

**Tutoring Log and Log Composite:
Tutoring Clinical at Mankato East**

Anna Wiechmann
EDUC 310
Prof. Butzow
15 December 2014

My goals for this clinical experience are:

1. To assist students in their studies.
 - a. To promote overall productivity during the class, by assisting the teacher.
 - b. To assist individual students with specific concepts.
2. To better understand the role of diversity in the classroom.
 - a. To recognize the influence of socioeconomic status, disabilities, cultural background, etc. on learning.
 - b. To learn how to prevent discrimination or prejudices within the classroom.
3. To observe the habits and practices of experienced teachers.
 - a. To learn ways of dealing with interruptions or disruptive students.
 - b. To observe how classrooms are set up to promote productivity and learning.
4. To better understand what grade level and type of classroom will suit me best.
 - a. To compare a junior high setting to a high school setting.
 - b. To consider the potential of working in a special education or English Language Learners classroom.
5. To improve my skills in communicating with and assisting students individually.
 - a. To work one-on-one with students.
 - b. To practice explaining concepts in more simplistic ways.

Orientation:

On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, I helped Ms. Julie Risto's sixth period English class and on Tuesdays I assisted Ms. Marie Ryan during third and fourth period, with math and then chemistry. I particularly enjoyed working in Ms. Risto's class because of the subject and course content. It was a class that I would be interested in teaching one day. She was very friendly and made sure that I felt comfortable both in her classroom and the school as a whole. On the first day that I worked with her, she immediately introduced me to the class. Ms. Risto was always very clear and specific when she gave me instructions for helping a student, correcting papers, or any other task she would have me do. As a result, I felt very confident in her classroom and comfortable with what she expected of me.

Truthfully, I think I learned more from my time in Ms. Ryan's classes. It was very different than what I expected. On my first day for assisting in her, I went to the room that I had been told, but it was incorrect. Another faculty member helped me find where I was actually supposed to be. Ms. Ryan apologized for the miscommunication, but she also said

that I should be ready to go with the flow while working in her classrooms, because both the subjects and the students would require completely different things from me. She told me how each class would ideally go, but she admitted that being adaptable was crucial in Special Education and ELL classrooms. Ms. Ryan was much more straightforward and blunt than I would have expected of a special education teacher; she did not coddle any of her students. Personally, I was really challenged by the students in her classes. It was quite an adjustment to go from my small private education background where students were primarily white and well off to a class of students who were almost all non-white and had very different interests. Also, I had far more opportunities to work one on one with students in Ryan's classrooms.

Description of the School and Classroom:

For this clinical, I was placed in three classrooms with two teachers. The first was a seventh grade English classroom, with Ms. Julie Risto. The seventh grade classroom was large and there were twenty-eight students in sixth period alone. I noticed that there were posters throughout the room displaying the characteristics of the school's PRIDE campaign: Preparation, Respect, Integrity, Determination, and Empathy. These posters also listed specific examples of how to act on these characteristics, both inside and outside the classroom. Another effective practice that I noticed was that Ms. Risto wrote the daily objective, agenda, and homework clearly on the board, so that students would know exactly what to expect as soon as they got to the classroom. In addition, Ms. Risto had a PowerPoint slide that gave students specific instructions for the beginning of class.

The two classrooms that I was in with Ms. Marie Ryan were very different from the seventh grade English one. For FS Chemistry, the classroom was a typical lab setting; the students sat at tables and were much more free to move about the room. The students were a mixture of individuals with learning disabilities and English Language Learners in grades nine through twelve. This class had both Ms. Ryan, with an expertise in special education and Mr. David Burgess, a science teacher working together along with the help of an ELL paraprofessional. This class was very different from what I experienced in high school. There was constant noise in the background and the teachers were fine with students using their phones whenever there was down time in the class. Each of the thirty

students also received a lot of one-on-one attention from each of the teachers, especially compared with the other classes that I had the opportunity to observe and tutor. One other important aspect of this class was that it was a Foundations of Science course. This means that the curriculum and pace was geared towards students who were not capable of keeping up in a traditional classroom.

