

Professional Development: Managing Reflective Growth

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“Seeing yourself as you want to be is the key to personal growth.”

– UNKNOWN

Becoming a skilled and effective professional takes time and dedication. It also takes the process of experience. Make the most of the opportunities available to you within your district for enhancing your knowledge and skills as a teacher. Also consider a more formal advancement through a degree program at a university. Remember, many states require professional development to maintain certification. The combination of meeting these requirements with the desire to be a life-long learner will help you evolve as a quality educator.

POINTS OF INQUIRY

- What strategies will you implement to manage yourself in your professional role?
- How will you provide meaningful closure to year-end for your students?
- What will your action plan include for closing down the school year?
- How will you resource your professional development to capitalize on your strengths and improve in areas needed for refinement?

Teacher Self-Management

“Know Thyself.”

– SOCRATES

Know Yourself

Research has shown that teachers enter the field with anticipation of their career and the impact they will have on students. The complexity of teaching soon becomes a reality. The workload increases and the demands are endless. Physical well-being is a concern. Teachers must be intentional about managing themselves professionally to balance their responsibilities for teacher and student success.

THE ARRAY INTERACTION MODEL

The first step in self-management is knowing yourself, your strengths, your values, your responses to stress, and how to gain energy. This will enable you to function at your optimum and enjoy your life's work. The Array Interaction Model (Knaupp, 1995) provides a tool for revealing who you are for analysis and action. It identifies four personality components called “Personal Objectives.” Every person has all four components within their personality composition; however, one component tends to dominate the way a person perceives/responds to life. The following graph describes how each personality component/personal objective responds in both a positive (cooperative) state and a stress (reluctant) state. You may recognize qualities of your own personality for both your primary and secondary personal objectives. Refer back to the Array Interaction Inventory completed in Chapter 2.

Personal Objective/Personality Components

	Harmony	Production	Connection	Status Quo
Cooperative (Positive State)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring • Sensitive • Nurturing • Harmonizing • Feeling-oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logical • Structured • Organized • Systematic • Thinking-oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spontaneous • Creativity • Playful • Enthusiastic • Action-oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet • Imaginative • Insightful • Reflective • Inaction-oriented
Reluctant (Stress Responses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over adaptive • Overpleasing • Makes mistakes • Cries • Giggles • Self-defeating • Depressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcritical • Overworks • Perfectionist • Verbally attacks • Demanding • Complaining • Take charge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruptive • Blames • Irresponsible • Demands attention • Defiant • Breaking rules • Physically aggressive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disengaging • Withdrawn • Delays • Despondent • Daydreams • Indecisive • Silent treatment

Depending on your personality, you have a tendency to be stressed by specific things, and respond to stressors in different ways. Stress can be defined as any stimulus that interferes with normal equilibrium and can produce physical, mental, or emotional tension. Stress can be a positive motivational force but too much stress can become disruptive to a person's life and health.

TEACHER SCENARIOS

The following teacher profiles highlight some predictable responses from teachers in both positive and stressful moments. Which ones do you identify with?

Harmony Jennifer's response on the "Array Interaction Survey" indicates she rates high in the Harmony Personal Objective. When in a normal state (cooperative), she is caring and pro-social. Her relationships with her students, and with family and friends, are important to her. She enjoys the school community and feels privileged to be impacting the lives of her students.

When highly stressed, Jennifer tends to overadapt, overplease, and make mistakes on the most routine items. Jennifer tends to be stressed by large amounts of paperwork, lack of social time with colleagues, and not enough time to have one-on-one interactions with students. She may procrastinate, waste time by socializing, and then feel badly because she doesn't have time for family, friends, or tasks that must be completed. She has a poor filing system, which exacerbates her paper dilemma. She also has a difficult time saying "no" and frequently finds herself on numerous committees and planning teams with a schedule that is overwhelming.

