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METHODS

Continual, Collaborative, and on the Job: Professional Development Moves to High School

ERINN BENTLEY

It is a Tuesday at 12:05 p.m. Twenty-five tenth grade students file into the classroom and give me puzzled glances as they notice the furniture has been rearranged with the desks placed in groups of four. The bell rings, and I say, “Good afternoon! As you can see, we’re going to do something a little bit different today. You all have done a great job reading and annotating *Lord of the Flies* this week; now, we’re going to try discussing the novel a new way. I’m going to get you all started; then at the end of class, I need your help. I want to hear what you think about this new strategy—what you learned, what you liked, and how we might make it work better.” Next, I explain and model the strategy we are testing out (literature circles); the students discuss the novel in their groups; and the class session ends with the tenth graders completing a questionnaire about today’s learning experience. Perhaps this sounds like a fairly typical high school English class—except I am not the students’ “real” teacher. Also, as I was facilitating the lesson, there were six preservice teachers in the room, taking notes on their observations of this class session. After the tenth graders left the room, the preservice teachers, mentor teacher, and I met for an hour to debrief the lesson, discussing our observations, impressions, and ideas.

This Tuesday afternoon describes a day-on-the-job for me as an English education professor who teaches on-site at a local high school. I teach a methods course there two mornings each week. In the afternoons, I supervise my preservice teachers in their mentor classrooms. Initially, I agreed to move my methods course from the university to the high school as a way to increase my involvement in my local educational community. I thought I would be providing local teachers with formal professional development sessions, such as introducing them to new strategies I have learned through my research and training. Instead, the mentor teachers, preservice teachers, and I have all learned from one another through opportunities that have evolved from our

day-to-day work in the classrooms. It is unlike any professional development I have experienced before.

Need for Personally Relevant, Ongoing Development

When I was a secondary teacher, I often felt there was a disconnect between the professional development provided and the actual concerns and challenges I faced in my classroom. Such development was typically structured as an in-service workshop on a topic preselected by someone else. Sometimes these topics were highly relevant to my development needs; other times they were not. I often left these workshops wondering whether the information I learned in this isolated situation would be useful in my day-to-day interactions with students. At that time, I also enrolled in graduate coursework and was a fellow in a local National Writing Project (NWP) site’s summer institute. These experiences allowed me to learn new pedagogical strategies, wrestle with theoretical concepts, and develop professional contacts. These self-selected activities seemed more directly related to my needs than those required by my district; still, I felt like a critical piece in my professional development was missing.

My experiences have been similar as a postsecondary instructor. Again, I have participated in various in-service sessions provided by my university. Additionally, I regularly attend state-level and national conferences, including the Annual Convention sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). I often leave sessions feeling inspired to implement my newly gained knowledge. Without continual on-the-job support, however, I find it difficult to put my new ideas into practice.

According to recent scholarship, I am not alone in my experiences. A 2009 study focused on teacher professional development in the United States and abroad found that nearly half of U.S. teachers are not satisfied with the professional development they receive (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009, p. 21). Specifically,

many teachers are not offered learning opportunities of significant depth and duration. That is, “[w]hile many teachers get a day or two of professional development on various topics each year, very few have the chance to study any aspects of teaching for more than two days” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009, p. 20). When professional development lacks continual support, these one-time events will not likely make a lasting impression on teachers. To truly support teachers (and their students), researchers call for professional development that is “collaborative... intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009, p. 5). Similarly, NCTE (2006) defines the “best” models of professional development as those that enhance teachers’ practices to improve student learning through “sustained activities.” This past year, I believe such a learning environment was established through the Professional Development School (PDS) formed among mentor teachers, preservice teachers, and my university at a local high school. This article describes how we developed this PDS and the professional development opportunities that emerged.

Creating a Professional Development School

In an effort to strengthen learning opportunities within local K-12 schools, Columbus State University piloted Professional Development Schools within one high school and three elementary schools during the 2015-2016 academic year. Simply put, a PDS is a partnership between a university and a school that is committed to providing high quality education to K-12 students and continual training to both preservice and inservice teachers. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) defines PDS partnerships as ones that focus on “the preparation of new teachers, faculty development, inquiry directed at the improvement of practice, [and] enhanced student achievement” (n.d.). Therefore, a PDS is not simply a site where preservice teachers engage in field placements to satisfy their program and certification requirements. Instead, all participants—mentor teachers, preservice teachers, and university faculty—engage in ongoing professional development to positively impact student learning.