Ms. Ryan's math class was much smaller than the other two classes that I observed. There were eight students, all of whom had a math-related learning disability. It wasn't held in a traditional classroom, but in a corner of the Special Education Resource Center. The students were always allowed to listen to their headphones while working on homework. There were enough desks for all of the students, but most of them opted to sit on the floor or in a beanbag chair. Overall, this class had a very casual atmosphere, which surprised me.

Structured Reports:

Monday, October 6, 2014 12:40pm- 1:30pm Seventh Grade English

Sequence:

1. Arrived, Met Ms. Sorenson (substitute teacher)
2. Observed while students reviewed old content and vocabulary and read their new story audibly
3. Talked with Sorenson about her teaching experience and her approach to student discipline

Episode:

The majority of my time was spent simply observing and familiarizing myself with the class and the classroom. Because there was a substitute teacher, I did not really have a chance to get involved with the students. However, it was a great chance for me to observe an experienced teacher working with students and encouraging them to participate and think critically, despite her not being familiar with the students.

Analysis:

It was very interesting how despite not knowing the students very well, Ms. Sorenson knew exactly how to discourage and prevent interruptions, without seeming harsh or strict. Rather than saying "Stop" or "Don't do that," she would ask the students questions that forced students to take responsibility for their actions. She asked, "How can I help you?" when students weren't staying in their seat and "Are we done with that now?" when one student was distracting another. The students responded very well to these questions and changed their behavior accordingly. These types of questions are definitely something that I can bring into my future classrooms.

Monday, October 13, 2014 12:40-1:30 Seventh Grade EnglishSequence:

1. Arrived, met Ms. Risto
2. Observed Risto's beginning of class procedures
3. Monitored students as they worked individually
4. Assisted students in coming up with project ideas for the story that they were working on

Episode:

The first thing that Ms. Risto did when she started class was a count down to quiet. She then reviewed the work that the students had done the day before and previewed the things that were coming up that were relevant to the story and project that the students were currently working on. The students were quiet and attentive the entire time that she was taking care of the "business" of the classroom.

Analysis:

Throughout all of my tutoring sessions I noticed that Ms. Risto started the class in the same way as this. Her clearly established routines really helped the students to know when it was time for class to start and them to focus in on Ms. Risto. Ms. Risto never had to raise her voice or call out to regain the students' attention. This coupled with the homework, objectives and agenda being written on the board really helped students to understand the direction of the class and what Ms. Risto expected of them.

Tuesday, October 14, 2014 10:05-11:50 Chemistry/ MathSequence:

1. Arrived, met Ms. Ryan and Mr. Burgess
2. Checked student responses to the writing prompt
3. Observed standard operating procedures in the classroom.

Episode:

During the FS Chemistry class, one girl refused to do a practice problem, even though calculator use was allowed. She said that she did not know how to use a calculator, and Mr. Burgess asked me to help her with the problem. She refused my assistance and walked out of the class. A moment later one of her friends started packing up her things and walked out. Mr. Burgess and Ms. Ryan told both of them to stop, but the girls completely ignored their teachers.

Analysis:

I had never seen anything like this in any classroom that I have ever been in. These girls were both Somali and apparently had done this in other classes as well. It was surprising enough when the one girl said that she didn't know how to use a calculator, but their attitude shocked me. I cannot imagine ignoring a teacher in the way that they did,

despite his saying that they would be marked as unexcused and would lose credit for the day. Ms. Ryan assured me that this was not the norm in any of her classes. However, it really opened my eyes to the challenges that I could face as a teacher. I'm still undecided about whether or not I would rather teach in a public or private school. Each will have a different set of challenges, but there are some that I cannot even imagine.

Monday, October 20, 2014 12:40-1:30 Seventh Grade English

Sequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Risto
2. Monitored students as they took a pre-test
3. Assisted student (one on one) with make up work from an absence

Episode:

A student had missed two class days because of an illness. Ms. Risto asked me to help the student understand the content and assignment that he had missed and also to make sure that he put the new information in his English notebook.

Analysis:

This student seemed very nervous about having missed so much class time. From what I had seen in my other visits, he was a good student. He participated often and successfully. To me, it didn't make sense that he was so nervous about missing those classes. I asked him if he was behind in his other classes as well. He said that he was and that one of his teachers usually wouldn't accept late work, which was the biggest reason that he was stressed about having been sick. I think it was really helpful to him that Ms. Risto had me spend the time to make sure he was comfortable with the information that we had covered. This conversation was also a good reminder of why it is important to be understanding of what students need, especially in regards to pacing.

