**Descriptive Review of a Special Needs Student**

# Assignment

# The teacher candidate will observe a special needs student over the course of the 50-hour field placement. This will be done with the permission of the host teacher but otherwise unobtrusively, nonjudgmentally, and unbeknownst to the student. The candidate will write a Descriptive Review essay (3 -4 pages) that integrates her findings with related research and discusses the student’s physical presence and gesture, disposition and temperament, connections with others, strong interests and preferences, and modes of thinking and learning. The final section of the essay will be a reflection on the process as well as how it helped to offer a greater sense of the special needs student and how to support him or her as a writer. The candidate will follow the collaborative, inquiry-based Descriptive Review protocol to present her essay to the class.

The 505 student uses only her observations. Using the guiding questions and categories in Kanevsky, she summarizes and interprets the observational data, distributes the review, and gives an uninterrupted presentation. The group reflects, poses questions, and asks for clarification. At the end of the review process, I ask for recommendations (based on Thurlow and other resources), pull everything together, and give a critique.

Resources

Bissex, Glenda L. "Small Is Beautiful: Case Study as Appropriate Methodology for Teacher Research." In *The Writing Teacher as Researcher*, eds. Donald A. Daiker and Max Morenberg. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1990: 70-75.

Himley, Margaret, and Patricia F. Carini, Eds. *From another angle: children's strengths and school standards: the Prospect Center's descriptive review of the child*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2000.

Kanevsky, Rhoda Drucker. "Descriptive Review of a Child: A Way of Knowing About Teaching and Learning." In *Inside/Outside: Teacher Research and Knowledge*, eds. Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Susan L. Lytle. New York: Teacher's College P, 1993: 150-162.

Strickland, Kathleen, and James Strickland. "Special Education and Other Concerns." In *Making*

*Assessment Elementary*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000: 138-166.

Thurlow, Martha. “Accommodations for Students with Disabilities in High School,“National Center

on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET).

<http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=247>

Learning Disabilities: Definitions.” American Library Association

[www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/olos/outreachresource/roadstolearning/ld\_defined.pdf](http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/olos/outreachresource/roadstolearning/ld_defined.pdf)

“Learning Disabilities: Common Signs.” American Library Association [www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/olos/outreachresource/roadstolearning/checklist.pdf](http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/olos/outreachresource/roadstolearning/checklist.pdf)

Checkpoints for Progress In Reading and Writing for Teachers and Learning Partners. 1998. <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/CheckTeachers/index.html>

A Guide to the Individualized Education Program. U.S. Department of Education. 2000.

<http://www.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html?exp=0>

[National Center for Learning Disabilities](http://www.ncld.org/). 2007. <http://www.ncld.org/>

Special Education Resources on the Internet (SERI). 2001. http://seriweb.com/

LD Online. 2007. <http://www.ldonline.org/>

Dyagraphia. <http://www.as.wvu.edu/~scidis/dysgraphia.html>

Learning Disabilities Association of America.

<http://www.ldanatl.org/aboutld/parents/ld_basics/dysgraphia.asp>

Resource Room http://www.resourceroom.net/readspell/dysgraphia.asp