**Reflection Process**

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Adapted from The Principal Portfolio, 2nd Edition (2000) by G. Brown and B. Irby

*Artifact: Identify the assignment. (Optional) Include any documents that support your completion of the assignment (documents may be scanned).*

001.2 "A Promising Academic Model for Students With Disabilities" November 12, 2013

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/11/13/12cortiella.h33.html?qs=one+year+plus>

*Describe: Describe the findings for the assignments.*

During the 2011-2012 academic school year, the Baltimore City School District implemented a policy system, One Year Plus, which focuses on raising academic expectations of students with disabilities and holding school accountable for students making significant progress. This policy is in response to the Department of Education eager to shift special education towards a system that focuses on educational results and functional outcomes rather than compliance. Along with One Year Plus, schools should be held accountable for helping children make adequate progress and achieve their prospected outcomes.

One Year Plus was created on two foundations: First, as reported by the National Center on Education Outcomes, special education students have the cognitive ability to achieve the same standards as their nondisabled peers when giving the appropriate support, accommodations, and specially-research designed instruction. Second, students with disabilities have the same rights to instruction and other supportive services as students without disabilities.

The following are required of the policy system if students are to benefit:

* Students on a regular diploma track must have goals geared towards a minimum of 12 months of academic progress during the span of the IEP. Students with significant cognitive disabilities are excluded.
* When a large gap between current grade level and performance level is present, the IEP annual goals must represent how much progress is expected to be made within 12months.
* IEP goals should be measurable, able to be implemented effectively, and a committee decision.

However, in order for the policy to be effective, low expectations of teachers towards student performance needs to be transformed. Professional developments, data retrieval/progress monitoring, and IEP implementation should improve and increase. The Baltimore City School District has evidence through reports that the policy system is meeting student expectations. Despite the program currently geared towards students with disabilities on a regular diploma track, they are confident that this policy system can benefit students with more significant cognitive disabilities.

*Analyze: a. Describe the importance of the findings for the assignment.*

This article is of crucial importance due to the current state of the special education system. When I began reading the article and discovering how and why the policy system was created and who would benefit, I was elated that a school district is focusing on the current issues that many school districts across the nation face. However, towards the conclusion of the article, they mentioned that the program is geared only towards students on a regular diploma track. These would be students with learning disabilities, other health impairments, or disabilities where their cognitive abilities are greatly impacted. Even though these students would benefit greatly, the policy system ignores other disability categories. The article provides the policy requirements, some of which I agree and disagree with. I agree that teachers need more efficient and effective professional developments, more research-validated curriculum and resources to implement academic standards, and assistance with developing measurable IEP goals. On the other hand, I do not feel that all students will always be able to obtain 15 to18 months of growth within 12 months. There are so many other factors, such as was there previous instruction adequate for them to make this amount of growth within this timeframe.

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*b. Include connections to your 5 year goals or desired position.*

In becoming an educational diagnostician, my interpretation of evaluation results and developing recommendations and strategies is vital to the development of IEP annual goals. I am presenting to the committee what students know and can do and what they need to be taught. This will help to close the achievement and performance gaps and students can work towards progress in necessary areas. Some components of this article are a reflection of my feelings about what needs to transform within special education. Personally, I have only attended a handful of beneficial professional developments in my four year career. My school district has introduced several reading curriculums, is in need of a math curriculum, and does not always have resources readily available to teachers. I have not always felt adequate or confident to perform my students, but my primary goal is for my students to make progress.

*c. Compare/contrast elements in your findings to your experiences or previous knowledge.*

My experiences and previous knowledge has been enhanced by my education, research in the case studies I have reviewed, and direct on the job training with special education children.

*Appraise: Critique or describe whether any of your findings were beneficial to you or not.*

My findings are very beneficial because partnerships with the parent, school and community need to be improved

*Transform: a. Describe any future ideas or insights you gained.*

The article is helps me understand the direction the Department of Education wants special education to go. It is very pleasing to see that the Baltimore City School District is improving student performance by implementing the One Year Plus policy system. The name speaks for itself that each year students should make one year of growth. However, in order to make this a reality nationwide, all districts should take a closer look at the structure of their special education department and meet student expectations.

*b. Describe future plans for use of the ideas presented, including any changes in your current practices or, describe how the information confirmed your current practices and/or beliefs.*

The presented article information encourages me to want to learn more about the shift from school compliance to school accountability. As a teacher, my goal is to make sure IEPs are measurable, obtainable, and focus on what students need to be taught. I can only benefit my students more if I attend relevant professional developments and implement the findings in my classroom. Other school districts should examine how the Baltimore City School District is improving student success and either adopt or restructure their department to truly benefit all students with disabilities.