



# LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

*Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives*

**TLSC 300A/B: Professional Learning Communities**  
*Teaching, Learning, and Leading with Schools and Communities*  
School of Education, Loyola University Chicago  
Academic Year: 2016 – 2016

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## Instructor Information

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## 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.

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## Required Readings

- Readings and resources will be posted on the Sakai site for the course
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## 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.

As a part of this experience, candidates will be assessed on the following dispositions:

- Develop awareness that teaching is a complex practice with inherently political and ethical implications.
  - Demonstrate professionalism and reflective practice in collaborating with teachers, students, administrators, families, and communities to improve achievement for all students.
  - Participate in ongoing professional development, reading, and research in order to deepen their knowledge and expand their repertoire of skills.
  - Reflect on how one's actions affects others and as a result demonstrate respect, fair-mindedness, empathy, and ethical behavior toward all learners, including respect for students' right to privacy.
  - Demonstrate resiliency when confronted with challenges and recognize when the support of colleagues and others is needed.
  - Recognize the critical importance and need for teacher leadership in and across classrooms, schools, districts, communities, and in local, national and international educational organizations.
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## 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.
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## Grading and Assessment

- **Grading:** This course will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis.
  - **Attendance:** PLCs, a 1-credit-hour experience across the academic year, meet only six total sessions – 3 sessions at the end of fall semester, and 3 at the end of spring semester. 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 300: 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).
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## Session Experiences

- PLCs, by nature, are flexible and responsive to the evolving needs of the participants. Whereas the introductory session of the academic year 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.
- Within the larger PLC section, candidates will engage in *Teacher Candidate Inquiry Groups* (TCIGs). These smaller groups will span program years and developmental stages in teacher development (e.g., freshman, sophomore).
- Whereas each session will open and close with whole-group dialog and learning in the PLC, the TCIGs will serve as the primary 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. The instructor will participate and facilitate these TCIG discussions, but they are meant to be emergent from candidates' interests, questions, and ideas as they apply learning from the semester to areas of expertise.

- In addition to whole-group PLC and small-group TCIG dialog, there will be opportunities for small groups of candidates to support one another in working on the summative assessments for the specific sequences.

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## School of Education Policies and Information

### **Conceptual Framework**

This course embodies the conceptual framework –Social Action through Education– of the School of Education (SOE) at Loyola University Chicago. As teachers, we recognize our connection to students as individuals and as members of a larger community. We serve others (students as well as families and communities) by creating experiences that encourage creative, moral and intellectual development. Leaders in our classrooms and larger school communities, we must consider how education can be transformational and how we might be agents of change. In this course sequence, we will explore what it means to hold high expectations for all learners that include academically challenging, personally and socially relevant knowledge and complex learning skills. In order to successfully provide opportunities for youth to meet these expectations, we must also be committed to reflecting on our own practice and to continually developing our own knowledge, skills and professional dispositions.

### **IDEA Course Evaluation Link for Students**

Each course you take in the School of Education is evaluated through the IDEA Campus Labs system. We ask that when you receive an email alerting you that the evaluation is available that you promptly complete it. To learn more about IDEA or to access the website directly to complete your course evaluation go to: <http://luc.edu/idea/> and click on **STUDENT IDEA LOGIN** on the left hand side of the page.

### **Dispositions**

All students are assessed on one or more dispositional areas of growth across our programs: ***Professionalism, Fairness, and the Belief that All Students Can Learn.*** The instructor in your course will identify the dispositions assessed in this course and you can find the rubrics related to these dispositions in LiveText. Disposition data is reviewed by program faculty on a regular basis. This allows faculty to work with students to develop throughout their program and address any issues as they arise.

### **LiveText**

All students, except those who are non-degree, must have access to LiveText to complete the benchmark assessments aligned to the Conceptual Framework Standards and all other accreditation, school-wide and/or program-wide related assessments. You can access more information on LiveText here: [LiveText](#).

### **Syllabus Addendum Link**

[www.luc.edu/education/syllabus-addendum/](http://www.luc.edu/education/syllabus-addendum/)

The above link directs students to statements on essential policies regarding *academic honesty, accessibility, ethics line reporting* and *electronic communication policies and guidelines*. We ask that you read each policy carefully.

This link will also bring you to the full text of our conceptual framework that guides the work of the School of Education – ***Social Action through Education.***