Activity 1: Expectations Continuum

The purpose of this activity is to provide a foundation for the mentor teacher-teacher candidate relationship. This relationship is critical to the success of a collaborative approach to the Professional Year. This is a **requirement** for interns and any student teacher who is with a new mentor.

Objectives: To foster candidate-mentor teacher communication regarding expectations for the Professional Year experience.

Idaho Core Teacher Standards/Danielson Domains Addressed: Standards 9 & 10; Domain 4

Instructions:
1. Complete the Expectations Continuum form. Candidate groups will debrief this experience together. [See APPENDIX A].
2. Have your mentor teacher complete the Internship Expectations form independently.
3. Set up a time to jointly discuss expectations for the semester with your mentor teacher(s). Take notes and make decisions for roles in the classroom based on individual expectations.
4. Be prepared to share this with your liaison

Assessment: Assessment will be based on participation in activity and reflective participation in seminar discussions.

Activity 2: Inquiry Project
The purpose of this assignment is to provide opportunities for candidates to investigate community, school, and classroom contexts. You will engage in inquiry related to a question or problem of practice that you develop. In order to do so, you will take into account your perspectives, your context, what research has to say about this issue, and data that you collect to try and further your understanding of the issue. Because of the multiple layers involved in inquiry, there are multiple components to this research based activity.

Idaho Core Teacher Standards/Danielson Domains Addressed: Standards 1-10 depending on issue; Domains 1, 2

Instructions (liaisons will tailor how and when these each section is to be completed):

PART I: Educational Context

Teaching and learning occur in complex social settings. Analysis of these contexts is a necessary part of teaching. This context assignment will also lend itself to the S-PAT requirement in Student Teaching and inform planning, instruction, and reflection.

Objectives:
1. To describe and understand the following contexts and any effects on teaching/learning
      a. Community in which the school is set
      b. School context and climate
      c. Classroom context
2. To become acquainted with mentor teacher and various staff members whom you may not work directly with so that you are able to understand their roles within the school and how they contribute to the school learning.
1) Community Context

• Using various sources such as district/school websites, driving through the community, talking with school personnel, describe the community in which the school is situated. Is it primarily residential? Business? What resources are in close proximity (e.g., public library, museums, police station, fire station, boys and girls club, etc.)? What are the demographics of the school attendance area? Include SES. What resources could you take advantage of?
• Explain how you feel the community context will affect you and your practice as a teacher.

2) School Context
• **Adults in the School** (respond to the questions below)
"Shadow" and/or interview a professional in the building other than a traditional classroom teacher (PE teacher, custodian, paraprofessional, ELL teacher, nurse, etc.)
What roles does this person play and how do these roles affect others?
• **Physical Spaces**
Walk through your school site's hallways using your five senses. Take notes of aspects such as cleanliness; plants and artwork; bulletin boards – including character or academic focus, for example, and if student work is displayed; classroom doors being open or closed; sounds coming from various classrooms; classroom arrangements when noticeable from hallway; entryway signs; the office as a "first impression" of the building; and "people presence" in hallways – adults? students – alone, in small groups? Describe your impressions.
* **Students in the School:**
Consider class sizes at each grade level and/or content area, student-teacher ratios, attrition, and turnover.
* **Programs**
What resources and programs are available to parents, children, and teachers?
* **School philosophy**
What is the philosophy of teaching and learning of this school? What is the mission statement of the school?

3) Classroom context (Create a brief report on your classroom context by gathering the data listed below. Be ready to share in seminar and develop S-PAT based on contextual factors)
•**Students' demographics**
Investigate the Race/ethnicities, languages, and cultures represented among your students
• **Anecdotal Records**
Make a seating chart of your students the first week. Keep anecdotal records on each student in one class period with data gathered during observations of classroom interactions. These notes may be helpful in selecting focus students for your final S-PAT artifacts.
• **Mentor Teacher Practices/decisions** (Interview/observe mentor to answer these questions): What is the philosophy of teaching/learning held by your mentor teacher and how is it enacted? How does the mentor teacher plan, assess, use standards, make decisions, manage the classroom, etc?

PART II: Inquiry into a Problem of Practice

One of the goals during the professional year is to develop an inquiry stance. One of the ways you do this is to develop a question of your own, based on your experiences, and investigate this question closely.

Objectives: 1. To use literature and data to help better understand a question that you have about practice.
2. To inform the field by communicating what you learned and how it may assist you and others in serving p-12 student needs.
1) Identify a Problem of Practice
- With your mentor(s), identify a "problem of practice" – what is a problem you have come into contact with in the classroom? Think about something within your context that you want to understand better, that concerns you, that you are curious about. Use any written reflection you have

done as a starting point and consult with your mentor teacher and peers, as they may have some ideas.
- Formulate a question based on this. Your question should be a "how" or "why" question that is open ended and cannot be answered with a "yes" or a "no".

2) Research
- Read several journal articles related to your question. Before drawing conclusions about your topic, it is necessary for you to find out what has already been written about it. There are a number of professional journals published for the practicing teacher (e.g., The Reading Teacher, English Journal, Instructor Magazine, AIMS Magazine, Educational Leadership, Journal of Research in Childhood Education, etc.)
- Develop a plan of action to address the question within your context and collect further data. This plan should include specific methodology and a timeline.

3) Implementation
- Implement your plan and collect data to further your understanding of this topic in your setting.
- How will you demonstrate whether or not your goal has been met? What information/data will you collect that will demonstrate this? This information will help you make sense of the topic you have chosen to explore. Data will come in different forms, and in part, will be determined by the focus of your inquiry. Possible information sources include:
  • Field notes from your classroom/school/inquiry context
  • Selected transcript of teacher/personnel interview
  • Professional articles
  • Collection of artifacts (e.g., curriculum guide/handouts/classroom policies/assignment sheets/student work/etc.)
  • Selected transcript from student interview or observation of a student
- Consider your own self. As you explore your topic, it is necessary to also appreciate the particular lens through which you view this educational situation. How does your history, school experiences, ethnicity, gender and other positions affect how you look and how you see the world? What are your biases and values when it comes to teaching and learning?

4) Report
- Summarize; share what you learned from your research and how it can help you and others.
- Consider your data. Begin to make some conclusions. What did you learn? What are the major themes that emerge from your project?
- Format and presentation of the project will be determined by liaisons.
- Examples of teacher inquiry projects may be found online:
  •http://www.tcnj.edu/~burns6/inquiry_project.htm (7th grade project);
  •http://www.ed.psu.edu/educ/pds/teacher-inquiry