Education 307: Practicum in Elementary Education

Winter 2014

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Introduction

This document outlines the opportunities, expectations, and requirements for the second semester of the elementary education practicum. The practicum is designed to assist you in making sense of educational theory and practice by drawing on coursework, your own experiences in schools, your current practicum classroom experiences, and other sources that will inform your developing professional knowledge. We will emphasize questioning, observation, and reflection throughout the term; together with your teaching efforts, these are integral parts of the teacher preparation program and of your developing professional teaching practice. You should be professional and proactive in the practicum, in both the field and the seminar. Make and take opportunities to increase your understanding of student learning, teaching practice and professionalism through observation, conversation, and participation. Develop strong working relationships with your Mentor Teacher (MT) and others in the school setting, your field instructors, and your intern colleagues.

Haisley Elementary School  Pittsfield Elementary School  Carpenter Elementary School
Ann Arbor Public Schools  Ann Arbor Public Schools  Ann Arbor Public Schools
825 Duncan Street  2543 Pittsfield Blvd.  4250 Central Blvd.
Ann Arbor, MI  48103  Ann Arbor, MI  48104  Ann Arbor, MI  48108
Phone:  (734)994-1937  Phone:  (734)997-1218  Phone:  (734)997-1214
Principal:  Kathy Scarnecchia  Principal:  Carol Shakarian  Principal:  Ed Brown
Field Instructor:  Betsy Warner  Field Instructor:  Njoki Kamuyu  Field Instructor:  Njoki Kamuyu

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. --Nelson Mandela
Practicum Professional Responsibilities

At the school
Responsibilities: You are expected at your field placement on Thursday, January 9th at 8:15. Thereafter, we will be at the school every Tuesday afternoon and Thursday morning until the end of the semester. While the day starts for students at around 8:40 a.m., and 1:00 p.m., teachers need to arrive well before that time. Sometimes they have meetings and sometimes they are preparing for the day. The general schedule will be 8:30-11:30 on Thursday mornings and 12:30-3:30 on Tuesday afternoons. Please check with your mentor teachers for any changes to this schedule.

During your practicum placement, you will participate in a wide range of classroom activities. The range of activities you have the chance to experience will be influenced, in part, by your initiative. If you want the widest range of experiences possible, be sure to volunteer for a variety of activities (even the ones that seem a bit scary). These activities may involve working one-on-one with students, teaching a lesson, facilitating the morning routine, working with a small group, overseeing computer use, etc. It is very important to keep lines of communication open with your MT. Please ask questions and request clarifications when you are unsure. If you feel that you are spending too much time only in observation or on tasks that take you away from interactions in the classroom, and you have spoken to your MT about your concerns, please let us know as soon as possible.

As a requirement of your School of Education coursework, you will be required to teach lessons. Your university teachers will describe these to you in their courses. If your MT does not formally address literacy during the time you are present in the field, notify us immediately so we can determine how you will successfully complete course assignments. Your MTs are aware that you will be teaching these lessons and they will make time in their schedule for you to do them. It is imperative that you arrange a time with your MT to teach lessons, at least a week in advance. In addition, post the time, date, and name of the lesson somewhere in the room to remind your MT.

We will observe your teaching of both informal and course-related lessons. Please let us know well in advance the day and time of your planned lessons so that we can arrange to observe. The usual procedure for these planned lesson observations is:

- Arrange the time for your lesson with your MT and let us know as well.
- Provide your field instructor and mentor teacher with your written lesson plan at least 24 hours in advance of teaching. Email works well for this.
- We will meet briefly ahead of time or contact you by email to discuss the lesson and it may be helpful to provide us with a focus for the observation (what you want us to pay close attention to).
- We will observe and take notes.
- We (and the MT if possible) will meet for a follow-up discussion.
- We will provide you with a copy of our notes.

As a part of your practicum placement you are required to keep a field notebook. Your field notebook is also the place to keep information you obtained from informal interviews with MTs, focal students, other teaching and non-teaching staff in the school, and administrators. We will use these observations, responses to interview questions and wondering questions as a way to talk about specific issues that are occurring in your practicum classroom. Please be careful to follow the guidelines for protecting the confidentiality of those you observe and interview, as listed below in the section on confidentiality.

