Field Experience Report

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ITEC 7450

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The field experience took place in the classroom environment that the student is situated in throughout the day. The student, John, is a 6 year old boy who is in first grade and a moderate level of English Proficiency. He is a child who is very sweet, kind, quiet, and helpful. He cares about helping others and always wants to achieve his personal best. He often gets discouraged when he does not do something correctly because he is intelligent and wants success the first time around. He is willing to put towards effort to learn, but does not necessarily understand that he is struggling because he has such a passion towards learning. He has a very high opinion of himself and his education.

This student was met with primarily for Math instruction, for 30 minutes, 1 day per week. I met with John to enrich his mathematical knowledge for 30 minutes per meeting, from 10:30-11:00 each day on the following days: September 5, 12, 19, 26; October 3, 10, 17, 24; November 7, 2014.

Problem solving is an integral component in first grade, and while John can add and subtract just fine, he struggles with visualization of problems/situations if they contain vocabulary that he is not familiar with. The first grade standards for word problems states how the student must be able to,

1. Use addition and subtraction within 20 to solve word problems involving situations of adding to, taking from, putting together, taking apart, and comparing, with unknowns in all positions, (e.g., by using objects, drawings, and equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem).

John was expected to master the concept of word problems and the importance of visualization/understanding when solving them. We used manipulatives, pictures, and/or number lines each session and went through the Singapore Math problem solving steps to help him progress. I also helped to motivate him by building on concepts he was familiar with and used concrete objects to aid in understanding of otherwise abstract concepts.

The [Teaching English Language Learners: Effective Instructional Practices](http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/ell/ell_02.html) module was very useful in learning about English Language Learners. It taught me that English language learners need at least five years within optimal learning conditions to achieve success in English-only classrooms with minimal support. Being that students come to my classroom when they are 6 years old, I am aware that they are not necessarily going to be proficient in the language if they just began learning it. It taught me that there are various forms of English learning programs and that no matter the particular program, the purpose is to have some sort of ESL instruction. Two way immersion is the most effective form of English instruction to ELL, however, it is not possible to do this in my school environment. One strategy I could bring to my classroom is to teach ESL using academic content. I knew this was a strategy I could use within the ELL module for this course. I also learned that using contextual supports, activate background knowledge, teach vocabulary, teach comprehension strategies, and differentiating instruction are general instructional practices that can be beneficial to students who are learning to speak English.

[Scholastic](•%09http:/www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/strategies-teaching-english-language-learners) created an informative article that helped to guide my ELL instruction. This resource states that effective instruction to ELL begins when teachers follow the following conditions: “Comprehensible input is provided, which means messages are made understandable and meaningful to the learner via a variety of techniques. There is a low-affective filter, which means students are made to feel comfortable and there is little pressure to learn "it all" right now.”. This was very helpful, because sometimes, as an educator, baby steps are difficult to take! Other ways that I gained insight on creating a classroom environment that supports natural acquisition of language are to: “Use visuals that reinforce spoken or written words. Employ gestures for added emphasis. Adjust your speech: Speak slowly; enunciate; use longer natural pauses; repeat words or phrases; include shorter sentences, fewer pronouns, and simpler syntax. Exaggerate intonations at times. Stress high-frequency vocabulary words. Use fewer idioms and clarify the meaning of words or phrases in context. Stress participatory learning. Maintain a low anxiety level and be enthusiastic.” These suggestions were clear, concise, and easy to follow.

Another [resource](http://www.netc.org/focus/challenges/ell.php) I gained information from taught me specific effective strategies for teaching ELL. A suggestion was to develop reading skills with ELL. It suggested that teachers give language learners many opportunities to read and write in meaningful contexts, in their first and second languages. Teachers should draw on effective strategies for increasing literacy skills, and integrate technology to support writing instruction and motivate students to use written language to communicate. They suggest encouraging students to develop literacy skills in their native language, then transfer these skills to learning English. It also focuses on working from student strengths by building on what students already know. Teachers of ELL should help students see the value of being able to communicate in multiple languages. It also suggests that teachers connect with students’ families and cultures, use effective instructional strategies that are engaging, and encourage collaboration opportunities. Combined, an ELL will get the best education possible to gain a deeper understanding of the English language.

As a whole, these resources helped me with my experience because they gave me strategies to focus on when working with ELL and provided me with insight on how they best learn and acquire the English language.

The objects and assessments are as follows:

**English Language Learners Module Field Experience Template**

*Objectives and Assessments*

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| **Objective** | **Assessment** | **Was the objective met? Evidence of student learning.** |
| *(Content)* The student will be able to Use addition and subtraction within 20 to solve word problems involving situations of “putting together”. | *(Summative).* I will check to see if John is able to use addition and subtraction within 20 at the end of the unit.  “I have 9 colorful markers. My teacher gave me 7 more. How many do I have altogether?” | Yes. John was able to use addition and subtraction within 20 to solve word problems involving situations of “putting together”. |
| *(Content)* The student will be able to Use addition and subtraction within 20 to solve word problems involving situations of “taking apart”. | *(Summative).* I will check to see if John is able to use addition and subtraction within 20 at the end of the unit through the following Math prompt:  “Ivan has 14 stickers. He gives 5 away to his friend Maria. How many does he have left?” | Yes. John was able to use addition and subtraction within 20 to solve word problems involving situations of “taking apart”. |
| (Language) The student will be able to connect key math vocabulary terms for addition and subtraction words with meaning by using nonverbal clues and nonlinguistic representation of ideas, including modeling. | *(Formative).* I will observe John and ask questions while the student is working. | Yes. John was able to connect key math vocabulary terms for addition and subtraction words with meaning by using nonverbal clues and nonlinguistic representation of ideas, including modeling. |