Student Teaching Observation Form
Special Education

☐ First Placement  ☐ Second Placement  Date: _________________

Teacher Candidate ________________________________ Observation 1 2 3 4

Classroom Teacher _____________________ Grade Level ________________

School ________________________________ School Board ___________

Subject Observed ________________________________

Brief Description of Planned Learning Experience/Lesson Plan ________________

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Commendable Features ________________________________________________

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Suggestions: ___________________________________________________________

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**1. Foundations of Special Education**

The candidate understands:

- Philosophies, principles, and theories
- And complies with relevant laws and policies
- Diverse and historical points of view that impact individuals with exceptional needs in school and society
- The influence of these foundations on professional practice
- Issues of human diversity and their interaction with the delivery of special education services
- The relationships of organizations of special education to the functions of schools, school systems, and other agencies

The candidate uses foundational knowledge to construct personal understandings and philosophies of special education.

**Diversity:**
The candidate integrates professional, content, and pedagogical knowledge to create learning experiences that make the content area meaningful for all students. The candidate uses multiple representations/explanations and links them to students’ prior understanding.

**EVIDENCE**

- Planned Learning Experience (PLE)/Lesson Plan (LP) reference NYS/Standards (performance indicators)/Ontario Curriculum Expectations and district objectives
- PLE/LP developed around a central topic, concept, or theme that shows connections between/among different subjects
- PLE/LP built around a central question(s); students are not told answers, but are led through experiences
- Identified and selected specific technology resources available at the school site and district level to support a coherent learning experience

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**2. Development and Characteristics of Learners**

The candidate understands:

- The similarities and differences in human development
- The characteristics between and among individuals with and without Exceptional Learning Needs (ELN)
- How exceptional conditions interact with the domains of human development
- How the experiences of individual with ELN can impact ability to learn, interact socially, and live as fulfilled, contributing members of the community
- How the experiences of individuals with ELN can impact families

The candidate:

- Respects students first as unique human beings
- Responds to varying abilities and behaviors of individuals with ELN

**Diversity:**
The candidate integrates professional, content, and pedagogical knowledge to create learning experiences that make the content area meaningful for all students. The candidate uses multiple representations/explanations and links them to students’ prior understanding.

**EVIDENCE**

- Age appropriate experiences for social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development of students
- New learning linked to students’ prior knowledge
- Encouragement of student reflection on prior knowledge and its connection to new information
- Integration of learning with other disciplines or real-world experiences
- Opportunities to empower learners to be responsible for their own learning
- Floor plan organization: graphic representation of how classroom is set up including desks, learning centers, technology, bulletin boards/word walls, displays of student work

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**3. Individual Learning Differences**

The candidate understands:

- The effects that an exceptional condition can have on an individual’s learning in school and throughout life
- How the beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures can affect relationships among and between students, their families, and the school community

The candidate:

- Is active and resourceful in seeking to understand how primary language, culture, and family backgrounds interact with the individual’s exceptional condition to impact the individual’s academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, and career options
- Uses this information to individualize instruction providing meaningful and challenging learning for individuals with ELN

**Diversity:**
The candidate is able to demonstrate sensitivity to diverse cultural groups globally, and how ethnicity, class, gender, and other socio-cultural factors influence student’s learning and classroom climate.

The candidate demonstrates the importance of students’ families, cultures and communities and uses this information as a basis for connecting to students’ experiences.

**EVIDENCE**

- Differentiated PLE/LP shows how assignments and strategies accommodate all learners
- Discussion of diverse characteristics of class and individual needs of students with special needs
- Familiarity with identifying processes of students with special needs
- Review of IEP’s
- When possible, attend a special education team meeting

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**4. Instructional Strategies**

The candidate:

- Processes a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to individualize instruction for individuals with ELN
- Selects, adapts, and uses these instructional strategies to promote positive learning results in the general and special curricula
- Appropriately modifies learning environments for individuals with ELN
- Enhances the learning of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills of individuals with ELN
- Increases the self-awareness, self-management, self-control, self-reliance, and self-esteem of individuals with ELN
- Emphasizes the development, maintenance, and generalization of knowledge and skills across environments, settings, and the lifespan.

