

Ashlyn Szabo

Mr. Bronkar

English CIBACS 3

12 December 2022

## **My Journey Through The Classroom**

### **Introduction**

I had the pleasure of completing my internship with [Nicole Messick](#). She is a special abilities teacher at [Hawes Elementary School](#). Mrs. Messick teaches children from kindergarten to second grade. Although she has been teaching for nine years, she has only taught at Hawes for three years. As for education, she has her Specialist-Moderate/Severe credential and Master of Education in Teaching. I would describe her as a patient, kind, and passionate individual. Mrs. Messick really made me feel comfortable and was an amazing mentor.

### **Day 1: [12/13](#) (Observe & Building blocks)**

Today was my first day of interning! Honestly, I was very nervous. This morning, I talked to Nicole about my worries, and she was very understanding and comforting. The first thing I did was check in with the front desk. Luckily, the principal was in the room next door. She remembered me from when I went to Hawes many years ago. She walked me to the classroom and made me feel secure. The second I opened the classroom door, I knew this was going to be a great journey. Mrs. Messick immediately said hello, but continued her duties. As she worked, I looked around the [classroom](#). The first thing I thought was *wow*. The [class](#) looked way different than any other class I have seen. There was a total of 4 other teachers in the class, but only 8

students. This allows for a sort of one-on-one, *I guess one-on-two*, communication with the students. I realize that it is very important to keep an eye out for all of the students. The teachers really know how to deal with the kids even when they are giving them a hard time. Seeing the teachers so motivated and confident in their job, was very inspiring. After a few minutes, I was actually assigned my very own task. I got paired up with a little boy named Jakie. Unfortunately, he was diagnosed with Down syndrome and hearing impairments. He is the sweetest little thing. I helped him to build blocks and sort through different colors and sizes. It was very interesting to see all of the kids' unique personalities. I really look forward to getting to know each and every one of the kids. After the kids left, I got to watch the clean-up process. In preparation for the upcoming day, they scooted in the chairs, put away any toys or random items, and wiped down the tables. I can't wait for another day and all the fun that awaits!

**Day 2: [12/14](#) (Arts and Crafts & Prep)**

Today was the second day of my internship. First off, I walked into the room and immediately got a task. I was given the opportunity to help out with a little boy named Jaxon. It actually worked out great, because every single kid had an adult to help with them. Another thing that I learned was that Mrs. Messick is the teacher, but the other adults in the room are called paraeducators. On the first day, I was wondering why Mrs. Messick was teaching, while the other ladies were helping the kids. *Interesting. That explains a lot.* Today was arts and crafts day. With my help and encouragement, Jaxon was able to cut, glue, and draw a picture of a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. I found it very difficult to keep Jaxon focused, because he was very easily distracted and would zone out occasionally. I learned that you need to be stern, but not in a scary way. It is okay to gently move the kid back into their seat or nicely direct them. When we

were finished with that, we watched a spelling video. It helps if you sing along to the video and show the kids how fun learning is. Then, we gave the kids their backpacks and got them ready to leave. Some of the kids get picked up by their parents, but some have to ride the bus. Today, Mrs. Messick asked me if I would like to walk Jakie (the kid I worked with yesterday) to the bus. Oh my goodness, he was just darling. He held his lunch pail in one hand while holding my hand in the other. I found out that the best way to get him to walk was by encouraging him with every step he took. After I dropped off Jakie, I went back to the room. When I returned, I received the task of prepping for another day. I traced little cutouts for an art project in the future.

**Day 3: [12/15](#) (Interview, Notes, & Prep)**

Today was an “early day” for the kids, so when I arrived, all of the kids had already left. Mrs. Messick and I had discussed an interview and came to the conclusion that today was a great day for it. No kids were there, so she wouldn’t be distracted from her job. Before the interview even began, she was already expressing how impressed she was. She couldn’t believe that a junior in high school was so poised and prepared. I handed her my [resume](#) and [cover letter](#), and I even printed out [sample interview questions](#). She didn’t even bother to look at the questions, she just got right into the interview. This [interview](#) was definitely different than the ones I have practiced before. Going into an interview where you don’t know much about the job field can be very difficult, but I still did great. She must have asked anywhere from twelve to sixteen questions. *That’s a lot compared to my practice interview.* Although Mrs. Messick is really sweet, I was still nervous. I genuinely cared about her opinion of me, so I was nervous that she wasn’t going to like my answers. Luckily, that wasn’t the case. With almost every question, she would say something like “wow, great answer” or “perfect.” Hearing her encouragement really

helped me get through the stress. I have to admit that some of the questions were very difficult, but I still managed to say just the right thing. After the interview was over, Mrs. Messick really expressed her feelings. She thought that I did wonderfully. She told me that the thing she loved the most about my answers was the examples and the in-depth explanations that I gave to her. After the reflection, I asked Mrs. Messick if she would tell me more about herself and the job at hand and I took [notes](#). She was super helpful and gave me a lot of tips about getting her specific degree. It was really interesting to learn about. When our conversation came to a conclusion, I got to work again prepping for another day. I traced more cutouts for a project in the future.

**Day 4: [12/16](#) (Music)**

Today was music day. The kids were taken out to a portable where a music teacher led the class. Interactive videos were projected onto a whiteboard. We each paired up with a student and encouraged them to sing and dance. It was very interesting and special to see a group of students so entertained and hyper. After the music class was over, the students got a little free time outside. They had the option to play on the playground or ride bikes and scooters. After about fifteen minutes, it was time to wrap up. We got the kids packed up and sent them home. Then, we cleaned the classroom and prepped for the next day.

**Day 5: [12/21](#) (Arts and Crafts & Prep)**

Today was a pretty mellow day. Right away, I got assigned to work with Jaxon again. I helped him cut and glue pictures onto a piece of paper. One of the paraeducators, Mrs. Neomi, was helping another student right next to me. She was very helpful and taught me a few tricks on how to deal with the kids. She told me that if you do little squeeze's all the way down the student's arm while counting with each squeeze, it will relax him. *It worked!* He kept asking for

me to do it again, but after a few times, he was content. *That is so crazy.* I never would have thought to do that. I definitely learned that being a special education teacher it is necessary that you get to know each and every student and what makes them learn best. For example, one of the little girls is very food driven. In order to get her to pay attention or do what she is told, she is given one singular Swedish Fish. On another note, it was really interesting to see how the teacher and the paraeducators dealt with difficult students. Today, a little boy was refusing to do his work. He was trying to lay down and was being very disobedient. If I'm being honest, he was so little that it was kind of cute. Rather than baby him, I watched how Mrs. Messick was stern with her voice and told him that it was not okay. She was able to get him to focus by holding his hand and walking around the classroom a few times. Another thing that I learned was the diction that the teacher uses. She used the same word choice every time she tells the students to do something. Repetition is very important so that the kids can remember and associate actions with words. When gluing something, we say "put on" and when we need to stick it onto the paper, we say "pat pat." After the students packed up and left, I helped prepare for the upcoming day. Although I didn't do much today, I feel like I learned a lot.

**Day 6: [12/22](#) (Prep)**

Today was a very low-key day. It was an "early day" for the students, so they were not there when I arrived. I just helped [prep for the next day](#). Through this internship, I not only learned what class is like during school hours, but I also got to see what class is like after hours.

**Day 7: [12/23](#) (All day)**

Today I didn't have school, but Mrs. Messick did. I had the amazing opportunity to be in her class all day. I've really been wanting to experience the classroom at the beginning the day,

and this worked out perfectly for me. At the beginning of the day, Mrs. Messick gave me my [own schedule](#)! The first thing that we did was help the students do puzzles. After that, we watched a learning video, then spread out to different math stations. I was in charge of the [tablet station](#). At my station, the students got to pick any learning game that they wanted to play. After 10 minutes, each student rotated to the next station. It was nice to be able to work with all of the kids. Following that activity, the kids went outside to eat a snack. Once they were finished with their snack, we took them out to recess. I buddied up with Jaxon and watched him as he played. He played on the playground equipment, then we went onto the grass to kick a soccer ball. When we got back to the classroom, we started another rotation for reading. Again, I was in charge of the tablet station. After that, it was time for lunch. We went to the lunch tables and the kids ate for about fifteen minutes, then they went out to play for around thirty minutes. This time, I was in charge of watching Jakie. We pretty much just walked around. When lunch was over, we took the students back to the room and it was my lunch. I went to the [teachers lounge and ate my salad](#). *I felt so important.* When I got back to the room, it was time to start prepping for the gingerbread house making party. All of the student's parents were invited, but not all could make it. I was there to assist the parents and pass out building materials. It was really cute. After all of the parents and students left, I cleaned up.

**Day 8: [3/1/23](#) (Arts and Crafts & Pictures)**

Today, I went back to Mrs. Messick's classroom to get more evidence. I helped a student named Nasir. I assisted him in some arts and crafts. After that was done, we got the kids packed up and ready to go. As we were packing up, it started to hail outside! The students starting running towards the door, but we had to get them back in their seats. I have definitely been

shown that this job isn't easy. Luckily, it stopped hailing and we were able to get them out to the bus. After the students left, I helped [prepare](#) for the next day. I also took some pictures around the classroom and with the [staff](#).

## **Conclusion**

I really enjoyed interning with Mrs. Messick. Unfortunately, I don't have any pictures of the actual students, because I was not permitted to take pictures of them. I learned so much more than I ever could have imagined. Some things you just have to experience to truly understand. This job may be difficult sometimes, but it is truly rewarding to see the students thrive. I really loved helping out and am definitely considering pursuing this career.