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Exit Self-Assessment

A. I can convey who I want to influence/affect concerning what (Subject, Audience, Purpose).

Upon joining the CCT program I had aspirations to develop as a critical thinker to become a better teacher. Specifically, I wanted to teach my students to think critically. Along the way, I have realized that my own growth and development could be a model for change for teachers and students. Through reflection I have become particularly interested in my own curiosity and how it has been fostered by the development of my thinking. With this frame of reference, my project set out to create a classroom and workshop environment to encourage autonomous reflective thinking amongst students and educators.

B. I know what others have done before, either in the form of writing or action, that informs and connects with my project, and I know what others are doing now.

The Critical Thinking Foundation, Project Zero, Marzano, and Hattie have researched and written about improving thinking and learning in students. Their ideas and my experience constructed a foundation for my own exploration and development of the Pedagogy of Curiosity.

C. I have teased out my vision, so as to expand my view of issues associated with the project, expose possible new directions, clarify direction/scope within the larger set of issues, and decide the most important direction.

Critical thinking was my initial focus of teaching and project. Through much research and discussion with my professor I began thinking about processes that underlie learning. I made a connection between my own experience of purposefully critical thinking, asking questions, and curiosity. I recalled the lack of curiosity in many students I taught and observed. It seemed to me that being curious was essential to student motivation and a foundation to developing thinking. This realization pushed me to rethink my focus on how I structure a classroom and instructional practice to create an environment to facilitate curiosity and critical thinking.

D. I have identified the premises and propositions that my project depends on, and can state counter-propositions. I have taken stock of the thinking and research I need to do to counter those counter-propositions or to revise my own propositions.

Many of the counter-propositions are grounded in the fear of change and the frame of reference created by traditional instructional strategies and pedagogy. For example, the concern about instructional time or the amount of content teachers are expected to cover during the school year. Ultimately, the arguments and counter arguments are based on assumptions about teaching and how to educate. This has inspired me to create a workshop for teachers that offers an opportunity to explore and inquire assumptions and instructional practice rather than being instructed “how to teach”.

E. I have clear objectives with respect to product, both written and practice, and process, including personal development as a reflective practitioner. I have arranged my work in a sequence (with realistic deadlines) to realize these objectives.

I plan to return to the classroom as a teacher to implement and refine the framework I created in the Pedagogy of Curiosity. In the fall, I also plan to approach county and the district office to arrange a venue and audience for the workshop.

F. I have gained direct information, models, and experience not readily available from other sources.

I have observed in many classes as a teacher and academic coach. These experiences have shown the difference between classes that utilize active questioning and collaboration to encourage and develop student thinking. Teachers and students work together and are more interested in learning and understanding than memorizing information for a test.

G. I have clarified the overall progression or argument underlying my research and the written reports.

The context of the changing focus of public education from NCLB to the Common Core and my personal experience frames my argument. It illustrates need for a teacher’s pedagogy and instructional practice to foster and encourage curiosity and critical thinking in students.

H. My writing and other products Grab the attention of the readers/audience, Orient them, move them along in Steps, so they appreciate the Position I've led them to.

The teacher workshop creates a collaborative environment. It gives teachers the freedom and license to explore, evaluate, and reflect on their practice through the framework of the Pedagogy of Curiosity.

I. I have facilitated new avenues of classroom, workplace, and public participation.

I have developed a framework to change the classroom experience for teachers and students. As the Curious classroom is implemented and refined a truly collaborative and supportive environment that is focused on questioning, thinking, and improvement. Through this process I have found a voice and willingness to share my work. This will include conducting a workshop and collaborating with other teachers to continue this work and evolution. I believe I can have a positive impact on the quality of instruction at my school and in my county. Others have voiced interest in my writing and my workshop.

J. To feed into my future learning and other work, I have taken stock of what has been working well and what needs changing.

This project has solidified my belief in collaboration. I have gained much from class discussions and personal interactions with classmates and the professor. Going forward, I plan to purposefully incorporate this into my teaching practice. I have already approached teachers to work with next year. It is exciting to know this type of scholarship and camaraderie will continue to grow in the future.

II. DEVELOPING AS A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER, INCLUDING TAKING INITIATIVE IN AND THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

1. I have integrated knowledge and perspectives from CCT and other courses into my own inquiry and engagement in social and/or educational change.

