies back soon. For both you and Janice: I wish all of you a Blessed and Happy Thanksgiving. I am sure both of you need a break.

11/30 Your ideas about Lincoln are very close to the mark. He does have a lot going on in his life and because of that I don't know if school will ever be that important to him. As Janice says he is just trying to survive each day. Janice was very excited about the new Africa unit that she and Christine put together. They decided to try a foldable unit with many parts that go in to it on a daily basis and which are graded individually rather than all at once at the end of the unit. The example that Janice put together is quit impressive. If I have time this summer I might try to put such a unit together for my 5th-6th grade history class; they would enjoy doing something like that. The LC group did their rotations today except for the computers because the recording component is not working and this makes it impossible for the boys to go on to the next level. So we have to wait for the technology to get fixed again. Instead Janice worked on the LiPS program while I did the guided reading and vocabulary lessons. The para made sure the independent reading group stayed on task. Jon was super talkative today and made it difficult for Lincoln to concentrate. Mark was semi-cooperative. He thinks that he knows all the answers and does not like to listen to others and yet he still makes elementary mistakes with his reading. His pride seems to get the best of him at times. In history Christine introduced the new unit with a short film called Africa which was basically a photographic overview of Africa with the Simpson's cartoon characters sprinkled in to keep the kid's attention. We began working on the foldables with each teacher taking over two tables to make sure that all the instructions and parts were done correctly. It seemed to go well. One can only hope that more students will get high marks this time around. On a side note there was an interesting conversation in the workroom before class between Janice and a Spanish teacher. They were discussing a survey that was done in the District which proposed all kinds of extra documentation of student issues which would cost millions of dollars. They were very skeptical to say the least. It is easy to see what is wrong with public education today. Teachers are forced to become bureaucrats and are not allowed to teach the way that they are trained to teach. All the money is poured into reports and statistics and not into the real life things like copy paper that the teachers need. I feel blessed to be teaching where I am!!

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 12/1/09 8:36 AM You have made a number of very interesting comments on what is happening with your students. I really appreciate the way the individual is taken into account when talking about educational considerations. Each child brings new baggage to the class each day and teachers need to realize where the child is at in order to teach the child expertly each day. What a task! I also see you are gleaning ideas for your classroom and children - great! I think your gathering information for your future teaching is a key to your internship. Not only are you gleaning information for your teaching, but you are gaining an understanding of the pressures the teachers in the public schools are under. Often improvement plans look good on paper, however, in practice, the pressure and responsibility is on the schools and the teachers. I agree, I think your setting is free of many of the pressures. I was wondering if you will be video taping your lesson in the near future? I will be happy to look over your work when it arrives. It is getting to be crunch time around here, so the sooner the better if possible.

I hope both you and Janice had a wonderful Thanksgiving and a much needed break. Just a couple of weeks to the end of the semester. My, how time flies. Let me know if I can help in any way. Have a great day and a prosperous week.

12/1 Time flies indeed! We video taped the LC group today. We used a flip video camera. As soon as Janice has time to download the video onto her computer she will send it to you. We used the same set up as yesterday with me teaching the small group lesson and Janice doing LiPS at a different table. Shauna (para) did the video taping. Her group was fine at independent reading without her today. I hope you can hear the audio portion because that is what is really the most interesting. Janice had a neat idea to color code the group tables so that everyone knows where to go each day. She is hopeful that the computer portion will be up and running again by tomorrow. Luke was late and was eating a messy bagel when he came in. It takes him a long time to get settled without the eating. I am surprised that his mother doesn't make him eat before he gets to school. I had to tell him to put the food away because he was making a mess at our table. Marc was not cooperating with me today. He only filled in a few of the questions that we worked on with his group. Attitude is such a big part of working with junior high students. In history we worked on a physical map of Africa. Christine used the Smart Board while Janice read the descriptions. Having the map on the Smart Board and watching Christine color each section was very helpful to the students when they colored their own maps. We didn't quite finish all of the activities, however. The bell rang and many students were scrambling to get everything handed in. Hope they all can find their papers tomorrow!

12/2 Today was about getting the mini booklets that go into the fold-able history "notebook" put together. Janice and Christine need over 400 of these four page booklets created. The LC group worked on their Read180 at the computers. It seemed to be working until they tried to record which still seems to be a problem. Only one student was able to do his recording. The rest of the period the boys were given the opportunity to either do homework or help with the booklet project. Janice shared that the history co-teaching is going much better. Janice reads the chapter sections while Christine reinforces the reading with a map or diagram on the Smart board that she is simultaneously filling in. The students are filling in their matching activity at the same time. Neat! I think the two heads are better than one saying fits here. :)

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 12/2/09 4:58 PM From what I can tell, you are making good progress, although it may come in spurts. I agree with the comment you made about adolescents and attitude. If you can get over the attitude, great things can be accomplished.

