

TEACHING PRACTICUM I FIELD EXPERIENCE REFLECTIONS

The following should be used to direct your observations in the public school classrooms you will be visiting. Reflect on these questions as you observe. These reflections will form the basis for your 1-2 page summary you will write for your journal each week (see ***Field Journal and Weekly Log Guidelines***). Be prepared to discuss your reactions in your cluster group meetings.

TOPIC #1: GETTING STARTED (the beginning of the semester)

1. Examine the classroom environment. Is the classroom aesthetically pleasing? Does it provide a good learning atmosphere for students? Are there cues as to the subject area taught in the classroom?
2. Notice placement of furniture, equipment, storage, work areas, etc. Is the space sufficient? Is it well utilized?
3. Observe the teacher as students enter. Are students greeted before the bell? What kinds of exchanges occur between student and teacher before the bell?
4. Observe characteristics of the students. Can you tell their class level or age group? How do they interact with one another? Are there obvious social groups in this class? Are all students included in the preclass interaction? What can you conclude about the ethnic, social, linguistic, and economic diversity in this class?
5. Observe how the teacher begins the class. How did the teacher get the attention of the class? How was roll handled? Were there non-instructional or general announcements? Were rules of conduct mentioned? Did the teacher mention a school wide code of general conduct? Were students assigned seats, stations, teams? Were classroom procedures explained or discussed?
6. Observe how the teacher introduces the course to the students. Was there a rationale given? Was the introduction verbal only? Were the students given something to do besides listen? How do students react to the course introduction?
7. How was the class concluded?
8. What is your overall reaction to the class period?

TOPIC #2: GETTING TO KNOW YOUR SCHOOL

1. Where is the faculty workroom?
2. Do faculty have access to clerical assistance?
3. Where are supplies located? How do teachers order supplies?
4. Is there a special resource center for your subject area?
5. Will you have access to a computer at the school?
6. Does the school have Internet access for teachers?
7. Does your teacher use computers in classroom instruction?
8. What is the name of the school newspaper, annual? Where can you see or obtain copies? How much freedom do students have to print what they wish? What school activities or achievements merit coverage in the annual or school newspaper?
9. Is there a special class for student government, or is this an extracurricular activity? How well does the student council represent the diversity of the school population? What kinds of decisions are made by the Student Council?
10. What percentage of students are on free or reduced lunch?
11. Are students bused to school? What percent?
12. Is there a dress code for students? (Check the student handbook also for this and related questions about student conduct)
13. What faculty facilities are available and where are they located?
14. How does the school encourage parent involvement?
15. What is the procedure for visitors to sign in and out?
16. How is campus security maintained?

TOPIC #3: OBSERVING INSTRUCTION

1. Was there any clue as to the lesson content that students could get as they entered the room?
2. How did the teacher introduce the lesson? Was an anticipatory set used? Was an advanced organizer used? Describe. Did the teacher state the purpose of the instruction that would follow? Was the introduction verbal only? How long into the period before students had something to do besides listen?
3. Could you identify the teacher's rationale for teaching this lesson or unit? If so, what was it? Why do high school graduates need to know this? Could you guess the lesson objective after listening to the teacher's introduction?
4. Identify the various student activities the teacher used to engage the students in this lesson. (e.g. recitation, discussion, cooperative learning, group work, game, simulations) Which were most and least effective? Why?
5. Focus on the teacher's directions to students. How were directions given? Were the steps clearly stated? Were students able to follow the directions?
6. Note the teacher's pacing, transitions, and response to student input.
7. What strategy governed the teacher's questioning?
8. How did students react to the content of the lesson? To the teaching strategy(ies)?
9. Observe where groups were used. What was the purpose in having the students work in groups? Were groups expected to be collaborative or competitive? Were the groups expected to produce a product as one of the outcomes? How was progress monitored? How were group members selected? Were students grouped by language proficiency, gender, ability, or other criteria? How were group roles or responsibilities delegated? How were the groups given directions? How were students evaluated (group? individual?)?
10. How were the students monitored during work periods? Did all students participate?
11. How did the teacher know if the students met the objectives? What did the students do to demonstrate their learning?
12. How were class activities concluded? Was there a summary at the end? What means were used to provide summary or closure? Did the teacher dismiss the class or did the students simply leave when the bell rang?
13. What is your overall reaction to the class period? What would you change if this were your lesson?

