Professional Development Plan

Example 1

**Goal:** To engage in reflective practice

**Activity:** Journal to Reflect on and Improve Teaching

This goal is inspired by the work of Stevens and Cooper, whose research indicates that regular journaling / blogging is an effective method for documenting, reflecting on, and making changes to instructional strategies. During the 2014 / 2015 Academic Year I will journal regularly and complete summary at the conclusion of each semester that highlights what I’ve learned about my teaching, about students’ learning, and any changes I intend to make as the result of these reflections. A one-page summary of this project will be provided as evidence of completion of this goal.

Reflection

Forcing myself to put into words what I thought about how I go about teaching was more difficult than I thought it would be. It also was more beneficial, I have to say. I spent a lot of time—maybe too much—at the beginning trying to find the right format. I waffled between a blog, an online journal, and just a plain paperbound journal. In the end, I used the paperbound journal to sketch notes to myself and then transferred more complete ideas into a blog. I developed a mindset that the blog should be useful to someone else who was learning to teach or had been teaching for a number of years. That helped me to switch to a “what lessons have I learned that I want to teach?” way of thinking, which served as good motivation for me to write entries three to five times each week. In the end, reviewing both my handwritten notes and the blog helped me see how I sometimes became more concerned or even upset about day-to-day things than I really needed to.

Examples of what I learned about myself as a faculty member

Well, as I inferred in the reflection, one thing I learned is that I sometimes let things get to me more than I should. Keeping the journal and reviewing it from time-to-time helped me gain perspective on a number of things—not only what was going on in the classroom, but also how I prepared for class, how I manage time (especially for grading and getting feedback to students), and my role as a colleague (I learned that I should make more time to seek feedback and offer it to others). I realized that I sometimes got so caught up in my own teaching that I became a little isolated from others.

What I might do differently

Looking back over my notes and blog, I realized that I need to set time aside for preparing for class in more intentional ways. I also need to set boundaries so that I have ample time to reflect and catch my breath. I sometimes work until I’m burned out and then have to really recover for a few days. Pacing myself is a new goal! I also will make more time to exchange ideas with colleagues. A theme that came to light for me when I was reviewing the blog was, “why didn’t I seek input from others?” I could take better advantage of the generosity of my co-workers, who are often offering ideas and suggestions.
Example II

**Goal:** Increase Presence in Professional Organization

**Activity:** Abstract submission

This goal includes writing and submitting at least one abstract to the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) Annual Meeting. The final submission (whether accepted or not) will be provided as evidence of completion of this goal.

**Reflection**

Due to a number of glitches with my schedule I changed this activity to submitting a manuscript to the Journal of Singing. That allowed me to work at my own pace on an article and it seemed to have more value than a conference presentation. I had several ideas for writing something on the role of women composers in American music. Narrowing the ideas down and then completing a literature review was time consuming, but extremely inspiring. I remembered how much I enjoy doing research! The lit review, research about history (most of which I knew, but needed to confirm dates and sequence of events), and actual writing was very rewarding. The process also helped me gain (even more) empathy with my students, who, it turns out, are taking classes other than mine! On occasion I would share with them my experiences in the library and trying to find materials on library databases...all of which helped me reflect and bring to life my passion for vocal music.

**Examples of what I learned about myself as a faculty member**

I learned a lot! First, while I often assign my students writing assignments, I have really gotten out of the habit of regularly writing for my own benefit. In addition to preparing to teach and working on my own performance material, I had to set time aside to write. While I've always considered myself a fairly self-disciplined person, I still struggled to find time to do everything well and stay consistent.

I also realized that writing for publication is something that many of my colleagues are interested in, but few of them have made time for it. Just as with our students, if it's not required, it most likely will take a backseat to all the other things that I have to accomplish. Once I made time for it and began to share the idea with others, several friends wanted to join in. That collegiality gave me a welcome sense of faculty leadership—that I could inspire others to challenge themselves. And so, a small, but energetic writing group emerged. That was perhaps the most satisfying event of this project.

**What I might do differently**

Balance! That is what I would definitely do differently. On some days I only did research, while on others I only prepared for teaching and grading. I would have had more enjoyment if I had created a schedule for myself so that I was always working at least a little bit on everything rather than my “all of nothing” strategy. I also would get some technical help. The manuscript (which is now submitted) had to conform to The Chicago Manual of Style,
with which I was not familiar. I'm sure a faculty member from the English department could've been very helpful if I had thought to ask.

**Example III**

**Goal:** Maintain currency in academic discipline  
**Activity:** Recertification  
Maintain necessary documentation to retain certification as a Personal Trainer through the International Sports Sciences Association (ISSA). A current certificate will be provided as evidence of completion of this activity.

**Reflection**  
This project was easier than I thought it would be. It turned out that there were plenty of opportunities to earn continuing education through the ISSA. With that said, each course was a little pricey, but fortunately, I had access to professional development funds through GRCC. My biggest lesson learned was trying to focus in on a particular area of expertise. I've become increasingly interested in providing fitness opportunities to people as they age. So, I chose a few CEUs that concentrated on aging and fitness across the life-span. My previous participation in professional development has mostly been just to keep my certification. Choosing a focus area brought some welcomed new energy to my studies. I got re-inspired, which reminded me of the need to prevent burn out.

**Examples of what I learned about myself as a faculty member**  
I learned (reminded myself) that learning is enjoyable! I also learned new ideas and strategies that I am able to incorporate into my teaching. Further, I shared some of what I was learning with my colleagues. Together, we are now considering the development of a new course that focuses on wellness and aging.

**What I might do differently**  
From this project I learned that I really benefit from having my personal professional development plan. While I did this project because I needed to stay current in my profession, I really didn't have a long-term professional development plan. I've now created a sort of agenda for what I need to invest in over the next 2-3 years. I would encourage other faculty, especially those who are in disciplines that require continuing education to have a plan, rather than merely meeting annual requirements.