Valley City State University

Advanced Program Field Experience
Rationale Statements from Capstone Portfolios

2nd example:

The NBPTS proposition 4, “teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience”, connects to my VCSU field experience. During the course EDUC 650, Field Design and Implementation, I created and implemented a project-based learning (PBL) unit on recycling. The ultimate goal of the PBL unit was for my kindergarten students to make a commercial about recycling. I had a great deal of frustration during the unit because I was more of a coach than a teacher. Giving up the control and allowing each group of students to be in charge of their commercial was eye opening. The students focused more on littering than recycling, which I had not initially planned.

Through this field experience, I learned the importance of stepping back and permitting students to take charge of their learning. When students are given time to figure things out on their own, the learning is retained more than if the information is told to them. I also learned what was important to my students through this field experience. The area where we live is full of litter. My students were very concerned about this, which changed their focus in the lesson.

When teaching this unit again, I would like to team up with an older grade (I have a good friend who teaches 3rd) and do this project together. I feel the 3rd graders would have some great ideas to share with the kindergarteners and help them with the commercial. The students could work together to videotape themselves and load it on the computer to edit their commercials. The 3rd graders could show the kindergarteners how to do this and obtain input from the kindergarteners about what to keep and what to fix.

In the future, I will continue to reflect on my teaching and student learning. I need to remember to not only reflect mentally, but also write it down for future reference. I am constantly learning new strategies and approaches in teaching. Modeling my learning to the students shows them that learning is never finished. What I gained through this field experience will help me plan and implement future PBL units. Teaching grade-level standards using PBL units will help my students greatly with the 21st century skills critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork.