

## CASE STUDY

### *Student Profile*

#### *Background*

William is a fifteen-year old, ninth grade student with Autism; he has no accompanying mental impairment. William is, basically, a very happy and pleasant young man. He has a wonderful sense of humor and is a pleasure to be around.

William has adapted remarkably well to his first year of high school. He is, for the most part, mainstreamed into regular education. William is a student of the resource room, which he visits one period a school day. His other classes include Choir, Academic Resource Science, Gym, Reading, Core-MoreMath and World Studies. While his Reading class caters to students with reading difficulties, it is not designated as a special education; his Science class, however, is specifically for students with special needs. William also has had a full-time paraprofessional throughout his school career, a different individual for elementary, middle, and now high school. The paraprofessional provides most of William's support and he is extremely dependent on her.

William's family consists of a working father, a stay at home mother and an older sister who will be graduating from high school this year. William receives a great deal of support from his family, who are realistic about his abilities yet still expect great things from him; William, in turn, appears to maintain a good relationship with them. His mother seems the most involved in his education, although both parents attend IEP meetings and parent-teacher conferences. William's sister is also highly involved in his life, as they attend Church youth group together and spend time together at home. A current worry, thus, is how William will react once his sister leaves for a Texas University later this year. He is cognizant, however, of the process and has not yet expressed any concern. Further, his family is originally from another state so William is already familiar with his sister's new home.

#### *Dreams of the Student*

William wants to do well in school. He is a perfectionist and expects to earn straight A's in his classes. He hopes to work as a bagger at a grocery store this summer and earn money for new video games. He does not discuss the future much, although when probed he states his vocational ambition to be a video game tester.

#### *Needs for Support and Assistance*

William needs reminders to pay attention during class. He tends to go off into his own world, dreaming about video games and television, and becomes somewhat oblivious to his surroundings. William also tends to rush through schoolwork, not fully reading directions and questions in his hurry to complete the assignment. William does

not need much assistance academically, except in Math. He does fine with basic arithmetic, but finds more complex mathematics confusing. He is a concrete thinker and struggles with the abstract as well.

William also becomes easily frustrated and angry; although his behavior has improved this year, he still becomes occasionally agitated and yells, hits himself, throws things or cries. He needs to learn to monitor his behavior and find alternate ways to express his frustration. He is also immature and often does not act age appropriately. This behavior includes talking in funny voices, singing and dancing during class, grabbing his crotch to emulate Michael Jackson, picking his nose in public and other actions associated with young children.

William also needs assistance learning how to socialize properly. Again, he has improved this skill this year, but still has trouble interacting with his peers. William does not always seem interested in his peers, preferring to speak with his paraprofessional or talk to himself. Often, he will answer a friendly greeting in the hall with a grunt or not at all. Sometimes William even responds to a question with a grunt or a command to leave him alone. Recently, however, William seems more interested in his fellow students. Further, William frequently engages in egocentric and one-sided conversations, focusing either on himself or items of interest only to himself. He needs to learn how to carry on a conversation that involves the other person and his/her interests, feelings and opinions.

Like many individuals with Autism, William becomes nervous in crowds. He becomes especially upset if he runs into someone, and thus thinks himself clumsy and too big. This is easily accommodated, however, as William leaves class a couple minutes early so as to avoid the crowds during passing time.

Finally, William is far too dependent upon his paraprofessional. Throughout his school career, William has become accustomed to relying upon this support figure for all his emotional, social and academic needs. He needs constant reassurance from her and becomes agitated if she is not present. William must realize that he can function successfully without her.

### *Strengths*

William has a great sense of humor and can be quite a pleasure. He is very creative and writes wonderful stories. He can read and write as well as his peers, although his comprehension of the abstract is limited. He is an excellent student who works very hard and always strives to do his best. Although he works with an occupational therapist, William's fine motor skills seem fine as he masters complex video games. William's gross motor skills are also good, illustrated by his weight lifting prowess. Finally, William has an excellent memory and can recite the arena and mascot for every NBA team.

