

Case Study

Student Name

EDUC 4290

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

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## Case Study

As educators in this nation, our job is to provide the best educational experience possible to each and every student. In order to accomplish this feat, we provide certain students with the accommodations that are necessary for them to be able to succeed both in the classroom and in life. Also, working with individual students provides us with the opportunity to make that one impact on that one person that we can remember for a lifetime. In this case study, I hoped to be able to first of all understand the student, and from there I sought to be able to implement certain modifications that would lead to a successful year for the student.

### Background of the Student

Often times some students, even those with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and modifications, can easily slip through the cracks of our educational system due in large part to their personality. Some students seem to blend in for a variety of reasons: shyness, average achievement in the classroom, and even withdrawal in social settings. The student I chose to work with however, did not exhibit the same characteristics.

I first noticed Samantha<sup>1</sup> during observations when she seemed to be a student that was very engaged in what was being said during class. While some students allow social studies to bore them, she listened to what was being said, took notes, and even voiced opinions. After watching her interest and diligence, I found out that she had an IEP that would allow me to assist her on an individual level.

An eighth grader, Samantha (all names have been changed) is a White female that is an overachiever. As her grades reflect, she is intelligent and is persistent in the classroom. She makes high “B’s” and low “A’s” as a student in social studies. Samantha’s abilities in the

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classroom could be attributed to the fact that her mother is a teacher at the local high school. Her mother was actually my very own art teacher back in middle school and Samantha exhibits some of the same personality traits as her mother. She is not afraid to state her opinions and is humorous. Being very artistic, outgoing, and vocal, she articulates well and strives to do her best in everything that she attempts. Her work ethic is also something worth noting, as it is a way that she displays her determination to complete all assignments.

### Unique Characteristics

Within the general classroom, as I stated previously, she is constantly engaged in what is transpiring. I was more than pleased with her ability to be able to remain alert and attentive in even the most boring of days. Boring in the sense that lecture, while discouraged at times, is necessary for the students to become familiar with the material on a general level.

The first time I was afforded the chance to teach, I had set up the lesson to include a lecture that covered the first section of the chapter with some reading to be done aloud by students in the class. Keeping in mind that Samantha's IEP was constructed to aid in her reading, I was surprised that she would volunteer to read aloud to the class from the textbook. I readily called on her and it was obvious that she had some difficulty being able to fluently read the words on the page. Although this was the case, it was her willingness to overcome that setback that really made me admire her persistence.

Processing information was also something that Samantha had difficulty with as well. She was constantly reviewing and then reconstructing what she had read on a continual basis. Having the setback with fluency in reading as it was, this made it even more challenging for her to be able to succeed. Despite all of this however, she continued to do all that she could to be

able to succeed, often times pushing herself beyond what one might deem normal as she was concerned that she needed to master the material.

Behaviorally, Samantha is one of the students that most teachers dream about. Not only is she a good student, but she is respectful, outgoing, and attentive. One of her best and most memorable moments in class came when she was determined to be able to complete her origami journal to the best of her ability. I can remember going back and forth between several students while they were trying to correctly fold the journals. When she sought my help she asked politely and waited. As it goes when one is trying to help a number of different people at the same time, I forgot she had asked for help. She returned twice to make sure she was completing the assignment the way it was supposed to be completed. I could tell from that moment that she was persistent and polite; something a teacher looks for in every student. Along with that, she was meticulous in carrying out her work as well.

Samantha can always be found at school. Her attendance is impeccable, due in large part to the fact that her mother is a teacher and understands the significance of attending school on a regular basis. Also, with reference to her personality, her unique style was evident as well. She wears checkered shoes and has no real regard for how people perceive her. She could best be described as confident and comfortable with whom she really is as a person.

#### Recommended Modifications

As a teacher, there are several modifications that are already in place for the student. Specifically stated on her IEP are that she is to have her tests administered as a read aloud and that she is to receive extended time for all subject areas when taking tests. The IEP specifically states one and one-half times for all subjects.

After collaborating with her social studies teacher, we discussed several things that would also be able to aid in her ability to do well. I felt that guided notes and structured notes would be a nice way to help her to be able to process information more clearly. The main reason I felt guided notes would help her was because she consistently reads and rereads certain things when she could benefit more by reading the textbook once, looking for the answer on the guided notes, and then using the guided notes to synthesize the information for her. Likewise, with better structured notes she would be able to follow events with more ease. Also, the structure of the notes could be designed in a way that is easy to follow, helping her to piece the information together like the pieces to a puzzle. In the end, when these two things are applied, she will greatly benefit in processing information more clearly.

Also, fluency was one thing that seemed to hinder her ability to be able to process. There is one particular strategy that I like that is referred to as Paired Reading for Fluency<sup>2</sup>. The idea of the strategy is that the students would work with one another in order to help each other to read more fluently. As the teacher, we would assign a struggling reader to pair with a fluent reader and from there they will rate each other's performance on reading aloud with a simple assessment sheet. The students will allow one another to read three times the same passage, thereby looking for improvements. I felt that this would be a good way to allow her personality and outgoing nature to shine in a collaborative setting while at the same time helping her to improve her reading capabilities.

Mr. Smith, her social studies teacher, has already taken the liberty of getting her to the front of the classroom with the seating chart. Not only does this allow for her to stay engaged, but he is also able to closely monitor her work and note-taking strategies. I was in agreement

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that she should be kept closer, as her attentiveness was an asset to the classroom due in large part to her responsiveness. Also, I found that if, during lecture, I would constantly repeat key concepts that she would benefit as well.

### Reflection

Through the entire experience, I found that planning for students needs can be easier than one might think. In fact, what one might plan for one student could benefit the entire class as a whole as well. When looking to implement something for a student, it is important that we take into account the student's background, race, and gender. This particular experience helped me to see that something I might plan for an outgoing student might not benefit a student who is more reserved.

From the assignment, I was also able to see that there are certain things I need to consider when reviewing an IEP. While what is recommended on the IEP is beneficial, there are times that those modifications only scratch the surface of what really needs to be done. As in my case, reading tests aloud are great, but structured notes would be great for someone who has the problem of processing information. Not only will it help someone to study, but it would also help someone to be able to cut down on the amount of extended time that they need when taking tests if they have properly prepared with the notes.

Overall, I found the task of working with my student very beneficial. Helping me to take into account a variety of circumstances that the student was faced with, the study was able to make me think about how I could go beyond the IEP and help them to succeed on a higher level. Likewise, the fact that I was able to center on one student helped me to see the individuality of

each student and how taking an interest can really drive that one student to lay it all on the line for a teacher.

References

Wood, K. D. & Taylor, D. B. (2006). *Literacy Strategies Across Subject Areas* 2nd ed. Boston: Pearson.