in **PRACTICUM – LANGUAGE LEARNING**

www.educatorsabroad.org

Montgomery, Texas USA; Redhill, Surrey England

### PRACTICUM --- LANGUAGE LEARNING --- GUIDE

The EducatorsAbroad Practicum (EA*Practicum*) provides teacher education students’ opportunity to broaden their experience by completing two to four week school placement requirements in other cultural settings.

EA*Practicum* participants:

* experience education in a community different from that which they know
* support the work of a teacher
* help students learn
* consider
  + their pedagogical development
  + comparative understanding of education, or
  + ability to guide language learning

These placements are open to individuals who can be depended upon to offer professional service in the host school, and whose application is signed by a college advisor or faculty member in teacher education.

**Framework**

As a participant in the EA practicum you are a guest in the host school. Your primary role is to serve the teacher and his/her students while learning about education in another cultural context and developing your abilities as an educator.

You have chosen to **focus on the process of teaching and learning languages** during your practicum placement. In doing this you will be helping others learn how to effectively communicate in your language, sharing your culture, and developing your abilities in intercultural communication.

To help prevent misunderstandings, approach your experience with an open mind – listen, learn, reflect, then form conclusions.

**Participant Actions**

**Journal**

Keep a record of your travel and school experiences. Write, take photos, audio/video record your reflections on a daily basis. Time will go fast, memories can fade, have a record so you can revisit your experience at later times.

**Prior to travel**

In preparation for serving your host teacher and students, record your responses to these statements in your journal

* Describe your background and the degree to which you see yourself as a ‘typical’ member of your culture.
* Describe how you think your cultural background might affect your communication with people in the culture you will be visiting.
* What resources do you have for helping others learn your language?

**During your placement – Be Involved**

* In a professional manner, be of service by supporting the work of a teacher through participation in your host school every day and throughout the school day during the assigned placement.
* Establish a plan for participation and follow all rules and procedures of the school. (Practicum participants are not be left alone in charge of class).
* Be active reliable, polite, prompt, cooperative, observant, spontaneous, and energetic as you observe, assist, teach, and reflect.
* Reflect on teaching and the teaching learning process using the observation and question guides.
* Assess your characteristics and qualities in terms of knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to become an effective teacher of children and adolescents.
* Journal - maintain a daily record of observations and reflections in your journal. Describe what you did, what you learned, what you concluded about your role as a teacher.

**Toward the end of your placement – Reflect, Record**

* Review your record of observations and reflections and discuss your conclusions with your host teacher.
* Complete the three sentence stems under ‘prior to travel’ again. Compare with your initial responses.
* Complete a self-evaluation of your progress by filling in the Summative Report form. Share and discuss with your mentor teacher.
* Request that your mentor teacher complete and sign a copy of the summative report for your use.

**Observation Guide**

**Some Ideas to Focus Your Classroom Observations:** When an observer of teaching does not know what to look for, it can be difficult to sit and watch lessons for an extended time. Observations become dynamic and worthwhile when the observer knows what to look for and is able to determine how each action impacts student learning.

Finding answers to good questions leads to increased understanding. The questions below are designed to help you focus your observations and come to better understand the complexities of the teaching/learning process. You need to add your questions to the list: what are your questions? What are the answers?

**Class Procedures**

* Are there particular ways that the teacher greets or starts the day with his/her students?
* Attendance, seating chart procedures - how does the teacher take attendance and organize the classroom?
* How does the teacher start class or transition to a new subject topic?
* How is the room arranged, and what is its appearance? How well does this design work?
* What are the classroom routines?
* How is class started and how is it closed?
* In what ways does the teacher maintain classroom organization so students stay on task and accomplish their learning?
* Does the teacher use any particular discipline methods to help student learn to be responsible students?

**Teacher**

* + - Appearance - how does the teacher demonstrate professionalism through appearance?
    - Teacher Voice (volume, clarity, variety, tone) - how does the teacher use inflection, emphasis, etc.?
    - Body language (gestures, movements) - what is the effect of these actions?
    - Spontaneity - how does the teacher adapt to students and situations?
    - Activities/teaching procedures - does the teacher use particular activities in particular circumstances?
    - Directions - how does the teacher provide direction - get student attention?
    - Classroom and instructional management - how does the teacher maintain order?

**Students**

* Does everyone in the class (students, teacher, yourself) know everyone’s name?
* What are your general impressions of the students?
* How do students respond to the teacher and to the course material?
* Are the students passive or actively involved in the lesson?
* What ability levels do you observe among students in the class?
* Do students hold any particular expectations about the level of evaluation that is acceptable to them or their parents?

**Individual Needs**

* Do any students have special needs that require accommodation?
  + - What types of activities or learning are most needed by the students?
    - Are all students learning and improving?
    - How are students with learning difficulties assisted?

**Instructional Process**

* How does the teacher determine what level of learning students are prepared for?
  + - What learning skills are required for each lesson?
* How does the teacher provide age appropriate lessons?
* Does the teacher individualize instruction for any students?
* What types of individualization is used in the classroom?
* How is the approach to teaching this subject the same or different from what you know of this subject in your country?

**Materials - Lesson - Content**

* What resources does the teacherhave available for use at the school?
* How appropriate is the material for the ability of the students?
  + - How much material is covered and/or assigned?
    - What resources are used?
    - Are other resources available?
* Are students or families expected to supply resources?
  + - How prevalent is the use of technology?

**Correcting Assignments, Papers and Tests**

* How does the teacher evaluate or grade student work or progress?
* How often does the teacher assess progress?
* What types of assessments are used (quiz, test, assignments, homework, projects, speeches, etc.)?
* Are students informed of their progress - in what ways?
* Does the teacher feel any pressure in evaluation of student work?
  + - Tests: How long are they? Who designed them? What kinds of questions are asked? What kinds of responses are given? What are the results? What do students need to improve upon?
    - What kind of grading standard is used?

**School & Community**

* How does the school relate to the community it serves?

**Guidelines for Lesson Planning**

Reminder: Practicum participants are NOT to be left in sole charge of a class at any time. But, they should welcome the opportunity to create and teach short lessons in partnership with their host teacher. In preparing a lesson consider the following essential parts of a lesson plan:

1. Lesson Objective. What are the students to learn as a result of this lesson?
2. Learning Activities. What activity will you use to help students achieve the objective?
3. Materials. What materials and or information will you use in the activity?
4. Assessment and Reflection. How will you know that students have learned or met the objective of the lesson?

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