**Reflection Process**

By B. Polnick and D. Reed

Adapted from The Principal Portfolio, 2nd Edition (2000) by G. Brown and B. Irby

*Artifact: Identify the assignment. (Optional) Include any documents that support your completion of the assignment (documents may be scanned).*

001.2 “More Differences than Similarities Are Found in Autistic Siblings” The New York Times, January 26, 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/27/health/autism-diagnosis-in-siblings-serves-as-poor-indicator-of-risk.html?_r=1>

*Describe: Describe the findings for the assignments.*

Most siblings with autism do not share the same genetic risk factors as the disorder and are as distinct in their behaviors as most brothers and sisters. Scientists analyzed genetic material from 85 families using a technology known as whole genome sequencing. The article goes on to discuss the differences in siblings who have each been identified with autism.

*Analyze: a. Describe the importance of the findings for the assignment.*

This article shows the diversity of autism even when it is in the same families. The study helped some families understand whether or not they would have additional children inflicted with this disorder.

*b. Include connections to your 5 year goals or desired position.*

As an educational diagnostician, I will work closely with students who are diagnosed with autism and their families. It is important to understand as much as possible the research being conducted to help understand and/or find a cure for autism.

*c. Compare/contrast elements in your findings to your experiences or previous knowledge.*

We have a family in our school currently who have four children, and three of their sons have all been diagnosed with autism. The only sibling, a daughter, has not been identified. I find this very interesting especially because I have had the opportunity to work with two of the brothers. They are only a year apart and their autism is displayed in very different ways. One brother is much more verbal and loves to be hugged and give hugs. The other brother’s language is not as developed and he does not make eye contact with anyone.

*Appraise: Critique or describe whether any of your findings were beneficial to you or not.*

The findings of this study showed that the underlying complexities of autism is greater than ever. It also showed that about 30% of the 85 sibling pairs shared the same mutation and 70% did not. The siblings who shared a genetic “glitch” were more similar to each other in their habits and social skills that those who did not.

*Transform: a. Describe any future ideas or insights you gained.*

This study prompted Autism Speaks to continue the research at the University of Toronto and the Hospital for Sick Children. They are currently analyzing genetic material from 2,800 families who have at least one child with autism.

*b. Describe future plans for use of the ideas presented, including any changes in your current practices or, describe how the information confirmed your current practices and/or beliefs.*

Scientists believe that this study confirms that children with autism within the same family are different and that as researchers study additional families, they will find that the percentages (30% vs 70%) will be less lopsided.