Assignment Title: A Community Plan for Jacob in Ms. Furtute’s 7th Grade Language Arts Class

“Peer Tutoring Session” Program

Name: Ryan Arciero

Professor: Dr. Mary Fisher

Class: Exceptional Learners

Date: 8 November 2011

“Peer Tutoring Session” Community Plan

“Providing Jacob, a Student with a Learning Disability, the Goals and Support Necessary to Succeed in Ms. Furtute’s 7th Grade Language Arts Class”

**Goal**

The goal of this community plan for Jacob is intended to be beneficial toward not only his learning, but to also effectively increase the sense of community and comprehension in Ms. Furtute’s entire 7th grade classroom. The ultimate goal by the end of this quarter is to effectively create and implement a “peer tutoring session” program for the students in Jacob’s Language Arts class. Every Friday, a ten or fifteen minute period can be taken aside from the workday in which students will spend a review period with a culturally (and ideally academically) distinct partner from themselves. In these partner pairs, students will have the opportunity to help assess their fellow student’s work, reflect upon the coursework of the week, and hopefully review any learning issues with each other to improve overall learning. They will ideally feel empowered with the responsibility of monitoring their own process, and better able to connect the context of lessons with their shared life experiences. This “peer tutoring session” is meaningful for students because it allows them to form a closer sense of community with their classmates, improve their social and collaborative skills with peers, effectively “teach” and “learn” the course material from their partner, and critically reflect on what content has been gone over that week. This community plan could be measured by noticing if student grades significantly improve over a period of time; it could also be less analytically assessed by seeing if a greater feeling of camaraderie and support has grown between the students. Lastly, this goal can be reasonably attained with a consistent amount of time spent working each week with student partners in their peer groups. It is additionally culturally responsive because in having the teacher selecting heterogeneous partners for the peer tutoring sessions, students will be provided with the opportunity to communicate with culturally distinct, academically different, and uniquely experienced students in order to offer new perspectives and learning.

**Rationale**

I believe that this “peer tutoring session” project is important for this particular class (and Jacob, especially) because it will not only hopefully promote better and more effective learning, but will also foster an inclusive and communal atmosphere in Ms. Furtute’s classroom. I noticed during my observation experience that while Jacob was bright, he (along with many other classmates) seemed a bit disconnected from the rest of their peers. Their attention span was poor when other students were presenting, and I saw little evidence of them trying to support each other to solve problems or succeed in school. However, with my community care plan, I feel that students will have the opportunity to forge a bond of respect and encouragement between their peers, while gaining a better grasp of the significant concepts covered in class. There is also important information from the “Reframing Our Work” questions from Chapter 6 of Sapon-Shevin *Because We Can Change the World,* as well as from the “Accommodating Diversity Rating Scale” that helps support my community goal. Chapter 6’s “vision” focuses on encouraging goal-setting in students, realizing “that all students need and deserve help,” and having teachers facilitate “student-supported learning” in the classroom (Sapon-Shevin 118-119). From the “Reframing Our Work” questions, I noticed that Jacob and his classmates seemed to be lacking in being “supportive of each other’s goals,” as well as “alert of others in need of assistance.” My “peer tutoring session” program would serve as an ideal project to resolve both of these issues. Students would likely become more supportive of each other through their time spent together in partner pairs. They would also gain the chance to find out more about their peers’ lives (in the process finding new perspectives to relate to their own), discover what “works” for them academically in the classroom (as well as what doesn’t), and realize that they indeed learn more with the critical review and support of their partner. I hope to believe that these culturally heterogeneous groups would further expand the students’ sense of appreciation of multiculturalism as they form new friendships, too. As Jacob seemed reluctant to accept another’s advice besides his teacher, this program may teach him to learn to appreciate the “advice that [he] perceives as personal” from a supportive partner (Sapon-Shevin 120). In addition, this project would certainly alert the students to the needs of others in the classroom by proving to them that everyone struggles with learning at one point or another, as well as that working together is an ideal way to solve such issues. Upon going over a topic during the review session, if one student notices that another does not really understand a particular concept or message from a story, for example, the other students can effectively “teach” that student from his or her point of view. In turn, students will become more aware of how their peers’ minds work, what are their educational strengths and weaknesses, and even learn to work together during the week to greater accomplish the learning objectives. The collaborative group work Jacob completes with his partner could serve as a “positive act… of goal-setting in a supportive learning community” (Sapon-Shevin 120). Academically, grades would hopefully improve, as more time is being spent on review and checking for comprehension of the English texts. As stated in the above citations, the information I collected from Sapon-Shevin’s *Because We Can Change the World* is yet another source of data that supports my reasoning of “peer support groups.” The text states that “it is through setting goals together… as well as giving and getting help” that students can truly succeed in the classroom (Sapon-Shevin 117). In working together in these paired tutoring sessions, students will have the chance to set goals cooperatively, while offering and receiving help in a student-centered atmosphere. Although I was unable to speak to any students about my goal, I was able to ask my cooperating teacher. Upon asking my mentor, Ms. Furtute, about this idea of “peer tutoring sessions,” she was very supportive and enthusiastic about the concept. She thought that it was an educationally sound and inclusively welcoming idea that might really work to improve student grades, class attitude, and peer cooperation. Ms. Furtute stated that the only issue would be finding enough time during the precious little class time she has to fit in the ten to fifteen minutes necessary for the pairs to reflect and communicate. Her advice was that perhaps making an afterschool program, or getting in a bit more work done earlier in the school week, might provide enough time to make my community care goal a reality.

