

Exemplary Planning Commentary: Special Education

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Student information

J is a friendly and outgoing 5th grade student. She likes to please her teachers and is confident in asking questions when she is confused. J has a strong work ethic. She gets along well with her peers though at times, she needs some guidance in confusing social situations. She has a great memory, which can be confused with actual understanding of the information. Her great memory benefits her with math facts, spelling, and other concrete facts. She is also strong at reading fluency and reading decoding. J has been diagnosed with Attentive Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (mixed inattentive/impulsive type). In the general education classroom J profits little from her teacher's efforts of group and one-on-one instructions subsequent to the persistent impact of compromised attention. J's impulsivity has kept her from weighing response alternatives. Memory functions have clearly been impacted, as well as cognitive inflexibility has interfered with her success. Speech/language and occupational therapies have been funded under Communication disordered guidelines, subsequent to J's problems understanding and following directions, she also has weaknesses in fine motor, formulating explanations to questions posed, and retaining information. J's linguistic deficiencies have impacted reading comprehension. She also struggles with conceptual math knowledge. J struggles to follow and understand school procedures and social expectations. She is unable to observe others and seek clarification to learn the expected behavior in a structured/unstructured setting. (Some of this information was gathered from the student's IEP.)

Two learning targets

Two learning targets were selected for the learning segment. Both learning targets are academically related. The first learning target (primary): When given a third grade curriculum based assessment, J will use a manipulative and/or partition sets to solve word problems involving fractions of a set improving numbers and operations from 0% accuracy to 80% accuracy. The second learning target (secondary): When given a third grade level text (literature/informational) J will read the text and write a summary including the main idea and key details from the text improving reading comprehension from 50% accuracy to 75% accuracy.

IEP goals related to learning targets

There are two goals on J's IEP that align with her learning targets. The first goal: By 11/2014, when given a third grade curriculum based assessment, J will use a manipulative to solve problems involving fractions of a set improving numbers and operations (fractions) from 0% accuracy to 100% accuracy (towards CCSS.Math.Content.5.NF.A.2) as measured by curriculum based assessment. The second goal: By 11/2014, when given a third grade level passage and multiple choice comprehension questions (main idea, factual recall, word meaning, inferential) J will read the passage and answer all questions improving reading comprehension from 50% accuracy to 75% accuracy (towards CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.2) as measured by curriculum based assessment.

Related learning standard

Each learning target relates to a common core state standard. The primary learning target falls under mathematics, and is labeled as CCSS.Math.Content.5.NF.A.2. The heading of this section focuses on the student's ability to develop understanding of fractions as numbers. The specific section our learning target is focused around is as follows, "Solve

word problems involving addition and subtraction of fractions referring to the same whole, including cases of unlike denominators, e.g., by using visual fraction models or equations to represent the problem.” The secondary learning target falls under English Language Arts/Informational Text, and is labeled as CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.2. The heading of this section focuses on reading informational text. The specific section our learning target is focused around is as follows, “Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.” These state standards were taken from the “Common Core State Standards Initiative” website, http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf

Accommodations for meeting learning targets

In order to help J attain her learning targets she requires small group and one-on-one specialized instruction in the resource room. Instructors should place materials to be copied in proximity, pair auditory with visual stimuli, break projects into manageable components, repeat directions when necessary, give her preferential seating in close proximity to the teacher and away from distractions. J also requires a lot of modeling and prompting with social skills.

Aligning learning targets with IEP goals

I chose to use the student’s IEP goals to create her learning targets. The primary learning target was based off a pre-assessment given at the beginning of the school year combined with data collected from last year. I felt that general fraction knowledge was essential in order for the student to succeed in middle school. The secondary learning target was based on a curriculum-based assessment (Read Naturally) that was given at the beginning of the school year as well as data collected last year. Reading comprehension is an important skill to have and is needed to be successful in any subject.

