My Professional Development Plan

**Rationale:** As we know, learning to teach is a lifelong endeavor and, as teachers, we must actively identify what we need to learn and make decisions about how we will continue to learn to teach over the lifespan of our professional careers…in order to improve our practice, our schools, the ways we do school, and the profession itself.

Traditionally, teacher professional development has often been designed as courses or workshops in which the teacher is provided with knowledge from experts…knowledge that is easily disseminated and often privileges particular practices/pedagogies based on research often conducted by outsiders who are not situated in a classroom. While this *knowledge for practice* (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) is useful, as it might suggest a potential “solution” for a dilemma a teacher is facing in his/her classroom, it is not sufficient, as this knowledge does not provide insight into how the teacher might make use of the practice/pedagogy within the particular context in which the teacher is situated (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2008).

Transferring new practices/pedagogies from a research article or from theory to practice is an intricate, complex task. As teachers engage in this task, they create *knowledge in practice*, which is the practical knowledge that teachers construct as they are engaged in teaching, in implementing a new practice/pedagogy. This knowledge in practice often remains tacit and unarticulated; thus, teachers benefit from deliberatively reflecting on their teaching and making sense of what is happening in their classrooms. This knowledge can be further strengthened if teachers collaborate with their peers and are encouraged to articulate what they know/are learning in dialogues that are informed by critical literacy (see Lewison, Flint, & VanSluys, 2002).

Finally, teachers can actively engage in constructing *knowledge of practice* when they engage in systematic inquiry in which they “make problematic their own knowledge and practice, as well as the knowledge and practice of others” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 273). Thus, teachers actively question not only their practice and their knowledge in practice, but also the knowledge for practice that has been constructed by others. Moreover, Cochran-Smith and Lytle also suggest that “what goes on the classroom is profoundly altered and ultimately transformed when teachers’ frameworks for practice foreground the intellectual, social, and cultural contexts of teaching” (p. 276). As teachers engage in inquiry and constructing knowledge of practice, they might explore issues of race, class, gender, culture, language, ability, etc. in order to determine how these influence teaching and learning in their classrooms and schools and to engage in working within the system, as well as working the system itself to create equitable classrooms and schools.

Feiman-Nemser (2008) suggests that learning to teach extends beyond the boundaries of formal teacher preparation and can be conceptualized around four broad themes: “learning to think like a teacher, learning to know like a teacher, learning to feel like a teacher, and learning to act like a teacher” (p. 698). Learning to think like a teacher requires a “critical examination of one’s beliefs, assumptions, etc., a transition to pedagogical thinking, and the development of meta-cognitive awareness” (p. 698). Existing beliefs must be interrogated and deconstructed so that new possibilities and understandings might emerge.
Because good teaching depends on a variety of knowledges (see Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999), learning to know like a teacher involves developing a “deep knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it to diverse learners. They need to understand how children grown and learn and how culture and language influence their learning. They need to know about curriculum, pedagogy, classroom organization, and assessment, and they need to understand the broad purposes off schooling and how those purposes affect their work” (p. 699). To feel like a teacher recognizes that “teaching is deeply personal work, engaging teachers’ emotions and identity, as well as their intellect” (p. 699). Developing a professional identity is not easily done or forever accomplished and involves “fusing past, present and future ideals and realities (Featherstone, 1993). Finally, learning to act like a teacher requires us to develop a “repertoire of skills, strategies, and routines and the judgment to figure out what to do when” (p. 699); in other words, teachers need adaptive expertise (Hatano & Oura, 2003).

Feiman-Nemser (2001) also suggests that the central tasks of laying a foundation so that pre-service teachers can continue to learn in and from their practice include: (a) analyzing their beliefs and forming visions for their practice; (b) developing subject matter knowledge for teaching; (c) developing understandings of learners and learning; (d) developing a beginning repertoire of approaches to curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and (e) developing the tools to study teaching. These tasks are aligned with the Zeichner’s and Liston’s (1996) characterization of a reflective practitioner as one who:

- Examines, frames, and attempts to solve the dilemmas of classroom practice;
- Is aware of and questions the assumptions and values he or she brings to teaching;
- Is attentive to the institutional and cultural contexts in which he or she teaches;
- Takes part in curriculum development and is involved in school change efforts; and
- Takes responsibility for his or her own professional development (p. 6).

Thus, the purpose of this assignment is to provide you with a space to think, know, feel, and act like a teacher as you explore and attempt to solve the dilemmas you experience in the classroom, to question/deconstruct the assumptions and values you bring to teach, to become more aware of the contexts in which your teaching is situated, and to take responsibility for your ongoing professional development.

