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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE FOR TEACHERS
(INDEPM)

Puerto Rico Professional Standards for Teachers[1]

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Standard 1: Content Knowledge

Description

In order to be effective in the multiple facets of teaching that lead to greater and better student learning, a teacher must know the discipline that he or she teaches. The teacher has to know and understand the concepts, the processes, and the skills inherent in her or his subject at the level it is to be taught and must be able to take into account how the subject should be taught in order to provide learning that is relevant and effective for her or his students. On the other hand, the teacher needs to know the basic nature of the discipline from which the subject arises: that includes how new knowledge is obtained, historical development, ethical aspects, as well as its contribution to society in the contemporary world.

Knowledge

The teacher knows and understands:

1.1 the concepts, processes, skills and core values of his or her subject according to the level he she teaches.

1.2 the nature and historical development of the discipline underlying the subject she or he teaches and what are the best methodologies for constructing knowledge.

1.3 the philosophical and programmatic principles expressed in state curricular documents that underlie and support the study program for his or her subject. (e.g. Standards, Curricular Framework, etc.)

1.4 the discipline's contributions to Puerto Rico's and the world's social contexts and the significance of her or his subject in students' social and cultural formation.

1.5 the relation of the discipline to other areas of human knowledge; such as the relation and possible conceptual connections between the subject she or he teaches and other subjects in the same teaching level.

Dispositions

The teacher values and endeavors to:

1.6 reflect constantly about the subject's structure and content to make it more relevant to his or her students.

1.7 identify her or his subject's big ideas and concepts as they connect to other areas or academic subjects.

1.8 reflect and study how learners develop knowledge, skills, and values recognizing that different models make important contributions at his or her teaching level.

1.9 connect her or his subject to Puerto Rican culture and make it relevant to the students' daily life, while maintaining the subject's universal characteristics at the same time.

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1.10 promote classroom research and experimentation so that students develop these mechanisms to seek information and develop knowledge.

Performance

The teacher is involved in activities directed at:

1.11 creating varied, pertinent and appropriate lessons which promote critical, reflective and creative thinking by all students in response to the problems they encounter in daily life.

1.12 designing instruction of appropriate breadth and depth taking students' present conceptual development into account.

1.13 planning learning experiences for her or his subject which take into account the students' cognitive development level.

1.14 constructing different conceptual representations in order to create learning opportunities for all the students.

1.15 evaluating, selecting, and utilizing the resources and curricular materials in order to complement, update, and delineate with greater precision the ideas, concepts and processes that are being taught.

1.16 relating the disciplinary fundamentals of the subject taught to the social, ethical and moral aspects of current society.

Standard 2: Pedagogical Knowledge

Description

Pedagogical knowledge empowers the teacher to carry out the teaching process effectively. This is what allows the teacher to transform disciplinary and subject knowledge into experiences that stimulate deep learning by students. The teacher must know and understand how students learning level and how they develop and learn in different situations, how to address individual differences, how to respond to special needs, and how the philosophical, psychological, and sociological foundations of education apply at distinct teaching and learning levels.

Knowledge

The teacher knows and understands:

2.1 how students construct knowledge, how they develop cognitive and psychomotor skills, and how attitudes change according to their development stage.

2.2 how student learning is influenced by individual experiences, talents, and prior knowledge as well as language, culture, family, and community values.

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2.3 that the student's personal world is formed by key experiences and by factors such as socio-economic level, gender, ethnicity, mother tongue, sexual preference, age, family structure, and special needs.

2.4 the philosophical, psychological and sociological foundations of education needed for an effective pedagogical practice.

Dispositions

The teacher values and endeavors to:

2.5 assure that his or her educational paradigm is reflected in his or her pedagogical practice.

2.6 guarantee that every student receives an excellent education.

2.7 recognize that students have different talents and strengths as well as multiple intelligences.

2.8 recognize that students learn and succeed at different levels.

2.9 respect the individual and cultural differences as well as the diversity in learning that occurs in the classroom.

Performance

The teacher is involved in activities directed at:

2.10 framing her or his pedagogical practice within educational theories validated by the professional community, by research, and by pedagogical experience.

2.11 applying learning theories validated by professional practice in order to address individual differences as they relate to student learning and the different contexts in which educational experience is developed.