Tuesday, October 21, 2014 10:05-11:50 Chemistry/ Math

Sequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Ryan and Mr. Burgess
2. Checked student responses to a writing check
3. Assisted students individually as they worked on a practice worksheet (significant figures)
4. Tutored a small group (rounding numbers)

Episode:

In the math class, students were supposed to be learning to round numbers. There were a few students in the class who seemed to have no problems at all with this concept, but about half of the class was really struggling with it. I helped two students in particular with the five practice problems that they had been assigned. The two were friends and

they were sitting next to each other, but they both had very different attitudes toward the task.

Analysis:

The diversity of the “academic-ness” of the class surprised me. Of the two students that I focused my attentions on, one seemed to be trying to understand the information and working diligently, but the other, for a while, refused to even open his book to the right page. The first was still really struggling by the end of the period, but the other when he finally did start working on the problems had very little trouble. When I was younger I tended to be more like the second student, albeit, to a lesser degree. I would be lazy or procrastinate, but once I started, I didn’t have a hard time with the content itself. As an English teacher, I will be working with the subject that comes most naturally to me, but I will have to remind myself that some students will struggle with what I might consider obvious. I will need to really monitor whether students are struggling with the content or only with their attitude.

Wednesday, October 22, 2014 12:40-1:30 Seventh Grade English

Sequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Risto
2. Monitored and assisted students as they identified parts of speech in songs

Episode:

For the Parts of Speech unit, the students were responsible for identifying how words function in a song. The students were given three songs to choose from and on this day, they were supposed to identify and label each noun, pronoun, and adjective. Students worked on this individually and I was monitoring and assisting students if they had questions on a particular word. I talked to most of the students, but there was one student who had finished analyzing his song, but there were several mistakes. I helped him locate the mistakes and understand why they were incorrect.

Analysis:

This student was very smart, but I noticed that he rarely took his time on assignments, and sometimes ignored directions. He did his work to finish it, not to perfect it. I asked him if he was finished and after he responded affirmatively, I asked if he was confident in his answers. He “guessed so”. I then work through the first two lines with him. I didn’t tell him right a way which identifications were wrong. Instead, I asked him to explain how he had come up with his answers. There were several times where, as he explained his original reasoning, he changed his mind about what part of speech the word was. I believe that allowing him to work through it on his own, but with supervision was the most efficient way to help him learn the material.

Thursday, October 23, 2014 10:05-11:50 Chemistry/Math

Sequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Ryan and Mr. Burgess
2. Checked student responses to writing prompts
3. Explained Cornell note taking to a student who was new in the class
4. Reviewed practice problems with individual students

Episode:

There was a student who was new to FS Chemistry, because he had not been able to keep up with regular chemistry, but needed the credits to graduate. I helped him to get set up with a binder for the class and also to understand how Mr. Burgess and Ms. Ryan would expect him to take notes.

Analysis:

This student was a junior, and had taken the regular level science classes prior to taking Chemistry. I think that although switching courses was necessary for him to graduate on time without having to take extra courses, the transition would not be, especially since it was already two months into the year. This student was not interested in chemistry and the fact that he had to be switched to a less challenging course only made him less willing to work with me as I explained the typical daily routine. I tried to put everything in a positive light, but this student was very clearly not interested in what I had to say.

Friday, October 24, 2014

12:40-1:30 Seventh Grade English

Sequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Risto
2. Assisted students with picking words for a word study
3. Monitored and corrected mistakes while students worked on the word studies

Episode:

While the students were working on their word study (they had each picked one particular word from their song to examine), there was one student that was falling behind. Every time that I would walk by him he would write something down or look up a word or meaning in the dictionary, but yet he had not even started filling out the worksheet.

Analysis:

Eventually, I went over to the student and got down on his level. I didn't ask him if he needed help, but rather asked him in what way could I help him. This student was Somali and English was not his first language, although he was almost fluent. He hadn't understood the directions on the worksheet and didn't understand that he was supposed to pick a word from the song. I then helped him to choose one, and got him started on the question after that. I wish I had stepped in sooner. I wanted to give him enough of a chance to possibly figure it out on his own, but I should have recognized that he was having

difficulties sooner. As I become more experienced as a teacher, I will hopefully be able to more easily recognize when I need to intervene to help my students progress.

