

The Practicum Component

You have been assigned to a middle school or a high school class based on availability, preferences, and location. You should be in a classroom for 1 – 2 hours per day, 5 days per week, for 6 weeks: approximately 9/16 through 11/1 (due to fall breaks in most districts). In these 30 days of practicum, you should help out in the classroom as much as possible. Potential tasks include grading papers, circulating the class during work time probing thinking when appropriate, working with students who have been absent, reviewing confusing homework problems, and teaching your 3 -day lessons. Volunteer a role for yourself if you see an opportunity that looks appealing.

Classroom Practicum Project Details

A set of short assignments are to be completed during your practicum to help you be aware of elements of teaching that go beyond delivering content.

Keep a log (notebook?) each visit to record any/all of the following sightings:

- **Effective strategies to engage ALL students.**
- **Effective techniques used to diffuse inappropriate behaviors.**
- **Useful questions to probe deeper reasoning.**
- **Cooperative group strategies that work well.**
- **Alternative assessments. ie projects, presentations,...**
- **How does the teacher stay organized & on top of grading?**
- **What does the teacher do when a problem solving activity steers to an unintended direction?**
- **Any other *skilled* teacher moves you want to remember.**
- **Any disturbing occurrences you'd like to discuss in class.**

Weekly assignments to be completed during your practicum are described below. **Bring each assignment in rough-draft form (hand-written is okay for this) to class on the Thursday of that week for discussion; make revisions and type final draft to submitted by the following Tuesday, so **Week 1 final write-up is due Tues 9/24****

Week 1 Class Description:

In your classroom, note the following things. You can ask your cooperating teacher to verify your own observations. Bring information to class, and be ready to talk about....

1. Class information
 - Name of the class (e.g., Algebra I)
 - Number of students in the class
 - Grade level(s)
 - Target students (Is this class for gifted, above average, average, below average, or remedial students?)
2. Classroom map
 - Ask for the seating chart from your mentor teacher (if there isn't one, create one). Is this an assigned seating chart, or do students choose their own seats? **Learn their names.** Attempt to memorize student names by the end of week 1.
3. Classroom Resources
 - Do students have their own books, or is there a class set, or what materials are used?
 - Does the teacher provide pencils and/or paper for those who didn't bring their own?
 - Are students allowed to talk to each other and/or work together?
 - What technology is available? (digital projector, SmartBoard, graphing calculators, document camera...)
4. Note how the teacher organizes work from different classes. Ask the teacher what is the usual turn-around time for grading tests. Ask the teacher what is the usual turn-around time for grading assignments.

Ask your cooperating teacher if you may circulate & tutor students during class, or “catch up” a student who has missed class, or “remediate” a student who has failed a quiz or test. Record your findings—what did you do to help a student? (Explanation, practice problems, focus on vocabulary, go over homework, etc.) Did the tutoring help? If so, how?

Week 2 Classroom Routines:

1. Note very carefully **what happens the first 5 – 10 minutes of class every day** that you are there. In a couple of sentences, describe the procedure as it appears to you for the first 5 – 10 minutes. What is the teacher doing? What are the students supposed to be doing? *How do they know to be doing this?* Are they doing this? Are there any consequences if they are not? Is this procedure the same every day? Are there directions for students to follow? Are directions given orally or are they written down? If they are written down, are they written down in the same place every day?

Classrooms have (or should have) defined procedures for various routines such as those listed below.

Select at least 2 of these procedures that are interesting to you to observe carefully for 5 days in a row every opportunity this procedure might be used.

- Describe the procedure
 - Do students know the procedure? If so, how do you know they know? Is the procedure followed consistently?
 - At the end of the week, you might ask your cooperating teacher how he/she handles each of these procedures, and if he/she has always handled the procedure the same way. How were students trained to follow the procedure? Be ready to talk about these procedures in class.

Additionally, ask your teacher if you can be responsible for presenting the warm-up problems and or fielding homework questions for the entire week. If your teacher uses warm-ups, ask him/her how they chose them. Write about those choices. Describe your technique for “going over” these problems.

If you do not do the warm-ups or homework, with teacher input, create an alternative engagement exercise to do instead.

Procedures:

- Missed class, need make-up work
- Don't have needed materials (paper, pencil, book)
- Beginning the class
- Ending the class
- Signal to get attention of the students
- How do students obtain materials for day's lesson (scissors, calculators, worksheet)
- Submitting assignments
- Returning graded work
- Need to use the restroom
- Working with fellow students
- What to do if work is finished early
- Student has a question
- Student is late to class repeatedly

Week 3: Questioning/Responding

On Monday, ask your teacher for content needs for your lessons to be done during week 6. You want to have an idea for what topics are needed. We will begin the lesson planning process next week.

Make note of students who are called to answer mathematical questions and/or share mathematical reasoning each day. You may want to use the seating chart to make tally marks. Write a summary of the participation. Include comments about how many **different** students have spoken, wait time, how students are “chosen” to respond. What happens if a student doesn’t know an answer when called upon?

Take 1 day to record all of the mathematical questions/directions posed.

- Rate the questions as procedural, or cognitively demanding, or...
- Are all students answering (slates?, chorus?)
- Are there some students who dominate the responses or a broad range of students? How does that happen?
- Refer to *Strength in Numbers*, Chapter 3. Comment about any status issues noticed. Also comment about efforts that you and/or students and/or the teacher made to assign competence.
- Rewrite two of the lower order questions as questions with a higher cognitive demand.

Additionally, ask your cooperating teacher if you may go over the homework for at least two days. Be sure to **stay within the time frame allotted** for this. Describe how you “go over” the problems.

If you do not handle homework, with teacher input, create an alternative engagement exercise to do instead.

Week 4:

On a day when there is not a test or a quiz, do the following. Be as accurate as you can.

State the objective of the lesson. If CCSS standards are addressed, specify the objective number(s) and content. (e.g., A-CED A1. Create equations and inequalities in one variable and use them to solve problems.) If the teacher writes the objective of the day on the board, copy it exactly as it appears. **Indicate whether this is the first day the objective** has been addressed, and if not, determine approximately how many days this objective has been addressed. **Which of the CCS Standards for Mathematical Practice were addressed? What fraction of the students do you think met the objective? What evidence do you have for saying so?**

All week, greet the students, by name, at the classroom door as they enter. Reflect at the end of the week if there seems to be a difference in student attitudes toward you, or your attitude toward them or the class as a whole as a result.

Ask your cooperating teacher to allow you to handle all of the administrative tasks for the week (e.g., attendance, hall passes, handing out papers, collecting papers, dealing with students who have been absent, entering grades into the grade book (if allowed), etc.) Describe what tasks you handled, and what was easy or difficult about each.

Week 5:

Your top priority is this week to prepare your lesson plans and confer with your mentor teacher to ensure that the plan is effective. Continue to help in class.

Again, all week, greet the students, by name, at the classroom door as they enter. Continue being a “teacher presence” in the classroom in appropriate ways.

Week 6:

1. Teach for three days. Make sure your teacher has seen your lessons well ahead of time, and that you have rehearsed.

- After each lesson, “debrief” with your cooperating teacher about how the lesson went, and focus on ways to improve each day. Submit a summary of the debrief comments.

2. Every teacher has strengths and weaknesses, including effective procedures, favorite activities, interactions with students, organization, etc.

- **Make a list of at least 5 things that your cooperating teacher does that you would like to do when you are teaching** in your own room, and for each, explain why.
- **Make a list of at least 3 things that your cooperating teacher does that you definitely would not do**, and for each, explain why.

3. Submit the complete lesson plans for your three lessons.

Practicum Project Rubric

Category	Points/Possible
Week 1	
Description of class	_____/10
Seating chart with student names/genders	_____/10
Classroom resources	_____/5
Teacher organization	_____/10
Reflection of classroom tutoring	_____/10
subtotal	_____/45
Week 2	
The first 5-10 minutes of class description	_____/10
Summary of 2 additional procedures used in your cooperating teacher's classroom (5 points each)	_____/10
Reflection of teaching warm-ups and/or homework solutions	_____/10
Subtotal	_____/30
Week 3	
Record of students sharing thinking & answers and comments	_____/10
Questions analysis /rewrite	_____/15
Status issues and assigned competence	_____/10
Homework problems reflection	_____/10
subtotal	_____/45
Week 4	
Objectives Analysis	_____/10
Reflection of greeting students	_____/5
Reflection of handling administrative tasks. 2-3 paragraphs, and include what tasks you handled, and specifics on some.	_____/10
subtotal	_____/50
Week 5	
Lesson plans complete questions	_____/60
subtotal	_____/60
Week 6	
List of 5 things you like and 3 things you don't like, and why.	_____/40
Debrief lessons with mentor summaries	_____/10
Presentation points	_____/40
Attendance Record	_____/30
subtotal	_____/120
TOTAL	_____/350

Extended Comments, if necessary.

The completed Practicum Tasks counts as 20% of your course grade.