As part of the pilot PDS initiative, Northside High School was chosen to partner with CSU’s English education program. Northside is an urban school, serving approximately 1350 students in grades 9 through 12. It offers traditional high school curriculum, such as college preparatory and AP classes; additionally, students may participate in the

school’s biomedical/engineering magnet program. This program is highly selective and draws students from the entire county. Northside’s student population, then, is comprised of neighborhood students zoned for this school as well as students who have been accepted into the magnet program. The English department is comprised of nine full-time teachers, whose classrooms are physically located within a single wing in the building. This wing is comprised of ten classrooms, three computer labs, and a teachers’ lounge.

Columbus State University is a Master’s-level, regional institution with the current enrollment of approximately 8,200 students. The Teacher Education Department is CAEP/NCATE accredited; just over 400 students are enrolled in initial certification programs in early childhood, middle grades, secondary, fine arts, physical education, and special education. In the area of English education, there are two routes to earn initial certification: a traditional, four-year undergraduate program, or a one-year Masters in Teaching (M.A.T.) program (for students already possessing a bachelor’s degree in English). In both routes, preservice teachers participate in two field placements (practica) prior to student teaching. During each semester-long practicum, preservice teachers spend 60 hours observing and assisting their mentor teachers. Student teaching is a 15-week, full-time commitment, culminating in student teachers assuming responsibility for all classroom instruction and demonstrating their teaching effectiveness through successful completion of performance assessment portfolios.

The undergraduate and graduate preservice teachers’ coursework and fieldwork overlapped during the fall semester of 2015, when both groups enrolled in an English methods course and practicum that I regularly teach. It was this methods course and practicum that served as the starting point for establishing the Northside PDS. During the 2015-2016 academic year, two M.A.T. students and four B.A. students participated in the PDS experience. All six preservice teachers remained with the same mentor teachers for fall and spring semesters. Within the PDS, the preservice teachers, university supervisor, and mentor teachers played varying roles, described below.

Preservice Teacher Roles

During the fall semester, the preservice teachers were required to spend 60 hours in their mentor teacher’s classroom, where they completed various assignments as part of the practicum and certification requirements. The preservice teachers also became informally acquainted with the other teachers in the English wing due to the lunch schedule. Since

all English teachers were on the same lunch schedule, the preservice, mentor teachers, and I often socialized in the lounge or in a classroom during that 30-minute break. At the end of fall semester, the mentor teachers requested to keep the same preservice teachers through the spring semester; however, they also wanted the preservice teachers to experience as varied a field experience as possible. To meet this goal, we required the preservice teachers to spend at least 15 hours in other teachers' classrooms and observe at least two of their peers during spring semester.

Initially, preservice teachers took on one role in the PDS—they fulfilled assignments for their practicum by working in a single classroom. Essentially, they performed the same role they would have in a non-PDS field experience. In spring semester, however, a new role emerged; they became peer mentors. I first noticed this role when a practicum student observed one of the student teachers. She explained that it was helpful for her to watch this student teacher lead classroom instruction, and she talked with him about the overall student teaching experience. She was able to get a glimpse of “what's next” for her in the program. Before, practicum students and student teachers had little (if any) interactions in the schools. In our PDS, the practicum students could literally walk down the hallway and see the “reality” of student teaching any day during the semester. In turn, the student teachers shared their advice with the practicum students.

As spring semester progressed, the practicum students began mentoring one another as well. For example, while conducting a peer observation, one practicum student observed her peer using a specific small group discussion strategy. Noticing how effective this strategy was, she consulted with her peer on how to adapt the strategy for use in her own classroom. When she taught her lesson, another practicum student observed her. Again, this student was intrigued by the strategy, and she adapted it further for her classroom. Over the next few weeks, we could literally see one specific teaching strategy “move” down the English hallway as the practicum students collaborated on how to adapt instruction to meet the unique needs in their classrooms.

University Supervisor Roles

As the university's English education program coordinator, I possess a six-credit teaching load per semester. For both PDS semesters, my entire teaching load was comprised of teaching and supervising the preservice teachers on-site at Northside. I arranged my schedule to teach the methods course on Tuesday and Thursday mornings; during those

afternoons, I assisted mentor and preservice teachers in their classrooms. On any given day, I observed a preservice teacher leading a lesson, co-taught a lesson with a mentor teacher, co-planned with a preservice and/or a mentor teacher, or taught a model lesson for my students to observe and analyze. My roles varied from day to day, based on the needs of the mentor and preservice teachers.

One role that remained constant was serving as the university supervisor to my preservice teachers. That is, I regularly observed them teaching; I evaluated and documented their progress; and I ensured they were successfully meeting the requirements of their certification program. This was the same role I had performed prior to participating in the PDS. Now, however, I was spending two full days each week with the preservice teachers in their classrooms. Previously, my preservice teachers were placed at different schools. In one semester, they were dispersed among seven schools across three counties. Prior to the PDS experience, practicum students were observed 1-3 times; student teachers were observed five times. Now, we work together daily.

One role that emerged through the PDS partnership was becoming a mentor to the mentor teachers. I met regularly with each mentor teacher and soon discovered that most of them were unsure as to how to give their preservice teachers targeted constructive feedback. Working with each mentor teacher, we determined each preservice teacher's strengths and areas for improvement; we prioritized the needs-improvement areas; and we developed strategies for supporting growth in those areas. In fact, the mentor teachers felt so strongly about wanting to improve their own mentoring skills that they requested they supervise the same preservice teacher for the entire academic year. Prior to the PDS experience, I had been acquainted with six of the nine English teachers; however, I had not worked this closely with mentor teachers. As part of the PDS experience, I was able to spend time in their classrooms, learn their teaching styles, develop relationships with them, and provide them with individualized mentoring support.

Mentor Teacher Roles

First, it is worth noting that mentor teachers were not compensated for their supervisory roles or their general participation in this PDS partnership. Mentor teachers assumed the responsibilities of assisting the preservice teachers with creating lesson plans and facilitating instruction. Next, mentor teachers conducted formal observations each semester (two observations for practicum students; three observations for student teachers). As the PDS partnership evolved,

though, mentor teachers also became co-planners of the preservice teachers' field experiences. That is, the teachers provided me with input as to how to better structure my methods course and practicum assignments. (See Appendices A and B for examples of co-planned assignments.) Again, prior to the PDS experience, mentor teachers rarely took such an active role in helping design and facilitate the preservice teachers' field experiences.

In spring semester, the mentor teacher roles further evolved due to the preservice teachers' "outside" observation requirement. With the addition of these hours, mentor teachers who had not hosted preservice teachers now had the opportunity to share their classrooms and teaching expertise. Also, the fall semester mentor teachers were now able to work with all the preservice teachers rather than just the one who was assigned to them. Although the preservice teachers were simply assigned to "observe" in these outside classrooms, the mentor teachers invited them to participate actively in their classrooms by engaging in a reader's theatre, leading small group activities, and serving as judges for student presentations. The preservice teachers said that they enjoyed these experiences because they were able to see a wide range of pedagogical and behavioral management strategies; they also liked the varied teaching opportunities the mentor teachers provided them. Similarly, the mentor teachers viewed the preservice teachers as valuable assets. For instance, one teacher commented that having two preservice teachers in her room allowed her to better facilitate the small group discussions she had planned for that day. Expanding the PDS so that all English classrooms were "open-door" classrooms, then, positively impacted both the mentor and the preservice teachers.

Making the PDS Work Through Professional Development Plans

"It is time for our education workforce to engage in learning the way other professionals do—continually, collaboratively, and on the job—to address common problems and crucial challenges where they work" (Hunt, 2009, p. 2).

Throughout our year-long experience in the Northside PDS, professional development opportunities emerged from real challenges we faced as teachers and mentors. One person did not solve these challenges; professional development needs were not remedied by a quick, one-day workshop. Instead, all participants—preservice teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisor—worked continually and collaboratively to address these challenges. Considering that

we each possessed unique concerns, we needed to explore how the PDS might provide enough flexibility to address each participant's needs and enough structure so that we were not simply 16 individuals working independently. By learning from our experiences during fall semester, we eventually developed a solution: The Professional Development Plan.

Since we were all new to the PDS partnership (and our roles in that partnership had not been fully determined), we approached fall semester similarly to how field placements had been structured during previous semesters. That is, as the university supervisor, I developed all of the practicum and methods course assignments and distributed these assignments to the preservice and mentor teachers. We dove head-first into our partnership, only later to realize that we missed some key steps to establishing that partnership. Toward the end of fall semester, I met collectively with the mentor teachers to elicit their feedback. One mentor teacher commented, "I didn't realize this until a few weeks ago, but I wish my practicum student didn't leave my classroom in the middle of 3rd period. I know she has to go back to CSU's campus for her English class, but it's disruptive when she leaves in the middle of class. My students don't view her as a 'real' teacher when she leaves like that." Another mentor teacher commented that she wished her preservice teacher would send her lesson plans further in advance rather than wait until the last minute. Through our discussions, we realized that mentor and preservice teachers needed to develop norms and expectations for their specific classroom partnerships.

Next, the mentor teachers believed we could improve the work or assignments that preservice teachers did in the practicum. For example, one teacher asked, "Why do the students all do the same assignments? They are at different professional development levels. Can't they do something more individualized?" She was absolutely right. Why had I not noticed this before? Drawing on the mentor teachers' suggestions, I changed the field placement requirements. Rather than creating one-size-fits-all assignments, I gave them a broader framework. Prior to the PDS experience, I determined the focus of the lesson plans the preservice teachers designed (e.g., leading a writing workshop, teaching a grammar mini-lesson, etc.). Now, each preservice teacher developed a portfolio

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focused on 2-3 specific development areas (See Appendix A). I did not dictate their focus areas; instead, each preservice and mentor teacher chose the focus areas. With this new design, preservice teachers still learned the same pedagogical practices found within “traditional” fieldwork assignments (e.g., lesson planning, assessing student learning, and leading class instruction). The portfolio simply allowed them to use their lesson plans and other classroom experiences to deeply reflect upon their personalized development needs.

Preservice Teachers: From Plan to Portfolio to Reflective Practice

As we approached the second semester as a PDS, we wanted to implement the new portfolio assignment and establish norm setting between mentor and preservice teachers. To do so, we needed a plan. Hence, the Professional Development Plan was created (see Appendix A). At the beginning of spring semester, each preservice teacher, mentor teacher, and I met as a team to complete the Plan. A wide range of professional goals was chosen. For example, one preservice teacher focused on building rapport with students and facilitating whole-class discussions. Another used formative assessments to guide his future planning. Throughout the semester, the preservice teachers reflected on their goals as they taught lessons and participated in other classroom activities.

One preservice teacher noted that she felt more confident reflecting on her teaching practices because of the Development Plan’s focus on professional development areas. In her reflection she wrote, “Last semester, I wasn’t sure what I was supposed to be writing about ...so much happens in one lesson. It’s overwhelming to think that I have to analyze everything I did during that class period...[N]ow I know exactly what I want my students to learn and how I want to teach it ... I can reflect on whether they learned the objectives and whether I met my focus goal.” As her comments indicate, engaging in reflective practice as teachers is not always a simple task. The sheer number of planning, teaching, and classroom management components within a single lesson may overwhelm novice teachers. If “through reflective practice a teacher continually considers the effects of instruction on students’ learning,” the Development Plan is a tool that can help preservice teachers hone the focus of their planning and instruction to truly engage in such reflection (Smagorinsky, 2009, p. 21).

At the end of the semester, preservice teachers returned to their Plans and discussed in what ways they had met their professional development goals. Interestingly, none

of the preservice teachers described having mastered their selected goals. Instead, they believed they had “improved” or “grown” in their focus areas, but they wanted to improve further. Additionally, they listed new professional development goals for the upcoming semester (although this was not a requirement of the assignment). Reading these final reflections was a true “a-ha” moment for me as a methods instructor. For years, my preservice teachers have completed similar assignments in which they reflected on their growth. Too often, they simply referred to the ratings they received on evaluation rubrics completed by their mentor teachers and me as evidence of their teaching proficiency. Too often, they did not explain how knowledge gained from one field experience might impact their future professional development. This time, the preservice teachers evaluated themselves using evidence from their lesson plans, student work samples, and video-recorded lessons, coupled with knowledge of their students and classroom contexts. They made informed decisions about their growth according to self-selected goals. Most importantly, they recognized that professional development is an ongoing process.