TOPIC #4: TECHNOLOGY AND RESOURCES IN THE CLASSROOM

1. How is technology used in the classrooms? Is it used primarily by teachers or students? What kind of technology is used in the classroom? Do students have equitable access to the technology?
2. What computer applications (software) have you seen being used by students?
3. What are the important issues relating to computer technology in the classroom? (Equality of access? Gender? Copyright? Creativity? Cost? Social isolation?)
4. What additional resources are available in the classroom (e.g., texts, maps, language dictionaries, print media, audiovisual equipment and materials)?
5. Does each student have his/her own textbook? How does the teacher use the textbook? Are translations of the text available to EL students?

TOPIC #5: OBSERVING CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND MANAGEMENT

1. Examine the classroom. How can you tell what subject was being taught there?
2. Examine the seating arrangement. How many students were in this class? Did each have appropriate seating, station, and equipment? How were students seated or stationed? If in a classroom, how was the furniture arranged? Did the arrangement contribute to the effectiveness of instruction? Why or why not?
3. Observe how regular classroom routines are handled. Do students have assigned seats or stations? Do students pick up material or equipment before the lesson begins? Are

textbooks or notebooks brought to class? How was roll taken? How long did it take? Were there directions or prior understandings as to how the students were to use the time while the teacher was taking roll?

4. Observe the behavior of the students. What rules of conduct are they actually following? Are class rules posted in the room? What behaviors are encouraged or discouraged by words or actions on the part of the teacher? What was the reward for good behavior? How was inappropriate behavior addressed?
5. Observe how classroom activities are handled and integrated. How many different activities are included in the period? How much time was allowed for each activity? What directions were given for each activity? How were the directions given? How did students behave during the transition from one activity to the next? Was the sequence of activities effective?
6. Observe the distribution and collection of materials. How did students get equipment and materials? How long did it take? Was the distribution efficient? How were papers, homework, assignments, equipment, and/or tests collected or returned?
7. How did students react to what was being presented by the teacher? Were they excited and eager? Bored or indifferent? What evidence did you use to characterize the students' reactions?
8. How did the teacher get the attention of the students? What exactly did the teacher say or do? Was it effective? How long did it take? What was the affective impact on the students?
9. How were students monitored? Was the teacher in a position to see the whole class? Was the monitoring effective? Why or why not?
10. What characterizes classrooms where there are fewer management or behavior problems? Which of these factors are under the control of the teacher?
11. Talk with teachers about their most common management or behavior problems. How do they handle such problems?
12. What student behaviors are uncomfortable to you? What are your thoughts about what your behavior standards will be and how you will implement these?

TOPIC #6: STRATEGIES FOR DIVERSITY

1. What specific activities did teachers use to engage all students in the learning process?
2. What strategies did teachers use with students who have limited English proficiency?
3. What evidence did you see that teachers know all students do not have the same learning style?
4. In classes where there are a number of EL students, how did the teacher modify or change the instruction to make the content more accessible? How did the language of the teacher change? What was used to complement or supplement the verbal instruction?
5. Note the materials used. Did pictures, texts, photographs, and examples reflect the diversity present in our society?
6. How would you characterize the linguistic and ethnic diversity in this class? Is there an atmosphere of cooperation within groups or between groups? An atmosphere of distrust, indifference, competition, or conflict?

