Characteristic of the Novice Teacher

Characteristic #2:

“We believe that the novice teacher should be an effective communication”.

Associated INTASC Principle #6: The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.

Associated INTASC Principle #10: The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students’ learning and well-being.

“Good communication is as stimulating as black coffee and just as hard to sleep after.”
- Anne Morrow Lindbergh
Communication is an essential ingredient to effective teaching, learning and life. An effective communicator is a person who can listen as well as convey material in a meaningful fashion. To reach all learners teachers must cover topics in a multidimensional manner – through oral, written, individual, group, hands-on, lab, and outside learning experiences. Student participation and information retention relies on these experiences and the teacher’s ability to communicate using each method. In the classroom, I try to use multiple forms of relaying content information, so that I can reach as many students as possible. However, I have also realized the importance of *listening* to my students – it helps me understand when students are grasping a topic, when they harbor misconceptions about material, and even when they are “off-task.” Aside from student to teacher communication, I feel it is important to be able to communicate with other faculty members. As a novice teacher, this skill has actually allowed me to grow tremendously in all of my communication efforts. I have learned the importance of written and oral “notes” home to parents – another dimension to effective teaching and learning. By sending progress reports or even a simple call to say, “your child is doing very well” – I can increase communication between parents and myself. Another effective tool for communication with both parents and students is technological programs such as Think Wave and Grade Quick; these programs allow me to communicate electronically, class expectations, assignments, progress notes, and student grades. In addition, the programs allow parents to email me at any time with questions or concerns.

As an up-and-coming “teacher leader,” I feel it is important to go beyond the boundaries of classroom/school communication efforts and reach out to the whole community. In one of my culminating Education courses, we were challenged to create a web-based Community Resource Project that worked to do just that. We identified a school/community need and developed a set of resources that directed educators’ in addressing the need. I chose the CRP that my fellow interns and I developed to address needs of English as Second Language learners at Morgantown High School as my communication artifact. The artifact highlights my ability to collaborate with fellow teachers, research – through oral and technological communication – specific needs of the school, and implement a plan to communicate the need and possible “solutions” to all concerned. In relation to the rapidly changing ethnic ratios across the country, it becomes increasingly important for teacher’s to have access to resources for communicating with (helping) all levels of ESL students, and to address cultural diversity of their school/community.

As a novice teacher, I must be able to communicate with all of my students, faculty and parents. However, considering the many abstract concepts in science class, a teacher’s inability to communicate due to language barriers can severely limit a student’s ability to learn effectively. Thus, to provide a productive learning environment for all of my students – to communicate well in all media – I feel it is imperative that I try to find available resources to aid my teaching and the students learning. In the future, I would like to implement a community resource project based on a need or needs faced in my own school/community. As having a deep understanding of my students and their culture/background is extremely important for creating a respectful and positive learning environment, I feel that investigating the needs of the surrounding community can only improve communication, and ultimately, learning experiences for everyone.