**Active Observation LOGBOOK**

**Introduction**

This first practicum provides you with an opportunity to acquire a **“big picture”** understanding of schools, communities, students, and teachers as you observe in classrooms, participate in school life, and plan and teach your first lessons. The practicum provides you with the opportunity to develop a rich understanding of what is happening in classrooms and schools today.

A **Weekly Expectations** chart is provided which details the progression of expectations over the course of the four week practicum. It is important to note that this is the first ***20 day*** placement of the ***100 days*** of practicum that you will experience in the teacher education program.

Therefore, because this is the first block of 20 days, a significant emphasis is placed on **Active Observation**, and on maintaining a daily **Log Book**. There are several reasons for this.

**Before you begin teaching, it is important for you to have the opportunity to learn about:**

* the nature of a **school community**
* the needs of **students**
* the **classroom** community
* **teacher planning and preparation**

There is much that can be learned from active, focused observation. Engaging in active observation will provide you with the opportunity to learn about the priorities and needs that exist both within the classroom and within the larger school community. It will also help you determine what you need to consider and pay attention to as you begin to plan and teach your first lessons.

**The Log Book**

**The Log Book has several important functions. It acts as:**

* a **record** of what you are doing, observing and learning
* **evidence** of the kinds of activities you are involved in
* a **record** of your professional journey, which can be used to inform a professional portfolio and preparation for job interviews

**Active Observation**

Topics and templates have been provided on the following pages for guidance and support in the maintenance of your Log Book. These are also available electronically on the Practicum website under FORMS.

The topics that are included do not exhaust the possibilities for what could be explored in a classroom or in a school. The list provided represents a range of topics that are important in education today.

***PLEASE NOTE:***

While several topics and templates are recommended in the Weekly Expectations chart, the choice of topics and the use of the templates will be determined ***in consultation*** with your AT. You do not need to complete every template, or focus on every single topic that is included here. In consultation with your AT, you will determine the most suitable focus for your particular classroom and school situation. You may choose to focus on a different topic each day, or on the same topic for several consecutive days, or on the same topic for different days throughout the practicum. In consultation with your AT, you will determine the best focus for your observation.

**Recommended for Week 1:**

The Classroom Setting

Learning about Students

The Structure of a Lesson

The School as a Community

The School Improvement Plan

**Recommended for Week 2:**

Lesson Preparation and Planning: Why?

Lesson Preparation and Planning: Observing Your Associate Teacher

Planning a Lesson: Guidelines for Teacher Candidates

Assessment and Evaluation

**Additional Templates:**

Classroom Management

Differentiated Instruction

Special Education

The Role of Technology

Extracurricular Activities

Safe and Accepting Schools

Final Reflection

**The Classroom Setting**

***Consider: How does the classroom setting and the physical layout of the classroom affect teaching and learning?***

What is the seating arrangement (rows, groups, etc.)?

How does the seating plan affect interactions in the class—among students? between student and teacher?

What other areas are there in the class, aside from their desks, where students can go to work or interact?

What elements of the classroom environment would you identify as “welcoming” or “student-friendly?”

What are the seating arrangements in the rooms in which your Associate Teacher teaches?

***In Secondary Schools***: What challenges does the secondary school teacher face in trying to establish and maintain a classroom setting that will facilitate learning in his or her particular subject area(s)?

***In Catholic Schools***: What elements in the classroom remind teachers and students that this is a Roman Catholic school? How do those elements influence student learning?

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| **The Classroom Setting** | **Examples** |
| Seating Arrangement |  |
| Effect on Interactions |  |
| Other Areas for Learning |  |
| “Student-friendly” Elements |  |
| Challenges in Secondary Schools |  |
| Roman Catholic Elements |  |

**Learning about Students**

﻿In consultation with your Associate Teacher, choose two students to observe closely for a day. Note their moods, behaviour, and social interactions, as well as their academic performance and attitudes towards their work.

At the end of the observation time, spend a little time speaking with the students to find out how they would evaluate their day so far.

To what do they attribute triumphs, successes, disappointments, and frustrations?

Based on your own observation and reflection, what are some of the factors that influence a student's readiness for learning, as well as their success, on a given day?

*(Do not identify students by name.)*

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| Student A | Student B |
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**The Structure of a Lesson**

Teaching is an activity that requires a great deal of time and preparation. From planning before the lesson—acquiring resources and evaluating students’ learning, for example--to developing instructional strategies for the lesson itself—there is a considerable amount of work involved in teaching.

While effective teachers may make teaching appear effortless, every teacher can attest to the countless hours he or she will have spent preparing for each lesson, every day.