Monday, October 27, 2014 12:40-1:30 Seventh Grade English

Sequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Risto
2. Discussed my current English course in relation to what she was teaching
3. Helped students as they did pair comparisons based on their songs
4. Monitored students as they worked individually

Episode:

I had noticed that most of the things that the students were working on were simplified versions of what we were learning in one of my courses at Bethany (ENGL 322: The English Language). I brought this up to Ms. Risto and shared some of the worksheets and course materials that I had received pertaining to the parts of speech. She was very grateful and interested in hearing how my professor approached the subject, because grammar was not her strongest area.

Analysis:

It surprised me that Ms. Risto was as excited as she was for hearing about alternative ways to approach the subject. I had thought that she would be more committed to the way that she had been teaching it. She had also gotten information from one of her other student teachers and based her notes off of the notes of the previous teacher of the class. I hadn't realized that teachers don't just want their students to collaborate, but they themselves rely on collaboration to improve both their understanding and teaching of a subject.

Tuesday, October 28, 2014 10:05-11:50 Chemistry/ Math

Sequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Ryan and Mr. Burgess
2. Checked student responses to writing prompt
3. Assisted students with significant figure and conversion worksheets

Episode:

In the math class, I was helping one of the same students as the week before. It was the student who refused to open his book or really put forth any effort at all. Ms. Ryan had asked all the students to do four practice problems from the textbook while she went and made copies. As soon as she had left the room, this student put his head down on his desk as if to sleep. I told him to sit up and eventually he did, but then he put in his headphones and put his head back down. I went over to him and asked him to open his book. He told me very loudly to leave him alone and he swore at me, right as Ms. Ryan returned from making the copies.

Analysis:

This was a very tough day for me. I am, for the most part, unaccustomed to hearing cussing and I was unprepared to have someone, especially a student, swear at me. After the class was dismissed, I spoke to Ms. Ryan and explained the situation. I wanted to know what I had done wrong and what I could have done better. Ms. Ryan's answer was not very comforting at first. She said that for the first three weeks of school, the same thing happened between her and the student. She explained that for this student in particular, building and maintaining a relationship was absolutely critical. Although this was not a fun experience, I will definitely not forget the lesson it taught me.

Wednesday, October 29, 2014 11:50-1:30 Seventh Grade EnglishSequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Risto
2. Corrected pre-tests on the parts of speech

Episode:

I did not have an opportunity to really interact with students, but I observed that the students were supposed to review questions on a worksheet in pairs and then switch to a different partner, about every two minutes or when Ms. Risto would tell them to switch. The first pairing resulted in a lot of productive noise, but with each successive change, the pairs turned into groups which got larger and larger and the noise became less and less productive.

Analysis:

I think group work can be a great tool. Personally, I love group projects and I learn best through discussions with my peers. However, activities like this need to be much more structured to be successful. I think just having the students pair up with two or three people initially would have been more effective. If that were done, students would get to hear multiple perspectives, but not waste time or lose focus by searching for a new partner.

Friday, October 31, 2014 12:40-1:30 Seventh Grade EnglishSequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Risto
2. Corrected pre-tests on the parts of speech
3. Monitored students as they worked in groups

Episode:

Again, I did not have much time to actually interact with students, but I overheard an interesting conversation between two of the students. One asked the other how old you had to be in order to legally change your name. The student was unsure, but asked why the

first student was wondering. The first explained that she hated her last name, because she hated her father. She described him as being mean and often drunk.

Analysis:

Hearing this conversation made me really sad for this young girl. She was in no way implying that he had abused her; it sounded like they just didn't see eye to eye. It did remind me of the issue of mandatory reporting and how crucial it is to pay attention to these types of conversations between students. Also, as a teacher, I need to be aware that each student will be coming from a background far different than my own.