I hope the notebooks work out for the classes. I think the idea is wonderful and look forward to your analysis as to how the concept works in practice. I think you will be pleasantly surprised!

I look forward to your video. It will be great to see you in action!! I anticipate the video will be fine. I will turn up the volume as loud as I can to hear what is happening. I will look it over and give you feedback.

12/3 Janice shared some comments from parents who believed that the school is supposed to in essence fix their child's issues. It was funny to hear her talk about the ridiculous expectations of some adults who basically have no clue how to parent their child. One mother was having her son watch a show about tough parents who know how to handle their child. Most of these parents are Christians. She wanted her son to watch and get clues on how to behave. Today was SLP day. I took Lincoln into another room and worked on phonics with him since the activity with the SLP was paragraph writing which is too difficult for him at this point. Janice had to work on Vorada's IEP and hopefully her reassignment to a more appropriate situation. Since Janice was excused to work on the IEP, Christine had the history section with me, Luke's aid and an intern from a local high school helping as well. The intern was using a laptop to communicate with a friend for most of the period. She and I worked on putting the mini booklets together. Mr. Klein, the principal, made a surprise stop in the room towards the end of the period. Christine and Janice's Stull is coming up next week I think. Only the eighth grade students have received their notebooks. That is half of the boys in the LC group. The history section is all seventh graders so I am not sure if I will get to see much with the notebooks unless I come back after Christmas. Consistency in a big school seems to be a difficult proposition. Despite the best plans of the faculty and staff there always seems to be something that interferes with the original plan. I guess the lesson is always having a plan B or C ready just in case.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 12/3/09 4:23 PM I believe the generation of parents today have little or no training on how to parent. The rule of thumb is - parents parent as they were parented. The indulging society and the me attitude really interferes with how parents were taught to parent. Just watching a video will not teach a child, yet with many parents, using a video is the only way they know how to parent. How sad:(I find the parenting issue doublely (maybe not a word) troubling, because religion can be the solid base to discipline the child. I really think the parents often simply do not know how. By the time the child reaches adolescence and is often as big as the parent, this is not the time to try to figure it out! Parenting with Love and Logic by Jim Faye and Foster Cline discuss the topic and say today's parents have it backwards. Parents are overly indulgent when the child is young and try to rein the child in during adolescence. Wrong - keep a tight lid on the child when he or she is very young and gradually let go. The tight control strategy makes very good sense. How sad the parent has lost the advantage early and now cannot do anything to manage the child.

Concerning your concluding comments, teachers need to be flexible. Often the best laid plans get sidetracked due to so many interruptions in schools today. Being able

to maintain structure, routine, predictability, and continuity when the school day is fraught with all kinds of interferences is a daunting task for teachers. I truly admire the teacher today who can keep track of all the things that go on during the school day. I know the children need the structure and routine, especially the children who are EBD or have other special needs.

Keep up your good work. I always look forward to reading what has been happening in your experience.

12/4 Janice had an in school conference. There were people on campus evaluating the school and she was part of the team showing people around as well as participating in the event itself. I took the LC students for her and worked on phonics with most of the group. Two of the eighth grade boys decided to work on homework while two other boys had OT today. Towards the end of the period Lincoln joined the homework group. Mark made some disparaging comments to Lincoln where upon Lincoln put Mark in a headlock and started punching his face. Fortunately, Vorada's aid was a tall man today and he helped me separate the boys. I took Lincoln to the counselor's office which was busy as usual. I left Lincoln there and returned to class where the other boys had continued to play the phonics game on their own. Vorada's aid and Luke's aid were still in the room with them. Lincoln came back into the classroom after a few minutes and said that the counselor had sent him back. This turned out to be a lie and that he had just left the counseling office on his own. Anyway, Lincoln was suspended from school for two days and Mark for one day. I met with the vice-principal briefly to see if she needed any more information from me and I also met with the counselor and Janice to make sure that they knew all the details. Mark seemed truly sorry about what he said. Mark has a dry sense of humor and has a knack for pushing people's buttons. I think he may have learned a lesson today about how sensitive even the tough guys can be about certain things. Mark does not know anything about Lincoln's life. Vorada was really upset after this incident and wanted to sit on my lap the rest of the period which I let her do. I can't imagine what she must have thought was happening. I did not help with history today because there was a substitute in there and they were watching movies plus Miriam is sick today and I needed to get back to Reformation.

