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GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION (SECONDARY)
AND
MASTER OF TEACHING (SECONDARY)

2009

OBSERVATION TASK BOOKLET
FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS,
ASSOCIATE TEACHERS &
STUDENT TEACHER CO-ORDINATORS

Pre-service Teachers - Please Note

All pre-service teachers must present and discuss the contents of this booklet with their Student Teacher Coordinator and, where applicable, their Associate Teachers.

For The Associate Teacher

Introduction and Organisational Procedures

This observation round is the first segment of the in-school Secondary Professional Experience Program. It is planned to introduce pre-service teachers to secondary school classroom policy, management and organisational practices.

As the first segment of the pre-service teacher's course, it is intended to provide a context which bridges theory and practice. During this segment, pre-service teachers are encouraged to work in a collegial and collaborative manner with their peers. Where two or more pre-service teachers are placed in a school, they are asked to complete, where appropriate, some of the observation tasks in this manner.

It is envisaged that these observation days will help prepare beginning pre-service teachers for successful supervised teaching experiences later in their course. These days should also assist in developing pre-service teachers' confidence and ability to interact with secondary school students and assist the development of an appropriate professional rapport with staff.

You are asked to provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to move throughout the school observing the overall operation of the school as well as teachers working in the junior, middle and senior departments of the school and in different subject areas.

Pre-service teachers are asked to negotiate with the Student Teacher Coordinator the allocation of some time towards the conclusion of the observation days to reflect collaboratively with peers, where applicable, on observations and experiences.

Pre-service teachers are to attend each day from 8.20 am until 4.00 pm unless otherwise advised by the Principal or the Student Teacher Coordinator.

Outcomes for this Observation Round

Pre-service teachers should be able:

- ◆ to demonstrate a basic understanding of the secondary school culture and context for teaching and learning
- ◆ to demonstrate that they have observed and interacted with students
- ◆ to demonstrate a basic awareness of the range of skills and techniques associated with secondary teaching
- ◆ to provide information for reflective thought during the initial stages of the pre-service teachers' academic program
- ◆ to present evidence that they have begun to collate practical teaching resources including relevant literature, references, educational aids, audio-visual equipment and teaching programs.

These outcomes should be achieved by pre-service teachers completing a number of specified tasks over the nominated observation days.

Pre-service teachers are encouraged to help with and participate in any activities as requested by staff at the school.

For the Pre-service Teacher

Please read the following requirements carefully

Requirements:

All observations should be recorded in a journal (A4 binder book) and **must be submitted to the Professional Experience Office at your respective campus no later than Friday, 27th February, 2009**. Failure to submit a satisfactory journal at the appointed time may jeopardise your first supervised teaching placement.

The following tasks are designed to have you observe and think about a range of important factors which make up a large part of teaching and learning. The observation tasks can be completed in any order and at any time over the four days in the school.

Short, succinct reflective responses to tasks are encouraged. It may be that you are unable to complete all tasks but it is important for your professional development that you attempt as many as possible.

Task 1 School Policies

If possible, read a copy of the School Strategic Plan/Annual Implementation Plan/Mission, Vision Statement, School Policies and Code of Conduct documents pertaining to the school or any other documents relevant to the educational and organisational arrangements of the school.

Look for such things as:

- the school's educational objectives
- discipline policy
- general school rules for students

Task 2 Teaching Organisation

Obtain a copy of a teacher's timetable. Determine the number of hours allocated to your curriculum areas per school cycle. Note the length and number of periods per day. You should also:

- select your curriculum areas
- note the goals/outcomes of the curriculum areas
- identify texts, resources etc., used in these areas.

Task 3 Classroom Organisation

Describe the physical arrangement of a classroom, noting the following areas (especially "specialist" rooms for music, art, science or ICT):

- students' work areas (tables, desks etc.)
- teacher's desk
- storage areas
- chalkboards and/or whiteboards/overhead projectors
- display areas
- high traffic areas
- 'withdrawal' areas
- special features.

A drawn plan of the above will suffice. Supply a key and relevant information.

Task 4 Classroom Management - Rules and Procedures

- A.** To ensure that all students in the class were *free to learn*, what limits did the teacher impose? How did the teacher obtain the attention of the class? In what ways did the teacher deal with inappropriate behaviour? Talk to the teacher about the issues involved here.

Observe the group dynamics of the class - how are different members of the class exerting influence?

How does the concentration span of the students in the various levels differ? What consequences does this have for the teacher and class?

- B.** Describe classroom procedures for:
- distribution and collection of materials
 - entering and leaving the classroom
 - first period of the day
 - last period of the day.
- C.** What methods are used for monitoring students' progress?