The Assignment: This task provides you with a space to develop and pursue the personal goals you have for your learning. These learning goals may be connected to the stances that inform your teaching, to dilemmas you have experienced in your PDS, and/or what you hope to learn in specific coursework. You will identify 2-3 substantive learning goals and provide rationales for why this learning is important to your development as a teacher. Then you will design a series of tasks/activities that will support you in meeting these goals. Finally, you will reflect on your learning during and at the end of the semester.

- To begin, identify 2-3 substantive learning goals that are specific and doable. They must be stated so that it is clear what you wish to learn and sufficiently narrow in scope so you might make substantive progress toward meeting your goals this semester. You might look through your teacher researcher notebook to identify dilemmas you experienced that might bring to mind some of the learning you wish to pursue. Because learning to teach is an ongoing process, you may continue to pursue some of the same learning goals over
your next two years in the program; however, you do want to be able to document your learning each semester.

- Describe/discuss your rationale(s) for each of your learning goals. These rationales should provide evidence for why it is important to accomplish this learning in order to create an equitable classroom, become the teacher you wish to be. Your rationales should be informed by what you have learned from your prior field experiences (knowledge in/of practice), feedback you’ve received from mentor teachers and course instructors, the vision you have for your teaching (stances you wish to inform your practice and identity), as well as how the literature/research (knowledge for practice) discusses what you wish to learn. The literature that informs your rationale should be from peer-reviewed sources and cited according to APA conventions.

- For each learning goal, describe a number of activities (4-6) you plan to implement that you believe will support you in meeting this goal. These activities might include reading the literature, engaging in professional conversations/reflection with others, designing, teaching and reflecting on lessons, conducting inventories or interviews, etc. We hope that designing, teaching, and reflecting on lessons will be one of your learning activities. If you engage in lesson planning and teaching as you pursue your learning goals, you’ll want to design and teach a minimum of 3 lessons.

- You will also identify the data sources you will collect and analyze to provide evidence of your learning. For each data source, you will describe what evidence the data source will provide of your learning.

- Once you have completed the worksheet for your Professional Development Plan (see below), please submit it via email to your small group facilitator by Friday, August 26th for formative feedback.

- Once you have received the formative feedback, please make necessary revisions/additions and share your plan with your mentor teacher and TEC for discussion and their signatures. Please submit a final, revised plan via email to your small group facilitator by Friday, September 9th. You will also submit the signature page, which can be an electronic or hard copy, by September 9th if at all possible.

- You will reflect on the progress you are making toward your goals on a regular basis in your TRN. You will be asked to submit a written reflection on your progress in an Admission Ticket mid-semester, as well as a more detailed reflection toward your goals at the end of the semester. This final reflection will be due Friday, December, 2nd.
Professional Development Plan Worksheet
Please copy and paste the table below into a Word document and use it to develop your professional development plan for this semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Goal</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Associated Learning Activities (in and outside of your PDS)</th>
<th>Data Sources Collection Schedule</th>
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<tbody>
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Preservice Teacher

Mentor Teacher

Teacher Education Coordinator

Rubric for Professional Development Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Scoring</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal <strong>learning goals are stated. Two substantive goals</strong> are specified.</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Substantive rationales</strong> for learning goals are included and include rationales based in personal experiences and in the literature/research.</td>
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<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicum Plan includes <strong>activities specifically designed to address personal learning goals/rationales</strong>. These activities may be required by coursework, but should also include some activities created by the pre-service teacher.</td>
<td></td>
<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicum Plan includes <strong>data sources</strong> that will provide evidence of the extent to which the learning goals are accomplished. <strong>An explanation of how each data source will provide this evidence is included.</strong></td>
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<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicum Plan includes <strong>all PDS activities (required by coursework)</strong>, as well as additionally activities that are personally designed to meet the learning goals and suggests when each of the activities will be completed.</td>
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<td>10 points</td>
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<td>Practicum Plan has <strong>approval from Mentor Teacher and Teacher Education Coordinator.</strong></td>
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<td>5 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practicum Plan is <strong>reflected upon.</strong> In these reflections, the pre-service teacher will make claims about the learning that has been accomplish to date and support these claims with evidence from their data. The pre-service teacher will also describe/discuss how their learning is influencing their</td>
<td></td>
<td>30 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
teaching, student learning, interactions/relationships with students and others, etc. They will also discuss what has proved challenging in accomplishing this learning and describe how they might address those challenges, as well as what questions are provoked by their experiences of studying their teaching and learning in the field. Plans for additional learning (next semester and beyond) are described and possible learning goals for next semester are suggested.

100 points

References:


