

## EOCS 2450 Practicum in Occupational Studies CTL Report

The Practicum in Occupational Studies is the initial supervised field experience in the public schools for students planning to teach. Students complete a total of 3 credits of Practicum before the professional education semester and full-time student teaching.

The Practicum introduces the students to the major components of contextual teaching and learning (CTL) through a series of directed observation experiences. A copy of the course syllabus and the Observation Exercises attached provides further details on the CTL components included in the course.

Other:

Observation Exercise #10, Contextual Teaching and Learning, provides a brief definition of CTL and asks student to observe how the teacher uses real world situations to provide a context for student learning. A series of questions directs students to observe the use of real-life examples, problem-solving situations, inquiry-based activities, applications to the workplace, and structured group activities.

Other Observation Exercises direct student observations to the teacher use of the environment and classroom atmosphere to promote learning (#1, #2, #8); student involvement in their own learning (#3); questioning techniques (#4); teacher/student interaction (#5); student motivation (#6), encouraging student thinking and decision making (#7); individual differences (#9); and student organizations (#11).

In the final Observation Exercise (#12) students are asked to reflect on their observations in terms of what they have observed that they will use in their own teaching.

Department of Occupational Studied  
The University of Georgia

Course Number: EOCS 2450 Practicum in Occupational Studies I. 1 – 3 hours. Repeatable for maximum 3 hours credit.

Description: Initial supervised field experience related to teaching individuals in programs of occupational education.

Non-traditional format: supervised experience in school or occupational setting.

The purpose of the early field experiences is to have preservice occupational studies majors in actual school settings prior to enrollment in the instructional strategies and curriculum courses and student teaching. The experience should answer fundamental questions for the students such as:

1. What are schools and classrooms like today? What goes on and who works in educational institutions?
2. Who are the students? How do I develop relationships with the many participants in the learning community?
3. How do I learn about and understand the practice of teaching, and how can I forge my own ongoing professional development?
4. Who will I be as a teacher?
5. How does educational theory relate to classroom practice?

These experiences will also help students learn about realities they will face in regard to how schools work as a community and as a part of the larger community as well as the complex and challenging work of teaching.

Objectives:

1. Describe the characteristics of the classroom environment and atmosphere which promote student learning.
2. Identify teaching strategies used to actively involve students in their own learning.
3. Evaluate the use of questions to engage learners in higher order thinking.
4. Describe various ways in which students and learners interact in the classroom.
5. Identify methods and procedures used to motivate students.
6. Describe various assessment techniques used in the classroom.
7. Describe strategies for individualizing learning.
8. Describe how the teacher uses real-world situations to provide a context for student learning.
9. Explain the role of student organizations in the career and technical education program.
10. Reflect on your own strengths and abilities as a teacher.

Requirements:

Field experiences should begin in the first semester of the junior year. While the stated goal for these courses is that the students will be placed in public school environments, the possibility exists of placing students in alternative settings which may be more appropriate for their educational and, thus, career goals. Two semester hours of credit will be earned as follows:

EBUS/ETES/EFCS	1 Semester hour (30 clock hours) at a middle school
EBUS/ETES/EFCS	1 Semester hour (30 clock hours) at a high school
EMKT	2 Semester hours (100 clock hours) at a high school spread over two semesters

Those students whose early field experiences will be spent in a middle school and high school must select schools that are in two **different** school districts and with demographics as different as possible from the high schools from which they graduated. The reason for this requirement is so the student is able to observe classes in demographically different school settings in which they will probably find themselves when they graduate and enter the teaching profession.

1. The time you spend in the classroom must be spread over the entire semester, not clustered in one week. Your observations should also occur on varying day through the week. Always observing on Friday, for example, would provide a narrow view of what goes on throughout the week in the class/es you are observing!

2. Complete an Observation Exercise for 10 weeks spent observing. These guided observations are designed to assist you with understanding the application of theory to the classroom. Additionally, the exercises are designed to help you think about your own practice as a teacher so that your practice is informed by the theory.
3. A journal must be kept with an entry for each day you spend at school.
  - Initial entry should reflect on the learning climate the teacher has developed and the teacher's management style.
  - Entries should include your observation exercise for the week and notations regarding the class or classes you are observing, the focus of instruction for that day, and how the teacher interacts with students.
  - Provide some sense of how you feel and what you think about what you see going on in the classroom.
  - Observe the extent to which you see learning connected with the world outside the school. Is learning and evaluation contextualized?

Your journal may be kept in whatever format suits you best; however handwriting must be legible! The journals must be submitted for review every three (3) weeks throughout each semester.

