

## **Foundational Beliefs about Education Case Study Group Project**

You have been asked by an administrator to work with others to create a presentation explaining foundational beliefs about education for a new teacher orientation in your school system.

*Foundational* is the operative word here. The goal of the presentation is to help new educators think critically about important issues related to teaching and learning before their first day with students. In this regard, you should rely heavily on the reading and lectures of the course. Your presentation is more than a “how to survive” for beginning teachers. It is intended to give them a sense of the history and philosophy that has guided this noble profession.

Your institution would like your collaborative work to be published in a wiki so that others will be able to add to it in the future. A wiki is a type of website where multiple people can quickly add or edit content on any page of the site. You will learn more about working in a wiki community as you collaborate on this project. Your project will be organized to answer the following questions:

1. Why teach?
2. What are qualities of a good teacher?
3. What do students really need?
4. What does a good classroom look and feel like?
5. What is truly meaningful in student learning?
6. How does a classroom become a place of reflective practice?

During the first week of the course, the instructor will divide the class into teams of 3-4 students. Each team will be responsible for developing a wiki and a presentation which will help new peers reflect on important issues related to teaching and learning.

Once this case study begins your team will complete five milestones using a wiki environment in Blackboard. The deliverables will include individual answers to milestone questions, short collaborative essays that synthesize individual answers, and a final presentation. Each team should organize their wiki to include areas for individual contributions and team collaboration. Each student should post individual ideas for each milestone before the group collaborates on a collective response. This will ensure that everyone has a voice and contributes to each milestone during the project.

Here is a list of the milestones. Detailed descriptions of each milestone will follow:

Milestone 1: Team charter

Milestone 2: Why teach? What are qualities of a good teacher?

Milestone 3: What do students really need? What does a good classroom look and feel like?

Milestone 4: What is truly meaningful in student learning? How does a classroom become a place of reflective practice?

Milestone 5: Final Product and team reflection

## **Milestone 1: Team charter**

Before beginning the actual work of the case study, teammates should agree on a team charter. A team charter is a contract which each team member agrees to follow to help the project be successful. Each team member should write responses to the items below on their individual pages (10 points) and then the team as a whole should collaborate on a final charter (**written out in paragraph form**) that will be posted on the Milestone 1 page of the team's wiki (10 points). These questions are based on questions suggested in Palloff and Pratt's text, *Collaborating Online: Learning Together in Community* (p. 27-28).

1. How will your group identify itself? Choose a name which can be used by the instructor and others in the course.
2. How will your group communicate? How will you utilize the discussion board? (Any communication done in person, by phone, or email should be copied to the team's discussion board as transcripts so that all individual and collaborative work is documented.)
3. On what day of the week will you have initial individual ideas posted?
4. How quickly will group members be expected to collaborate on a collective essay to address the milestone's questions?
5. What role will each person in the group perform? Possible roles include: initiator, secretary, liaison to the instructor, motivator, and organizer. Feel free to combine or modify. All group members are expected to post their own content in Blackboard so that course statistics will correctly show their participation.
6. How will the group handle a member who is not participating or is late posting individual ideas?
7. What other issues need to be discussed and agreed upon before beginning the project?
8. The purpose of this project is: (one sentence)
9. Our deliverables include: (5-7 bulleted statements)
10. Operating guidelines: (5-7 bulleted statements beginning with the words "We." Example: We will complete all milestones on time.

## **Milestone 2: Why teach? What are qualities of a good teacher?**

In this milestone, we are concerned with what motivates a person to become a teacher. What are that person's dreams? What is it about teaching that is attractive? What can a teacher hope to accomplish? What does it mean to be a professional? This leads logically to a consideration of the "good teacher." What qualities or attributes do good teachers possess? What makes a teacher memorable in the eyes of a student? What feelings, beliefs, and attitudes does a good teacher possess? What other qualities are needed?

1. Individually:
  - a. Use the course readings, lecture, and external resources to develop answers to the questions for this milestone.
  - b. Post your thoughts about each question on your individual page within your team's wiki. This should be posted early so that team members can review each others' work prior to collaborating on a collective response.
  - c. Make an entry in your personal blog after your group has finished with the collaborative essay (listed below). This personal reflection should address your

thoughts about the process of the group work. How is the project going? What is working well? What are the challenges?

- d. Each student will receive an individual grade (10 points) on each milestone.
2. Collaboratively:
    - a. Create an outline for your group essay that answers the questions for this milestone. This outline should be posted on the appropriate milestone page. Each team member should help write and edit this outline. This process should begin only after all team members have posted their responses on individual pages.
    - b. Use your outline to create a collaborative five-paragraph essay.
    - c. Each member of the team should help with the writing and editing of the essay.
    - d. Follow general APA guidelines for formatting the essay.
    - e. Include a bibliography at the bottom of the essay.
    - f. Teams will receive a group grade (10 points) on each milestone.

### ***Milestone 3: What do students really need? What does a good classroom look and feel like?***

In this milestone, we are looking at teaching and learning from a student perspective. Good teachers want to reach all their students. Good teachers want their students to achieve and to become good citizens. What needs of children and/or adolescents must be met in order for this to happen? How does a teacher inspire his or her students? If we were to visit schools, what qualities would we find in good classrooms? What is truly different about a good classroom in terms of atmosphere and feeling tone, freedom and opportunity, management and discipline, civility and orderliness?

