Amy West

EDIS 5877-Romig

Placement 2-Walker-Rasnake

Reflection and Collaborative Record

**Week 1 & 2**

The first two weeks I observed and met the students, as well as began to help in groups or situations when I could. I provided accommodations for students taking tests, read IEPs, attended meetings, and taught one or two small groups to get a feel for the instruction. One of the groups was doing SIPPS, or Systematic Instruction in Phoneme Awareness, Phonics and Sight Words. This group takes a minimum amount of planning, since they are scripted lessons, however, we try to tailor them to each group based on their needs and goals. In week 2, I took over first period with support and plans. I co-taught during check-ins and one-on-one math instruction. I also taught with co-planning a SIPPS group and a reading intervention group. In my SIPPS group, it was difficult to stick to the script while following what the group normally does with Rachel. I veered a little bit but the students still gained from the lesson. Rachel and I discussed that I could have planned my changes to the reading portion of the lesson so that more of the students could participate and benefit at once. We also discussed how every part of the lesson has a purpose for the group and for each student. In my reading group, Rachel let me decide based on the IEPs and discussions with the general education teacher what I should do to help the students improve. The first lessons went well, getting to know the students and the purpose of the group together. Rachel and I discussed how the group may change as I go along based on the students’ needs, and I should be prepared for that. I am enjoying this placement more than I expected. My previous, similar placement in 6th grade was overwhelming, but Rachel has made me feel a part of the schedule and helped guide me to build relationships. I am looking forward to jumping into teaching more groups next week.

**Week 3**

This week, Rachel missed the first two days because her son was sick and I was her substitute. Luckily, she came in for the first hour to make plans for me that I did not do myself (everything but SIPPS reading group and my Tuesday reading intervention). I did surprise myself in having two successful days by myself. My reading group is still going well planning and teaching myself. The boys look forward to it so much that they came in on Monday and group is only on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. With Rachel and my supervisor’s suggestion, I plan to adjust the group by providing positive reinforcement throughout the lesson, providing choice as often as possible and reading a book as a group of high interest that is on their reading level. In 3rd period, I planned writing group this week. We started the writing process for a fictional scary story. It went well. Their goal is to be able to plan and write in one 30-minute class period by the end of the year. My focus is to continue building relationships with students, ensure productivity of all students is maximized, and provide proper intervention with engaging challenges. Next week, I will participate more in the planning process for 4th and 3rd period.

**Week 4**

This week I began a true take over in the classroom. This happened earlier than we expected, however, many of the groups use scripted programs, making it easy for me to jump in and teach with planning and advising. Next week I will do most of my own planning for the day, outside of the groups that use a program requiring additional training to plan myself. During planning each day when we do not have a meeting, Rachel and I get the chance to discuss how my teaching and planning are going. We consistently discuss how everything that we do has a purpose. Sometimes in a group, I would try a new activity or executing something differently to try to engage with students more, but after discussing with Rachel, I will realize that some of the changes I make don’t have a true educational purpose to help students reach their goal. I also made a new schedule for myself to reference so that I can better plan and be ready for groups. Sometimes I am doing a last-minute gathering of materials because of time changes from day to day. The new schedule has helped me get ahead of schedule in planning, especially for the coming week. I have also been doing more work in the morning with student check-ins. Something that I did not realize I would enjoy so much is the strong relationships that I can make with each student, especially for these older students. One of my favorite parts of the day is helping students take their breaks and get ready for class. Rachel and I spend a great amount of time discussing students’ behavior and what we can do to help them, even students outside of her caseload. This is something that I love about Rachel because not only does everything have a purpose, we do our best to help as many students as we can.

**Week 5 & 6**

These two weeks have been going well with full take over still occurring. I planned everything for these weeks with Rachel’s approval of the lessons, minus the special program that I cannot plan myself without training. Each day during planning, Rachel and I discuss how lessons and groups are going and what minor changes may need to be made so that students can make optimal progress towards their goals. These discussions are a constant reminder that everything has a purpose and my time cannot be wasted because, sadly, we are in the back half and it is almost over! Another part of the week that I have been assisting Rachel with is the Paw Store. We had to reorder products to fill the PBIS reward store for the week, which was interesting to see the behind-the-scene process of a tangible reward PBIS. I have attended two of the PBIS meetings with Rachel, in which various teachers volunteer to discuss the data behind the system and analyze as a group how the system is working and how students are making progress. Last meeting we discussed the top ten behaviorally troubled students with very thorough data that seems to be greatly affected by the PBIS system and its consistency. This week, I also attended parent-teacher conferences with Rachel. This was an eye opening experience since most of the parents that we met with are not even on Rachel’s caseload but simply students that we interact with every day. Parents were concerned that their children were not progressing as they should, and I helped Rachel in the discussion, since I have been attending the collaborative classes. It was fun and interesting to help teachers and parents come up with plans for students to help them in their own individual way to meet their needs. Something I realized through these weeks’ happenings is that remembering what happens in the classroom is essential. My memory is not always great, so it is important that I keep up with my calendar, todo lists, and notes so that when situations come up with students, parents, teachers or administrators, I have a safety net of notes to back up my memory. Week 6 was a little crazy in preparation for Thanksgiving break, as we could not do much instruction on Monday and Tuesday was no instruction due to the teacher talent show. I did, however, partake in the talent show. It was an exciting and rewarding experience to share the spotlight with my colleagues and to show students my twirling talents that I enjoy outside of the classroom. I am entering a “free lesson” with me for a raffle in the Paw Store next week. ☺

**Week 7, 8 & 9**

In my last weeks at Walker, I spent my time gradually reducing my activities in groups. Rachel and I have continued planning together and bouncing ideas off each other. It is important for both of us to continuously stay connected to students so that we can maintain good relationships. We have been very flexible in who teaches what for the sake of relationships and because it has been good experience to co-plan and co-teach. Also because of this flexibility, I have had to teach on the fly or substitute while Rachel had a meeting or other event. During weeks 8 and 9, Rachel and I have been apt to find other opportunities for different experiences while I am here at Walker. We have sat in on many kinds of meetings and had various interactions and advice-giving moments with other faculty and administration. It has been a great opportunity for me to be in such a flexible and dynamic special education environment since special education is truly always changing. A few days during my last weeks, I have subbed or observed other teachers, including collaborative, general education, and various special education resources. Rachel and I have been discussing my next semester in hopes of taking a long-term position here at Walker School. This will allow even more experience in addition to providing me the opportunity to continue to see my old students in 5th grade.