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Personal Reflection

At this point in my life, I do not have a lot of experience working with children who have disabilities. Currently, I do not have a lot of knowledge regarding the various categories of exceptionality. So I would be lying if I said that I feel completely prepared and ready to work in an inclusion classroom that has students with disabilities. The truth is that I am hesitant to work with students who have disabilities, because I have limited experience and exposure.

Within my practicum setting last year I worked with two first grade boys that have autism. I learned a little bit about what autism is and that the students do not use social cues with their interactions. I also learned that there is a wide continuum within the autism category and that each student has individual needs. Working with these students was rewarding but sometimes frustrating, and without knowledge of their needs and ways to address their needs I could see myself getting worn out with day to day problems in the classroom.

Despite the fact that I have limited experiences with exceptionalities, I believe in the concept of least restrictive environment. I feel that it is important for students to have the same general education classroom opportunities as students who do not have disabilities. I would be open to having individuals with disabilities in my classroom, but I would also hope that the school provides resources and support for the students both within and outside of the classroom when necessary.

Regardless of whether my classroom has students with disabilities, the fact remains that as a teacher I will need to remain flexible with teaching. Being able to adjust curriculum, instruction, lessons, tests, and grading is important for all my students. Every student has

individual strengths and weaknesses. They also have individual learning styles and needs within the classroom. Remaining open to change and gauging how the students are doing within the classroom will allow me to effectively teach students with disabilities. I realize that at times the type of instruction used or the lesson content may vary based on the learners in the classroom. I also know that some students may require additional time doing an assignment or test. They may require assistance with reading, writing, or responding to questions. Finally, the actual grading of assignments may need to vary depending on the students, but I think that the Individualized Education Programs will help guide where students should be performing and what is considered a success for them. Within an inclusion classroom, I would try to work with my students to ensure that the disability does not hold them back from being able to succeed within the classroom. I would also work to ensure that the classroom is an understanding environment and that no one feels unwelcome or out of place.