



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Faculty of Education

PRACTICUM COHORT MEETINGS: GUIDE FOR FACULTY ADVISORS 2018 – 2019



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PRACTICUM COHORT MEETINGS 2018-2019

GUIDE FOR FACULTY ADVISORS

Goals of Seminar Cohort Meetings

- to provide a time and place for Teacher Candidates (TCs) across streams (EY, MY, SY) and years of the program to meet, discuss their experiences, share resources and support one another in a manner similar to a professional learning community (PLC)
- to provide opportunities for TCs to more fully understand the practicum course expectations with the guidance of their Faculty Advisor
- to model the process of critically examining one's own practice in a professional manner that is respectful of other educators and aligns with the Manitoba Teachers Society Code of Professional Practice

Overview of Session Materials

At the March 2017 and March 2018 Faculty Advisor professional learning sessions, advisors were asked to spend a few minutes thinking about ideas they felt should be shared during seminar cohort meetings; additional ideas were contributed by email. The Field Partner Liaison and SEO Director reviewed these ideas along with current practicum models and compiled them into the session descriptions in this document.

As you plan the practicum cohort meetings keep in mind that:

- FAs may use their own strategies for facilitating interactions with their cohort but should ensure the ideas listed for each session are explored
- Suggested timelines are intended as general guidelines. Each FA should adjust the meeting plan in ways that are appropriate for their cohort.
- FAs may choose to add material if time permits, as long as the key points indicated are addressed.
- Time will be set aside at future FA professional learning sessions to share strategies for facilitating cohort meetings and to make suggestions for next year's meetings

First Day of School

The first practicum cohort meeting on September 4, 2018 is **only for** TCs registered to complete P1 or P2 in the 2018-2019 academic year (usually Year 1 students). This meeting is intended to cover fundamental aspects of practicum **before** TCs report to their practicum school and to reassure TCs who may be anxious about beginning their practicum.

The practicum cohort meeting is one part of a full day of orientation activities at the Faculty of Education to introduce TCs to our B.Ed. program. While the Faculty recognizes the value

of attending the first day of school in the practicum setting, we are also obligated to provide an orientation to B.Ed. students who are new to the program before they proceed to a school. It is particularly important that our new B.Ed. students understand the professionalism requirements before they arrive at their schools. Many have had little or no exposure to the responsibilities inherent in the teaching profession and concerns with professionalism are the most common cause of practicum failure or termination.

TCs who are completing P3 or P4 at any time during the academic year are not required to attend the September 4, 2018 meeting as they have already been introduced to the basic elements of practicum. Instead TCs who are completing P3 or P4 will experience the first day of the school year in their practicum schools.

FAs can reassure Year 1 TCs that they will have the opportunity to experience the first day of the school year in their practicum school when they begin their final year or register for their P3 course.

Attendance at Practicum Cohort Meetings

Aside from the differing expectations for Sept. 4, 2018, attendance at all practicum cohort meetings is mandatory for every TC in your cohort. The same policy regarding excused and unexcused absences used for other practicum days applies to these meetings. The meetings count as practicum time and do not need to be made up. TCs have been informed of the practicum schedule and attendance policy well in advance of the school year

FAs who need to re-arrange the time of a cohort meeting must do so in consultation with the SEO Director. Alternate meeting times can usually only take place during a scheduled practicum day as this is part of the course schedule provided to TCs.