Procedures:

- Attendance: Attendance at the school site is mandatory. You are expected every Tuesday and Thursday each week. Please be prompt; arriving a few minutes prior to your expected starting time is a good indication of your dedication.
- Dress: Professional attire is expected. Jeans, leggings, sweatshirts, t-shirts, shorts, sneakers, and revealing clothing (clothing that reveals undergarments and/or any front or back cleavage, very short skirts, leggings, etc.) are not professional. Please do not wear these clothes to your school.
- Arrival: When you arrive at the school, please sign in and out of the U-M notebook at the front office.
- Identification badges: You must wear your UM identification while at your school.
- Absences: If you must miss a day because of documented illness or emergency, you must reschedule the time with your MT. Repeated absences or late arrival—even if made up—will be reported to Meri Tenney-Muirhead and may affect your grade. Unexcused absences can result in an unsatisfactory grade for the course.

If you must be absent from school, you must notify the following people prior to your absence: (1) your MT (2) your practicum partners, and (3) the field instructor for your placement site. Please carry these phone numbers with you at all times so that you can make emergency contact, if needed.

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Attendance at Professional Workshops/Seminars is mandatory. These opportunities are as much a part of your professional development as are your other courses. If you are absent from a whole group Professional Workshop or Seminar, you are required to provide documentation of the emergency that kept you from attending. In addition, you must notify us, if at all possible, in advance of the group meeting time. Absence from more than one Professional Workshop/Seminar may result in a failing grade for the practicum.

Make-up assignments: If you miss a whole group Professional Workshop/Seminar meeting, you will be required to submit a written make-up assignment that covers the topic(s) discussed on the day of your absence. We will need to discuss the content of the assignment and the due date. If extenuating circumstances prevent you from turning in an assignment on time, please contact us via email prior to the submission deadline. Unexcused late work will impact your grade. If you have questions about the nature of this assignment, it is your responsibility to contact your field instructor for clarification.

There may be occasional short readings provided so that you have background information for a topic to be presented at seminar.

We will continue to use the text, The Power of Our Words by Paula Denton.

Using laptops or cell phones as tools of your learning is acceptable, as long as it is not distracting. Examples of acceptable use of electronic devices include making records of your practice and consulting resources for work in class. Non-instructional texting, phone calls, social networking, shopping, and other non-instructional use of these devices are not acceptable at seminar or in the school setting at any time. If you are concerned about your ability to meet this professional expectation, please discuss your concern with us. If an emergency arises during your time at your field placement, where you must use your phone, please step out of the classroom and go to a setting away from the classroom.

A word about professionalism:
Remember that you are a guest in your placement classroom. Mentor Teachers are extremely busy and have volunteered, as a commitment to their profession, to welcome teacher candidates into their work domains. The MTs are committed to the important work of helping to guide new teachers in their professional growth; however, their first responsibility is to the children in their classes. Your responsibility is to learn by observing and questioning, but not to make public judgments. Your focus should be on interactions, patterns of behaviors of teachers and students, school issues, practical ideas for management and planning, and so on.

Remember that the people in the schools (adults and children) look at you as a colleague and a professional. Often, exemplary student teachers are offered positions in schools. Do not underestimate the impression that you make! You may be paired in your practicum with another teacher candidate who, in some cases, may be a close friend. You are reminded not to be disruptive. Even casual whispering can be disconcerting to teachers and children and should be minimized. It is important to have professional conversations with your practicum partner about the things that you are experiencing but please make sure to have these conversations at an appropriate time, such as when students are not in the room or before and after school is in session. If you need to speak with or ask questions of the MT, find a time to do so outside of instructional time. The learning time of students always takes priority.

You will have the opportunity to discuss classroom experiences during the seminar, in other university courses, and at other times that we meet individually, in small groups, or as a cohort. Confidentiality and respect should always be of paramount concern. We are guests in the practicum classrooms; we need to honor each classroom with kindness and sensitivity that ensures our time spent there will not in any way disrupt or cause harm. What we observe is simply a snapshot of complex and on-going interactions. We often lack the context and experience to fully understand all aspects of the situation we are seeing.

Take great care with the information you gather in your classroom work. For example, individual students', teachers', non-teaching staff members', and administrators' names should not be used in discussions with your friends or colleagues, in conversations (within or outside university classrooms). In written assignments, you must not use the real names of students, teachers, staff, administrators and schools. (e.g., identifying information must be removed from student work that you have permission to photocopy).

