



**Watson School of Education**  
**University of North Carolina Wilmington**  
**EDN 305: Exemplary Teacher Project**  
**Fall 2009 – Thursdays 3:45 PM - 4:45 PM**  
**EB 387**

*As educators, we believe that many things are important for good schools: curriculum is important, parental involvement is important; having a clean, safe building is important. But of all the things that are important to having a good school, nothing is as important as the teacher and what that person knows, believes, and can do. That is where the rubber meets the road in being a teacher.*

*~Platt, 2008~*

**Contact Information**

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**Course Overview**

This course is a one (1) credit hour seminar taken during the fall semester of the junior year. The course is designed to encourage students to examine the practice of teaching and the realities of the school context as it affects teaching. The program of study centers on classroom observations, interviews and reflective discussions with exemplary K-12 school teachers. The project utilizes documentation of teacher artifacts and seminar discussions with teachers regarding the considerations given in instructional planning, the decisions made during the lesson, and the *reflections* of the teacher following the lesson about outcomes and future plans.

**Course Goals**

1. To encourage students, through observations and interactions with practicing teachers or support personnel, to enhance their understanding about the complexities of effective teaching.
2. To provide opportunities for students to “get into the head” of reflective, articulate exemplary practitioners, experiencing the application of pedagogy within real classroom settings, developing an understanding of their decision framework, and deepening the realities of current educational contexts.
3. To challenge students to actively engage in a focused, purposeful classroom observation and critical analysis of educational practice within the realities of current educational context.
4. To enhance students’ preparation for their senior year final methods course and internship experiences through an in-depth exposure to model teachers and classrooms across a span of all school levels and subject areas.
5. Use data to understand the nature of exemplary teachers and teaching.

## **Course Format**

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Students will be involved in a variety of activities during the semester. Each student is expected to participate in the following:

1. Read assigned readings and actively participate in classroom activities
2. Schedule and participate in at least one team observation of a selected exemplary teacher and document that lesson for use in a pre-scheduled class seminar
3. Conduct an interview with the selected teacher to understand dispositional and pedagogical practices that inform exemplary teaching.
4. Analyze observational data as part of the report for the scheduled seminar
5. Assume leadership in the seminar discussion with teachers of the year
6. Submit an individual reflection based on the field experience

## **Course Requirements and Grades**

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Because this is a team project, students should work *collaboratively* with other team members. The project is a shared responsibility and no one student should assume total responsibility for the tasks associated with the project. Team members should negotiate with each other to ensure that all tasks are accomplished and that the work is shared. The tasks associated with a seminar for exemplary teacher practices include, but may not be limited to the following:

1. Design a teacher observation rubric
2. Pilot and implementing the teacher observation rubric
3. Observe, document and interview local teachers.
4. Analyze data from the teacher observation and interviews
5. Present results to teachers of the year from the local County.
6. Document teacher observation through artifacts such as digital pictures, note-taking or any appropriate means.
7. Observe professional conduct including punctuality and dressing appropriately
8. Write a biographical sketch as part of the presentation.
9. Serve as hosts for seminar sessions with teachers of the year. Set up the room and equipment and make sure all handouts are available before the 3:45 seminar session. The team is responsible for leading the discussion, asking and responding to questions and comments, and preparing questions and comments prior to the seminar to facilitate discussion relevant to the project. Students should begin with an introduction of the teacher, facilitate discussion, and take the lead in bringing the seminar to an appropriate close.
10. The team will be responsible for sending a thank you letter to the teacher they observed and interviewed.



Grades are based on an individual’s participation and completion of team responsibilities, their active engagement during seminar discussions, and evidence of and analysis of teacher observation and interviews. It is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor regarding how they are participating as a team member. Attendance is a professional expectation of future educators. **On-time attendance** at each scheduled seminar is critical. Less than adequate engagement, marginal or non-completion of assignments, absences and/or late arrivals, or non-participation in team responsibilities and in seminar discussions will result in a grade reduction. During presentations, please treat your classmates and any other speakers with **professional courtesy**.

**Grading:**

Letter grades will be assigned on the following scale:

- A=95-100
- B=94-90
- C=89-85
- D=84-80
- F=0-79

- A: outstanding work meeting expectations of course that needs no revision. (95-100)
- B: excellent work meeting expectations of course that needs some revision (94-90)
- C: acceptable work meeting expectations of course-needing extensive revision (89-95)
- D: minimal work meeting expectations of course (84-80)
- F: work that does not meet expectations of course (0-79)

| Course Requirements  | % of Class Emphasis |
|--|---------------------|
| • <b>Class attendance, participation and leadership</b>        | 10%                 |
| • <b>Planned Projects</b>                                      |                     |
| 1. Class Activities/Reading Assignments/Class Discussions      | 20%                 |
| 2. Observation Rubric Development, Implementation and Analysis | 30%                 |
| 3. A Piece of My story   | 10%                 |
| 4. Teacher observation and interview - documentation           | 20%                 |
| 5. Final Reflection and Self-Assessment                        | 10%                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>100%</b>         |

**Attendance, Participation and Class Leadership**

Your active participation in this class is crucial to its success. Because of its interactive, group nature, I depend on you to build and shape the course. Participation involves a combination of attendance, appropriate discussion, completion of assignments and active listening. Any absences should be discussed with me and absence for more than one live class will result in a conference to evaluate your status in the course. Please email me or

call and leave a message at 962-2665 if you are unable to make it to class for any reason. Class leadership involves actively contributing to the success of this class.

