

Summary Paper

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Field Experience – PSYC 475

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Field Experience

Overview

This semester, I had the pleasure of volunteering in the Life Skills classroom at Newberg High School in Newberg, Oregon. I had the chance to go in the classroom twice a week, Wednesday and Friday mornings, and work alongside five classroom aids, one teacher, and 35 students.

Review of Activities

I would start my day with the kids by showing up during their second period class. I would assist them with writing during that period. Third period would be leisure time, so this is when I would get the chance to play games with the kids, teach ASL (American Sign Language) to a couple of the kids, and get the chance to get to know the kids on a personal level. In fourth period I would help the classroom aids take the kids to P.E. I would assist with the girls in the locker room, making sure that they would get their uniforms on and got to class on time. I warmed up with the kids, did whatever activity they were doing in class that day, and then I would help them again in the locker room. In fifth period, I would make sure the kids were paying attention to Mr. Morgan (the teacher) while he was teaching and help the kids understand what was going on in class.

My Reaction

At first, I was shocked that there were so few adults in a room with 35 kids, most of which needed one-on-one attention and support. It was a little overwhelming. But, overall, I had so much fun. I loved working with the kids and working with a great staff. They made me feel so loved and welcome the whole time I was in the classroom.

How Well my Goals Were Met

Overall, my goals were met pretty well. Over the course of the semester, I became more comfortable talking with the kids and the staff. Soon enough, I felt comfortable enough to speak in front of the whole class. However, I never was able to teach a class period. But, the teacher did offer for me to come back after finals week to teach. I am looking forward to growing more confident in my skills in the classroom.

How Prior Courses Helped with My Experience

Out of all the classes I have taken at GFU, I would say that the classes that I have helped me the most with my field experience would be counseling and advanced counseling. When I worked with these kids, it took a lot of patience and a lot of listening. Some of these kids do not speak very well, so it takes them a while for them to get out what they want to say. Also, it takes patience when working with these kids in other areas, such as P.E. In situations where I have had to slow down to listen to a student, I have seen that it was in those moments that those kids would open up to me the most.

Faith

Throughout the semester, I would say that my faith in Jesus Christ has been strengthened immensely. At first, I was frustrated with God. With how my back has been these last few months, I thought it was messed up that God wanted me to work with these kids when I would probably have to quit working as a caregiver. But, God taught me that I do not have to be in pain to work with this population. There are others ways I can work with kids with special needs, such as working as a para-educator, a special education teacher, or even a special education counselor. God has taught me that working with kids with special needs is something I was

made to do. With His help and guidance, I can make this dream come true. This semester would not have been as successful if it were not for Him being on my side.

Evaluation of My Plans to Continue Psychology

As far as psychology goes, I want to continue to pursue counseling. At first, I thought I wanted to work as a middle school counselor. But, after this incredible semester, I think that I want to pursue being a special education counselor. It will require me to go to grad school for special education and for school counseling. The thought of going back to school in order to become a special education counselor gives me goose bumps! I also feel like I just want to learn even more. Even though I am graduating, I feel like there is still so much that I do not know about psychology.

How My Career Planning Has Been Influenced

Like I said before, at the beginning of the semester I thought that I was headed towards being a middle school counselor. However, over time I have learned that I love working with kids with special needs. I know that this is why God created me – to love these kids and to be a voice for them when no one else can understand them. After I found out that I had degenerative disc disease and got hit with a lot of “no’s” towards job applications and grad school planning ideas, I looked into different jobs with kids with special needs. I found out what it takes to become a special education counselor, and I think that is where I am supposed to go with my life. One day, I will be going back to grad school to get a degree in special education, teach for a few years, and then go back to grad school and get a degree in school counseling. It will be hard, but it will be worth it.