Production Mia's survey indicates she has a Production Personal Objective. She is logical, structured, organized, and persistent. She is a thinker, a problem solver, likes information exchange, and values such things as using time efficiently, task completion, skill development, and schedules. Mia has many ideas and enjoys sharing them with colleagues. She is efficient, and her desk, lesson plans, and materials are always well organized. She is most likely to become stressed by changes in scheduling, too many unnecessary meetings, and confusing job descriptions, interruptions, or lack of specific information.

When Mia is stressed, she may become critical of herself and others. She may verbally disagree with a colleague's actions. She may put undue pressure on herself to do things perfectly, even neglecting to eat in order to finish a task. She tends to become curt when colleagues "waste her time" by engaging in frivolous chatter when she knows she could be accomplishing other more relevant tasks with her valuable time.

Connection Billie rated herself as having a Connection Personal Objective. She loves activity and action and enters a room with energy. She is friendly, connects with others in positive ways, enjoys music and drama, and is very creative. She likes to try new things and never teaches the same material the same way twice. She enjoys the spontaneous moment.

When stressed, Billie can become irresponsible, disruptive, attention-getting, and blaming. Her jokes may become inappropriate and sarcastic. She can become openly defiant. Billie is stressed by high levels of structure when there is no room for creative thought or spontaneity.

Status Quo Jose's survey results identify Status Quo as his Personal Objective. Jose is very quiet and reserved, insightful and reflective. When he speaks, both colleagues and students listen. He is good at repetitive tasks and enjoys putting lessons together on the computer, and finding out additional information and activities from resources on the Internet.

When Jose becomes stressed, he begins to withdraw. He may lack enthusiasm and demonstrates little effort. He allows the students to do their own thing and does not pull it all back together for closure. He may sit at his desk to grade papers and find that 20 minutes has elapsed. Jose is most likely to be stressed by lack of specific direction and insufficient information. He is also stressed by too much activity, with no break time for regrouping his thoughts and feelings.

Identifying and Modifying Stress

ENERGY DRAINS

Stress drains your energy, lowers your personal motivation, and frequently hinders your ability to solve problems and meet daily challenges. It is important to specify stressors so that you can avoid them, adjust to them, and redirect your behavior. Learning how to deal with your stressors and subsequent energy drains is essential. The following examples follow Jennifer, Mia, Billie, and Jose as they learn to self-manage.

Harmony Jennifer is anxious about the large amount of paperwork associated with progress reports. As soon as school is dismissed for the day, Jennifer is going to generate a list of the things she needs to accomplish before the next school day, and prioritize the list. She is going to allow herself a 10-minute break to socialize and get a snack before returning to the classroom to implement the plan.

Production Mia is frustrated by not getting through her to-do list and accomplishing all that was included. Mia is going to allow 20 minutes in her schedule to adjust for any unplanned time demands. She will pack a nutritious snack for mid-morning recess so that her physical energy is rejuvenated even before mid-day.

Connection Billie is pressured by the curricular and testing demands for her grade level. Billie is going to plan a variety of learning tasks that both meet lesson objectives and engage herself and students actively in the learning process.

Status Quo Jose becomes indifferent when multiple activities are vying for his attention. Jose will stay in his room during lunch to give himself a chance to regroup and deliberately plan for any adjustments needed for the rest of the day.

Mentor Voices

► "Design more active, hands-on projects toward the end of the year. This allows students to expend their energy while learning."

PROACTIVE PLANNING

Identify constructive ways to manage your stress. Begin by thinking about activities or responsibilities that lead to energy drains and initiate stress responses. Consider specific actions to reduce the "energy drains." The following sections will provide the next steps in your proactive plan, which include identifying your needs and building on the things that generate positive energy.

Energy Drains List what drains your energy.	Proactive Plan Identify actions to reduce or eliminate energy drains.

IDENTIFYING NEEDS

In the last sections you considered—

- Your primary and secondary personality components (Personal Objectives).
- What activities/responsibilities stress you.
- How you personally respond to stress.
- Ways to proactively manage your stress.