### **Class Activities/Reading Assignments/Class Discussions**

Each week, reading assignment, group activities and field experiences tasks will be due. Assignments are to be posted on Blackboard or as indicated in the assignment/task/activity. Full participation and completion of the readings, discussions and group activities is expected.

### **Observation Development, Implementation and Analysis**

As a class, we will discuss the characteristics and portraits of exemplary teaching. We will field test the observational rubric and interview teachers. We will analyze the observational data and interview results and present them as part of our class project sometime in November.

### **Final Reflection**

Due on the final class night, the final reflection will allow you to share insights gained from the course projects and provide feedback related to the learning in the course. What are your takeaways from this class? Where do you stand, thus far in the continuum of exemplary teaching? A final self-assessment related to the objectives of the course and connections to North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards will be included.

### **Tentative Calendar**

| <i>Dates</i>         | <i>Topics</i>  |
|----------------------|--|
| <i>Week 1</i>        |  |
| Tuesday, August 25   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions/review and summary of syllabus</li> <li>• Survey on your teaching perceptions and aspirations</li> <li>• Selecting the “best candidate” focusing on:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teacher's fundamental belief system</li> <li>2. Teacher as lifelong learner</li> <li>3. Content knowledge</li> <li>4. Instructional skills</li> <li>5. Classroom management skills</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Due next week— 1) 3 interview questions/scenarios for three areas for ‘selecting the best candidate’ and 2) a piece of my story.</li> <li>• Watch the <a href="#">Teacher movie</a></li> </ul> |
| <i>Week 2</i>        |  |
| Tuesday, September 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on a ‘piece of my story’ and assigned readings (<a href="#">what keeps teachers going</a>, <a href="#">Dispositions to teach</a> and <a href="#">exemplary teachers who care</a>) list characteristics of exemplary teaching.</li> <li>• Map of Pedagogical Knowledge</li> <li>• Introduction of <a href="#">Standards for assessing Teacher Performance</a> and proficiency</li> <li>• Due next week 1) In your view, rate areas of teacher</li> </ul>   |

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|---------------------------------|---|
|                                 | performance in order of importance and 2) list at least 5 characteristics of the teacher in the 1 <sup>st</sup> case study.   |
| <b>Week 3</b>                   |   |
| Tuesday, September 8            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss 1<sup>st</sup> case study</li> <li>• Evaluate case study 1 using classrooms areas of performance</li> <li>• Write notes on 1<sup>st</sup> case study</li> <li>• Due next week, at least five characteristics/profiles of teacher in 2<sup>nd</sup> case</li> </ul>                     |
| <b>Week 4</b>                   |   |
| Tuesday, September 15           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share profiles of teacher in 2<sup>nd</sup> case study</li> <li>• Rate areas of teacher performance in 2<sup>nd</sup> case</li> <li>• Write notes on 2<sup>nd</sup> case study</li> <li>• Due next week, at least 5 characteristic/profiles of teacher in 3<sup>rd</sup> case study</li> </ul> |
| <b>Week 5</b>                   |   |
| Tuesday, September 22           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share profiles of teacher in 3<sup>rd</sup> case study</li> <li>• Rate teacher in 3<sup>rd</sup> case study using ‘our’ classroom areas of important</li> <li>• Write notes on 3<sup>rd</sup> case study</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Week 6</b>                   |   |
| Tuesday, September 29           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for observation in the field (expectations)</li> <li>• Confirm observational rubric</li> <li>• Revisit note taking</li> <li>• Q&amp;A</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Week 7</b>                   |   |
| Tuesday, October 6 – Fall Break |   |
| <b>Week 8</b>                   |   |
| Tuesday, October 13             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the field for classroom observation and teacher interview</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Week 9</b>                   |   |
| Tuesday, October 20             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the field for classroom observation and teacher interview</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Week 10</b>                  |   |
| Tuesday, October 27             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share observational experience</li> <li>• What went wrong and what went right</li> <li>• Areas of improvement</li> <li>• Data analysis</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Week 11</b>                  |   |
| Tuesday, November 3             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observational data analysis</li> <li>• Organizing for the teachers of the year panel</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Week 12</b>                  |   |
| Tuesday, November 10            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observational data analysis</li> <li>• Organizing for the teachers of the year panel</li> </ul>  |

**Week 13**

Tuesday, November 17

- Report finding to panel
- Take notes
- Due next week, reflective paper

**Week 14**

Tuesday, November 24

- Final reflection and assessments (SPOTS)
- What have we learned? What will we do?
- Meeting with instructor as needed
- Reflective paper due

**Week 15**

Tuesday, December 1

- Back-up week for any weather cancellations along the way.