

The school in which I was placed and where I observed the child for this assessment was small public school, with an enrollment of approximately two hundred second and third grade students. When you enter the building, you can sense a very close knit community feel, as there are student produced pictures and other art work or projects, labeled with the child's name and classroom, hanging all over the hallways and the windows. This first thing I saw upon entering the building was a collage made up of hand-drawn pictures of each student in the school. When I saw this, I felt very welcome and comfortable; as I'm sure the students do as well. Every day, students rush to their classrooms, not because they are afraid of being late, but because they are afraid of missing something fun or interesting in their classroom.

The child I observed, was placed in a mixed classroom made up of ten second grade students (five girls and five boys) and seven third grade students (four girls and three boys). This classroom served the purpose of "catching" the students up in reading and math, areas where they had previously tested low. The students would work bi-weekly (second graders one week and third the next) with the lead teacher in the mornings in reading/language and math, then both grades would come together in the afternoon for science and social studies work, even though this content wasn't required in this particular classroom. The grade level not working with the lead teacher would be working with a co-teacher in another room close by. This mixed level classroom was in its first year of operation and seemed to be proving to be very beneficial to the students within. In past years, students would switch to the room to work on reading and math and then would go back to their homeroom classes. With the new system in place, children feel more

comfortable and safe within their environment; as they are not being pulled out of class and taken into another.

The child I observed was an eight year old, female child, in the third grade. After speaking with my cooperating teacher, the lead teacher in this child's classroom, I learned that this child comes from a very low functioning, single mothered family. As the child openly explains in class, the mother didn't do much around the house, so the responsibility fell to her young children. She often came into class with dirty clothes, skin, and unwashed, tangled hair. When she often didn't have her homework finished or her papers signed, she is still very positive every morning, even though she knew she would be disciplined. When asked why she wasn't turning in her papers or getting her things signed, she often told us how her mother simply didn't want help, sign things, or just didn't care.

This child is of average size, when comparing her to other females in her classroom and at her grade level. Even though physically she appears healthy, her clothes, hair, nails, and skin could have told another story. As stated before, the child often came into class with dirty clothes, tangled, unclean hair, and dirty or drawn on skin.

Her motor skills appeared to be up to par, according to that of her age group. Although I wasn't able to observe many of her large motor abilities, I was able to make note of many small motor skills. For a third grade child, her writing was rather neat and properly spaced, when she was given the time to make it look this way. Even though the class wasn't yet spending much time on learning cursive, she could partially write her name. She enjoyed cutting pieces of paper into chains or snowflakes or painting with a friend in the mornings during free-time. Her artistic abilities, as far as I saw, consisted of

drawing or painting flowers. Even though I have no observation of large motor skills to compare with, the student seems to be developing at a similar rate to that of her peers.

Like all of the other students in her classroom, both second and third grade, this child has scored low and is behind in reading and mathematics. These students, especially the one I observed, learn at a slower rate than other children their age. The child I observed would have a lot of trouble focusing on materials when reading or doing language worksheets and she would ask for a lot of help. Also, even though I wasn't there during their math time, I saw many of her math papers and graded them, her grades were more often than not, lower than the other students, and sometimes her assignment had to be re-done altogether. She is placed in this classroom for this purpose exactly, to get the extra help and practice in the subjects she struggles with most.

Trying to find evidence of Concrete Operational Thinking was difficult for me. I believe that like most students in her class, this child has some logic thinking and reasoning, but often fabricates stories or believes things that may not necessarily be possible.

When the child was learning something, she would try extremely hard to remember the steps, rules or processes in which to complete the task. One great example I have is her use of the grammatical rules for adding suffixes. When the teacher or I would ask a question about what to change to add a certain suffix, she was the first one with her hand up. I believe this shows evidence of memory strategies, as there was definitely a way in which she helped herself remember these rules.

The child was quiet some days and rather chatty on other days. She knew how to properly communicate with her teachers and peers, made friends easily, and participated

in class, although her input was not always correct or directly on topic. There were times however, when she couldn't quite seem to explain herself, like when she didn't have her notebook signed or when she was asked why her mother missed her scheduled parent-teacher conference. Like most children I have worked with, this child used her language and communication abilities at their best when it was appropriate or comfortable for her.

When thinking about self-concept and self-esteem, I think of many days when this child would come in without her homework, her book bag, the proper books, and dressed in clothes that didn't fit her, were costumes, or were not appropriate for the weather. On days like these, I would expect an eight year old child to be embarrassed or ashamed for not having these things or for being dressed the way she was, but she was positive and proud of herself. When she didn't have her bag and books, she simply said, "My mother told me not to bring them." She also said this was because she would be visiting her dad and her mother was afraid her things wouldn't return home. Instead of having the child leave them at school with the teacher, she sent her to school unprepared for the day. Even then, this child thought highly of herself and her abilities. She had a very high self-concept and self-esteem from what I saw in my observations.

When thinking about my observation of Industry, I would say that this child is very industrious. One example comes to mind, the child was so set on pleasing the teacher and getting her weekly reading log turned in, that she filled it out herself and signed, in her best cursive, her own name, because her mother had refused to do so. The previous week the child hadn't turned her log in and had lost her recess privileged and had clearly disappointed her teacher and classmates. So set on getting her log in on time, she took

matters and the responsibility into her own eight year old hands and completed it herself, and in turn received a passing grade.

As stated before, this child got along well with her classmates, even though at times she served as somewhat of a distraction. She interacted well with others in the morning free time and during small group lessons or in group discussions. She tried very hard to stay on task, sometimes failing, and desired to please her teachers. This child tried very hard to make the best out of her situation and seemed to not let any of it bother or stop her.

I feel that this child will have a difficult and trying journey ahead of her, but she will prevail and make it through. Already at the age of eight, she is taking the responsibilities of others into her own hands in order to survive and succeed. I feel that with help from her teachers and other school officials, from this point forward, she will continue to make slight progress every year. When she learns to keep herself focused on lessons and tests, she will make great strides developmentally, in my opinion. Working with and observing this young female over the course of the semester was at times sad, difficult, and interesting. I loved seeing her succeed in assignments and watching her take on more responsibility and fend for herself, if you will, amazed me and made me proud of her, even though for her age, she was being forced into maturing a little bit more than necessary. I feel that I have learned a lot from this experience and will be better prepared when I start my student teaching in the year to come.