Tuesday, November 4, 2014 10:05-11:50 Chemistry/Math

Sequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Ryan and Mr. Burgess
2. Assisted with checks for a writing prompt
3. Took down notes and made a master copy for absent students
4. One on one tutoring (variables in mathematics)
5. Orally gave a math exam to an ELL student

Episode:

One of Ms. Ryan's students had to take a make up test for one of her other classes. She asked if I could give it to him orally, because he really struggled with reading. I read him the first question, and because it was algebra, I offered to go get him some scratch paper so that he could work out the problems. He said that he didn't need it and proceeded to guess his way through the entire test. I asked him several other times if I could get him a calculator or paper or anything to help him do well on the test. He refused all of it.

Analysis:

To me, this was extraordinarily frustrating. This student refused to even put in enough time to figure out if he knew any of it or not. There was nothing that I could have said or done that would have affected his motivation or make him want to do better. I think that for me, this will be the hardest part of being a teacher. I need to learn how to deal with students who refuse to be helped, especially those who have so much potential.

Thursday, November 6, 2014 10:05- 11:50 Chemistry/Math

Sequence:

1. Arrived, met with Mr. Burgess
2. Corrected Papers

Episode:

The tenth graders were taking standardized tests on this day, over half of the class was missing and Ms. Ryan was one of the teachers supervising the testing. Mr. Burgess elected to allow the students to use the period to get caught up on work for that class or on work for other classes.

Analysis:

I feel like in the FS Chemistry class, things always take a little longer than planned and they spend a lot of time on each topic. It surprised me that Mr. Burgess did not use the period for reviewing old material.

Friday, November 7, 2014 12:40-1:30 Seventh Grade English

Sequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Risto
2. Signed off on High-Paws slips
3. Helped students outline first drafts of their "Friendly Letter"

Episode:

Students were supposed to be writing an outline for a letter to a former teacher. I was monitoring their progress and making sure that students were being productive. There was one student who wasn't working on his outline because he thought it would work better to just sit down and write it. I explained that the purpose is also developing the skill of making an outline, which is very important in both high school and college.

Analysis:

I think that it is very common for students to not understand why teachers make them do so much work. This student realized that writing a three-paragraph letter was not necessarily challenging which made it hard to understand why such a long and difficult process was so important. I think that it is really important that teachers are using seemingly pointless assignments to help students build a skill set that will help them to be successful in high school, college, and beyond.

Wednesday, November 12, 2014 12:40-1:30 Seventh Grade English

Sequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Sorenson
2. Monitored while students read
3. Passed out High-Paws

Episode:

There wasn't one specific event that I noticed, but the mood and the behavior of the class as a whole was very different from when Ms. Risto was there. Ms. Sorenson maintained control over the class, but she had to ask for their attention more than Ms. Risto ever had to.

Analysis:

I think that this difference can be attributed to two different things. First of all, the students have spent the last two months getting to know Ms. Risto and what she expects from them as a class and as individual students. They have built up a relationship and respect. The other reason is that Ms. Sorenson is not quite as methodical as Ms. Risto. The

lack of the typical beginning of class routine might cause students to think that they do not need to behave how they normally would.

Friday, November 14, 2014 12:40-1:30 Seventh Grade English

Sequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Risto
2. Assisted two students with their "Friendly Letter" first drafts

Episode:

I spent almost the entire hour working with two boys in the computer lab because they were behind on their letter. I helped them with grammatical, structural, and formatting issues.

Analysis:

The two boys that I worked with had very different weaknesses in their writing. The first was actually writing a very nice letter, or at least good quality for a seventh grader. He was very slow and methodical in his writing. The other student struggled in far worse ways. He had numerous mistakes in punctuation, capitalization, and other aspects of grammar. Unfortunately, if I would point out or correct one mistake, he would not make a connection between that and others like it. I think that many of the problems that he was showing are a result of using abbreviations in texting and social media. If the issues are so deeply ingrained in students' daily lives, they will be much more difficult to resolve.

Monday, November 17, 2014 12:40-1:30 Seventh Grade English

Sequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Risto
2. Monitored during student reading time
3. Corrected exit slips from the day before

Episode:

Ms. Risto gives the students reading time a few days a week. Most read out of actual novels, but a few read off of their school-issued iPads. Of the kids who read from their devices, most do actually read. However, there are always a couple of children that try to get away with playing games during reading time.