# Observation Exercises

On the following pages you will find twelve exercises that you are to complete in order. One exercise should be done per visit. Answers may be hand-written or typed. These observations are intended as a springboard into your preparation to be a great teacher.

This packet contains the following exercises:

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## **#1 Environment**

**What are basic classroom facilities? How are they used to promote learning? Refer to the items listed below in answering this question.**

Student desks. Are they moveable? Are they moved? Draw a picture if you like.

Teacher's desk.

Bulletin boards.

Walls. Windows.

Tables. Counters.

Other classroom facilities.

Describe the room location relative to the office, workroom (supplies), copier, restrooms, media center, special subject rooms. Briefly tell the advantage and disadvantages of the room location. Again, you may want to draw a school map on the back or on an attached sheet.

## **#2 Atmosphere**

**What is the general atmosphere of the class? Of the school? Many factors contribute to the “atmosphere”. Consider these...**

Is the school/classroom bright?

Is the school/classroom attractive?

Is the school/classroom comfortable?

Is the school/classroom safe?

Notice walls, displays, lighting, plants, etc. What changes in the physical appearance of the school (or classroom) would you change? Why?

How did you feel when you first walked into the school? Did you feel welcome? Why? Why not? Who made you feel most welcome? How did s/he accomplish that?

Consider how you've been treated by staff members so far. Do you think you would act any differently toward a new face in school if you were a staff member?

Is the school a friendly place? Notice the rapport among staff, kids.

Do the students seem to like the school? Would you if you were their age? Why?

Did the students make you feel welcome? Were they encouraged to?

### **#3 Student Involvement**

#### **How does the teacher involve the pupils of the class?**

Decision making. Is the class (as a group) allowed or encouraged to make decisions for the group? What kind of decisions? How are such decisions made? (voting, class meeting, etc.) What kind of decisions do you think the class could make—as a group—for themselves? Be as specific as possible. If you observe more than one class, answer these questions for one of them. (Individual decision making will be dealt with in a later exercise.)

Are your students involved in handling and running equipment?...in running errands?...in setting up?...in cleaning up?...in anything else? Can you think of any other ways the students could be involved in everyday activities (not necessarily academic)?

How are the students chosen to participate? Name one or two other ways students might be chosen?

## #4 Questioning

### How does the teacher use questions?

Plan to observe the teacher's question-asking pattern during a block of time (20 to 30 minutes) in which s/he is working with the whole class. You should probably do this exercise more than once to improve your skill in recognizing different kinds of questions. Listen to student responses. Are they being challenged to think at levels beyond the simple recall of facts and numbers?

Make a tally of the number of cognitive-memory, convergent, divergent, and evaluation questions asked. (see attached sheet on "Questions.")

### Try this!

Try to categorize the questions into the sub-classes (recall, predict, explain, etc.) To do that you would probably have to get the teacher's permission to tape an oral lesson so that you would be able to listen to it and analyze it at your leisure.

*☞ Keep observing questioning even after you have completed this exercise. ☞*

### **#5 *Time and the Teacher's Attention***

**The squeaky wheel gets the most oil.**

With which student have you spent the most time with so far? Why?

With which student have you spent the least time? Are there any you haven't talked to at all? Select one student with whom you have spent little or no time. Next day, seek out that child. Talk to her/him. By talking with and observing find out something new about her/him. That day, after you have spent some time with your new friend to the following:

Write five things about the child you have learned.

Tell why you had given this child so little attention prior to now.

Was this exercise of any value to you? Why or why not?

## **#6 Motivation**

**What methods and procedures does the teacher use getting students interested in what they are to learn?**

This question deals with motivation. You may need to discuss it with the teacher and/or look for motivational techniques over a period of time. Frequently used motivational techniques: bulletin boards, movies, speakers, collecting pictures, writing letters, pep talks, etc.

Which motivational techniques have you seen used? Don't limit yourself to the ones named above. Be specific, describe how.

Watch your teacher as s/he introduces a new topic or concept to the class. What technique(s) was used? Watch the students. Look at their faces, posture, other non-verbal and perhaps verbal behavior clues. Are they interested? Do they care? Speculate as to WHY they are or are not interested.

Can you think of any other motivational techniques the teacher could try?

## **#7 *Think, Decide, and Evaluate***

**How does the teacher help students to think, to make decisions, to evaluate their own learning?**

Are information and answers to questions handed to kids or are they expected to “discover” new information and dig out their own answers? Explain.

Are students in any way allowed/encouraged to determine what they will study and when? Does the teacher make any provision for personal initiative on the part of her/his students?

In what ways are students included in the evaluation of their own work? Do they ever check their own papers? Are they expected to correct their own errors? Do students ever work together in evaluating work?

## **#8 Social Environment**

**What types of social structures are operating in the classroom? In the school? How does the teacher utilize them in a positive and productive manner?**

Are there noticeable cliques?

Is there a student elite (academic or athletic or socio-economic)? Answer this both for the class and the school.

Is there any form of student government either in the class or in the school? Describe.

How do the opposite sexes tend to relate to one another?

What have you noticed about how members of the same sex relate to one another?

Is there teacher involvement in any of the above – as promoter, problem-solver, manipulator, etc.? Describe.

### **#9 Individual Differences: Learning, Speaking, Discipline**

#### **How does the teacher provide for individual differences?**

Do the students ever have time to work on their own and at the own pace? Are any learning activities partially or completely individualized? Are all the students doing the same thing at the same time?

Does the teacher talk differently to different students...tone of voice, vocabulary, expression, touching? Watch carefully. This can be very subtle and may or may not suggest favoritism. Do you detect a pattern?

Does the teacher use different means of discipline/punishment/reward for different students? Again, this can be subtle and may or may not suggest favoritism. What do you think?

## **#10 Contextual Teaching and Learning**

### **How does the teacher use real world situations to provide a context for student learning?**

Contextual teaching and learning (CTL) is a conception of teaching and learning that helps teachers relate subject matter content to real world situations; and motivates students to make connections between knowledge and applications to their lives as family members, citizens, and workers and engage in the hard work that learning requires. Information obtained from [www.cord.org/lev3.cfm/146](http://www.cord.org/lev3.cfm/146).

Are new concepts presented in real-life (outside the classroom) situations and experiences that are familiar to the student?

Are concepts in examples and student exercises presented in the context of their use?

Are new concepts presented in the context of what the student already knows?

Do examples and student exercises include many real, believable problem-solving situations that students can recognize as being important to their current or possible future lives?

Do examples and student exercises cultivate an attitude that says, "I need to learn this"?

Do students gather and analyze their own data as they are guided in discovery of the important concepts?

Are opportunities presented for students to gather and analyze their own data for enrichment and extension?

Do lessons and activities encourage the student to apply concepts and information in useful contexts, projecting the student into imagined futures (e.g., possible careers) and unfamiliar locations (e.g., workplaces)?

Are students expected to participate regularly in interactive groups where sharing, communicating, and responding to the important concepts and decision-making occur?

Do lessons, exercises, and labs improve students' reading and other communication skills in addition to mathematical reasoning and achievement?

## **#11 Student Organizations**

### **How do student organizations contribute to the students education?**

Vocational Student Organizations (VSO) can be a wonderful part of the curriculum for Career and Technical Education.

List the VSOs offered at your school. (There can be up to 10 related to Career and Technical Education.)

Which organization is affiliated to your area of study?

What is the purpose or motto for the organization?

What are the specific colors of your organization?

Do they elect officers? If so, what positions are elected and which are appointed?

When are meetings?

Do they attend regional/local, state and national events/competitions? Explain.

List some activities the organization is involved in or will be involved.

Is the organization involved in fundraisers and/or community service projects? List each project and provide an explanation if necessary.

How does the teacher incorporate the student organization into his/her lesson planning?

## ***#12 Reflection on your Observation Experiences***

### **What is the teacher's method for organizing learning activities?**

Some of you have dealt with this in you logs and other observation exercises. I'd like you to try and pull you observations in this area together into a cohesive, descriptive paragraph and then add a few personal comments evaluating the teacher's system. What have you observed, both positive and negative, that will be of value to you as a teacher?

### ***Appendix: Questions***

<b>Narrow</b>		<b>Broad</b>	
<u>Cognitive-Memory</u>	<u>Convergent</u>	<u>Divergent</u>	<u>Evaluative</u>
Recall	Explain	Predict	Judge
Define	State Relationship	Hypothesize	Value
Name	Compare and Contrast	Infer	Defend
Yes or No		Reconstruct	Justified choice
Designate			
Identify			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low level thinking skills</li> <li>• Short, factual, predictable answers</li> <li>• Require little thought by student</li> <li>• Often used in drill sessions</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permit a variety of acceptable answers (not predictable)</li> <li>• Thought provoking</li> <li>• Cause person responding to hypothesize, predict, infer</li> <li>• May also involve opinion, judgement, feeling</li> </ul>	

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_