

Professional Growth Planning Process—A Vignette of Mrs. Wright

After Mrs. Wright, a 3rd grade teacher, formally reflected upon her effectiveness as a teacher using the KY Framework for Teaching, she realized that one of the components she scored lowest in was 3c: Engaging Students in Learning. She further determined from evidence (from last year) such as her own videotaped lesson clips, peer observation notes, Principal’s walk through comments, and her in-depth PLC study of the KY Framework for Teaching (KFfT), that this would be an area that, if she could grow from “Developing” to “Accomplished” might impact her students the greatest.

Mrs. Wright’s classroom could be identified as “orderly and respectful” by anyone who observed her teaching. Students were compliant and on task. However, what Mrs. Wright concluded is that most of her ‘tasks’ (all too often in the form of worksheets) required recall of facts and very little thinking about processes; they rarely required students to think about “why”, only giving thought to the “how to.” Her teaching was merely allowing students to gain procedural knowledge, while rarely (if ever) gaining conceptual understanding. Students were mimicking the work/steps of the teacher, without giving thought to other solution methods even existing. When students were given opportunities to work problems in different ways, they were first shown the alternate methods. The idea of student choice usually occurred when students would choose which method they preferred, of the teacher-taught types. Students were not engaged in any type of inquiry.

Typically, only one type of grouping took place in her classroom (either whole group or ¹small groups). In reflection, Mrs. Wright determined that it may have worked better to have some students work in a small group with her, while other students worked in pairs.

In order to move from “Developing” to “Accomplished”, Mrs. Wright knew that students needed to be more than ‘on task’—they needed to be engaged in discussing, debating, answering ‘what if?’ questions, finding patterns, and reflecting on what they have done and what they have learned. The problem was, she did not have the resources, or perhaps didn’t know of the resources, that could assist her in learning how to teach conceptually so that students are involved in inquiry learning.

Taking her notes and observations with her, Mrs. Wright scheduled a meeting with the principal to develop her Professional Growth Plan.

After meeting with the principal, the following goal (with action steps) was formed:

Goal: For the 2013-2014 school year, I will improve my ability to engage students in learning. When I measure my teacher effectiveness in this component (3C) of the KY Framework for Teaching (KFFT), I will grow from “developing” to “accomplished” or “exemplary”. My growth will be evidenced by what students are saying and doing as a consequence of what I do, have done, or have planned. This evidence will meet the descriptors and critical attributes in the “accomplished” or “exemplary” performance category.

Action Steps:

- Professional learning around developing/finding open-ended tasks, congruent to standards, which require conceptual understanding is needed. Principal suggested contacting NKCES for input from instructional consultants around this learning (ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies available).
- Analysis of peer observation notes and conference notes and the language of the KFFT in order to make decision about growth in the performance category
- Analysis of Principal/administrative observation (short or long) notes and post-conference notes to help inform teacher about growth in this component.