TOPIC #7: QUESTIONING STRATEGIES

1. Observe classes where teachers are working with the entire class and engaged in question asking (15-20 minutes). How did the teacher respond to student answers using wait time, reinforcement, probing, and interacting among students?
2. Track a questioning session. Is there a "strategy" in the order of the questioning? Is it clear that the questioning is purposeful and leading toward some instructional objective? Does the questioning proceed from the familiar to the unfamiliar? From the concrete to the abstract? From high general interest questions to those more focused on new content?
3. Identify the kinds of questions asked by the teacher. How many were data- or knowledge-level questions? Was there a mix of convergent and divergent questions? How did the teacher engage students in higher levels of thinking? Did the teacher employ data level

questions to check for understanding before proceeding to higher level questions? Why might the teacher reverse the order or mix the levels?

4. Focus on the students who were responding to the teacher's questions. Did the teacher call on students in any particular pattern? Did the same students always answer? Where were they located in the classroom? Did a higher percent of males or females respond and/or volunteer? Were there students who did not participate? What did the teacher do to elicit more response from non-participating students?
5. What evidence do you see that the teacher wants or expects a response from all students? (eye contact, wait time, body language, calling by name) Was it clear when students were expected to raise their hands and respond individually as opposed to a group chorus? How did the teacher signal which type of response was welcome?
6. Did students ask questions? What kinds of questions did they ask? How did the teacher respond to the questions? Did the teacher seem more receptive to the some students' questions than to others?
7. Describe a questioning strategy that you are likely to use and tell why.

TOPIC #8: ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION AND GRADING

1. Check with a teacher, principal, and/or faculty handbook to determine if the school has any policies about grading. When do teachers give grades? When do students get report cards or progress reports? What are the procedures followed by the teacher for giving grades?
2. Ask different teachers to explain their grading system and procedures and describe the components of the different systems. Locate some teachers who use a cumulative point system and some who use a letter grading system. What are the merits and demerits of each system? Does class participation or attitude affect the student's grade? How do you feel about extra credit assignments? How does this relate to validity and reliability in assessment?
3. Describe the organization of different teachers' grade books. Do teachers utilize computer grade books?
4. Observe and describe different procedures/routines established for absent students.
5. When and how are standardized tests administered (SAT 9, STAR, HSEE, CELDT)? What impact do the results have on student placement and grading?
6. Note the instruments used in assessment. Teacher-made tests? Performance and/or portfolio assessments? Are any teachers using a mastery system? Are students given extra credit assignments? How is homework counted?
7. Does the grading system penalize EL students?
8. How do teachers provide ongoing feedback to students regarding daily performance?
9. Describe how you would assess student achievement.

TOPIC #9: PERSONNEL

For this topic, you will work with members of your cluster group to conduct interviews with school personnel. Divide the list of personnel amongst your group members. Each of you will be responsible for conducting and writing up interviews with your assigned personnel. Distribute copies of your completed interviews with each of your group members. Be prepared to discuss your findings at a cluster group meeting. Please note that each group member will be expected to submit a complete set of interviews.

PRINCIPAL

1. How would you characterize the school and the community?
2. What is the economic base in this community?
3. What are the responsibilities of the principal?
4. What are the major assets and major problems in this school?
5. What is the profile of the student body?
6. What alternative modes of education are available to the student besides the regular school set-up?

7. What provisions are made for students with limited English proficiency, special education students, and the college-bound student?
8. What other school support personnel are available through the district and/or county?
9. Where would I look to find the time, place, and agenda of the next faculty meeting and the next school board meeting?
10. Where can I get a copy of the district salary schedule?

VICE PRINCIPAL

1. May we see a copy of the district teacher's contract? What kinds of items are typically in a contract?
2. What are "extra duties?"
3. Is there a teacher's handbook? A student handbook?
4. What are the legal responsibilities of teachers who suspect drug use, child abuse, etc.?
5. How do I check out keys?
6. What is the procedure for sending a student to the office who is being disruptive in class?
7. Are there forms available for referrals and for parent reports?
8. What should I do if I see a fight starting?
9. What is the law on grounds for expulsion of a student?
10. Is there a copy of the Education Code available to teachers?
11. What are the school rules as to student conduct? How are infractions handled? By whom?

