

(Soc St) Candidate Reflection on Student Teaching - Acceptable



# Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

## Professional Development Reflection Scoring Rubric

Name: XXXXX

ID#: 0305022

Teacher Preparation Program: Secondary Education

Major: Political Science/Secondary Ed

Assess the extent that the candidate has achieved the following Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards in the Professional Development Reflection. Rate the candidate's performance 1 (an area of weakness) to 4 (an area of strength) for each Standard.

		Weakness (1)	Developing (2)	Competence (3)	Strength (4)
1.	The professional development reflection provided evidence of the candidate's self-awareness of his/her strengths and weaknesses. (RIBTS 10)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	The professional development reflection provided evidence of an informal plan for professional development where the candidate reflected on his/her initial education, and assumed responsibility for his/her own professional growth. (RIBTS 10)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	The professional development reflection provided evidence of the candidate's awareness of ethical, legal, and professional standards and the need to maintain these standards in his/her practice. (RIBTS 11)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Place Comments Here

Strong assessment of growth in ability to teach all students effectively. He is able to articulate areas to work on but doesn't lay out how he will proceed to strengthen these areas in the future.

Evaluator: Ellen Bigler

Date: 5/12

During my time in Practicum I have learned many ideas and techniques to become a better teacher. These ideas and techniques address the issues of knowledge, diversity, pedagogy, and professionalism. By teaching at both a rural high school and an urban middle school, actually implementing lesson plans and reflecting on my experiences, I have learned what it means to be a social studies teacher in today's world. It is no longer teaching through lecture and notes, but teaching through the constructivist approach that makes learning intrinsic, which then has the students reach beyond factual knowledge. Teaching using the constructivist method allows students to discover answers through hands on activities which will allow a better understanding of the subject at hand.

### **Knowledge**

Social studies is an ever changing field and events from the past tend to repeat themselves in today's society. Because of this, I have attempted to teach students important information that does not only pertain to the past but links their everyday life to the time that I am teaching. I have learned that students are more interested in history and social studies when this link has been attained. For example, when I taught at the high school I was teaching America during World War I and had students analyze a wide range of propaganda posters from that time period. After the students were done analyzing these posters they decided what techniques made the posters effective. I then had the students create their own propaganda poster about an issue that was important to them. The assignment reinforced aspects of propaganda posters but also had the students use these aspects to spread their own message. Through this assignment I learned that

many students were worried about the environment as many of the posters reflected ideas of global warming and recycling. In the future I can use this knowledge to create lessons that meets these interests.

I also learned that teaching goes beyond what the instructor says. Body language and facial expressions will get a point across sometimes even more effectively than the spoken word does. If I was not content with the behavior of my middle school class I would stand and be quiet with a stern look on my face until the class settled down. It is not possible to teach students when you are talking over them. For students to learn they must be paying attention to the material. To do this teachers have to create an effective learning environment. This environment is one in which all students not only know the rules, but also the consequences when someone breaks a rule. If there are no consequences then there is no reason to follow the rule. This environment also allows for students to feel safe to engage in the conversation. Social studies classes are often boring when the lesson is a teacher centered lecture. The constructivist model of learning would agree that most students do not learn much from these lectures because they do not get to hypothesize or predict what will happen next.

When I was teaching at the middle school level, I started a lesson on the Proclamation of 1763 with a teacher centered lecture and the class did not respond. Because of this I had to shuffle my lesson on the spot and had the students imagine that the classroom we were in was a colony. When I drew an imaginary line that the kids could not cross and they reacted angrily. They had many of the same feelings that the colonist had towards Britain at this time. This lesson shifted from a teacher centered activity to a student centered activity which created an understanding of the core

concepts. If I continued with the lecture the class probably would not have understood these concepts, but when I adapted my teaching to the needs of the students they understood the feelings and the dilemmas that stemmed from the Proclamation of 1763.

### **Diversity**

The student population within a classroom is diverse, not only by race, but by gender and learning styles too. Not all students learn the same way so it is impossible to teach all lessons the same way and get the best possible results. Many students have multiple intelligences which allow for them to learn in many different ways. Some students do better through reading and writing, but there are some learners will learn better by listening to the discussion around them. Teachers must take this type of diversity into account when they decide how to teach their classroom. They must also look at the student population and decide if there are topics which will interest the students more. When I taught at the high school and did my propaganda lesson, I intentionally used many posters that were geared towards women because almost the entire class was female. This allowed for these female students to connect more with the posters instead of using posters that were geared to a population that was not present in the classroom.

The middle school was also more culturally diverse than the high school. I observed my cooperating teacher teach his ESL class at the middle school on more than one occasion and noticed the differences in his teaching style. First, the overall pace was slower so the students had more time to grasp key concepts. Second, the class notes were all in chart form to easily organize the new information. Finally, the literacy teaching was more prevalent in this class. Most of these students did not have any knowledge on

how to take notes or outline. My cooperating teacher taught his students these basic skills as the lowest level of scaffolding and in hopes that these skills will continue to grow through their academic careers.

