

## ***Urban Studies Field Trip: Community-based Clinical Experiences***

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PHY 209 – *Introduction to Teaching High School Physics* Fall Semester 2010

Ken Wester, Instructor

Contextualized teaching and learning ([CTL] Sears & Hirsch, 1998; Borko & Putnam, 1998) is a powerful approach that can acquaint teacher candidates with a target community's culture, resources, and needs. Six attributes of CTL frame effective teaching and learning, and are the following:

- Using a problem-based approach,
- Occurring in multiple contexts,
- Fostering self-regulation,
- Supporting an understanding of students' diverse life contexts,
- Employing authentic methods of assessment, and
- Utilizing interdependent working groups.

Before, during, and after your *Urban Studies Field Trip* you will conduct a series of clinical experiences. Some experiences will be observations; others will be interactions. You, cooperating with a working group consisting of 3-4 students, must complete all clinical experiences. Each working group must submit a single portfolio that includes a record of all clinical experiences, a question-by-question analysis, and a final reflection.

### **PBL Statement:**

Your aim is to determine what it takes to teach physics in a high-needs urban school. Your goal is to find out what it would be like to work with the youth of the community to help them benefit from what physics has to offer – practical knowledge, critical thinking and problem solving skills, and a disposition in favor of science. In order to provide a meaningful answer, you need to complete the following activities:

- 1) Attend to the *Urban Studies Field Trip* in-class orientation and participate in class Q&A.
- 2) Form working groups of 3 to 4 students from among PHY 209 teacher candidates.
- 3) Obtain a high-needs urban school (Farragut Career Academy High School or Juarez High School) and community (Little Village and Pilsen respectively) assignment from your course instructor.

4) As a member of your working group, learn as much as possible about your community by completing the following abstract community mapping activities in the weeks and days prior to your *Urban Studies Field Trip*:

- Determine the community's ethnic/racial make up
- Determine what sort of languages are most commonly spoken at home
- Describe economic make up
- Identify community resources within the community that can help with learning and confronting life issues – businesses, institutions, agencies, people
- Visit a web page about the community at <http://www.newcommunities.org/> to develop an understanding of the community's history
- Document your findings as part of the working group portfolio process

5) All working groups must learn as much as possible about their high school by completing the following abstract school mapping activities in the weeks and days prior to the *Urban Studies Field Trip*:

- Go to the ISBE web site [http://www.isbe.net/research/htmls/report\\_card.htm](http://www.isbe.net/research/htmls/report_card.htm) and download and read the Report Card for your school
- Summarize important information about the school such as PSAE scores and AYP, racial/ethnic make up, characterization of teachers, etc.
- See if your school is on the ISBE's Academic Early Warning or Academic Watch Lists
- Go to your school web page to see what else you can find out about it.

Document your findings as part of the working group portfolio process, and share this with your course instructor prior to undertaking the urban studies field trip. You may "jigsaw" the work, but everyone must be familiar with the content of the portfolio prior to turning it in.

Complete a brief working group discussion with the course instructor prior to departing for the urban studies field trip.

6) All individuals will complete the following concrete community mapping activities after arrival in the community:

Document your findings as part of the working group portfolio process.

**Student interactions: (If time permits, try and talk with some of the students to determine)**

- To what extent is the curriculum relevant to the student?

- What factors influence the student's learning and/or desire to learn?
- What support systems does the student have for learning?
- What are the student's aspirations as far as education/employment is concerned?
- What vision of the future does the student have – hopeful or hopeless?

**Classroom observations:**

- Is there generally a lack of teaching materials in classrooms or laboratories?
- Is there a general lack of instructional technology in the classrooms?
- Do students seem to be under prepared to handle the material of the classes you attended?
- Are students unruly or unresponsive in the classes you attended?
- What are the teachers like in terms of racial make up?
- Do the teachers you've observed appear to be competent to teach the subject matter?
- Are language differences between teachers and students a barrier to learning?
- Do teachers express low expectations of their students?
- Is there little praise for student accomplishments?
- Is the student or his or her culture undervalued in any way?
- Do class sizes seem unacceptably large?
- Do students seem in any way less capable than your own high school peers?
- Do the students seem to lack motivation?
- Do teachers help students construct knowledge from evidence?
- Do teachers help students identify prior conceptions?
- Do teachers build on students' interests?
- Do teachers use examples and analogies from students' lives?
- Do teachers use varied learning activities?
- Do teachers work to make certain students are aware of what they know and don't know?
- Do teachers use a variety of assessment activities to support student learning?
- What influences exist for teaching for better or worse in the high needs urban school?

**School building and grounds observations:**

- Is any form of overt racism evident?
- Is a discomfort with other races evident (e.g., kids grouping selves by race in the cafeteria)?
- Is the building housing the school up to your expectations?
- Did you observe any sort of crime or violence on school grounds?

- Have you seen any signs or symbols of gang activity?

**Experienced & new teacher/administrator discussions** (discussion could take place any time during the day depending upon teacher/administrator availability):

- Are science teachers in demand in the high needs urban schools?
- What motivates teachers to undertake careers in high needs schools?
- What personal accommodations have you made in order to teach here?
- Was your decision to teach here a good one?
- How has your presence here made a difference on the lives of students?
- Would you recommend teaching in an high needs urban school?
- Do teachers build on their experiences to better address the socio-cultural demands of teaching?
- What have teachers done to make themselves more aware of the needs of the students?

