

Throughout my practicum session, I have had the opportunity to work with a variety of learners. These learners each had their own set of strengths and weaknesses. They each needed different supports and had a different timeline of learning from each other learner. I have had the opportunity to teach and observe a fifth grade classroom at Jardine elementary school. For the past two years, I had the opportunity to tutor a fourth grader at Kennedy Elementary through communities in schools. This student struggled to learn math in the classroom. I have also had the opportunity to observe and teach lessons in multiple special education classrooms through a program at my high school. These experiences combined have given me insight on the differing needs of a variety of students.

I am very committed to equity and inclusion in classroom experiences. I believe that all students should receive whatever scaffolding and supports they need in the classroom to achieve their highest potential. It is important as a teacher to know what each of your students need and know how to provide that differentiation of support to each student. If an outsider was observing me in the classroom, they would know that this idea is important to me right away. First, they would be able to look at my mathematical lesson plans and see the accommodations that are included in my lessons for students with differing needs in a mathematical lesson. Then, during my instruction time, they would see me incorporating many different techniques throughout the lesson time so that students could have a variety of experiences throughout the lesson and could benefit from the technique that works best for them. For example, I incorporate individual and group work for students who need support from their peers and also for those who work best when they can think through things on their own. I write out and project visuals onto the board, but also talk through problems for students who are visual or oratory learners.

After taking an equity walk around Jardine Elementary school, I realize that not everyone would have access to the high quality mathematics instruction that the students are receiving in this school. Jardine is a STEAM school, so they have access to technology to bring math to life and engage the students in real word math problems. Some students who might not receive as many math instruction would be the English language learners. They are working double time to learn a whole new language, so math might not be their teacher's top priority with them. While they are learning the language, they might be falling farther and farther behind in math. Another group, is students who have ADHD, or learning disabilities. After observing many lessons in the fifth grade classroom that I'm in, I can see where there might be some gaps. Many of the lessons are the students watching the teacher work through a math problem on the board, and then filling out a worksheet with similar problems. Students who have trouble focusing or understanding new concepts, might struggle with this learning model. Some students might benefit from a more interactive method of math instruction.

Some topics that I would be interested in investigating this semester is how students with learning styles that differ from the norm, or differ from the curriculum design face challenges in math. I'd also be interested in looking at math instruction from the perspective of an English language learner. As a personal reference, I could talk to my teaching english as a second language professors and see if they had any insight on this topic. I could also talk to my mentor teacher to get her insight on math in the classroom.