***PREPARING FOR SUCCESS IN THE EXTENDED PRACTICUM EDUC 421 2014***

***(Retain this document for reference in your practicum binder)***

1. ***Getting Started***

* In terms of unit planning, we would encourage you to stay in touch with your SAs, pin down all unit topics and fill out the practicum overview of what will be taught and when. You should also keep your practicum unit topics/themes in mind when preparing teaching units and resources in your Term 1 & 2 courses.
* **Teaching in a 10-week practicum:**

For the first week, you will teach +20-30% (similar to Oct/Nov), the following 2-3 weeks at +40-50%; and then increase your teaching time to 60-70% and 80% (all but 1 period/class a day) for 4 weeks, with the Spring Break from March 17-28. In the final week you will “phase out”, finishing unit plans, completing any tasks you did not have a chance to finish, field trips, visits to other classrooms, assessing students, writing reports, etc. The final summative conference is scheduled for the week of April 14th.

**NOTE: TCs must realize that there is no slow build up in the 10-week practicum and this requires that your units be ready early.**

***2. Getting Ready for School***

* Become familiar with the 3-column document outlining responsibilities for teacher candidates, school advisors and faculty advisors at various stages of our 10-week adventure (see attached). Keep it in your practicum binder and refer to it in an ongoing way. Ask any questions if there are responsibilities that are unclear or unaddressed. Also, review the UBC Practicum Guidelines and feel free to ask any questions in advance. See link at:

<http://teach.educ.ubc.ca/resources/pdfs/guides/BEd-Practicum-Guidelines-2013-14.pdf>

* Please note that attendance is imperative during all phases of the practicum. For an absence of 4

days, a medical note will be required and the practicum may be extended accordingly. **If you become ill enough to warrant being absent from school, call your school advisor well in advance or early in the morning and make sure they have your lesson plans and materials.** Do not leave a phone message. Your SA will be your TOC and they deserve to be left well prepared. **Please also email me as I am required to keep a record of attendance.**  You need to make sure that your students are taken care of and that other professionals are prepared to step in for you.

* + Ensure that all lesson preparation (charts, photocopying, gathering of manipulatives, materials, etc.) is completed ***the night before*** teaching. Leave this ready at the school in case someone needs to cover for you. *It is wise to avoid the copy room in the morning, as it can be busy with regular staff lining up for the machine.*
* Limit any outside commitments so that you can concentrate all of your energy on the requirements of your final practicum. It is vital that this teaching experience is your first priority and that you attend all meetings and stay after school. Your schedule, of course, will be based on your SA’s availability and timing.
* Prepare your Practicum Binder as requested for EDUC 315. This will be an ongoing system whereby you organize your observations, unit and lesson plans and document your learning experiences between Feb. 3 and April 25.
* ***This binder should be kept up-to-date and made accessible in your classroom for review by your SA and FA at any time during the practicum.***
* A journal is also a great idea to write/answer questions for your School Advisor(s).
* Be professional at all times. Set yourself up for success by arriving at the school at least 45 minutes before the bell, wearing your badge, checking in at the office and organizing your workspace. Find out where you will receive mail (notices, school info) and check regularly. Check on a daily basis the sign-in book or school’s system for informing staff of daily notices, reminders and special announcements. Stay at the school as long as you need each day to consult with your SA and be fully prepared for the next day (at least 45 minutes after the bell).
* Find out how to be part of the coffee fund or other staff routines (potluck lunches etc.). You don’t have to participate but don’t partake without contributing.
* Have a “Big Picture” discussion with your S.A. Align your 10-week calendar with theirs. Make sure to note things like report card due dates, Parent-Teacher Conferences etc. Also include Pro D dates, scheduled school assemblies, performances and special events, class field or camping trips and track meets if you are assisting in coaching. All of these things involve you and affect your planning and the implementation of your units. You will notice that there are many things scheduled for this latter part of the school year – best to plan ahead and around them. Additional things will “pop-up” and you will need to be flexible.

Add the known events to your calendar now.

* Get to know the staff (i.e., teacher librarian, office staff, administrators, resource team, supervision aides etc.). Visit the staff room, attend staff and committee meetings as appropriate. Try to attend a Parent Advisory Council meeting, too.
* Try to become a part of the school. Get around visiting other classes before your load builds up. Make connections/observe the work of specialist teachers (i.e., Music, Resource Room or a subject you will *not* teach). The Librarian can be an invaluable support to you in locating resources to enhance your units. Take the opportunity to co-teach a lesson or two with these people in order to broaden your experience. Also make a point of connecting with support staff (SEAs, Childcare Workers, Multicultural Workers, and Speech/Language Specialists etc.). They have much to offer in their knowledge of individual students, families and the broader school community. Be sure to respect and connect with the office staff and to leave your room clean for the engineer/custodian. Do not “make more work” for people who are already very busy.
* **Professional Development Opportunities**

Talk with your SA to find out about teachers’ Pro D within the District. You will need to be registered on the VSB’s network to register. Within your school, there will be regular school-based Pro D activity already planned for the staff as a whole.

1. ***Working With Your School Advisor***

* Talk with your SA about photocopying guidelines. Most schools are on a tight budget and we also want to minimize consumption of paper for environmental reasons. Make sure that what you copy is important and essential. If you want to make copies of resources for your personal collection, speak to your SA about how you can pay for that. They will usually give you quite a reasonable rate per page.
* Take time to establish a professional relationship with your School Advisor. Arrive at school a minimum of 45 minutes prior to the start of the school day to assist with preparations and discuss what is planned. Do this regardless of what time your SA arrives. Remain after school a minimum of 45 minutes to debrief and help with preparations for the next day. **You need to follow the SA’s schedule - if s/he comes earlier or stays later, please do the same**. It is not acceptable to arrive or leave at the same time as the students. This will result in an Interim Report.
* Ask questions, seek advice and indicate your openness to feedback. Take the initiative to clarify expectations and establish an ongoing dialogue with your advisor(s). Practice your communication skills and ask for direction or clarification; (i.e., *“Have I been specific enough about my responsibilities”, “Have we covered your expectations?” “How might I help when I’m not observing or teaching?”*).
* Find out about emergency procedures (medical, fire, earthquakes). \* Please note that the SA should be in the classroom most of the time during the first weeks of practicum. If s/he needs to leave briefly, please be aware of where s/he is and what to do in an emergency. By the midpoint of the practicum, the SA will gradually withdraw so that you can assume more independence. Still, the SA should be available within the school at all times during the practicum – **you are not an employee of the school district, and therefore cannot assume the legal responsibilities of a TOC under any circumstances.**
* Talk to your SA about the range of learning needs within the classroom and the supports in place to meet them (modified programs, resource room, IEPs, Student Support Worker etc.) What are the modifications for students needing extra support? Do some students require enrichment or challenge in their learning?
* Part of your role is to complete duties outside the classroom with your SA (i.e., if the SA has supervision, staff room clean-up or coaching, these are opportunities for you to learn more about your advisor and their roles). Please be a part of all school and staff activities.
* Please ensure that your SA and the school principal review any letters you would like to send home before you send it.
* Although it is tempting to cluster as a group of teacher candidates in the staff room, try to also make some time to sit with your SA and other teachers in order to feel like part of the staff. This is good practice for next year when you may be TOCing and need to connect with other professionals in a variety of schools. The more relationships you establish, the more confidence you develop - these professional connections are helpful in acquiring information and resources and may also assist you in being called out more often as a TOC.
* Observe actively and thoughtfully as your SA is teaching. Learn all you can about this teacher’s approach to planning, classroom management, instruction, assessment and evaluation. Make notes and ask specific questions. ***Know that good teaching can take many forms and you and your SA may have quite different styles.***
* Be consistent in supporting existing routines, procedures and expectations (i.e. signals, praise/reinforcement, rules and consequences, organization of materials and the classroom environment, use of washrooms, routines for beginning and ending the day etc.).
* Ask how you can assist with classroom routines and activities (working with individuals or small groups, reading a story, helping with journals, marking, preparing materials etc.). Find ways to be actively involved in the classroom program even though you may not be teaching many formal lessons in the first 2-3 weeks.
* Talk with your SA about how you might become familiar with other programs within the school (i.e., follow a group of your students as they visit the Resource Room, observe when the class is taught by other teachers perhaps for Music or PE or Science, visit classrooms at other grade levels if your SA can make such arrangements).
* Your SA will observe your classroom interactions and lessons. You will receive frequent informal feedback (oral) and at least one formal written observation each week. Be open to hearing the ideas and suggestions of your mentors, and feel free to ask for advice or help at any time. When something is suggested, try it right away.
* Spend time with your SA, at his/her convenience and establish yourself as an active member of the teaching team;
  + Discuss issues, needs and questions;
  + Review and refine your lesson plans;
  + Help to prepare for the next day;
  + Assist with marking;
  + Collect all forms and money;
  + Help with classroom organization etc.

# ***Daily and Weekly Reflections***

* Make notes for yourself on a daily basis. These can be handwritten comments on your lesson plan (what went well, changes needed in pacing or process etc.). Reflect on your own practice, noting after each lesson or day, what went well/what was challenging/what will you do next time? Take time to discuss your own teaching strategies and management practices.
  + You should also be keeping a section in your binder where you can record important comments about individual student progress as you observe successes, concerns or questions. You may choose a few students to observe and comment on each day and also note anything important that comes up with others. This will help you revise your plans to accommodate individual needs and will also prove to be an invaluable source of anecdotal information when you approach report card time, if applicable. Share these observations in your regular planning meetings with your SA. Remember to use “the language of inquiry” in writing comments about students. Your documentation should be constructive and professional, rather than labeling or judgmental in tone.
* Write weekly reflections and use a format that works for you (see attached). Try to keep them focused and specific (one page should be enough). Keep a hard copy in your practicum binder so I can read your reflections when I arrive for an observation. ***Remember to state one or two goals that you are working on.*** I tend to look at that when observing. Share your goals with your school advisor – this helps keep you focused! ***Please email me your weekly reflection for the first 3 weeks so that I can quickly become aware of any early issues and offer my support as needed.***
* **You will also be asked to do a midpoint self-evaluation at week 4 (due February 24) and another in week 9 (April 14)**. These are to be sent to both advisors and should include a list of what you have taught/coached/etc. a list of your strengths, challenges and goals. This will be an important record of your growth and will help you summarize your learning for inclusion in the final report.
* ***Professional e-Portfolio (Optional): Note: The e-portfolio or Professional Portfolio is optional this year; however, your Enquiry Seminar III course in Summer Term 2 will require you to present a summary of your experiences this year. A portfolio will also be beneficial during a job interview. With that in mind, remember to be on the lookout for important artifacts/reflections to augment your professional e-portfolio.*** Keep a camera handy and look for good photo ops to illustrate what you have already outlined. Look for relevant samples of rubrics, student work, effective lesson plans and perhaps a video clip of you in teaching mode (those of you using Macs may find iMovie easier than you think). Always keep that portfolio percolating on the back burner and just add to it when something good pops up. *A portfolio should be a dynamic and ongoing documentation of your learning experiences in preparation for your Inquiry Seminar III course, EDUC 452, in the summer.*

# ***5. Ongoing Unit Planning***

* **A reminder that units need to be fully completed and shown to your school advisor at least one to two weeks before teaching the subject. If the unit isn’t completed at this time, you may fall behind in building up your teaching load as scheduled on the practicum calendar. This may lead to an Interim Report.**
* Ensure that your initial lesson plans include all key components:

**Title/Grade/Date/Time, PLOs, Student Outcomes, Materials, Resources, Timing, introduction, Procedure, Activity, Closure, Management Notes, Modifications (for any students with IEPs, students who need adaptations for their learning, ELL students, etc.), Follow-up/Extension and Assessment details.** Please include a section at the bottom of the plan or back where you can record your reflections after teaching and share these with your advisors. Do not forget to include a **Plan B**.

* Try to avoid large amounts of teacher-directed learning (lecture style) - not that there is anything wrong with direct instruction - just not all the time. *“Read the text and answer these questions”* is not an adequate instructional repertoire. Similarly, *“work on your own and fill out this worksheet”,* tends to be an overused and sometimes uninteresting strategy. Make sure to incorporate teaching strategies that involve students in active learning. Remember the value of using *“Think-Pair-Share”* or *“Write-Pair-Share”* or other variations.

# ***6. Teaching Your Units***

* In our first meeting in Week 1, we will review your teaching load to ensure that you are clear on how your teaching load builds up over time and that you are thinking ahead to develop the necessary resources, worksheets, activities, etc. The practicum will go by very quickly and will be intense and busy at times. **Your success will depend on being proactive, organized and well-prepared in advance.**
* Review your timetable with your SA and adjust for changing circumstances (resource room schedule for individual students, school events or assemblies, field trips, Pro D, meetings etc.). ***Please give me a copy of your class timetable.***
* Detailed lesson plans (one or two pages max.) are required for all formal lessons taught, other than “extra” routine activities you pick up. If your unit plans are comprehensive, that will save you time in preparing your lesson plans. In some instances, you can cut and paste parts of the “Activity or Procedure” section of your unit plan onto a lesson plan template. Presuming that your planning and implementation goes well, we will decide at your midpoint conference (Week 5) if you are ready to go straight from your unit plan to a daybook format similar to what experienced teachers use.
* Be aware that many of your plans will need to be adjusted as you go along either because you may have over-planned or because you misjudged the students’ ability to move at the pace you predicted. Also, at this stage in the school year, there will be many interruptions and special events that may take away from your academic focus. Be flexible and consult with your SA on a regular basis to make necessary changes in process. You can note in handwriting on your unit and lesson plans any changes that were made and why. This will help you in the future, should you want to refine and reuse these plans with another class.

