

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FRAMEWORK

Seven Oaks School Division desires high quality education for its students. Quality instruction is concomitant with quality education. Effective teaching forms the foundation on which quality education is based.

Teachers, acting as professionals who serve the public interest, must be personally responsible and accountable for their professional judgements and actions. They must ensure that they are current in the knowledge of the profession and must take responsibility for the application of that knowledge in diverse situations.

The Professional Learning Framework requires that teachers engage in examination of their practice by:

- Documenting and showing evidence of teaching practice through the use of a professional portfolio, personal journal, interactive journal or other means
- Reflecting upon one's practice to link the theoretical frameworks and broader purposes of education to one's actions in the classroom
- Dialoguing with peers and administrators to consider educational judgements made and how they link one's knowledge and practice
- Giving consideration to other relevant perspectives
- Finding ways for research to inform practice as well as for practice to inform research
- Acting upon new understandings
- Preparation of an Annual Reflection on Professional Learning to be discussed with administrators and submitted to the Superintendents' Department for placement in the personnel record

In the Professional Learning Framework reflection, dialogue and action are built upon enabling conditions of trust and open communication. Leadership built on trust and communication will foster the professional learning which results through reflection, dialogue and action. Administrators and teachers benefit from collegial discussion of education and teaching and are encouraged to engage in such discussion frequently. Educational judgement is negotiated through reflective dialogue.

DOCUMENTATION

The documentation package is the record of the individual teacher wherein the teacher defines his/her situation, interprets what is seen to be important and documents the practices that were applied. The highly unique nature of the documentation package precludes any definitive description.

The teacher's documentation is a tool for the professional development of the teacher in

that it supports reflection on practice and is part of his/her professional duties. This will be kept by the teacher in a secure location and will be accessed only under the teacher's direction.

REFLECTION

Teachers are called upon to make hundreds of decisions or judgements each day. It is important to be able to stop and to reflect upon the assumptions, ideas, beliefs and values that underpin the actions that are taken. It is also important for educators to talk to each other about what they are doing and why.

Teacher reflection must be informed by knowledge about learning and pedagogy and grounded in instructional purposes and concerns for the effects of one's actions on learners (Linda Darling-Hammond, 1999, p. 32).

PROFESSIONAL DIALOGUE

Teachers are expected to engage in professional dialogue about teaching. Dialogue is a public, collective activity through which one explores purposes and negotiates educational judgements. In a discussion, different views are presented and, sometimes defended. The aim is to reach a decision or a course of action. On the other hand, a dialogue does not seek agreement, rather views are presented as a way of discovering/reinventing new views. Consensus is not required in dialogue. (Pourdavood and Fleener, 1997, p. 52)

The purpose of a dialogue may arise as a result of a specific teaching experience, student feedback, results of action research, responses to current literature and research, exploration of broader purposes of education, questions raised by parents or the broader community and so forth.

Administrators are expected to assist in structuring opportunities for such dialogue to occur.

CONSIDERATION OF OTHER PERSPECTIVES (IMAGINATION)

Teachers are expected to think about other relevant perspectives as they plan their work. For example, imagine the implications of decisions as seen through the eyes of a six year old or a sixteen year old or a parent or a particular culture.

LINKING OF PRACTICE TO RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

Teacher reflection must be informed by knowledge about learning and pedagogy and

grounded in instructional purposes and concerns for the effects of one's actions on learners. The capacity to reflect in an informed and thoughtful manner is critical to the transformation of complex knowledge into action and to the development of further knowledge based on practice (Linda Darling-Hammond, 1999, p. 32).

ACTION (PRAXIS)

Seven Oaks School Division recognizes that teachers have the capacity to make a difference in the world of children. There is an inherent responsibility to continually consider the interrelationships between our thinking, judgments and actions.

ANNUAL REFLECTION ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Teachers will be required to submit to their administration a commentary on their professional learning once each school year. It is intended that the Annual Reflection on Professional Learning give evidence of the professional growth and development of the teacher.

The commentary should address ways in which teaching practice may change as a result of this process.

The commentary will form the basis of a discussion with the administrator and/or with a cadre of colleagues selected with mutual agreement of the administrator and teachers. The commentary will be signed by the teacher and administrator and forwarded to central office for placement in the teacher's personnel file.

First or final drafts of Annual Reflections of Professional Learning must be submitted to school administrators NO LATER THAN May 1st.

Teachers have the right to request a written evaluation from their administrator. The format of this evaluation shall be decided by the teacher and administrator, and shall be for the teacher's use only. Teachers have the option of forwarding a copy of this evaluation to central office for their personnel file.

APPENDIX

It is important to utilize the structures of our schools and school division to encourage time for the educational conversations as outlined in Policy GBI. Creative use of the following structures should be considered:

staff meetings	common preparation time
professional learning days	peer mentorship
cognitive coaching	action research groups
symposia	university studies
publication of articles	release time for specific purposes
book discussions	professional articles
journaling	interactive journaling
mentoring teacher candidates/mentoring new teachers	