12/7 My last week! The surprise in LC today was that Marc was there. We both thought he was to be suspended for today. Lincoln was still suspended. Since the issue with the computers still has not been solved Janice decided to review phonics rules and then have the two groups play the phonics game with each of us. At the end of the period she did her student store since they didn't get to do it last week. The boys were on task today except for when Abenezer's phone went off in his pocket. Janice turned the phone into the office. It is raining steadily today which we haven't had in many months. I was pleased that it didn't seem to affect the way the boys were acting today. Jon was very wiggly, but then that is Jon. In history the class was making their Ghana booklet which fits into the foldable. They also had some new workbook to fill out which just came. From the looks of it the workbooks go with the text and were supposed to be here at the beginning of the year. Better late than never I guess. Vorada's IEP meeting last week was successful in that they decided to transfer her to a place where she can get the help that she needs. Janice was amazed that the district had insisted that she be in a middle school setting when clearly she cannot function outside of a special education setting. Middle simply does not have the resources to handle extreme cases like hers. I wish I could see where she finally does end up when the transfer is made.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 12/7/09 4:50 PM Wow, your last week! What an experience you have had so far! It also sounds like Friday was a day to remember! I truly feel for Vorada and how her needs need to be met in an appropriate setting. LRE is a big issue and children need to be where they can learn and socialize the best. I, like you, would be interested in Vorada's placement and progress. A number of "experts" have commented on the continuum of placement options. I remember Rick LaVoie commenting on the importance of placing a child in the correct environment when he spoke to the CEC convention in Salt Lake City. When he indicated strongly that not all children are successful in the inclusion model, he got a hearty round of applause. I also remember Dr. Melvin Levine making a similar comment quite a while ago when I attended a week-long workshop on neuro-developmental constructs in North Carolina. The children simply need to be where they can thrive and learn.

I also have empathy for Lincoln. His community environment, including the home, must be very difficult. I am also very concerned about his likely outcome. The future is not very bright for Lincoln. I wonder how he will act and react when he returns after his suspension. I would anticipate he will have a chip on his shoulder and not be humble and/or obedient. Somehow, Lincoln needs to find his niche and hopefully it will be positive.

I have not received your CD with your lessons, although I did not read the mail today. I will look for the CD soon and view you in action. I will return the CD with my comments or will email you my comments as soon as I finish my looking over your lesson.

Hope both you and Janice are doing well and staying healthy.

12/8 LC had the three rotations today with me doing the phonics drills/game instead of the computers. The boys seem to like it when we stick to the three rotations rather than the improvised ones that we have to do sometimes because of outside factors. Luke, Lincoln and Marc were all late today. Marc and Lincoln may have been at some debriefing meeting with the counselors. I am not sure. The counselor came in with them and talked to Janice for a moment. Marc joined right in. Lincoln stayed apart for a moment. Fortunately, his group was with Janice and there is only Jon in his group. He was very quiet. The boys are doing better at the phonics games, but they still make mistakes reading the words. The history class continued to work on Ghana. I helped students and wrote down points for the tables that had the right answers on their papers. One student in the class did not have his paper and sat through almost the whole period without doing anything. I noticed this and tried to catch him up. He had been absent and didn't know what we were doing. I mention him because for the longest time I had mistaken this student for a girl because of his name and long hair. His background is Polynesian and I had read somewhere that they do not assign gender to their children specifically. I am glad I never said anything feminine to him. We are healthy thanks - the CD should be there shortly. I am not sure when Janice sent it.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 12/8/09 5:32 PM I am somewhat surprised by Lincoln being so quiet. I would be interested on what the counselor had to say to Lincoln. Maybe he came down on Lincoln very hard to knock the chip off his shoulder. Hummmm! You did the right thing by not mentioning anything feminine about your other student. Sometimes things works out OK.

I look forward to your CD. I will try to get at your disc as soon as possible. Right now life is hectic trying to get all things corrected and back to the students. The end is near and all the assignments I made at the beginning of the semester are coming due. I tried to spread the assignments out over the semester, yet some assignments need to be turned in at the end. I am also working on late work which drives me up the wall. Semester tests begin on Saturday, but I have all of them ready to go right now. We are in the throws of a real Minnesota snow storm. It has been snowing all day and is also very cold and windy. Tomorrow night the temperature is supposed to be below zero. Must be rough living in San Diego. However, we are tough Minnesotans!

