

Education Department Field Experience Manual

The role of theory to classroom practice in field experiences

The major goal of field experience is to help students develop the ability to apply their college course work to what they observe in the K-12 classroom. Through observing and interacting with practicing professionals in their classrooms, Gettysburg College students will find real life examples and situations to connect what they are studying and discussing in the college classroom as they learn to apply educational and learning theory to classroom practices. By observing classroom teachers, you will begin to understand and to appreciate the complexity and the challenge of teaching, and to make a more informed career choice. During your classes, you will be expected to demonstrate that you can apply theory to the practical concerns of a unique group of students. Otherwise, the theory and research you read will be of little value in helping you to develop your effectiveness as a teacher.

Education courses are required for all students seeking a minor or any teaching certificate in Education at Gettysburg College. State of Pennsylvania regulations for teacher certification include the mandate that students should have a minimum of 60 hours of pre-student teaching in field experiences in a variety of settings, including working with special needs students and English Language Learners. As part of your course work in every Education class, *you will complete 15 of these required observation hours.*

Sequence of Field Experiences in the Education Department

All Education classes require field experiences and they are designed so that students will progressively be immersed in a variety of classroom cultures and practices. This includes at least 60 hours of observation and participation in appropriate classrooms. Content, methodology and field experiences are interwoven to offer a wide variety of experiences and opportunities for students. School visitations, microteaching, classroom observations, simulation activities, case studies, and student teaching are among the field experiences planned for students. Field requirements for each class are described in the syllabus for the course. These experiences allow for increasing involvement as the student progresses through the program. For example, Education 201 students observe and participate in whole class, small group, and tutoring instruction and begin lesson planning. Education 209 students participate in a service learning experience related to education of diverse populations. The three hundred level courses in the Education sequence require microteaching and team teaching as well as lesson planning. Student teaching, the culminating course in the program, requires the development and teaching of a unit and a professional teaching portfolio and presentation. All courses in the Education Department require the development of reflective thinking skills to analyze teaching events.

Act 34 and Act 151 Information*

Act 34 of the Pennsylvania School Code requires background checks for criminal records on new employees and volunteers in public and private schools. In order to complete your field experience requirements *all preservice and student teachers* must complete the following clearances:

- FBI Criminal Record Background Check with fingerprinting
- Pennsylvania State Criminal History Record Check
- Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance

Please contact the Administrative Assistant in the Education Department for exact procedures for clearances.

Pennsylvania's Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators is reproduced in full in Appendix B. Please be familiar with the code; while you are in Gettysburg College's program, you are expected to conduct yourself professionally as described in this document. The Teacher Education Committee requires that *all students enrolled in 300 and 400 level classes in the Education Department complete a self-report statement on good moral character certifying that you have not been charged with or convicted of a criminal offense since your application or admission to the Teacher Education program.*

Health Clearance*

All students are required to have a tine test or similar proof of freedom from tuberculosis before being admitted to field experiences and/or student teaching. The Gettysburg College Health Center will be working with students to offer this test as part of your field experience program. Please carry proof of your health clearance to the school site when you are working in the schools.

Clearances File

All students should submit both TB and ACT 34 and 151 clearances required by the state of Pennsylvania for school field experience participation to the Education Department Administrative Assistant so that your clearances are on file in your permanent record.

Documenting your field experience hours on the blue card

As a preservice teacher at Gettysburg College, you must plan field experiences in a variety of settings including those with diverse student populations. Blue cards are available in the Education Department for documenting your hours spent observing and

working in classrooms. Use the back of the card to detail the dates, times, and signatures of all supervisors of your field experience. The front of the card should be used to designate how many hours of field experience you completed during the semester. It is your responsibility to keep an accurate record. At the end of the semester (or any semester in which you complete field experiences,) your completed card should be submitted to the Academic Administrative Assistant for the Education Department. You will not be eligible for student teaching without satisfying the pre-student teaching field experience observation requirement. Documentation of a minimum of sixty hours of field experience is a prerequisite to student teaching. You are responsible for ensuring that the proper documentation is recorded in the Education Office.

Teacher certification is a privilege to be earned not a right to be demanded or expected. To be eligible for student teaching, Gettysburg College students must demonstrate such traits as integrity, responsibility, and professionalism in both campus life and field experience. The instructor of the course and the field placement supervisor (See Appendix A for checklists) will evaluate your performance and conduct. Results of these assessments may be used to evaluate your application for admission to the Education Semester. Any student conduct violations accrued on campus also become part of your file.

Interstate agreements for teaching certifications

Certificates issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education are recognized in a number of states either through interstate agreements or through the compatibility of the program with the requirements of other states. Information on particular states is available in the Education Department or at this website:

<http://www.uky.edu/Education/TEP/usacert.html>

However, requirements are subject to change without notice and students should contact the certification officer of the desired state for current information.

Field experience placements

The Director of Education Field Experiences will make your local field placement assignment. You will be assigned to a cooperating teacher in one of the local districts. It is your responsibility to contact your cooperating teacher and to participate during your scheduled lab time consistently throughout the semester. Your cooperating teacher will receive your letter of personal introduction as well as a letter regarding academic field experience expectations for your college class. Provide the cooperating teacher with your phone number and email so that you are accessible in an emergency. If you are interested and your cooperating teacher is willing, you may work with the teacher to arrange a more extensive field placement. In short, this is a professional experience, and you should try to develop a relationship of mutual trust and respect with these teachers who are willing to share their classroom for your professional benefit.

As with most everything, the more involved you become in the culture of the classroom, the more you will learn from the experience. Your purpose during the field experience is to participate, observe and analyze classroom events, and to consider how theory is applied to practice. Your purpose is not to criticize the teacher. We will take opportunities in class and in small group discussions to analyze field experience. During any conversations or written communications regarding your field experiences, you should maintain professional confidentiality. Use pseudonyms and not real names in your reflections. Both privacy and confidentiality should be respected. Also remember that professionals **never discuss confidential information with unauthorized personnel.**

Please consider that you are representing Gettysburg College at these schools and what you do lives on after you. It is vital that you be prompt, dependable, polite, courteous, helpful, and unobtrusive when necessary, appropriately dressed, and enthusiastic about learning to teach! It is important that you are conscientious about letting your host teacher know when you will be in class because he/she may be counting on your participation. At the end of your field experience, your cooperating teacher will complete a brief checklist (Appendix A) to comment on your performance and to elicit suggestions for improving the quality of preservice field experiences. These evaluations will be made available to members of the Teacher Education Committee as they review your application for student teaching.

Social Networking and Professionalism

As professionals, and because we are in the information age, please be advised that whatever you put online (or whatever your friends put on line that is linked to or otherwise identifies you) can be accessed by students, parents, professional colleagues, supervisors, or administrators. We discourage you from posting personal details or compromising information in a public online forum (MySpace, blogs, and other social networking sites). We discourage you from allowing friends to post any compromising information on those sites as well.

Remember:

- Always obtain the cooperating teacher's permission and advice before completing any special projects with the students.
- The field experience is not designed to interrupt the classroom teacher's normal classroom routine.
- You should discuss with your host teacher what is considered appropriate professional dress in that school.
- From time to time, your cooperating teacher may ask you to share your journal.

- Sending a thank you note to your field experience supervisor is recommended since they have contributed to your growth as professionals.
- Always behave professionally according to guidelines delineated in Pennsylvania's Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators.

Field Experience Assessment

Field assessment for each class will be determined by the instructor. However, we will want to see evidence that you can

- apply the theories we read about to concrete situations
- generalize to other possible scenarios
- develop the ability to ask good questions that get at the heart of teaching and learning
- include direct references to class & other professional readings as well as class discussion
- develop and demonstrate planning, management, and instructional strategy skills.

Please review this summary of your field experience responsibilities prior to your first school visit:

- Complete your clearances and submit copies to the Education Department
- Read the entire handbook before you make contact with the cooperating teacher
- Complete and send a brief biographical letter to your cooperating teacher prior to your first class visit
- Contact the cooperating teacher; email the placement officer (wforeman@gettysburg.edu) when you make your first visit.
- Arrange your own transportation
- Dress professionally
- Observe correct language usage
- Record all emergency phone numbers (school, teacher's home phone number)
- Call the cooperating teacher in the event of an emergency or a change of plans
- Maintain confidentiality
- Exhibit enthusiasm, interest, and appreciation for your field opportunity

Thinking about your Field Work

The following focus questions are suggested to help you maximize your observations; however you should consider creating your own questions regarding the application of social foundations, educational psychology, and advanced methods course work to classroom practice based on the characteristics of your unique field placement. Another resource, *Putting Research to Work* by Berliner and Casanova (available in the Education Department) can be used to assist you in the design of relevant focus questions.