1. Individually:
  - a. Use the course readings, lecture, and external resources to develop answers to the questions for this milestone.
  - b. Post your thoughts about each question on your individual page within your team's wiki. This should be posted early so that team members can review each others' work prior to collaborating on a collective response.
  - c. Make an entry in your personal blog after your group has finished with the collaborative essay (listed below). This personal reflection should address your thoughts about the process of the group work. How is the project going? What is working well? What are the challenges?
  - d. Each student will receive an individual grade (10 points) on each milestone.
2. Collaboratively:
  - a. Create an outline for your group essay that answers the questions for this milestone. This outline should be posted on the appropriate milestone page. Each team member should help write and edit this outline. This process should begin only after all team members have posted their responses on individual pages.
  - b. Use your outline to create a collaborative five-paragraph essay.
  - c. Each member of the team should help with the writing and editing of the essay.
  - d. Follow general APA guidelines for formatting the essay.
  - e. Include a bibliography at the bottom of the essay.
  - f. Teams will receive a group grade (10 points) on each milestone.

### ***Milestone 4: What is truly meaningful in student learning? How does a classroom become a place of reflective practice?***

At the end of the (school) day, what really matters? How can we know what knowledge, values, skills, and attitudes are of most worth? How can teachers help to raise everyone's achievement? To what extent should students be allowed to have a say, a voice, in guiding their own learning? How does reflective practice make a difference in achievement, empowerment, and self-efficacy? How can the social/moral fabric of school life be improved at the classroom level?

1. Individually:
  - a. Use the course readings, lecture, and external resources to develop answers to the questions for this milestone.
  - b. Post your thoughts about each question on your individual page within your team's wiki. This should be posted early so that team members can review each others' work prior to collaborating on a collective response.
  - c. Make an entry in your personal blog after your group has finished with the collaborative essay (listed below). This personal reflection should address your thoughts about the process of the group work. How is the project going? What is working well? What are the challenges?
  - d. Each student will receive an individual grade (10 points) on each milestone.
2. Collaboratively:
  - a. Create an outline for your group essay that answers the questions for this milestone. This outline should be posted on the appropriate milestone page. Each team member should help write and edit this outline. This process should begin only after all team members have posted their responses on individual pages.
  - b. Use your outline to create a collaborative five-paragraph essay.
  - c. Each member of the team should help with the writing and editing of the essay.
  - d. Follow general APA guidelines for formatting the essay.
  - e. Include a bibliography at the bottom of the essay.
  - f. Teams will receive a group grade (10 points) on each milestone.

### ***Milestone 5: Final Product***

Now it is time to put your work together to create a presentation for new teachers. Please review the introductory paragraph of this case study before beginning your work on the final product.

1. Individually(10 points):
  - a. Review your team's essays in milestones 2-4 and make a list of important content that should be considered for inclusion in your team's presentation to new teachers.
  - b. Post your list of ideas on your individual page in the wiki.
  - c. After your team has posted the presentation to the Milestone 5 area of the wiki, write a final entry in your personal blog reflecting on the process and products of this case study. What worked well? What were the challenges? Are you satisfied with the quality of the essays and presentation? Are you satisfied with the individual and collaborative work of your team? Describe how you personally did, in terms of following the charter? How did the team do? Were there technical challenges?
2. Collaboratively:

- a. Review each team member's individual page to determine what should be included in the presentation for new teachers.
- b. Make an outline of your presentation in the Milestone 5 area. All team members should add content and edit this outline.
- c. You will have 45 minutes to make your presentation and have a discussion with the new teachers. (*You won't actually give this presentation.*) Your presentation content should take 20 minutes or less of the total time. Use Microsoft PowerPoint to create your presentation.
  - i. Use the discussion board to post drafts of the presentation as it is being created.
  - ii. Each slide should be shown for a minimum of one minute so you should not have more than twenty slides in your presentation. (Twenty is probably too many in most cases.)
  - iii. Avoid including too much content on an individual slide. In general, there should be eight or fewer words for each bullet point and eight or fewer bullet points per slide.
  - iv. Consider the use of questions in your presentation to help your audience be active participants.
  - v. The use of images and/or clipart is encouraged and will improve the overall appearance of your presentation. Do not include video or sound as these will make the file size too large for online use.
  - vi. Subtle animations may be helpful but avoid abrupt animations that distract from your presentation.
  - vii. Use the notes area at the bottom of each slide to write out a script for your presentation. This will be read by the instructor when reviewing your presentation since you won't be able to share this presentation in a live setting.
  - viii. Include a bibliography slide. This does not count against your total number of slides.
  - ix. The final presentation should be posted as a link in your Milestone 5 area of your wiki (50 points).
- d. Complete the following as a group reflection after your team has posted the final presentation (10 points).
  - i. Review your team charter in Milestone 1.
  - ii. How did the charter contribute to the success of the project?
  - iii. Discuss the process and products of this case study.
  - iv. Discuss changes you would make in your charter, the process, and the products (essays, and presentations) if you were starting this project over today.
  - v. Post your group reflection in paragraph form below the link to your final project in the Milestone 5 area of your wiki. All team members should help compose and edit this reflection.

During this project, team wikis will only be available to team members and the instructor. Once all groups have completed their projects, the instructor will open team wikis (not personal blogs) for the whole class to review.