2.12 planning and developing activities to form a learning community in which respect and diversity are valued.

Standard 3: Instructional Strategies

Description

Instructional strategies are the operational mechanism through which pedagogical knowledge addresses student academic and personal development. The teacher, as an instruction designer, should select strategies to meet the learning goals and objectives. Furthermore, the strategies selected respond to the particular needs of his or her students in a manner that promotes deep understanding and the development of higher level thinking skills. The teacher plans challenging lessons that motivate students to learn the subject content and above all lessons that develop the joy of learning.

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Knowledge

The teacher knows and understands:

3.1 the goals, objectives, and general curricular proficiencies of her or his academic program as established by the Department of Education in official documents.

3.2 teaching strategies, methods, and techniques validated by the professional community, by research, and by his or her pedagogical practice.

3.3 how to plan instruction based on the individual student needs.

3.4 the importance of uncovering and activating students' prior knowledge to produce significant learning.

3.5 the value of integrating technology into the teaching learning process.

3.6 the learning strategies needed to develop planned educational activities in a suitable learning environment.

Dispositions

The teacher values and endeavors to:

3.7 recognize the cultural diversity and individual student differences when selecting and putting into practice diverse pedagogical strategies.

3.8 consider and take responsibility for the moral implications of her or his pedagogical practice.

3.9 make classroom learning pertinent and establish links with the social issues that affect students.

3.10 reflect and examine his or her educational practice using the learning objectives achieved and the difficulties encountered in achieving them as criteria.

3.11 recognize when instructional strategies are not effective and be receptive to changing them as required by the situation.

Performance

The teacher is involved in activities directed at:

3.12 identifying and designing instruction suitable for students' developmental stage and their individual needs.

3.13 planning short and long term instruction based on knowledge of the discipline being taught and awareness of students' learning processes.

3.14 utilizing instructional materials and diverse resources to achieve the learning objectives.

3.15 identifying strategies to design significant learning experiences that support students' search for and construction of knowledge.

3.16 contextualizing teaching amidst the realities of the school, the community, and the country.

3.17 offering learning activities that promote developing higher level thinking skills.

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3.18 utilizing diverse techniques that promote thinking appropriate for solving problems and for applying knowledge to meet day to day situations.

3.19 utilizing a variety of evaluation and assessment techniques to measure and demonstrate learning objective achievement.

3.20 utilizing social integration strategies in the classroom to promote respect for the cultural differences that arise from ethnicity, home town, gender, age, socioeconomic status, and family structure.

3.21 using a variety of strategies to help students understand the complexity and depth of the material taught in class.

Standard 4: Learning Environments

Description

The formal teaching learning processes are framed by the school environment and the community in which the school is located. Nevertheless, the teacher is in charge of these processes in the classroom. In order for the classroom teaching learning processes to be effective, the learning environment created and maintained by the teacher must be a highly motivating one in which the dignity of all learners is respected. In an effective learning environment respect and equity for all students prevails. Such an environment fosters self-motivation, positive social interaction, and commitment to learning.

Knowledge

The teacher knows and understands:

4.1 that the classroom is affected by a variety of factors, both internal and external to the room.

4.2 that the classroom environment is established and maintained by the teacher and the students.

4.3 the importance of his or her role as a facilitator in creating and maintaining a positive learning environment for students.

4.4 the importance of creating a physical and social environment that responds to the diverse individual needs required for learning.

4.5 the implications of the education system's laws, rules, and procedures for her or him and for her or his students.

4.6 the importance of active student participation as a key factor in his or her learning.

Dispositions

The teacher values and endeavors to:

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   4.7 establish routines and procedures that promote an environment of respect, equity, and responsibility in the classroom.

   4.8 promote and model equity and respect in the classroom.

   4.9 value student feedback as a fundamental information source for improving her or his teaching practice.

Performance

   The teacher is involved in activities directed at:

   4.10 creating a social, emotional, and physical environment in which students practice their communication and participation skills as well as accept diversity.

   4.11 utilizing instruction time in an effective manner.

   4.12 maintaining an environment in which students assume responsibility for their actions and decisions.

   4.13 incorporating didactic materials, resources, and technology to promote learning by all students.

   4.14 guiding students with respect to the rules and procedures that influence learning in the classroom setting.

Standard 5: Diversity & Special Needs

Description

The student population that a teacher serves is characterized by diversity above all. Factors such as social class, gender, ethnicity, and language corroborate student population heterogeneity. Moreover, in Puerto Rico there are many special needs students that require particular attention. Specific planning is essential in order for these children and youth to reach their full learning potential. This portion of the student population includes, among others, those with physical and cognitive handicaps that place them at a significant disadvantage unless they participate in learning experiences that take into account their particular needs. There are also students with exceptional academic learning abilities who also need attention and special assistance to attain deep learning. Because of this every teacher, even if they are not specialists in the area, must know and understand the basics of special education that apply to their students in order to make reasonable accommodations, teach more effectively, and provide an equitable education for all her or his students.

Knowledge

   The teacher knows and understands:

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5.1 how cultural and socio-economic differences and students' special needs affect their learning and the teaching methods and resources to respond to these.

5.2 the manners in which students learn in different environments, the neurobiological processes associated with learning, diverse reasonable adjustments, and how to motivate students to learn.

5.3 the statutory provisions in the laws regarding handicapped persons and the basic or fundamental requirements of same.

5.4 the local laws and their provisions regarding talented students.

5.5 how to access information about the laws, rules, and procedures that apply with respect to protecting planning and implementing individual learning programs.

5.6 the resources available related to educational strategies that make it possible to adjust to individual differences.

5.7 the purpose of individualized education is to guarantee that the needs of each student are addressed.

Dispositions

The teacher values and endeavors to:

5.8 respect individual and cultural differences and show appreciation for the value of each individual and her or his culture.

5.9 respect the diversity of learning that happens in the classroom as well as each student's talents and perspectives used to learn.

5.10 support the idea that every child and adolescent with special needs can learn and be successful to the best of their individual abilities.

5.11 adjust the evaluation process to make reasonable adjustments, meet special needs, and attend diverse learners.

5.12 collaborate in the preparation of individualized learning plans for his or her students and make reasonable adjustments.

Performance

The teacher is involved in activities directed at:

5.13 studying student records to ascertain their previous performance, their current needs, and their potential to learn successfully.

5.14 utilizing adequate means to diagnose and interpret results in order to implement strategies that influence learning.

5.15 creating inclusive learning environments that provide students with special needs or abilities with special attention in which diversity is valued and solidarity with those who need special support is shown.

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5.16 learning about the cultural, linguistic, economic and social diversity of her or his students, their families, and the community in which they live.

5.17 utilizing knowledge about his or her students to design instruction in a manner that builds on their strengths and at the same time attends their special needs.

5.18 utilizing a variety of techniques to accommodate and modify the strategies, services, and resources, including technological assistance, so that students learn more effectively.

Standard 6: Evaluation and Assessment

Description

The evaluation and assessment processes affect the teaching and learning processes to such an extent that it is inconceivable to separate them. They are essential for gathering information about student learning and subsequent decision making. The teacher should know the theoretical framework on which evaluation and assessment are based as well as the variety of techniques and instruments that can be used. Furthermore, the teacher should be able to analyze the information from multiple sources of measurement, assessment, and evaluation. This allows the teacher to reflect and take action with respect to her or his pedagogical practice, the student learning process, and student academic performance.

Knowledge

The teacher knows and understands:

6.1 the conceptual difference between measurement, assessment, and evaluation.

6.2 the diverse uses for diagnostic, formative, and summative evaluation.

6.3 evaluation and assessment as formal and informal processes that should address the social, cultural, and physical diversity; and are planned according to the student's development stage.

6.4 that evaluation and assessment should address students' social, cultural, and physical diversity planned in response to their development stage.

6.5 that the preparation of various types of tests and evaluation instruments (objective, discussion, normed, criteria based, etc.) respond to course objectives and to the development of standards and curricular expectations.

6.6 the pertinence and relevance of standardized tests results in the evaluation of student learning.

6.7 the use, advantages and limits of different assessment techniques, as well as the evaluative weight of each experience in order to select that which best corresponds to her or his students.

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Dispositions

The teacher values and endeavors to:

6.8 use a variety of evaluation and assessment techniques so that students can demonstrate and appreciate what they know in various ways.

6.9 participate and foster teamwork with other teachers, with students, and with parents.

6.10 recognize the value of students taking an active role in their own learning.

6.11 develop action (classroom) research as a means to ascertain student learning and the effectiveness of teaching strategies used.

6.12 maintain the confidentiality of evaluation and assessment results obtained from various methods.

Performance

The teacher is involved in activities directed at:

6.13 identifying, designing, and utilizing different evaluation and assessment strategies to know what students have learned.

6.14 collecting, organizing, and interpreting information obtained related to the effectiveness of learning experiences he or she provided students in order to validate his or her teaching and to auto-evaluate his or her performance as a teacher.

6.15 designing diverse assessment techniques on the same curricular content as alternatives for individual differences and at the same time allow students more than one manner to respond.

6.16 observing verbal and non-verbal behavior that shows students' understanding levels with respect to the discipline being taught.

6.17 utilizing assessment and evaluation results to readjust teaching and learning processes.

6.18 establishing a continuous, reflective communication with all of the participating components (teachers, students, parents, and community) in order to contribute to student academic achievement.

Standard 7: Technology Integration

Description

The development of information and communication technologies and other technological innovations present a challenge and an opportunity for educators. The new

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generation is immersed in a world in which technology is emblematic of the era. Consequently today's children and youth naturally relate to technology. Nevertheless, the technology that students use is not necessarily designed for or used for their academic learning and personal development. In the classroom, the teacher integrates technology to create a better environment for learning that facilitates the inclusion of all the students. Technology, especially computer based technology, must be integrated into the teaching-learning process intentionally and systematically as a tool to develop thinking. There are other technologies designed for the classroom (calculators, simulators, etc.) that contribute to the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process.

Knowledge

The teacher knows and understands:

7.1 the power of technology as an essential tool in the modern world in order to obtain, process, and analyze information for constructing knowledge.

7.2 the criteria needed to select and use the technology appropriate for developing a lesson plan.

7.3 the evaluation criteria for internet resources and the value of integrating these into the curriculum.

7.4 existing programs for integrating technology in his or her teaching area.

7.5 the difference between software for facilitating course management and software that can be used as a cognitive tool for her or him and her or his students.

7.6 the basic standards for integrating technology that teachers and students are expected to follow at this time.

Dispositions

The teacher values and endeavors to:

7.7 accept new challenges, both personal and work related, for managing information and communications technology (ICT).

7.8 value the use of information and communications technology (ICT) for self-directed student learning.

7.9 reflect critically about the use of information and communications technology (ICT) as a means to manage and distribute deep learning information for students.

7.10 recognize the utility of information and communications technology (ICT) to express requests and opinions via communication media and take advantage of their increasing flexibility.

7.11 model the ethical use of information and communications technology (ICT) to present results of his or her work and the work of others.

7.12 strive to offer equal and just participation to exceptional students in curricular activities that integrate information and communications technology (ICT).

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Performance

The teacher is involved in activities directed at:

7.13 promoting new knowledge and skills using technology so learning becomes an interactive process in which emphasis is on forming new cognitive syntheses rather than the mere acquisition of information from the Internet.

7.14 creating a learning environment rich with experiences, facilitated by information and communications technology (ICT), that respond to planning in which the student is viewed as the main character in her or his own learning.

7.15 integrating information and communications technology (ICT) as a means for student interaction in group learning and at the same time, a way to develop autonomy in searching for and acquiring knowledge.

7.16 creating links with the community to contribute to reducing the differences in access to technology (digital divide), with special attention to the students from families with limited economic resources and or those with special learning needs.

7.17 utilizing technological resources available in his or her school or district as learning resources for his or her students.

Standard 8: Communication and Language

Description

Oral and written communication is the essential vehicle that teachers use to carry out the teaching process and to develop student learning required by the subject. Furthermore language, once learned, becomes a tool for conceptual analysis, interchange, and reasoning. The teaching learning process demands that every teacher must be highly proficient in the use of language. Mastery of communication skills, oral as well as written, helps the teacher foster the inquiry process and develop social environments that engender positive relationships among all the students.