1. Diversity and Demographics of your Placement: How do the demographic characteristics of your school and its community affect your understanding and inform your ideas regarding education? To answer this question you will need to research in some detail the diversity of the student body, the staff, and the community in which the school resides. How does the school's curriculum reflect the cultural diversity of these students? Include information on parent involvement, grading practices, and alignment of teachers' and students' cultural backgrounds.
2. Cognitive Development: In what ways does the teacher plan instruction to meet the zone of proximal development (i.e. how are the students helped to move beyond their current level of development?)? In what ways do you observe students' cognitive development through their interactions with other students and/or the teacher? How does Piagetian stage theory or Vygotsky's ideas on the importance of social interaction to cognitive development relate to instructional practice in this classroom? How does the teacher adapt instruction to meet the special needs of learners? How can educators' actions and dialogue impact the classroom climate and therefore individual students' cognitive development?
3. Language Development: What does the teacher do to encourage language development? What language competencies do you observe in these students? How is literature used in this classroom? How much time is devoted to reading, writing, and speaking in this classroom? How do non-native speakers develop language skills from instruction in this classroom? How does the teacher respond to the diverse backgrounds, appearances, actions, behaviors, attitudes, beliefs and social identities of students in the class? How do these characteristics affect acting, talking, and writing in the classroom?
4. Psychosocial and Moral Development: How does the pacing of instruction fit or not fit the psychosocial development of these students? How does the psychosocial development of students affect their academic performance? What evidence do you find of these students' moral development? How does the teacher communicate moral/ethical values to the students? How does the curriculum introduce and advance moral/ethical development of students? How does the teacher's philosophy communicate moral and ethical expectations for the students in the class?
5. Behavioral Theory: What examples of behavioral theory do you observe in this classroom? How effective is the teacher's use of behavioral principles? How is social learning taking place in this classroom? Discuss the effects of behavioral issues on learning.

6. **Cognitive Information Processing Theory:** What evidence do you see that students from different cultures engage in different cognitive processes? How does the teacher apply cognitive theory in the classroom—use of schema, advanced organizers, concept mapping, study skills, metacognitive strategies, etc.? How are the methods of presenting concepts varied?
7. **Thinking Skills and Problem Solving:** What kinds of questions and authentic problem solving does the teacher present and how does questioning stimulate higher-level thinking? Do the questions appear to vary in frequency or type according to the student's sex, ethnicity, class, etc.? How do problem solving and questioning utilize student interaction, cooperation, and/or socialization?
8. **Motivation:** In what ways could the design of instruction in this class be characterized as motivating or not motivating and why? Do certain types of lessons appear to be more motivating than others, or more motivating for some students rather than all? How do these students appear to be motivated—from extrinsic or intrinsic rewards? What differences are there among students? How do grades and tests appear to affect motivation? How does classroom climate affect motivation?
9. **Lesson Design and Instructional Effectiveness:** What are the goals for this lesson? What did the teacher want to accomplish? How does the teacher use praise? How much of the class time do students appear to be engaged in assigned activities (time on task)? Do the lessons appear to be geared to meet the needs of the individual students, particularly those with special needs? How does assessment reflect instructional effectiveness?
10. **Classroom Management:** Does the teacher employ an identifiable classroom management program? Would you characterize this teacher's management style as consistent with the teacher's identified philosophy? Why? Does the teacher's approach seem more effective with some students than with others and why? How does organization affect the flow of the classroom?
11. **Assessment and Evaluation:** How is testing used in this classroom? What do grades represent? What examples of performance assessment or alternative assessment do you observe in use? How do students react to assessment? How much voice do students have in assessment practice? How well does a specific assessment adjust for individual differences and backgrounds? How does standardized testing drive instruction in this classroom?
12. **Multiple Perspectives of Learning:** What are the different learning styles exhibited in the classroom and how does the teacher promote the success of all students? How does the teacher choose appropriate instructional strategies for the learners in the classroom? How is self-regulation encouraged in students? What combinations of learning theory do you see demonstrated in this classroom?

Thinking About Classroom Practices and their Effectiveness

The following list provides a helpful framework for considering and interpreting the effectiveness of classroom practices. (This material is paraphrased and used with permission from the Professional Assessment and Comprehensive Evaluation System [PACES, Ellett, 2000] currently used to evaluate effective teaching practices:

Planning

How effective is the teaching plan and the learning task or activity for meeting the teaching objective? Do these tasks follow a logical progression for learners? Do they accommodate all the learners in the classroom? Do activities enable and promote thinking skills in learners? Are supplemental activities planned that extend learning for those learners who need extra help and those who may finish early? Is there a reasonable match between the time allocated for learning, each teaching method, and learning task? Is depth and broad coverage of content considered in the teaching plan? Are learners involved and engaged in their own learning? Is homework required for learning and practicing objectives taught? Does the teacher provide timely and high quality feedback when learners are practicing the concepts to be mastered? How is achievement of the objective assessed (informally and formally)? Are learners aware of the standards and the expectations by which their work is to be judged?