PRACTICUM COHORT MEETING ONE

(approximately 90 minutes)

When: B.Ed. Orientation Day (for Year One and any TC completing P1 or P2 in 2018-19)

Where: Faculty of Education Building, rooms assigned by SEO

Topics & Timeline:

Icebreaker (approx. 15 min)

- *engage Teacher Candidates in activity to introduce themselves and the Faculty Advisor. If possible use an activity that relates to teaching and learning.*

B.Ed. Program Practicum Guide (approx. 20 min)

- *ensure all TCs have downloaded and/or printed the 2018-2019 Practicum Guide (double check that they don't have last year's version).*
- *use a facilitation technique of your own choosing to review the sections of the Guide with TCs (e.g. a scavenger hunt or quiz activity for ideas in the Guide etc.)*
- *spend extra time on the attendance policy, as this is often an area of tension*
- *explain the process for selecting and registering for an MTS Day session (formerly known as SAGE Day); this is a mandatory practicum day*
- *reiterate that TCs are required to read the Guide carefully before beginning practicum and should refer to it regularly throughout practicum. The Guide is the course outline for practicum.*
- *make sure that each TC is aware of the specific practicum expectations for the practicum course they are completing in the Fall term*

Understanding the MTS Code of Professional Practice (approx. 20 min)

- *ensure TCs have read the Code and listened to the MTS presentation that took place in the morning session*
- *many do not yet have a clear sense of the meaning of each statement so be open for questions and allow time to explore the ideas*
- *consider sharing a few short fictional vignettes, case studies or scenarios from your own experience to illustrate some ideas addressed in the MTS statements (e.g. A TC is on a field trip with her Cooperating Teacher and one of the students ...etc)*
- *be sure to caution TCs who may describe their own experiences in schools that whenever they share an experience, including any aspect of their practicum experience, they must take care to respect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals, schools and districts*

Learning through Observation (approx. 20 min)

Many TCs are excited to begin teaching and this can mean that some will question the value of learning through observation. Research suggests that TCs are able to learn more effectively during their practicum if time is spent exploring the value of observation and developing some

strategies for 'how' and 'what' to observe. Learning through observation is challenging in practicum because there is so much going on in a classroom at any moment and because highly effective teachers make it all appear seamless. TCs may not be sure what to pay attention to. Given these factors, providing TCs with some guidelines for observation is key.

To do this, begin by reviewing the "Practicum Expectations Checklist: Week One and Mondays" which can be found in the Practicum Guide (as Appendix H) and is also available in downloadable format online (under "Fillable forms for practicum" on the "Current Students" page of the Faculty website).

After discussing the checklist, use the guidelines below to discuss ways to learn through observation during practicum. TCs should be encouraged to use the strategies described below whenever they are in the classroom and are not responsible for teaching. Remind TCs to use their prep period and time outside of class for planning rather than doing their planning while their CT is teaching. Learning through observation is a key activity to engage in while the CT is teaching. Consider asking each TC to create an observation record keeping sheet for one or two specific topics, conducting and recording observations and then sharing their thoughts with you at your first formative observation visit.

Why bother with observation?

- encourages view of the teacher as a flexible decision maker
- fosters a more realistic view of teaching as a profession
- allows TC to focus on specific teaching skills
- helps build confidence and increase comfort
- increases professional vocabulary
- enhances relationship between TC and CT
- helps TC appreciate the connection between teacher actions and students' learning
- increases independence/self reliance
- observation notes are generative conversation starters for FA meetings
- assigning a specific observation task is an effective strategy for supporting a TC where they are struggling (e.g. observe at least three strategies the CT uses to get and hold students' attention in a lesson etc.)
- the required peer observation task for each practicum course is much more beneficial for a TC when their observation skills are more fully developed

Strategies for getting started with observation

- begin with single area of focus and short duration (10 – 15 mins) then gradually increase to more complex foci and longer observation period
- discuss difference between observations that are judgmental statements which tend to be less specific and undefined and descriptive statements which are more specific and more clearly defined (e.g. "students were engaged" is a judgmental statement whereas "students were talking in excited voices for approx. 8 minutes and the conversation was about the task almost all that time" is descriptive and specific)
- discuss various ways of recording observations (i.e. written notes, checklists, visual mapping of events using seating charts & diagrams, simple rating scales, tallies etc.)
- practice observing first as a non-participant (e.g. when not teaching or helping small groups of learners) and only much later in the practicum as a participant (e.g. when teaching or helping small groups of learners)

