I participated in being a Math Coach at Akron Elementary every Tuesday at 2:00. I helped with two classes of fifth grade students who struggled with different mathematical concepts. Each student had very different personalities and problems that sometimes worked for the best and other times clashed. But that diverse group of students gave me a great challenge to work towards and really apply the classroom lessons to a real life.

The first group that I worked with was from Mrs. Teel’s classroom. Jim and I helped about 5 students from this room. These students mainly struggled with multiplication tables. In this mix, there were 2 predominately Spanish speaking students. This was a challenge because they could not grasp certain words that I would try to use to communicate and they would also try telling each other things in Spanish. One of them was also very hyperactive and after a couple sessions, I realized to get him calmed down, he need to have more individualized time and attention. Things went a lot soother in smaller groups and more individualized time. I used Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences for a lot of our activities to get the students to think differently about the mathematical concepts such as playing puzzle games, and drawing objects on the board with numbers.

The second group that I help was from Ms. Saner’s classroom. In this group I had one very hyper student again. He was very hard to control with outbursts of anger when he became frustrated. He also needed more individualized time. In this group, I would sit students down at a table and we would all start on the same homework problem and go one by one working them through. The student who needed individualized time had a lot of trouble staying on task or going ahead and wanting individual help at the exact time he needed help even though the rest of
the group was on another problem. This happened for a couple times then I asked him to sit by me. He started staying with the group and working along and when he did need help while ahead, he was sitting next to me and wouldn’t interrupt everyone else as much. It really taught me how to control a small group of students, which is a good starting point to build on up to controlling a classroom.

My experience at Akron was a very pleasant one. I learned a lot about new approaches to teaching and behavior. I enjoyed working with the students and even challenging myself to teach a subject that I don’t excel in. The teachers showed a great deal of appreciation for my service there and all the staff were very helpful. It was a great learning experience for my future career.