Analysis:

This really makes me wonder about whether or not all technology is good in the classroom. It obviously allows a lot of things that pen and paper simply cannot offer. Online quizzing gives the student instant feedback and saves the teacher hours of correcting, but is it worth the additional distraction?

Wednesday, November 19, 2014 12:40-1:30 Seventh Grade English

Sequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Risto
2. Helped students with final edits on their "Friendly Letter"

Episode:

This was undoubtedly the busiest day that I have had as a tutor. The whole class was in the computer lab and they were supposed to turn in a final copy of their letter. I knew the class had been working on this project for over two weeks and I thought that there would be very few people still editing their document. I was completely incorrect. Every single student still had several or many changes to make to their letters. Students had questions on every aspect of the letter, from openers to closings, body paragraphs, format, spacing, margins, etc.

Analysis:

Originally, Ms. Risto was going to have the letters be due the Friday before the Wednesday that we were in the lab. Based on the progress of their letters during the week before, she knew that she was not going to have them wrap up the project as quickly as she would have liked. She had to decide between having the students do less with the letter and turn in low quality work or devote more class time to the project. I think that Ms. Risto made the right decision, because the project was really neat. I know that as a teacher I will have to face similar decisions, but I know that they will not be fun decisions.

Friday, November 21, 2014 12:40-1:30 Seventh Grade English

Sequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Risto
2. Monitored during student reading time
3. Observed students as they had an opportunity to work in groups

Episode:

The students were each asked to come up with five traits or characteristics of a survivor. Ms. Risto then instructed the students to divide up into pairs and had the pairs shuffle up periodically to discuss the characteristics. I noticed that there were no mixed gender pairs, other than one because of odd numbers of boys and girls. Even when Ms. Risto told the students to change partners, girls tended to stay with girls and the boys tended to stay with boys.

Analysis:

I thought this was a super interesting observation. I don't think that it is an occurrence that would be limited to just this age level. I think people just tend to gather with people that are the most similar to them, especially when discussing new ideas and opinions. To be with like-minded people gives a sense of security and encouragement to be vulnerable. When I organize activities in my future classroom, I should keep in mind that

people are the most likely to participate when they feel safe and comfortable and I ought to do everything in my power to make them feel that way.

Monday, November 24, 2014 12:40-1:30 Seventh Grade English

Sequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Risto
2. Provided one on one help for students with make-up homework
3. Observed and aided students as they worked in groups

Episode:

Since it was the week of Thanksgiving break, Ms. Risto had the students do some activities that were more fun, while still pertaining, at least minimally to what they were learning in class. Since they had spent so much time working with the parts of speech, she had them spend the last few minutes of class working on a Thanksgiving Mad-lib. They had to fill in the blanks in the story with nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

Analysis:

At first, when Ms. Risto told me that the students would be doing a Mad-lib during class, I was a little confused. It didn't seem like a very practical use of class time. Then, when the students started working on them in pairs I realized that there were two obvious advantages of finishing the class with this activity. First of all, it allowed the students to get out of their seats and have fun. After listening to thirty minutes of a lecture, the students were very ready to get a little energy out. They were worked in pairs but were encouraged to change partners and give each other ideas. They all loved getting to share the silly stories that they had created. Secondly, it applied really well to the concepts involved with identifying different parts of speech. If the students were not able to distinguish the difference between a noun and a verb, the story would become unreadable. My first thoughts about this activity were obviously incorrect. I think it will be very important for me as a teacher to regularly look for unique ways to integrate course content and things that are fun and interesting for my students.

Monday, December 1, 2014 12:40-1:30 Seventh Grade English

Sequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Risto
2. Corrected journal entries
3. Monitored students during reading time

Episode:

My students are reading an autobiographical novel as a class. Ms. Risto read from the novel and the students were expected to follow along in their copies of the book. For the most part I was monitoring the students, making sure that they were not using any of their devices and that they were keeping pace with the rest of the class. Periodically, Ms.

Risto would pause and ask critical thinking questions, primarily about why the characters felt or acted how they did. She asked a question about why the setting was important. She called on a student who gave an answer that was related to the topic, but it was not what she was hoping for, just because it was not specific enough. Ms. Risto made a point of telling the student that he was “on track” and then continued by asking him another question that helped him to focus on what she was looking for in her answer.

