Session Description

Professional learning communities (PLCs) serve as the touchstone of teaching and learning in the Teaching, Learning, and Leading with Schools and Communities (TLLSC) teacher preparation program, bringing together teacher candidates within specialty areas to share and co-construct knowledge, skills, and dispositions applied to their classroom contexts. By working in small groups of colleagues and peers, learning is emergent, targeted, and collaborative. Facilitated by faculty members with expertise in the specialty area, the PLCs serve as communities of practice where candidates come together to (a) share learning from various school- and community-based experiences, (b) synthesize learning through reflection and discussion, and (c) apply learning through completion of sequence summative assessments. In this way, candidates come together to make meaning of the learning in modules and sequences to apply learning within their chosen specialty areas in order to increase their content and pedagogical expertise.
Session Goals
Essential Questions:

- What are pertinent factors of teaching, learning, and leading with schools and communities?
- How does theory connect with your learning and experiences in this sequence?
- How do sequence learning and experiences connect with past learning and experiences?
- How will you use your learning to guide subsequent problem-solving in education?
- What are the connections between your learning and experiences across this sequence and professionalism in service of social justice?
- What goals do you have for future learning in your chosen specialty area to increase your content and pedagogical expertise?

As a part of this experience, candidates will understand that effective educators:

- Enact principles of social justice in the school and community by focusing on the intellectual, social and emotional development of all students, promoting human rights, reducing inequalities, and increasing the empowerment of society’s most vulnerable groups (EU1).
- Engage and promote reflection and collaboration among teachers, students, administrators, families and communities to improve achievement for all students (EU2).
- Utilize information from theories and related research-based practices when making decisions and taking action in their professional practice (EU10).

As a part of this experience, candidates will:

- Use goals and procedures to guide PLC dialogue and to synthesize and make meaning of the learning and experiences across sequences.
- Engage in collaborative discussion and learning related to teaching, learning, and leading, as well as professionalism in service of social justice.
- Engage in dialog and make connections between sequence learning and experiences with pertinent theories and principles and specialty area teaching and learning.
- Complete the sequence summative assessments for their particular sequence related to the specialty area with individualized support from faculty facilitators.

IDEA Objectives:
As a part of this experience, candidates will:

- Learn to apply course material to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions.
- Acquire skills in working with others as a member of a team.
- Acquire an interest in learning more by asking questions and seeking answers.

Grading and Assessment

- **Grading**: This course will be graded on a Pass/No Pass basis.
• **Attendance:** Because of the limited time of the experience, candidates are expected to attend every session. With a pertinent reason, the instructor may choose to allow the candidate to participate virtually for 1 of the 6 sessions – using Skype or other technology to engage with the PLC while not physically present. If an emergency arises, faculty always have the option of making accommodations. Attendance is mandatory and failing to be present will result in a grade of No Pass for TLSC 400: Professional Learning Communities.

• **Participation:** In addition to the importance of attendance, active participation is central to PLCs. To receive a passing grade, candidates must come ready to actively participate in PLC dialog. This implies having read any assigned readings and completed any assigned tasks determined by the instructor or by the PLC as a whole.

• **Assessment:** At the close of each semester, following the completion of the PLCs and submission of sequence summative assessments, candidates will reflect upon personal and professional learning during that semester, specifically on Conceptual Framework Standards 1 (synthesizing their learning about teaching, learning, and leading with schools and communities) and 6 (collaborating with peers and making decisions about practice to model professionalism in service of social justice). Candidates will also receive a brief narrative evaluation, in either writing or recorded audio, from the instructor; topics addressed include, but are not limited to, candidate’s strengths, areas for growth, and suggested steps for continued development as a teacher.

**Required Text:** Readings posted to Blackboard throughout the course.

### Session Experiences

- PLCs, by nature, are flexible and responsive to the evolving needs of the participants. Whereas the part of the first session will be used to inform candidates about the pertinent PLC structure and relation to the overall TLLSC program, ongoing sessions are flexible based on candidates’ needs. PLCs serve as specialized locale for candidates to set goals for learning, ask questions about their practice, seek out resources to mediate discussion, and work through problems and solutions together with others specializing in the same area of teaching.

- The PLC instructor will participate in and facilitate discussions, suggest resources, and collaborate with candidates to organize learning experiences. While the instructor has certain expertise in this area of teaching, it is a limited expertise. It is expected that by matching the instructor's expertise with candidates’ expertise, the entire group can function as a learning community that is smarter and more knowledgeable than the individuals within it.

