CASE STUDY: Jackie
Signature Assignment
Background Information:

Jackie B. is a sophomore at a high school in the Long Beach Unified School District. She will turn seventeen in three months. As a student diagnosed with a Specific Learning Disability, she has an annual review of her current IEP coming up. She’s a native English speaker that lives with her mother. While her mother has rights over her, the grandmother plays a large role in her life. She has four half brothers and sisters. She has a brother that she says she’s never really seen. There wasn’t much information on her father. According to Jackie, her friends play a large role in her life. Their opinions and well-being are very important to her. Her Strategies for Success class has not finished its IEP Unit. Jackie is still learning about her IEP. Now that she knows how much of an impact her IEP can have, she’s become very strong-willed towards her education. Her future goal is to work in the medical field. Her responses to what her future plans usually vary, but they run a common theme, “I don’t know, but I wanna be a nurse or something.” All she wants to do is help others.

A review of her academic records over the past five years reveals that Jackie B. has maintained an average GPA of 1.95. She earned her lowest GPA of 1.5 as a freshman in high school. In middle school, she averaged 2.4 for her GPA. Since middle school, math has been her hardest subject. This is her second year taking Algebra I. She has averaged a D throughout her school records since 6th grade. She is able to orally recite algebraic rules if she is asked. Without telling her the mistake, Jackie is able to identify almost 2 out of every 3 times the mistake that she made. When she is struggling with concepts like integer rules or combining like terms, Jackie prefers to ask for assistance rather than do the task individually. She currently struggles with integer rules and combining-like terms. She consistently repeats that math is her weakest subject.
As for her abilities in English Language Arts, Jackie B. writes very well when it comes to sentence structures. From her in class journal, Jackie tries to make complex sentences with combinations of dependent and independent clauses. When she has trouble with spelling, she uses phonemic awareness to use letters that correspond to the sound. Though she’s not always right, she gets close. Unfortunately, Jackie gives up when she is starting to get frustrated with a task; she’s also more like to give up when she knows she won’t get assistance.

**Present Levels of Performance:**

Jackie B. is a student with a Specific Learning Disability. This disability impacts her academic performance. Jackie took a total of seven of the eight proposed assessments. Due to a scheduling clash with another class, she was unable to take the final teacher-made assessment. Jackie was assessed using the Woodcock Johnson IV Tests of Achievement Form B. She was tested in three clusters. Each cluster focused on one domain. Jackie was tested with the Reading Fluency Cluster, which consists of Oral Reading and Sentence Reading Fluency tests. This cluster focused on her oral reading abilities. She was also tested with the Written Language Cluster. This cluster consisted of Writing Samples and Spelling assessments that focused on her spelling and writing abilities. She was also tested with a Math Calculation Skills Cluster. This cluster consisted of Math Facts Fluency and Calculation tests. Her final assessment was an Algebra 1 Unit 1 Assessment on Equations and Inequalities that is provided by the district.

The scores are analyzed based on Age Equivalency, Relative Proficiency Index (RPI), Standard Score, and Percentile Rank. Age Equivalency is the age in which the student is performing. RPI is proficiency in which the student is performing the task compared to other students in her grade level. Standard scores reflect comparisons of performance. The mean or
mode standard score on these assessments is 100. This is the average range. If a student were to score lower, then he or she would be below average.

In the Reading Fluency Cluster, which focused on Jackie’s reading abilities, Jackie was able to score better than 17% of the students in her age range that took the assessment. This cluster tests a student’s accuracy and speed in testing. In the domain of reading, fluency helps with reading comprehension. Her standard score of 86 is showing that she is -1 standard deviation from the mean of 100 for Reading Fluency. According to the test results, Jackie’s proficiency level of reading fluency for her age is at 48%. In this regard, she is performing at the age equivalent of a student that is 11 years and 7 months old. On one of the specific assessments within the cluster, Jackie did better than 34% of the students in her age went tested in Oral Reading. Her Relative Proficiency Level is at 81% for someone in her age. She still had a standard score of 94, which is still below the mean for her age. However, her age equivalence was that of a student who was 13 years and 9 months old. Jackie scored lower for her Sentence Reading Fluency assessment. She was below the mean with her standard score of 83 and only scored better than 13% of the rest of the students her age that took this assessment. Her standard score is a little over 1 standard deviation to the left of the mean. Her age equivalence is at 11 years of age. Her proficiency level is at 17%.