### *Successes*

William has earned A's and B's this academic year. He has become more independent of his paraprofessional and attends his Science, and occasionally Choir classes alone. He also makes the transition between classes without her assistance and travels to his locker by himself. William has improved his socialization skills and made

some friends this year. He is also beginning to monitor his own behavior and recognizes when he behaves inappropriately. Finally, William has become more active because of Gym class and has even lost some weight.

### *Likes/Dislikes*

William loves video and computer games, drawing, watching television and listening to music. William enjoys amusement parks and likes to talk about them. He has just recently discovered a fondness for weight lifting, a skill that nicely compliments his rather large physique. He does not particularly care for physical activity otherwise, and he has struggled in Gym class to overcome this lethargy. He enjoys group work. He does not particularly like one class over another, although he does not like math.

William does not enjoy physical activity much and complains when asked to run or swim in Gym class. He becomes annoyed when classmates are loud or disruptive and is rather intolerant of other students with special needs.

### *Greatest Challenges*

William needs to become independent of his paraprofessional. He needs to handle frustration better and not lose control of his emotions. William needs to attend better to oral instructions and not get lost in his own thoughts. William needs to improve his socialization skills and act more maturely.

### *Reading*

William has excellent reading skills. He has an expansive vocabulary and usually can gleam the meaning of a word he does not know from sentence context. William struggles with the abstract, however, and has trouble understanding symbolism and inference in textual material. William also struggles to find the main idea and paraphrase a written passage.

### *Writing*

William also has excellent writing skills. He uses correct grammar and is a decent speller. He is very creative and writes imaginative stories.

### *Math*

William can add, subtract, multiply and divide with relative ease but struggles with higher level mathematics. He does not know how to approach problems and needs constant assistance. He does best with concrete problems, and has the most difficulty with abstract word problems. William tends to rush through math homework and make wild guesses at answers as he feels he cannot complete it without assistance.

### *Work Habits*

William has pretty good work habits. He thoroughly completes assignments and turns them in on time. Occasionally he forgets to do an assignment, usually because he did not write it down in his assignment notebook. His math assignments, however, tend to be incomplete as he does not understand the material. William is well organized.

### *Communication*

William has good verbal and written communication skills. He tends to ignore social manners when speaking however and has a habit of interrupting others.

### *Social*

William has improved his social skills this year but still needs some assistance in this area. He is immature and has trouble conversing with his peers in an age-appropriate manner.

### *Behavior*

William has also improved his behavior throughout this school year. He still needs to learn how to handle his frustration without having a tantrum. He also needs to learn how to use his free time in a more age-appropriate way.

### *Motor*

William worked with an occupational therapist this year although this will be discontinued the next school year. He is somewhat clumsy but not inordinately so. His fine motor skills need some improvement, but he is able to play video games without difficulty.

## ***General Education Class Profile***

### *Background*

Core-More is a new program first implemented at William's school in 1997; his school was actually a testing site for the program. Most of the students in William's class began Core-More in middle school and will continue with the program throughout high school. While not a special education course, Core-More is supposed to be more accessible to students with special needs. Its creators claim that Core-More "prepares students for success in college, career and daily life". Further, the Core-More theme is "mathematics as sense making" and its investigations are based in real life contexts. The textbook mirrors this theme, as problems revolve around scenarios such as banking, baseball and bacteria growth. Core-More also promotes such instructional strategies as mathematical modeling, multi-level instruction, technology and active learning; the

program also endorses multiple approaches to assessment. Core-More covers such math skills as algebra and functions, statistics and probability, geometry and discrete mathematics.

William's instructor is a first year teacher who actually taught William during his student teaching practicum. He is well liked by the students although he occasionally struggles with behavior problems. Almost half the students in William's section of Core-More are highly disruptive and do not care about the class. The class average is a "D" and about a third of the students are certified special education. While Core-More is not a remedial program, it has earned a reputation as the "stupid" math course.

