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Human Relations Report (Mankato East High School)

Having a room full of ninth through twelfth graders can be quite challenging as their maturity level has a dramatic gap. For some, maturity is just developing, and for others, their maturity level has been set high and they are ready to move on into the “real world.” The select number of students in *Reading Concepts (Special Education)* were for the most part, responsible, understanding, and had a great sense of humor. They thoroughly enjoyed interacting with their peers and doing activities that require movement and competition. Learning in an engaging process was ideal for this age group.

By this age in school, these diverse students are aware of the schedule that is to be followed as well as what is acceptable in the classroom as well as outside of the classroom. With this, there are always going to be those students who do not abide by the standards and that need redirection and discipline. However, keeping the students engaged was a key aspect for this classroom. Students would be “off in left field” if there was no engagement. Therefore, the students would retain nothing if they were not engaged. For example, on days where the students were allowed a study hall day (every other day), they would sit on their phones with their headphones on. However, on days where they were engaged in an activity such as reading an article pertaining to their school and the population, they were more capable of understanding the material which was presented to them. I found that the students tend to talk more about things outside of the classroom when they are not being observed by a special education teacher.

- A. Mankato East Junior/High School is composed of numerous and various ethnic, racial, cultural, differently abled, and economic groups in our society. As a teacher, it is important to recognize that all students have a different home life and some may not have the opportunity to do homework in a clean, relaxed, and quiet atmosphere. As there were numerous students in the class that come from a different ethnic background, it was evident that they were treated differently from their peers. The students of another color are grouped together in the classroom, as the students get the opportunity to choose their seating arrangement in the beginning of the year. However, it is important to note that the special education classroom is small, with only 9 desks in the classroom. It was also evident that the students that come from poor families have a lower self-esteem than the others.
- B. No matter what, bullying is always an issue and will continue to be regardless of the efforts by the community or the school. As an educator, it is important to recognize the issues that your students face inside and outside of the classroom. It was easily observed that the students who participated in athletics were over-powering the students who were non-athletes or those who were involved in “groups” outside of school were overpowering those not involved in “groups.” There were often conversations talking about sports, lifting, running, etc. which left out the non-athletes and kept them in the background of the classroom. In contrary, there were also those discussing parties, drinking, drugs, etc. which left out those who disagree with such acts. In such case, many of these students were regarded as “not cool” or “not popular.” In a general education classroom and special education, it is important when grouping students to set groups so that all students get the opportunity to

interact with one another instead of grouping all of the athletes together, for example. It is important to look at your students and get to know them as they endure many ups and downs throughout their high school years. Through boyfriends and girlfriends to family issues and classes, life can be an emotional roller coaster for many.

- C. A positive learning environment is something that I find vital to students' success and in order to achieve appropriately for their future. However, proper classroom management is a key aspect in order to achieve this vision. There are many students that lack self-esteem and need it to be regained in the classroom through the guidance of a teacher. With the diverse population within this school, there are many students who feel isolated or discriminated. It is important, as an educator, to create a learning environment suitable to all students which encourages positive interactions amongst all. The guidance of students is especially important, especially for the students who receive special services. Instead of drawing the attention to the student, it is important for the teacher to give the student directions in a discrete manner. Drawing attention to one student can lead to dehumanization and anxiety of the student which will encourage the other students to do the same to that student, as well. The special education teachers at Mankato East did an exceptional job of making things "fair" with one another even though the students' ability levels were across the board.
- D. With the increasing number of diversity in the Mankato East Junior/High School, there is a full understanding of the implications drawn on for the teacher as well as the peers. As observed in the classroom, the students of other racial and ethnic backgrounds felt left out and out of place due to them seating themselves on the side or in the back corner. There was little interaction with them and their other peers of

another background. However, as a teacher, it is important to recognize these differences and take a stand of it within the classroom by enforcing collaboration with all students, not just students in which they choose to collaborate with.