- Jackie’s reading fluency skills are currently 5 years below her age level. She is able to decode simple text rapidly and almost effortlessly. When she faces sentences that contain one or two words she may have trouble with, Jackie automatically uses access background knowledge of phonemic awareness. She will need to attempt words she reads instead of substituting unknown words with known words. While Jackie is reading
sentences, she will take her time to make sure that she is reading each sentence correctly. She will have to learn to increase her speed.

In the domain of spelling, Jackie’s skills are limited to average. She was tested in the Written Language cluster, which measures her spelling, and written expression. In this cluster, she was able to score better than 24% of the students in her age that took this assessment. Her age equivalency for this cluster was that of a student who is 12 years and 7 months old. Her relative proficiency index is at 73%. Once again, the Relative Proficiency Level compares Jackie’s proficiency for written language tasks to that of same age peers. She still had a standard score of 89, which is below the mean for students her age. Her Spelling age equivalent is that of a student who is 11 years and 11 months old. She is still had a standard score below the mean, which is 88. Her percentile rank is 21%. Her proficiency level is at 60% for a student her age.

Unfortunately, her Writing Samples assessment had to be scored twice. In the original score, Jackie’s score was above and beyond her actual skills. The Written Samples assessment was then taken to an individual who has nearly a decade of experience in scoring the Woodcock Johnson. The scores may still reflect a score slightly higher than Jackie’s actual level. The second scores for Written Samples concluded that Jackie performs at the age equivalence of a student who is 13 years and 9 months old. Jackie’s percentile rank is 35%. She did better than 35% of the students that took this assessment. She was also able to perform this task at 83% proficiency. However, her standard score of 94 was close to the mean for this assessment, but still below average.

- Jackie is currently performing below grade level in her Written Language skills. She is able to use phonemic awareness to attempt spelling unknown sounds. She needs to improve her consonant blends and consonant digraph skills. She is able to write on almost any topic that she is given. She is able to stay on the given topic for a few
sentences. With extra help, Jackie will be able to expand her writing skills to use more descriptive words.

Her final cluster was the Math Calculation Skills Cluster. This cluster measures math computational skills. Jackie scored better than 15% of the students in her age range that took this assessment. The assessment puts her at the “Limited” level of proficiency for her age. Jackie’s age equivalent is at 11 years and 9 months. Her standard score was 85, which puts her at -1 standard deviation from the mean. Her overall Math Calculation RPI is at 47%. In the subtests for this cluster, Jackie almost had the same scores. In the Calculation assessment, Jackie had a standard score of 85 and she performed at the age equivalent of 11 years and 7 months. She still scored better than 15% of the same-age students that took this assessment. However, her proficiency level was at 45%. As for her Math Facts Fluency, Jackie performed better than 18% of the students that took this assessment. Her age equivalence was at 11 years and 11 months old. Her standard score of 86 put her -1 standard deviation from the mean. She performed at 48% proficiency.

As for Jackie’s Algebra 1, Unit 1 Assessment, there isn’t much information to share. Since it is a district exam that was given recently, it was nearly impossible to receive any data. This assessment did not compare her with any of her peers. However, the assessment is a compilation of content studied at the 8th grade to 9th grade level. As presented in the reports, Jackie’s Math skills are fairly low. Since she scored low on the Unit 1 Assessment as well, she could be potentially performing more than two grades below her current grade.

- Jackie will need extra help in math. She understands that this is her greatest need. She is willing to do extra work to learn different strategies for certain concepts. She is able to orally recite an algebraic rule if asked. If she makes a mistake during a multi-step
equation, she does not need to be told the exact details of the mistake. She is able to identify the mistake on her own.

**Observations:**

Jackie B.’s behavior during most of the assessments was fairly normal. However, she complained at the start of each example in the WJ IV assessments, but near the end of each example, she couldn’t control her laughter. She mentioned that they were “stupid and pointless.” It finally got to the point she chose not to do the examples for the Math Calculation Subtest.

Two of the seven assessments were taken with a group. The Math Calculation Subtest (Math Facts Fluency and Calculations) was taken along with other students. During both assessments, Jackie was VERY focused on her assessment. Her Calculation assessment was taken with a group. Three of her peers finished early, and she was the last to finish. When the second person finished the assessment, Jackie started to rush. She did not divert her eyes from her own paper, but her foot started to tap at a faster rate. At this point, she was nearing the end of her assessment with some of the harder, but doable for her grade level, questions. She finished her assessment a question earlier than she should have. This is something that I’ve seen since the beginning of the school year. Jackie is willing to try harder tasks, if she can get help. All of her Algebra I quizzes are done as a group; she’s had better grades with quizzes than tests because she is able to get help with a quiz. She was undeterred during her Algebra I Unit 1 and her Math Facts Fluency Assessments. Jackie was struggling with her Unit 1 Assessment but kept going, only to stop before the last question. She went through her Math Facts Fluency slowly, but still did very well.

Jackie was interrupted in her Written Language Subtest. During the spelling test, there was a major disruption while administering the last section of the assessment. She was given one
word above her ceiling. It was still very clear to see that Jackie was not willing to try as hard unless she received assistance for her Writing Samples assessment. She was hesitant when she was reading words she did not understand or could not pronounce. We had some trouble during her Reading Fluency Subtest. It took her several minutes to start each one. I pulled her out of her class and administered it during 6th period while another class was there. Though the class was mostly respectful, there was an outburst during the examples of the first assessment from another student after he heard her comment on the examples. Though the rest of the class paid no attention, this outburst came from her significant other. It took her a few minutes to regain her composure after laughing. The second assessment in the cluster was delayed by two visits to the classroom by another teacher.

Findings:

Both the parent and the daughter know that math is what Jackie needs the most help on. Though Ms. Jackie’s Mom wasn’t pushing her daughter to go to tutoring in the beginning of the year, Jackie now wants to go. After her vocational assessment, Jackie realizes that math is a necessary concept to learn. She’s learned from her Strategies for Success teacher that the problem solving skills she is learning in math will be applied to a future in the medical field. On top of this, she is wary of the possibility of being a Junior in an Algebra 1 class that contains mostly freshman. On top of this, Ms. Jackie’s Mom is fearful that Jackie has not learned the necessary money management skills. After Jackie’s IEP, her mom will have her attend after-school tutoring at her current high school. Both of them have come to terms that Jackie may not have the necessary A-G requirements to go straight to a 4-year college after high school due to past grades. It was also mentioned that Jackie is constantly on her phone. The mom may think
this is of concern as it limits academic practice at home. Unfortunately, Language Arts was not discussed.

**Sharing the Assessment:**

“Though these assessments are extremely helpful in determining Jackie’s current level, it is important to note to the parent and the student that these don’t reflect everything about Jackie. One set of assessments won’t prove it to be a reliable source. To ensure validity, the reports should also take into account the student’s past achievements.” These would be my first words to the parent. The initial step in communicating progress to a parent would have to be done in person. A face-to-face meeting can help improve rapport as it proves the willingness of a teacher to help a student. I will have to keep in mind that Jackie’s scores are low and may not be something that a mom would be happy to hear. During the IEP, I would give the mom the Parent Report from the Woodcock Johnson website. It may seem inappropriate to overwhelm a parent with the scores from assessments. I would also recite the bulleted points in the Present Level of Performance section. They focus on the strengths and needs without too much jargon. Once she understands that the scores are low, I will then focus on what can be done for Jackie.

Since both the parent and the daughter already agreed on tutoring, they will be given the current after school tutoring sessions during the meeting. Even so, it would be better to offer Math goals with benchmarks that address this. As for Jackie’s reading and spelling skills, these can be addressed with exposure to more books rather than cellphone screens. Jackie already turns in most of her assignments in her Language Arts class; however, this may not be enough practice. I would offer at least two Language Arts goals that address this.

**Sample Goals:**
Math
Given 20 Algebraic multi-step equations with at least 2 variables, Jackie will simplify to solve for a single variable with 80% accuracy for three consecutive weeks.

Benchmark
Given 20 Algebraic multi-step equations with at least 2 variables, Jackie will simplify to solve for a single variable with 60% accuracy for three consecutive weeks.

Language Arts
Jackie will write a 5 paragraph Argumentative essay with supporting sentences and concluding sentence on a given topic with (4-5 sentences) scoring a 3 out of 4 on a 4 scale 8th grade rubric using proper conventions of writing (punctuation, grammar) with minimal to no assistance 2/3 trials.