These preservice teachers, I believe, moved beyond viewing the Plan and portfolio as mere assignments. Instead, they engaged in a continual process described by Smagorinsky (2009) as “principled, reflective practice” (p. 21). Through such practice, teachers take part in ongoing readings and discussions to stay abreast of new pedagogical strategies; they pay “...attention to how their students experience their classrooms...[and they use] principled reflection on how instruction works, to be effective in his or her unique setting” (Smagorinsky, 2009, p. 21). Based on the preservice teachers’ final reflections, it appeared that they did not view the portfolio as the “end” of their professional development journey. Instead, they were using their reflections to revise their Plans and determine new development goals.

University Supervisor: Connecting Methods Course and Field Work

Originally, the Plan was intended to assist preservice teachers in identifying focus professional development areas and to assist both preservice and mentor teachers in establishing partnership norms. After reading all of my preservice teachers’ plans, however, I knew I needed to complete my own Plan. I noticed that all of the preservice teachers stated that they wanted to learn strategies for teaching close reading. Although I had planned to address this topic in some of our weekly meetings, I now knew I needed to give it more attention. Their development needs prompted me to engage

in professional learning of my own. After studying close reading resources and attending two workshops on this topic, I adjusted my course content to provide added support in this area to my preservice teachers.

Before I taught on-site as part of the PDS, I often felt as if the theories in my methods courses were disconnected from the teaching “realities” preservice teachers experienced in field placements. That is, I met with my preservice teachers on the university’s campus, where I modeled lessons, we discussed theories, and we practiced strategies. I drew from my past experiences as a secondary teacher to connect the hypothetical world of methods coursework to the real world of the classroom. Then, the preservice teachers went out to the schools by themselves and tried to make those connections. Now, we make those connections together. Frankly, I have wanted to make such a change in my teaching for quite a while. When I first read the Conference on English Education’s (CEE, 2005) Position Statement—“What Do We Know and Believe about the Roles of Methods Courses and Field Experiences in English Education?”—I was struck with the assertion that “...course readings and assignments [in a methods course should] reflect and extend the issues raised by specific field placements.” I wanted there to be an explicit connection between my course and the “real” world of the classroom; I just did not know how to make that connection happen. The Professional Development Plan has allowed me to understand specifically what “issues” my preservice teachers were encountering, adjust my course content accordingly, and undergo my own professional learning to address new issues and challenges that arise.

Mentor Teachers: On the Job Development

Interestingly, the mentor teachers also chose to complete their own Plans. One mentor teacher admitted that she had not provide detailed feedback for her preservice teacher in the previous semester. In the spring, one of her mentoring professional development goals was to provide targeted feedback, especially as her preservice teacher was teaching each lesson. Through conversations with this teacher, I discovered that my university’s four-page rubric was too cumbersome for providing quick, on-the-spot responses. She needed a better way to record her observation notes as she focused on her preservice teacher and monitored her students’ behavior. Her preservice teacher and I then created a simplified feedback form, the mentor teacher piloted it for us, and we revised the form based on the mentor teacher’s feedback. We plan to continue using this form for classroom observations in the future. Although the creation of this form

may not seem like a major accomplishment to some, it served as an example of how the PDS partnership promoted true collaboration and joint ownership of the practicum experience. According to CEE (2005), “School-based and college/university-based partners should share responsibility for field experiences.” As PDS partners, we discovered an issue by discussing one teacher’s Professional Development Plan. Together, we solved the issue, which benefitted that mentor and preservice teacher as well as future practicum participants.

Not all mentor teachers focused their Plans on their roles within the practicum. Instead, some mentor teachers focused on improving their own teaching practices. For example, one teacher was having difficulty with a group of struggling readers. She asked for me to “adopt” this class—to experiment with her in testing out various strategies to increase their engagement. I co-taught with the mentor and preservice teachers, I modeled teaching strategies, and sometimes I took on the role of observer by analyzing their classroom interactions. Together, the mentor teacher, preservice teacher, and I poured over resources—articles, books, and videos. We discussed our findings; we continued to test out new ideas and strategies. We were participating in principled, reflective practice by “...focusing on the why of teaching: why teaching methods work in particular ways in particular settings” (Smagorinsky, 2009, p. 20). Through trial and error, we discovered a close reading strategy that worked for that specific group of students. In this situation, the preservice teacher was able to take part in reflective practice alongside two veteran educators—thus reinforcing that professional development truly is an ongoing process.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Research indicates that the most effective professional development focuses on the “everyday challenges involved in teaching...rather than focusing on abstract educational principles or teaching methods taken out of context” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009, p. 10). Further, teachers value professional development that is explicitly connected to standards, students, resources, and curriculum associated with their own classroom contexts (Geret, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yeon, 2001). In our PDS, the mentor teachers were not provided with “formal” professional development sessions. Instead, we engaged in an ongoing process of identifying problems or challenges and working collaboratively to solve them. This experience was true, on-the-job development. It was also true teamwork, as the preservice teachers and I were

invited to be a part of the problem-solving processes with the mentor teachers.