**Assessment and Decision-Making**

There are a couple of sources of data I could potentially collect to document what progress is made toward the realization of this “peer tutoring session” goal. Firstly, I would begin my evaluation of the program through a pre-assessment in which I would have students fill out a class cooperation and curriculum survey. In the survey, I would have students respond to questions such as “How well do you feel the class gets along cooperatively as a whole?” and “When you don’t understand a concept or text we’ve covered in English class, how do you go about figuring it out?” Initially, I would assume that some students would express some doubts about having a very collaborative classroom atmosphere or that all students understand the material by simply reviewing it themselves. I would begin my decision-making my picking out the pairs for the tutoring session; I would try to pair up students with different cultural backgrounds, academic experience (such as Jacob, a student with a learning disability, with a student without one), and social/popularity standings. This teacher-centered selection is intended to create a heterogeneous set of student groups. The first session of “peer tutoring” on Fridays for fifteen minutes would likely be rocky, challenging, and with little progress made. Nonetheless, another assessment tool I would use is a subjective reflection sheet. During the peer tutoring time, I would walk around the classroom to be available for any help if students need it, as well as to keep students getting off-task or unfocused back on track. Afterward, I would write down my noticings and other observations to see what is working, what isn’t, and what development I hope to make by the next class period and beyond. As the weeks continue, I would evaluate student grades to see if they are improving, if class camaraderie and supportive attitudes are changing for the better, and how the student groups are getting along. Once a week, I would ask the students to hand in a half-sheet of paper in which they report to me what they discussed and reviewed during their tutoring time, as well as which students contributed what information to the conversation, and which student served as the tutor/tutee for that particular session. I think that these techniques allow both the students and myself, the teacher, to monitor the implementation of the community goal plan. Since students will have the chance to voice their own opinions with me, express their ideas, and be held accountable for their own learning, I believe they will be more likely to succeed because they will feel I have enough respect of them to allow them to “monitor” and “earn” their own good grades. With this collected data, I would try to keep an organized document that accurately records both my own observations of the student groups as well as the students own critical reflections of their time spent together. If I were co-teaching with a fellow instructor, I would likely sit down to review what progress has been made once every two weeks. For each partnered group, I would evaluate how each student’s grades have changed over the weeks, how well they are working with their group member, and if anything needs to be altered to develop their cooperative learning experience. I would have other adults, including my co-teacher and the parents of the students, stay in close contact with me to report any noticeable progress made. I would ask my co-teacher to take an important, “modeling” role parallel to mine—to similarly walk around the classroom and help students by directing the peer tutoring discussions (to make sure they remain on task), resolving any conflicting issues, and constructively supporting students for a job well done. If my plan succeeds, class enthusiasm and averages should rise because students have the opportunity to not only review what they have learned with a peer, but apply those concepts by discussing them. I would finish my assessment at the end of the quarter by having the students complete a second and final evaluative form to fill out with similar questions to the first, as well as asking “Do you feel our class tutoring sessions helped you learn more and become a better student?” I would hope that most responses would be positive, and if so, I would know that my assessment was successful and complete. By the end of my evaluation, I would hope to see that not only are the paired groups working together more smoothly and effectively, but academic grades have improved and a greater sense of class community has been achieved.

**Intervention Ideas and Strategies**

In addition to Fridays serving as my fifteen minute “peer tutoring sessions” as part of my overarching community plan, I think that incorporating throughout the weeks a few of the activities from Sapon-Shevin’s text, *Because We Can Change the World,* would be a great way to help Jacob and the other students reach this goal of a smoothly operated and integrated peer tutoring program. These activities would be used to supplement and facilitate student learning by first and foremost increasing a sense of community in Ms. Furtute’s Language Arts classroom. While Jacob in particular is very bright, he is often distracted, loses focus, and appears a bit disconnected from the rest of his classmates. I feel that if he forms greater bonds of friendship and collaboration with his peers, he will be more likely to concentrate and remain engaged in class doings. Thus, these activities are intended to foster a feeling of understanding, acceptance, and appreciation between the students in class, so that they come to know that learning can be a positive group experience in which everyone wins and succeeds.

 A first activity I might incorporate occasionally into classroom periods (to help prepare students to work together for their peer tutoring sessions on Friday) is Peer Listening (Sapon-Shevin 122). I think this would be a great activity to implement toward the beginning of my community plan, as it is intended for two individuals (ideally the two students who will be working as partner pairs throughout the quarter for peer tutoring) to find out more about each other. Each group of two would thus have the chance to get to know each other, “have their voices heard,” and learn more about each other in a friendly and comfortable setting (Sapon-Shevin 122). The three components of this collaborative activity are divided time, speaking and listening moments, and the confidentiality agreement. Students will have an equal amount of time (anywhere between five and ten minutes) to speak and listen in short, alternating intervals. Students will be able to increase their communication and listening skills in that they are allowed to smile and ask for clarification while listening to the speaker, but must otherwise be silent until it is their turn to tell a story or share a personal experience. This will hopefully forge a close bond between the pair of peers. Lastly, students are asked to follow a confidentiality agreement in which they promise that what the other person says “doesn’t leave that space” (Sapon-Shevin 122). Not only does this create a close bond between the two students who will be working with one another for the next quarter, but it will also better encourage them to more fully express themselves and share their doubts and feelings with their partner. Jason could hopefully improve his social skills with his peers and form a closer connection with them through this sharing.

 A second activity I might integrate into weekly classroom structure to foster a communal environment is Proud Board (Sapon-Shevin 128). I would likely use this engaging activity halfway through the community project to help showcase student progress and further reinforce the forming sense of interaction and collaboration forming between the classmates. The Proud Board activity focuses on having students post something on the board that they are proud of, rather than just having “the teacher post only the top papers or perfect scores” (Sapon-Shevin 128). This way, all students feel special, included, and inclusively valuable in front of their peers. I would make a slight amendment to this project to help make it even more cooperative and partner-oriented for my “peer tutoring session” program. Once a week, I would ask my students to post something to the board that compliments or acknowledges a notable sign of progress or development that they have seen in their partner through their time together. Making this slight change will ideally further strengthen the bonds between the tutoring partners and motivate them to work harder in school to impress their group member and improve for themselves, too. Overall, this recurring activity is something that should be consistently used every week to “look past perfection as the only thing worthy of recognition,” and instead value the accomplishments of each and every student (Sapon-Shevin 128). I think Jacob would really enjoy this activity because he would feel a greater sense of special attention and appreciation.

 A third and final activity I might include to supplement my peer session program is a personal and (in my opinion, most effective) favorite, Goal Setting (Sapon-Shevin 128). This activity could similarly be used toward the beginning and throughout the plan, with a final culminating activity being completed at the end of the school quarter. When students are encouraged to set goals for themselves and others, they are simply more likely to accomplish those goals because they have something to aspire toward and work for. This Goal Setting activity thus promotes students (with guidance by the teacher) to create “both private and public goals” (Sapon-Shevin 128). A private goal is one that the student keep to himself or herself in a writing journal—students can write about a social skill they want to improve, or something as simple as mastering a concept through their peer tutoring sessions. A public goal is one that the students can share with their tutoring partners; for example, one possible goal could be, “I’m going to spend a half hour every night this week studying my spelling words so I do well on our next test.” Upon sharing this public goal with the partner, students will be more likely to work on achieving it in order to prove themselves and impress their group member. With teachers giving “thoughtful rules” like respectful questioning of private or personal goals and deep expression with partners, great progress over the school quarter can be ideally made. I would close this activity at the end of the “peer tutoring session” program by having students share with the entire class what goal they feel they accomplished in thanks to their partner’s help. I believe that Jason in particular would benefit from this Goal Setting activity because with these goals in the back of his mind, he will be more likely to strive to accomplish them. In order to do so, he will have incentive to focus more in class and not let his slight learning disability distract him from academic success.

Chapter 6 *Reframing Our Work* Assessment Checklist

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Question**Chapter 6: Setting Goals and Giving/Getting Support1. Do students set realistic goals and reasonable goals for themselves?
2. Do students think critically about what goals would make sense for themselves?
3. Do students recognize that different people in the class will (and should) have different goals?
4. Are students able to articulate their own goals clearly?
5. Are students supportive of one another’s goals? Do they offer concrete and responsive help to classmates?
6. Do students freely ask for help when they are struggling?
7. Do students ask for help appropriately, rather than whining or complaining?
8. Are students alert to others who require assistance?
9. Do students offer assistance respectfully to classmates?
10. Do students accept help from others graciously?
11. Do students reject unwanted offers to help politely?
12. Do students have well-developed repertoires for providing support and assistance to classmates who are different from themselves?
13. Are teachers encouraged to set individual and collective goals for themselves?
14. Do the teachers in school easily support one another?
15. What happens when a teacher is in need of support?
16. What channels or procedures are in place for the school to provide help and support for those who need it?
 | **Response from Classroom Experience**1. (10/7) Yes, I think that this is a true statement in Ms. Furtute’s classroom. Ms. Furtute encourages many of her students to earn A’s, often verbally letting them know that she is sure they are capable of them. As such, it is certainly realistic to think that with hard work, Jacob and the other students can achieve academic success in Language Arts class.

I found that Jacob did set realistic goals for himself, but might perhaps do even better in school with an awareness that he *should* be setting goals for himself. Just as this Chapter 6’s “vision” focuses on encouraging goal-setting in students to facilitate “student-supported learning” in the classroom (Sapon-Shevin 118), Jacob might have focused better if Ms. Furtute told him his particular “goal” for the day was to finish his in-class assignment. For example, for a short vocabulary worksheet completed in class, Jacob had to take it for homework because he had been too distracted to complete it like many others students. With that goal in mind, Jacob might have pushed himself to finish it in time.1. (10/6) This is a bit more difficult to ascertain, but I think that this statement is true in Ms. Furtute’s room as well. For example, when suggesting books from a reading cart for students to choose from, Jacob in particular seemed to critically search for a book that would be a good fit for him. He ended up picking a challenging but interesting-looking book about Abraham Lincoln.

While Jacob may have a basic grasp of reflecting upon his goal-making, I think further critical thinking would help him succeed further. While it was impressive that Jacob picked up a challenging book to read, I noticed that he made little headway in the book once it was selected. Perhaps with Ms. Furtute (or himself) setting a goal of covering the first 10 pages in class, for example, Jacob would have made some real progress.1. (10/6) Again, I agree that students do realize that their different goals vary. When Ms. Furtute went around taking a look at student reading logs, I noticed that while some students were intent on simply reading the minimum half-hour required (to receive an A grade), others had read far more than was necessary, perhaps out of a love for reading. Jacob had read 40 minutes, 10 minutes over the minimum reading requirement.

I found that Jacob in particular was well aware that he had his own set of goals he needed to accomplish, regardless of his classmates. From reading above the minimum requirement to not saying anything negative toward those who did not read as much as him, Jacob was able to focus on his progress, instead of any lacking progress in his peers. Thus, I felt that Ms. Furtute did a solid job of “encouraging and setting individual and collective goals” for students (Sapon-Shevin 121). 1. (10/7) I would certainly agree with this statement. In my experience in Ms. Furtute’s classroom, Jacob and the other students would often voice their opinion, even if it was for such a short-term goal as understanding a question. For example, Jacob raised his hand and asked for clarification on directions during a class vocabulary activity.

While Jacob may not yet be at the developmental point that he can question or articulate his long-term academic goals, I was pleased to find that he had no problem voicing his opinion or intentions in the classroom. Just as he asked Ms. Furtute for a repeat of the directions on the vocabulary activity, he thus proved that with a goal in mind (of doing well on the assignment), Jacob can better focus.1. (10/5) Unfortunately, I am not entirely certain that this particular question can be answered positively yet. During my observation, I overheard Jacob telling another student that his project was “better” than another student’s, which is not very supportive. Nonetheless, the class did applaud after each partner presentation.

This particular point is something that I feel Jacob could certainly work on, or that Ms. Furtute could hopefully improve in her classroom. While there was no outright problematic behavior or issues in the classroom, I did not see Jacob do very much to usefully respond to his classmates or show support of their own work. If Ms. Furtute perhaps took some time one class period to occasionally try a friendship-forming activity, she would be able to increase Jacob’s sense of belonging and support of his peers.1. (10/5) Yes, I was pleased to notice that most students in Ms. Furtute’s class did ask for instructor assistance when they were confused or struggling. Again, while Jacob didn’t appear overly social with his classmates or teacher to me, he still did ask Ms. Furtute for help explaining directions to vocabulary work for him.

As previously stated, I was very glad to see that Jacob in particular would often raise his hand when he had a problem or question. While I have seen in my experience that some students are too embarrassed or uninterested to raise their hands and ask a question, Jacob actively “resisted this cultural preconceptions” about voicing an uncertainty (Sapon-Shevin 120). Despite his learning disability and trouble concentrating, I think Jacob’s interest in trying to focus and willingness to work hard is key to his good grades. 1. (10/7) The answer to this question is an absolute “yes.” While I suspect that much of the class’ respect for their teacher is a result of Ms. Furtute’s solid teaching ways and powerful presence, all of the students (including Jacob) who asked for assistance with something did so by raising their hand or speaking politely.

This particular model I experienced in Ms. Furtute’s class is something I’d like to continue in my own classroom. Though Jacob did have trouble concentrating, I think that his respect toward Ms. Furtute always encouraged him to raise his hand, rather than making a negative spectacle of himself when he had a question. When asking Ms. Furtute to repeat a set of directions, Jacob did not shout out his issue, but rather waited patiently and appropriately to be called on.1. (10/5) I do not think that Ms. Furtute’s 7th grade class has reached this level of peer awareness yet. While it is evident to me through Jacob’s hard work in school that he wants to individually succeed, it didn’t appear to me that the other students acknowledged group goals or realized that other students may need help, too.

Like most of Ms. Furtute’s class, I find it difficult to believe that Jacob especially is alert to the needs of other students. I noticed that Jacob’s particular learning style seemed to emphasize his own work—he did not seem very interested in supporting his fellow classmates. Perhaps with a peer tutoring program during class, Jacob would better be able to forge a bond of camaraderie between his peers and be more alert to when they need help or assistance.1. (10/6) I honestly saw very little evidence of this. However, during group work after a spelling test for an upcoming peer response, I did notice several students relaying potential ideas off each other. I think that this collaboration was a solid step toward a greater sense of respectful assistance between the classmates.

As previously stated, while I did see some of the more mature students offering help to their classmates, I did not see this sort of progress from Jacob. At the same time, it is not as if he offered assistance in a disrespectful manner either; rather, he did not offer any at all. I think that with some guidance from the instructor Jacob could learn to use his intelligence to help the other students in class, and in turn, be more likely to pay attention.1. (10/5) Yes, many of the students I saw (Jacob included) were very polite and grateful to Ms. Furtute for her direction. For example, when Ms. Furtute randomly decided to give a candy bar to the student who had read the most pages the previous night (as an incentive program, I suppose), the student was very grateful. A couple other students again thanked her for previous treats she had given them.

I found that when Jacob did receive help from Ms. Furtute (such as when asking a question or being offered a candy bar for solid reading time), he did so not only politely but with “no stigma or shame associated with needing other’s help” (Sapon-Shevin 118). This was very encouraging, as it showed me that Jacob had a better chance of learning effectively if he could clarify what was confusing him.1. (10/7) Although I didn’t notice any responses to this question with Jacob in particular, I did hear quite a few students respectfully saying they were fine when Ms. Furtute asked if anyone needed any additional assistance. While this may seem minor, it nonetheless shows that the class on the whole greatly values the teacher’s role and can sometimes manage on their own.

I think an important note to add here is that I was very pleased that Ms. Furtute did not continually offer Jacob assistance, but rather waited for him to ask her for it (if he needed it). When a teacher is frequently making a fuss of helping a student, doing so in turn makes that student feel embarrassed and makes his or her learning disability the focal point of who they are. In not always asking him if he needed help, Ms. Furtute better helped Jacob fit in with the rest of the class.1. (10/7) This question confused me a bit, so it was difficult to come up with a response I analyzed during my observation hours. However, the closest thing to a “repertoire” of respect that I noticed was a list of rules posted on the wall. I glimpsed Jacob glancing over the rules walking into class one day, and the classroom rules discuss what types of good behavior and supportive demeanors are expected of them in the classroom.

Again, I feel that Jacob had the physical resources he needed to know what was expected of him during English class with the list of rules on the board. However, I think that if Ms. Furtute perhaps tried putting another set of class-established procedures on the board that offered insight into assisting others or how to provide help (without cheating) to their classmates, Jacob might have a better idea of how to do so.1. (10/7) I think this statement is very true of Ms. Furtute. From informing me that she wants to personally become a great teacher to help ensure solid understanding in her class to working toward having her students connect as a collective group of learners, I think Ms. Furtute sets high individual and collective goals for herself.
2. (10/5) Though I have little experience of teachers interacting at Brooks Middle School, I was able to observe the very friendly and professional relationship between Ms. Furtute and Ms. Parliament. From “venting” about a difficult lesson to talking about their personal and teacher-related lives, I think the two got along very well and provided moral and educational support for the other.
3. (10/6) When a teacher is in need of support at Brooks Middle School, I think the most probable solution is to seek out another teacher’s aid or advice. For example, Ms. Parliament brought into class for Ms. Furtute a pink slip of paper from another teacher that offered a new way of encouraging student homework completion. She said that she knew Ms. Furtute was having a hard time getting her students to complete their homework in later classes, and the helpful instruction on the pink slip of paper may help.
4. (10/5) Again, it is difficult for me to respond to this chapter question because I saw very little teacher interaction during my observation hours. However, I did hear Ms. Furtute and Ms. Parliament talk about an upcoming teacher’s meeting, and I believe they will discuss at the meeting better ways to improve student learning and assist teachers in their instruction.
 |

Community Plan

Accommodating Diversity in the Classroom Rating Scale Assignment

 After careful reflection of my time spent observing a student with a learning disability in Ms. Furtute’s 7th grade Language Arts class, Jacob, I recorded my ratings of classroom diversity in the scaled assessment. For the first section, *Classroom as Community,* I had varied results. I felt that while Ms. Furtute had done a solid job of including her students together and forming a strong sense of community in the classroom, many of the students were not very interested in the progress or needs of their peers. For example, I noticed during one observation session that Jacob told a fellow student after another group had given a presentation, “Our talk was *way* better than theirs. I think ours was the best.” This obviously reveals that Jacob was intend on his own group’s success, rather than being supportive of another group’s project. Nonetheless, after paired groups offered a presentation on what they learned from an animal reading book, the class did applaud for each group, revealing that there is a certain sense “of close community identity.” Similarly, the bulletin board near the front of the classroom each had a list of student names along with their birthdays (to celebrate), which likely helps foster “a special role… and place” among individual students. The second section focused on *Teacher Ownership.* I believe that Ms. Furtute did a stellar job of engaging all of her students fairly, and gave mostly high scores of 3s and 2s for this part. While there was no special education teacher present in the classroom, the general education teacher (Ms. Furtute) never singled out a student or referred to them as “not my students.” While Jacob’s poor concentration skills and hard time focusing do not (at this time) require an IEP, Ms. Furtute nonetheless accommodated the needs of her student.” Whenever Jacob needed a question repeated, for instance, Ms. Furtute would often do so, just for him. She did not constantly ask him if he needed any help (thus not impinging upon his sense of social security), but did remind him to pay attention if he was distracted. The only 1 I gave was to the line that discussed “the families of IEP students”—I had no experience with this, so I cannot say how the school or Ms. Furtute handles it.

