

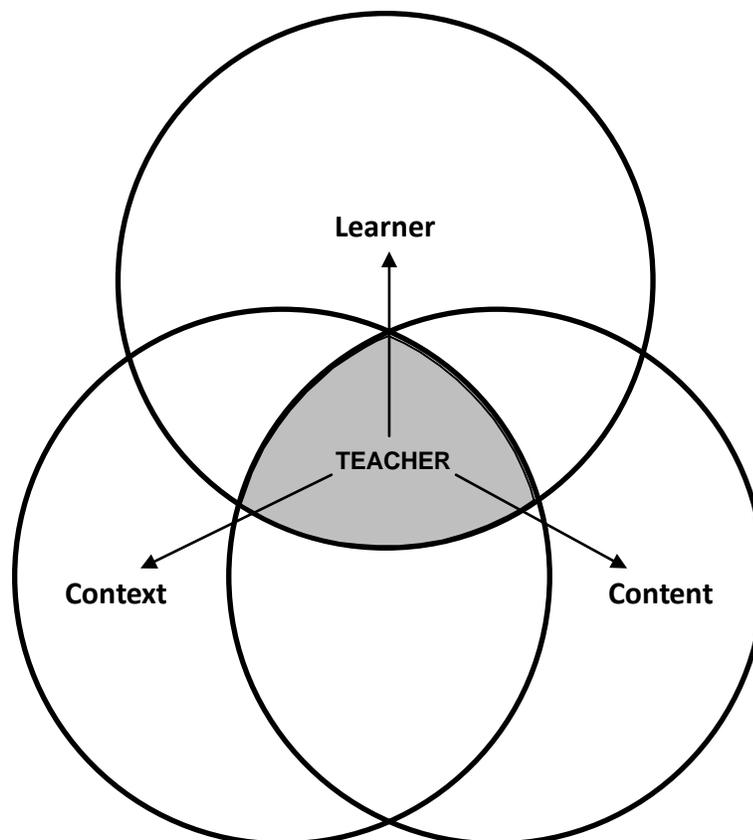
The framework for the teacher candidacy experience at Wisconsin Lutheran College is built around the purpose of developing educators who are reflective practitioners. Reflective practitioners seek to solve problems through a balanced inquiry about practical situations. We expect pre-service teachers to analyze informally and formally while they are engaged in these diverse instructional situations during the scope of teacher candidacy and beyond into their professions.

Throughout our teacher education program, pre-service teachers are encouraged to examine and interpret their attitudes and beliefs about teaching and learning in disciplined ways. Such reflective inquiry is the well-spring of responsible and deliberate teaching and learning in practice. It is only natural and essential that this reflective inquiry continue—even expand in depth and breadth—during the teacher candidacy experience.

A reflective practitioner builds and examines knowledge about learners, the culture and curricula of schooling, and the contexts in which teaching and learning occur; such a practice assists an educator to simultaneously renew, invigorate, and maximize the teaching process. Such renewal requires contemplation about:

1. One's self and the effect on the teaching/learning process;
2. One's previously acquired knowledge, skills and dispositions;
3. One's current learners and educational setting; and
4. One's vision for accountability and development of every learner's potential.

The reflective practitioner seeks to integrate previously learned information with the present experience in order to achieve future results. This quest is enhanced through collaborative efforts with colleagues, other professionals and community resources. The **Four-R format** presented on the **back of this sheet** is an outline of a structured approach that assists the teacher candidate in the process of reflective journaling.



Four R's of Reflective Writing

The reflective journal is not a depository for mere factual information. It is true that facts are needed in the narrative journal. The challenge, however, is to go beyond the facts to make journal writing an expression of the expectations, perceptions, and feelings, that cluster around the experiences of teaching and learning. The journal is to become essentially a journal of personal and professional growth.

Reflective journal writing need not be considered a one-size-fits-all experience. The teacher candidate may appropriately use a variety of forms, but feelings and voice should be clearly present in this record of the experience. The Four-R format that follows is an outline of a structured approach that assists the teacher candidate in the process of reflective journaling.

A. **Recollections—Capturing the Moment**

Summarize key experiences as they have unfolded. Highlight one or two experiences and provide the facts and contexts for them. These serve as an introduction to the reflective process. If this introduction describes a teaching incident, this is the time to address the “who, what, when, how” questions of the experience.

B. **Reaction—Engaging the Affective Domain of Attitudes, Beliefs, and Feelings**

As you re-examine your description of the even or issue that is the focus of your journal entry in the recollection section, what does the “evidence” that you have documented say to you? How are you feeling about it now? Connect the dots for your reader. Are there examples that you can reference that illustrate your response?

C. **Relevance—Engaging the Cognitive Domain of Thinking**

How are the facts and feelings related to what is known about teaching and learning? How do these connect to your acquired research and knowledge bases? Does this information extend your understanding of teaching and learning in new ways? How is this meaningful to you? What impact has it had on you? What new possibilities do you see? What perspectives have changed or been added? Be as specific as possible to make this reflection concrete and substantive by being a “name dropper” of theorists, programs, best practice research, etc. to anchor and support your claims.

D. **Responsibility—Engaging the Psychomotor Domain of Doing**

How does the new information, the knowledge gained, apply to the teaching and learning process? What else do you need to know? Who else can give insight? What resources should be consulted? What are possible next steps for the immediate future and/or applications for your future in the classroom?

The time spent in reflection is especially valuable as it contributes to professional growth and results in enrichment of your teaching and your emerging role as a servant leader. This is an essential foundational practice in a purposefully professional approach to serving as an instructional leader within your classroom and in your school community. This “habit of the mind” can serve you in all of your endeavors.