Grading and Course Expectations
Your grade for EDUC 307 considers your work in your field placement and the Professional Workshop/Seminar sessions. You will be graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. [Remember: You must receive a Satisfactory grade for your field experiences, in order to be eligible to student teach and to continue in your elementary education sequence.]
Our expectations for satisfactory participation include:

**Attendance**
- regular attendance in field and seminar (defined as arriving on time and remaining for the entire session)
- appropriate pre- and follow-up behavior if absence is unavoidable

**Professionalism**
- taking initiative and developing a commitment to learning about the many facets of teaching
- taking initiative and developing a commitment to helping students learn
- developing appropriate connections and engaging in appropriate interactions with students, MTs and other school professionals, family members, and other teacher candidates
- engaging in appropriate interactions with students, MTs and other school professionals, family members, and other teacher candidates
- appropriate dress and manner within the school

**Participation**
- regular attendance and active participation in your practicum classroom and seminar
- satisfactory completion of assignments
- keep a detailed field notebook

**Mid-semester and final self-evaluations**
- You will complete a brief mid-semester self-evaluation and goal setting on your progress. These are not graded progress reports, but are to be seen as an opportunity for you to inform us about how you feel you are doing and how we and your Mentor Teacher can support you in optimal ways.
- You, your MT and your field instructor will fill out final evaluation forms at the end of the semester.

**Field Instructor's Role**

Field instructors serve many roles. We are a liaison between the university and your cooperating school and Mentor Teacher. We meet with you in your placements as well as assist course instructors. At the university, we will meet as part of a team of instructors to better understand and coordinate information regarding the semester’s coursework and the program’s goals and expectations. This will also help us clarify assignments for you. **However, before coming to one of us, you should always discuss assignments and expectations for the class with your university instructor.**

It is our responsibility to help you negotiate your relationship with your Mentor Teacher and your responsibilities in her/his classroom. In order for us to do our job well, you need to keep us informed about any concerns or questions you have as they arise. If, for example, your MT’s schedule does not provide sufficient opportunities for you to engage in the literacy-related activities or other university course assignments you need to complete, we will help you work with your MT to resolve this issue, allowing you to successfully complete your assignments. Again, you should always talk with your MT about classroom-related issues **before** approaching one of us. You need to develop the ability to work with colleagues in a professional manner.

Much of our work focuses on helping you develop your ability to learn from and about the practice of teaching. To do this, we will observe and participate with you in your classroom placement serving as another pair of eyes on the act of teaching. Together, we will analyze what was intended and what was accomplished in a lesson or activity, focusing on evidence of the effectiveness of choices made, and working together to deepen your understanding of children and their learning.

Finally, it is our responsibility to conduct seminar. The purpose of seminar is to help you make connections between what you are learning in your university courses and what you are observing and doing in your field placement classroom. The various configurations of the seminar provide the forum to bring up concerns and questions about your role as a teacher. In addition, you practice collegiality with your peers through the exchange of ideas and by listening to and respecting one another.

We will occasionally meet with you as a whole group, in small groups, or individually. These meetings are designed to:
- Establish an environment conducive to a fair and equitable exchange of questions and ideas.
- Provide a forum through which you critically reflect upon what you are learning from and about the practice of teaching.
- Create a connection between your professional coursework and classroom experiences that reflect the program goals of helping you think critically about teaching and learning.
- Respond to the issues that you are likely to find pressing at this time.
Important Dates for Winter Semester 2014

January 9th   First Day in the field
Seminar: *Approximately 11:30-1:30 in the field. We will discuss the syllabus, first day experiences/observations, seminar schedule, and possible topics for future seminars.

January 16th  Seminar at field placement. Approximately 11:30-1:30

January 23rd  **No seminar at field. Literacy Seminar 12:30-2:30 given by Nell Duke SEB 1315.**

January 30th  Seminar at field placement. Approximately 11:30-1:30 Topic TBD

February 6th  Seminar at field placement. Approximately 11:30-1:30 Topic TBD

February 13th  Seminar at field placement. Approximately 11:30-1:30. Topic TBD

February 17th to 21st  Ann Arbor Public Schools Mid-Winter Break  **No field and no seminar.**

February 27th  Seminar at field placement. Approximately 11:30-1:30 Topic TBD

March 3rd-7th  U of M Spring Break- Enjoy!

March 13th  Seminar at field placement. Approximately 11:30-1:30 Topic TBD

March 20th  Seminar at field placement. Approximately 11:30-1:30. Topic TBD

March 27th  Seminar at field placement. Approximately 11:30-1:30. Topic TBD

April 3rd  WISD Seminar with Sandy Riley-Place and time TBD

April 7th-11th  AAPS Spring Break -No field, but you have Literacy Sem. 12:30-2:30 N. Duke SEB 1315

April 15th  Last day in field

*Times and dates for seminar will be discussed at the first seminar on January 9th. Times and dates are subject to change with the consensus of the group.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**
If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let us know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities and the way the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make us aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; http://ssd.umich.edu) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.
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