REFLECTION AND FEEDBACK

The unit’s conceptual framework in part states: Field experiences and internship are designed to help candidates and interns achieve the following goal:

Engages in reflective practice: candidates and interns will be asked to reflect regularly upon their field experiences and internship as they make decisions about the efficacy of lesson content, classroom management techniques, in classroom discussions, and use various teaching methods.

Candidates reflect on and evaluate their own performance. They consider multiple perspectives about their own performance from the lead teacher, unit faculty, and even other candidates or interns placed at the same school. Candidates reflect their own performance, identify their own strengths and areas in need of improvement, and incorporate feedback into practice.

Prior to teaching a lesson, candidates in the secondary field experiences (EDSC 321P, EDSC 404P and CTL 650) complete the pre-observation questionnaire which asks candidates to: identify the strengths based on the lesson you are teaching; describe strategies/techniques that will be used to engage students in the lesson; what areas that the candidate has concerns for or are unsure about; and specific areas they want feedback in. After teaching a lesson, candidates complete an in depth reflection of the lesson that includes the cognitive and affective domains. In EDSC 321P and EDSC 404P, candidates write a midterm essay. This essay is a tool for reflection (process, brainstorm, and evaluate their own contribution to the field experience). There is a common rubric for these essays such that candidates are held to the same standard and receive similar feedback. The essay includes:

- Description of overall field experience thus far
- Reflections and observations on the lead teacher
- Reflections and observations on the class and the students
- Connections to lecture, readings, and class discussions
- Descriptive plan on what the candidate can change for the remainder of the field experiences, areas for growth and development, ideas they would like to incorporate, how they plan to challenge themselves, etc. Candidates describe and outline the behaviors, strategies, and techniques they could use to enhance the field experience. These become the candidate’s individual goals for the remainder of the field experience.

Before internship, candidates must satisfactorily pass Portfolio I. Portfolio I is evaluated by unit faculty within each teaching program (3c3.2 and 3c3.3).

- As part of Portfolio I, IETP candidates complete a reflective essay that is an examination and discussion of the candidate’s overall academic experiences throughout the program and addresses the growth and change within the program. The Portfolio I artifact analyses addresses INTASC Standard #9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice. In addition, the candidate completes a self-evaluation of their professional behaviors and dispositions.
- The secondary Portfolio I is different. Effective spring 2014, candidates will complete self-evaluation of their professional behaviors and dispositions upon admission and for Portfolio I. For Portfolio I, candidates are evaluated on five domains which are derived from INTASC Standards. Domain 5 (professionalism) addresses reflective practice among other things. The evaluation of Domain 5 is obtained from the average of the lead teachers evaluations in the midterm and final and the grade point average in these field experiences: EDSC 321, EDSC 404 and CTL 650.

Mentorship by the lead teacher and the candidate’s reflection is ongoing throughout each day. During each visit, the supervisor meets with the lead teacher and intern and whenever possible includes the lead teacher in the supervisor’s pre and post observation conferences. Open and positive communication among the intern, lead teacher and supervisor is imperative. These collegial conversations have proven to
be valuable opportunities for interns to reflect on their own performance, consider the perspectives of others, and incorporate feedback and suggestions. There are ancillary benefits of reflection and feedback for supervisors and lead teachers. Supervisors learn about different school initiatives and curriculum since they have interns at other different schools. Supervisors help lead teachers polish their mentoring skills. Each gains a deeper understanding of the intern’s performance and increased objectivity through these collegial conversations, sharing perspectives and reflection.

Opportunities for interns to practice, refine or try new skills and strategies is an important component of internship and depends on immediate feedback and reflection. The intern makes two reflective journal entries per week and the supervisor provides bi-weekly feedback to the intern’s reflections journal. This is done online so that feedback may be immediate. The supervisor is also accessible by phone and email when needed. Additionally, the intern receives immediate and ongoing verbal and written feedback on their performance and this is accomplished through informal and formal conferences and other opportunities in which the lead teacher and supervisor model, coach, mentor, and provide suggestions for growth and/or improvement.

The internship supervisor and lead teacher use a clinical model to formally observe the intern five times each for a total of ten formal observations. The Internship Manual describes the observation cycle in more detail. Essentially the observation cycle consists of:

- A pre-conference and feedback on the intern’s planning and preparation;
- The observation of the intern teaching the lesson with the internship supervisor or the lead teacher observing;
- The analysis of the observation by the internship supervisor or lead teacher;
- The post conference in which the formative evaluation of the lesson is discussed with the candidate; and
- Reflection and follow-up.