- engaging in dialogue about what was observed is key for ensuring that observation contributes to reflective practice; that is analyze, clarify and evaluate what was observed to better understand classroom practices

Things to observe

- describe, in detail, how the room is arranged
- observe one student during part of the lesson, make detailed notes about their behavior; consider possible ways to interpret what you observe
- document the use of technology by teacher and/or students
- describe the role of other adults in classroom (e.g. EAs, volunteers)
- how and when do students move around the classroom?
- how and when does the teacher move around the classroom?
- when & how are instructions given?
- what kinds of questions does the teacher ask?
- how often does the teacher ask questions?
- which students answer questions? How does the teacher respond?
- what kinds of questions do the students ask? Who asks them?
- what strategies are used to encourage students to act within acceptable limits in the classroom?
- how many transitions occur in the lesson? How long does each transition take? How does the teacher facilitate the transition?

Sections adapted from: Taggart, G.L. & Wilson, A.P. (2005). Promoting Reflective Thinking in Teachers. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.)

Getting Ready for Tomorrow (approx. 15 min)

Ask each TC to share with the group the following details with reference to their practicum school:

Where am I going?
 How am I getting there?
 What time do I need to arrive?
 What am I planning to wear?
 What questions do I have before leaving today?

Facilitate a general Q & A session.

Discuss appropriate strategies for addressing any concerns about the classroom placement (e.g. grade or subject area etc.).

Be sure that TCs know how you prefer to be reached, in addition to your UM email, in the event of an urgent matter.

PRACTICUM COHORT MEETING TWO

(75 – 90 minutes)

When: afternoon of last practicum Monday before Fall term block begins, Nov. 5, 2018; all TCs in your cohort should be in attendance

Where: at Faculty of Education Building in rooms assigned by SEO and/or in a place deemed more convenient by each Faculty Advisor such as a meeting room at one of the practicum schools

Sharing Initial Practicum Experiences (20 mins)

Provide an opportunity for each cohort member to share a few details about their first week of school, practicum Mondays, and the MTS PD day they attended. Provide some guidelines to focus their comments to ensure everyone gets a chance to share and that there is time for the other topics and activities (e.g. two minutes each).

Gender Diversity in Practicum Settings (approx. 15 mins)

In Supporting Transgender & Gender Diverse Students in Manitoba Schools (2017), Manitoba Education provides guidelines to help educators ensure transgender and gender diverse students “have equitable access to all aspects of school life (academic, extracurricular, and social) in ways that preserve and protect their dignity”. Remind students in your cohort to obtain and read this document, as per the requirement in the B.Ed. Program Practicum Guide 2018-19. Allow time for discussion as this may be an area of new learning for some TCs. Understanding and responding appropriately to the requests of students in their practicum setting is an important element of professionalism and reading the document will help TCs support students who do not identify in a gender binary manner or express their gender in their preferred ways.

In addition, remind TCs that they can indicate if they prefer to be addressed using a gender-neutral pronoun (e.g. use of the singular they rather than he/she or his/her) and that they may also choose a gender-neutral honorific for use in practicum (e.g. Mx. rather than Mr. or Ms.).

Be sure to let your TCs know that you are available if they have questions or concerns regarding gender diversity in practicum which they would prefer to discuss in a confidential setting.

Lesson Planning (20 mins)

Facilitate an exploration of approaches to lesson planning. Use the templates and required elements of a lesson plan listed in the B.Ed. Program Practicum Guide as a beginning point.

Ensure that each TC has identified a lesson planning template that they can start out using in the practicum. Suggest that they may wish to make changes to the template as they begin using it so that it is more effective for them. Remind them that whatever template they use, it must include the essential elements of a lesson plan found on in the Practicum Guide.

Encourage Year 2 students to share their approaches with Year 1 students. You may suggest that each member of the cohort bring a digital or print copy of the template they have created to share with the group.

Briefly get a sense of the extent to which each TC is aware of what they will be teaching during the block and has taken some initial steps in co-planning with their CT. TCs are not expected to arrive at the beginning of the practicum block with fully prepared unit plans but should have some sense of the topics they will be planning.