Analysis:

Ms. Risto uses the term “on track” very frequently, even in how she corrects answers in homework. (She writes a plus sign when an answer is on track and a minus sign if it is not.) I thought it was really insightful that in response to this particular student answer, she immediately established a positive attitude. This type of a response encouraged both the individual student and also class participation in the future. I think it was also very important that she stuck with the same student, even though he didn’t get to the right conclusion immediately. She did not accept the superficial answer that was initially given, but pushed the student to think critically and really engage with the text. I think that this way of dealing with an incorrect answer is especially effective when studying literature and is something that I hope to do in my future classroom. I have noticed that this student in particular struggles with this class, but he participates happily and frequently; I can only assume that this is a result of Ms. Risto’s consistent positive and encouraging responses.

Wednesday, December 3, 2014 12:40-1:30 Seventh Grade English

Sequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Risto
2. Handed back papers
3. Assisted students with formatting on a journal entry
4. Monitored students during reading time

Episode:

Ms. Risto and I handed back corrected homework and journal entries. After we had handed everything back, Ms. Risto took the time to explain how she had graded and scored each item. She also explained what her expectations were for the students who had late and missing work. She reminded them that a “Homework Help” day was coming up and that she expected each student who had missing work to attend that event.

Analysis:

Each day Ms. Risto goes over the business aspects of the class (homework, due dates, expectations, getting grades into the Portal) right away when the period starts. Today, I really noticed that she spent a lot of time giving the students feedback on the homework that she had returned to them. I really appreciated this because I know how frustrating it can be to get an assignment back and not know why I received a certain

grade. Ms. Risto went through each assignment explaining how many points it was worth and described what exactly the assignment would look like if it had received a perfect score. She also listed things that were important to remember so that students could do better on their future assignments. Over the my time in her classroom, I have really noticed that she does everything that she can to help students stay on top of the class, understand her expectations, and know what to expect from her. I think that this is crucial at every level of education, but especially at the middle school level, because these students are very distractible.

Friday, December 5, 2014 12:40-1:30 Seventh Grade English

Sequence:

1. Arrived, met with Ms. Risto
2. Corrected papers
3. Signed and distributed High-Paws slips

Episode:

The students were having a quiet reading time. Ms. Risto asked me to pass out the High-Paws slips to students who were demonstrating PRIDE characteristics. Almost all of the students were doing exactly what they had been asked to do. There was one student who had his book out and was sitting quietly, but was clearly not focused on his book or trying to read it. I asked him several questions about his book. I tried to aim my questions at the content of the book and what he was finding interesting. I didn't ask why he wasn't reading or what he was doing.

Analysis:

The major reason that I didn't ask him outright if he was staying on task was because I did not want him to think that I was angry or upset. I wanted to make it clear that I just really wanted him to focus in on his book. I didn't want it to be about the task or keeping up with his class, I wanted him to be invested in the book itself. I think that if I had asked him whether or not he was reading, he would have been much more likely to lie to me and then continue what he had been doing. I think I handled the situation successfully, because by the end of the period, this student was reading his book attentively and earned a High-Paw.

Log Composite:

My clinical tutoring experience was very unique and there was a lot of diversity and variety within my experiences. I had the opportunity to work with both junior high and high school students, among them English Language Learners and students with special needs or learning disabilities. The classes that I assisted were in a variety of academic

fields: English, science, and mathematics. This variety allowed me to learn several important themes, helped me to realize what type of classroom I will want one day, and also allowed me to fulfill my goals for this tutoring experience as listed at the beginning of this document.

There were four major themes that I picked up from my time in the three classrooms: 1) the importance of creating and maintaining habits and routines within the classroom, 2) being willing to adapt to individual student needs, 3) awareness of the individuality and variety in the background of each student, and 4) the importance of building relationships with each student.

The theme of the importance of creating and maintaining habits and routines within the classroom was supported in both positive and negative ways in all three of my classrooms. First, in Ms. Risto's classroom, she started every period in the same way. The homework, objectives, and agenda were clearly written and visible on the white board everyday so each student could figure out where the class was going. Ms. Risto would also post instructions for the beginning of class on the smart board. As soon as the bell rang, she would go over the content of each of the boards and cover the classroom "business", before launching into her lesson. Both of the times that Ms. Risto had a substitute teacher, the students would not pay nearly as much attention to the substitute, because there were no habitual expectations for the students to meet that would require them to pay attention.