When you consider your personality, it is important to understand what you need in order to stay in a positive and cooperative mode of interaction. It is important to know yourself and proactively plan ways to accommodate for your own psychological needs.

Jennifer, Mia, Billie and Jose identify specific ways their personality needs are met within the classroom context.

Harmony Jennifer values reciprocal friendship and needs a comforting work environment that is aesthetically pleasing to her.

Production Mia values accomplishment and needs to feel appreciated for her work efforts. Mia also needs a highly structured work environment.

Connection Billie values activity and needs to experience positive engagement and participation in her work environment. She needs to be involved in stimulating activity.

Status Quo Jose values privacy and stability. He needs quiet time in the day to think and prepare. Jose also needs predictable routines and schedules.

The following chart shows the primary needs associated with each personality and some possible ideas for ways to meet those needs.

Needs Chart

	Harmony	Production	Connection	Status Quo
Psychological needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values self/others • Sensory experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value for work • Time schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values action • Fun activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values time • Stability
Ways to meet need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value feelings • Comfortable surroundings • Personal effects (family photos, etc.) • Time with colleagues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value ideas • Incentives • To-do list • Routine for the day • Organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value activity • Hands-on activities • Group interaction • Change in routine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value quietness • Independent activities • Computer activities • Routine tasks

My Needs Identify primary psychological needs.	Proactive Plan Identify actions to meet needs.



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BUILDING ENERGY GAINS

When your psychological needs are met, you feel confident, stronger and more capable; in other words, you actually gain energy.

Think about actions or activities that energize you. Think of ways you can build these “Energy Gains” into your life.

Let’s refer to our four example teachers:

- Jennifer socializes with colleagues for a few minutes after school.
- Following a to-do list makes Mia feel accomplished and in control of her time.
- Billie plays music while planning for the next day.
- Jose takes a few minutes to reflect in the quiet of his classroom.

Energy Gains List what energizes you.	Proactive Plan Identify actions to meet needs.

WARNING SIGNS

Teaching is rewarding, challenging, and fulfilling, but at the same time it is demanding, energy-draining, and time-consuming. Too much stress can cause physical problems. Symptoms frequently associated with severe stress include:

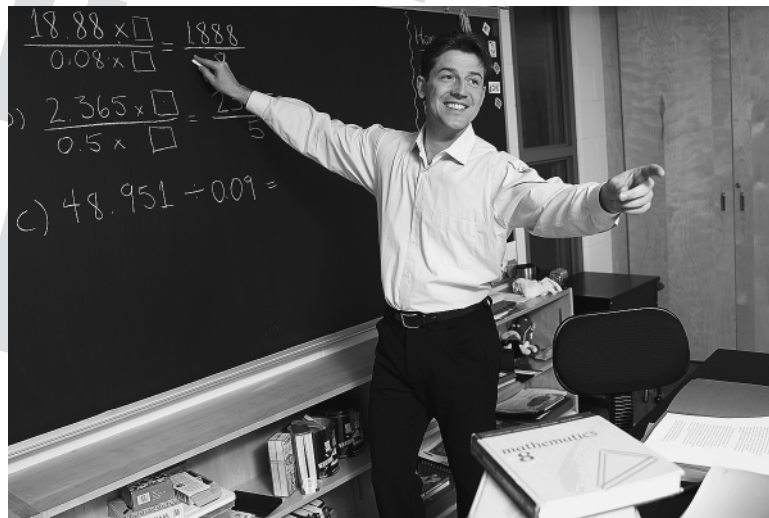
- Recurring headaches
- Laryngitis
- Stomach problems
- Frequent heartburn
- Hostile feelings/language
- Depression/crying
- Sudden weight changes
- Tense back/neck muscles
- Unrelenting exhaustion

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, or a combination of these symptoms, it is important that you seek a doctor's attention. Mental and physical stress symptoms are your body's way of telling you to reflect and put balance into your life. Remember, a well-balanced teacher can productively embrace each new day.

STRESS RELIEVERS

Use the following stress relievers to gain positive energy.

- Stand up and do stretching exercises.
- Close your eyes and think of a color; picture five objects of that color.
- Close your eyes and visualize your greatest achievement.
- Crumple up a piece of paper and play "basketball" using your trashcan.
- Drink a glass of water with small sips.
- List five things you have enjoyed in the last month.
- List five things you would like to do in the next month.
- Think of some funny event from your life. Laugh out loud.
- Color a picture in a coloring book.
- Take three deep, slow breaths in and out.



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best PRACTICES

One of the characteristics of teaching is the complexity of the work. At times it can be overwhelming. Teachers report in studies done by Kortman and Honaker (2005) that acknowledgement of stress and becoming aware of how to manage it allows teachers to balance their work and personal lives. Also, by being conscious of stressors, teachers can sense and seek support during their working day to remain in cooperative behavior. Teachers will have greater gains in their effectiveness in the classroom.

Kortman, S., & Honaker, C. (2005). *The BEST beginning teacher experience: A framework for professional development with CD-ROM*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

Questions for Reflection

evaluation ? QUESTIONS

SELF-MANAGEMENT

- How will you determine your primary and secondary personality/ Personal Objectives?
- How will you identify stressors?
- How will you plan to respond appropriately to stress?
- How will you take care of yourself to stay positive?
- How will you create a comfortable work environment?

- What strategies will you implement to manage yourself in your professional role?
- How will you provide meaningful closure to year-end for your students?

CLOSURE WITH STUDENTS

- How will you decide special learning projects for closing down the year?
- How will you include meaningful reflection for your students?
- How will you leave a legacy for what you want your students to think, know, and believe after their year with you?
- How will you celebrate each student in your classroom?
- How will you have your students say goodbye to you and their friends?
- How will you say “thank you” to your students’ parents?

A Purposeful Closure

“He who has put a good finish to his undertaking is said to have placed a golden crown to the whole.”

– EUSTATHIUS

Until the Last Bell Rings

At this time of year many students sense that “the end is near” and often act accordingly. There is often a misperception that the end of the school year is not academically meaningful but only filled with “time-consuming” activities. However, you want to convey the message that the end of the school year is filled with rich opportunities for learning. This is also a time to engage the students in ways that they will:

- acknowledge the classroom community;
- celebrate their own personal abilities and talents;
- consider ways they can learn throughout the summer;
- look forward to coming back to school next year.

view POINT

Try to keep classroom schedules and activities as routine as possible until year end.

SPECIAL LEARNING PROJECTS

In most states, standardized testing is completed in April. In many cases the required curriculum has been taught prior to state testing. Therefore, many expert teachers use this time to deliver high interest instructional projects that offer opportunities for children to apply all the skills they have learned.

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

Students need time to reflect upon the learning experiences they shared with you and their classmates. The following activities focus on summarizing the learning that students experienced and will hopefully store in their memories.

Personal Scrapbook Have each student create a personal scrapbook of their year. The students can include such items as:

- summary of the content learned;
- work from their portfolio;
- snapshots of them engaged in classroom activities;
- other meaningful artifacts related to the class.

They may take this treasure home the last day of school.

Top Ten List Have each student make a top ten list of their favorite memories, themes, projects, units of instruction, and videos from the year. They may personalize it in their own unique way.

CLOSURE WITH STUDENTS

You have spent the better part of a year with the students in your classroom. They have made an emotional impact on you and you have probably touched their lives in more ways than you'll ever know. Just as you planned their academic lessons every day, it is now equally important for you to consider how you will plan to send them to the next grade level. Beyond their academic skills, you need to consider how you want them to feel about themselves as students and people. Saying goodbye to your students means you will need to consider:

- what memories you want them to have of their year with you;
- what learning legacies of themselves you want them to form;
- what meaningful ways they can close out the year with each other.

Making Memories Take a few moments and list three things you would like your students to think, believe, or know after their year with you. These will become their memories of you and their learning legacy. Plan some specific ways you will embrace these into your end-of-year planning.

view POINT

Reflection exercises not only help the students recall their learning experiences, but also allow the teacher to see what instructional activities students value most.