Organizing learning activities to build on prior knowledge and make progress toward goals

The lesson objectives, learning tasks, and materials are sequenced in a way that gives the student time to learn the information, time to practice the new concept that has been introduced, and then the opportunity to apply the information that has been learned. For the learning segments the Common Core State Standards were chosen to align with the primary and the secondary learning target. The Common Core State Standards that were chosen are at a 5th grade level, this level was chosen to match the student’s grade level. By choosing the Common Core State Standards to align with the student’s grade level the student can visually see what she is working towards attaining. Currently the student may only be able to do part of the standard, the goal is that she will eventually be able to meet the full standard. By choosing standards at the student’s grade level we are able to keep the general education curriculum in mind as the student works towards the standard in the resource room. The materials that are used in the lesson sequence present information to the student in a variety of formats (worksheets/technology/independent/teacher led/partner/book). The information not only aligns with the student’s IEP goals, and state standards, but also keeps her interests in mind. The student’s prior knowledge is used throughout the lessons to determine the learning tasks and objective for each lesson. For example, we will use the pre-assessment that was given for the primary and secondary learning targets to aid in planning. The information gathered from the pre-assessment informs me on what the student already knows about fractions and locating an accurate main idea in a text. I have also included the student’s interests in the lesson sequence. The student enjoys using a manipulative, reading aloud, and using technology. I do this by incorporating the use of chips when solving word problems, having the student read aloud whenever possible, choosing a book that she enjoys that relates to the primary and secondary learning targets, and setting up an activity on the active board (technology). By providing the student with many different activities and new ways to apply what she has learned she will be able to generalize and make connections to her life, this will also give her the ability to maintain the knowledge she has gained over time.

Student prior knowledge and skills related to lesson objectives

Prior to this lesson segment based on the Focus Math Intensive Intervention pre-assessment given J understood equal parts, halves, describing equal parts of whole objects, equal parts of a whole, writing fractions for part of a region, understanding one as a fraction, estimating fractions, mixed numbers, fractions and length. J was also strong with her

understanding of a numerator and denominator. Prior to this lesson segment based on the Read Naturally pre-assessment J understood how to write a prediction for a text. She was able to underline information in the text and use it in a short answer but she was not using the most important information from the text. She is also able to make inferences.

Social and emotional development

Based on the Social Skills Improvement System (rating scale) one of the biggest struggles that J faces with social and emotional development is understanding school policies and how they must be followed. She has a difficult time learning and following social expectations and school procedures. For example, all the students line up with their class outside before school. J was wandering around the different grade levels talking to younger students. When approached by a staff member she didn't understand what was wrong with this, and hadn't noticed that students line up with their class every morning. She has a hard time observing her peers to learn what the expected before is. She also has a difficult time remaining engaged in specific activities that are not interesting to her.

Student assets

Based on the Social Skills Improvement System (rating scale) J enjoys interacting with her peers and teachers and has made a lot of growth in her conversational skills in the last year. She now leaves appropriate space between herself and others, appropriate tone and voice levels, eye contact, stays on topic, and ends a conversation appropriately. J still struggles at determining a good time to join a conversation. J is flexible and does a great job of compromising. J is an only child and recently moved to Washington. She was born in China, and moved to Washington when her parents received a promotion at Ringer. Her parents are extremely involved in her education and are strong supporters in her life. They are both highly educated and value J's education. Currently J receives several outside supports such as an after school academic program, private tutoring, and a language tutor. J is interested in video games, and enjoys sharing with her peers what she has built in Lego Land. She also enjoys playing different games on her Android tablet as well as reading. J is dedicated to her schoolwork and will work hard to complete assignments several days before they are due.

Planning based on student strengths and weaknesses

The tasks, materials, and supports are all focused around J's strengths and interests. J is a visual learner and needs to be able to physically manipulate objects and make drawings in order to understand concepts. It is important to incorporate the use of a manipulative and drawings (circles/tally marks) because J is a visual learner, as you can see we incorporate these aspects into each of the lessons. Another strength is her memory, by offering support in step-by-step instructions on how to get the correct answer; it is easier for her to remember the steps for the future. Being repetitive with the concepts and skills also allows J time to memorize important steps to solve a problem, as you can see I teach the same skills in each lesson in a variety of formats. J becomes stronger at skills and concepts by writing them down; this is why the use of worksheets is so important. J enjoys being independent, by having a visual timer, jobs chart, and rules poster she is able to self-manage. She loves interacting with her peers and helping others, to capitalize on these skills we include plenty of time for her to share and explain her answers, as well as utilize partner and group work.