**Diversity:**
The candidate implements a variety of instructional and assessment strategies appropriate to diverse learners.

**EVIDENCE**

- Uses exploratory strategies to set stage for learning
- Use of multiple strategies to foster critical thinking and problem solving
- Use of multiple instructional roles (facilitator, coach, instructor, audience)
- Uses Manipulatives used to develop understanding
- Learning centers: self-managed work centers set up around tables or desks where students investigate a particular topic
- Cooperative activities: PLE/LP indicate how students work together in cooperative ways
- Uses technology used as an instructional and/or resource tool

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**5. Learning Environments and Social Interactions**

The candidate:

- Creates learning environments for individuals with ELN that foster cultural understanding, safety and emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and active engagement of individuals with ELN
- Fosters environments in which diversity is valued and individuals are taught to live harmoniously and productively in a culturally diverse world
- Shapes environments to encourage the independence, self-motivation, self-direction, personal empowerment, and self-advocacy of individuals with ELN
- Helps general education colleagues integrate individuals with ELN in regular environments and engage them in meaningful learning activities and interactions
- Uses direct motivational and instructional interventions with individuals with ELN to teach them to respond effectively to current expectations

**Diversity:**
The candidate diagnoses and builds upon the personal, cultural, and historical experiences of learners from a variety of socio-economic/ethnic backgrounds and develops meaningful instructional activities and positive, productive learning environments.

**EVIDENCE**

- Establishes and maintains classroom expectations
- Ability to organize and manage time, space and activities conducive to learning
- Implements learner-centered experiences that are based on current best practices that engage, motivate, and encourage self-directed student learning
- Provides opportunities for students to achieve self-management
- Uses enthusiasm to motivate students and energize teaching
### PROGRAM EXPECTATION

#### 6. Language
The candidate understands typical and atypical language development and the ways in which exceptional conditions can interact with an individual’s experience with and use of language.

- **Diversity:**
  - The candidate uses individualized strategies to enhance language development and teach communication skills to individuals with ELN.
  - Matches communication methods to an individual’s language proficiency and cultural and linguistic differences.
  - Provides effective language models.
  - Uses communication strategies and resources to facilitate understanding of subject matter for individuals with ELN whose primary language is not English.
  - The candidate communicates in ways that demonstrate sensitivity to cultural and gender differences.

- **EVIDENCE:**
  - Models effective, accurate and culturally sensitive verbal and nonverbal communication skills.
  - Models writing skills appropriate for grade level.
  - Supports and expands learner expression in speaking, writing, and other media.
  - PLE/LP shows a variety of uses of technology as teaching/learning strategies.
  - Uses various resources such as textbooks, internet, media center, school/community members.
  - Word Wall/Bulletin boards: artistic work on a theme, extension of student learning/work.

#### 7. Instructional Planning
The candidate:
- Develops long-range individualized instructional plans anchored in both general and special curricula.
- Systematically translates these individualized plans into carefully selected shorter-range goals and objectives taking into consideration an individual’s abilities and needs, The learning environment, and a myriad of cultural and linguistic factors.
- Emphasizes explicit modeling and efficient guided practice to assure acquisition and fluency through maintenance and generalization.
- Selects, adapts and creates materials and instructional variables based on an understanding of individual differences and knowledge of an individual’s exceptional condition.
- Develops a variety of individualized transitions plans, such as transitions from preschool to elementary school and from secondary settings to a variety of postsecondary work and learning contexts.
- Is comfortable using appropriate technologies to support instructional planning and individualized instruction.

- **Diversity:**
  - The candidate plans learning opportunities that meet the developmental and individual needs of diverse learners.

- **EVIDENCE:**
  - Goals and objectives aligned with specific outcomes for each day, week, and month.
  - Daily plans based on identified curriculum goals.
  - Thorough PLE/LP that includes components of suggested lesson plans in Handbook.
  - Pacing guide: outline of what is taught and when it is taught throughout the placement.
  - Adjustment of plans based on unanticipated sources of input or learner needs.
  - Organizational binder that includes daily/unit plans, pacing guide, assignments, units, schedules, sources of input or learner needs.
  - PLE/LP connects objectives/expectations to closure/assessment.
  - Integrates technology to enhance learning.

