

Advanced Program Capstone Portfolio Sample Rationale Statements for Diversity/Global Awareness

Candidates submit a proposal to the instructor of their EDUC 657 Exceptionality, Diversity, and Difference course. Candidates reflect on their experience and make connections to NBPTS core propositions and the appropriate core value while writing rationale statements linked to their capstone portfolio.

Examples of candidate work:

Diversity and Global Awareness Rationale Statement

I chose my diversity practicum experience from EDUC 657: Exceptionality, Diversity and Differences to demonstrate good teaching and global awareness in connection to the NBPTS. During October 2011, I had the opportunity to observe and interview a Westside Elementary ELL teacher. I observed her teaching ELL students using a combination of Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) and direct language instruction. I learned ways to incorporate new learning strategies to help the ELL students in my own classroom. I also interviewed the ELL teacher about the work she does with Westside's ELL children and their families. I learned the differences in language levels of ELL students and what children can do when they are at each level. I also discovered what a day in the life of an ELL teacher is like and the similarities and differences between classroom teachers.

My diversity artifact connects with the VCSU Diversity/Global Awareness Core Value because it expanded my knowledge of working with ELL students. Propositions 1 and 3 of the NBPTS are tied directly to my diversity practicum. Proposition 1 states "Teachers are committed to students and their learning" and Proposition 3 states "Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning." I learned that ELL students differ in their approaches to learning and how to create instructional opportunities that are adapted to their diverse backgrounds. Completing this practicum taught me that the learning strategies I use for ELL students, such as using visuals and real-world examples to teach vocabulary, are great strategies for all the other students as well. I also learned that classroom teachers need to build trust in their ELL students and be sensitive and understanding of the different cultures and religions. Completing my practicum experience helped me individualize my instruction and be aware of how I treat each student in my class, thus showing how I demonstrated growth in propositions 1 and 2 of NBPTS.

This artifact has enhanced my growth as a professional educator. It takes a caring, patient, empathetic, compassionate, and knowledgeable teacher to teach ELL students, and this is what I am always striving to be. I will use what I learned from my practicum experience in the future by continuing to use best practices in my classroom and with my ELL students. Examples of this are teaching in small groups, using visuals to teach new vocabulary and concepts, pairing ELLs with English-speaking students during partner-sharing and group work, giving ELL students extra "thinking time" when asking and answering questions, and modeling correct language when speaking. Above all, I developed a renewed compassion and drive to help the ELL children I teach after completing this practicum.

A second example:

The artifact I selected is from the diversity practicum in EDUC 657. During the practicum, I observed a second grade boy with Down Syndrome whom I had as a kindergarten student. My goal was to see how he had progressed over the past two years with his motor skills, self-help skills, academics, and language. He speaks very little, but he has learned some sign language to help him communicate. The growth I observed from this student was eye opening. The materials his special education teacher and aide use with him have really helped him succeed. My field experience and interest in this student's progress shows "Teachers are committed to students and their learning" NBPTS proposition 1.

The VCSU core value diversity and global awareness states, "teachers who graduate understand how students differ in their approaches to learning and create instructional opportunities that are adapted to students with diverse backgrounds and exceptionalities." This VCSU core value directly connects the NBPTS proposition 1 because they both focus on finding ways to help students learn. Not all children can learn and/or communicate the same way. It is the teacher's job to find a way to teach and communicate with all students. Many times teachers have to adjust curriculum and have different goals for students with disabilities.

When I am working with a group of students during intervention time, the rest of the class is at centers. Each center contains multiple level tasks for the students to complete. Students are able to choose a task in their academic level. Also, after I teach a math concept and have students working independently, I have multiple version of practice. Students whom are above level will be working on the same concept, but more advanced. Students who are below level will be working in a small group with my aide or me for extra help.

It is critical to adjust my instruction and teach students with disabilities at their level of learning and I will continue to do make adjustments in the future. Based on the information I learned during the field experience, I can also use sign language or communication boards to effectively communicate with nonverbal students or students with Down Syndrome.

A third example:

Diversity and Global Awareness Rationale Statement

I chose to use my diversity practicum experience from EDUC 657, Exceptionality, Diversity, and Difference, for my artifact. This class was taught by Professor Kvilvang. I chose this because I worked with Autistic children in Detroit Lakes, MN. The teacher I observed and worked with started an Autistic program at the elementary school. I decided to witness this program as part of my learning experience with Autistic children. I had an Autistic student in my classroom, and I wanted to learn certain techniques that would help me better understand, and reach my student.