Justifying selection of lesson plan activities and supports

The learning tasks, materials, and supports that have been developed in these lessons have been based on my student's strengths, needs, and principles of research/theory. My focus student needs many visuals, the use of a manipulative, and repeated exposure to the concepts. Each of these supports has been provided to the focus student throughout each lesson. The student is strong at remembering concrete facts; I have used this skill to help her remember simple concepts such as the numerator and denominator in a fraction. The focus student is also very teachable, and hard working. This is a great advantage, by offering supports for her needs she is able to quickly master concepts. One important research/theory that has impacted my learning segments is evaluating the student's progress. Curriculum should be designed and organized based on student needs. Curriculum should be periodically evaluated to ensure students are progressing and understanding the material presented. When reviewing research results for goal setting I realized the impact curriculum organization has on student learning. Without organizing curriculum with student needs in mind it is

difficult for them to progress. I have used goal setting to organize curriculum, based on student needs, as mentioned in Marzano (2007). Marzano discusses how goal setting can improve student's attention and test scores. After reviewing a study done by Marzano I found that when goal setting was implemented the average score in classes was 21 percentile points higher than those who did not (see the Lipsey & Wilson effect). When students are involved in setting goals they become motivated to learn. It is also effective when teachers present learning targets to students at the beginning of a lesson. When expectations are set prior to the beginning of a lesson the teacher can accurately see where students are and how much they progress throughout the lesson sequence. By using learning targets I was able to utilize a rubric to assess specific levels of understanding. I was also able to introduce content and assess knowledge based on the same learning targets. This made my life much easier because I knew exactly what level of understanding and specific goals I was looking for the students to meet. It was also easier on my students because they knew what was expected of them. When students and teachers use learning targets they are more likely to all be on the 'same page'. The students know what is required of them from the beginning and teachers are able to assess their understanding based on the learning targets. Although in general, setting learning targets is beneficial to students and teachers it can be misused. If students or teachers are setting unrealistic learning targets, it is unlikely students will reach them. It does no good to create learning targets that are impossible to reach. A good way to keep learning targets realistic is to check in with students and provide feedback (self-reflection cards/ learning checks). By using the Common Core State Standards to develop our learning targets we will set attainable goals. If the teacher and the students are providing feedback about targets throughout the lesson they can be adjusted to ensure that they are attainable.

Opportunities to express understanding of learning targets (Washington state only)

J has the opportunity to reflect on her understanding of the learning targets at the end of each of her groups in the resource room each day as well as throughout group. This is achieved through "reflection cards," and "learning checks." You are able to see the learning check system in use, as you will notice in video clip 3. You will also see the student self-reflecting in video clip 4. With reflection cards J mentions what the learning target was for the day and then reflects on a strategy she used, what was challenging, what she did well, and what she needs to focus on for next time. This allows her five minutes at the end of group to collect her thoughts and share with the group on how she feels she is doing with the learning targets. Throughout group the students will self-access on the learning targets using a learning check. There will also be a 'learning check' system in place. Each student will have a red, green, and yellow block. When the teacher says, "learning check," The student will place a red block if they do not understand, yellow block if they are a little confused, and green block if they understand the concept. Learning check can also be used with thumbs up (understanding the concept), sideways thumb (a little confused), thumbs down (not understanding the concept). This strategy is helpful because after the student responds to the learning check the teacher can determine when they can move on and what needs to be covered more in depth this is also helpful when scaffolding. During the lesson sequence there is also a time when the group discusses why the learning target is important and how they can apply what they have learned. This is always an important part of the lesson sequence because the student needs to understand the purpose of their learning and how they can apply it.