### *General Approach to Curriculum*

The class is quite hands-on, allowing students to actively participate in the mathematics curriculum. Teacher instruction often involves demonstration in which the students may take part. Further, group activities predominate as classmates work together to complete assignments. The work is also interdisciplinary, as problems revolve around real life topics such as bacteria growth and population control.

### *Physical Environment/Setting*

Students sit at tables, rather than desks, scattered about the room. These tables become working groups as students help each other with assignments. However, William is seated next to his paraprofessional and no other students sit at his table. Seats are assigned, but in no particular method.

The walls are quite bare, but for a few inspirational posters. One computer, the teacher's, is in the room but students are free to use it.

### *Content*

The teacher tends to follow the textbook in his instruction, but does skip around and leave some sections out. He also recognizes the material students have trouble with and will spend more time on it, even at the expense of his lesson plans.

### *Student Participation*

Again, students constantly work together. Every assignment and some tests may be done as part of a group, which the teacher encourages. There is no organized system of peer tutoring, although many students help one another.

Students also must keep a math "tool kit" which organizes all their notes, quizzes and tests. This tool kit helps keep students organized as it is arranged by topic; students may also use this on quizzes and tests. Tool kits are periodically graded, although students evaluate their own.

### *Teacher Presentation/Facilitation*

The class is not stridently structured and the teacher tolerates movement and noise. He employs demonstration rather than lecture and does not monopolize class time; students are given opportunities to work and learn on their own. However, the teacher sometimes so abbreviates instruction time that students are left confused; if this occurs, he circulates the room and helps students individually. All students are involved and the teacher constantly questions them in order to ascertain their levels of understanding.

### *Tests, Assignments, and Evaluation*

Assessment is of the usual variety, composed of homework, quizzes and tests. Homework is given almost everyday, but students have every opportunity to complete assignments in class; most assignments take no more than twenty-five minutes. Homework is graded on effort and completion, rather than perfect work.

Quizzes and tests may be taken with the aid of notes and, occasionally, partners. The teacher clearly specifies what will be on the test and even reviews immediately before testing begins.

Grading is very objective, based upon grades given throughout the semester. Participation is considered, but more in terms of attendance.

### *Classroom Climate and Management*

Students are free to move about the room and talk; they also do not need to raise their hands in order to speak. The teacher, however, has almost no control over the class. About a third of the students do not attend at all and are constant distractions. They speak loudly during instruction and engage in constant horseplay. The teacher has seemingly given up controlling these students and teaches to the rest of the class while ignoring their behavior. Corrective strategies for these students include loss of points, detention and being sent into the hall or to the office. The other students, however, seem to respect the teacher and his leniency. They respond well to the liberal atmosphere and thus participate and work hard.

### *Home-School Communication*

The teacher does not engage in much parental communication besides parent-teacher conferences. If a student is especially acting out or his/her grades suddenly drop, the teacher may call the parents.

### ***IEP Goals and Objectives***

- I. To improve social and communication skills.
  - A. Given an assignment, William will independently seek assistance from students and teachers to understand.
  - B. William will increase positive interactions with his peers.

- C. William will greet his peers and teachers when they address him.
  - D. William will respond to questions from others in a friendly manner.
- II. To be able to gather meaning from content area text.
- A. William will be able to paraphrase one paragraph at a time.
  - B. William will be able to determine main ideas of a text.
  - C. William will actively look for deeper meaning/symbolism within designated texts.
- III. To increase independent behaviors.
- A. William will develop strategies to attend to oral directions.
  - B. William will keep an assignment notebook on his own.
  - C. William will begin to attend classes without his paraprofessional.
  - D. When in class with his paraprofessional, William will approach an assignment independently before asking for her assistance.
- IV. To improve behaviors.
- A. William will develop strategies to deal with frustration.
  - B. William will develop strategies in order to monitor and correct age-inappropriate behaviors.
- V. To improve problem solving techniques.
- A. William will learn to approach math problems in a step by step manner.
  - B. William will approach assignments slowly and thoroughly.