1. ***Classroom Management***
   * Check with your SA regarding routines and expectations that may be new since October/November as well as individual behaviour programs that may have changed over time. In the early days of this practicum, it is best to stick with the management plan that the students are accustomed to. If there are adjustments that would be appropriate in terms of your own management and teaching style, you can gradually introduce these when your role becomes more central (Weeks 5-9), presuming that your SA is comfortable with what you propose. This would include setting up new routines or procedures, using different room arrangements etc. It is important that you have this opportunity to experiment; however, it is easiest to establish yourself initially within the existing structure.

* Review relevant sections in your Classroom Management notes. Many behaviour “problems” can be prevented through proactive strategies. If you are feeling challenged by management issues, Barrie Bennett’s “*Classroom Management”* text is a useful resource (available in the Scarfe Ed Library and in some schools/classrooms. Remember “The Law of Least Intervention”. Be sure to focus on “*winning over”* or developing rapport with individuals and the group. This foundation of mutual respect and trust goes a long way in minimizing disruptive behaviour.
* Remember to be clear and consistent in your own behaviour – you need to “walk the talk”. Monitor your use of praise and encouragement and distribute it to all students, make it specific and genuine, and ensure that the frequency of positive statements far outweighs the delivery of corrective comments.
* In your lesson planning, think carefully about the clarity and specificity of your instructions. Be particularly attentive to structuring for transitions within and between lessons. Frame your questions carefully, use wait time and let the students know how you want them to respond (hands up, choral response, teacher will select at random etc.) Pay attention to variety, momentum and pacing within your lessons to maximize student focus. Consider writing a script or dialogue of what you will say to your students – this may be helpful for the first few lessons.

1. ***Observations***

* I will work with you to set the date for your first observation, likely starting my first cycle on the Wednesday or Thursday of Week 1. You will know when I am coming at least until the midpoint of the practicum. After that, when everybody is teaching at an 80% load, I may do a round of “drop in” visits. By that time, you will be feeling quite comfortable and you will hardly notice that I am there! **Remember that my observations are intended to support your learning and that I am there in my “coaching” role rather than looking for flaws or making final judgments about your competence.** If questions or concerns arise for you at any time, catch me when I’m in your school or drop me an email. Never hesitate to let me know if you are feeling challenged. Teaching is challenging no matter how experienced one is. **Asking for support is an indication of self-directed problem solving, not an admission of incompetence.**
* I will continue to review your lessons, unit plans and reflections throughout the practicum. Please email me your lesson plan for the lesson observed the evening before and leave your binder ready for me to review. Let me know if there is something particular you would like feedback on and I will watch for that. At the same time, if I see something else that might be helpful for you to consider, I will mention that in my notes as well.
* At this point, I am planning 8-9 formal cycles of observation for each of you and saving some time for people who may want or need more. I should be able to complete 3-4 cycles before our midpoint meetings.
* Your school advisor should be providing you with ongoing informal (oral) feedback, especially in the early weeks when teachers are in the classroom much of the time. After the midpoint conferences, they will be in and out, leaving you to feel more independent as you assume the 80% role. **Between Week 2 and Week 9, they should be providing at least one written observation per week.** Some teachers like to do more. This can be done on the triplicate form (please save the yellow copies and give to me for your file when I visit). Some teachers may prefer to write your observations on their computers and print off a copy for each of us or they may email an electronic copy.
  + **Please let me know at any point if you feel that you are not getting enough feedback or if there is something that your school advisor or I could do to make the feedback more helpful in developing your confidence and/or skill.**
* **During Week 3 or 4**, we will aim to give you some additional feedback by videotaping yourself with the assistance of one of your fellow teacher candidates if possible. You should work together as a group in the school to organize this. Closer to the time, I will send out a simple one page form for peer assessment and for your self-assessment (once you have reviewed your video). **You will need to bring these two forms (peer and self) to your midpoint conference in Week 4 or 5.** If you want me to review your video and comment on a particular aspect, I can do so.

So, that’s all for now. Remember to review your yellow ***Roles and Responsibilities*** document each week, keep up those reflections and add to your portfolio. This is how you assess your own progress, set goals and take charge of your own development. Write your reflections for yourself, not for me. Use your calendar to think ahead and let me know of any questions or concerns as they arise. I will meet with all SAs to make sure they have the same information. Clear communication is a benefit to us all.

Try to get together as a group from time to time. Keeping the sense of mutual support and sharing that you had on campus will be important during the weeks ahead. We will all be very busy but it should be fun, rewarding and affirming work as you apply and extend what you know in the real world of your classroom.

I look forward to seeing you in the schools again and supporting your success in this important final practicum!

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