Use this template to guide your observation of the structure of a lesson. This template can also be used for your own lesson planning.

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| **LESSON OBSERVATION** | |
| **Title & focus of lesson:**  . . . what it’s all about. |  |
| **Purpose of lesson:**  . . . why this lesson is being taught; where and how it fits into the larger curriculum, why students should want to learn about it. |  |
| **Learning Expectations:**  . . . what students will know or be able to do after this lesson; most lessons will have only one or two learning goals. |  |
| **Introduction/Hook/Bridge:**  **. . .**how to interest students and get their attention. |  |
| **Development:**  . . . what the teacher does;  what students will do;  key questions asked by the teacher. |  |
| **Closure:**  . . . how to clarify the take-home message, help students consolidate what they have learned, and set up a transition to the next lesson on the topic. |  |
| **Assessment:**  . . . how to find out what the students understood as a result of this lesson. |  |

**Teachers use a variety of lesson plan formats. You can find many outlines and templates by searching online for Lesson Plan templates for Ontario teachers. When you plan your lessons, choose a format that works for you. Sample lesson templates can be found under FORMS on the Practicum website.**

**The School as a Community**

**Roles and Responsibilities**

A school community is made up of many individuals, each with an important role in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for students.

Identify the key roles and responsibilities for the administration, teaching and non-teaching staff, students, and parent/guardians? How are these responsibilities communicated to parents and students? How is the relationship between the school, parents/guardians and students maintained and supported? What roles do parents have in the school community?

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| **Role** | **Responsibilities** |
| Administration |  |
| Teachers |  |
| Non-teaching Staff |  |
| Students |  |
| Parents/Guardians |  |

**Code of Conduct**

Is there a school “Code of Conduct”? How do students learn about the Code?

What routines in the school do students seem to be aware of and (usually) follow, without requiring explicit direction?

How do the teachers or administration deal with mildly inappropriate behaviours?

What are the consequences for more serious and disruptive behaviours?

How do the teachers or administration reinforce appropriate behaviour?

**Programs and Initiatives**

While schools provide important opportunities for students through academic programs and extra-curricular activities, schools are communities that also support students, and their parents or guardians, through special programs or initiatives, committees and community outreach.

What are some of the initiatives/programs that have been established at your school? (Examples might include: a breakfast program, a gay/straight alliance, Parent Council initiatives, etc.)

Choose one or more of these programs offered at your school, and for each one, describe the following:

-the purpose or goals of the program

-who is involved in the program

-why the program was initiated

-how the program has developed or grown

-how the program functions

-how the effectiveness of the program is determined

-future plans or developments for the program

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| **Program/Initiative Name** |  |
| Purpose or Goals |  |
| Who is Involved |  |
| Development/Growth of Program |  |
| Effectiveness/Impact |  |
| Future Plans |  |

**The School Improvement Plan**

What is a school improvement plan?

A school improvement plan is a “map” that outlines the changes that a school has identified it needs to make in order to improve the level of student achievement. It also shows how and when these changes will be made. School improvement plans help principals, teachers and school councils determine what needs should be prioritized now.

An SIP reinforces the importance of monitoring student achievement, as well as other factors, such as the school environment, that can influence student success.

Visit the school’s website and consult with your AT to learn more about the school’s SIP. If possible, arrange to speak with someone who has been involved in the development of the SIP at your school. Use the following questions as a guide for your discussion:

How does a school determine what should be considered for improvement?

Who are the partners involved in school improvement planning?

How does a school community create a SIP?

What does the actual “plan” look like?

How and when is it implemented?

How does a school evaluate the results?

How does the school plan for future success?

(adapted from *School Improvement Planning: A Handbook for Principals, Teachers and School Councils*, Education Improvement Commission, 2000)

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/sihande.pdf>

**School Improvement Plan**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Area(s) Identified for Improvement |  |
| Process for Development |  |
| Partners Involved |  |
| Implementation |  |
| End Result |  |
| SIP Evaluation |  |
| Future Plans |  |

**Lesson Preparation and Planning – Why?**

**﻿You are expected to plan your teaching activities thoroughly and in writing. Associate Teachers are responsible for their students. They need to know what you are planning to do—that is, they need to see a written plan—before they turn their classes over to you.**

Here are some other reasons why you are expected to prepare detailed lesson plans:

* planning your lessons carefully and in writing helps you think carefully about what you want to do and say, and in what order; it helps with organization, clarity, and coherency.
* good teachers ask good questions - you can't ask good questions unless you have thought about them beforehand;
* your Associate Teacher can review your lesson plans with you before you teach and provide support;
* your Associate Teacher can write comments on your lesson plan while you are teaching, giving you immediate, written feedback;
* written lesson plans serve as a record of your practicum experience – many candidates keep them as evidence of what they have done and how they have improved;
* you are a beginning teacher - when you are more experienced, good teaching practices will be second nature to you and you will not need to plan in so much detail, but for now you do.