Identifying resources to make progress toward learning targets (Washington state only)

There are many resources available to J that support her progress toward each learning target. The tools that are available to her ensure that she is monitoring and tracking her own learning. Learning checks are a valuable resource available to the students. Learning checks can be completed after teacher prompt or anytime the student is engaging in self-reflection. Learning checks contain a red, yellow, and green block. The red block indicates that the student does not understand, yellow indicates that the student is a little confused, and green indicates that the student understands. This is a great tool used for independent self-reflection/self-evaluation. Formative and summative assessments are also used in our lessons. Formative assessments are given throughout our lessons for the teacher and the students to be able to determine how they are doing with the concepts. If students are struggling with accurately answering formative assessment questions, a learning check is done; this gives the teacher insight on what may need to be taught again. Summative assessments are given at the end of each lesson as well as at the end of the lesson sequence. This is also a good way for students to be able to reflect on the lesson for the day and see how they are progressing towards the learning target. Summative assessment ranges from completing two word problems to explaining a problem step by step. Behavior reflections is another tool available for the student to self-reflect this is used to reflect on their behavior

during the lesson. The student fills out questions such as, “Was I paying attention during the lesson?” and “Did I do my best?” these are great questions that initiate reflection. After the students complete their behavior chart they set a goal for the next day, usually this is chosen based on what they struggled with that lesson. Another tool used are exit slips these are given at the end of the lesson and are meant to encourage student’s to reflect on their learning during the lesson. Along with these tools there are also sensory tools available to the student such as a quiet room to work in, headphones, weighted wearable, seat cushion, pencil grips, and fidgets.

Helping the student generalize and self-manage

By providing the same concept in a variety of ways J will be able to generalize the information. The concept will be presented with worksheets, a technology activity, a children’s book, teacher led instruction, and group work. I will also provide multiple opportunities for exposure in order for J to generalize and master these skills. By providing J times to self-reflect she will be able to manage her understanding and take time to ask for explanation or clarification in areas that she does not understand.

Communication skill or function

In order to access instruction and demonstrate learning with the primary learning target the student must be able to follow directions. This is a very important skill that is crucial in order for the student to succeed with the primary learning target. If she is unable to listen to and follow directions she will not be able to attend to any of the learning tasks throughout the lesson sequence.

Using the communication skill or function

J will need to follow the directions in the math group in order to participate in the learning tasks as well as demonstrate learning with the primary learning target. By coming to group on time, getting the group supplies set up (rules chart/jobs poster), beginning her warm-up, sitting in her assigned seat, and asking appropriate questions when she needs guidance she will be much more successful with the primary learning target. If J is unable to follow directions it will be difficult for her to learn new skills. For example, if J is the first one to arrive to group and does not follow my direction to set up group supplies we will be spending an extra 10-15min explaining what is expected of her and what she should be doing instead of being able to get into the lesson. J will demonstrate learning when I can observe her following my directions whether they are verbal or written instructions.

Receptive and expressive communication knowledge or skill required to participate in learning activities

Within each lesson there are multiple expressive and receptive communication demands that are required in order for the student to be able to access the lesson. Each lesson requires J to be able to listen and understand English directions, explanations, and schedules (receptive communication), read English directions and word problems (receptive communication), and write English words to complete her worksheets (expressive communication). There are also a few spoken and written vocabulary demands. In lesson 1 a few vocabulary words: fraction, set, and manipulative. In lesson 2 the vocabulary word will be key ideas. In lesson 3 the vocabulary words will be main idea and graphic organizer.

Lesson 1: J will need to be able to use expressive communication to read the book during the warm-up and use receptive communication to ask questions about the graphic organizer. J will need to be able to verbally explain (expressive communication) to the teacher what she is doing for each step of the problem. J will also need to verbally explain (expressive communication) how she came to her answer. She will also need to be able to verbally (expressive communication) ask a question to clarify or ask for help when the task is too difficult. J will need to be able to read the vocabulary words (receptive communication) and provide her definition (expressive communication). She will listen (receptive communication) to the teacher’s explanation of the definition if she is incorrect. J will need to be able to understand and answer the teacher’s questions while completing word problems on the active board (receptive/expressive communication). Throughout the lesson J will need to be able to use expressive and receptive communication to be able to complete her learning checks (self-reflect) on her understanding of the concepts and

answer formative assessment questions. J will need to use expressive communication to verbally complete her reflection cards at the end of group. J will need to use receptive communication to read and complete her job for the day.

