



SCHOOLS - PRACTICUM STUDENTS & STUDENT TEACHERS - BENEFITS for ALL An Introduction for Prospective Host Schools

School based practicum/student teaching experiences play a central role in the pre-service professional development of teachers and therefore in determining the future of the teaching profession and effectiveness of schools. These placements fulfill their purpose when candidates, schools, universities, and certification agencies share high expectations of educators and work together to achieve them.

Since 1987 EducatorsAbroad (EA) faculty have facilitated these relationships by providing opportunity for over 2,700 prospective teachers from 125 colleges and universities in 7 countries to complete practicum/student teaching assignments through placements in 826 schools in 62 countries.

Because accepting responsibility for this central role in the professional development of prospective educators entails additional responsibilities, prospective host schools rightly ask, ‘Why should we participate?’ The following are reasons commonly put forward by those that have hosted practicum students/student teachers within a context of responsibility for the future of the teaching profession.

THERE ARE BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

- An additional adult, who has completed initial professional preparation, is available to help students learn.
- Increased opportunities to enhance the teaching/learning process through use of team teaching, small group work, and other cooperative teaching approaches.
- Students can receive specialized support and instruction that responds to their unique educational needs.
- Class teachers can provide individual instruction including withdrawing some pupils while the practicum student teaches the class.
- Interacting and learning from a person representing a different country/culture widens children's horizons.
- Expansion of extracurricular activities using the candidate’s special interests and specialties e.g. assisting in or developing clubs, music & sport activities, international days, assemblies.
- Practicum/student teachers approach this experience with enthusiasm, optimism, and high expectations that stimulate student learning.

THERE ARE BENEFITS FOR TEACHERS

- Guiding the professional development of prospective educators and observing/assessing their work stimulates educators to reflect on their own practice and consider why they do what they do.
- Sharing perspectives and partnering with individuals from settings different than their own provides educators valuable insights into their own work.
- Increased flexibility in use of time, in part while the practicum/student teacher is teaching whole class, to fulfill other professional responsibilities.
- Gain experience as a mentor working with individuals from different educational/cultural backgrounds leading to more in depth consideration of the how and why things are done as they are in the school.
- Develop mentoring skills and potentially earning a certificate or qualification as a mentor.
- Experience alternative curricular ideas and approaches to curriculum planning.
- Observe and consider new strategies, resources, and lesson plans.

THERE ARE BENEFITS FOR SCHOOLS

- Be recognized by parents and inspection/accrediting bodies of the school's willingness to broaden the world view of students and staff.
- Expand communication with the local community through collaboration with host families.
- Ability to select future employees based on having extended experience of their working in the school.
- Support from EA faculty affirming success and sharing ideas as they participate, through on-site visits, in the supervision and assessment of teacher candidates.
- Access expertise of EA faculty in resolving challenging issues.
- Widen horizons through discussion of different educational systems and institutional perspectives.
- Broaden school experience by forming partnerships with schools in other settings through communication and exchange at all levels.
- Foster understanding of life in another society while enhancing the each person's image of one's own country.
- A small financial honorarium provided for the cooperating teacher or to assist the school in achieving a goal.
- Receive a certificate of recognition for participating in this professional development programme.

THERE ARE RESPONSIBILITIES TO SERVE THE PROFESSION

As educators, and members of the global profession of teaching, we have a responsibility to:

- assure that young people are prepared for the world they will live in,
- help train the next generation of teachers, and
- give back to the profession by sharing our expertise, as others have done for us as we prepared to enter this profession and continue to develop our abilities and effectiveness.