

## Teacher Candidate Dispositions Essay Cover Sheet English Education Program

Teacher Candidate: Michelle Solomon Semester: Spring 2006

Course (check one): \_\_\_\_\_ I: EGL441    X    II: EGL440    \_\_\_\_\_ Seminar EGL 454

Instructor: Michael LoMonico

What does it mean to be a professional, ethical English teacher? What kinds of issues should good English teachers think about as they go about the daily tasks of planning, conducting and evaluating lessons? How should they include others in their decisions about teaching and learning? What approaches should teachers consider as important and sometimes difficult social issues arise as a result of class discussion? These are difficult questions with no one right answer.

To address these kinds of questions, several important educational organizations have developed documents, which we will work with in the English Education program:

- The New York State Education Department’s “Code of Ethics”
- The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium’s Dispositions from their “Model Standards for Beginning Teacher Licensing and Development: A Resource for State Dialogue”
- The National Council of Teachers of English’s “Attitudes for Teachers of English”

Directions to Teacher Candidates: In connection with the above documents, you have written an essay that responds to scenarios from English classrooms. Please carefully examine your essay and list the numbers of the codes, dispositions, and attitudes to which your essay speaks. In this manner, you will demonstrate your awareness of and your ability to address these points. It may not be practical for every essay to speak to every code, disposition and attitude. Since you will complete three of these essays in your work in the English Education Program, please pose as a goal for yourself that you will address each of the codes, dispositions, and attitudes at least once by the time you have written all three essays. This cover sheet and your essay should be included in your Teacher Candidate Portfolio.

	NYS “Code of Ethics”	INTASC “Dispositions”	NCTE “Attitudes”
Dispositions Essay	Principles 1, 2	Standards 3, 4, 6, 9	Attitudes 1, 6

Michelle Solomon  
Dispositions Essay  
Methods II – Stony Brook University (SUNY)  
May 3, 2006

I believe that what one learns in the pre-service teacher classroom does always sink in right away; time is needed to let us pre-service teachers reflect on what we have learned and take into consideration our own teaching styles, geographic location, and the needs of the students, English department, and school in which we teach. While we are taught a lot of methodology and pedagogy, as well as actual material that pertains to our own specific certification area, we need time (excuse the cliché) to make what we have learned our own; what we learn does not always seem to fit into the mold of the current English Language Arts (ELA) classroom, especially when we observe what goes on in the classrooms before we have our own classrooms. If anything, what I have observed in my observations and field experience causes me to be a bit disheartened, although of course it is emphasized that we are never to say anything to the teacher, who has been so kind as to let me observe. (After all, whatever teaching experience I might have accumulated does not compare to the teacher who has been teaching longer than I have been alive.) That does not stop me, though (nor has it stopped any the other pre-service teachers I know) from making judgments regarding what works, what does not, and every possible aspect in between. When I feel uncertain about my future as a teacher, I consider it almost easier to look at the New York State Code of Ethics, the National Council of Teachers of English Attitudes, and the INTASC Dispositions and see which of the numbered items *are not* addressed, although this is unfair; I realize that the schools and

teachers that do address quite of few standards, attitudes, and dispositions are the schools that theoretically should not be doing so – the “high needs schools.”

A few of the promising things I noticed: That the teachers I observed seem to understand that they needed not just to be in front of the classroom lecturing; I saw teachers using film adaptations and audio performances. I also talked to a few teachers regarding the assignments they would be giving their students – I did not have the chance to observe any teacher a few consequence days, but I was told that performance would be integrated, as would various writing prompts that utilized critical thinking strategies, which would be used in accordance with not only the text, but with film adaptations as well. And most teachers I observed clearly had high expectations of their students, who were engaged and active in the class discussions. The teachers themselves were invested in their classes, and that seemed to make the most difference; those teachers who seemed bored by the very material they were teaching had students who were disengaged.

The moral of the story is, in my mind, that if as a future teacher I am interested in the class and the materials, the students in the class will also be engaged and interested.