In this academic year, we have slowly evolved in what some might term a “teaching hospital.” According to NCATE (n.d.),

PDSs are often compared to teaching hospitals...

As practicing professions, both teaching and medicine require a sound academic program and intense clinical preparation. The teaching hospital was designed to provide such clinical preparation for medical students and interns; PDSs serve the same function for teacher candidates and in-service faculty. Both settings provide support for professional learning in a real-world setting in which practice takes place.

This year, we have been confronted daily with the intersection of theory and practice in the classrooms, hallways, and teacher’s lounge—our English wing at Northside is a place where the lines between methods course and “real-world” teaching have blurred. Sometimes even the lines between mentor and mentee have blurred.

Now, it is the final countdown to the end of the school year. As I sit here in the Northside English teacher’s lounge, I wonder, “Where do we go from here?” For years, teachers and scholars have called for professional development that is continual, collaborative, and on the job (Hunt, 2009). This year, we have experienced such development as participants in our PDS. One concern I have, though, is the fact that mentor teachers’ professional development within the partnership is not (yet) officially recognized. That is, in order to gain recertification, meet state-mandated evaluation standards, and be eligible for salary increases, teachers must show evidence of ongoing professional development. Typically, teachers complete postsecondary coursework and participate in approved workshops or in-service sessions. How might participating in a PDS or engaging in some other partnership with a teacher preparation program “fit” into our current landscape? That is a question that needs further investigation. From this PDS experience, I have learned that we need to recognize that mentoring—true mentoring that encompasses reflective practice and collaboration—is professional development in itself. I have also seen that we need to better recognize both preservice and mentor teachers’ individual professional development needs. Finally, we must find ways to legitimize inservice teachers’ work to achieve their development goals, even if their work takes place in a K-12

classroom, in a “teaching hospital,” or in some other context outside a traditional professional development setting.

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Appendix A. Practicum Professional Development Plan

Instructions: Prior to beginning your spring 2016 field placement, you will need to schedule a time to meet with your cooperating teacher and complete this Practicum Professional Development Plan form. The purpose of this form is for you and your cooperating teacher to clearly establish your schedule, norms/expectations for your work, and targeted areas for your professional development. Complete this form (either handwritten or typed responses are fine). Make sure both you and your cooperating teacher sign the form. Provide copies of the signed form to your cooperating teacher and university supervisor (and keep a copy for yourself). Turn in your signed form to your university supervisor by 1/26/16.

Schedule

I plan to complete my practicum placement on these days and times.

Norms/Expectations

Here, create a list of expected professional behavior, tasks, etc. For example, is it acceptable for you to leave/enter the classroom in the middle of a class period? Is it acceptable to bring outside food/drinks in the classroom? What should you do if you are going to be absent? How far in advance do you need to submit lesson plans to your cooperating teacher? Other norms?

Professional Development Goals

Here, create a list of 2-4 specific professional development goals for yourself. For example, you might look at your MAP and Disposition evaluations from last semester and choose 2-4 components on which you would like to show improvement.

Statement of Understanding

I have received a copy of the Practicum Professional Development Plan form for EDCI 3455 for Spring 2016. I have read the form and have collaborated with my cooperating teacher to complete the form. I understand the requirements set forth in the form and my responsibility to fulfill those requirements in a professional manner.

Student Signature

Date

Mentor Teacher Signature

Date

Appendix B. Preservice Teacher Professional Development Portfolio

The purpose of this portfolio is for you to document your professional growth and participation in both your field placement and practicum course meetings over the course of the semester.

Portfolio: Contents

Section 1: Introduction

- Copy of your Professional Development Plan (signed by you and your cooperating teacher).
- Copy of your completed field log (60 or more hours) signed by teacher(s).
- Copies of your mid-term MAP and Disposition evaluations from your university supervisor.