Lesson 2: J will need to be able to use expressive communication in order to reread the book for the warm-up and to answer the comprehension questions about the text. J will need to be able to verbally explain (expressive communication) to the teacher what she is doing for each step of the problem. J will also need to verbally explain (expressive communication) how she came to her answer. She will need to be able to verbally (expressive communication) ask a question to clarify or ask for help when the task is too difficult. J will need to be able to understand and answer teacher's questions (receptive communication). As well as read each word problem that is presented to her and understand what is being asked of her (receptive communication). J will use expressive and receptive communication to read the directions for the Exit Slip. She will need to choose a color for her learning check and explain to a friend what she did in math group. Throughout the lesson J will need to be able to use expressive and receptive communication to be able to complete her learning check (self-reflect) on her understanding of the concepts and answer formative assessment questions. J will need to use expressive communication to verbally complete her reflection cards at the end of group. J will need to use receptive communication to read and complete her job for the day.

Lesson 3: J will need to be able to understand and answer teacher's questions (receptive communication). As well as read each word problem that is presented to her and understand what is being asked of her (receptive communication). J will need to be able to verbally explain (expressive communication) to the teacher what she is doing for each step of the problem. J will also need to verbally explain (expressive communication) how she came to her answer. She will also need to be able to verbally (expressive communication) ask a question to clarify or ask for help when the task is too difficult. J will use her expressive communication to discuss her prior knowledge; she will need to verbally discuss her thoughts with the teacher and her peers. With this lesson it will be important for J to be able to follow instructions, examples, and models the teacher is providing in regards to the new strategy. J will need use be using her learning checks often (expressive communication) in response to her comprehension of each concept. She will also be asked to verbally walk the teacher through several problems (expressive communication). Throughout the lesson J will need to be able to use expressive and receptive communication to be able to complete her learning check (self-reflect) on her understanding of the concepts and answer formative assessment questions. J will need to use expressive communication to verbally complete her reflection cards at the end of group. J will need to use receptive communication to read and complete her job for the day.

Lesson 4: J will need to be able to understand the learning objective and the schedule for the day (receptive communication). She will use express communication to ask questions about the schedule and the learning objectives for the day. J will use receptive and expressive communication to understand the directions for the post-assessment and to be able to vocalize any questions she may have in regards to the assessment. J will use expressive communication to answer the questions related to prior knowledge (finding the main idea of a text). J will need to be able to use expressive communication to accurately self-reflect/self-evaluate throughout formative assessment questions and learning checks. She will then read every other page of the book (expressive communication) and answer questions in regards to the text (expressive communication). She will ask any questions (expressive communication) in regards to the graphic organizer. J will need to use expressive communication to verbally complete her reflection cards at the end of group. J will need to use receptive communication to read and complete her job for the day.

Prior knowledge or skill of receptive and expressive communication demands

Needs to learn: J struggles with answering inferential questions (expressive communication). She often will quickly respond to a question but will leave part of the question unanswered (expressive communication). She has difficulty explaining her reasoning and supporting her thinking (expressive communication). J also struggles with observing her peers to learn the expected behavior (receptive communication) and then completing the expected behavior (expressive communication). J has difficulty with oral language skills in general, including being able to synthesize and summarize verbal information (receptive/expressive communication). She often has a hard time determining expected and unexpected behaviors (receptive communication). J often does not understand or remember directions/explanations that are presented to the group, she then needs re-explanation (receptive communication). J lacks comprehension of

many age-expected language concepts or vocabulary necessary for reading comprehension and content areas (receptive communication). She struggles with comprehension of texts and choosing a main idea with accurate key details. She appears to be erratic in both the comprehension and retention of concepts and skills presented which results in continuous teacher redirections (receptive communication). J also has difficulty explaining and verbally reasoning aloud which interferes with classroom discussion. When J does answer aloud, her answers tend to be off target, or she will forget her answer after volunteering (expressive communication).

Already does: J is able to answer questions when they are referring to specific details, facts, or there is only one possible correct answer (expressive communication). She has a great memory, if you tell her something that is concrete she is able to remember it and recall it rather quickly (receptive and expressive communication). She is able to follow directions but may need them broken down into smaller chunks. J is able to read text accurately and fluently.

