

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF ART, EDUCATION, AND COMMERCE
EDUCATION PRACTICUM
EDUCATION 2530
FALL, 1998.

INSTRUCTOR: Jan Shields

OFFICE: C-313A

CONTACT: 539-2861 (office) 532-4295 (home) e-mail: shields@gprc.ab.ca

OFFICE HOURS: MWF: 11:30 a.m. to 12:30, MW 2:15 to 3:00 and by appointment

TEXT AND MATERIALS

Education Practicum Manual: Fall 1998- Winter 1999

Beauchamp, L., & Parsons, J. (1992). Teaching from the inside out.
Edmonton, AB: Les Editions Duval Inc.

OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

The Education Practicum (Ed 2530) is designed for students in the first or second year of the B. Ed. (UA) or Combined Degrees Program (UL). The primary purposes of the course are to introduce beginning teacher candidates to the professional life of the teacher and to orient them to the school and the classroom setting.

The course objectives are met through coursework and a 10-day field experience, which runs concurrently with the course. Students work with two cooperating teachers over the term—one at the elementary level and one at the secondary level.

The combined coursework and field experience are intended to enhance student's awareness of the multiple responsibilities and diverse demands of teaching. While the most prominent role of the teacher is that of instructor, the tasks and responsibilities associated with teaching extend far beyond matters of instruction.

Student teachers will have opportunities to study the many aspects of teaching, to observe and talk with students, teachers, and other professionals in the school, and to assist teachers in various aspects of their work.

MAJOR OBJECTIVES

1. To assist student teachers in making a decision about the teaching profession as a personal career choice.
2. To assist student teachers in choosing between the secondary and elementary route.
3. To help student teachers begin to develop an understanding of what it means to be a teacher: the how, what, and why of teaching.

Teachers learn three times: once for their own personal growth and understanding, a second time to apply their new knowledge, skills, and habits of mind to help students learn, and a third to continue to increase their effectiveness

Teachers must know not only their subject matter, but also the students they teach. As Beauchamp and Parsons (1992) point out "every single child in every single classroom is a sacred trust given to teachers" (p. vii).

4. To develop student teachers' capabilities to do systematic, field-based inquiry. The foundation of field-based inquiry is good observation and analysis skills. As students investigate how teachers and students carry out their roles in the classroom and within the wider school context, they are also developing important skills that will assist them in diagnosing student needs and solving teaching and classroom management problems.
5. To develop student teachers' capabilities to think reflectively about their educational experiences and their related values and beliefs. The capability to reflect-in-action and to reflect-on-action are fundamental skills and habits of mind that underlie learning to teach effectively.
6. To introduce student teachers to issues and concerns related to practice. Due to time constraints, students should appreciate that this course can only offer a brief overview of educational theory and practice.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

Ed 2530 entails two complementary kinds of learning experience:

SEMINAR

The seminar provides an introduction to the teaching role. Students will explore many aspects of teaching and learning to teach that can be applied in their school observations and experiences.

Seminar attendance is extremely important to facilitate understanding and interpretation of the field experience and to assure that the practicum runs smoothly. Students are encouraged to attend faithfully and to let me know if they are unable to attend class.

SCHOOL-BASED PRACTICUM

The school-based practicum provides students with opportunities to participate in the life of schools and classrooms; to work in a limited way with students at different grade levels; and to observe, investigate, and subsequently analyze instances of the ideas discussed in the seminars.

The field experience consists of two five-week rounds of school visits, one in an elementary school setting and one in a secondary school setting. During each round, the student will spend five (5) full days or ten (10) half-days at an assigned school. Students must have either one full-day (8:00-4:00) or two half-days (8:00-12:30 or 12:30-4:00) available each week in order to fulfil the practicum requirement.

While in the schools, students will (1) participate in teaching-related activities associated with teachers' diverse roles and responsibilities, (2) observe students and teachers and discuss their growing understanding of what it means to be a teacher with their cooperating teachers, their student colleagues, and their seminar leader, and (3) conduct more formal, systematic, observation-based investigations (OBI's) of the multiple roles and responsibilities associated with teaching. The student will select ONE investigation EACH round with help from the cooperating teacher.

Sept. 2-23 Preparation for the Practicum

Overview. Student teachers will focus on the following topics: Choosing to Teach, Your Teaching Career, Professionalism, and Teaching Philosophy. In addition, student teachers will learn and practice a number of observation techniques.

Principles. Teachers who understand themselves and are clear about their values and beliefs can make more congruent decisions and direct their teaching energies more positively. Observation is the basis of responsive teaching and accurate diagnosis of student problems.

Sept. 28 to Oct. 30 Round I The Practicum

Overview. Student teachers will focus on the School Curriculum, Planning for Teaching, and Teaching and Learning Strategies.

Principles. Sound practice is the foundation for serving the needs of students. For the sake of students, practitioners continuously strive to improve their practice.

Nov. 2
to Dec. 4

Round II The Practicum

Overview. Student teachers will focus on Students, Classroom Diversity and Equity, and the Dynamics of Classroom Life.

Principles. Not all students come to the classroom with the same history and experiences: "Wes is not like Judy. Their bodies, minds, and personalities are different in many ways. They are unique in their fingerprints and personal history. Their needs, desires, and dreams are different, and teachers must strive to respond to that uniqueness in their own unique way" (Garrison, 1997, p.18).

Responsive teaching requires the capacity to see students, events, and situations from multiple perspectives. Teachers use practical reasoning to creatively transform distressing and needful situations into more desirable ones.

POLICIES RELATED TO ASSIGNMENTS

Late Policy

All assignments are expected to be turned in on time. When legitimate circumstances make this impossible, the student should make alternate arrangements with the instructor prior to the due date.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using people's ideas or words without giving them credit. Students should be aware that plagiarism is a serious breach of academic integrity. Evidence of it will result in a failing grade.

Course Credit

Student teachers' in-school performance during each round will be evaluated as satisfactory or unsatisfactory on the basis of the cooperating teacher's completion of the Assessment of Student Development form. Students who receive unsatisfactory ratings in both rounds of school visits will not be granted course credit.

Students who receive a unsatisfactory rating in one round of school visits may not be granted course credit, subject to a review of the circumstances and his or her standing in the seminar.

A student must successfully complete both the on-campus component and the in-school component of Ed 2530 in order to earn credit in the course.