**Location: Dayton, Tennessee**

**School: Rhea Central Elementary**

**Teacher: Kati Williams**

**Grade: 1st**

**Required for College Class: Exceptional Children**

**Thursday, February 3, 2011**

Today was my first day at Rhea Central Elementary School! I found the teacher’s classroom right away after checking in with the office. I could tell it had been a rough day right off the bat. The teacher seemed flustered and it was just 11 am. The first thing I did was cut out shapes for a craft project for another teacher in a different classroom. Then when the students came back from lunch I helped a girl with who had some exceptionalities. I helped her finish a worksheet and all she had to do was fill in the blanks with words from a word bank. She was confused at first but then she seemed to get it by the end. I enjoyed working with her, so I hope I can help her again. Then the class did another worksheet about telling time and the calendar. The students worked at their own pace. Some were fast and read quickly so they were often ahead of the teacher. Others were in their own world and didn’t have anything written down on the first page when the teacher started going over the second page. There must be some way to do this better. I did appreciate how she taught time using the clock’s hour and minute hands. “First look at the hour hand. If it’s pointing between two numbers, choose the first number. Think of the clock as a number line. For the minute hand, count by 5s.”

**Thursday, February 17, 2011**

Today I got to the classroom at 8:30 am and stayed till 2:30 pm. It was Day of Prayer at Bryan College and we didn’t have classes so I thought it would be a good idea to see what a regular day looks like in this first grade classroom. When I got there the teacher put me to work right away. Next week is President’s week so I made a banner that said, “If I were President..” and then the kids wrote down on pieces of paper what they would do if they were president. Then I made a snowman that said “Let It Snow!” Then I made a space gameboard. I also helped the students with math. They do at least three worksheets a day, usually two for math. I am surprised at how many worksheets they do. It seems like they are always trying to finish a worksheet. And they all work at different speeds. Four kids didn’t come to school yesterday, so the teacher had them stay inside during recess and finish the worksheets they had missed. I stayed with them and they could go outside when they were finished. At least 3 boys didn’t finish so they didn’t get to go outside. There has to be a better way to teach math than doing worksheet after worksheet. I also got to eat lunch with my teacher and two other teachers. They were talking about their days. Teachers always seem stressed! One of the teachers had been teaching for 15 years, one of them just started this year. I wonder how long I will last.

**Thursday, March 17, 2011**

The teacher has found my creative side. Every time I go to practicum now the first hour is spent making something. I find it fun and the students enjoy seeing what I make, too. Today I drew a black pot and put gold pieces in it. And then I made a huge rainbow coming out of the pot. I used a lot of construction paper! I think it was for Saint Patrick’s Day. The students are starting to recognize and get more comfortable with me now. At least 2 girls gave me hugs today, and the girl that has special needs that I usually tutor came up to me and stood by me, acting like she wanted me to help her again. After I got done with the rainbow, the teacher wanted me to work with a new girl with what is called *Reading Recovery.*  I had never heard of that term before but from what I gather it’s about quickly reading letters and sounds. The student I worked with today came to the school this past week and knows very little English. I worked with her on the letters that she already knew: m, t, p. For each letter she would write it in the air, on the whiteboard, in the sand, and with magnetic pieces. We would repeat this process over and over again with each letter. Then she had some worksheets associated with each letter to do as well. She was a sweet girl and I was surprised that we were still able to communicate even though she didn’t know much English. I tried to use my facial expressions and gestures to make her feel comfortable with me. After awhile we were both giggling and having fun learning the letters. ☺

**Thursday, April 14, 2011**

Today was my last day of practicum. The school was doing TCAPS this week, and even though the 1st graders didn’t have to do it, their pullout times were changed. When I got there I started working on a game board for the students to play with later. She likes giving me art projects to do. I saw she laminated some of the other banners and signs I did in the past. The students worked on another math worksheet today, but they were excited they only had to do one. It was simple addition and subtraction with word problems. I’ve enjoyed working in this classroom this semester and have gotten a better idea how a 1st grade classroom functions.