12/9 Janice and Christine are getting evaluated today. (Part one of the Stull.) We did not get to talk much. I haven't been able to get here very early this week either which hasn't helped. I did not ask Janice if she mailed the CD. I am hoping that she did. We had the same rotations in the LC group as yesterday except today I had Jon and Lincoln right away. They still struggle with the rhyming sounds that this particular phonics game works on. I only worked with the seventh graders today. Luke was very late getting to school again. His health seems to be an issue these days. In the history periods Janice and Christine have worked out the team idea to where Janice does a cloze reading of the text while Christine supports what is being read with graphics on the Smart board. During the 4th period they were able to play a game which had the pods of students competing to see who could put all the events read about in class in order. They were listed on strips of paper which had to be put in order and verified by a teacher to win. I am getting all these neat ideas for history. If only history were my only focus all day long. ha! Hope you stay safe in the snow! We are getting cold and rain right now so not so great here either.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 12/9/09 5:25 PM Sounds like you are having a good day even though it is sort of miserable outside. I am sure you need the rain. We will be well below zero here tonight and will struggle to get in double digits tomorrow. Oh, well, it's winter in Minnesota. I am happy you are getting tons of ideas for history. I wonder if you could use some of the ideas in other subjects? I found some strategies and methods used for one discipline fit another. Keep the generalizing concept in mind.

From what you describe, you had a calm day. Good for you! I think you had enough happen in your experience this week so you deserve a break. I really am happy you are seeing top quality team or co-teaching going on. The teachers seem to fit together in a cohesive unit. I can only believe the co-teaching will benefit the children. The literature supports co-teaching as a very good model to promote learning. I will look for the CD. Have a great day tomorrow.

12/10 Today is SLP day with Mrs. Kennedy. She is still working on writing skills with the group so I took Lincoln to her office to work one on one with his phonics which he desperately needs. The SLP writing that she is doing with the kids is over Lincoln's head. He is getting better with silent e words and double vowel words, but the rhyming words he does not fully comprehend yet. I also noted that he mixes up p,d, and b. Janice said that she would do more LiPS training on those consonants with him. In history period 3 was behind so we tried to get them caught up. Janice and Christine chose wisely when they decided to have the principal do the Stull during period 4 yesterday and not during period 3. Period 3 has been behind all year and the kids are not very into history in general. I think there are a large number of slow readers in

that period in addition to the special ed. kids who were placed with that group. Christine told the group that reviews of their grades were being done and that some students may have to be placed in remedial classes if their grades are below a C. It seems that some students will have schedule changes after the break. Janice said that they received high marks on their Stull from yesterday. I can't believe that tomorrow is my last day here. I am thinking that I may have to come back and do some "exit" interviews with the people that I have worked with in order to get their perspective on my internship. Is there a form that Janice needs to fill out as well? My co-teacher will still be teaching in my room next week so I may be able to sneak back and get some feedback then if I can't get this done tomorrow. We have Christmas rehearsals big time all next week.

12/11 Last day! The LC group had a party for me. Thank you, Janice for making this a fun experience for everyone. I will miss my boys at iMiddle and wish them the best. The history class is starting to make some progress with their foldables. I wish I could stay and find out if they do better on their tests after creating this type of study aid rather than the traditional notebook. Thank you to Christine for allowing me to work with her history classes. I love how creative she is with her learning materials. She and Janice make a great team.

spurgiam@mlc-wels.edu 12/11/09 5:04 PM Wow! Time really slips by quickly. I can hardly believe you are done. I am very happy you had the opportunity to work with the variety of children. I will miss not knowing what is happening with the students, some of which will be moving on to other placements.

I am really happy the Stull went well for Janice. I could hardly imagine the outcome would have been different! Congratulations and kudos to her for her hard work. As far as Janice is concerned, I would like to have her fill out the Final evaluation form. The form was with the packet of materials I left when I was there and also sent at midterm (the forms are the same). If you need a copy, I will email it to you or Janice, or both. I do not need a lengthy evaluation, but would appreciate Janice commenting in each of the areas on the form. If a follow-up teleconference would be helpful, I could arrange for the conference to be done post haste. I will leave the teleconference idea up to you two. If you both are content with Janice writing out the form, so be it.

I will be sending Janice a letter with a modest stipend next week. I will give you a call early next week to see if you need anything to complete your internship and what you will need to start thinking about for your final paper.

I hope both you and Janice have a restful weekend. I need to correct papers and get ready for finals. Blessing to you both.