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Grande Prairie Regional College
Department of Early Childhood Development

CD1040 AND CD1060
ON-CAMPUS
PRACTICUM 1 AND SEMINAR 1

DESCRIPTION AND GUIDE

Revised: June, 2000

PRACTICUM DESCRIPTION

The practicum component of the Early Childhood Development programme consists of practical experiences in community services such as day care centres, playschools, kindergartens and special placements from Monday to Thursday of designated practicum weeks. Students must successfully complete time and task requirements as well as demonstrate a rapport with young children and a growing knowledge of, and willingness to assist with, routines.

During Practicum 1, the student is required to complete a minimum of 20 days of practicum, each day consisting of seven working hours for a minimum total of 140 hours. The student must complete the time commitment to receive credit. Absences from practicum must be made up prior to the end of the semester.

The student must notify the practicum supervisor and the practicum instructor prior to, or as early as possible, regarding absences.

The Early Childhood Development Department observes all statutory holidays. Closures in the school system will not be considered absences in applicable practicum placements.

In order to integrate the practicum component with class content, and to share and expand experiences, students will regularly meet for scheduled practicum seminars.

GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICUM SUPERVISORS

Practicum provides important learning experiences for each student in our programme. We ask that supervisors share the philosophy of their programme with the student and give the student an opportunity to fulfill all expectations and to challenge individual capabilities. To guide supervisors, we offer the following suggestions:

1. Delegate responsibility according to the level of the student's experience. During the first practicum, the inexperienced student should deal with individual children and small groups. The experienced student may be ready to take on large groups and/or increased responsibilities.
2. Assist the student to be aware of the rules and procedures in the centre/ programme. The student will need clear direction regarding her/his role in all routine activities.
3. Discuss the student's written plans prior to, or on the first morning of each practicum week. The student is responsible for coordinating practicum and course assignments with the centre's schedule. Assignments will require observations of children and child/adult interactions. The student is also expected to provide a variety of experiences for the children. Written plans should be initialed and dated by the supervisor upon presentation.
4. Provide positive reinforcement and on-going feedback. It is important that you interpret incidents to students as they occur whenever possible. It is strongly recommended that you and the student arrange time for regular discussions of daily events. This will help the student feel involved with the programme and promote opportunities for learning. Discuss the student's progress on an informal daily basis. In order for the student to prepare written plans for the following practicum week, the supervisor should be prepared to share programming ideas and identify goals for each practicum week.
5. Keep a record of student attendance on the provided time sheet. This record will be submitted to the instructor at the end of the practicum placement.
6. Students should not be left alone with a group of children nor should they be used as substitutes for regular staff. This helps to ensure that students are given appropriate supervision and feedback regarding their interactions with children.
7. Provide the student with a comprehensive verbal evaluation midway through the practicum. A written evaluation at this time is recommended. At the end of the practicum, the student and the supervisor should discuss in-depth the final written evaluation of the student's overall growth and development prior to submission to the college instructor.

GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICUM INSTRUCTORS

1. The college instructor will visit the assigned student at least three times throughout the practicum placement.
2. The instructor's role will be to observe the student, discuss individual progress, and identify the needs of the student in consultation with the supervisor. The instructor is a consultant for both the student and the supervisor. A written evaluation will be completed by the instructor mid-way through practicum and upon completion.
3. The instructor is always available to both student and supervisor should any questions or concerns arise.
4. The final evaluation of the student will be determined by the instructor with input from the practicum supervisor.

GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICUM STUDENTS

1. The student is expected to become familiar with the philosophy, policies, routines, and methods that are used in the practicum setting.
2. The student is expected to demonstrate a professional attitude with regard to attendance, punctuality, dress, confidentiality and feedback.
3. The student must contact the practicum supervisor and the instructor as soon as possible if late or absent.
4. The student is expected to share plans with the practicum supervisor on the Monday morning of each practicum week and have them initialled by the supervisor.
5. The student is expected to share all written plans with the practicum instructor during each practicum visit.
6. The student is expected to inform the supervisor of scheduled visits by the practicum instructor.
7. The student will consult with room supervisors for informal feedback at the end of each day.
8. **The student will consult with the supervisor to discuss plans prior to the following practicum week.**
9. The student will take equal responsibility with the supervisor in initiating ongoing communication.
10. The student will display a desire to learn.
11. The student will spend time assisting with the day to day operations of the programme through preparation, clean up, assistance with routines, etc.
12. The student will assess personal progress in working with children, and to act upon this assessment. The process of self-evaluation is an important part of learning and personal growth. This evaluation will occur orally in informal discussions with the practicum instructor and the practicum supervisor.

PRACTICUM 1 EXPECTATIONS

This semester the student will focus on work with individuals and small groups of children. The more experienced student may be ready to work with larger groups.

1. The student will begin to develop skill in establishing rapport with young children
2. The student will begin to develop skills in setting and maintaining appropriate limits.
3. The student will interact with, and begin to develop skill in facilitating the play of young children in a variety of play areas.
4. The student will begin to develop skills in observing, recording, interpreting and assessing the behaviour of young children.
5. The student will begin to develop skills in planning and implementing learning experiences based on the developmental needs and interests of young children.
6. The student will demonstrate increasing skills in planning, implementing and evaluating experiences in such areas as art, literature, music, movement and motor development.
7. The student will demonstrate professionalism in regard to attendance, punctuality, dress, confidentiality, and receiving feedback.
8. The student will begin to develop skills in communicating and working collaboratively with all other adults in the programme.

PRACTICUM TASKS

Students may be required to make regular journal entries. Guidelines for this journal are on page 7. This journal will be reviewed by your instructor and used as a basis for discussion during practicum visits and seminar.

WEEK 1: ORIENTATION

During this week students are expected to interact informally with the children in all aspects of the programme (eg. indoor and outdoor activity periods, routines). The student should begin to establish a rapport with the children and adults in the programme. Opportunities to observe the children should be included in this week, as well as throughout the semester. The programme philosophy, rules, regulations, routines, procedures and goals should be identified by the student during this week.

WEEKS 2-5

Throughout the remaining weeks, students will be expected to actively participate in all aspects of the programme, including observing and participating in children's outdoor and indoor play in a variety of centres. This is an opportunity for students to become familiar with young children: their stages of development, how they play and interact with others, as well as the adult's role.

Students will also be responsible for planning and implementing a variety of experiences for young children. Specific tasks required by the student will be identified in consultation with the instructor. This individualized approach will assist the student to build on strengths, address weaknesses, and will reflect the uniqueness of each practicum setting. The student can expect that the tasks will include at least some of the following:

- a) Art experiences using a variety of media.
- b) A variety of songs, fingerplays, games, nursery rhymes, poems and stories, some of which will include the use of props such as puppets and flannelboard characters.
- c) Observations and other assignments as designated by individual course instructors.
- d) Motor experiences based on children's abilities and interests.

PRACTICUM JOURNAL GUIDELINES

The practicum journal is primarily a tool for student reflection. Journal entries may provide an opportunity to:

- consider children's interactions with materials and peers during play
- consider and reflect on child-adult interactions
- reflect on your role in children's play
- reflect on your ability to communicate effectively with children and adults
- consider the differing abilities of children and the practices used to support development
- assess your own development as an early childhood professional
- ask questions regarding practicum and the early childhood profession
- comment on your increasing understanding of the role of the early childhood professional

All journal entries must respect the confidential rights of the children and adults in the programme.

SEMINAR DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the seminar which accompanies the practicum is to allow students to integrate the theories they are being exposed to in their course work with their own emerging practices. As well, since some of the practices which students will observe are different from the philosophical approach espoused by the Early Childhood Development Department, it is necessary for students to understand some of the reasons for this discrepancy. Seminar, then, should serve both short term and long term needs.

1. In the first practicum experience students are often preoccupied with immediate concerns such as planning activities and dealing with limit setting. Ample time to discuss specific issues will be allocated; however, this should not be the only focus.
2. Students should have an opportunity to examine their own assumptions, biases and personal history and to determine the impact of these factors on their current and developing beliefs and practices in terms of their work with young children.
3. Students can critically examine their own beliefs in relation to practices to which they have been exposed and explore the reasons for different styles of and approaches to working with young children.
4. The above mentioned topics may be discussed on an on-going basis throughout practicum. Other issues which will no doubt arise during consideration of the above items may include: advocacy not only for young children, but for the early childhood professional, professionalism and continued peer support after graduation, and guiding children's behaviour.
5. Regular journal entries may assist the student in reflecting on their beliefs and behaviours as well as their own learning and development.

The integration and application of course content will be a primary focus in seminar. It should not only provide a time for students to discuss their immediate concerns but should also develop a spirit of critical inquiry. Preparation in the form of reading, thinking and writing will constitute a vital component of seminar.

CD1060

SEMINAR GUIDELINES

Seminar provides students with the opportunity to integrate practicum with class content and to share and expand experiences. Students will meet regularly for scheduled seminars. CD1060 Seminar 1 is a co-requisite for CD1040 Practicum 1. **Attendance at Seminar is compulsory.**

CD1060 will focus on the needs and interests of practicum students and include:

1. Sharing and analyzing experiences in practicum settings.
2. Reflecting on appropriate practices in programmes for young children.
3. Discussing and collaborating with peers regarding curriculum planning, guiding children's behaviour, and observing and interpreting children's behaviour.
4. Researching and presenting (orally or in writing) information relating to the field of early childhood education.