**Meeting with LVCDC personnel** (such as Marco Santiago or César Nuñez): Immediately after school, you will visit with a social-service provider to learn about the following and similar community aspects:

- Determine the community's patterns of segregation
- Determine patterns of language usage in the community
- Determine typical parental jobs and incomes
- Determine who the community's formal and informal power brokers are
- Important understandings about the dominant culture of the community
- Community resources to support student learning
- Needs of high school students in the community
- Public opinions about important local issues
- Family cohesiveness and its influence on student learning
- Customs or traditions that can affect learning outcomes
- Affect of social ills (poverty, gangs, pregnancy, etc.) on student learning
- Impact of being undocumented person living in the USA

Document your findings as part of the working group portfolio process

**Community observations:** Later on Friday afternoon you will tour your designated community in an effort to find out answers to the following points. You will join a student from Farragut HS (Little Village) to complete a scavenger hunt. Find the likenesses and differences between your "home" community and urban studies field trip community in the following areas; pay attention, too, to student interactions in the next section.

- Nature of housing
- Variety of businesses
- How leisure time is spent
- Recreational facilities

- Neighborhood safety
  - Neighborhood socioeconomic status
- 8) Following your return to the PHY 209 classroom, participate in a whole-class discussion and summary of the *Urban Studies Field Trip*.
- 9) Immediately thereafter, complete the URBAN EDUCATION Post Survey. Then, carefully compare your pre and post responses one by one and then overall. Prepare and turn in an individualized report summarizing your changed impressions from pre to post survey. (Magnitude and direction of change – “I moved one letter to the right” – by question and overall is all that should be turned in.)
- 10) Summarize your working group’s *Urban Studies Field Trip* by completing a clinical experiences portfolio working at home with other members within your working group. Carefully review criteria before starting and submitting your working group’s portfolio. One portfolio per working group only is permitted.
- Start your portfolio project by providing names and working group.
  - Give an overview statement about what your working group did prior to, during, and following your *Urban Studies Field Trip*.
  - Collect into a single written file all field records. Be certain to group the data into six areas outlined above.
  - Review all field records from each area of the abstract and concrete mapping activities.
  - Discuss and determine the meaning of these observations to determine the best interpretation of the “facts.” Keep in mind that not all group members will have had the same experiences or arrived at the same conclusions even if they did.
  - Consulting as a group and working individually, synthesize one summary paragraph for each of the 60 areas of observation and interaction. You may “jigsaw” your work so that everyone is responsible for writing the same number of paragraphs. Be certain to number of each your paragraphs as shown in the scoring rubric.
  - Assemble your final project and cover it with copy of the scoring rubric. As a group, assess your work paragraph by paragraph and then turn in both the portfolio and finished cover sheet.
- 11) Reflect carefully on what these experiences mean in relationship to the intellectual and moral virtues contained within ISU Teacher Education’s conceptual framework *Realizing the Democratic Ideal*. Be certain to include these experiences when you individually write the required essay, *How I Will Implement the Democratic Idea as a Teacher*.
- 12) If you are considering student teaching in a high needs urban setting, now is the

time for transition planning. Perhaps one of the most important things you can do to prepare to teach in the high needs urban setting is to arrange your General Education program to take advantage of courses that can build your understanding. Consider the following courses:

Recommended MIDDLE CORE GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES:

United States Traditions (1 course required) [MC-LH]

- ENG/HIS/FCS/HIS 131 – American Culture: Traditions and Texts
- HIS/SOC 111 – American Diversity: Contested Visions of U.S. Experience
- SOC 112 – American Family: Change and Diversity

Individuals and Civic Life (1 course required) [MC-ILC]

- CJS 102 – Individuals, Society, and Justice
- POL 101 – Citizens and Governance
- POL 106 – U.S. Government and Civic Practices

Individuals and Societies (1 course required) [MC-IS]

- ANT 175 – Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Contemporary Human Problems
- GEO 140 – Human Geography
- PSY 110 – Fundamentals of Psychology (*required of all secondary education majors*)

Recommended OUTER CORE GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES:

Social Sciences (1 course required) [OC-SS]

- ANT 185 – Cultures of the World\*
- ANT/ENG/FOR 143 – Unity and Diversity in Language
- GEO 135 – World Geography\*
- POL 140 – Introduction to the Politics of Africa, Asia, and Latin America\*
- SOC 240 – People in Places: Understanding and Developing Community

Humanities (1 course required) [OC-H]

- HIS 104 – History of Asia, Middle East, Africa, Latin America, or Indigenous Peoples\*
- PHI 238 – Rights and Wrongs

Courses in Educational Administration and Foundations (EAF) and Curriculum & Instruction (C&I) – certain sections of EAF and C&I courses include an emphasis on urban teaching. For information on opportunities in the College of Education, consult your PHY 209 course instructor.

\* Courses with Global Studies designation. One such course is required for graduation.

13) If you are willing to student teach in a high needs urban setting, you should request a student teaching placement in an urban school in such areas as Peoria, Decatur, Springfield, and Chicago. See the following resources:

<http://www.teacherpipeline.ilstu.edu>

<http://www.coe.ilstu.edu/urbanteacherpreparation/> (Download the Urban Teacher Preparation Packet)

<http://www.cps-humanresources.org/teachingresidency/>