

### **Additional License Renewal Requirement: Reflective Statement**

Beginning **July 1, 2012**, teachers will be required to submit “evidence of work that demonstrates professional reflection and growth in best teaching practices” (*MN Statutes 122A.18, 4*). Applicants must submit a written statement, no longer than one page, reflecting on their professional growth and accomplishment using **one** the following types of evidence:

1. Support for student learning
2. Use of best practices and their applications to student learning
3. Collaborative work with colleagues that includes examples of collegiality
  - a. Committee work, staff development programs, professional learning community work
4. Continual professional development
  - a. Job-embedded or other ongoing formal professional learning, including coursework

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Sample Statement

Name: Angela Safran

Reflective Statement Option #2

November 20, 2011

Ethnocentrism and Writing

On November 13, 2009, I attended "Writing Central: A Day for Literacy at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University." The keynote speaker for the symposium was Minnesota author, John Coy. While his presentation was interesting, it was the breakout session, "Thinking and Writing Ethnographically in High School English" facilitated by Linda Mork and Mary Freng-Gunderson, that inspired me to try a new writing assignment with students in World Literature.

Mork and Freng-Gunderson spoke about students' misperceptions that diversity has only to deal with skin color. The discussion then moved to ways to change this line of thinking. They challenged us to think about the many social, academic, and athletic groups within our schools as their own cultures. Diversity, in this case, was the result of both ability and choice.

I was really intrigued by this idea of ethnocentrism and decided to put together a six-week unit using many of the ideas gleaned from the conference. I set up a research project that asked students to; 1) Identify their own ethno-groups, 2) Devise a list of the groups' norms, and 3) Evaluate the moral code or usefulness of these groups. From there we made a compilation of all of the possible cultures in our community.

The research began with students choosing one group to which they, their friends, or their family did not belong, to observe without bias. The students were asked to spend a minimum of 20 hours with their research group. (One of the most memorable was a young man who spent 20 hours with a senior choir member.)

The students used their experience to write a 5 -7 page paper about another culture, in some ways very different from their own, yet in their own backyards.

This was an assignment that I was happy to have shared with my students. I believe that it was a valuable lesson and one that I look forward to trying again in future years.