Creating an Effective Learning Community (15 mins)

According to current thinking about effective classrooms, teachers should strive to create an effective community of learners rather than engage in what has sometimes been referred to as “classroom management”. That is, students are part of a learning community rather than individuals that must be managed.

Some ways that learning can go off the rails or instructional time can be lost in practicum classrooms include: getting and maintaining students’ attention, transitions between activities, students not listening to the ideas of one another, ensuring that time spent working collaboratively is “on task”, deciding how students should leave the classroom (e.g. washroom breaks) and ensuring appropriate use of digital technology. These are aspects of classroom practice that TCs may find challenging.

Facilitate an activity to enable TCs to share strategies for some of these aspects of an effective learning community. Remind TCs that any strategies they use must be consistent with the approach used by their CT or, if they wish to implement a new approach it must be approved by the CT beforehand. Feel free to suggest strategies and resources that you have found particularly helpful for building an effective learning community.

Formative Assessment Process & Visit Schedule (10 mins)

Review the formative assessment process (see B.Ed. Program Practicum Guide 2018-19) and ensure that TCs are aware of the requirement to provide a lesson plan to you in advance of each scheduled observation visit.

Begin to schedule visits with each TC (where possible). Review how you want students to contact you during the practicum block in case of an urgent matter.

PRACTICUM COHORT MEETING THREE

(75 - 90 minutes)

When: second last Monday of practicum block, December 10, 2018; the last cohort meeting for Fall practicum courses

Where: in a location convenient to the cohort members and FA (e.g. one of the practicum schools; a coffee shop in the vicinity etc.); for rural candidates the entire cohort may not be able to meet at the same time given driving distances

Sharing Experiences (30 mins)

Provide an opportunity for each cohort member to share a few details about their practicum block (e.g. a successful moment, an awesome resource etc.). Provide guidelines to focus their comments and to ensure that everyone gets a chance to share while leaving time for other activities. The goal is to celebrate the hard work that has gone into the practicum block while reflecting on the learning that took place.

Self-assessment & Discussion of Teaching Identity (30 mins)

Facilitate an exploration of the ways teaching identities emerge gradually with experience in the classroom. Consider using prompts such as:

- What kind of teacher did you think you wanted to be when you began your B.Ed.?
- What experiences during the practicum block have shifted your understanding of what it means to be an effective teacher?
- What do you see as your strengths as a beginning teacher?
- What is one area that has been a challenge for you this term?

TCs may be given time to record their ideas individually and then discuss ideas with a partner or as a full cohort, depending on the comfort of the cohort members with one another.

Preparing for Summative Evaluation Conference and Report Process (15 mins)

Review the summative evaluation process including how TCs should provide you with input for the summative conference, how CTs are providing you with input, when summative conferences will take place and the importance of TCs being actively involved in the process.

Review process for signing summative evaluations as per B.Ed. Program Practicum Guide. Remind students that CT signature is optional, FA is the main author of the summative with input from TC and CT and that they should put their signed original in a safe place if they plan to use it in the future as the SEO is not able to provide copies of summative evaluations.

PRACTICUM COHORT MEETING FOUR

(75 – 90 minutes)

When: afternoon of last practicum Monday before Winter term block; March 11, 2019

Where: at Faculty of Education Building in rooms assigned by SEO and/or in a place deemed more convenient by each Faculty Advisor such as a meeting room at one of the practicum schools; a coffee shop etc.; rural cohorts may not be able to meet in one location due to driving distances

Introduction of New Cohort Members (10 mins)

Some cohorts may have one or two new members as individual TCs may have participated in an alternate practicum experience in the fall term or chosen not to take a practicum course in the fall term. If there are new members in the cohort take a few moments to introduce one another.

