

Rubric/Guidelines: Case Study

The purpose of this assignment and rubric is to help you (a) gain experience in relation to observations of individuals with ASD, (b) develop an understanding of the referral process according to state guidelines of ASD eligibility, and (c) summarize the information you have obtained from the classroom observations. Total points for the case study is 30.

**** (You may choose to do (a) two, 30 minute observations, (b) three, 20 minute observations, or (c) four, 15 minute observations) ****

Observer's name: __Rosemary Kenrick__
Date: __9/24/14__ Time Started: __1:00__ Time Ended: __1:30__
Location: __3rd Grade Classroom__ Activity: __Math__

Observer's name: __Rosemary Kenrick__
Date: __9/26/2014__ Time Started: __2:00__ Time Ended: __2:30__
Location: __Playground__ Activity: __Recess__

1. Provide background information about the student you observed (e.g., grade, gender, family background, medical history, academic achievements, etc. – do NOT provide identifying information such as real name). (3 pts)

Ethan is a Caucasian, 3rd grade boy. He comes from a family with both parents who are both very involved in his life and education. Dad has a good job, which allows mom to be a stay at home mom. She is very present in the school; lunch mom, library helper, parent chaperone, etc. Ethan has a twin sister who is in the same class with him (our school only has one class of each grade). He is a healthy boy and is active in sports and clubs outside of school. I had Ethan when he was in first grade and was quickly comparing notes with the kindergarten teacher. I was seeing signs immediately and started documenting things in the first two weeks of school. Being at a Catholic school with no resource room or Special Ed teachers, kids with disabilities can slip through. Sometimes parents will even send these children to us because they don't think they will be labeled or tested if they come to a private school, since we do lack the resources of the public schools. After many conferences with the parents, they did finally decide at the end of first grade to have Ethan privately tested. It was found that he does have Aspergers. It was recommended that he begin Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy. We do offer Speech, which is the only service we offer, but his parents turned it down. It was also documented that Ethan had visual perceptual difficulties, body awareness problems, a possible reading disability, and was very delayed in his basic language skills. It was documented that a Catholic school is not the best place for Ethan, but his parents have chosen to keep him here. I don't believe they want him labeled or separated from his sister.

- 2. Briefly summarize any relevant information obtained from conversations or interviews with the student's teacher (e.g., general educator, special educator, etc.), support staff (e.g., paraprofessional) or any professional who provides ancillary services (e.g., speech/language therapist, physical therapist, etc.). (4 pts)**

We do not have any Special Ed teachers or support staff at our school. As I stated earlier, we have a speech and language therapist, but Ethan's parents don't want him attending that in school. (I should mention his sister does go to speech here at school, but they could not give me a reason as to why they would not let him go to speech here). I spoke with Ethan's general education teacher, who is new to our school this year. She had just had a meeting the night prior with Ethan's parents. In the first couple weeks of school, she was noticing the same behaviors that the second grade teacher and I had noticed. (Ethan does not have an IEP. His parents declined and chose to continue sending him to a Catholic school). Mom seemed to be in the same amount of denial as she has been the last two years. She is ok, however, with some accommodations being made for Ethan. I should also point out that when I spoke with the therapists that have tested and worked with Ethan, they made comments about how mom was in denial. One actually said to her, "Why are you even here?" Mom's response was, "The teacher made us come." The therapists and I all discussed with mom and dad the importance of getting Ethan the help as soon as possible. We tried to stress, the earlier the better. She has been receptive to some things like accommodations, but not to getting the public school to look at him.

- 3. Describe the student's behaviors in detail. Please include all domains relevant to ASD eligibility (e.g., communicative acts, social skills, repetitive/challenging behaviors, etc.). (6 pts)**

Ethan does not make eye contact with peers, teachers, or other adults he comes in contact with. One of the most observant behaviors of Ethan's is that he constantly rocks his head back and forth. He does this all day long. It doesn't matter if he's in a desk, sitting on the carpet, or standing, he is rocking his head back and forth (his torso is kind of moving too, so it's more extreme than just the head). He is also looking up at the ceiling a good portion of the time. Ethan laughs for no reason when students are reading, when the teacher is teaching, when children are working at the board, etc. He is socially different than the other children. He also spends time throwing his head over the chair and between his legs. He swings his head back and forth while being upside down. Most of the children in his class have been with him since Kindergarten and appear to be annoyed with him the majority of the time. He throws things like erasers at girls' heads. He screams in the hallway going outside. When the teacher addresses him, he says, "I didn't mean to yell." I've noticed during Mass that he refuses to shake hands with the other students during the sign of peace. He also frequently blows on the other students. He touches them even when they ask him to stop. When they are on the carpet, he puts his arm in two girls' faces and licks his arm up and down. These are all behaviors I also observed in first grade. During recess, it is apparent that he has become more isolated from the other students. He doesn't play with anyone, but wanders around playing by himself.