Time Management

Does learning begin promptly and is it managed throughout the lesson with few inefficient delays or organizational glitches? Do learning activities continue throughout the entire lesson? Do learners pay attention before directions for routines are communicated? Are students actively engaged? (Scanning the classroom at regular intervals and recording the number of learners that are off task at each scan can provide important data for learner engagement rates). Are off-task learners monitored and redirected verbally or nonverbally? Does the lesson include variation in teaching and learning activities? Are there fair and consistent consequences to enhance learning conditions and learning equity for all learners?

Interpersonal Relations

Does the classroom climate evidence courtesy and respect among teachers and learners? (Sarcasm, ridicule and derogatory remarks should not be present). Is the teacher enthusiastic about the content taught and for learning generally? Does the teacher demonstrate patience, empathy, and/or understanding for learners? Are teaching and learning activities personalized for the learners?

Learning Equity

Are all learners provided with opportunities to participate and engage in learning? Does the teacher involve students throughout the lesson through questioning, examples, demonstrations, etc.? Is the teacher fair and impartial in interactions with and among all learners? Are learners provided with reasons for actions decisions and/or directives as needed?

Enhancing and Enabling Learning

Does the teacher secure learner attention, clearly communicate expectations, and provide an appropriate context for the new learning? Does the lesson proceed in a logical sequence, incorporating summary and review? Does the lesson end with an appropriate closure? Are the methods, tasks and related resources for learning used in ways that facilitate achievement of planned objectives? Is the information presented accurate, up-to-date, and communicated clearly by using appropriate vocabulary for the developmental level and ability levels of learners? Are the essential elements emphasized and do effective questioning techniques extend thinking skills? Are misunderstandings or misconceptions effectively and efficiently readdressed? Does the teacher monitor and adjust teaching and learning when indicated by learner performance?

Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy

Does the teacher use different topics, teaching methods and learning tasks as appropriate for different topics, contexts, teaching methods, and learning tasks? Do learners have opportunities to learn at more than one cognitive and or performance level? Are the teacher and the learner co-participants in developing knowledge and in accomplishing learning goals and objectives? Is content knowledge clear and accurate for learners? Do learners understand explanations of content and learning tasks? Are areas of potential confusion and emphasized and clarified?

Enabling Thinking

Does the teacher use methods that actively engage and or involve the learners by providing opportunities to develop concepts and skills in generating, structuring, integrating, transferring, and transforming knowledge? Does the teacher use wait time and questioning strategies to extend the responses of students? Does the lesson include homework for extending and developing student thinking? Is the learner actively making associations about the content? Do learners generate their own examples from their experiences? Do learners elaborate responses to content and create new and original examples that extend their abilities to think critically?

Classroom Based Assessment of Learning

Does the teacher actively and continuously monitor pupil progress in meeting lesson objectives (both formally and informally)? Do learners receive specific and individual feedback about learning? Does the teacher adjust teaching methods and learning tasks to reflect information provided by assessment? Does feedback include suggestions for improving performances and encouragement of subsequent effort? Does feedback broaden understanding and mastery of content knowledge?

Professional Responsibilities

Does the teacher reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of lessons, learning tasks, and learners? Does the teacher promote student learning and advance school improvement? Does the teacher keep accurate records? Does the teacher facilitate home-school communications? Does the teacher plan and incorporate technology in the teaching and learning process?

Other Field Opportunities

Advancing Science Outreach Program

Gettysburg College sponsors a progressive program, which brings Pennsylvania and Maryland teachers together with college faculty to develop new curriculum ideas in interdisciplinary, problem-based learning in the sciences. Teachers participate in workshops providing training with mobile resources and interdisciplinary science activities. Then the Advancing Science program delivers portable instruments, computers, supplies, and project ideas to classrooms of K-12 teachers. The program's Teacher Specialists visit the classrooms and assist with delivery of the program requested. Programs range from Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Earth and Space Science, with a little math and psychology thrown into the mix.

