

Initial Reflective Essay Project Revised Fall 2008

Purpose:

The purpose of this assessment is to help teacher candidates understand the Illinois State University conceptual framework, “Realizing the Democratic Ideal”, by asking them to assess their current beliefs about what teachers should know and be able to do and assess their own strengths and challenges in relation to the conceptual framework. A minimal rating of Basic in all categories is needed for the successful completion of this assessment for Gateway 1: Admission into Professional Studies.

Suggested Implementation:

- A. Students are presented with Survey Part A (Teacher Characteristics) and Part B (Self-Analysis) at the beginning of the semester. The instructor leads a discussion that discusses each of the items on the surveys, so students may ask questions and have a fairly good understanding of what each item means.
- B. Students are then asked to complete the surveys and make a list of any additional follow-up questions.
- C. The instructor leads a discussion based on the students’ assessments of themselves and their thoughts on teaching.
- D. The instructor then introduces the students to the conceptual framework.
- E. Students then write an Initial Reflective Essay to be put into their LiveText Portfolio. Students also need to attach/insert a copy of their Survey B, Self-Analysis Survey, into their LiveText Portfolio with their Essay.

Initial Reflective Essay Prompt:

Looking at your Self-Analysis Survey (B) that is based on the Illinois State University Conceptual Framework for Teacher Education, “Realizing the Democratic Ideal,” identify your areas of challenge. Then explain specifically how you plan to develop as a professional educator in at least three of the virtues that you identified as an area of challenge as you progress through your program at Illinois State University. Among the three virtues you select, you must address at least one moral and one intellectual virtue. Your essay must be no less than 500 words, but no more than 750 words.

Reflective Essay Rubric

A minimal rating of Basic in all categories is needed for successfully passing this assessment for Gateway 1: Admission into Professional Studies.

Text

	Weak	Basic	Strong	Outstanding
Discussion of virtues	Based on his/her responses to the Self-Analysis Survey (B), student identifies fewer than three virtues or does not identify at least one moral and one intellectual virtue and shows some understanding of the essential virtues discussed. Discussion is inconsistent with respect to the challenges.	Based on his/her responses to the Self-Analysis Survey (B), student identifies three virtues (at least 1 moral & 1 intellectual) and shows a basic understanding of the essential virtues discussed. Discussion shows an incomplete recognition of the challenges.	Based on his/her responses to the Self-Analysis Survey (B), student identifies three or more virtues (at least 1 moral & 1 intellectual) and shows a developed understanding of the virtues discussed. Discussion shows a realistic recognition of the challenges.	Based on his/her responses to the Self-Analysis Survey (B), student identifies three or more virtues (at least 1 moral & 1 intellectual) and shows insightful understanding and appreciation for the virtues discussed. Discussion shows a superior recognition of the challenges
Plan for Professional Growth to Address Challenges	Student has written a plan to address his/her three areas of challenge while at Illinois State University. Plan is incomplete and/or unclear.	Student has written a plan to address his/her three areas of challenge that is complete and shows a basic understanding of what it means to be a teacher and how (s)he will work toward that goal while at Illinois State University.	Student has written a plan to address his/her three areas of challenge that is complete and shows a good understanding of what it means to be a teacher and how (s)he will work toward that goal while at Illinois State University.	Student has written a plan to address his/her three areas of challenge that is complete and shows insight into the ways to overcome the challenges and shows an excellent understanding of what it means to be a teacher and how (s)he will work toward that goal while at Illinois State University.

Reflection

	Weak	Basic	Strong	Outstanding
Level of Reflection	The essay shows little or no reflection on the ways in which the student plans to develop as a teacher while at Illinois State University. There is little evidence that the student has the initiative and capability to identify ways in which experiences at Illinois State University will affect future teaching and learning.	The essay shows some reflection on the ways in which the student will develop as a teacher while at Illinois State University. There is some evidence that suggests that the student has the initiative and capability to identify ways in which experiences at Illinois State University will affect future teaching and learning.	The essay shows a well-developed, coherent way in which the student plans to develop as a teacher while at Illinois State University. There is evidence that suggests that the student has the initiative and capability to start to identify ways in which experiences at Illinois State University will affect future teaching and learning.	The essay shows a consistently thoughtful, even insightful ways that the student plans to develop as a teacher. The student examines his/her assumptions and understandings. There is evidence that the student has the initiative and capability to consistently identify ways in which experiences at Illinois State University will affect future teaching and learning.

Structure

	Weak	Basic	Strong	Outstanding
Logic	Writing is poorly organized and uses paraphrasing and/or repetition with little or no connections.	Writing is organized in general and specific ideas can be followed in a predictable manner.	Writing is organized with some connections and incorporates sufficient detail to support the general and specific ideas.	Writing is well organized in both general and specific ideas, has good connections, and argument fully supports writer's point of view.
Grammar & Mechanics	The essay contains grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and/or punctuation errors that compromise the writer's meaning.	While containing errors, the text demonstrates the writer's basic ability to construct standard sentences, to use basic vocabulary, and to use punctuation correctly so the essay is meaningful.	While essay contains a few errors, sentence structure, vocabulary, and punctuation are basically correct and the meaning is clear.	Essay is error-free and sentence structure, vocabulary and punctuation are correct and effective.

Teacher Qualities Survey (A)

Read each statement below and place an “X” in the box that best describes your views.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Teachers need to exhibit sensitivity toward the varieties of individual and cultural diversity.					
Teachers should have both the disposition and ability to collaborate ethically and effectively with others.					
Teachers should have a reverence for learning and a seriousness of personal, professional, and public purpose.					
Teachers need to show respect for learners of all ages and a special regard for children and adolescents.					
Teachers should have a wide general knowledge and a deep knowledge of their content area.					
Teachers should have a working knowledge and appreciation of the diversity among learners.					
Teachers should exhibit an understanding of what affects learning and appropriate teaching strategies.					
Teachers should have an interest in and an ability to seek out informational, technological, and collegial resources.					
Teachers should have a contagious intellectual enthusiasm and courage enough to be creative.					

Self Assessment Survey (B)

Read each statement below and place an “X” in the box that best describes you at your present stage of development as a professional teacher.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I exhibit sensitivity toward the varieties of individual and cultural diversity.					
I have both the disposition and ability to collaborate ethically and effectively with others.					
I have a reverence for learning and a seriousness of personal, professional, and public purpose.					
I show respect for learners of all ages and a special regard for children and adolescents.					
I have a wide general knowledge and a deep knowledge of my content area.					
I have a working knowledge and appreciation of the diversity among learners.					
I exhibit an understanding of what affects learning and appropriate teaching strategies.					
I have an interest in and an ability to seek out informational, technological, and collegial resources.					
I have a contagious intellectual enthusiasm and courage enough to be creative.					