

{Course Number and Name}  
**Exploring Teaching and Learning From Underserved Communities**

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This describes a contract for your inquiry project. You should design an experience that is relevant to the course content, enjoyable, and pertinent to your development as a professional. Some students choose experiences that enhance their personal-professional growth while others choose more traditional academic-professional experiences. The potential range of the experiences is very wide.

The contract contains five parts: (a) a goal/rationale statement, (b) list of questions you are exploring, (c) your activities and timeline for accomplishing this inquiry, (d) how you will demonstrate what you have learned, and (e) your plan to evaluate your accomplishments. These parts are described more fully below.

Your contract is to be completed by \_\_\_\_\_. We will review your contract and return it to you for revision or as approved.

See either of us, if you have problems with the contract. The contracts can be renegotiated if necessary. However, renegotiating is usually less necessary if you are specific enough and realistic enough about your expectations from the outset.

**Format**

***Goal/Rationale***

A general statement of your plans and why this topic is of interest to you.

***Questions You are Exploring***

Write out the questions(s) you are trying to find answers to by doing this project.

***Activities and Timeline***

***Specific Activities***

List the specific activities that will assist you in successfully accomplishing your contract.

***Timeline***

Create a time line of the approximate dates of each of your activities

***Demonstration***

How will you demonstrate what you learned? What will the final form of your inquiry be? Some students have written a paper, given presentations (with or without using PowerPoint), video tape/DVD project, created a brochure, or (your idea).

***Evaluation***

Describe what you will do to evaluate your minimum (C level), middle (B level), and maximum (A level) expectations for the contract. Be sure to include all levels. Otherwise we cannot tell if your contract meets your expectations or if it is incomplete.

## **Additional Information**

### **Quality of Your Inquiry**

It is expected that you will take pride in this (and all work) to create a quality project. This will be shown in the use of headings, an APA reference list, and APA citations used throughout your project. You are expected to cite all your resources within the body of the paper. The organization of your project will also be evaluated. Spelling, grammar, and mechanics must be used correctly throughout your project.

Your project should be presented professionally. If writing a paper, this includes a title page which contains the title, your name, date, name of the class, and name of instructors.

Attention to these details will ensure you earn your suggested grade. Inattention to these details will result in a lowering of your suggested grade. The degree of grade loss will be determined on a project by project basis.

### **When Project is Due**

Hand in:

1. the original approved contract,
2. cover sheet (found in this handout),
3. two copies of the product that demonstrates that you have completed the contract,
4. a one page evaluation (see information below) of your efforts, including a letter grade that you suggest for your work and,
5. an electronic version sent to us via e-mail.

### **Guidelines for Evaluation Statement**

In your one page evaluation of your efforts address the following questions: A. In what way was this project worthwhile or not worthwhile? B. How does this new information impact you as a beginning professional? C. What new questions arose out of your research on the topic? D. Suggested grade and your rationale for receiving this grade.

## **Sample Contract**

### **Brian's Inquiry Contract**

#### Goal/Rationale

I come from a small Northern Indian town. The people are close and seem to know every step that a person might take. Knowing this I decided that whatever I do, it will have to be explained and have reasoning. After two years of work out of high school, I noticed that I had a knack with working with children. This is the point where I found out that I wanted to be a teacher. I then needed to explain to some of my family and friends that I am going into a field that I am non-traditionally slated. "Why would you want to be a teacher?", and "You know teachers don't make very good money." were some of the more common statements that I heard. My replies were, "I am a minority in the teaching field", and "children need more males in the classroom." My goal in this inquiry is to find out if I am right, when I say that I am needed in the field of teaching. Of course, this sounds very egotistical, but I only hear it from Ball State professors. I want to find out from some school corporations outside of Muncie.

#### Questions You are Exploring

What are the benefits of being male in a predominately female occupation?

Why are males needed in the teaching field?

What are the stereotypes of male teachers from a female teacher perspective and from a principal's perspective?

#### Activities and Timeline

##### Specific Activities

I shall interview some teachers in two or more schools in Northern Indiana. I shall interview some principals in two or more schools in Northern Indiana. I shall look for information on the need for male teachers. I shall observe a class taught by a male teacher.

##### Timeline

February 2, Go to library and look up information about males in the elementary level of teaching.

February 2-8, Make phone calls to teachers/principals to make appointments for interviews.

February 9, Go to my hometown

February 10-11, Go to Rausch Elementary, and interview the principal along with two female teachers and a male teacher. See about sitting through one of his classes. Visit West Main Elementary to interview the principal and teachers. Visit Tapan Elementary (my alma mater) and do the same.

February 12-23, Write and revise what I have found and put together a presentation for the class.

### Demonstration

I plan to do a presentation of the information that I received from the interviews. Have a visual chart. I could explain how I came to my conclusion that being male might have its benefits in the teaching job market. I could also find out what schools look for besides being male. However, these interviews could blow up in my face. Some teachers might disagree and say that schools don't need more males.

### Evaluation

To receive an A, I will carry out the interviews with the teachers in all three schools, carry out the interviews with the principals in the three schools, sit through a class taught by a male teacher, read at least 5 articles about male elementary teachers. and give a presentation.

To receive a B, I will carry out the interviews with the teachers in two schools, carry out the interviews with the principals in two schools, sit through a class taught by a male teacher, read at least 4 articles about male elementary teachers, and give a presentation.

To receive a C, I will carry out the interviews in one school but talk with several teachers, sit through a class taught by a male teacher, read at least 4 articles about male elementary teachers, and give a presentation.

## Inquiry Project Cover Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

After you complete your professional inquiry project, **please answer the following questions honestly and thoughtfully**, and attach this sheet to your project. A "yes" response to all of the questions will increase your chances of receiving your suggested grade.

1. Have I included a cover sheet with the title of my project, my name, date, course section number, and names of the instructors?
2. Do I have an effective introduction that engages my reader/listener?
3. Is there a logical organization to the paper/presentation?
4. Are there effective transitions between ideas?
5. Is there a logical flow between ideas? Are the parts related to each other? Does the paper "make sense"?
6. Have I provided headings for each section?
7. Did I appropriately credit each source for their ideas that I used? Are my sources properly cited in APA style? \*(For a presentation - Are my sources referred to?)
8. Have I provided summaries of essential points?
9. Have I included my own analysis and conclusions?
10. Have I included necessary charts and/or graphs to clarify information?
11. Have I run the spell check?
12. Has my paper been proofread for accurate grammar and mechanics?
13. Is my reference list in APA style?
14. Have I included only sources cited in the paper/presentation in my reference list?
15. Does my paper/presentation answer the research questions stated in my contract?
16. Does my paper/presentation meet or exceed the number of sources stated in my contract?
17. Have I attached my original contract, evaluation statement, and suggested grade to my project?

Sample Grading Sheet

**Inquiry Project-Grade**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

☐ I have recorded your suggested grade \_\_\_\_\_,

☐ I have not recorded your suggested grade. The grade that has been recorded is for the following reason(s):

1. \_\_\_\_ information gathered not integrated into final product
2. \_\_\_\_ terms of contract not met
  - a. \_\_\_\_ original questions as stated in contract unanswered
  - b. \_\_\_\_ sources cited are fewer than stated in the contract
  - c. \_\_\_\_ contract not originally approved
3. \_\_\_\_ information not clearly communicated
4. \_\_\_\_ facts stated presented without source cited
5. \_\_\_\_ citations for sources not in APA or MLA style
6. \_\_\_\_ citations for sources missing from reference list
7. \_\_\_\_ reference list contains sources not cited in product
8. \_\_\_\_ reference list missing
9. \_\_\_\_ no evaluation statement provided with a suggested grade
10. \_\_\_\_ inaccurate grammar, spelling, syntax, and mechanics
11. \_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_