Knowledge

The teacher knows and understands:

8.1 proper grammatical structure and syntax and encourages their use in both spoken and written language.

8.2 the structural features of language that make it a tool for thinking and expressing ideas.

8.3 that language is, in essence, a product of the culture and at the same time a means to share it.

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8.4 the language features that make it a unique tool for developing effective communication between human beings and for establishing productive social and psychological relationships.

8.5 the individual needs of each student for the optimal development of their oral and written communication skills.

Dispositions

The teacher values and endeavors to:

8.6 be a model in language use in all its forms (e.g. spoken, written) as a mediating agent in the teaching learning processes.

8.7 develop, along with students, the power of effective communication by using effective language in the teaching learning processes.

8.8 utilize the power of language as a socializing cultural agent to the fullest extent and as an indispensable learning tool, framed in these contexts.

8.9 develop effective linguistic communication skills between his or her students so they can develop an authentic learning community in which individuals show respect for each other and ideas are the focus of discussion.

8.10 utilize different strategies and communication modes that demonstrate sensibility with respect to special needs and linguistic, cultural, gender, ethnic, and social diversity.

Performance

The teacher is involved in activities directed at:

8.11 modeling communication strategies and asking effective questions for discussing ideas and stimulating critical thinking.

8.12 developing the essential oral communication and effective writing skills among her or his students while respecting individual differences.

8.13 developing the verbal and non-verbal skills in his or her students so they can be inquisitive thinkers and more effective critics both as individuals and as a group.

8.14 encouraging and fostering high level critical thinking skills in all students utilizing language as a mediating agent taking into account linguistic, cultural, gender, ethnic and social differences.

Standard 9: Community & Family

Description

Student learning is nuanced by forces inside and outside the classroom. Specifically, his or her immediate family or guardians have a significant influence on his or her educational

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process. In the same manner, the home and school surroundings have a powerful impact on the social environment in which the student develops and on the learning resources available in the school. Recognizing this interdependence, the teacher collaborates with the school, the community, and the home to build a learning community in her or his classroom. The teacher stimulates and fosters the cultural interchange that already exists between these community components and models an equitable social relationship between school community members. The teacher uses the family and the surrounding community as valuable learning resources.

Knowledge

The teacher knows and understands:

9.1 the school, the family, and the surrounding community as a system of mutual influences for teaching and for learning.

9.2 the importance of parent and guardian participation in a continuous, respectful dialogue between the school community and the family, especially in those decision making processes inherent in the student's academic achievement.

9.3 the history, values and customs of the surrounding community where students live.

9.4 the interdependence between all sectors of the school community in order to produce an environment that leads to better learning.

9.5 the learning resources that exist in the community.

9.6 how to establish alliances with different community organizations.

Dispositions

The teacher values and endeavors to:

9.7 value and respect student's family (mother, fathers, and guardians) and the student's community and appreciate their role in each student's learning.

9.8 increase understanding of the students' cultures and dynamic communities, including linguistic, ethnicity, religious and socio-economic diversity.

9.9 discharge faithfully her or his duty to protect and promote the principles and values that support a healthy coexistence in the classroom, in the school, and in the surrounding community.

9.10 respect and value the sociocultural diversity in his or her classroom.

9.11 appreciate community resources and the matters of interest for the community as learning sources for the students.

9.12 model dialogue between sectors inside the school and outside the school.

Performance

The teacher is involved in activities directed at:

9.13 creating a sociocultural profile of her or his students which provides information to help understand and work effectively with their diversity.

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9.14 establishing collaborative alliances with organizations, agencies, industry, commerce and higher education institutions to advance both school and community development.

9.15 integrating the community resources which serve as instructional support inside and outside of the classroom in his or her work plan.

9.16 designing classroom experiences in which parents and guardians have an opportunity to actively participate and collaborate.

9.17 establishing an effective system of communication with students' families in order to make them aware of the achievements and difficulties that arise during their children's learning process.

Standard 10: Information Management

Description

Today's students and teachers live in a society in which information is generated at an accelerated rate never before seen in human history. The capacity to effectively manage this deluge of information and knowledge requires that a citizen, more so a teacher, possess an array of skills and proficiencies to recognize his or her information needs and put together a coherent, effective process to meet these needs with reliable, useful information. The teacher must be able to carry this process out, as well as help her or his students to develop their capacity to do so autonomously. In this endeavor, the teacher must use information and communications resources and technologies in an ethical, effective, and efficient manner, paying particular attention to special needs students.

