

**GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE
HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

TA1235 - PRACTICUM

Winter 2008: January 28, 2008 to April 4, 2008

TIME: Students will attend their practicum placements on Tuesdays and Thursdays from **08:30 to 11:50. (45 hours total).**

The seminar component will be held **Mondays from 1:00 to 1:50.**

LOCATION: Each student will be assigned to a school in the region. **Seminars** will be in room **H223.**

INSTRUCTORS: Theresa Suderman 539-2041
tsuderman@gprc.ab.ca

NOTE: Each student is responsible for contacting their agency supervisor one week prior to the start of practicum.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This practicum consists of 45 hours of fieldwork in a school setting and 10 hours of an integration seminar on campus. Practicum experience gives students the opportunity to integrate the knowledge, skills and attitudes learned in their course with practical experience in school settings. College instructors and school personnel will supervise and evaluate practicum students.

REQUIRED TEXT

Grande Prairie Regional College Department of Human Services: Practicum Handbook for Supervisors and Students, Teacher Assistant Program.

CLASS FORMAT

The practicum consists of providing assistance to individuals and teachers within a school setting. Regular observation times and on-site meetings are held with College faculty supervisors.

Classes on Tuesday afternoons will be conducted in seminar style, requiring student's active participation in discussions. The practicum seminar provides a forum for students to reflect and explore issues related to the field of teacher assisting, their studies, and their practicum experiences. **Students are required to ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE** in discussions.

Students will be involved in developing an agenda for the seminar session at the beginning of each class meeting. (Examples of agenda items: questions related to clarification of course material/assignments, resolution of difficulties with classes or with field placements, etc.) Students are encouraged to identify other issues, relevant to the field, especially current issues raised by the media.

A portion of each seminar will focus on discussion of practicum experiences. Students are expected to bring comments related to the highlights of their experience, what they learned, and what they need to learn in preparation for their next practicum. Sharing experiences will provide students the opportunity to explore how concepts and skills learned in classes are effectively/ appropriately applied to a variety of practical settings.

Students are reminded that information about the people with whom they work is **HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL** and as such must not be discussed or repeated outside the seminar.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this practicum, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate professionalism by responding appropriately to school routines, discipline policies, fire drills, and established practices.
 - a) be aware of classroom and school routines
 - b) contribute successfully and follow school's discipline policies and procedures
 - c) arrive on time to workplace
 - d) demonstrate confidentiality
2. Demonstrate initiative and self-motivation.
 - a) Look for opportunities to assist teacher and/or students.
 - b) Ask for directions as required.

3. Demonstrate a positive attitude and develop rapport with staff and students.
4. Set up or prepare necessary materials to facilitate activities.
 - a) Prepare and clean up materials associated with classroom activities
5. Follow directions given by supervisor.
6. Demonstrate skills, attitudes, and knowledge acquired in course work.
7. Communicate with supervisors, parents, and other professionals on practicum related issues.
8. Respect the individuality and diversity of each child, family, and staff member.
9. Express points of view, feelings, and concerns regarding courses and issues in the field of teacher assisting.
10. Evaluate their performance on practicum and work with their classmates to develop strategies for improvement.
11. Take a leadership role in facilitating discussion of seminar topics.

CREDIT REQUIREMENTS AND STUDENT EVALUATION

This is a credit/no credit course. Successful completion of the practicum requires that the log book be complete and all evaluations are satisfactory.

School personnel complete a practicum evaluation form for each student they supervise.

College instructors evaluate students based on observation of strengths and needs in the field and review of field experiences and reflection as per the **work** book. The extent to which the student uses supervision to maximize learning will be taken into account in the instructor's evaluation. Students are expected to be prepared to address specific issues during instruction supervision visits and have log books up-to-date.

Both the agency supervisor and the student are required to notify the college instructor **immediately** if serious performance and/or related difficulties should arise so that an attempt can be made to rectify the situation prior to final evaluation of the student and/or withdrawal of the placement.

Student work book – This assignment allows the student to reflect on the attitudes, skills and knowledge experienced within the practicum placement. It is to be completed after school hours, not during the working day. Workbooks should be in loose-leaf binders enabling students to add materials as required.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

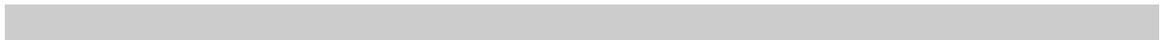
PRACTICUM ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY. If for any reason students are unavailable to participate in the practicum on any given day, both the supervising teacher and the faculty supervisor must be notified in advance. Appointments (e.g. dental, medical) must be booked outside of practicum hours.