While participating in the program, I worked with a wide range of levels from 1st grade through 5th grade. We worked on Math, Reading, Science, and Social Skills. I really enjoyed my time during the social skills section. That day, they were learning about how to react to different things that could take place during a school day. "How would you react if someone decided to ruin the block tower you were working on?" These situations were videotaped and played out with both positive and negative reactions. The video was viewed the next day to reinforce appropriate behavior.

My artifact relates to the NBPTS Proposition #1. This experience shows that I am committed to my students and their learning. This artifact shows that I am vigilant in ensuring all students receive their fair share of attention. By choosing this experience, I wanted to help my Autistic student. I wanted to better understand how to reach my student and make his experience more enjoyable in my classroom.

This applies to the VCSU Core Value: Diversity/Global Awareness whereas the graduate will embrace, "Equal educational opportunities, the treatment of students with disabilities, ELL, school effectiveness and reform, school finance, and philosophy". I witnessed a classroom and a school that reformed their Special Education program to treat students with disabilities and give them the best opportunity to succeed.

After completing this task, I learned that all students have a very specific way of learning. As educators, it is easy for us to just teach what is in front of us, but we need to really take a look at every one of our students, and see how we can affectively reach each one. This will give each child the right education for them as an individual and not just what the class is suppose to learn.

I will be able to use this knowledge when I make up plans. I will take extra time to plan and set up different centers for the different learning styles of my students. This will help my students retain the information. I will also be able to plan for more one-on-one time with certain students. This will benefit every child, not just my special needs students.

A fourth example:

Diversity/Global Awareness Core Value

The importance of being aware of diversity is a topic we all contemplate but rarely dig into and dissect. It is easier to carry on with our daily lives and thought processes, until we are confronted with or become aware of diversity and others that may be different than us. Education 657 was an eye-opening course that forced me to see and appreciate the differences in the world around me.

I teach kindergarten in an average size town in the upper Midwest. Most families function on a modest income and provide for their families with hard work and average to low paying jobs. The five years of kindergarten classes have been sprinkled with a variety of student abilities and disabilities, ethnic backgrounds, income levels, and parental support. The diversity of students entering school today can run the spectrum from ability and home life to parental influence and poverty level. Many of these students with severe needs/diverse backgrounds attend our school's special needs pre-school. The special needs preschool is where I completed a two-day observational visit. The artifact I created is entitled "Diverse Practicum Proposal". It includes my observations and some background information on the diverse students and their needs.

I chose this artifact because it reflects the type of diversity that is evident at my school. The artifact paints an accurate picture of some of the students who will be entering my kindergarten classroom. The experience was filled with diversity as well awareness of the differences of others and their effect on learning and teaching. The artifact fills the requirement for the VCSU Core Value of Diversity and Global Awareness by alerting me to the various differences of students, their backgrounds and how that diversity affects learning. Proposition 4 of NBTPS is highlighted throughout this artifact. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience by being honest and fair, aware of diversity and differences, and adapt their teaching for new ideas, theories and techniques.

Personally and professionally, I have learned to be conscious of differences, compassionate, to teach with empathy and empowerment and focused on being aware of all backgrounds of learners.

Teaching and reaching students in a manner that is respectful and patient will enable me to be a good example of how we treat others, no matter what differences we may have.

Appendix A: Proposal Form for EDUC 657 Exceptionality, Diversity, and Difference

Diverse Practicum Proposal

Your Name Here

Proposed Diverse Practicum:

A one sentence description of your proposed diverse practicum. Options Include: Observe a diverse classroom/school, Interview a peer that works in a diverse classroom/school, Collaborate with a peer that works in a diverse classroom/school, or Others as approved.

Diverse Practicum Purpose and Goals:

State a specific goal and/or purpose for your diverse practicum. What do you want to gain from the experience and how will it add to your professional growth?

Rationale for Practicum Selection:

Why did you decide that this was the diverse practicum you would propose? Why is it right for you? What will you learn? What concrete skills will you develop? Explain how your proposed practicum creates the best possible context in which you can reach your personal and professional learning goals.

Action Plan:

What are you going to do, how are you going to do it, when will you do it, and what preparations will be necessary? List step by step what you plan to do during your practicum. List resources and/or activities that will help prepare, inform, and enhance your learning for the practicum.

Documentation of Diverse Practicum:

How do you propose you will document your practicum? Some examples include: PowerPoint presentation, video, journaling, reflective paper, or a combination of methods. Challenge yourself to get the most out of your practicum by setting this bar high.

Location of Diverse Practicum:

School name and mailing address.

Instructor Approval:

Faculty member approving this practicum

(Name)

Comments: