The Practicum Experience: Spring 2015

Bowdoin Teacher Scholars begin their practicum experience on January 5, 2015, and continue for fourteen weeks, concluding on April 17, 2015. During this time, student teachers are expected to be full-time professional members of the school community, assuming responsibility not only in the classroom of the cooperating teacher but in the larger community as well. Student teachers are expected to attend all professional meetings (department, faculty, IEP, etc.) as appropriate and maintain communications with students and their families in a manner consistent with that of a full-time teacher.

Guidelines for the Student Teacher

Student teachers begin their teaching experience as observers and planners. Cooperating teachers, student teachers, and the College supervisor decide together the exact nature and timeline for the student teacher’s responsibilities, but the expectation is that the student teacher will assume responsibility for two classes as soon as possible and that a third class will be added by the end of February.

The education department expects that student teachers will:
- Arrive at school each day prepared and dressed professionally
- Be familiar with the school calendar, professional days, holidays, etc., and plan accordingly
- Share in the performance of duties as assigned by the cooperating teacher
- Prepare and discuss lesson plans with the cooperating teacher for approval in advance of teaching those lessons
- Confer with the cooperating teacher and College supervisor on a regular basis

Guidelines for the Cooperating Teacher

We ask that the cooperating teacher be willing to serve as a guide and resource for his or her student teacher, maintaining professional supervision of the educational process at all times and modeling a variety of effective teaching strategies and methods in an atmosphere conducive to learning, experimentation, and risk taking. Cooperating teachers will be given a $400 honorarium for their service at the conclusion of the student teaching practicum.

Specifically, we ask that the cooperating teacher:
- Welcome the student teacher to the school and classroom and provide essential teaching materials and curriculum guides
- Orient the student teacher to the school administration and physical layout of the school
- Provide the student teacher with a desk or other work space
- Identify special-needs students for the student teacher and share those students’ Individualized Education Plans where appropriate
- Encourage the student teacher to observe in other classrooms in the school
- State expectations clearly and plan for inclusion of the student teacher into the daily activities, routines, and culture of the class
- Give the student teacher responsibility for two sections as soon as possible and add a third by the end of February
- Meet with the student teacher regularly to provide constructive feedback on all aspects of the student teacher’s work
- Meet with the College supervisor and student teacher for two formal assessments—at midpoint in the practicum and again at the end of the practicum
- Inform and confer with the College supervisor and student teacher should any problem or difficulty arise during the student teaching practicum
- Write a professional letter of recommendation
- Permit the student teacher to be the sole classroom teacher during the last weeks of the practicum

Guidelines for the College Supervisor

- Meet with the student teacher and cooperating teacher to discuss mutual expectations for the student teaching experience
- Regularly observe the student teacher and provide clear, specific feedback following the observation
- Make constructive, useful suggestions for specific ways in which the student teacher can improve his or her teaching practice and communicate these suggestions to the student teacher in a timely, supportive, and straightforward manner
- Use the midpoint assessment as a checkpoint to review certification standards and to ask the cooperating teacher if he or she feels there are any areas in which the student teacher is not progressing in a fashion likely to meet a performance standard

Assessment

The student teacher, College supervisor, and cooperating teacher will discuss expectations, goals, and assessment of the practicum experience and will confer informally throughout the practicum. The student teacher will be informed as soon as possible if the cooperating teacher or College supervisor has serious concerns about some aspect of his or her performance and will be given sufficient time and specific expectations for improvement.

There will be a formal three-way conference at the practicum midpoint, during which the student teacher’s performance will be assessed using Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Core Teaching Standards (see other side). If a student teacher is not adequately progressing in his or her development as a teacher, this assessment may trigger interventions and/or departmental action. At the conclusion of the practicum, a similar assessment will take place, taking measure of the progress since the mid-semester assessment.

Demonstration of successful completion of all aspects of Bowdoin’s state-approved program is required to receive recommendation for certification. This includes passing scores on the practicum, seminar, relevant Praxis testing, and required registration of fingerprints.
LEARNER DEVELOPMENT
The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

LEARNING DIFFERENCES
The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS
The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation.

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE
The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.

APPLICATION OF CONTENT
The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.

ASSESSMENT
The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher’s and learner’s decision making.

PLANNING FOR INSTRUCTION
The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES
The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND ETHICAL PRACTICE
The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his or her practice, particularly the effects of his or her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.

LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION
The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth and to advance the profession.