- 4. Provide your decision and rationale for whether or not the student meets eligibility for ASD. Please refer to the syllabus and note that this is never an individual decision – this assignment is just to give you practice in relation to observations and awareness of the eligibility criteria. (Refer to the form provided on ANGEL). (5 pts)**

I realize that this is never an individual decision, nor would I be the one making this decision if it was, but I do believe Ethan meets eligibility for ASD. His comprehension and fluency skills are delayed. His behavior affects his ability to form interpersonal relationships with his peers and some teachers. He has impairment in social and emotional reciprocity. Ethan's speech and language skills are very delayed. One behavior that I failed to mention is Ethan's propensity to have his hand in his mouth, almost pulling down on his bottom teeth. His constant rocking and distractions are also something that I greatly think makes him eligible. When Ethan was in first grade, I filled out forms for the therapist testing him and those alone highlighted ASD and specifically Aspergers.

- 5. Are any interventions being utilized to address the student's atypical/challenging behavior or skill deficits? Please describe all aspects of the interventions. (3 pts)**

The student is pretty smart. He excels in Math, but does struggle more in Reading. In order to remove some of the distractions he faces in the classroom, Ethan takes tests in the office so he is in a smaller, calmer environment. This is something that was suggested by the therapist when he was tested in first grade. He also works more one on one with the teacher than the other students. He has often turned in work that is all wrong, even though he knows how to do it. Since first grade, the teachers have required him to show them his work before he turns it in. Each teacher has used different interventions for behavior with Ethan. I know this year his teacher has started a daily behavioral chart that is right on his desk. She moves the clip to show him how he is doing. This gives him a visual right in front of him. Ethan's teacher uses this to monitor his outbursts, touching, intentional rule breaking, etc. The teacher also relies heavily on parent communication. This has been consistent over the last three years. Ethan's teachers have always been in constant communication with his parents and I know they take it seriously when he isn't behaving.

- 6. Do you feel the interventions are appropriate and/or effective? Please explain and discuss. (3 pts)**

I do think that the interventions are good for Ethan. Often during tests he was doing things that would distract the other students and distracting himself in the meantime. Ethan would be so worried about getting a rise or a reaction out of the other students or the teacher, and he would mark anything down as his answer. When the teacher comes up to him and says, what's this question asking, he would repeat the question and tell you the correct answer, meanwhile he had circled the wrong answer. By taking him out of the classroom and putting him in the office, he had no one to try to get a rise out of and is way

more focused on the task at hand. Ethan really struggles with focusing and is redirected all day long. Taking him out of the more chaotic and large environment for tests really allows him to focus. I'm not sure that his behavior interventions are all too effective. From my experience with him and my recent observations, some days he is excited with receiving positive reinforcement, sometimes he doesn't care. Some days he really strives to stay on green, some days he doesn't care about getting a red. I'm not sure any of Ethan's teachers have found what works best in regards to behavior interventions. I think this is something that his teacher could use help with. I also think having a resource room or Special Ed teacher could be so helpful for this. It is very hard just having general education teachers to talk to about these interventions.

7. If interventions are being used - how would you improve the interventions to better address the student's behavior problems or skill deficits? If interventions are not being used – discuss one you might implement to address the student's behavior problems or skill deficits. (3 pts)

As I said in the previous question, I truly wish we had someone we could talk to at our school to help us best address Ethan's behavior problems and skills deficits. I think we are pretty successful with working with him to improve his skills deficits, but we need to improve his behavior problems. The same problems that I saw in first grade, I'm still seeing now when I observed him and when I spoke with his teacher. All ASD students are obviously unique and different, but if we had more resources so we could even bounce ideas off of someone with more background. It was also suggested back in first grade that he gets a weighted vest or a textured cushion to sit on to help regulate his rocking and swaying, and therefore helping him remain more focused. When this was suggested to Ethan's parents and said that it was the therapists' idea, they were not okay with it. They don't want Ethan to look any different from the other students. I wish that we could use some resources like these to help him put his energy somewhere.

8. Reflection: Highlight what you learned from this assignment. How might this experience benefit you in your future professional work? (3 pts)

As a general education at a private school with no resources, I think the most important thing this assignment has taught me is to trust my instincts. This experience is a reminder of that and I will take it with me in my professional career. I had such a hard time with this student and his parents two years ago, but I firmly believed that he needed extra assistance and that something was going on. They finally agreed to get him tested, and the documentations that came back to me showed me that I was right in my thoughts. It's not about being right or wrong, but fighting for the students we teach. I wanted to better help him and he should be getting so much more help than he is. Seeing him in his classroom two years later has shown me that there are still so many of the same behaviors and social challenges. I only wish that we could get some better interventions to better help Ethan. This assignment has also taught me/reiterated that it is up to the parents. I have to do the

best I can for each of my students, but ultimately, the parents make all of the choices. I think this assignment will help me to stay alert to my students in my classroom. I truly know now how important early intervention is and how I am one of the first teachers that will see these children.