**Curriculum Matrix**

<b>IEP GOALS</b>	<b>Choir</b>	<b>Science</b>	<b>Gym</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Social Studies</b>
Given an assignment, William will independently seek assistance from students and teachers to understand.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Increase positive interactions with peers.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
William will greet his peers and teachers when they address him.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
William will respond to questions from others in a friendly manner.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
William will be able to paraphrase one paragraph at a time.		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
William will be able to determine main ideas of a text.		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
William will actively look for deeper meaning/symbolism in designated texts.				<b>X</b>		
William will develop strategies to attend to oral directions.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
William will keep an assignment notebook on his own.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
William will begin to attend classes without his paraprofessional.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
When in class with his paraprofessional, William will approach an assignment independently before asking for her assistance.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
William will develop strategies to deal with frustration.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
William will develop strategies in order to monitor and correct age-inappropriate behavior.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
William will learn to approach math problems in a step by step method.					<b>X</b>	
William will approach assignments slowly and thoroughly.		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>



***Daily Schedule with Adaptations and Supports: Odd Day Block Schedule***

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Adaptations</b>	<b>Staff Support (If needed)</b>	<b>Evaluation Notes</b>
7:25	Come to school			Oral questions to verify that he is still successful coming to school and going to his locker alone.
7:30	Resource Room		Works with staff on assignments from classes.	Daily log on what is accomplished to ensure that resource room is still necessary.
9:10	Transition time	May leave class early as to avoid crowds in hallway.		
9:20	Science	Prompts to solve problems, step by step. Peer buddy and teacher questioning to monitor attention.	Parapro support as needed.	Keep log of outbursts and monitor assignment notebook. Note progress towards goals.
10:55	Transition time	May leave class early as to avoid crowds in hallway.		
11:05	Reading	Oral questioning about text content, teach previewing strategies. Peer buddy and teacher to monitor attention.	Parapro support as needed.	Keep log of outbursts and monitor assignment notebook. Note progress towards goals.
12:05	Lunch	May leave class early as to avoid crowds on way to lunch.		Oral questioning about how lunch is going, does he have friends to eat with, etc.
12:55	Social Studies	Oral questioning about text content. Peer buddy and teacher to monitor attention. Takes tests and quizzes in resource room, untimed. Works in groups on projects.	Parapro takes him to resource room for tests and quizzes. Also monitors group work to ensure that he is included.	Keep log of outbursts and monitor assignment notebook. Note progress towards goals.
2:32	Go home	Discuss homework for the night and what should be taken home. May leave class early as to avoid crowd in hallway.	Parapro discusses nightly homework and what to bring home.	

***Daily Schedule with Adaptations and Supports: Even Day Block Schedule***

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Adaptations</b>	<b>Staff Support (If needed)</b>	<b>Evaluation Notes</b>
7:25	Come to school			Oral questions that he is still successful coming to school and going to locker alone.
7:30	Choir	Peer buddy and teacher to monitor attention. Praise for job well done. Gentle reminder when acting silly. Remind student that he may go to teacher's office if he is upset, frustrated or overwhelmed (outbursts worst in choir).	Parapro handles violent outbursts as teacher is too uncomfortable to do so. Parapro keeps track/reminds about upcoming concerts.	Keep log of outbursts and monitor assignment notebook. Note progress towards goals.
9:10	Transition time	May leave class early as to avoid crowd in hallway.		
9:20	Gym	Peer buddy and teacher monitor attention. Peer buddy assists any problems in locker room and also travels around weight room with him, helping to adjust weights and technique. Praise and encouragement when running. Adjusted requirements (more time to run mile) as long as he puts forth effort. Gross motor worked into curriculum.	Parapro as needed. Occupational therapist to come once a month and work weights with class. Staff should encourage him to continue fitness regime after class.	Keep log of outbursts and progress in weight training/running. Note progress towards goals.
10:55	Transition time	May leave class early so as to avoid crowd in hallway.		
11:05	Reading	See odd day schedule.		
12:05	Lunch	May leave class early as to avoid crowd on way to lunch.		Oral questions about how lunch is going.
12:55	Math	Peer buddy and teacher monitor attention. Provide prompts to solve problems, step by step. Group work and peer tutoring. Reduce number of problems required. Allow calculator. May go to resource room for tests and quizzes, which are untimed. Possibly adapt requirements. Seat him with other students, not just parapro!!!	Parapro takes him to resource room for tests and quizzes. Also monitors group work to ensure he is included. Staff should discuss with teacher ways to adapt requirements.	Keep log of outbursts and monitor assignment notebook. Monitor progress in class and adapt as necessary. Note progress towards goals.

2:32	Go home	Discuss homework for the night and what should be taken home. May leave class early so as to avoid crowd in hallway.	Parapro discusses homework and what to bring home.	
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### ***General Adaptations and Support***

William, again, is a good student and does not require much academic support; his needs are primarily social and behavioral. He also must become independent of his paraprofessional; staff intend to fully phase out the position by William’s junior year of high school. Most adaptations are thus geared towards integrating William into the student body and increasing his independence.

### ***Social and Behavioral Adaptations and Support***

- Collaborative learning groups
- Class meetings
- Buddies and peer tutors
- Circle of friends
- Peer mediators
- Cross-age buddies and tutors
- Help others as experts
- Redirection of attention
- Eye contact
- Calming down time

Such social and behavioral supports emphasize students helping students, rather than staff providing support. This will lessen William’s dependence upon his paraprofessional and hopefully increase his overall independence. Peer buddies may remind William to pay attention during class and also help to calm him when upset. Circle of friends and cross-age buddies may provide similar support. Collaborative learning groups will allow William to participate in class and also supply the direction he needs. As William is a good student, he may even act as an expert or peer tutor in some subjects; this should make him feel good about himself and see that he has something to contribute to class.

William’s peers and teachers can also learn how to handle certain aspects of his Autism. If he appears to wander off mentally, a simple redirection of attention will get him back on track. If he is not contributing to a group project, a member of the group may ask William what he thinks the group should do next. Further, when addressing William, they should be informed that eye contact is very important to fully capture his attention. Finally, William should be made aware of a quiet place he can go when he feels overwhelmed. This may be a secluded corner of the classroom, a teacher’s office or perhaps the resource room. He will decide when he needs to take a break; this will also increase his independence as well as his self-awareness.

Increasing William’s interaction with his peers should solve many of his behavior problems as well. He will hopefully see that teenagers as a whole do not sing and dance

during class or talk in funny voices. They can remind William of this fact by redirecting his attention to something else or striking up a conversation with him. Further, his violent outbursts may be controlled by peer buddies. They may question the cause of his frustration and devise other methods of expression. Peer buddies can also model positive ways to deal with frustration.

William's paraprofessional should slowly be phased out of the classroom. She should begin this process by sitting at a distance from William so she is not the first person he turns to when a problem arises. Teachers and students should likewise volunteer to help William so he recognizes that his paraprofessional is not the only support person in the classroom. A variety of students and teachers should aid William so he does not merely transfer his dependence on his paraprofessional to another individual. Once William grows accustomed to working with others, his paraprofessional may leave him alone in certain classes. Hopefully, William will soon realize that he does not need to so rely on this support person and that he can function independently.

### ***Collaborative Consultation***

If William's paraprofessional is phased out of his classes, his special education teacher needs to become more involved in his case; she currently relies on the paraprofessional to handle most aspects of William's school life. The special education teacher will have to meet with William's general education teachers to discuss the adaptations and support he needs. If necessary, they will have to devise a more formal behavioral management plan if William's outbursts continue and become disruptive.

A teacher support team may also be useful as it does not designate one individual as William's main support system; this is vital for the staff, as well as William, to realize. Both general and special education staff seem to think that William is the sole responsibility of his paraprofessional and depend upon her to support and instruct him. A teacher support team would emphasize that he is their student and responsibility. This would also increase their interaction with William, emphasizing that he need not solely depend upon his paraprofessional.