

**My Narrative 3**  
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**3/25/24**

**Theme Three: Professional Responsibility (Standards 9-10)**

*“Candidates demonstrate their ability to thoughtfully describe, critically analyze, and insightfully reflect upon their readiness for professional responsibility.”*

**Description:** Standard nine is twofold; First, it is about the responsibilities teachers have been given in regards to ongoing professional development and the expectation that learning is a lifelong process, which we actively engage in various experiences and trainings to improve our teaching both individually and collectively. In a blog on “Why You Need to Be a Lifelong Learner, by Emily Coleman, she writes, “Teachers who are lifelong learners deflect criticism and learn from it. They appreciate other teachers giving ideas on how to incorporate new strategies into their classrooms. Educators with a growth mindset always look for opportunities to grow and advance as a teacher.” Second, it encompasses the moral and ethical practices of teachers, understanding the laws that protect learners and the responsibilities of teachers with regards to confidentiality.

In standard ten it is about the leadership roles teachers carry and the many faceted ways teachers collaborate with other teachers, families of students, school leadership, other professionals, and the greater community. It entails standing up and finding ways to advance ones profession and advocating for positive changes that will enhance the learning environments of students and the programs being offered. It also involves knowing the school organization and culture and pursuing ways to contribute to the bigger of equal and quality education for all.

**Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice**

*“The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate [their] practice, particularly the effects of [their] choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of the learner.”*

**Performance Criterion 9.1**

*“Candidates are prepared for self-directed, continuous professional learning.”*

One of the pieces of evidence used for the first part of standard nine was my PC 9.1a “WIDA certifications” These are trainings and certifications that ELL teachers need to do every year for both screening potential students and doing mandated state Access testing every spring. This is different from the CASAS testing I was used to when teaching ELL students in a college setting. Since I teach k – 12 ELL students across the district, there are multiple trainings and certifications needed based of the different ages of students. WIDA designs and implements proficiency standards and assessment for grade k – 12 students who are English-language learners. “WIDA’s story begins with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which brought

English learners into the national spotlight. As a result of this change, WIDA was born in 2003, when an Enhanced Assessment Grant was awarded to the Wisconsin Department of Public Education.”

WIDA originally stood for the three states involved; Wisconsin, Delaware, and Arkansas. Today there is a collaborative group of 42 states, territories and federal agencies that use this research-based system for training, assessments, and educator support. Vermont is one such state, so when I started teaching last year in the Mount Abraham Unified School District there were a number of trainings and certifications I needed in order to administer screeners for placement and yearly WIDA Access tests to show language progress of students. The state closely monitors and these tests that are federally mandated.

### ***Performance Criterion 9.2***

*“Candidates are prepared to practice in a legal and ethical manner.”*

One of the pieces of evidence for this standard that was the required for my portfolio was a response for PC 9.2b “What Does Ethical Teaching Look Like?” And, “How do you model, teach, or guide learners to use technology in a safe, legal and ethical way?” In this piece of evidence I took the approach of how ethical teaching looks like from the perspective of a recent meeting I had with other middle school teachers concerning how to make modifications for an entry level ELL student in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Besides modifications, we talked about using an emergent bilingual program to help this student adjust to his new school culture. My ethical job now is to look out for the well-being of this new student and do the best I can to help him transition and thrive in our school community so he can reach his academic goals.

The other question that needed to be answered for this part of the portfolio concerns how to model, teach, and use technology in an age appropriate safe way. For one of my entry level students in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, technology is a part of our everyday time together. I sometimes look up a word to find out the Spanish translation, or just an image of something he isn’t familiar with, in order to help him understand the vocabulary we are working on. We are often on Dictionary.com, and he sees technology as a tool to help him learn English. On some days we go to a site called Ventures Arcade to practice his English. There are activities in listening, grammar, word recognition and reading comprehension. By accessing only certain sites on the internet that I have used, I believe I am modeling in a good and appropriate way so my student can use technology to help him learn and improve his English.

### **Standard 10: Leadership and Collaboration**

*“The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth and to advance the profession.”*

### ***Performance Criterion 10.1***

*“Candidates are prepared to collaborate with stakeholders (such as learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, or community members) to ensure student learning.”*

For PC 10.1a I made a “Power point on Modifications” to share with other teachers at a meeting addressing the needs of high school ELL students. This was part of a presentation that also included handouts and helpful Can – Do Descriptors for different levels of ELL students put out by the WIDA consortium. A portion of this standard also addresses collaborating with other colleagues. I shared it with the assistant high school principal, because she had extensive experience teaching ELL students in another state before taking on her new role. The purpose of the meeting was to give strategies for working with ELL students and share different ways of making modifications to assignments. This was also a time to listen to their concerns and offer up support in any way to help meet the ELL learner diverse needs.

### ***Performance Criterion 10.2***

*“Candidates are prepared to advance the profession through advocacy, leadership and/or action research.”*

The piece of evidence I chose was PC 10.2a “The beginning of a district Lau Plan.” This is new and challenging for me, but a necessary step needed in our district in the coming year. I have been in various Zoom meetings with other Multilingual Learner coordinators as well as meeting with Stephanie Vogel, who is our Title III and EL Programs Director for the state of Vermont. Much of discussion this past year has been on, “What is a Lau Plan and who needs to have one?” Stephanie offers assistance on many levels to local districts and part of this past year a big chunk of time has been offering workshops on Lau Plans for English Language Learners and coming up with a template for districts to use, so we can be in compliance with the state that mandates that all districts need to have a Lau Plan in place.

All school districts are required to maintain a current Lau Plan. “The Lau (EL) Plan is named from the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1974 decision in *Lau v. Nichols* which ensures that all students have equal access to education which is required by the Civil Rights Act of 1964.” A sample plan, shared by the Burlington School District includes: what schools will do to identify English language learners, design an effective program reflective of their needs, employ appropriate personnel with specialized knowledge to serve the needs of ELLs, to align the instruction of ELLs to state and local content standards, and provide ongoing, authentic assessments to ascertain their growth in English language proficiency and the comprehension of academic content.

### **Analysis:**

Performance criteria 9.1 says that candidates are prepare for self-directed, continuous professional learning. For my evidence, labeled PC 9 1c, I included ongoing WIDA certifications that need to be done annually. The WIDA trainings are in relation to age categories and based on screeners for possible new students or Access training for the yearly assessment tests done each spring. The trainings also are specific to paper-based or online screening and Access testing. Besides that, there is a special training just for kindergarten, and then other age

groupings up through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Since I cover K-12 ELL services there are various certifications and trainings needed depending on my caseload each year. WIDA also offers webinars and other professional development courses. Part of standard 9 (b) mentions that “Teachers engage in meaningful and appropriate professional learning experiences aligned with his/her own needs and the needs of the learners, school, and system.” These certifications that I have been doing each year are a requirement for the state in order to be the administrator of screeners and Access tests for the ELL learners in our district. Besides doing certification trainings, this past winter I took a WIDA course on scaffolding activities for ELL students, and just last year attended a conference in Burlington, VT sponsored by the Burlington School District.

As far as a plan for professional growth, I believe after going through this peer review process I will be better able to reflect on what types of continuing professional development will be needed over the next few years as I evaluate possible gaps and or areas for growth and development as an ELL teacher in Vermont. One area for sure that I plan to take webinars or workshops related to the Lau Plan that our district will need to develop in the next year. This is addressed in my evidence for standard 10 PC 1c and 10 PC 2a.

The 10.2 performance criteria states that, “Candidates are prepared to advance the profession through advocacy, leadership and/or action research.” The evidence I chose to analyze is 10 PC 2a “The beginning of a Lau Plan.” I have only been in a few Zoom meetings this past year, but all the discussions have included in some part, the task of districts writing Lau Plans for their ELL programs. According to the Vermont Agency of Education, “A Lau Plan should not be prepared by one person only. The expertise of an ML specialist must be leveraged but this person should not shoulder the sole responsibility for its creation, maintenance, and execution. The plan should be created with stakeholder input.” This will be a work in progress, but the goal is to use the template and make a pitch to the district administration with the hopes to get a committee together to begin this process.

The Vermont Lau Plan Template was issued by Vermont Agency of Education on 01/22/2024 and covers everything from: identifying and screening of multilingual students, providing multilingual learners with a language assistance program, staffing and supporting the program, creating an inclusive environment and avoiding unnecessary segregation, addressing multilingual learners with disabilities, serving multilingual learners who opt-out of EL programs, monitoring and exiting English learners, ML program monitoring and evaluation, and meaningful communication with parents/guardians, as well as provides resources and legal foundations to help guide in the process of creating a Lau Plan. I believe this template will be invaluable to our district to help guide us through a new chapter and further development of a plan to help us better reach the needs of our ever growing multilingual student population.

## **Reflection:**

For me, an area of immediate focus and interest is looking at what my role will be in assisting the district in creating a Lau Plan to meet the state requirements for our ELL program as well as to be used to give more precise direction and accountability for the services we offer to multilingual learners and their families. I am relieved that it isn't an individual project, but rather a team that will take on the process of writing and implementing one. This is something I would like to research more over the summer, as well as discuss with other school districts to get a better handle on the process, so I can be better prepared to make a difference when we write ours.

Another area that I would like further training in is related to the WIDA screeners, assessments, and the other WIDA resources available. I am considering attending the Annual WIDA Conference, which will take place from October 15-18, 2024 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I am not sure of funding available, but this is a conference that I believe will be helpful. In the past I have always attended state conferences, and sometimes the national conventions related to work with English Language Learners, but since moving to Vermont I feel that I am just starting to get connected to the network of other ELL teachers and coordinators. The Northern New England TESOL NNETESOL Conference on Saturday, November 2, 2024. This will be the next step in my journey of ongoing professional development and connecting with other teachers in the same field of study. I must say that am grateful to my neighboring district ELL teacher who has been so helpful in this transition time for me. I would not be here today if it wasn't for her guidance and help during my first year of switching from teaching in a large public community college setting to a rural public k-12 school setting. We have an awesome group of ELL teachers dedicated to helping kids and families where English isn't the first language spoken in their homes. I am proud of what many rural area teachers do in efforts to go to multiple schools in their districts each day, providing English support to this ever growing population in our state.

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