

Chase Estepp

Dr. Eastman

Corrective Reading

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Autism Workshop Reflection

While attending the pre-professional workshop about Autism, I was able to walk away with an abundant amount of new information and a better understanding of the characteristics of individuals with Autism. The first speaker presented us with a lot of background information and different strategies to help create a classroom that is suitable to students that are on the spectrum of Autism. The second speaker that we had talked to us about social stories and the effectiveness they could be if used in a classroom with an autistic child. I personally have never seen a social story being used in a classroom so it was very interesting for me to learn about them and also have a hands-on experience with creating one. For the final session that we participated in, we sat and listened to a panel of speakers talk about their experiences and stories about autism. They really caught the attention of the students during this session because we not only were able to hear about the stories but there were two people there with autism and we were able to see how they interact and go through their lives. I thought that all of the sessions were helpful and gave me more insight into the world of Autism and what all the disorder entails.

One story that really made me think about my actions and taking more of an interest into the lives of my students was the story of Matt that his mother shared with us. Matt was an adult who many people used to words to describe him like non-verbal and autistic. Not too many people ever gave Matt a chance but his mother shared with us a couple of teachers who really took an interest in Matt that many people were too afraid to do. They worked with him and

eventually found a device that allowed facilitated communication. This story really made me think about myself as a teacher and what I have to offer to students who have autism or any disability. These students need a teacher who is willing to work with them and give them a way to communicate their thoughts and feelings. As I become closer to being a teacher, I know that I need to use experiences like this workshop to become exposed to new ideas that are going to help me become a better teacher and provide those students with a classroom where they can be comfortable.

Looking back at the workshop made me think about myself and what I have to offer to students with Autism if I ever have a student in my classroom. Even though I know I am very excited about teaching and starting to become more confident in my abilities, I still worry that I do not have enough experience working with students who have a disability or learning disability. I have worked with people who have disabilities but I think I feel uncomfortable because I do not feel like I can offer them the help they need or I feel bad for them and it makes me uncomfortable. The first presenter really helped me start thinking about what I could do for these students because she presented us with multiple slides that gave us ideas and strategies on what to do for autistic students. She really talked about using Sensory Integration and structuring your classroom in a way that allows the student to concentrate on the task at hand and eliminating other distractions around them. My biggest fear of having students who have a disability is that I will not put enough attention and detail into making sure that they are getting the most effective teaching from me in order for them to continue to develop in their learning and development.

As I move closer to becoming a teacher and get deeper into the profession of teaching, one professional goal that I will continue to pursue is becoming more aware of not only autism

but all learning disabilities and what I can do as a teacher to develop my students. One way that I can try and meet that goal is making sure to participate and take full advantage of all the professional development opportunities that become available to me while teaching. I feel that one of my duties as a teacher is to continue learning and developing new ideas as a teacher to accommodate to all students. The other thing that I find important for me to do as a teacher is making sure to involve the families of these students and try and gain the support from them. During the final session, they talked about how important it was to find that teacher who was willing to work with the parents and understand the parents are sometimes uncomfortable. By creating a relationship with the parents or guardian of the student, it allows the two sides to cooperatively work together and provide a learning environment and experience for the student to succeed.