Already knows: J can make inferences and use perspective taking, she is also able to compare and contrast when given a visual. She knows how to use her memory to memorize detailed facts and repeat them back to the teacher (expressive/receptive communication). J knows how to follow instructions and ask questions about her comprehension of the concept (expressive/receptive communication). J knows how to answer what, where, when, why questions when related to a grade level text (expressive communication). She knows how to stay on topic, use appropriate tone of voice, gestures, eye contact, and space when in a group of peers (expressive communication).

Learning supports for receptive and expressive communication

There are several instructional supports that help J acquire, generalize, maintain, and successfully use the targeted and receptive communication skills, vocabulary demands, and the other communication demands I have discussed above. One important support is breaking steps into manageable parts. When there are multiple step directions it is important that the directions are broken into smaller chunks. This makes it easier for her to understand what I am asking of her (receptive communication). It is also important to write everything down and provide this visual in close proximity of her. By writing directions and instructions down and setting it by her desk, she is able to refer back to the visual and check off the list as she goes. This is also helpful when she has a question. She can look at the visual and recall the question she was going to ask (receptive/express communication). Because J struggles with vocabulary word meaning, I offer instructional support by teaching and reviewing an electronic vocabulary glossary before each unit. This offers her another visual and in-depth definitions for her to better understand the vocabulary words (receptive communication). Because it is difficult for her to think of an answer to a question in a short amount of time, it is important to prepare her for the questions I will ask. By providing a list of questions or even letting her know, "I will be calling on you to answer this question in 5 minutes," gives her think time to prepare what she will say. Because J often does not think to observe her peers to learn expected behaviors, I often give her prompts to get her to think about observing her peers. When she is confused or lost I will say, "Look around and see what everyone else is doing." Usually with this prompt she is able to look around and learn what she should be doing. Another important support for J is giving her a visual cue card to slow down. She often thinks that she needs to hurry through questions; this is when she will forget to answer part of a question. By giving her a visual reminder to slow down, she is able to realize she is moving too fast and needs to slow down to read through each question more carefully.

Assessments showing monitoring of learning and progress toward learning targets

The assessments given will provide valuable information in order to monitor my student's progress. I will use the pre-assessment to determine what concepts the student is struggling with. This will help me to make my lessons specific towards my students needs. The post-assessment will indicate to me whether my student has learned these skills or is still struggling. If the student has learned the skills I will be able to progress to the next skill, if the student is still struggling with the information I will need to re-teach the information in a different manner or perhaps provide more support/modeling. The daily assessment record will inform me on data that was collected for each lesson and will help to determine what the follow-up lesson will include. It will be give me information in the areas the student is struggling and what needs to be a focus for the next lesson. The daily formative assessments will help me to identify any specific gaps in the skills I am teaching for that lesson. If I notice an area of concern I will be able to stop and provide extra support to ensure that the student is able to grasp that concept. The summative assessments will measure student's

knowledge of what was taught during each lesson. A summative assessment may be an exit slip, a question about a problem they solved, or solving a word problem and explaining their process of thinking. Each assessment (formative/summative) will be helpful to the student as well. After discussing each assessment with the student she will be able to self-monitor her progress towards the learning target.

Student self-assessment (Washington state only)

I will be including student voice (i.e. self-assessment) throughout each lesson. I provide an opportunity for student voice in a variety of ways: learning checks, exit slips, reflection cards, and behavior reflection sheets. Learning checks are done throughout the lesson to gauge the student's comprehension. Exit slips, reflection cards, and behavior reflection sheets are done at the end of group, this gives students a chance to reflect and voice their opinions about how they feel about the lesson for the day. I use the reflection cards and behavior reflection sheets after every group and will give an exit slip when I want the students to explain their knowledge on the topic.

Strategies to promote self-assessment (Washington state only)

J will use learning checks, reflection cards, behavior reflection sheets, and exit slips to monitor her progress towards the learning segment. These strategies help her to reflect on the lesson and respond to how she feels she understands the concepts. J will also have the opportunity to review her graded work with me in a conference to be able to see why questions were incorrect and what she can do to fix the mistakes she made. We will also be reviewing independent worksheets as a group, this will also allow her time to determine what steps she may have missed and any areas that she needs clarification on