

## Rubric/Guidelines: Case Study

Observer's name: Cory Puskala

Date: 2-7-11

Time Started: 2:00

Time Ended: 2:30

Location: First Grade Classroom

Activity: Everyday Math Lesson

Observer's name: Cory Puskala

Date: 2-8-11

Time Started: 1:20

Time Ended: 1:50

Location: First Grade Classroom

Activity: Everyday Math Lesson

### 1. Background Information

J is a caucasian male. He is 7 years old and his birthday is September 13<sup>th</sup>. Mom decided to keep him in preschool for an extra year because she felt he needed another year before starting kindergarten. J is one of the older students in his class. He is relatively taller in height compared to his peers.

J's mother is a teacher in the same school district. She expressed her goals for her son to his teacher at the beginning of the school year. The main goal for J is for him to make one friend this year.

J receives outside OT services through Children's Hospital. His IEP states that he has sensory issues that cause anxiety and frustration. The OT professional that works with him has stated that she would come into the classroom if needed to help the teacher set up tasks that would help with anxiety, however he doesn't receive OT through the school.

J excels in math and any math related content. While he is in a higher reading group he struggles with reading. Often times when he reads out loud he phrases his sentences and misses words. The teacher believes this is difficult for him due to his weak pragmatic language. J is in the gifted and talented pool at the school for general intelligence.

2. Briefly summarize any relevant information obtained from conversations or interviews with the student's teacher (e.g., general educator, special educator, etc.), support staff (e.g., paraprofessional) or any professional who provides ancillary services (e.g., speech/language therapist, physical therapist, etc.). (4 pts)

#### ***Conversation with General Educator:***

His teacher Mrs. P says that a big issue she has with J in the classroom is his constant shout outs. His behavior is often disruptive and an intervention has been put in place to address his shout outs. He also becomes fixated on specific things. For instance on the day I observed his whole morning was thrown off because the school bell rang at 8:34 instead of 8:30. He repeated this throughout the morning. When changes to his daily routine occur he often begins a repetitive behavior. She found that using interventions that require him to keep track of his actions using large numbers works best. J needs a challenge to keep him focused and she touches on his math strengths by using numbers. Mrs. P works alongside J's mother and reports his progress daily to

her through the use of a student planner and email. Mrs. P also said that the letter system that all of first grade uses to record their behavior is not effective with him and was more of a challenge than beneficial. This was another reason why she switched to a number system to help J with his shout-outs.

Mrs. P said recently J met the goal his mother set for him at the beginning of the year to make one friend. She thought he had made a friend with student M but that only lasted a day. However, recently he told a little girl that he would miss her if she moved schools. She thought about it and responded that she would miss him too. This made him very excited and happy. Since then the two sit next to each other and interact.

### ***Special Educator Conversation:***

Mrs. H is J's special education teacher. She stated that at the beginning of the year she tried to find a time that would work to pull J out of the class for a short period to work with him on social skills. This was very difficult to because J would always have a reason why leaving the room at that time wouldn't work for him. Example: "Mrs. P reads Little Treehouse now so I can't miss that." Mrs. H said he was very concerned with keeping his schedule and making changes such as pulling him out were very concerning for J. She now conferences with him each morning.

### ***Speech Service:***

J sees the school speech therapist 2x/week in a small group. She consults with Mrs. P and his special education teacher especially in terms of pragmatics. J is working on pragmatic language skills such as turn taking and topic maintenance in conversation and how to be good a listener in a large group. We have used many social stories for these things. He is also working on semantics and syntax in terms of word meanings and how to form grammatically correct sentences. J is also working on understanding and following directions but these are impacted by his attention/topic maintenance. He is not currently working on any articulation skills

## **3. Observation Notes**

I observed J over the course of two days. Both observation times took place in the regular education classroom during math.

