

EDU 390

Diversity Capstone Paper

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I have experienced cultural diversity for my practicum during my time at Legacy High School, Jeanette Myhre Elementary, and at the Marketplace for Kids event. I have been a freshmen AVID tutor at Legacy High School this semester. You can learn about what AVID is if you follow the link below this paragraph. I have also volunteered to help with recess team and have observed classrooms and students with the behavior specialist at Jeanette Myhre Elementary a handful of times this semester. Finally, I was able to lead a group of fifth graders and two groups of seventh grade students through the Early People's Gallery on a scavenger hunt along with my group members for the Marketplace Day for Kids event at the Heritage Center on April 12th.

<https://www.bismarckschools.org/Page/349>

I intend to cover a variety of points about my experiences in my capstone paper. I will talk about the demographics of the population of students in each of the practicum settings. I plan to discuss both environmental and instructional adaptations that enhanced the likelihood of learning success for the students in my practicum. I will touch on successful interventions used outside of the classroom. I will also connect course information to my practicum experience as well as include three artifacts in my paper which highlight my experiences in my practicum settings. Finally, I will summarize how I will take what I learned from my cultural diversity practicum experience to my future classroom.

The demographics of the students in the AVID classroom at Legacy and the students in recess team at Myhre Elementary are very different. The difference between the two groups is one group is high school students, while the other is elementary students. The AVID students are freshmen with differing learning and cognitive abilities. As far as ethnicity goes in the AVID classroom, most of the students are white while there are two Native American girls. The girls

out-number the boys in the freshmen AVID classroom. Jeanette Myhre Elementary is a diverse school with students of varying ethnicities. Many students come from poverty, having low-socioeconomic family backgrounds. I observed both kindergarten and fourth graders for recess team. The fourth grade has students with ethnic backgrounds of Mexican, African American, Asian, and White. Many of the students that I observed at Myhre Elementary have behavioral or social issues.

The demographics of the students in my groups at the Marketplace for Kids event at the Heritage Center was different yet from my other two practicum settings. All three of my groups at the Heritage Center were from Garrison North Dakota. I had two groups of seventh grade boys and one group of fifth grade girls. One of the fifth -grade girls in my group was Native American. There was a seventh- grade boy who stood out as he was very smart and exceeded the other boys in his group by knowing a majority of the scavenger hunt questions from the top of his head. The Marketplace Day for Kids event hosted third through eighth grade students coming from a 90 miles radius outside of Bismarck. The demographics of the students attending the event varied in age, gender, cognitive abilities, and ethnic backgrounds.

In each of my practicum settings, there were environmental adaptations that enhanced the chance of learning success. In the AVID classroom at Legacy, students that had a hard time seeing the board sat in the front of the classroom. Half of the students would stay in the classroom for tutorials, while the other half went to the collab room. The collab room is set up in a different way than a typical classroom. Many of the students felt they could focus better when the lights were dimmed and not so bright, which enhanced their learning success. Recess team took place in the gym, which is different environment than a classroom environment. This type of environment gave the students lots of room to have fun playing games while learning

strategies to control behavior and reinforce social skills. The link below this paragraph has different examples of play strategies they use for recess team. The environment of the Early People's Gallery at the Heritage Center was very informational and engaging for the students. The culturally rich learning environment provided for learning success. Students were also walking around the gallery and experiencing Native American culture first hand rather than learning from a desk.

<https://www.playworks.org/services/online-learning/>

I implemented instructional adaptations that enhanced the likelihood of learning success in a couple of my practicum settings. My job as a tutor is to ask guiding questions to help the students arrive at an answer to their point of confusion question on their own. I would often ask if they had notes or resources that could help them gain a better understanding and reach an answer. I ask probing questions to help them critically think, the ability to critically think is crucial for learning success. I will tell them if they are on the right track, but students remember much more effectively if they reach an answer on their own rather than if it is given to them.

I used instructional adaptations when I guided students through the Early People's Gallery at the Heritage Center. If students understood the concept well, we moved on to the next. If students didn't fully grasp the concept, I would explain more to help them better understand. The goal was for students to find the answer to the scavenger hunt questions on their own, but if they were struggling I would give them hints to them find the answer. When teaching students how to make the bracelet, I would first have students watch me, then I would have them do it with me, and finally I would have them try it on their own. I would assist the students if they were struggling, but most of the students got the hang of it right away. Below is a picture of two of the fifth-grade girls making their bracelets.



I observed instructional adaptations during my time at Jeanette Myhre Elementary. I observed classrooms with Tiffany Perrin, the behavior specialist, where I had the chance to see instructional adaptations being used in the classroom. In many of the classrooms, there was a paraprofessional to help students who needed additional help or support academically or behaviorally. I noticed teachers would use the turn and talk strategy to enhance learning success. In a second-grade math lesson, the teacher would have students sit in a circle on the floor with personal white boards. Math questions would be written on the board and students were asked to take 30 seconds to try to figure out the answer on their own and once they figured it out they would talk about their answer with a neighbor. If the teacher saw that a student was struggling, he would go over to him to ask questions and help walk him through the steps to get the answer. The class would come together and they would discuss how they got their answer as a class as the teacher wrote the steps on the board for the students to see.

Successful interventions beyond the parameters of the classroom were evident at the Marketplace Day for Kids event at the Heritage Center. It took community involvement and resources as well as lots of planning to put this event together. Student had the opportunity to

participate and engage in a many activities and presentations which enhanced their learning experience. Presenters including myself, my group members, and classmates were responsible for making the Early People's Innovation Gallery class a success.

I was successfully able to meet the course outcome/standard which was to understand what diversity is by observing and working with students of diverse backgrounds and learning needs. I accomplished this through my practicum experiences at Jeanette Myhre Elementary, Legacy High School, and the Marketplace for Kids event at the Heritage Center. I would say I encountered the most diversity at Jeanette Myhre Elementary as I observed students with all kinds of ethnicities, learning needs, and behavioral issues. I have had the chance to get to know the freshmen students I tutor at Legacy and while working with them through tutorials, I have observed the varying learning needs of the students.

I can connect the Benedictine value of community well with the preparation for the Marketplace for Kids event. I learned the importance of community while working with my group in preparing for our presentation including the scavenger hunt and bracelet making activity. We all strived together with a common goal in mind to make the Early People's Innovation Gallery a success for the students in our group.

I have described the demographics of the students I observed in my practicum settings. I have also explained some of the environmental and instructional strategies that enhance learning success. I touched on successful interventions beyond the parameters of the classroom, specifically at the Marketplace for Kids event. Finally, I connected the course standard/outcome with my practicum experiences and related the importance of community to my group project in preparing for the Marketplace for Kids Day.

I plan to carry many things I learned from my practicum experience and observation to my future classrooms. I have learned through my experience as an AVID tutor that students have differing cognitive abilities. It is important to keep this in mind in your classroom, so that your lessons can be modified for both proficient and below proficient students. Mrs. Perrin has told me more than once that good classroom management skills are key. It is important to be patient with students and to never raise your voice with them. I have observed different strategies to help students control their behavior which will be beneficial to know when I will deal with behavioral issues in my own classroom. I now have a better understanding and appreciation for diversity than prior to these experiences.