When I was teaching my middle school class I knew that those students already possessed these skills so I had them read primary documents from the Boston Massacre. I had one third of the class read an account from a British officer, one third read depositions from the trial and the other third read the actual newspaper accounts. I had them underline confusing phrases and vocabulary then had the students work in groups with other students who had the same account. I did this so that the students could teach each other confusing parts of the reading. Typically in each group there was a student who understood the reading and taught it to the rest of the group. After these students knew the information I put them in another group with students who had different accounts. They had to teach the rest of the students their document's point of view on the massacre and then fill in a chart. This lesson worked great because the class responded so well. The students who worked well alone learned the material by reading the accounts, and the other students who needed help got it from the groups they were placed in. After each student understood their perspective I had them go and teach the other students who had a different perspective. I feel that when a teacher incorporates room for different learning styles in a lesson the class will get much more out of that particular lesson.

### **Pedagogy**

I have developed new pedagogical skills since entering Practicum. I have learned that cooperative learning groups are just as effective as lecturing when done correctly.

During my first experience in the high school I taught a lesson about new weapons of World War I. In this lesson I had students work in groups and read about machineguns, airplanes, poison gas, anti-aircraft guns, and tanks. These groups took what information I gave them and came up with their own strengths and weaknesses of the weapons. This lesson was effective because I did not tell the students what the strengths and weaknesses were, but through hands on activity they were able to create an internal idea which made the outcome their own. This idea of making an outcome the students own is important because then they feel as though they accomplished something and will be more inclined to try something on their own in the future.

At the high school I had the use of a computer and a projector which made PowerPoint presentations an accessible means of teaching. These presentations allowed me to use more visuals in the classroom than I normally would have been able to. My PowerPoint presentations were concise and to the point, but also included political cartoons, pictures of the people that I was talking about and diagrams which made it easier for the students to follow along with the notes. The PowerPoint also allowed me to introduce important ideas to the class and go back to them later. During my last class I stated that after World War I America feared communism in my presentation. Later I gave a reading on the basic differences between capitalism and communism and had the class fill in a chart to better understand these differences.

At both of the schools I taught at I encouraged class participation. I was constantly asking questions and getting feedback from students. A classroom is not effective when communication is monopolized by one side. I also came up with formal assessments at both schools. These assessments were based on the core concepts that I

felt the students should come away with after I taught them. These assessment pieces had multiple sections that ranged from multiple choice questions, to true and false, to essay questions. At the middle school level I asked straight true and false questions, but at the high school level I had the students fix the statement if the answer was false. I feel that this showed higher order thinking because not only did these students have to know whether the statement was factual, but they also had to know why or why not. I also had informal assessments which were assignments I had the students complete during class. These ranged from T Charts to vocabulary lists. The students usually seemed to hit the core concepts but when they did not I started the next class fixing the problems from the day before.

### **Professionalism**

While teaching at these schools I used both my cooperative teacher as well as my fellow Rhode Island College students to collaborate when necessary. At my first site I worked with one other student from Rhode Island College and we co-taught some lessons in which we collaborated on. We came up with the key concepts as well as activities. At the high school my partner and I came up with a Treaty of Versailles conference and had the class create their own treaty to end World War I. I also collaborated with my cooperating teachers many times. They both reminded me that the students are not at a college level and that I have to start from the ground up and teach vocabulary and skills that I assume they have, because at this level most of them do not. This was especially the case when I was making tests. I wanted to ask questions that I would have received in my college level classes, but the students are obviously not ready for these questions at their current levels. I had to revamp my tests in order for the students to build skills that

will eventually lead them to abilities that will allow them to answer those types of questions. I did not get a chance to work with special education teachers or paraprofessionals, but I did observe how my cooperating teachers did, and how they fed off of each other in order to teach the students that needed extra help. Collaboration is important because it gives teachers a place to bounce ideas, help each other, and create a better teaching environment amongst the faculty.

I have learned many things about myself as a teacher. First, I have learned that I have the ability to adapt when students are not grasping the concepts of the lesson. Also, I have learned I am much more comfortable in front of a classroom than I thought I would be. I am a nervous person by nature, but I do not show this nervousness when I am teaching because I feel confident with my lesson and my ability to get the points across. Finally, I have learned that I have to expect more out of the students in order to get them to think critically and achieve higher order thinking.

Since I am a beginning teacher I have distinct strengths and weaknesses. I feel that one of my strengths as a teacher is at the planning level. I am always prepared and have materials that attempt to make learning meaningful and fun, such as posters or songs. I am also creative and try to teach students not in the traditional lecture fashion, but from a constructivist point of view. I feel that I could be stronger at the implementation level. I know what I want to do, but I am not sure how much time certain aspects of the lesson will take. I feel that this comes with knowing your students and what they can do, but also with more experience.

My experiences in the classroom, as brief as they may have been, have given me a new guide on how to be a teacher. I now have personal experiences to reflect upon about



how to make myself a better teacher. By studying and creating my own techniques on knowledge, diversity, pedagogy, and professionalism, I have been able to look at myself and see how far I have come in a few short months. Over my teaching career my views on some of these subjects will change with new experiences, but at least I have a place to start when I get my first class as a student teacher.