PRINCIPAL'S SECRETARY (MAIN OFFICE)

1. What is the procedure to follow if I am going to be absent from school?
2. What is the procedure for making a long distance phone call?
3. What phones are available for student teachers to use?
4. Where are the faculty workrooms and bathrooms?

COUNSELING OFFICE

1. How are the counselor's duties assigned and divided?
2. What are cumulative files? What do they contain?
3. What are the regulations regarding the confidentiality of the cumulative files?
4. What standardized tests are given in this school and when? Are results available to teachers?
5. What is the role of the counseling office in cases of suspected drug or child abuse, trauma, etc.?
6. How do students make an appointment to see the counselor?
7. How do students get the homework assignment if they are absent? Am I required by law to give make-up work?
8. What is the procedure for sending progress reports home?
9. How do I schedule a parent-teacher conference?
10. How do I find a phone number if I wish to call a parent?

LIBRARY MEDIA TEACHER (LMT)

1. Is there a credentialed professional librarian (LMT) who oversees this library?
2. Who are the credentialed and classified employees assigned to this library?
3. What professional services do you offer to teachers, staff and students?
4. What kinds of materials/equipment do you circulate; how are they accessed?
5. What are the guidelines for bringing a class to the library? (Teacher/LMT expectations)
6. What specific resources would you recommend for my area of curriculum?
7. What are the legal and logistical requirements for reproducing materials?
8. What else should I know about your library program?

DIRECTOR OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. What extracurricular activities are available at this school?
2. Which activities are held during the school day?
3. How are sponsors and chaperones chosen?

4. Where can I find the schedule of clubs, activities, and events?

TEACHER FOR A HOME BOUND STUDENT or for COUNSELOR

1. How does a student get assigned to a home teacher?
2. How do homework assignments get to the student? And back to the teacher?
3. Who is responsible for correcting the student's work?

ELD TEACHER/RESOURCE SPECIALIST

1. What is your role in providing support and resources to EL students in my classroom?
2. What percentage of students at this school are non-native speakers of English?
3. What are the native languages of these students?
4. Where can I access information about individual students' background, language proficiency and experience?
5. How does an EL student demonstrate increased English proficiency in order to become reclassified?
6. Are there bilingual aides available? For which language groups? What kinds of support might be available for teachers to meet the needs of EL students in their classes?
7. What instruments are used to test the EL students' native language proficiency?
8. What types of school-based programs are available to support EL students (e.g., ELD classes, sheltered content classes, other)?

SECURITY OFFICER

1. What are your duties and how can you be contacted when needed?
2. What are the kinds of problems you handle?
3. What do you notice about the social groups of students at breaks and lunch times?
4. What outside community forces seem to impact negatively or positively on student problems here?

ATTENDANCE OFFICER

1. When is roll officially taken during the day?
2. What is the procedure for reporting absence and attendance?
3. When does a student need a re-admittance slip for class?
4. What kinds of call slips are used here?
5. Is a hall pass required?
6. How do I find a student during the day?

SCHOOL NURSE

1. What is the role of the school nurse?
2. During what hours is the school nurse available?
3. What are appropriate referrals to the school nurse? How is one done?
4. What other services can teachers expect from the nurse?
5. What is the teacher's responsibility regarding classroom accidents and injuries?
6. What is a confidential medical list?
7. What can you tell me about drug abuse, pregnancy, or other health issues at this school?

FIRST YEAR TEACHER

1. What are your classes and assignments?
2. What have you found most rewarding? Most challenging?
3. If you could do your professional preparation over, what would you spend more time on?

CTA BUILDING REPRESENTATIVE

1. What is the role of CTA in education?
2. What is the process for contract negotiation?
3. What is your role?
4. What are the major issues this year in negotiations?