University Of Michigan Domains of Professional Learning

Our aim as a program is to guide, support, and evaluate student teachers’ learning in each of the following five domains. Within each domain, we specify some of the kinds of learning that ought to occur if student teachers are to be prepared as we wish them to be at the completion of the program.

In articulating these domains, we provide a framework for use by university field instructors and cooperating teachers as they plan and do their work of guiding, supporting, and evaluating student teachers. This framework should also help student teachers conceptually organize, reflect on, and plan for their own learning. Finally, it should serve as one tool to help program instructors, cooperating teachers, and others reflect upon the teacher education program itself. The framework will be most useful when its meanings are not accepted without question but instead are used as part of a vigorous attempt to delve into practice, examine values and understandings, and articulate learning accomplishments and learning needs.

The capabilities we specify here, and the dispositions underlying them, are for the most part best understood as works in progress over the course of a professional lifetime. They are to be worked on and worked at rather than achieved once and for all. The thoughtful practitioner we envision regards teaching as a life of inquiry. Student teachers are expected to be able to demonstrate working understanding and appropriate early accomplishments within each domain in order to be recommended for certification.

I. Planning, Assessing, Evaluating

Student teachers are expected to:

- Choose and articulate worthwhile purposes for lessons, units, and other classroom activities;
- Appraise students’ current understandings, prior knowledge, developmental capabilities, and skills, and anticipate what they may find understandable, interesting, or difficult, incorporating findings into their planning;
- Examine material to be taught and evaluate their own subject matter understanding, extending this if need be;
- Plan and carry out assessment and evaluation processes appropriate to purposes and focused on student understanding, periodically share results with students and other audiences, and use results to inform subsequent teaching, lesson/unit design, goals, and objectives; and
- Document their own planning and teaching as an aid to reflection and continued development.

II. Knowing and Representing Subject Matters

Student teachers are expected to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts and foundational methods of inquiry and practice within the discipline(s);
- Adapt or design curricula and employ instructional strategies in order to actively engage students with important disciplinary concepts, methods of inquiry, and practices within subject matter studies, in service of student understanding; and
- Attend to concerns and ways of knowing that span disciplines.
III. Knowing, motivating, and engaging students
Student teachers are expected to:

- Attend to individual students’ interests, strengths, prior knowledge and skills, developmental capabilities, approaches, and needs as learners and members of the classroom community, and make curricular, pedagogic, and organizational decisions that address these;

- Attend to the diversity of culture and experience that students bring into the classroom and value these differences as resources for student and teacher practice; and

- Enact lessons, units, and classroom activities and structures that elicit, build upon, and make visible authentic student inquiry and student thinking.

IV. Building classroom community
Student teachers are expected to:

- Promote a climate in which learning is valued and on-going, in which all students are able to share in and contribute to social and intellectual life;

- Uphold fair and equitable standards for conduct that encourage responsibility, mutual respect, and civic values, and that safeguard the physical, intellectual, and emotional well-being of all students;

- Organize and manage classroom space, procedures, and communication practices to foster student engagement and independence, as well as cooperative community and mutual respect; and

- Create and sustain opportunities for both individual and collaborative effort.

V. Becoming a member of a profession
Student teachers are expected to:

- Act ethically and with integrity;

- Demonstrate respect for families and cultures and attend to the challenges of teaching students whose background differs from their own;

- Be alert to and curious about the relationship of the classroom to larger school and societal contexts;

- Be reflective about their practice, continue their learning, and take advantage, when appropriate, of professional development opportunities.

- Be open to constructive feedback from others, manage situations of their stress and conflict appropriately; and

- Be considerate, respectful, punctual, and appropriate in appearance, in conduct, and in all interactions with students, families, mentors, and colleagues.