#### 8. Assessment
The candidate understands:
- The legal policies and ethical principles of measurement and assessment related to referral, eligibility, program planning, instruction, and placement for individuals with ELN, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Measurement theory and practices for addressing issues of validity, reliability, norms, bias, and interpretation of assessment results. In addition, special educators understand the appropriate use and limitations of various types of assessments.

- **Diversity:**
  - The candidate uses a variety of informal assessment strategies to monitor student understanding and to adapt and adjust instruction as needed.
  - Uses rubrics to determine criteria and expectations for levels of performance (individual/group, projects, presentations).
  - Use of closure to gather feedback from students about classroom environment and learning.
  - Uses a variety of summative assessment tools.
  - Objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment are connected.
  - Records student work/performance.

- **EVIDENCE:**
  - Uses multiple types of assessment information for a variety of educational decisions.
  - Conducts formal and informal assessments of behavior, learning, achievement, and environments to design learning experiences that support the growth and development of individuals with ELN.
  - Uses assessment information to identify supports and adaptations required for individuals with ELN to access the general curriculum and to participate in school, and statewide assessment programs.
  - Regularly monitors the progress of individuals with ELN in general and special curricula.
  - Uses technology to support instructional planning and individualized instruction.

- **Diversity:**
  - The candidate uses a variety of assessment techniques, including observation, portfolios, self-assessment, peer assessment, and projects as well as teacher-made and standardized tests.
### PROGRAM EXPECTATION

#### 9. Professional Responsibility

The candidate:

- a) practices in multiple roles and complex situations across wide age and developmental ranges
- b) engages in professional activities and participates in learning communities that benefit individuals with ELN, their families, colleagues, and their own professional growth
- c) acts as a lifelong learner and regularly reflects and adjusts practice
- d) is aware of how personal and other attitudes, behaviors, and ways of communicating can influence practice
- e) understands that culture and languages can interact with exceptionalities, and is sensitive to the many aspects of diversity of individuals with ELN and their families
- f) actively plans and engages in activities that foster professional growth and keep current with evidence-based best practices
- g) knows and stays within personal limits of practice

#### Diversity

The candidate reflects on his/her personal background and life experiences in order to develop culturally responsive curricula and instructional practices.

#### EVIDENCE

- Attendance at faculty/staff/department/division/team meetings documented by handouts, materials received
- Records student work/performance
- Attendance at workshops/conferences
- Reflection of self and self-improvement (personal journal about teaching experience; PLE/LP reflections)
- Collaboration with professional colleagues
- Demonstrates personal conduct consistent with professional behavior

#### 10. Collaboration

The candidate:

- a) routinely and effectively collaborates with families, other educators, related service providers, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways
- b) assures that the needs of individuals with ELN are addressed throughout schooling
- c) embraces the special role as advocate for individuals with ELN
- d) promotes and advocates the learning and well being of individuals with ELN across a wide range of settings and a range of different learning experiences
- e) is a resource to colleagues in understanding the laws and policies relevant to individuals with ELN
- f) collaborates to facilitate the successful transitions of individuals with ELN across settings and services

#### Diversity

The candidate demonstrates knowledge of the influence of family participation on students’ learning and ways to involve families. The candidate identifies community resources and explains their use in the classroom.

#### EVIDENCE

- Assists with clubs, teams, social events, committee/volunteer work
- Participation in school activities, (including before/after school)
- Communication with parents (letters, phone conversations, class newsletters, notes to parents)
- Awareness of community agencies and how to access assistance
- Attendance at parent-teacher/report card meetings where permitted
- Collaborates with other professionals on behalf of students

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**Comments/Growth Plan:**

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**Please sign to indicate that you have read this form:**

Teacher Candidate: __________________________

Cooperating or Associate Teacher: ___________________

University Field Supervisor: ______________________

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