Facilitating Teacher Reflection through a mutual understanding of the Characteristics of Exemplary Teachers

Seth E. Jenny  
*Winthrop University, dr.sethjenny@gmail.com*

Geraldine Jenny  
*Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/tlcconference](https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/tlcconference)  
Part of the [Higher Education and Teaching Commons](https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/tlcconference), and the [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Commons](https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/tlcconference)
What is an exemplary teacher?

* A person who accepts the challenge of life long learning experiences

* These experiences are broken down into 3 domains and 5 themes
* **3 Domains:**
  * Diversity
  * Leadership
  * Technology

* **5 Themes:**
  * Instructional Leader
  * Master Practitioner
  * Learning Theorist
  * Curriculum Designer
  * School Content Expert

Source: American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE, 2010, p. 24)
An exemplary teacher is an advocate of creating learning experiences that demonstrate sensitivity to others.

He/she acknowledges learners of differing abilities and demonstrates a valuing of human differences in race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, and sexual preferences.

An exemplary teacher understands that as human beings, we are all evolving physically, cognitively, socially and emotionally.
An exemplary teacher is a lifelong learner who inspires classroom communities of learners to pursue continuous improvement and growth.
An exemplary teacher is adept in technology and constructs learning environments that respect and integrate the power of technology.
1) **Instructional Leader:** An exemplary teacher develops leadership skills and self perception in relationship with other learners, the group, the community, and society.

2) **Master Practitioner:** An exemplary teacher develops competence in instructional strategies, reflective practice and the home-school-community partnership triad.

3) **Learning Theorist:** An exemplary teacher understands cognitive, physical, and affective development as well as pedagogical theory that address the learning needs of multi-age learners.
4) **Curriculum Designer**: An exemplary teacher bases curriculum decisions on research, theory, and informed practice.

5) **School Context Expert**: An exemplary teacher comprehends the social, intellectual, cultural, economic, ethical, political, and government influences upon schools including traditional and emerging stakeholders.
* In order to be an exemplary teacher you must reflect on your teaching experience.

* As you reflect, focus on domains and themes that contribute to your teaching.

* Identify ONE domain and ONE theme while journaling each week.

* The domain and theme you choose will be the basis of your journal entry.
1) Think of topic – see handout (front of 2nd page)

2) Choose domain and theme

3) Then email the reflection based upon the following four guiding reflective statements...
a) In Student Teaching this week I learned...

b) My new learning connects to the domains and themes of becoming an exemplary teacher in the following ways...

c) Before my learning and reflection this week, I used to think...

d) As a result of my learning and reflection, I now believe...
“This experience has led me to recognize the difficulties parents go through when their child has a disability. Some parents do the bare minimum to help their child out while the parent I got to meet wanted to know everything she could do to help her child succeed.”

-Deanna Griffin
… I focused on the relationship with the teacher and students. I focused on this area because relationships are very important aspect to a successful classroom. To allow the students to have the most success in your classroom you have to have a relationship where they feel safe and comfortable with the teacher. To have a successful relationship the students need to have the utmost respect for you and they need to know that you can have fun if they do what is expected of them.”

- Brady Grosch
“In student teaching this week I learned that technology can make or break you. In a teacher’s case it can make you stronger. The printers all stopped working the same day... Before my learning and reflection this week I used to think that worksheets had to be found on-line or out of a book. It was not expectable to make your own worksheets using a marker and paper. My teacher showed me her binder and 50% of her worksheets were homemade also.”

-Kari Yount
Rubric for Reflective Email Journal Entries

Outstanding:
♦ All four sections of the entry are addressed with sharp and distinct focus.
♦ The student teacher provides substantial and specific statements of learning supported by illustrative examples.
♦ Overall, the student teacher demonstrates sophisticated ideas that are well developed and result from careful reflection and personalization.
♦ The writing is free from mechanical and word usage errors.

Competent:
♦ All four sections of the email entry are addressed with adequate focus.
♦ The student teacher provides general support for statements of learning.
♦ Overall, the student teacher demonstrates basic reflection on learning and makes general connections to the themes and domains of becoming a leading teacher.
♦ The writing demonstrates some mechanical and usage errors.

Unsatisfactory: (An entry of this quality will be returned for further polishing)
♦ The email entry does not address all four required sections.
♦ The content of the report is superficial and merely lists ideas.
♦ There are limited demonstrations of reflection and meaning-making.
♦ The writing contains repeated weaknesses in mechanical and usage errors that seriously interfere with the student teacher’s purpose.
“Making the commitment to become an exemplary teacher is a choice you should make with care because it is a decision that will affect the way that you live your life and the way others will live theirs.”

-Gerri Jenny