If you would like to participate during workshops (on campus) or classroom visits (off campus), the Advancing Science Program would welcome your responsible involvement. To participate in the Advancing Science Outreach Program, you should email Greg Anderson (ganderso@gettysburg.edu). One of the teacher specialists will contact you by email about your interest and provide you with details. If you respond to their email that you are still interested in participating, one of them will provide you with a list of scheduled visits and locations, including the date, return time, age group, and a brief description of activity. After you select the program you will attend, notify the teacher specialist of your intent to participate.

Your role will be to interact with the students as another adult in the classroom while the activity takes place. With older students that may mean supervising and answering questions; with younger students, you will get actively involved in the procedure. You will be expected to assist in loading and unloading the van and setting up the equipment. If you ride with the van, **you must be punctual.**

Participating in the Advancing Science Program would be an excellent field experience opportunity for those of you interested in science and interdisciplinary curriculum. Several of the journal focus questions would be appropriate for reflecting on instructional strategy and effectiveness, management, and thinking and problem solving skills. We encourage your support of this valuable program.

Service learning programs sponsored by the Center for Public Service (extension 6490)

Local tutoring and reading programs sponsored by individual schools

Important Dates and News from the Education Department:

- Applications for student teaching are due during the fall semester one year in advance of your proposed student teaching semester. Applications are due to your major department by Sept. 10 and to the Education Office by Oct. 15. Check the Education Handbook or website for further information and details.
- The Education Department maintains a website. Visit it at www.gettysburg.edu/Education. The site contains valuable information and links that you may find useful throughout your education program at Gettysburg.
- At the end of every semester, student teachers present their professional portfolios to the campus community. We encourage you to attend several of these sessions before your own student teaching experience.
- New requirements mandate that students must complete the required (*) PRAXIS tests for certification prior to student teaching and for admission to the student teaching semester. There is a charge for tests, and to be certified in Pennsylvania, you must successfully pass all tests listed below as per your certification area:

Required Praxis Exams by Certificate

ELEMENTARY

10710 Reading*
20720 Writing*
10730 Math*
10011 Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
30511 Fundamental Subjects Content Knowledge

Music

10710 Reading*
20720 Writing*
10730 Math*
30511 Fundamental Subjects Content Knowledge
10113 for Music Content Knowledge

Foreign Language

10710 Reading*
20720 Writing*
10730 Math*
30511 Fundamental Subjects Content Knowledge
& appropriate area content test: French (20173), Spanish (10191), Latin (10600), German (20181)

SECONDARY

10710 Reading*
20720 Writing*
10730 Math*
& appropriate Content Knowledge Exam

Registration information, test dates, and locations are available in the education office and online at

<http://www.ets.org/praxis>

Praxis I (Reading, Writing, & Math) can be completed online at Sylvan Learning Center, 2544 Eastern Blvd., York, PA, 17402. Call to schedule an appointment (717.840.9600 or 717-755-7471)

List of Appendices

Appendix A	Checklists for Field Placement Performance and Departmental Evaluations
Appendix B	Pennsylvania's Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators
Miscellaneous	Letter to field experience cooperating teacher

Appendix A

Link to Facilitator Observation form: http://www.gettysburg.edu/academics/education/education_minor/field-experience-documents/facilitatorobserveeval.doc

Link to Participant Observation form: http://www.gettysburg.edu/academics/education/education_minor/field-experience-documents/PARTICIPANTOBSERVEVAL.doc

Link to Field Placement Feedback—Mentor: http://www.gettysburg.edu/academics/education/education_minor/field-experience-documents/FieldPlacementFeedbackrev6-7-07.doc

Link to Field Placement Feedback--Self Assessment: http://www.gettysburg.edu/academics/education/education_minor/field-experience-documents/FieldPlacementFeedback--selfAssessmentrev6-7-07.doc

Appendix B

Link to Pennsylvania's Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators:
<http://www.pde.state.pa.us/pspc/cwp/view.asp?a=3&q=113571&pspcNav=6561|&pspcNav=>

Miscellaneous

Letter to field experience cooperating teacher:

Biographical Information Letter for your Field Experience cooperating Teacher

1. Prepare a letter offering biographical statement to share with your cooperating teacher. Make this letter a reflection of your personality!
2. Send this letter to your cooperating teacher, either by email or snail mail, as soon as your cooperating teacher is named. Ideally, the letter will precede your first visit to the school and will serve as your introduction.
3. Submit a copy of your letter to your course instructor.

Planning Organizer for your Letter
Hometown
Major
Minor
Why you decided to study education
Grade level of most interest
Email & phone contact information
Work experiences
Travel experiences
Technology competencies
Hobbies, interests, skills
Language skills
Set a goal for your field experience