What I want my students to think, believe, and know:	Specific ways I will integrate this into my planning:

Individual Conferences Take 3–5 minutes to share something very personalized and sincere with each student. Your comments may include your perceptions of their contributions to the classroom, identification of an individual trait or ability you admire, or encouragement of continuous growth in their strengths.

Personal Note Compose a letter or note to each student in your classroom. Describe your appreciation of the talents, qualities, or contributions they have made to you, other students, or the classroom during the year.

Special Certificates Create an individualized “certificate” for each student. Each certificate is unique and highlights the students’ special talents, qualities, characteristics, or abilities. The goal is for each student to feel pride in the area identified. Be sure to think of how each student’s parent will interpret the area of recognition. Remember being awarded the “Most Improved” may be interpreted as a negative, not a positive. Positive examples include:



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|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Academic Excellence | Independent | Dedicated |
| Risk-Taker | Cooperative | Loyal |
| Artistic | Helpful | Committed |
| Inquisitive | Musical | Critical Thinker |
| Diligent | Athletic | Problem Solver |
| Persistent | Optimistic | Courteous |
| Respectful | Awesome Attitude | Generous |
| Compassionate | Positive Thinker | Polite |
| Friendly | Honest | Gracious |
| Personable | Caring | |
| Confident | Active Listener | |

view POINT

The students will want to say thank you and goodbye to classroom aides, parent helpers, and school personnel. Design cards for students to sign and deliver.

Classroom Message Board Have a large poster or banner of butcher paper for the students to share written compliments to one another. Be sure everyone has something positive written about them by the end of the day.

CLOSURE WITH PARENTS

Summary Letter Your students have learned so much during the school year. Many parents appreciate a summary letter to review the major academic units and learning achievements. To begin this summary it is helpful to review your long-term plans. You might wish to highlight academic units and special events from the students' perspectives.

Satisfaction Survey Toward the end of the spring semester, many schools routinely ask parents to complete a survey about their satisfaction with the curriculum, the school, and the teacher.

Often the teacher is asked to send the survey home with the students and then collect the information for the school administration to summarize. In some schools the survey is sent directly to the parents via the mail. However the data is collected, it is important for the parents to have an opportunity to give feedback to the teacher and the school. If your school does not collect this type of information, you may wish to develop a questionnaire.

Recognition Tea The parents, like the students, have played an important part in your classroom community. Therefore, it is important to recognize their contributions. Many principals sponsor a school-wide, end-of-the-year celebration for parents who have volunteered in various ways throughout the year.

If the school does not sponsor the celebration, it is a good idea to invite the parents to attend the end-of-the-year party. The students can help make special recognition cards. A heartfelt thank you is always appreciated.

Summer Activities Teachers may wish to send home a Summer Activity Packet on the last day of school. The packet may include:

- age-appropriate learning;
- a listing of local programs that are sponsored by the city or local university;
- a reminder of summer safety tips.

Until the Key Is Turned In

In many ways the end of the school year is as challenging as the start. There are dozens of details and administrative requirements that must be completed. Plan ahead to accomplish the tasks while you enjoy this important season of the school year.

CLOSURE WITH COLLEAGUES

Though you will see most of your colleagues and administrators next year, it is a wise idea to compose thank you notes for people who have helped you throughout the year. These could include the principal, assistant principal, nurse, secretary, custodian, and your grade-level teammates. While it takes a few minutes to write your appreciation, the recipients of your thanks will greatly appreciate them.

CLOSING DOWN YOUR CLASSROOM

Do you remember the hours you spent at the beginning of the year setting up your classroom? Well, the good news is that it will take less time to take it down than it did to put it up. The bad news is that you have accumulated a lot and will probably have much more to put away.

Organizational Scheme As you put away teaching materials, you will also need to consider how to organize your instructional units so that you may retrieve them easily next year. Some teachers use a subject-by-subject approach, while others use a month-by-month scheme. Teachers who use an integrated approach will store materials by thematic units.



