

Learning More About Learning Disabilities

Activity

- Using *The Blackest Blackbird* essay, read aloud by able student volunteer readers, or you, if you feel that students may have difficulty following the meaning with student readers.
- Note that there are questions for writing/discussion at the end of the essay. You can review those with students before starting the essay reading, and students can then be aware and reflective as they listen/read.
- At the end of the reading, follow your journal writing or discussion plan. It is worthwhile to ask students: *Have you ever had an experience like this (essay theme) earlier in school, or do you know someone who has?*
- Students need to be able to articulate their own disability. Ask for volunteers to describe their own disability. For those who do not volunteer, note who those students are, and ask them later to describe their disability one-on-one to you, or other school personnel. If they cannot follow through with this, it is worthwhile to do some additional follow-up with the individual students to develop their ability to accept and articulate their disability.
- As a follow-up to this activity, have students study their own official student records, noting that they are entitled to do this. Arrange for a time and place for that to happen with a responsible adult present to interpret entries and/or questions that students may have.

Objectives

- Students will understand the attributes of various types of learning disabilities
- Identify accurately the attributes of own disability
- Articulate accurately, using vocabulary words to understand and describe their disability

Materials

www.ldonline.org is a good web source for teachers, students and parents, offering an excellent variety of information to support any aspect of a learning disability

LP DD – What is LD all about? Stories written by kids about their own disability

LP DD- Vocabulary

LPDD – Facts about Learning Disabilities

LP DD – Essay: The Blackest Blackbird

Vocabulary

- Accommodations
- Additional words listed on Vocabulary sheet, LP DD

Summary

- Using the vocabulary exercise and the student record knowledge, students should now articulate, as well as describe their disability in writing.
- Have students make a journal entry in which they describe their disability, noting the challenges and how they deal with obstacles/challenges. If they have accommodations, student should note those and how they have assisted student.

Notes for Teachers

Decide which materials you will choose to use for this class from the available LP DD, listed above

Predict the amount of time you will dedicate to the activities with the LD theme

If using the essay *The Blackest Blackbird*, review questions at the end of the essay. Decide which questions to use and how: discussion, journal or writing. Plan to read through the questions with students BEFORE beginning the essay reading

Reflection

- ✓ Think about how you have become more aware of your disability and how that has changed (or not) how you think of yourself, or how you move forward with your daily life.
- ✓ Students can also ask for parents' input on their disability and how they have assisted/encouraged them. Share with the class by volunteering this information

Home Connection

Handout for parents: LD Ideas for Parents. Think about: When is the best time to get this into parents' hands? At the IEP? Open House?