On the first day I observed he was stuck on the fact that the bell had rung at 8:34 instead of 8:30. When speaking to another student during my first observation he leaned in extremely close to the peer next to him and with a very loud voice stated "It's 382!" which was the answer to the math problem. He then continued to repeat this phrase. He was stating this first out loud, in which the teacher had to remind him to raise his hand. He then began repeating the phrase to himself. He was also disruptive with his shout outs during math time. He had a total of 7 shout-outs during the first 30 minutes of my observation.

J did seem very engaged with his math work but he had a difficult transitioning from using the math manipulatives to working with his math journal. He became fixated on the cubes he was working with and making sure that his table had enough cubes and longs to work with. When the

class transitioned to putting the manipulatives away and working in their journals he stated, “We need more longs” in a frustrated tone. After getting his math journal out he held it up in front of his face and was asked twice by the teacher to rest his journal on his desk.

During my second day of observation J was engaged in the same type of math activity. The second day of observation allowed me to observe more social skills that are problematic for J. When I walked into the classroom he was already irritated with the peers at his table. He yelled “It’s mine” and then corrected the teacher when she asked another student a question. During this observation J had 5 shout-outs. The daily math activity required J to work with his neighbor M. J was reminded 3 times that he was to work together with M to solve the math problem. J says to M “Just use yours” when working with the cubes and pushes them away from M. He then shout-out to M in a loud tone “We don’t have that much!” becoming gradually frustrated with his partner. When another student attempts to help M with the cubes, J says “I’m helping him!”

Throughout the observation I watched as J would rotate back and forth from attempting to work with his partner to making noises and placing his face in front of another peer at the tables T. At one point he grabbed T’s finger and then put his face on her desk. J was also asked to sit in seat 4 different times during the observation. He was unable to keep his chair on the ground and his body in his seat.

#### **4. Student behavior relevant to ASD eligibility.**

From observing J and speaking with his teachers I found that J has impaired receptive and expressive language skills. His pragmatic language skills are weak for his age. He has a difficult time processing auditory information and following 1 and 2 step directions. When speaking his syntax and utterance lengths are weak. He gives commands and does not use full sentences when speaking to others.

Socially, J has a difficult time with eye contact and topic maintenance. He gets stuck on topics. J uses repetitive phrases when talking. He becomes very frustrated and irritated when his schedule changes.

When interacting with peers and his teacher he is verbally abrasive and invades others personal space. Students are often intimidated by his abrasiveness and lack of respect for their personal space. He is not capable of helping a peer out without taking complete charge and directing them to what they need to do. He becomes overbearing and is not able to work alongside a partner without becoming frustrated.

J often becomes stuck on the topics of roads and numbers. If you ask him about a street or how to get to a location he can tell you where to go using street names and cardinal directions. When changes to daily routine occur this can encompass his entire day. For example, the school held Grandparent’s day and he was very agitated that his individuals were in and out of his classroom that he did not know.

#### **5. Decision and Rationale**

My recommendation based on conversation with his J's teachers and observation of his behavior in the classroom is for him to receive special education services for ASD. J's disability adversely affects his communication, social skills, and behavior and requires special education services.

Currently, J is at the present level of academic achievement. Math is his strongest subject and his performance is high in math. In the subjects of reading and writing J is at grade level but does struggle with reading skills due to his impaired receptive and expressive language skills. J's disorder adversely affects his behavior and social skills. He has marked impairments in the use of non verbal behaviors such making eye contact. He is not able to develop relationships with peers his age. J is unable to share enjoyment and interests with peers. But he is capable of enjoying and showing pleasure in his own achievements. J has trouble expressing what he needs and wants due to his spoken language. He has impairment in pragmatics and speaks in short phrases. J uses word and phrase repetition. He is unable to take part in spontaneous play. He does not participate in developmentally appropriate play with his peers. J engages in repetitive behaviors that interrupt his learning in the classroom. He becomes restricted to specific topics and can focus on nothing else. J is intolerant of change and needs his routines to remain the same each day.