Connecting On-campus Courses to Practicum (25 mins)

Facilitate an activity where TCs identify an idea from an on-campus course that they hope to try using during their practicum block. For instance, in course work they may have: learned of a student-centered approach to pedagogy or explored the use of inquiry in the classroom or had an opportunity to better understand incorporating Indigenous perspectives into the classroom etc. Each TC should identify one approach or strategy that they learned about in one of their courses and are planning to try. TCs can share the on-campus connection they are thinking about with a partner, in small groups or with the whole cohort.

Remind TCs to ensure that their CT approves of any pedagogical approach they wish to try before they use the approach in the classroom.

Thinking about Classroom Assessment Practice (25 mins)

Review the concepts of assessment 'of' learning, assessment 'as' learning, and assessment 'for' learning (help TCs locate and use materials from Manitoba Education as basis for this conversation including "Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind"). Ask TCs to share examples of these three forms of assessment from their practicum classrooms. The examples may be activities they created or facilitated themselves or may be activities facilitated by their CTs. Note that students in their final practicum course are expected to begin using these approaches themselves so this activity is one where Year 2 (P3 & P4) TCs may be a bit further along in their thinking than those in Year 1 (P1 & P2).

Discuss the ways that assessment 'as' and 'for' learning can be used to support the learning process and to guide the teacher's next steps.

Peer Observation (10 mins)

Review the requirements related to peer observation as described in the B.Ed. Program Practicum Guide. Facilitate conversations among cohort members as they arrange to observe

one another teach. TCs can observe a candidate from another university if they wish to do so and/or if there is no other UM candidate in their school. If there are no other TCs in the school, the TC should observe another practicing teacher's classroom. TCs should complete the "Peer Observation Sheet" which can be found by clicking on "Fillable forms for practicum" on the "Current Students" page of the Faculty website.

Lesson & Unit Planning (10 mins)

Get a sense of where each TC is at in terms of lesson and unit planning for the block. Remind TCs that they are not expected to arrive at practicum with a fully developed unit plan. However, they should have decided on a lesson planning template or revised the one they used in the previous practicum. They should also have a clear sense of what they will be teaching through conversations they have had with their CT. A quick round of sharing should be enough to give you a sense of any TCs who may need more encouragement and/or support in this aspect of practicum.

Formative Assessment Visit Schedule (5 mins)

Where possible, begin to schedule formative assessment visits for each TC. Review the specific practicum expectations that each TC is working to fulfill.

PRACTOCUM COHORT MEETING FIVE

(75 – 90 minutes)

When: second last Monday of practicum block, April 15, 2019; the last cohort meeting for Winter practicum courses; last practicum event for graduating students

Where: in a location convenient to the cohort members and FA (e.g. one of the practicum schools; a coffee shop in the vicinity etc.); for rural candidates the entire cohort may not be able to meet at the same time given driving distances

Sharing Experiences (40 mins)

Provide an opportunity for each cohort member to share a few details about their practicum block (e.g. a successful moment, an awesome resource etc.) Provide guidelines to focus their comments and to ensure everyone gets a chance to share while leaving time for other activities. The goal is for the group to celebrate learning, describe emerging identities as teachers and share perspectives in a professional manner using current terminology. For graduating students these sorts of discussions reflect some of the expectations of job interviews and of professional learning communities (PLC).

Preparing for Summative Evaluation Conference and Report Process (15 mins)

Review the summative evaluation process including how TCs should provide you with input for the summative conference, how CTs will provide input, when summative conferences will take place and the importance of TCs being actively involved in the process.

Review process for signing summative evaluations as per B.Ed. Program Practicum Guide. Confirm with each TC about any required make-up days. Remind students that CT signature is optional, FA is the main author of the summative with input from TC and CT and that they should put their signed original in a safe place if they plan to use it in the future as the SEO is not able to provide copies of summative evaluations.

Year-end Closing Activity (30 mins.)

As this will be the last time the group will meet, plan a farewell activity. Graduating TCs may wish to exchange contact information beyond their UM email accounts as their accounts will be closed out by the University shortly after TCs graduate.