Task 5 Communication

Since the most important aspect of good teaching is efficient communication, observe carefully how different teachers *explain, demonstrate, question, motivate* and *encourage*, in order to communicate effectively.

Identify an effective communication process used:

- between teacher and student(s)
- between student(s) and teacher
- between student(s) and student(s)

Task 6 The Students

Whilst observing in classrooms and also in outside areas note the students themselves. Observe their interests, language, dress and groups. Do any particular groups dominate? Is there any evidence of leadership?

What indicators of the above led you to form your opinion?

Record your findings in writing and discuss them with your colleagues if there are two or more pre-service teachers at the school.

Task 7 Teaching Strategies

The following are some accepted teaching strategies. Observe and write a report on how often and in what circumstances you see them used. Which are the most popular? Which seem to you to be effective and *why*?

1. direct instruction
2. discussion
3. group work
4. co-operative learning
5. problem solving
6. student research
7. performance activities (such as role-plays)

Note other effective teaching strategies which you observed.

Choose different classes for Tasks 8, 9 and 10.

Task 8 Observing a Class in Action.

Wherever possible, make a concerted effort to observe a senior class ie. Year 11 or 12.

Write a profile of a full lesson. You might include information about some of the following:

1. activity of the teacher (what is the teacher doing?)
2. activity of the learners (what are the learners doing?)
3. resources (what resources are utilised?)
4. noise level (high, moderate, low)
5. use of space (what regions of the classroom are used?)
6. concentration level (high, moderate, low)
7. movement of learners
8. movement of teacher
9. number of learners involved
10. lines of communication (teacher-to-student, student-to-teacher, student-to-student).

Task 9 Lesson Planning

1. Most experienced teachers would not write a complete lesson plan for each of the lessons that they teach. However, many of them do jot down key points or statements. These help them to remember and concentrate during their busy day of lesson presentation. Observe a lesson and suggest the points that might have been the basis for a summary lesson plan for the teacher.
2. Every teacher would hope to answer the needs of his or her students. In a mixed ability classroom, the needs can be many and varied. Were there any incidents in the lesson you have just seen that made you aware of the different ability levels? How would you have chosen to deal with the situation?
3. Imagine that you have just given this lesson. You have now to plan the next lesson in this topic. Discuss and provide notes of how you would proceed.

Task 10 Lesson Observation - Closer Analysis of Lesson Elements

Finally, towards the end of your observation period, **observe and then write a description of the basic elements of one lesson using the following template:**

1. *Anticipatory set.* What has the teacher done to get the students' attention, to relate the lesson to what the students have done previously, and to engage them in the lesson? Note how the teacher communicates to students that the lesson is about to begin, whether the teacher reviews previous lessons, how the teacher tries to stimulate interest, and what the teacher does to lay the groundwork for the lesson.
2. *Outcomes and purpose.* What has the teacher done to communicate to the students what they are supposed to achieve by the end of the lesson and why that is important?
3. *Input.* What knowledge and skills necessary to achieve the lesson's outcomes does the teacher make available to the students and how does the teacher provide them? Look for the specific methods employed, whether they include lecture, discussion, laboratory, work at desks, or some other method.
4. *Modelling.* How does the teacher show the students what they are expected to produce or learn to do? What kind of examples and demonstrations are employed?
5. *Checking for understanding.* How does the teacher monitor the students' understanding of concepts and proficiency in skills during the lesson? How does the teacher adjust the lesson on the basis of this feedback? Look for the ways in which the teacher invites questions. Note how the teacher asks and answers questions, including the amount of time the teacher waits for an answer. Also note how many and what type of students the teacher involves in questioning, and what the teacher does with a student's answer, especially when it is wrong.
6. *Guided practice.* How does the teacher give the students opportunities to practise using their new knowledge or skills under direct teacher supervision?
7. *Independent practice.* How does the teacher provide opportunities for students to practise using their new knowledge or skills independently after the teacher is reasonably sure that students will not make serious errors?



Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne

Professional Experience Program

Observation Experience Checklist

NB. This checklist must be signed and submitted with your journal no later than Friday, 27th February 2009.

TASK	COMPLETED (please tick)	DATE COMPLETED
Task 1 School Policies		
Task 2 Teaching Organisation		
Task 3 Classroom Organisation		
Task 4 Classroom Management		
Task 5 Communication		
Task 6 The Students		
Task 7 Teaching Strategies		
Task 8 Observing a Class in Action		
Task 9 Lesson Planning		
Task 10 Lesson Observation		

Pre-service Teacher's Name: _____

Pre-service Teacher's Signature: _____ Date: _____