

Running head: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Professional Development

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EDTE 689: Advanced Seminar in Teaching

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As an educator and a professional, I have taken a vow to be a life-long learner. I understand the importance to grow and evolve as a teacher and as a person so that not only will I keep up with the most current research and theory, but so that I will ultimately be able to best serve my students. In my short time being a teacher, I have already learned that there are many different ways to become a more skilled and competent professional, and I hold all of them to an equal importance. I believe that professional degrees, certification, in and out of house workshops and seminars, reflection, and action research are all essential aspects of enhancing my professional development.

First, I believe that professional degrees are an important aspect of my professional development. Professional degrees, including undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral are the foundation of a teacher's education not only for their pedagogical knowledge, but for their content area knowledge as well. Even though I was not planning on becoming an educator as I pursued my undergraduate degree, it nevertheless gave me the core knowledge that I would later teach in my content area. As Johnson, et al. (2005) discusses, the cornerstone of being an effective teacher is gaining and developing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to help students learn. My graduate degree in Special Education is what has given me the foundation and knowledge to understand how to best teach my content. Accompanying this degree is professional state certification, something necessary and vital to ensuring that I am qualified and capable to perform the job I was hired for. I will continue to pursue continuing education to make sure that I not only keep up with the latest in the world of my content, but also so that I will be able to best teach it to my students.

Next, I believe that in and out of house workshops and seminars are important aspects of my professional development. At Chelsea School, we have weekly workshops on a variety of teaching and learning topics, entire professional development days, and even professional reimbursements. Chelsea School is dedicated to molding and supporting the best teachers possible, and the programs they offer are a true resource and inspiration to me. In our workshops, we collaborate as a team of professionals to discuss best practice, create new classroom strategies, and research educational theory. I always try and contribute to the best of my ability and gain everything that I can from our workshops. I have even conducted presentations on my own classroom strategies. I also observe my co-workers in their classrooms and reflect on those experiences. Outside of Chelsea, I have already attended Maryland Association of Nonpublic Special Education Facility's (MANSEF) conference and have taken several continuing education seminar courses at Trinity University. I have also observed several diverse classrooms in the Maryland/DC area.

Lastly, I believe that reflection and action research are important aspects of my professional development. As an educator, I make sure to constantly and consistently reflect on my practices and my professional experiences by journaling and discussions with my administrators, co-workers, classmates, along with others outside of these environments like family and friends. From all of these various perspectives, I gain wonderful insight in many diverse perspectives. Professional reflection on my teaching practices is also a great jumping off point to conduct action research, which I believe is an ideal way to develop professionally. As people, we grow and evolve and so must our practices. Action research is a way to make this idea a reality. I have already conducted

several research projects where I set out with an educational theory, tested it in the classroom, and documented my research. And I will continue to do this throughout my career.

I am dedicated to being the best teacher I can be and to do that I know that I must never stop developing myself professionally and personally. But not all development happens in official ways. The experiences we go through day-to-day are always a learning experience. I cannot count the number of times that I have had sudden and unexpected inspiration for a lesson plan or learned an invaluable lesson from a student. All of these experiences can relate to and enhance my professional development and I will make sure to always keep my eyes and ears open and reflect on whatever can make me a better teacher.

## References

Johnson, J. A., et al. (2005). *Introduction to the foundations of american education.*

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