

Developmental Assessment

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While Pre-Student teaching at St. Clement School in Lancaster I observed a male child in my 1st grade placement. The 1st grade classroom is very vibrant as it is painted bright yellow. The room includes a carpet area for morning routine and stories, a sink for easy hand washing before snack, lunch and after messy activities, and a couple tables that are used for small group activities. There is one table that is rounded and has a divot on the inside where the teacher can sit and see all the students around the table, this works well for a guided reading lesson. This school is very welcoming of new people whether they are students or adults. When I first started my pre-student teaching it wasn't long before the kids were comfortable with me being there and talking to me about many things. There is only one first grade class because of the small class size and with this school being a private school. The students are all friends and get along really well with one another. The student I chose to observe is a young boy who is 7 years old. For the purpose of this assignment I'll refer to him as Peter*. He is fairly tall for his age and pretty lean. I've noticed since I'm only in the classroom one day a week that he wears the same shirt every Monday of each week (or he has since I've started). I'm not sure if he does this because he loves this shirt or if maybe he doesn't have many clothes to choose from at home. He is an only child, which I think is in his favor because his parents are able to spend more time helping him with homework and other daily tasks. Since Peter does struggle in school his parents are able to spend their evenings working with him and helping him improve skills he needs to use at school. From talking with the teacher she has mentioned also that the

parents are very helpful and want to do anything than can to help Peter comprehend information better.

As I mentioned above Peter is tall and skinny for a 7 year old. He loves to go outside for recess and play kickball with the other students. From watching him run around outside I can tell he really enjoys being outdoors much rather than being inside. He has so much energy when he's inside that it's good for him to go out and run around to get rid of some of that energy so he's not bouncing off the walls during class. I think being inside and constricted to only a small amount of space makes Peter quite squirmy. I have noticed when Peter is outside running around he is a bit wobbly. I've talked to his teacher about some of his physical features and she mentioned that nothing has been diagnosed as far as a disability; right now she is just watching and recording small movements that she notices. As I've watched Peter in the classroom and have been able to observe his large and fine motor skills, he seems to have a hard time with his fine motor skills. His writing is very sloppy and big, he doesn't stay between the lines as you should, his letters go overtop the top line and underneath the bottom line. He doesn't write in a straight line either, his lines tend to slant upwards or downwards. When using scissors, glue or any other small object he often gets frustrated and upset because the tools aren't working properly. When he is cutting paper he often cuts in a jagged line, which I think is from how he holds his scissors and from starting and stopping while cutting. I can remember one specific example of the class making an art project that included cutting and gluing. Peter was getting very upset because he couldn't get his pieces to stay glued together, even with the large amount of glue he was using. Another observation I've made is that he often doesn't tie his tennis shoes or when they come untied he doesn't tie them even when he

is asked to. I think this contributes to his weak fine motor skills where his fingers don't work well with small materials. From watching Peter play outside and in PE I've noticed his large motor skills seem to be pretty good. He can make that foot-eye coordination to kick balls and hand-eye coordination to shoot/catch balls. Overall, his physical development appears to be good with the exception of being a bit wobbly and unstable at times.

When it comes to class work and learning something new each day, Peter does have a cognitive delay. He sits in his desk as though he is paying attention but when it's time to do a practice worksheet or homework he is totally lost and says "I don't understand" or "I don't get this!" He gets very upset because he doesn't know what to do. My teacher will spend extra time helping him individually to be sure he stays on track and at the same speed or close to the rest of the class. For example, I've noticed when the students are taking a test the teacher will stand next to Peter and read the question to him and try and help him understand it better. Math and reading are two subjects that I see most often and he struggles with them. He reads at a slow pace and sometimes needs help or guidance when reading. I believe Peter is at the Concrete Operational Stage in Piaget's Theory of Concrete Operational Thinking. In this stage he struggles with reversibility, specifically numbers. I know this from grading math time tests and he'll get one question right written the first way but when the numbers are flipped he'll mix it up and get it wrong, so he hasn't quite mastered that they are the same thing just written differently. As for decentering, classification, transitivity and seriation he seems to understand most of these from what I've been able to observe. Peter's memory and comprehension is good sometimes and other times, not as good. For example, when he is having a bad day or an "off" week he struggles more than normal and the teacher is more patient with him. He

remembers the simple things such as: where his desk is, his snack container, his plastic tub and other little things. As far as remembering spelling words or math problems, it seems to depend on the day; if it's a good day or a bad day. If one of his classmates sees Peter is struggling and they are finished with the assignment I've seen students lean over and try to help him. Peter interacts well with the students in the classroom when need be, otherwise he'll just sit in his chair and look off into the distance and daydream. As I said above, when he doesn't understand something he doesn't necessarily ask for help he just says "I don't get it!", so he's not using very good language pragmatics.

For the amount of time I spend in this classroom with this young boy I don't see him expressing himself that much. He doesn't act out on a normal basis or tattle tale, he usually just goes about his business on his own. He doesn't try to be the center of attention, when he's having a bad day, he just sits and is quiet, which most likely he is not paying full attention to the teacher during a time like this. Especially on bad days he doesn't feel good about himself, he thinks he can't do things, so therefore he doesn't even want to try. One week when I was there for two days he was having a rough week, as the teacher informed me, and that just made me want to be even more gentle and calm when I was helping or talking to him. When he does do well on a test or a worksheet he does feel good about himself and we encourage that kind of behavior to help him feel good all the time. There have been times when he's been having a pretty good day but then something goes wrong and he just breaks down in tears. When the teacher tried to talk to him he just cries and tries to explain what happened. Most times it's nothing to big, but to him it meant a lot! This student is usually quiet when it comes to working on homework or a test but when in the hallway, outside or getting ready for a lesson he is very

chatty. He likes to be up and moving around opposed to sitting still in a desk all day. I think, possibly a tall chaired desk would be something good for him to try. I've seen it in other schools and it seems to help certain students. Overall, he gets along with most if not all of his classmates. As for the teacher, she works really well with Peter and he accepts her helping him. I have never seen him act out to terribly, when he is asked to stop doing something for the most part he listens right away, there is no fighting back or acting out towards the teacher. According to Erikson's industry and inferiority, I feel with this student it is one sided. I can see the inferiority in him because he doesn't like to try at something and then be wrong, he would opt to just not do it at all. However- we work with him so he at least tries and without giving him the answer we encourage him to look over his work before submitting.

After spending a lot of time thinking about this student and the features he shows I think he should be tested to see if he actually has a specific disability, because as of right now he has never been tested but has some qualities that may lead to something further. He shows definite poor fine motor skills which caused him to become very frustrated with himself and that leads to becoming angry! He also has a cognitive delay, especially with reading and reading comprehension. I think if it was possible to have an aide with the student during the day that would help him make progress faster and possibly help him get to the same level as his classmates. It's good that he is in a small school where the teachers have the ability to spend more time with him opposed to a larger school where it's harder to do that. Hopefully as he gets older the teachers will continue to give him extra attention and then when he gets to high school, if he hasn't reached the level as his peers he can be placed in a special education classroom where he may feel more comfortable. The only downfall this school has is that there

is no special education classroom, the extra time and modifications are all placed on the classroom teacher.