Section 2: Top 10 Teaching Resources

During the semester, you will need to collect teaching materials from your cooperating teacher and the other teachers you observe. In your portfolio, include the top 10 resources you have collected. These resources may include (but are not limited to): note-taking guides, slide shows or lecture materials, tools for guided reading or writing workshops, etc. Also include a brief (no more than two pages) description of these resources. Why did you choose these resources? How do you plan to use them someday?

Section 3: Three Reflect and Perfect (RAP) Lessons

Throughout your practicum, you will be responsible for planning, teaching, and reflecting on three (3) video-recorded lessons. Use the lesson plan template provided for all of your RAP lessons. For all 3 RAP lessons, you should consult with your cooperating teacher as you do your planning. The majority of the planning and teaching of the lesson, though, should be your responsibility. The goal of all three lessons should be to engage students in actively participating in an activity that is standards-based and appropriate for their learning levels. A teacher-centered lecture or rote-memorization task is not appropriate for a RAP lesson. Teaching a plan completely created by your cooperating teacher or teaching a “sub plan” is not appropriate for a RAP lesson. Submit your RAP lesson plans via email to your university supervisor at least 72 hours prior to teaching it.

Professional Development Focus Areas

For each of your RAP lessons, you will focus on one of the professional development areas you identified in your Professional Development Plan.

Artifacts to Include in each RAP Lesson

- Completed lesson plan template
- Supplementary teaching materials (all handouts, presentation materials, assessment materials, etc.).
- Completed RAP Sheet.
- Cooperating teacher’s feedback (formal or informal feedback).

RAP Sheet: Information

Your RAP sheet should include concise, specific descriptions in response to the following writing prompts.

- Professional Development Focus Area: In 1 paragraph, clearly describe the focus area you have chosen for this RAP lesson. Cite or paraphrase an outside source to support your description of the focus area (e.g., you might refer to the “accomplished novice” description of your focus area in the MAP rubric, or you might refer to another outside source, such as an NCTE policy statement).
- Professional Development Relevance: In 1 paragraph, clearly describe the relevance of this professional development goal. For example, how does this goal impact student engagement, learning, and/or the classroom environment? Use an outside source to support your description.

- **Planning Reflection:** In 2-3 paragraphs, clearly describe one or more specific ways in which your lesson plan is aligned with your chosen professional development focus area. Refer to specific portions of your lesson plan as evidence.
- **Teaching Reflection:** In 2-3 paragraphs, analyze to what extent you were successful in meeting the chosen professional development goal while teaching your lesson. Use evidence (e.g., feedback and/or moments from the video recording) to support your analysis.
- **Next Steps:** In 1 paragraph, describe at least one change you would make to the planning and/or teaching of this lesson were you to teach it again. Describe why you would make this change.

Section 4: Four Practicum Observations Reflections

During the semester, you will spend time in several teachers' classrooms. You will write at least 4 reflections in which you describe your experiences. These reflections can be informal in tone. Each reflection should be 2-3 double-spaced pages. You need to reference at least 3 different teachers across the 4 reflections; you cannot focus your reflections solely on your experiences in your assigned classroom. You do not have to complete the reflections in the order given. At the top of each reflection, please include the topic of the reflection. The topics are:

- **Behavioral management**

For example, how does one teacher vary his/her management style with 2 different sets of students and why. OR, how do two or three teachers demonstrate different behavioral management styles. OR choose another approach to discussing this topic.

- **Facilitating a classroom discussion**

Analyze a teacher facilitating a whole class discussion by recording how students are called on – volunteers vs. non-volunteers, or how genders participate, or how the teacher provides feedback. OR analyze the types of questions asked. More information (and practice) will be provided on this topic.

- **Peer Observation**

Observe one of your peers (either practicum student or student teacher) teach a lesson. Use the MAP observation form(attached) to record what you see and your questions/suggestions for your peer. Be sure to provide a copy of your completed form to your peer.

- **Your Choice**

Choose a topic on which you would like to reflect. For example, you might interview a teacher to learn more about his/her teaching philosophy and professional development journey. Or, you might attend a planning meeting and reflect on the ways in which two (or more) teachers collaborate. Or, you might attend a parent-teacher conference and reflect on your experiences. Or, you might think of another topic you are interested in investigating.

Section 5: Professional Development Plan Reflection

In 2-3 double-spaced pages, describe in what ways you did (or did not) meet your professional development goals as listed in your Plan. You must meet with your cooperating teacher to discuss your practicum plan reflection and he/she must sign your completed reflection.