1. Educators value and care for all students and act in their best interests.

Standard 1 is the first standard and I believe the most important.  As educators, it is vital that we understand the position we are in, how to use the power, and how to foster the trust of all students.  The complex relationship between teacher and student is not simply giver and receiver of knowledge.  The educator is "responsible for fostering the emotional, esthetic, intellectual, physical, social, and vocational development of students" thus a teacher has many roles at all moments in their career.

 I am excited to tap into each student’s passion and help them take pride in their work.  Each student is unique and they should be treated as so.  To me, this standard speaks to respecting your students and their diversity and the different ways they learn and express themselves.  It is important to understand that each person has unique struggles and talents and that it is alright to make mistakes or ask questions.  It is our job to make a safe learning environment for all students.

Finally, being a resource for your students is also key.  If they need someone to talk to, I will be approachable and understanding and respect confidentiality.  Adolescence can be a challenging time; however having someone to look up to—or talk to—can make a world of difference when you are growing up.

1. Educators are role models who act ethically and honestly.

“Educators are role models who act ethically and honestly” is something that will be with me at all times.  As educators, we must understand the influence we can have over students and it is our duty to act in their best interest at all times.  It is important to understand that us being ‘teachers’ does not stop once we leave school property.  We are responsible for our actions and how we are perceived in the community at large.  Being a teacher may be an incredibly difficult job because you are never ‘off duty’ but it is also extremely rewarding.  Making a positive change in one student’s life is worth much more than the extra caution that we must take.

As we transition from students ourselves into teachers, it is vital that we understand this standard.  I want to be the best role model for all my students that I can be and it starts with living an honest, ethical, and positive life.  At their most impressionable time, students are searching for adults to look up to or talk to, and we must be ready to take on any challenge which is put forth to us.

1. Educators understand and apply knowledge of student growth and development.

This standard really speaks to me personally.  As an educator, it will be my biggest challenge to constantly assess my student’s growth and development and tailor my teaching accordingly.   Not every student learns in the same way or at the same pace, nor does any style or pace dictate ability or intelligence.  For example, I always had a more difficult time than most kids learning completely new things.  It would take a lot longer for me to understand but once it started to click, my learning curve was steep and then I would often become ahead of other students.  My experiences growing up made me feel stupid and slow because I would almost get left behind or made to feel badly when I was told that I needed more attention.  Knowing this now, I get less frustrated when it takes me a little longer than most to grasp concepts because I know that I will eventually excel.  I will do everything I can to ensure each student feels that they are important and unique and not to feel bad about their differences, especially when it comes to learning.

Keeping all of this in mind, I will be adjusting my lessons, curriculum, assessment, instruction, and classroom management according to the individual needs of my students.  I will also help to create

1. Educators value the involvement and support of parents, guardians, families and communities in schools

As an educator, I will value support and involvement of all those involved in the lives of my students.  They have a right to be a part of the education process and I will value their input and be considerate of their views and expectations.  I believe that open communication is key in any relationship, thus my relationship with my student’s family will be no different.  I will give feedback promptly so that everyone is aware of the progress and education of my students and that I am as transparent with the goals and prospected outcomes as I possibly can be.  I will involve the student’s parents/guardians whenever I feel like I need assistance or I have any questions about which direction to take.  I will understand that each parent and student are unique and have distinct values and beliefs and that they may differ from my own.  I feel that if my teachers had been more transparent with my parents about my progress and/or struggles, then I would have more opportunities to communicate openly with my experiences at school.

The African proverb of “it takes a community to raise a child” is ever-present in my mind when pondering this Teaching Standard and it reminds me that we are all apart of ensuring each child has a full and enriching experience throughout their lives.

1. Educators implement effective practices in areas of planning, instruction, assessment, evaluation and reporting

Educators having effective practices in all areas shows that the teacher genuinely cares about the well-being of the students.  It shows you have prepared and respect yourself as the facilitator for their learning.  That being said, an important part of being a teacher is recognizing your own strengths and weaknesses.  This could be by “seeking additional support.”  For example, if there is a unit in my class that I feel the students could benefit by having guest speakers then I would do my best to supply them with that opportunity.  Moreover, being able to be flexible to the needs of the students is vital.  If for some reason, the students are struggling with a particular concept, then being able to adjust and spend more time on that area would be ideal.

Another point of this Standard which speaks to me is the relationship between planning, reporting, and everything else.  Assessment is something which I will continuously be working towards perfecting because I believe it should always adapt as your grow and learn.

1. Educators have a broad knowledge base and understand the subject areas they teach.

This standard feels of particular importance for myself being a social studies minor. My insecurities about teaching are highlighted in the sixth standard because I am scared that I will not ‘have all the answers’. However, it is this insecurity which will compel me to be prepared, learn, and understand the subjects and concepts which I will be teaching. I want to ensure that I can be a resource for my students and someone who can help them find the answers to their questions. I find it interesting that my least favorite subject in high school was social studies but my favorite was history. It is now my duty to find ways to teach the socials curriculum in such a way which my students find interesting, intriguing, and memorable. Also ensuring that you teach in a democratic way is another important point. Allowing your students to feel like the classroom is a safe place and a fair space is necessary in order to facilitate active learners who feel comfortable.

1. Educators engage in career-long learning.

The 7th standard is focused on teachers being lifelong students. Too often we believe that once we become an “expert” in something, then we have learned all we are going to need. This standard states that we engage in career-long learning as well as reflection. Even in the short time that I have been in University, more research is performed and we learn new techniques or strategies for ensuring the school experience has the most positive impact that it can. Because of this, it will be important for me to understand that I can always be better and can always learn more about being a more effective educator. This standard also refers to reflective practice. I will always reflect upon every aspect of my lessons. Creating a lesson plan is a craft and it could always be better thus reflecting and adjusting it is important. I put this into practice all the time when I am coaching and I will need to ensure I do the same when I teach. I will recognize my areas of weakness and will make myself better.

1. Educators contribute to the profession.

I love standard 8. I believe it is important to be an active and contributing member to the teaching profession. Being able to share experiences, resources, and ideas can only benefit the overall education provided by teachers. This standard I am currently putting into practice by creating resources which can be used by teachers currently. I feel an obligation to do this because I have a unique amount of experience in a sport which is not as common among physical educators (Ultimate Frisbee). Having a lot of knowledge about the sport as well as a developing knowledge for education, I feel that I should use both of these to create resources for teachers to be able to teach Ultimate properly and effectively. The standard also states that educators “support, mentor or encourage other educators and those preparing to enter the profession.” This is something we will be getting to experience a lot at the beginning of our careers and we should great gratitude and appreciation for those who take the time to listen to us, mentor us, and help us grow for the greater good of the education system.