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EDFD 311

Final Tutoring Report

I. All About My Student

This summer, I worked with Juliet P. for my 15 hours of tutoring. Juliet is 5 years old, and will be going into Kindergarten this Fall. Her parents, Rob and Melissa, and she and her twin brother, Jack, go to my church. Juliet is very sweet and smart, but because her brother has such an outgoing personality, she is often overshadowed and has a lower confidence level. Juliet is good at counting and speaking, but she had issues with her alphabet and what sounds the letters make. When she went to Kindergarten screening, they expressed the issues she had with letters, and said that would cause many problems in Kindergarten, so that is mainly what I focused on for the full 15 hours.

II. Challenges Throughout The Sessions

The first few tutoring sessions, Juliet was very shy. I worked one-on-one with her, but every time I would ask her to answer something she didn’t know, she would shut down, get really quiet, and stop answering. I felt really awful about this because I was just trying to understand what she knows and doesn’t know, and so I had to be more careful with the way I approached things with her. If she started getting sad, I would quickly change the activity into something more upbeat and just go back to revisit the complicated problems later.

Another issue that I ran into was her being goofy and not concentrating. After about the third session, I brought in her twin, Jack, and he worked with us also. This boosted her confidence because she felt more at ease with him there, and he was also encouraging when she didn’t understand something. There was also a part of Juliet that wanted the sessions to be a competition between her and Jack, which ended up being a good motivator for her to think about the letters and give me the right answer the first time. Jack is very smart, and knows all his letters, sounds, and can identify words that being with each letter of the alphabet. This meant that sometimes he got a little frustrated with Juliet because she couldn’t identify a letter, but I had to remind him that it was a treat for him to be working with us, and he quickly became supportive again; (Jack felt left out because he wasn’t getting to work with me, so I agreed to let him work with us, and he saw this as a great privilege).

One last challenge was the environment that we were tutoring in. Each time, we got a room away from everything else to help the children concentrate, but this did not stop the distractions from happening. Their dad, Rob, would come in to see what they were learning, and he would ask them to prove that they had learned something, and if they could prove it, he would give them a dollar. This got the twins off track, but not as much as the popsicles. These two LOVE popsicles, and their mom, Melissa, would let them have two every time I was there. She tried to use it as a reward for doing well, but a lot of times they would have one almost as soon as I got there, and then they would want one halfway through, and she would give it to them whilst telling them to keep paying attention. She thought this was a good reward for them, but since every time they asked, she gave them one, it wasn’t anything too special; and it also made them really hopped up on sugar which made them hyper. There was also the fact that they had just built a brand new house, so they have painters, plumbers, blinds and every other kind of service man you can think of coming in and out of the doors. To help with this, I would ignore their comments about the distractions and get really excited about what we were about to do next. This worked on them because it distracted them from their distractions.

III. My Relationship With The Student

At first, Juliet was shy but polite around me, and now she is constantly laughing and talks to me when she sees me at church. She has come out of her shell because she has seen me for 15 hours over the last two months, but also because she has been able to be goofy with Jack and I, while also learning. Her mom is happy that she is more outgoing, and says that she can really tell a difference with Juliet’s confidence.

IV. “Getting Ready For Kindergarten” Summer Curriculum

During our sessions, I focused mainly on quizzing her on her letters, and associating items she could relate to with the letters of the alphabet. To benefit her and Jack, we also worked a little bit on simple addition by playing games like Farkel and Yahtzee. Another thing I worked on was her confidence, and I tried to quiet Jack at times to let Juliet get her words out. This seemed to help both of them, because by the end of the 15 hours, Juliet would talk over Jack when he interrupted her instead of just letting him cut her off. While this might not sound like a good thing, I think she does it because she knows what she has to say is important too, and I don’t think it will become an issue in the future.

V. Parental Involvement

I involved Melissa the most because most of the time Rob was out of the house, but after each session we would sit down and talk about what I worked on with the twins that day, and I gave her advice on what to work on with them until I came back again. Melissa learns and instructs in a different way than Juliet learns, so by giving her tips and activities to do while I’m not there, this allowed her to keep a consistent learning scale so Juliet was not confused. This worked very well, and Juliet was comfortable with doing it with me because she had done it in the comfort of her own family. I also advised Melissa to get the educational apps on their iPhones and iPad so the kids could work on them in the car and to provide a fun aspect to learning. This worked wonderfully because they would be excited to tell me about what happened on their game, and would many times say “I know the answer because I did this on my game!” Melissa working with them was a huge help because I could really see progress from one session to the next, and it allowed me to keep on track with working with them.

VI. Instructional Strategies

Juliet’s learning style is hands on/visual learning, which is the way I learn so I was able to help her in a lot of ways. When I started the summer, Melissa explained that her brain doesn’t work that way, and so she didn’t understand how to work with Juliet in a way that would be easy for the both of them. I used my past experiences and things that interest me to try to keep her passionate about learning and help her understand school on a fun level.

VII. Evidence of Learning

At the beginning of the summer, Juliet could not identify many letters. The very first day, I showed her letter flashcards to see which letters she knew, and she only knew A, B, C, J, O and Y. With each other card, she would at least say a letter in effort, but she mostly answered R or Q, except when it was actually an R or Q. The very last day of tutoring, I went through the same flashcards that we did the first day, and she got every single letter correct except for M and N (they are tricky for her to say, so she mixes them around a lot). I was so proud of her! And on top of knowing pretty much every letter, she could also identify the starting sound each letter makes, and could answer correctly when I asked “What is a word that starts with the letter\_\_\_”. She has made such a substantial amount of progress, I almost think she knew the letters, but was just too shy to admit it at first.

VIII. What I Learned

I have learned a lot from tutoring about how to deal with different levels of learning and different personality clashes in the classrooms. I haven’t talked much about Jack because he was mostly playing the games for fun since he already knew most of it, and because my main focus was helping Juliet. But Jack’s involvement played a huge role in my developing knowledge of what it is like to be a teacher. Jack obviously learns a lot quicker than Juliet, and he has a more outgoing personality, so twisting my curriculum that I set at the beginning of the summer into something that was suitable for both Jack and Juliet was a big production. It helped me define what kind of a teacher I want to be to each kind of child, and provided me with practice of trying to help a student that might be a little behind while also making sure the student who understands it is being challenged. Overall, this experience has just made me more excited to become a teacher and work with sweet children every day!