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Mentor Voices

- ▶ "Celebrate good colleagues rather than taking them for granted. Have pot luck while teachers clean out their classrooms. Invite colleagues to share their favorite dish, and memories from the year."

Check-Out List In addition to organizing your teaching materials, you will need to accomplish a number of administrative tasks. Most schools provide a list of actions you must complete before the end of the school year. The following list provides examples of end-of-year responsibilities:

- Submit gradebooks with class rosters and attendance sheets.
- Insert grades onto a permanent file card for each individual student.
- Return all software and A.V. materials to the learning resource or media center.
- Return curriculum materials or teacher editions.
- Return textbooks, manipulatives, and learning aids to designated storage areas.
- Return all school-owned equipment/materials to designated areas for storage.
- Turn in textbook lists and requested purchase orders for next year.
- Turn in completed list of schedule preferences for next year's class schedule.
- Turn in recommendations for next year's student placements.
- Submit completed supply requests and standard stock requisitions.
- Clear classroom walls.
- Return next year's teacher contract to Human Resources.
- Provide district/school office with summer addresses and telephone numbers.
- Return all keys.
- Pick up paycheck from building administrator when entire list is complete.

Reflections: Identifying Professional and Personal Goals

The end of the school year is a perfect time to reflect upon the accomplishments of the past year. It is a time to consider:

- what you learned and what you still want to know;
- what you did well and what you want to do better.

The guided-reflection form will help you to review your year, celebrate your triumphs, and establish new goals.

A TEACHER'S REFLECTION: REMEMBER AND RESPOND

The outcome I am most pleased with from this year is . . .

The thing I am most disappointed about from this year is . . .

The part of teaching that is most natural for me is . . .

The part of teaching that is the most difficult for me is . . .

The one thing that I could not have been prepared for, regardless of preparation, is . . .

The best part of teaching is . . .

My professional goals include . . .

**A purposeful closure for a teacher
is really a new beginning.**



best PRACTICES

"Becoming a reflective, research-oriented educator paves the way for meeting the challenge of today's evolving, diverse, standards-centered classroom, as well as for taking charge of one's own professional growth" (Parsons, 2004). Teachers need to become reflective practitioners and engage in their teaching through a research mind set. This will encourage teachers to view instructional, environmental, or behavioral changes as interventions that can lead to efficient and effective classroom learning.

Parsons, S. (2004, October). Reflective Research. In S. L. Bisenger (Ed.), *teachertoday...*, 20(2), 3-4.

evaluation QUESTIONS ?

- What will your action plan include for closing down the school year?
- How will you resource your professional development to capitalize on your strengths and improve in areas needed for refinement?

Questions for Reflection

CLOSING DOWN THE SCHOOL YEAR

- How will you close down your classroom?
- How will you thank those who have assisted you this school year?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- How will you reflect on your year and your accomplishments?
- How will you implement professional development goals into your summer and your next school year?

Reflection: Self-Assessment of Professional Growth

Name	Date				
Grade Level/Content Area					
Self-Management	Low				High
To what degree do I have the knowledge needed to self-manage my professional role?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
To what degree do I have the skills needed to self-manage my professional role?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Closure with Students	Low				High
To what degree do I have the knowledge needed to provide a meaningful closure to year-end for my students?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
To what degree do I have the teaching skills needed to provide a meaningful closure to year-end for my students?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Closing Down the School Year	Low				High
To what degree do I have the knowledge needed to develop an action plan for closing down the school year?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
To what degree do I have the teaching skills needed to develop an action plan for closing down the school year?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Professional Development	Low				High
To what degree do I have the knowledge needed to resource my professional development to capitalize on my strengths and improve in areas needed for refinement?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
To what degree do I have the teaching skills needed to resource my professional development to capitalize on my strengths and improve in areas needed for refinement?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>



Next *Steps*

Set goals for next steps to implement best practices in the teaching standard of professional development.