In the FS Chemistry class, there was a firm structure and the lesson plans seemed to be very detailed. Each day started with a writing prompt and announcements about tests and upcoming due dates, but in Ms. Ryan's math class, on the other hand, the lessons and

teaching seemed much more laid back and unstructured. Each class felt incomplete, ineffective, and unconnected to the other lessons.

The second theme: being willing to adapt to individual student needs, goes hand in hand with the third theme: awareness of the individuality and variety in the background of each student. These two themes were both supported in many ways and are especially important in regards to lesson and assessment planning. The Foundations of Science classes at Mankato East (including the chemistry class that I tutored in) were designed specifically for students who could not keep up with the pace of a traditional science class. The majority of the students in these types of classes are either English Language Learners or people with learning disabilities. This is a very widespread modification to assist certain individuals. In Ms. Ryan's FS Chemistry class, each day was started with a writing prompt to help those learning English get a broader base of scientific vocabulary. Finally, there is also a paraprofessional assigned to this classroom to help with communication between ELLs and native speakers. Another modification that I noticed was that the math class that I observed was almost exclusively students with learning disabilities. As a result, the class was extraordinarily small so that each student could get more individual attention from the teacher.

Even Ms. Risto occasionally had paraprofessionals in her classroom to assist individuals with particular educational needs. Ms. Risto stayed late at least three days a week so that struggling students could come talk to her outside of class or work on homework and was flexible about deadlines in order to make sure that students would turn in quality work. Whenever Ms. Risto asked me to work one on one with a student, I was always with students who were really far behind in their classwork or struggling with

a certain concept. One specific example of that is my spending a whole hour just to help two of the students with their "Friendly Letter." My final and most obvious example of catering to student needs and backgrounds, is in my giving an oral test to one of Ms. Ryan's student, because he struggled too much with reading and could not have been a successful if he were taking it as a written test.

All of this is without even considering that there are different types of intelligences and learning styles that ought to be accommodated for. Teachers are supposed to incorporate a variety of elements of these cognitive styles and skills into each lesson along with teaching that reflects and supports objectives in the social, emotional, physical and cognitive domains of development.

The final theme that my clinical exposed is the importance of building relationships with each student. I first started to realize this as I compared the behavior of the seventh grade English class under the substitute teacher, Ms. Sorenson, versus their behavior under Ms. Risto. The students were not terrible when their normal teacher was gone, but they were certainly worse behaved and paid less attention to the instruction.

The more overt example was my experience in the math class while trying to help and encourage on of the students to do his work. He responded rudely and with an expletive, even though I was trying to be nice and unassuming as I worked with him. His response was elicited by the fact that he really didn't know me or trust me, as Ms. Ryan told me.

Aside from learning all of these major themes, I also think that I improved as a tutor and I know that I feel much more comfortable as an authority figure in a classroom setting. At the beginning of my clinical, I felt extremely nervous. It seemed like I was barely older

than the students that I was working with. I was unsure of what was expected of me and I felt uncomfortable with the idea of tutoring a math class and a chemistry class, especially because it has been so long since I have taken courses in those subjects. I think the most difficult part of the experience was that it started later in the school year. It seemed that some classroom procedures were already set in stone, which at times made it difficult to fit into the classroom. Overall, everything was way better and more interesting than I could have anticipated. I wish I had been more outgoing towards the beginning of the clinical and worked harder to make myself more useful to the teachers, but by the end of the experience I felt like I learned a lot and truly was an asset to the learning environment. I gained both big and small insights to ideas that will help my future classroom run smoothly and be efficient.

This tutoring experience also helped me to get a better feel for what type of classroom would be the best fit for me. I liked the content of my English class better, but I think I would rather be in a high school setting. I learned a lot from my experiences with the ELL students and the students with special needs and I will definitely use what I learned, but I do not think that I am patient enough to work with those students all of the time and more than that, I love the English language and its potential and I want to teach others to appreciate it as well.