Knowledge

The teacher knows and understands:

10.1 the variety of information sources available and how to use them in educational settings.

10.2 that information skills are not limited to technological information search skills.

10.3 how to select and validate information as well as incorporate it into her or his scheme knowledge.

10.4 the ethical, economical, legal, and social aspects concomitant with accessing and using information, including intellectual property rights

Dispositions

The teacher values and endeavors to:

10.5 support the information skill development by his or her students.

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10.6 recognize students' information needs in order to create a coherent and effective search process in the different media available.

10.7 identify the information and communications technologies (ICT) available to satisfy her or his own necessities and her or his students' necessities.

10.8 model ethical and legal information use, both that accessed and that distributed.

10.9 use information effectively to achieve a specific purpose.

10.10 critically evaluate information and its sources.

Performance

The teacher is involved in activities directed at:

10.11 planning educational experiences that cultivate information skill development by his or her students.

10.12 organizing a coherent and effective educational search process in the different media available.

10.13 selecting content and information sources, assuring that these are valid and reliable.

10.14 adapting information that meets the particular needs of each student.

10.15 offering opportunities to generate technological proficiencies in accessing and using information.

10.16 establishing a collaborative relationship with the librarian, as an information professional, that supports her or his day-to-day search, identification and effective use of information in the classroom.

10.17 identifying community resources that support information skills development by his or her students.

Standard 11: Professional Development

Description

The teaching profession, by its nature, requires continuous professional development. Curricular theories, teaching and learning theories, as well as disciplinary knowledge are continually evolving. Changing student profiles and social phenomena that impact education, such as information technologies, regulations, and labor affairs; challenge teachers to seek new and better alternatives to respond to emerging student needs and to their own professional development needs. Therefore, in order to keep up to date and be effective, a teacher needs to be alert regarding her or his professional development. The teacher should be able to take the knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained from the professional development program to his or her teaching practice in order to improve student learning. The teacher must transfer these to the classroom in a critical manner so as to benefit students. The teacher should carry out a

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reflective educational practice and establish and foster a professional learning community with her or his peers.

Knowledge

The teacher knows and understands:

11.1 his or her development needs in order to strengthen himself or herself as an educational professional.

11.2 the linkage between her or his professional development needs and her or his students' learning needs.

11.3 how research and other methods of inquiry can be significant for his or her development, learning, and self-evaluation.

11.4 that there are multiple professional development paths which range from institutional programs to individual and collective initiatives managed individually and by the school.

11.5 that professional development needs to be planned fundamentally by the teacher himself or herself in collaboration with his or her school principal.

Dispositions

The teacher values and endeavors to:

11.6 reflect continually on her or his educational practice as an individual and in conjunction with her or his peers.

11.7 transform reflection into a plan of action for professional development.

11.8 use research results from his or her pedagogical practice to identify his or her professional development needs.

11.9 make a conscious effort to find professional development opportunities in order to improve her or his pedagogical practice and preparation.

11.10 evaluate the available alternatives and apply the best criteria to choose what is most suitable for her or him as a professional and as a teacher for her or his students.

11.11 voluntarily use his or her time for professional development, outside of working hours if it should be necessary and if the opportunity presents itself.

11.12 collaborate with colleagues to offer and receive support that leads to professional development for all.

11.13 accept that planning professional development is, first and foremost, every teacher's responsibility and right.

11.14 maintain an attitude of lifelong learning.

Performance

The teacher is involved in activities directed at:

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11.15 participating professional development initiatives that respond to his or her needs as an educator.

11.16 sharing with colleagues and the school community the results from her or his learning and learn from what other school members contribute.

11.17 transfer with the learning constructed in professional development activities into the classroom with a critical eye.

11.18 utilizing the professional standards as a reference in self-evaluation of his or her performance as a teacher.

11.19 utilizing the results from student learning, the feedback from students' families, the constructive criticism from colleagues, and formal evaluations from the system as important information sources for identifying her or his professional development needs.