

SAMPLE DISCUSSION POST:

UNIT 5

*Please note that this is a **sample** Discussion post to help inspire and guide your own original writing of the assignment. Your assignment does not need to look exactly like the sample, as this sample is just a possible response to the assignment prompt. Be sure to review the reading and grading rubric, complete each task in the instructions, and contact the instructor with any questions.*

DISCUSSION POST:

Hi Class,

I am reposting my revised thesis, but I'm still not sure if it is specific enough. More suggestions are welcome!

Teaching literature themed around or including characters with special needs can increase acceptance of the growing population of special needs students in American schools.

Here are my key terms that I came up with after completing the Learning Activities on research: special needs student experience, student disability voice, special needs personal stories

When I thought about underrepresented perspectives for my idea, I immediately thought about the children with special needs. I found out just how underrepresented this voice is! I started in the university library hoping for a scholarly peer reviewed article so that I would not have to worry about credibility. I was surprised to find that most of the research was based on educator and/or parent experience. I scanned one research study that sounded promising because it included student interviews, but the focus was a special ed student's experience with standardized testing. That is not the type of information that will support my thesis. I started a Google and Google Scholar search. I really started panicking because the result was the same! There were no scholarly articles that gave voice to the children, and though there are many blogs, online magazines, and organizations that discuss issues for special needs children, the information was secondary.

Finally, on the National Bullying Prevention Website, I found a section titled "Disability Stories." There were several posts from children who suffered through bullying and shared their own perspectives. One was written by a boy with Asperger Syndrome who explained how he was bullied about his fascination with collecting sticks. This will be a perfect example to support my thesis because I plan to suggest a work of fiction with a character who is on the spectrum. I worried about credibility because I only have the words of an anonymous child, but then I thought about an example in our reading about using a mom as a credible source. In the example, the mom would not be credible source for a project on commercial fishing, but she was a hospice caregiver, so she would be a

credible source for the advantages and disadvantages of hospice care. Who is more of an expert on the social effects of Asperger Syndrome than this child?

My question for the class is do you think I should include more personal stories from special needs children, or should I look for more experts to support my idea?

Kacey

[NOTE THAT KACEY DID NOT CITE THE WEBSITE SHE DISCUSSES IN HER POST AS INSTRUCTED BY THE PROMPT; WHAT IS THE ADVANTAGE OF PROVIDING CITATIONS LIKE THE ONES SARA INCLUDES IN HER RESPONSE FOR THE TEMPLE GRANDIN TED TALK AND THE TWO NOVELS?]

*Please note that this is a **sample** Discussion response to help inspire and guide your own responses to classmates. Your response does not need to look exactly like the sample, as this sample is just a possible response to the assignment prompt. Be sure to review the reading and grading rubric, complete each task in the instructions, and contact the instructor with any questions.*

RESPONSE POST:

Hi Kacey,

I have a son on the autism spectrum, so I am really drawn to your topic. It is so sad that the boy was bullied just because he enjoys sticks! Personal stories can be very powerful, and you should include more from children who share similar experiences. Those common threads will strengthen your idea just like the example of the homeless veterans mentioned in our reading this week. I am not sure about an anonymous source, and if I were you, I would look for stories that have a name attached. Have you checked for videos? I know that there is personal testimony on many issues on YouTube. You could even check out TED Talks; I know that Temple Grandin, who has Asperger's Syndrome and is an autism advocate, has done a TED Talk (2010). I also remember reading a memoir by John Elder Robison, who was diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome as an adult, *Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Asperger's* (2007). I know he talked about his problems socializing with peers.

I also think you need experts, which can include educators, psychologists, doctors, and even parents. If you want to add credibility to your idea, just working on emotions probably won't work. Remember the pathos, ethos, and logos concepts covered in our reading last week? I am surprised that I do!

As for your thesis, you have a good foundation here. I would focus on your particular community (like your local school district) and perhaps a particular age group. I wonder if you might focus on late elementary or middle school students since they are starting to read novels at that time? There are some wonderful novels for middle school readers that center on characters with disabilities, like *Out of My Mind* by Sharon Draper

(2010); this novel is narrated by a character with cerebral palsy who is nonverbal but discovers she can communicate with a computer. It is very powerful.

I really enjoyed reading your post. I love your idea.

Sara

References

Draper, S. (2010). *Out of my mind*. Simon & Schuster.

Grandin, T. (2010, February). *The world needs all kinds of minds* [Video file]. TED Talks.
https://www.ted.com/talks/temple_grandin_the_world_needs_all_kinds_of_minds

Robison, J. E. (2007). *Look me in the eye: My life with Asperger's*. Crown Publishers.