

ASSESSMENT #7: Student Observation Project, Optional Assessment

a. A brief description of the assessment and its use in the program.

The Student Observation Project occurs in Pre-Service Clinical II, EDUC [REDACTED], and is connected to candidates' field placements, which are typically the fall semester of a yearlong residency, culminating in student teaching. For this project, candidates consult with their mentor teachers to select a student in their placement who faces challenges in school. Candidates then observe the student on repeated occasions, work with them one on one, and construct in-depth knowledge of the student. As a result of this work, candidates write both a portrait of the student as a learner and create recommendations for teachers working with the student. This project is completed while candidates read and discuss selections from *Hanging In: Strategies for Teaching the Students who Challenge Us Most* by Jeffrey Benson, and the project adopts several of Benson's core principles, also captured in the NCTE/CAEP standards:

- 1) all students bring assets to their learning and can learn (1.1),
- 2) inclusive learning environments value difference (1.2), and
- 3) teachers use data from educational community members and multiple sources to persist with their students and adapt to ensure that all students achieve (5.3).

Candidates' Student Portraits draw from their observation notes, which should emerge from a variety of sources (e.g. conversations with their mentor teacher and other educators, student work, assessment data, direct observations of and interactions with the student, etc.). Student Portraits should display a highly individualized and intersectional portrayal of their adolescent student (1.1), citing evidence for all thematic descriptions, recognizing a student's challenges while avoiding a deficit-laden perspective (1.1), and working against any negative or essentializing views of adolescence/ts (1.2). Candidates also produce a Recommendations Report for Teachers, organized by Danielson's domains. This report follows a format that includes a brief Student Profile (lists of Student Strengths, Student Interests, Challenges for the Student, and Challenges for the Adult Team) and then 3-6 educator actions that could enhance student learning organized by Danielson's domains (5.3, 5.4). The Recommendations Report is asset-based; centers the individual student's strengths, interests, and needs; and posits multiple and creative ways to positively affect learning (5.4).

Candidates typically complete this project on an individual learner whom they will continue to work with while student teaching in spring. Ideally candidates share their final project with their mentor teachers, discuss possible recommendations to implement, and implement selected recommendations. Candidates share their selections and ongoing observations during class meetings in EDUC [REDACTED] and then present their final profile and recommendations during their one on one check-out with the instructor (5.4).

b. A description of how this assessment specifically aligns with the standards it is cited for in Section III. Cite SPA standards by number, title, and/or standard wording.

Assessment	NCTE/CAEP Standards
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<p>Student Portrait</p> <p>NCTE/CAEP Standards</p> <p>1.1 1.2 5.3</p>	<p>Learners in Learning in ELA: Standard 1.1 and 1.2</p> <p>Professional Responsibility of ELA Teachers 5.3</p>
<p>Recommendations for Teachers (organized by Danielson’s Domains)</p> <p>NCTE/CAEP</p> <p>1.2 1.3 5.3 5.4</p>	<p>Learners in Learning in ELA: Standard 1.2 and 1.3</p> <p>Professional Responsibility of ELA Teachers 5.3 and 5.4</p>

c. A brief analysis of the data findings.

100% of candidates scored “Distinguished” or “Proficient” on both categories of the assessment. Over 80% scored “Distinguished” on the Student Portrait, assessing 1.1, 1.2, and 5.3. 36% scored “Distinguished” on the Recommendations Report for Teachers, and 63% scored on “Proficient.” There were no Basic or Unsatisfactory scores.

d. An interpretation of how that data provides evidence for meeting standards, indicating the specific SPA standards by number, title, and/or standard wording.

With means of 3.8 and 3.4, data demonstrate that all candidates can portray learners through asset-based, individualized, and intersectional lenses (Student Portrait, NCTE/CAEP 1.1); can get to know learners through a variety of means, including conversations with educational community members and assessment data (Student Portrait, NCTE/CAEP 5.3), can consider how learners’ identities affect learning experiences in creating an individualized set of recommendations (Recommendations Report, NCTE/CAEP 1.2); and can create recommendations that can be used by other educators and administrators (Recommendations Report, NCTE/CAEP 5.4).

e. The assessment tool itself or a rich description of the assessment.

Student Observation Project

This project addresses InTASC Standard #2: The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

One of the most important things you do as a teacher is develop in-depth knowledge of each of the learners in your classroom. This knowledge helps you make effective instructional choices that will support each student's growth, and it also helps you be a culturally responsive teacher who validates and affirms students' cultures while building relationships with them. But every student is different, so developing the careful art of listening, observing, and making individual decisions that will benefit kids' unique strengths and needs is a must for a strong educator. For students who are particularly challenged by the context of school, your knowledge of them is crucial to their success.