Illness or absence in excess of ten percent of the hours required for the practicum will require a medical certificate and will be made up at a time mutually agreed upon by the school, student, and the College.

Failure to comply with the above will result in unexcused absences. Three unexcused absences may result in course failure.

INTEGRATION SEMINAR IS MANDATORY. Absence in excess of 2 hours of seminar class will necessitate the negotiation of a learning contract with the instructor. Should the student fail to meet the terms of the contract, credit for this course may not be granted.

Extenuating circumstances may be considered on an individual basis.



WHAT'S IN A SEMINAR?

So, what is a Seminar?

The Integration Seminar is the primary mode for exploring current issues in the field, discussing how what you are learning in classes is or is not implemented on your practicum site and dealing with the day to day issues of attending College. Instructors' announcements will also be made during this time.

How do I Prepare for a Seminar in General?

You are responsible for placing items you wish discussed on the Seminar Agenda at the beginning of class. If you are presenting an article for discussion, you should have read the article, thought about it, and pose some significant questions that need to be explored. Issues around attending College should be placed on the Seminar Agenda as well.

What and How do You Learn in a Seminar in General?

In the Seminar the group is responsible for exploring the article and probing the ideas that are put forth by other people. This is a time for critically analyzing and integrating the article into your existing framework of knowledge in the field of rehabilitation. As well, we will problem solve any issues that occur while you are attending College.

How do I Prepare for a Seminar While on Practicum?

In terms of discussing your practicum, you will be expected to talk about what went well this week, as well as any difficulty you experienced. You will need to give this some thought before the actual class.

What and How do You Learn in a Seminar While on Practicum?

At this time, the focus of the Seminar will shift from discussing articles and issues in the media to a **confidential** discussion about your practicum experience. During the class you will tell your group about what went well that week and what didn't go so well. Your group will help you problem solve around any issues that may have occurred over the past week and discuss what you may have done differently.

As well, items that may be causing you concern in terms of attending College should be discussed with your group.

A Seminar is a class discussion and it definitely is not a time for a lecture from an expert who will tell the group what they should get from an article, or particular topic of discussion. Seminar is a special time for a unique intellectual activity. The exchange of ideas is focused on a source (article, play, film, media someone's idea) and is aimed primarily at getting more deeply into the source.

Sometimes the Seminar will be focused and free-flowing. Sometimes it will be searching, questions, going deeper to understand ideas from articles, from others or from within yourself. Sometimes the group will come to some conclusions. Sometimes it will seem like a series of disconnected activities, like a popcorn popper, with ideas jumping around the table without clear connections. In either case, the Seminar is a place to discover new ideas, to re-look at old ideas, or to develop insightful connections among ideas.

Rules & Roles

The instructor's role in a Seminar is, at best, to be a model of an experienced learner; not to be the focus of attention, or the authority who will tell you what you should learn. Don't let the faculty member give a lecture in Seminar. Everyone must take responsibility for co-leading and sharing ideas.

Participants must learn to actively listen to each other and speak openly to the whole group, not just to the leader. The group must learn to be sensitive to the needs of all. The natural talkers must discipline themselves in order to learn how to listen better. The quiet people must learn to be more assertive and to share their insights, even if they are not comfortable doing that. Everyone should speak during each Seminar.

Speak in turn and allow others to finish their thoughts. Do not interrupt one another. Silent periods are OK. Silence gives time to process thoughts, so try to become comfortable with it. Address an idea or argument by connecting it to what someone else has said. Summarize the point you are responding to, then provide your own idea.

Finally if things are not going well, it is our responsibility individually and collectively to put things right. Keep taking the pulse of the group and make adjustments so that everyone can have the opportunity to have a meaningful intellectual experience in Seminar. The best question to ask is not "how am I doing," but rather "how is our Seminar going?"

Leaving the Seminar with more questions than you came with, or being somewhat confused and overwhelmed with new ideas, is a sign your Seminar is working. You will come to realize in seminar that a great article or topic of discussion is not something you read or share once and then feel satisfied you have learned all you can learn from it. Rather, a great article or idea is one which

stimulates continuing curiosity and which demands from you reading or re-thinking and a continuing discussion of it - maybe for the rest of your life.

Hard work spotlights the character of people: some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don't turn up at all.

- Sam Ewig