

Competency #8 Reflection

The artifact that I have chosen to demonstrate my proficiency with the collaboration, reflection, leadership, and professionalism competency is my research paper. I chose this project, despite the fact that my school has moved to incorporating PLC's (Professional Learning Communities), and I have been actively sharing my knowledge of physical education. I have consistently tried to give classroom teachers ideas of how they can incorporate movement into their classes. While many of them have gratefully accepted several of my thoughts and suggestions, I felt that it was not reaching the majority. I realize that my work in these PLC's is very important to bringing awareness to teachers about the benefits of physical activity to overall health and academics. Yet, I also believe that my research is much more poignant at this time because I asked my colleagues to reflect about their own physical fitness, health, and overall well-being. By understanding how a physically active lifestyle may benefit them, they will be better able to comprehend the ramifications of a strong physical education program for our students, and will be much more obliging when it comes to implementing movement into their classrooms.

Physical fitness has always been a tremendously important part of my life. Without sacrificing time in the gym, I often feel that my life is somewhat unbalanced. At the end of the day, I really do not feel like myself if I have taken time off from the gym. I realized this shortly after graduating college. I was a first year teacher, was no longer active in competitive sports, other than to coach, and liken the feelings that I had as going through a period of mourning. While I do understand that many teachers feel this pressure, I knew I needed to get back to work on myself. Therefore, about three months

in to that first year, I started working out again. Although, from time to time I take short breaks away from the gym, and training in general, I have made it a point to continue my own self-preservation and self-improvement by sticking to a regimented schedule. I believe that this has helped me become a better husband, teacher, coach, and friend. If I can see the benefits, surely others can too!

I decided to test this theory in an effort to see how the teachers in my building are doing in terms of their overall fitness levels and perceived stress. I began by trying to find out what other researchers had discovered concerning this topic. Luckily, I was able to find several articles prior to the research I conducted that agreed with how I perceive physical activity and stress. The sources included in the research paper talked about the benefits attributed to physical activity from adolescents to retirees. The information seemed to promote a regimented workout routine and added depth to the research I conducted. It also reconfirmed my beliefs of the benefits of a physically active lifestyle.

Because I wanted to speak and gain insight from the mass, I knew that interviewing a few teachers at a time would not be the most efficient way to gather my data. So, I set forth in developing an online survey that would ask the questions I wanted answered. I was a bit apprehensive because I was not sure I would have enough participation to come up with conclusions about our school or to find the answers I was seeking.

Throughout the year my staff has been bombarded with various surveys asking for their input on seemingly everything under the sky. I have watched as many of my colleagues have simply “forgotten” to fill them out, or have put them to the side. One could imagine my delight and the feelings of respect I have obtained throughout my years

teaching in this building, when I saw that I had thirty responses from my colleagues within a four day period. I also appreciate their questions of me as to why I was conducting this research and their positive feedback in assisting me with my work. I am honored that my staff trusts me with this information to continue the important work of developing a physically active community of both teachers and students.

I have talked at some length with our principal about the possibility of sharing this information at a staff meeting later on this year, after CSAP of course, so that we may be able to look and see who would be interested in implementing an after school program for teachers. Initial conversations have included a walking or jogging club, but there are some that have expressed an interest in trying to find a more rigorous way to exercise. Since the study, I have had a few more teachers approach me about sharing ideas with them on implementing more movement into their classrooms as well.

This experience has shown me the value of leadership, and all that it entails. Leadership is not product of knowing more than someone else, but using the knowledge that one has to help create a system of progress. I had only hoped to gain a little more insight when this project initially began, but what I got instead is a group of willing participants that want to collaborate and learn from my experience.

The idea of beginning with my colleagues in order to move ahead with our students has been invaluable. I cannot explain the satisfaction I have from doing this work and all of the ramifications it has had, and will have in future endeavors. I have tried to model leadership that will secure physical education as a central subject matter in everyone's school experience. I have also learned that I have an incredible responsibility

to my staff, students, and surrounding community to continue using my pulpit as a leader to successfully advocate for physical education.