

Case Study

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11/27/01

❖ School A Profile

School A is an urban school in a larger mid-western city. At the beginning of this school year (2001-2002), three of the elementary schools have added the seventh grade students to their enrollment. This is due to the reorganization of the junior high school. The student population is 99.9% African-American. The majority of the students come from single-family households or being raised by their grandparents. Over 50% are on public assistance, 85% of the students receive free or reduced priced lunches, and 25% are the working poor (are employed but at or near minimum wage), but despite their low economic status many of the students have cable television, designer clothes and shoes. Most of the students arrive at kindergarten with a history of few experiences with print, book, story, and pencil activities. Most students are environmentally (low-birth weights or premature births) and biologically (poverty, parental intellectual impairment, low-parental education, lack of family support, inadequate parental care, disturbed parent-child interaction, and child abuse and neglect) at risk.

School A is a Title 1 Schoolwide Project. This is the largest federal education program that provides funds for schools serving disadvantage children. School A is classified as a Schoolwide Project because over 50% of the student population lives in poverty. The Title 1 staff provides support to the grade level teachers. There are two teachers Mrs. S and Mrs. H and two paraprofessionals who support the classroom teachers by pulling-in for language arts, science, math, and social studies. Each support staff person pulls-in for a 50-minute class period. There is team-teaching amongst the teachers of Title 1 and the classroom teachers for whatever

content area they agreed upon. The role of the paraprofessional in the classroom consists of supporting the classroom teacher (e.g., monitoring the students while the teacher works with a small group or whole group instruction).

❖ **General Education Class Profile**

➤ **Background**

Ms. N is a third grade teacher, who has been working in School A for four years. This class consists of 26 students. The students' academic ability ranges from beginning first grade through fourth grade level. Nearly two-thirds of her students are not on a third grade level, which puts them academically at risk. This teacher receives support from a paraprofessional five days a week for a 50-minute period. The paraprofessional monitors the students while they do independent or group work. The students seem to enjoy the extra teacher in the classroom to assist them with their questions about their assignments.

Ms. N is well liked by her students although she does have difficulty with certain students with interpersonal relationships and inappropriate behaviors under normal circumstances.

➤ **General Approach to Curriculum**

The curriculum revolves around the quarterly assessments for each content area. Ms. N. integrates the science and social studies standards/benchmarks into the language arts curriculum. This addresses the students' need for more exposure to expository text. She uses cooperative groups activities, reading partners, partner activities, visual and graphic aids, pre and post reading activities that are opened-ended, word wall, manipulatives, and pictures walks to address the variance in her students abilities.

➤ **Physical Environment/Setting**

At first glance, the room is very cluttered and disorganized. There is too much furniture and teaching material that is currently not being used throughout the small room. The students seem to adjust to the physical setting in their classroom. They maneuver around the clutter with ease. There are five large groups of desk (six to seven students per group) in the classroom. Each student has an assigned seat within a group. They are placed within a group with various academic abilities. This enables the students to interact and assist each other individually, in pairs or in groups. The display of students' work decorates the room suspended from clotheslines.

➤ **Content**

Ms. N aligns her teaching instruction to the benchmarks/standards for each card marking period. The science and social studies curriculum are integrated into the language arts. She is aware of her students' academic abilities and accommodates the learning instruction to their individual needs with various techniques and strategies.

➤ **Student Participation**

The students work in small cooperative groups or pairs in all academic areas. Peer tutoring is used in all content areas. The students self and peer edit each other's writings according to the writing checklist in the classroom. Partner reading allows friends to help each other read various content area text. The use of graphic organizers in reading and writing enables the students to organize information when reading. They also help the children focus on specific aspects of stories that they are reading.

➤ **Teacher Presentation/Facilitation**

Ms. N's classroom is noisy and movement of the students is evident if you are walking by, but they are on task. She uses questioning techniques to gasp students' understanding of the lessons. The instruction is a combination of lectures, large group discussions, and peer and cooperative groups engaging in discovery of the content area subjects. She adapts the pace of the instruction according to her students needs. If a child or a small group needs additional assistance with a class assignment, she will provide support.

➤ **Tests, Assignments, and Evaluation**

Portfolios are used in the writing section of language arts class. There is an entry piece "All About Me". Then each quarter, according to their language arts curriculum a written piece is added. Quizzes are given in all content areas. There are quarterly assessments mandated by the curriculum departments each card-marking period for each academic area. These assessments are worth 80% of the student's grades. Ms. N takes into account class work, homework, and quizzes for 20% of her students grades. Combining the 80% of the assessments and 20% of the class work, quizzes, and homework for each academic area accumulates the final grade for each academic area. Ms. N. also takes into account the students' effort and improvement in each content area. She accommodates the various abilities in her classroom when administering test by reading the assessments, dictating their responses, and allotting extended time to complete the assessments, tests, and quizzes. If a student is identified as receiving special education services their academic area(s) is identified as being "adapted curriculum" and is graded by the resource room teacher.

➤ **Classroom Climate and Management**

The classroom noise level is loud, but the majority of the time it is work related. Ms. N. does have difficulty with a few students, who exhibit interpersonal relationships and

inappropriate behavior under normal circumstances. These students make inappropriate noises or comments during independent or group work, inappropriate comments to others, and behave impulsively without self-control. She handles these situations as well as the other students with positive reinforcement (praise when following the rules "I like the good choices ___ is making"), recognition from peers, tangible reinforcements, intrinsic rewards, predetermined signal to stop inappropriate behavior, removal of student from the group, loss of special class privilege, and speaking to the student to explain inappropriate behavior and appropriate behavior. The students respect Ms. N. due to the fact that she is caring and supportive to her students academically and socially. The students are supportive to each other in obtaining success in all areas of their education.

➤ **Home-School Communication**

Ms. N. communicates with her students' families only on an as need basis. Phone calls are made if a student is acting out, homework is not returned, class work is incomplete, or their grades drop. She does communicate with one parent (Mike's) via e-mail with a daily progress report.

❖ **Student Profile**

➤ **Background**

Mike is a nine year old, third grade student who is identified as learning disabled. He has repeated the second grade. Mike made remarkable growth repeating the second grade academically and socially. His mother was very pleased with her son's growth last school year. She is still having a difficult time accepting her son's disability. Ms. I. did not want her son in a self-contained special education classroom. She had to fight to keep him in a regular education classroom. Mike's second grade teacher last year recommended that he stay with her and see the resource room teacher on a daily

basis. Currently, Mike is pulled out for resource room services for 1 hour a day/5 days a week. His report card is adapted only for Language Arts. In all his other academic classes he is maintaining a B average.

Mike's family consists of his mother. She work full time and attends college. She has been raising Mike as a single mother since his birth. She is very involved with her son. She has Mike enrolled in the "Boys and Girls Club". He attends two to three days a week. They spend every weekend doing something together (shopping, movies, bowling, mini vacation, cooking, and baking). They spend every Thanksgiving in Okalahoma visiting his mother's sister and family. Mike looks forward to this trip. Ms. I. has strong paternal support. Mike visits with his grandfather two to three times a week. He admires his grandfather and speaks very highly of him. Mike has little contact with his biological father. His father is involved with someone else and has a child with her. Mike has expressed that he would like to spend more time with his father and his family.

➤ **Dreams of the Student**

Mike enjoys baking and decorating cakes. He would like to go to school and design cakes. He bakes at home with his mother. He states that he enjoys the closeness they share in the kitchen.

➤ **Strengths of the Student**

Mike is a pleasant and well-mannered student. He academically strives to do his best in all content areas. He is well liked by his peers. He is creative in his drawings. He has strong verbal and logical thinking skills.

➤ **Likes/Dislikes**

Mike likes spending time with his grandfather, especially going fishing together. He enjoys making various food and

dessert entrees with his mother. Mike takes pleasure in playing with his friends at school and at the Boys and Girls Club. He stated that he enjoys school more these past two years, especially his new friends, his good rapport with his teachers, and his academic growth in all content areas.

Mike particularly does not care for his physical education class. He does not like the exercise section of the class. He is more interested in playing the sports aspect of the class.

Mike also stated that he does not like going to his resource room teacher because the work she gives is boring, due to the endless and mindless worksheets. He does not like being pulled out of class. Mike feels that he will be missing something in class.

➤ **Successes**

Mike takes pleasure in his academic successes at school. He is very proud of himself. His self-esteem has grown. Mike has also improved his social and behavioral skills. He is handling his emotions better. Mike is controlling his frustrations and emotions with self-control. His acceptance of not being able to have everything his way, right way enabled Mike to become a well-liked classmate and someone they look up to.

➤ **Needs for Support and Assistance**

Mike's needs support and assistance in content areas that incorporate reading, comprehension, and writing.

➤ **Greatest Challenges**

Mike's greatest academic challenges are in spelling, basic reading skills, written expression, and reading comprehension.

➤ **Reading**

Mike has not developed an adequate number of sight words for his age and grade level, which greatly handicaps his reading. While reading he is more likely to analyze more words than a grade level reader. The use of phonics (consonants beginning and ending, vowels, blends, digraphs, and diphthongs) to decode vocabulary while reading and spelling is limited. His inadequate use of context clues when reading inhibits his pronunciation and meaning to unfamiliar words. He also has difficulty in pronouncing multisyllabic words, which relates back to his deficiency in decoding skills (basic sight vocabulary and phonics).

➤ **Writing**

Mike's writing correlates to his reading deficits. His writings are replete with errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and handwriting (size). Mike's written products tend to be short, poorly organized, impoverished in terms of ideation.

➤ **Mathematics**

Mike's basic mathematics skills (adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing) are at grade level standards. He does have difficulty with word problems. This inhibits his understanding of the language structure of the problem and to organize a plan to perform the mathematics task required to solve them.

➤ **Work Habits**

Mike's organizational skills need to be refined. His work area and book bag is clutter and papers are everywhere. He typically stays on task, but if the assignment is too difficult he tends to daydream or starts filling through his desk and book bag or disrupts another student while they are completing the assignment.

➤ **Communication**

Mike's oral language skills (listening and speaking) are one of his strongest aspects.

➤ **Social**

Mike has improved his social skills throughout the last two years. This has enabled him to make new friends. He is well liked by his peers. His classmates speak highly of him.

➤ **Behavior**

Mike has improved his behavior these last two years. He is not acting out when things do not go his way. His acceptance that he is not the only person in the classroom enables him to wait his turn. He is not easily frustrated and emotional outburst (crying) rarely occurs.

➤ **Motor**

Mike's gross and fine motor skills are normal for a child his age.

❖ **IEP Goals and Objectives**

I. To be able to gather meaning from content area text.

- a) Mike will be able identify story elements (character(s), setting, problem, solution) of a narrative text.
- b) Mike will be able to identify the main idea and supportive details of an expository text.
- c) Mike will improve his reading ability and enjoyment of reading.
- d) Mike will be able to use strategies to decode words.
- e) Mike will be able to develop techniques in using context clues.

II. To be able to express his thoughts onto paper

- a) Mike will improve his writing abilities using various instructional formats.
- b) Mike will improve his spelling and reading through the use of a word wall (high-frequency words) and word families.
- c) Mike will self edit his own writings (writing checklist).
- d) Mike will have peers edit his writings (writing checklist).
- e) Mike will edit peers' writing (writing checklist).

III. To improve problem-solving techniques

- a) Mike will learn to approach math problems in a step-by-step manner.

IV. To improve organization skills

- a) Mike will learn to file his papers in the appropriate place (i.e., folder).
- b) Mike will clean out his book bag weekly and separate papers as those to keep and those to throw away.

❖ **Curriculum Matrix**

➤ Student: Mike M. Grade: 3 Date: 11/27/01

❖ **General Adaptations and Support**

Mike requires academic support in the content areas that incorporates reading, comprehension, and writing. His adaptations and support crosses over into all his content area classes.

➤ **Academic Adaptations and Support**

1. Reading in the Content Areas

- a. Reading partners
- b. Graphic organizers
- c. Small group instruction
- d. Group projects
- e. Study guides
- f. Variety of reading material at his level
- g. Peer tutors
- h. Reading material will be divided between grade level and easier selections
- i. Shared reading
- j. Retelling of stories
- k. Working with Words

2. Writing in the Content Areas

- a. Focused writing
 - i. Teacher modeling
 - ii. Letters
 - iii. Poetry
 - iv. Graphic organizers
 - v. Response logs
 - vi. Paragraph frames
 - vii. Curriculum related writings
 - viii. Stories
 - ix. Class journal entries
- b. Individual, paired, group writing
- c. Writer's workshop (self and peer edit) with edit checklist
- d. Peer tutors
- e. Author's chair

f. Working with words

With these supports and adaptations Mike will be able to master the goals and objectives of his IEP. The main goal is to be able to meet his academic needs with the least frustration and to gain self-esteem and success in his academic abilities. Mike will be able to stay in the classroom working on the various classroom assignments with his peers without being pulled out to go to the resource room teacher. This will enable him to have the least intrusive and most inclusive setting.

Integrating the curriculum would benefit Mike and the rest of the students. This will allow the exposure to expository text without being isolated. When the content correlates with curriculum instruction knowledge is obtained. Integrating the content areas will expose the students to reading and writing that are more focused and relevant.

Overall, adaptations and supports are needed for all the students in the classroom to succeed. Each individual in this classroom functions at various academic levels. The more assistance that is provided the less obvious it is and no attention will be drawn to Mike. All the students will benefit with the additional supports and adaptations.

❖ **Collaborative Consultation**

The special education teacher will be working in the classroom at supporting Mike's progress through the core curriculum without having to pull out him out. She will also assist the other students who are not identified needing special services.

The special education teacher and the general education teacher will have to meet weekly to discuss the adaptations and support that Mike needs. Through the use of team teaching, designing the curriculum instruction with support and adaptation, and evaluating/assessing collaboratively will allow a more interrelated learning environment for all the students.