One of the most important lessons I have learned is to listen. In the past, I listened to figure find weaknesses or problems with the argument. In reality, it is not about how my belief is better than others, but why each of us hold our beliefs. Trying to understand others reasoning and assumptions is the only way to have a mutually beneficial dialogue. This is why I constructed the teacher workshop to be more of a collaborative dialogue rather than an instructional workshop. It creates an openness that encourages reflection and honest dialogue to inspire change.

2. I have also integrated into my own inquiry and engagement the processes, experiences, and struggles of previous courses.

I took this program focusing on the critical thinking side of CCT. I struggled in my initial Creativity course. I did not view myself as creative. I did not connect with the assignments or activities. Through a little more dedication and releasing the non-creative mindset, I moved

forward and learned. This class allowed me to see myself as a learner. Specifically, having the ability to learn in environments and situations that I was not experienced in or “good at”.

3. I have developed efficient ways to organize my time, research materials, computer access, bibliographies, etc.

I began using an online reference manager and found it to be helpful. Now, as I continue my work and research I will be able to easily find references and readings. Also, Google Drive and the many apps associated with it has made communicating, sharing, and editing so much easier.

4. I have experimented with new tools and experiences, even if not every one became part of my toolkit as a learner, teacher/facilitator of others, and reflective practitioner.

Although, I did not use it as diligently as possible, daily writing and written reflections will become a part of my daily/weekly process. I would like to create specific questions and prompts to target specific areas of improvement and growth. Alos, it will be part of my students practice

5. I have paid attention to the emotional dimensions of undertaking my own project but have found ways to clear away distractions from other sources (present & past) and not get blocked, turning apparent obstacles into opportunities to move into unfamiliar or uncomfortable territory.

I have used a large whiteboard and using a voice recorder to get my ideas down. These two strategies helped me deal to deal with blocks and distractions. It allowed me to focus on something other than my thoughts and a blank screen.

6. I have developed peer and other horizontal relationships. I have sought support and advice from peers, and have given support and advice to them when asked for.

Numerous classmates and colleagues have challenged my thinking and reasoning. Many times during this process my peers pushed me through frustrations and obstacles. It has inspired me to find a cohort of teachers to work with in my professional life.

7. I have taken the lead, not dragged my feet, in dialogue with my advisor and other readers. I didn't wait for the them to tell me how to solve an expository problem, what must be read

and covered in a literature review, or what was meant by some comment I didn't understand. I didn't put off giving my writing to my advisor and other readers or avoid talking to them because I thought that they didn't see things the same way as I do.

My advisor and readers suggestions were instrumental in how I viewed my project and writing. My ideas were there , but a question or comment would shift my focus just enough to continue my inquiry and writing process.

8. I have revised seriously, which involved responding to the comments of others. I came to see this not as bowing down to the views of others, but taking them in and working them into my own reflective inquiry until I could convey more powerfully to others what I'm about (which may have changed as a result of the reflective inquiry).

The revision process improved the organization and flow of my paper. Also, with the comments of my peers and advisor I incorporated components about myself and the workshop to create clarity and connection with the audience.

9. I have inquired and negotiated about formal standards, but gone on to develop and internalize my own criteria for doing work—criteria other than jumping through hoops set by the professor so I get a good grade.

Although, I want a good grade, this project more than any other has been about my personal evolution. I am an academic and have continued to grow as researcher, reader, and writer. One of my biggest concerns entering this program was my reading and writing level. After numerous papers and research I feel my writing skills are adequate for graduate work and believe I belong in that arena.

10. I have approached the CCT synthesis course and the CCT program as works-in-progress, which means that, instead of harboring criticisms to submit after the fact, I have found opportunities to affirm what is working well and to suggest directions for further development.

This program and synthesis has allowed me to become a purposeful reflective learner. The project was and will continue to be a work in progress. Curiosity and learning are intertwined with my vocation and life's work. What is amazing to me is how this project has completely pushed my thinking and perspective of teaching to much deeper levels. I have moved beyond my goals of teaching thinking to thinking about how and why individuals learn. More importantly, this process has helped me reconstruct what is important to me as a student,

educator, and person. So, I am a work in progress that wants to share my reflective practice, critical thinking, and curiosity with others to inspire growth and change.