

Michael Casey
Putting it all together
Reflection

I observed one 6th grade class and one 7th/8th grade class. For the most part, students were developmentally and cognitively progressing at appropriate levels. The difference between a 6th grade student and a 7th or 8th grade student is large. Differences that can quickly be picked up on mainly center on the students' social skills, maturity and problem solving skill sets. For example, 6th grade students were selecting books that they viewed were "easy to read." When I observed 8th grade students, they cited that they picked out books that interested them. In some cases, this meant they were reading books that required a higher Lexile level than where they currently were at. This challenges students in a positive way.

Students in 8th grade were working on multistep/multivariable math equations. This demonstrates an ability to think not only linearly but in some cases, abstractly. Students used vocabulary associated with content more frequently in 8th grade than in 6th grade. This is in line with what I thought I would observe.

Students in 6th grade appear to need more movement than students in 8th grade. 8th grade students more readily comply with sitting in chairs and completing work. On the contrary, 6th grade students would rather that they didn't have to sit in a chair. Teachers in 6th grade regularly had to ask students to sit at their desks. This proves that middle school students would probably benefit from some physical activity throughout the day. This also suggests that schools should look into a variety of seating options in the classroom.

It would be an excellent practice as a school leader to continuously review the different ages of childhood development of the students I serve. Additionally, it would most likely be beneficial to teachers to also review these attributes as well.