

Strand II – Pre Student Teaching Guidelines for Observation and Participation In the Classroom

Student _____

School _____

Supervising Teacher(s) _____

University Supervisor _____

Grade Level/Subject Area _____

Classroom Observation and Participation Guidelines

The following "Observation and Participation Guidelines" are activities for you to do during your student teaching practicum. Keep notes on your observations and activities in the school and school community, your responses to what you observe, and reflections on your experiences. Your notes will serve as a basis for discussion and for written reports required by your university instructors or by your supervising teachers.

Some of the activities are followed by (* and the name of a course). This indicates that there will be additional information regarding the activity, requirements, and due dates provided in the syllabus and by the instructor of the specific courses mentioned. The guidelines are group by categories, however, the categories are not intended to suggest a chronology.

Observation Task

Completed

Physical Characteristics of the School and School Personnel

- What is the layout of the school? Locate key areas such as the library, media center, faculty or department offices, teachers' rooms and other areas of the school. _____
- Note where students congregate inside and outside of the school building. _____
- Identify the names, roles and locations of office staff, custodial staff, administrators, and all support staff. _____
- Interview: (with other student teachers at your site)
 - School psychologist and/or school nurse
 - Special program coordinator/Special Education teachers
 - Police liaison officer
 - Other specialists_____

What are your impressions of the facility and school personnel?

School and Community

- Walk through the school neighborhood at three different times of day. Who do you see? What are they doing? What inferences do you make? _____

- Identify relevant community service agencies and groups that provide services to the school community _____
- Contact a community service agency and arrange to interview a staff member regarding the agency involvement with children and their families. _____
- Arrange to attend (if possible)
 - A school board meeting
 - A parent/teacher association meeting
 - Meetings of the school site committee

- What after school activities are available for students and who sponsors them? _____

If you were a new student or parent to the school, how easily available is information regarding community services and community activities?

Culture of the School

- What are the most obvious manifestations of culture that you observe when you first walk into the school? (Name of school, language(s) of signs, language/appearance of people in office, bulletin boards, pictures, decorations, etc.) _____
- How do you think you would feel entering the school if you were a parent, or a child of color? Of a poor family? Non English speaking? Special needs? TAG? _____
- Observe student and teacher behavior before and after school, at break/recess, lunch. _____
- Arrange with your supervising teacher to do a shadow study of a student.* (Multicultural Ed.) _____
- Observe attire and nonverbal behavior/communication of students and teachers. _____
- Identify other evidence of a school culture. _____

Compare the culture of your school site with that of other schools with which you are familiar.

Policies and Procedures

- Familiarize yourself with appropriate school procedures to follow if you are absent from your placement due to illness. _____
- Review faculty and student handbooks and discuss with your supervising teacher(s). _____
- Examine the school improvement plan. _____
- Become familiar with school procedures dealing with:
 - Substance abuse
 - Medical emergency
 - AIDS/STDs
 - Fire drills
 - Suspected child abuse

- Lock down procedures
- Sensitive subject matter
- Students flagged for confidentiality
- Sex education
- Other emergencies

- Review all school rules that you will be expected to enforce as a classroom (student) teacher and discuss with your supervising teacher.
- With the other student teachers at your site, make an appointment with the appropriate administrator in charge of discipline and identify school guidelines in handling discipline problems.
- With other student teachers at your site interview the school counselor or appropriate administrator to learn the policies and procedures for referring a student to a counselor.

What questions do you have about school policies and procedures?

Working With Family Members (*Issues, *Ed Psych)

- Are there written policies that address family participation in the school? If there are get a copy and become familiar with them.
- How does you supervising teacher communicate with family members? Look at copies of written communication.
- Arrange to sit in on a parent conference (if possible).
- Which of the following are available for family members?
 - Meeting rooms for family members?
 - Resources on parenting?
 - Directories of community resources for families?
- Are staff and/or faculty member assigned as a family/community liaison(s)?
- Are there organized opportunities for family members to volunteer at school in a meaningful way?

What other indications are there of the extent to which family members are welcome or not welcome in the school.

Extra Curricular Activities and Teacher Assignments

- Join your supervising teacher during assigned supervision at lunch, break, bus duty, assembly, school dance, game or other event.
- What after school activities are available for students and who sponsors them?
- Attend an after school event.
 - How many teachers are there?
 - Administrators?

- How many students?
- Parents?

- How does the behavior of the students compare with their classroom behavior?

What event did you attend and what did you learn?

Instructional Resources

- Introduce yourself to the librarian, media personnel
- Explore the school library and media center. Evaluate holdings in your subject area(s)/grade levels and familiarize yourself with procedures to make use of the materials.
- Conduct a survey of computer use in the school.
 - How are computers used?
 - By teachers?
 - By students?
 - Are the computers school owned?
 - Teacher owned?
 - Which classrooms have computers?
 - How many?
- Arrange to visit resource center at the district office and familiarize yourself with its services.
- Familiarize yourself with the services offered by the local ESD.
- Review films, tapes, and other materials available to you and familiarize yourself with ordering procedures from various sources.

What are your impressions of the adequacy of instructional resources?

Meeting the Needs of Early Adolescents/Classroom Observation

- Observe a minimum of two teachers outside your subject matter area or grade level. Note how subject matter and grade level impact teacher styles, strategies, and learning activities.
- Find out how time is organized for instruction (Blocks, 45 min. class sessions, AB Block, 4x4 Block, flexible scheduling, etc.)
- Is there a well developed advisory program with a curriculum? (*Issues)
- Do teachers team and have common planning times? (*Issues)
- Are there school wide programs that promote health, wellness, and safety?
- Identify how instruction is designed to meet early adolescent developmental needs. (*Ed. Psych, *Planning & Implementation)

- Request permission (arrange through your supervising teacher) to observe each of the following types of classrooms: (as available)
 - English as a Second Language
 - Limited English Proficiency
 - Bilingual
 - Gifted and Talented
 - Special Education
 - Other special programs or classes

- Identify at least three teachers who use various instructional strategies such as cooperative learning, writers workshop, simulations, etc. and arrange observations through your supervising teacher.

Reflect on the strategies/activities observed that address the needs of early adolescents. What “best practices” did you observe?

Classroom Participation: Fall Practicum

- Ask your supervising teacher to assign you responsibility for some classrooms tasks. (i.e. taking attendance, correcting papers, assisting individual students)

- Ask your supervising teacher to assign you responsibility for preparing instructional materials, searching out resources in the library and working with the media specialist, checking out materials for classroom use and unit preparation.

- With your supervising teacher’s direction, increase your interaction with students.
 - Assist in class activities.
 - Help individual students during class, before/after school.
 - Work with small groups of students.
 - Correct quizzes or tests

- With your supervising teacher’s guidance give a minimum of three class presentations.

- With your supervising teacher’s guidance prepare and present a lesson or segment of a lesson for the whole class.

- Prepare, administer and analyze at least one assessment.

Based on your experiences so far describe your strengths as a teacher and what aspects of teaching are the most challenging for you.

Preparation for Spring Student Teaching

- Talk with a teacher or department head and find out how long term course or unit planning is done and how these plans are tied to course outlines and/or curriculum guides/frameworks.

- Examine grade books and computer grading programs. Identify a number of methods for computing grades and reporting progress to students and parents.

- Identify types of tests and specific tests, (standardized and teacher made) used in your school, in your classroom.

- Ask your supervising teacher for ground rules in handling sensitive topics in the classroom.
- Familiarize yourself with all school forms and record keeping that you will be responsible for as a (student) teacher.
- Review appropriate records of students in your class(es).

Become familiar with the school calendar. Develop a long-range plan for your student teaching semester. Identify units, benchmarks to be addressed, and important dates such as those for state testing, conferences, and grading days.

Getting Ready To Teach

- Prepare a draft or letter to the parents/guardians of all of your students. Introduce yourself and say something about your plans and/or goals for the semester. Discuss the draft with your supervising teacher and guide group advisor. Be sure to get administrative approval before sending the letter.
- Review your management plan with your supervising teacher.
- Establish detailed procedures for the first few weeks of the student teaching semester with your supervising teacher and university supervisor.
- Establish regular due dates for long and short term planning and record them on your planning calendar.
- Establish a mutually agreed upon place and time for weekly conferences with your supervising teacher. You will meet weekly (at a minimum) with your supervising teacher during your student teaching semester to review your lesson plans for the following week and discuss issues.
- Discuss your work sample with your supervising teacher.

Identify three specific goals for student teaching. Discuss why they are important and make a plan to achieve each goal. Enjoy your time at your school site!