Following the *Hanging In* model, this project asks you to pick a student who faces challenges in school, observe the student on repeated occasions, and construct in-depth knowledge of the student. As a result of this work, you will write both a portrait of the student as a learner and create recommendations for teachers working with the learner.

Ultimately, this project is designed to help you to become an adaptive and flexible teacher who prioritizes students.

Step 1: To choose a student, talk with your mentor teacher about the assignment. You want to make sure you choose a student who fits the requirements of the project. The student should find English class (or school in general) challenging in some way and ideally should be someone your mentor teacher and other teachers have discussed. The student does not need to have a current IEP or a 504 plan, but it is fine if the student does. Keep in mind that there are many different ways students are challenged by school; sometimes the students who are the most challenged are hiding behind quiet and "compliant" behavior. The goal is for you to pick a student you genuinely want to understand better so that you will be a better teacher for him/her/them.

Step 2: Observe the student. As you observe, use the Note-Taking/Note-Making format or any other format that delineates objective and interpretive text.

Please Note: Your notes should use a pseudonym for the student name, as will all the work you do this year that refers to specific students.

When taking notes, remember that the left-side of your notes should be simply what you see and hear. Try to be objective as possible and to capture as much factual detail as you can. Make sure to note the date and the setting (could be on a virtual Zoom call or in class).

On the right side, try to make some interpretations: what are you gleaning about your student as a learner and person? What answers to the questions below might you see emerging in the notes?

At this point in the semester, you may be helping your mentor teacher in class, teaching lessons, working one on one with students, etc., so make sure you put aside some time each week just to observe the student.

Make sure you also observe multiple samples of your student's work. Talk with your mentor teacher about their literacy skills and look at some of their work together. How would you describe them as a reader? As a writer? As a speaker and listener?

Questions for Observation

Keep in mind that you are on a quest to get to know this student as a learner. You want your observations to include multiple perspectives, including cognitive and psychological as well as social and cultural. Read through the questions below to consider the many ways you can begin to pay attention to your student as an individual.

- What are your student's rings of culture?
- What assets does your student bring to learning (e.g. individual experiences, abilities, talents, prior learning and knowledge, peers/social group interactions, language, values, etc.)
- What do they gravitate towards?
- Whom do they talk to? What do they talk about?

- How do they express themselves? Does it change with different people?
- Is your student actively involved in class? Passive? Disruptive? How so? How does that involvement change depending on the activity?
- How does your student's behavior change depending on the other students or adults? Large groups or small groups? Face to face or virtual?
- How does your student describe his/her/their identity?
- Pay attention to clothes, hair, etc.. How does your student use clothes/accessories for self-expression?
- How would you describe their personality in class? With other students? With teachers?
- What makes your student laugh? When?
- What do you observe about your students' physical mannerisms in class and their fine or gross motor skills?
- Talk with your mentor teacher about your student's cultural background and homelife. What aspects of your students' culture or family are important to them? How might culture shape how your student approaches school?
- What do you notice about your student's work habits in school?
- Has your student shared any major beliefs, fears, or understandings of the world that would help you understand their perspective?
- What type of directions work best for your student?
- How does your student get the teacher's attention, if they do? Do they work better with teacher involvement? To what degree?

- Does your student work best alone, with a partner, in groups? With what kind of structure?
- Is your student a kinesthetic learner? Auditory? Visual?
- Is there an area in English class (or at school) where your student seems to excel?
- What about outside of academics?

Interact with Your Student

Make sure that you take time to get to know your student. Below are a variety of suggestions. Talk to your mentor teacher about ideas they have for ways for you to interact with your student.

- Greet them when they come in the door and ask questions to get to know them
- Check in with them when students are working independently
- Check with your mentor teacher to see if there is something they need help with and how/when you could help. Find a good opportunity to help them one on one.

Step 3: Write the Portrait and Create the Recommendations

Your final project has two components:

- Part 1: a **Student Portrait** paper, in which your goal is to present this student to me and help me see the student fully as an individual.

- Part 2: a **Recommendations Report for Teachers**, intended for the adult team of teachers working with the student, which will include a student profile and a chart, organized by Danielson’s domains, of the steps to take and accommodations to make to best serve the student.
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**For Part I: Student Portrait Paper (remember to use a pseudonym)
2000-2500 words**

Your Student Portrait Paper should include three parts:

Introduction: Set up your student for me with a brief overview, which would include facts, age, family, the school history you are aware of, a physical description, relevant rings of culture, known learning strengths and challenges, and anything else that seems pertinent to a snapshot of the student.

Include also how this student finds school challenging. In an overview, why is this student on the adult team’s radar?

The Body: As Benson does in *Hanging In*, the body of your Student Portrait Paper should be split into meaningful sections, each with its own subheading. Each subheading should name a different theme that you saw emerging as a clear pattern in your research.

For example, in my own past student observation research, I identified three themes that were incredibly important to understanding a particular student I called “Sam”:

- 1) Telling Jokes: Humor & Class Participation,
- 2) Dreaming and Behind? Transitions and Attention, and
- 3) Both Fluency and Difficulty: Written Expression

For your student, reread all of your notes and code for patterns, key words, problems, strengths, challenges, etc. that are coming up again and again. Pick the three-five most important (and consider grouping related codes together) and come up with thematic titles that capture them. Those will be your subheadings.

In each section, share why this theme is important to understanding your student. How do we see this theme play out in your student’s life at school? When and where? How do we see it play out in in-class work? In homework? Why does the theme matter for understanding and reaching your student? To do so, you will refer to your notes as evidence. To cite your evidence, make sure you

include when and where the observation occurred. Remember that much of your evidence will be anecdotal, so tell me lots of brief stories to help illustrate your student as a learner. See below:

Sam is almost always the last one out the door when exiting class. For example, on 9/12, after a group discussion in 6th grade honors English about Tuck Everlasting, Sam (who hadn't spoken during the discussion), did not start putting his book away until others had already cleared their desks.

You might decide to quote a chunk from your notes. Format this as a block quotation.

Similarly, at the end of English on 10/1, Sam was still trying to write when the bell rang. In my observation journal, I described his slow exit from the room:

The bell rings and most students are up and out. Sam is not actually writing but has his pencil in hand and is lightly pushing it on the paper. He briefly glances up but doesn't start moving, even though Ms. Gipson says, "Sam, time to go. You don't want to be late to your next class." Sam smiles slightly, leans back, and slowly starts to pack up. By the time he has his things in his bag, the next group of students is filing in, including the student who sits in his desk. She waits while he starts to get up. "What?" he says to her while she waits behind him.

I should see **many references** to specifics from your note-taking/note-making.

Conclusion:

You can end this portrait with a summary of your student, what makes him/her/them tick, what they are good at, what trips them up, why they find school challenging, and what you think are the most important things for teachers to keep in mind.

Your next section, Part II, will offer very specific pieces of advice to the adult teacher/administrator team working with the student.

For Part 2: Recommendations Report for Teachers

This is the most important part of the project! Now it is time for you to distill this information into meaningful, applicable steps and accommodations that teachers could implement immediately to help this student achieve.

Remember that your goal in Part 2 is to offer very specific pieces of advice for teachers working with the student. Look at the end of *Hanging In* chapters for ideas of what those pieces of advice could be, which range from individual accommodations for the student to ways teachers might work together to help meet the student's needs successfully.

To complete this section, please use the Recommendations Report for Teachers form, which is also at the end of this document. You will download this form and fill it out to finalize this list of Recommendations.

I will read your Recommendations Report after reading your Portrait, and it should be clear how the two are linked. In other words, make sure your recommendations are clearly grounded in the evidence you presented as significant to your student in the Portrait.

Recommendations Report for Teachers Form

organized by Danielson's Domains

To use this form, please go to **File + Download as** and then work on it as a Word document.

1. Student Profile: Please first create the lists below. These lists should be based on extensive research and should be directly linked to the recommendations chart below.

A. Strengths of the Student:

B. Interests of the Student:

C. Challenges for the student in school:

D. Challenges for the adult team:

Danielson’s Domains	Teacher Actions: What Teachers Should Do to Teach This Student
Planning and Preparation <i>Teacher’s plans, based on extensive content knowledge and understanding of students, are designed to engage all students in significant learning. All aspects of the teacher’s plans--instructional outcomes, learning activities, materials, resources, and assessments--are in complete alignment and are adapted as needed for individual students.</i>	Here you will put a list of 3-6 actions that begin with verbs and can be used by ELA teachers (and other colleagues, such as ELA teachers in future years or other teachers who would adapt recommendations to their content area) .
Learning Environments	

<p><i>Students themselves make a substantive contribution to the smooth functioning of the classroom, with highly positive personal interactions, high expectations and student pride in work, seamless routines, clear standards of conduct, and a physical environment conducive to high-level learning.</i></p>	
<p>Learning Experiences <i>All students are highly engaged in learning and make material contributions to the success of the class through their participation in discussions, active involvement in learning activities, and use of assessment information in their learning. The teacher persists in the search for approaches to meet the needs of every student.</i></p>	
<p>Principled Teaching <i>The teacher's ethical standards and sense of professionalism are highly developed, showing perceptive use of reflection, effective systems for record keeping and communication with families, leadership roles in both school and district projects, and extensive professional development activities. Where appropriate, students contribute to the systems for record keeping and family communication.</i></p>	

f. The scoring guide for the assessment.

	Distinguished 45-42 pts	Proficient 41-38 pts	Basic 37-31.5 pts	Unsatisfactory 31 or below
Student Portrait NCTE/CAEP Standards 1.1 1.2 5.3 InTASC 1 Danielson 1b, 2a, 4b	<p>presents a compelling portrait of a student, backed up by detailed evidence</p> <p>through evidence and interpretation, makes a strong case for why selected themes are key to understanding the learner</p> <p>demonstrates in-depth knowledge of the student's learning styles, strengths, and needs</p> <p>provides detailed and clear evidence of the student's assets for learning as well as the student's challenges</p> <p>offers multiple interpretations for evidence, posing questions and considerations</p> <p>showcases evidence from different parts of English class</p>	<p>presents a portrait of a student, backed up by detailed evidence</p> <p>through evidence and interpretation, makes a good case for why selected themes are key to understanding the learner</p> <p>demonstrates knowledge of the student's learning styles, strengths, and needs</p> <p>provides evidence of the student's assets for learning as well as the student's challenges</p> <p>showcases evidence from different parts of English class</p>	<p>presents a portrait of a student, backed up by some evidence</p> <p>through evidence and interpretation, starts to make a case for why selected themes are key to understanding the learner</p> <p>demonstrates some knowledge of the student's learning styles, strengths, and needs</p> <p>provides some evidence of the student's assets for learning as well as the student's challenges</p>	<p>presents a weak portrait of a student, backed up by little evidence</p> <p>struggles to make a case for why selected themes are key to understanding the learner</p> <p>demonstrates little knowledge of the student's learning styles, strengths, and needs</p> <p>provides little evidence of the student's assets for learning as well as the student's challenges</p>

	Distinguished 20 pts	Proficient 19-17 pts	Basic 16-15 pts	14 or below
<p>Recommendations for Teachers (organized by Danielson's Domains)</p> <p>NCTE/CAEP 1.2 1.3 5.3 5.4</p> <p>InTASC 2, 3, & 10</p> <p>Danielson 1b, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 3e</p>	<p>recommendations are full sentences, clearly emerging from evidence provided in the portrait, immediately usable by teachers, creative and specific to the student</p> <p>recommendations clearly fit Danielson's domains and demonstrate best practices (e.g. give opportunities for the student to demonstrate their learning in different ways; adjust pacing, task demands, communication, assessment & response modes for the student when applicable)</p> <p>student profile is clearly connected to evidence in the portrait</p> <p>clear that the teacher candidate believes that all learners can achieve and that teachers persist in helping each learner reach their full potential</p>	<p>recommendations are full sentences, clearly emerging from evidence provided in the portrait, and immediately usable by teachers</p> <p>recommendations fit Danielson's domains and demonstrate most best practices (e.g. give opportunities for the student to demonstrate their learning in different ways; adjust pacing, task demands, communication, assessment & response modes for the student when applicable)</p> <p>student profile is clearly connected to evidence in the portrait</p> <p>mostly clear that the teacher candidate believes that all learners can achieve and that teachers persist in</p>	<p>recommendations are full sentences and are somewhat connected to evidence provided in the portrait. May seem general or vague.</p> <p>some recommendations fit Danielson's domains</p> <p>some demonstrate best practices (e.g. give opportunities for the student to demonstrate their learning in different ways; adjust pacing, task demands, communication, assessment & response modes for the student when applicable)</p> <p>student profile is somewhat connected to evidence in the portrait, but connections could be clearer</p> <p>mostly clear that the teacher candidate believes that all learners</p>	<p>recommendations may not be full sentences, only somewhat connected to evidence provided in the portrait. Several or all seem general or vague.</p> <p>recommendations may not clearly fit Danielson's domains</p> <p>may not demonstrate best practices (e.g. give opportunities for the student to demonstrate their learning in different ways; adjust pacing, task demands, communication, assessment & response modes for the student when applicable)</p> <p>student profile is somewhat connected to evidence in the portrait, but connections could be clearer</p>

		helping each learner reach their full potential	can achieve and that teachers persist in helping each learner reach their full potential	not clear that the teacher candidate believes that all learners can achieve and that teachers persist in helping each learner reach their full potential
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g. Charts that provide candidate data derived from the assessment.

Spring 2022
 Scores from Final Assessments
 n = 11

NCTE/CAEP Standard	Distinguished 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Unsatisfactory 1	Final Mean	Final Median
Student Portrait 1.1 1.2 5.3	9	2	0	0	3.8	4
Recommendations Report for Teachers 1.2 1.3 5.3 5.4	4	7	0	0	3.4	3