

## Assignment Descriptions for Middle Level Emphasis Program

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### Reflection

   

**Weekly Reflection or Observation (Including Reflection on Learning Env as first Reflection)**

   

### **Collaborative Logs – Handbook p. 50-51**

**#1 – Setting a Course for the Next Few Weeks – Sept. 17**

**#2 – Discussion on the 2 days of Teaching – Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>**

**#3 – Progress on “Menu” items – Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**#4 – Debriefing Coaching Cycle – Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>**

### Context

**School & Community Resources – Handbook p. 53-55 (Due Sept. 11)**

**Shadowing Assignment Description (See below) (Due Oct. 16<sup>th</sup>)**

### Action

**Technology Lesson – Handbook p. 61-65 (Pre-Obs form to Sup. by Nov. 13)**

**Coaching Cycle – Handbook p. 67-79 (Due Nov. 20<sup>th</sup> or as arranged with Sup by Nov.20<sup>th</sup>)**

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## Weekly Reflection or Observation Description

### **Purpose**

As you progress through the semester, you should begin to reflect on your strengths and needs as a teacher, at first based on your observations and later, based on your work with students and integration of ideas from your coursework.

Because of the additional time that you will have in the classroom, **we are asking that you conduct two (2) observations of another teacher/classroom per month.** By observing differing approaches/styles and learning environments, you will gain greater breadth and depth in your professional development experience.

In the past, we would have asked you to write a reflection on your own teaching each week. However, we are expanding the scope of this assignment now to include your reflections on comparisons and contrasts of the classroom environment that you are currently working in with the one that you observed.

Think of these weekly reflections as a way to focus your thinking about your practice and set an agenda for your growth as a teacher. We will discuss your weekly reflections in supervisor groups each week at our Friday seminar.

**If you are doing a “Reflection” on your own teaching, please answer the prompts below.**

### **Prompts for Written Assignment**

1. Reflecting on the week, please describe some progress you have made, a victory you have achieved or an important insight you have gained. Be sure to use specific observations, interactions with students, student work, or feedback from your cooperating teacher to respond.

2. Describe a puzzle, challenge or worry that you are working on this week. What has brought this to your attention and why does it represent a challenge? Again, be sure to use specific observations, interactions with students, student work or feedback from your cooperating teacher to respond.

3. Describe next steps you are considering to address the issue(s) you identified in prompt number 2 above.

**If you will be writing an “Observation” commentary, follow the same prompts above.** However, feel free to describe comparisons and contrasts of the teaching/learning experiences and how/why you think these are important for either student learning and/or teacher professional development.

## **Shadowing Assignment Description**

### **Purpose**

Knowing your subject matter well is a necessary but not sufficient ingredient of good teaching. Good teaching requires inquiry – inquiry into student learning that guides our decisions about what and how to teach. As teachers we can learn a great deal about what and how to teach by developing the skills and strategies of student observation. Observing the same student in different classes can reveal insights into methods and contexts that support or deter individual learning and that of your whole class. This assignment provides a concrete experience for learning about a particular student you will teach in order to develop plans to use during your student teaching.

### **Logistics for Shadowing Observations**

Select a student from your cooperating teacher's classroom that you have observed previously and who represents a potential teaching challenge or puzzle to you. Remember, the whole point of the assignment is for you to learn about a student so that you can teach him/her well. Choose someone that you will consider as you write your lesson plans. Of course you will need to consider ALL students when writing plans, but thinking about the needs of particular students will help you do just that!

Ask your master teacher to get the student's schedule. Contact his/her teachers and arrange to visit three of them on a single day. Observe the student for 3 or more periods (at least 2 outside of your subject area and preferably one "elective") on a single day. It might be best to observe nonconsecutive periods so you have a little time between classes to record some notes about your observations. Be sure to review the expectations for the shadowing paper BEFORE observing so you will focus and record notes on the most important elements.

### **Guidelines for Written Assignment**

The shadowing paper describes your observations of the student in three classrooms. In a total of 3-5 pages, address the following:

#### **Part I: Description and Analysis (2-3 pages)**

1. Subject Area: Which classes did you observe? What was the content taught or objective/standard addressed?
2. Student Engagement: Is the student "engaged" in instruction? What is your evidence of this engagement? What is the teacher doing to elicit the student's participation in the lesson? In what ways does the lesson connect to the student's life? What "funds of knowledge" or lived experience does the student apply, if any? **Remember: Quote student responses or teacher questions to avoid general statements or assumptions.**
3. Student Learning: What evidence do you have that the student has learned something in the lesson? Were there any aspects of the lesson that resulted in a struggle or challenge for the student? What do you think he/she has learned?
4. Relationships: Describe the classroom community/culture/climate. With whom does the student interact? What kind of relationship does the student have with the teacher and with other students in the class? What does the teacher do to promote positive relationships in the classroom? **Remember: Quote student/student or student/teacher interactions to avoid general statements or assumptions.**
5. Contrasts/Additional Insights: What differences, if any, do you see in the student's relationships, participation, engagement, and/or learning across the three classes? What else did you observe that you found intriguing or puzzling?

#### **Part II: Now what? (1-2 pages)**

Reflect on your descriptions of your observations of this student. In a page or two, describe how you will address this student's learning needs through your planning and teaching of specific upcoming lessons (or for your coaching cycle). You may want to consider one or more of the following questions to guide your reflection:

1. What do you need to consider when planning and teaching to meet the particular learning needs of the student you observed?
2. What do you want to learn about your students' lives (this student in particular and other students more generally) so that you can leverage their "funds of knowledge" while teaching an upcoming lesson or unit?
3. How will you go about establishing a relationship with students that supports them to succeed in your subject area?