- Some TLSC 400 sessions will allow time for sequence-based small groups to support one another in working on the summative assessments for the specific sequences.
School of Education Policies and Information

Conceptual Framework Standards
The School of Education at Loyola University Chicago, a Jesuit and Catholic urban university, supports the Jesuit ideal of knowledge in the service of humanity. We endeavor to advance professional education in the service of social justice, engaged with Chicago, the nation, and the world. To achieve this vision the School of Education participates in the discovery, development, demonstration, and dissemination of professional knowledge and practice within a context of ethics, service to others, and social justice. We fulfill this mission by preparing professionals to serve as teachers, administrators, psychologists, and researchers; by conducting research on issues of professional practice and social justice; and by partnering with schools and community agencies to enhance life-long learning in the Chicago area. Specifically, PLCs bring together teacher candidates to have them make meaning of their learning and experiences in schools, as well as apply that learning to future practice and behaviors in teaching practice.

Technology
Whereas PLCs focus on the in-person dialogue and collaborative learning, technology will be integrated in various forms to mediate and support the professional development of teacher candidates, including but not limited to: (1) video clips of PLCs and/or classroom practice, (2) video or audio clips of teacher candidates working in classrooms, (3) online blogs, articles, and other information, and (4) Web 2.0 collaborative technologies (Adobe connect, Google sites).

Diversity
PLCs provide candidates with the opportunity to engage in collaboration with a community of learners – discussing and making meaning of all learning and experiences in schools and communities. Additionally, teacher candidates will engage in reflection and response in relation to professionalism in service of social justice. With this in mind, teacher candidates will consistently engage in dialogue around the diverse students (including those with special education needs and those who are English language learners), classrooms, schools, families, and communities with which they engaged in the prior sequence, as well as connect and reflect upon those experiences in relation to their own professional practice as a future urban teacher.

University Policies and Information

Academic Honesty
Academic honesty is an expression of interpersonal justice, responsibility and care, applicable to Loyola University faculty, students, and staff, which demands that the pursuit of knowledge in the university community be carried out with sincerity and integrity. The School of Education’s Policy on Academic Integrity can be found at: http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_integrity.shtml. For additional academic policies and procedures refer to: http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_main.shtml
Accessibility
Students who have disabilities which they believe entitle them to accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act should register with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) office. To request accommodations, students must schedule an appointment with an SSWD coordinator. Students should contact SSWD at least four weeks before their first semester or term at Loyola. Returning students should schedule an appointment within the first two weeks of the semester or term. The University policy on accommodations and participation in courses is available at: http://www.luc.edu/sswd/

Harassment (Bias Reporting)
It is unacceptable and a violation of university policy to harass, discriminate against or abuse any person because of his or her race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. Such behavior threatens to destroy the environment of tolerance and mutual respect that must prevail for this university to fulfill its educational and health care mission. For this reason, every incident of harassment, discrimination or abuse undermines the aspirations and attacks the ideals of our community. The university qualifies these incidents as incidents of bias.

In order to uphold our mission of being Chicago’s Jesuit Catholic University-- a diverse community seeking God in all things and working to expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith, any incident(s) of bias must be reported and appropriately addressed. Therefore, the Bias Response (BR) Team was created to assist members of the Loyola University Chicago community in bringing incidents of bias to the attention of the university. If you believe you are subject to such bias, you should notify the Bias Response Team at this link: http://webapps.luc.edu/biasreporting/
# Tentative Schedule for TLSC 400A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Agenda Overview</th>
<th>To Bring/To Have Read</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>May 29th</td>
<td>TLLSC Experience Reflection</td>
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<td>TLLSC PLC Overview</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>June 5th</td>
<td>Inquiry Group Discussion</td>
<td>Bring a source(s) that best represent a concept discussed during TLSC 401 for group</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Summative Assessment: Collaborative Work Session</td>
<td>discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>June 12th</td>
<td>Inquiry Group Discussion</td>
<td>Selected readings from Teaching for Social Justice (Shmasher, Decker, Brandes,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Summative Assessment: Collaborative Work Session</td>
<td>Kelly, eds.). To access this book go to Sakai.</td>
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<td>Bring ideas about what question/topic you would like to investigate over the next</td>
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<td></td>
<td>sequence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>June 19th</td>
<td>Summative Assessments Due</td>
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