## **6. Interventions currently in place**

### ***Interventions with Classroom Teacher:***

Currently in the classroom Mrs. P has set up an intervention that helps J with his shout outs and disruptive behavior. J keeps track of his shout outs on a small index card. He gets 50 points in the morning and 50 points in the afternoon. For each time he shouts out he has to deduct a point from his 50 points. Mrs. P says he enjoys keeping track of his points and needs a challenging system so they work with higher numbers. At the end of the day his typical total is 80 for the morning and afternoon. His progress gets sent home and mom has set up a reward/ consequence system in relation to his points. If he gets below 70 points he has to go to bed 5 minutes early. If he gets between 70-85 he has a regular bedtime and if he gets above 85 he gets to stay up 5 minutes later. This is a very big deal at home because J is so stuck on his daily routines and schedules. While this is a reward/ consequence system it also helps him work with change and the unpredictable.

### ***Interventions with Special Education Teacher:***

When Mrs. S meets with J each morning in his classroom they discuss his three goals that he is always work on. Along with discussing they look at the visual pictures that he keeps, which indicates what each goal needs to look like. His three daily goals are:

1. Talking Out
2. Correcting the Teacher
3. Talking over Peers

The discuss his tally/number plan that is put into place by Mrs. P and how he will work on his three goals for the day.

Another intervention that Mrs. S did for the first half of the school year was read a social story each morning. During breakfast time in the cafeteria before the bell rang, J would read his social

story “Keeping Hands and Feet to Myself.” This was done before the school day started so it wouldn’t disrupt his routine.

**7. Do I feel the interventions are appropriate and/or effective? Please explain and discuss.**

I feel like his general education teacher has done a wonderful job at creating an intervention that addresses J’s strengths while at the same time helping to monitor his behavior. The intervention allows J to work with numbers, which is a strength and passion of his. It also teaches him to take responsibility for his actions by keeping track of his shout-outs which is a goal of his. The intervention is also supported at home by J’s parents and they have created a reward/consequence system that addresses J’s adherence to change.

The special education teacher had trouble creating interventions that required J to be pulled from class because it caused anxiety for J. I feel like she has done her best to accommodate his needs while at the same time addressing his daily goals. J is never pulled from the general education classroom but she does come and conference with him daily. This has become part of J’s routine and it is a way to reinforce his 3 behavior and social goals using visual cues. I also feel like the social story was a great way for J to be reminded daily of how to interact with peers.

J is also receiving his speech therapy twice a week outside the classroom. His speech teacher works to address his deficits in language and communication. She works with him using social stories and activities that address turn taking and topic maintenance.

8. If interventions are being used - how would you improve the interventions to better address the student’s behavior problems or skill deficits? If interventions are not being used – discuss one you might implement to address the student’s behavior problems or skill deficits. (3 pts)

I think J would benefit from another intervention that works with peer relationships. He can be very abrasive and students are intimidated by him. Finding an intervention that allows him to help others, which he enjoys doing, and teaches him appropriate behaviors when interacting with peers would be great.

I think the social story intervention was a great idea and I would like to see that intervention continue in the mornings. I would like to use a social story that shows pictures of J and how he could appropriately interact with a little boy M in his class. Mrs. H explained that M is a little boy who needs a lot of help following morning routines such as hanging up his backpack, getting his folder and planner out, and getting started on his morning job. J likes to help M, but doesn’t know how to do so without being overbearing and controlling M. J does not use appropriate tones and language when working with M. He does realize the difference between “show” and “do” for M. Using a social story that uses pictures to show how J could remind M to hang his backpack up, get out his red folder, and then do his job would be a great way to teach J how to

work alongside a peer to help. The social story would show appropriate interactions and J would read and practice appropriate ways to speak and guide M in the mornings.

9. Reflection: Highlight what you learned from this assignment. How might this experience benefit you in your future professional work? (3 pts)