Proposal for Internship: EDUC 890
Susan Kenney
Summer 2009

Internship Topic: CompuWrite Camp

Topic and Relevance of the Internship:

The complex skill of writing involves a combination of motor processing skills and language

competence (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2009) that continues to be vital

throughout many aspects of life. Students with learning disabilities are often plagued with

writing difficulties (Newcomer & Barenbaum, 1991). The struggle to concentrate on letter

formation, illusive spelling, and confusing mechanics, often confounds students' higher level

thinking processes (McCutchen, 1995). Relieved of handwriting and spelling pressure with word

processing, spell check, and word prediction, students can focus on higher level thinking skills.

MacArthur (1996) asserted, "Existing research on word processing makes it clear that simply

providing technology to teachers and students will not result in improvements in students'

writing" (p. 352). Some studies indicate a positive influence when AT is used for writing by

students with learning disabilities (e.g., Lewis, 2007; Zhang, 2000), while others do not (e.g.,

MacArthur & Graham, 1987). Perhaps teachers' level of technology comfort and attitudes make

a difference. Lewis (2007) stated, "Staff believed that if teachers deemed the hardware and

software provided by the project valuable they would be more likely to use them in the

classroom" (p. 27). Li (2007) found, through teacher and student surveys, that although teachers

tend to use technology with "strong students" they are less likely to recognize benefits

technology can provide for students with weaknesses. "The students cry out loud for the more

frequent use of technology and the adoption of more current technology in schools. … Their teachers, on the other hand, are far less enthusiastic" (p. 391). Educational integration of assistive technology is vital if students are to have access to AT. Teachers need a chance to learn about the technologies available and they need to experience giving access to students and witnessing the results.

The purpose of this internship is to work in a leadership capacity in a writing camp with a focus on assistive technology. I will show teacher interns how to use many different software programs with struggling writers, assist with trouble shooting technical issues, and help them work through challenging situations. With this summer experience, perhaps they will be more prepared to use assistive technology in the classroom.

Learning Objectives:

☐ To develop leadership skills for working with educational professionals

☐ To be able to communicate constructive teaching suggestions for integrating assistive technology

☐ To encourage teachers and assist them through the problem solving process in challenging situations of assistive technology integration

☐ To develop, practice, and communicate strategies to enhance teacher/student interaction during the student acquisition of Assistive Technology skills

☐ To develop critical observational skills for the educational setting

☐ To explore how the use of AT affects student outlook and attitude toward writing, teacher interaction, and student independence

☐ To explore and describe possible dissertation research questions associated with AT applications

Activities/duties to be performed:

- □ Supervision of teachers

- □ Model strategies for AT integration

- □ Observation of teachers as they instruct students in the use of assistive technology

- □ Advise teachers in the use of assistive technology with students in small group settings

On-site supervisor role:

- □ Technical support

- □ Guidance regarding the analysis of experience in relation to viable dissertation topics

- □ Evaluator of the Intern's participation and products

Paper(s)/report(s)/other product(s) to be developed or produced:

- □ Field notes

  - o Observation of teacher/student interaction during training

  - o Interview Notes

- □ PowerPoint

  - o Camp organization

  - o Camp experiences

  - o Strategies for AT integration

  - o Student impressions

  - o Teacher impressions

  - o Dissertation Research Possibilities

- □ Reflection paper

  - o Analysis of the experience in relation to background, outcomes, and learning

  - o Evaluation of the Internship in relation to program goals and doctoral program

On site working schedule:

June 6th – 4 PM- 8:30 PM & June 7th, 2009- 9 AM -2 PM

July 7th , 2009-July 31, 2009- 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Evaluation procedures:

- ☐ Participation and communication (30 %)

- ☐ Field notes (10 %)

- ☐ PowerPoint (20 %)

- ☐ Reflection paper (40 %)

References

Lewis, C. (2007). *Technology for learning disabilities project.* Portland, Oregon: Central

    Washington University, Special Education Technology Center. RMC Research

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Li, Q. (2007). Student and teacher views about technology: A tale of two cities? *Journal*

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MacArthur, C. A., & Graham, S. (1987). Learning disabled students are composing

    under three methods of test production: handwriting, word processing, and

    dictation. *The Journal of Special Education, 21,* 22 - 42.

McCutchen, D. (1995). Cognitive processes in children's writing: Developmental and

    individual differences. *Issues in Education: Contributions from Educational*

    Psychology, 1, 123-160.

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    with learning disabilities: A review of the literature from 1980-1990. *Journal of*

    Learning Disabilities, 24, 578-593.

Zhang, Y. (2000). Technology and the writing skills of students with learning disabilities.

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