

Special Education in Ocean Tides

During my time at my internship, I took part in much of what the special education department does to help those students who are low skilled and have trouble processing information. Many of the students are so low skilled because in previous school settings they skipped classes and/or did not participate in school assignments. Other reasons include that many of these students have difficulties in school because of a language and culture barrier. Some kids predominantly speak Spanish, so it is challenging for them to learn to read and write in proper English grammar. They also may have behavioral issues that get in the way of them focusing and succeeding in the classroom. For these reasons, the special education department would then step in to assist the students to help best excel in their schoolwork.

I was able to help in giving individual attention to those kids who need it while the teacher focuses on the other students in the classroom. For instance, in the physical science class whenever a test was being held, I would take the two low skilled students who needed individual attention and work with them more personally in the teacher's office so they can better focus on the test. I would read the questions out loud or have them read the questions to me to practice their reading skills. I would ask them if they understood what the questions were asking. If not, I would explain it for them. Many of the times I had to relate the questions to subjects we talked in class in hopes they would associate the question to past learning material. By taking them aside, they also benefitted from not feeling the pressure of doing the test at the same pace as the other students. It brought them into a more comfortable setting, which in return I saw great improvements on their test taking and reading skills by the end of the semester.

However, skill level varied from person to person. One student may read great, but they do not know how to apply what they have just read. Another student loved to write and usually went above and beyond the required amount needed to write his summaries, but his sentence structure was extremely poor. At times, when I worked individually with the kids, I would have them read out loud to me to allow them to sound out words and practice their skills. I noticed that the special education department works very diligently with these kids and that is really how they will ever succeed in their learning. In truth, many of these students when they leave this program will never be pushed or motivated to excel in areas

they need help in. They may not ever receive the individual attention they have gotten at Ocean Tides again. It was very rewarding working with these students, because when improvement happened you were able to see the confidence they gained through their achievements.