 The next section talked about *Explicit Social Relationship Goals and Activities.* I unfortunately gave a majority of low scores in this area, as while I feel that the academic goals for her students were certainly present, there were few to none noticeable social or emotional goals visible. I was privy to one of Ms. Furtute’s well-organized lesson plans (involving a review of the short story, *Rikki Tikki Tavi)*, but nowhere on the plan did it “reference any social behaviors or work habits as task components.” While partner projects were assigned (such as the animal research assignment Jacob participated in), there was little to none support give to encourage peer relationships during that time. I did, however, give one 3 to the line that described what “literature was available in the classroom.” As a Language Arts teacher, Ms. Furtute had a great and culturally diverse section of books available for her students to choose from and read. In fact, each class period started with some silent reading time for students. The fourth section discussed *Membership Status and Full Participation.* For this particular segment, I have relatively average scores (mostly 2s). While students in Ms. Furtute’s classroom were certainly encouraged to participate and get involved (the teacher often asked for student answers by raising their hand), there was very little evidence of Ms. Furtute instructing her students to “explicitly treat one another equally and fairly.” While I suspect that this is likely to be assumed as this point, I do not think it would hurt for Ms. Furtute to remind her class (such as during group work time) that when they work together collaboratively, the class will be able to progress and succeed as a whole. I did not notice that any students had any “class duties or responsibilities” either. However, not once did Ms. Furtute treat Jacob any differently from anyone else or “excuse” him from work for his disability. She treated him fairly and equally.

 The fifth section talked about *Differentiated Instruction and Diversity.* My scores here were very mixed—while there were great positives, there were a couple of negatives as well. For Jacob’s case in particular, I noted that Ms. Furtute did a wonderful job of “transitioning activities” and “effective instructional strategies” to not only and try to engage class attention, but maintain it. For example, whenever it became apparent that Jacob was about to lose all focus on a class task, that would just about be the time Ms. Furtute would transition to a new activity. As Jacob would start tapping his pencil on the desk after a long period of silent reading, for instance, the teacher would then begin a class lecture on new vocabulary terms. However, I saw little to no evidence of Ms. Furtute incorporating any “multicultural educational approaches” to increase student learning or support positive peer interactions. The sixth section discussed *Cooperative Learning,* which I rated quite highly in all categories. I noticed that whenever Ms. Furtute implemented a partner or group project, such as during the class’ paired animal presentations, she grouped together “heterogeneous” learning groups to great effect. For example, Jacob’s partner was Tyreke, an African-American student who struggled academically, Ms. Furtute reported to me. Jacob, a Hispanic student and very bright despite his trouble paying attention, thus had a great chance to work with a student who varied from him both culturally and academically. Moreover, the group assignments were solidly created in that they “involved a shared goal structure”—both Jacob and Tyreke wanted to do well on the project with the shared goal of succeeding and getting an “A” in mind.

 The seventh section focused on *Seating Arrangements.* While I did not mark this section overly low, I did put a majority of 1s because I felt that a more inclusive, close-knit seating arrangement might work more beneficially for the students in Ms. Furtute’s class. Student seating “was not clustered into sets of smaller groups” to facilitate group learning, but rather was unfortunately organized “into smaller rows without peer interaction.” While Ms. Furtute may have done this to prevent talking during class, I noticed it also prevented the class from truly being able to form a close sense of camaraderie. Ms. Furtute did a balanced job of including “group membership” by giving her students the opportunity to work in pairs for the animal project, but again the classroom seating may restrict students from forming friendships outside of their small groups. For the eighth section, *Arrangement of Special Education Supports,* I was forced to give Ms. Furtute’s class all 1s simply because there was no special education teacher present during my observation hours. Thus, this particular section did not really apply to my learning experience while watching Jacob.

 The ninth section focused on *Nature and Structure of Peer Supports.* I marked this set with mostly positive 2s and 3s because I felt that Ms. Furtute served as a great role model for “positive social valuing,” although I observed little of “the peers trying to support each other” without a teacher’s influence. Ms. Furtute of course never “treated her students in an age-inappropriate manner” (she would remind them often they were “mature young adults”), and fairly described her time working with all of her students as “a fun, new experience each day.” Perhaps with more student-centered focus and support, grades and class attitude may hopefully improve in the future. The tenth and final section concentrated on a *Kinder and Gentler Place to Be.* I unfortunately had to give this section mostly 2s and a 1 because I felt that, overall, there was a bit lacking with “the diverse needs of cultural students” in the classroom. I did not observe any evidence of students showing any “additional consideration” towards Jacob for his difficulty concentrating. In fact, a girl next to him even asked him to quiet down when he was whispering to her during another student’s project; though she did not do so rudely, it didn’t appear as if she was very aware or accommodating of his learning disability. Nonetheless, I do think that the class atmosphere was overall positive in Ms. Furtute’s room, and I do think that Jacob could “make friends and support” his peers if taught how to do so by his teacher. Overall, I felt that this reported assessment was useful in helping me evaluate how well the sense of diversity was accommodated for Jacob and the rest of the students in Ms. Furtute’s 7th grade classroom.