**Lesson Preparation and Planning: Observing your Associate Teacher**

Teaching is an activity that requires a great deal of time and preparation. From planning before the lesson—acquiring resources and evaluating students’ learning, for example--to developing instructional strategies for the lesson itself—there is a considerable amount of work involved in teaching.

While effective teachers may make teaching appear effortless, every teacher can attest to the countless hours he or she will have spent preparing for each lesson, every day.

Use the questions and templates provided here to guide your lesson observations. These observations will help to inform your own lesson planning during the practicum.

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| **Lesson Planning** | |
| **Lesson Introduction:**   * How does the teacher gather and settle the students in the classroom? * What introductory activity is used to focus students' attention and pique their interest? * Are the students made aware of the purpose of the lesson? The expected learning outcomes? In what way(s)? |  |
| **Instructional Strategies:**   * How does the teacher relate this lesson to previous lessons or to an overall unit or theme? * What approaches to learning are used? What materials, aids, and resources are used? * What aspects of the lesson seemed to engage the majority of learners? * How are students encouraged to participate? * How is lesson closure achieved? |  |
| **Questioning Techniques:**   * What do you notice about the variety and level of the teacher’s questions? * What kinds of questions do students ask? How does the teacher respond to students’ questions? * How might a teacher's questions reflect what he or she believes about learning? |  |
| **Teacher's Knowledge of the Learners:**   * How does the teacher determine the learning needs of students? * How does the teacher know the students understand the lesson? * With what aspects of this lesson did the teacher predict the students might have difficulty? * How will this lesson's relative success affect planning of subsequent lessons? |  |
| **Teacher Planning:**   * Discuss with your Associate Teacher his or her approach to planning. * What are the implications for your own planning during your practicum? |  |
| **Elementary Schools:**   * How does the teacher determine the timetable for each day? * How can a teacher predict how much time students will need on a particular lesson, topic, or unit? * How far in advance is daily planning done? * What kind of things need to be planned well in advance? |  |
| **Secondary Schools:**   * How much control does your Associate Teacher have over the sequencing and timing of the curriculum? * What impact does the length of the class period and the time of day have on planning? * What impact do particular courses and/or grade levels have on the planning and pace of lesson delivery? * How far in advance is daily planning done? * What kinds of things need to be planned well in advance? |  |

**Planning a Lesson - Guidelines for Teacher Candidates**

These guidelines are summarized and adapted from “The Educator’s Reference Desk.”

Like many other websites, this one provides step-by-step instructions on how to write a lesson plan. <http://www.eduref.org/Virtual/Lessons/Guide.shtml>

**To begin, ask yourself three basic questions:**  
Where are your students going? How are they going to get there? How will you know when they've arrived?

**COMPONENTS OF A LESSON: The following components are found in every lesson.**

**Goals:**

* What are the broader goals of the unit or curriculum with which you are working?
* What will this lesson contribute to the goals for this unit?

**Expectations/Objectives/Outcomes:**

* What will students know or be able to do when this lesson is over?

**Prerequisites:**

* What must students already know or be able to do if they are to be successful in this lesson?

**Materials**:

* What materials or books are needed?
* What needs to be prepared in advance?
* Is equipment needed—and ***is it working***?

**Procedure:** Provide a detailed, step-by-step description of how you will proceed with your lesson. It doesn’t matter if you do not follow your plan exactly; but at least you *have* a plan if things do not go quite as expected.

**Introduction:**

* What will you say to begin?
* How will you get students' attention and interest them enough to hold their attention?
* How can you tie this lesson to student interests and past classroom activities?
* What will you tell the students about what will be expected of them?

**Main Activity:**

* What will *you* do—a demonstration, an explanation? How will you make it interesting?
* How will you ensure students understand?
* What will the *students* do—an activity, a discussion, small group work?
* How can this material be presented to ensure each student will benefit from the learning experience?

**Closure/Conclusion:**

* What will you use to draw the ideas together for students at the end?
* How will you provide feedback to students to correct misunderstandings and reinforce their learning?

**Follow up Lessons/Activities:**

* What activities might you suggest for enrichment and remediation?
* What lessons might follow as a result of this lesson?

**Assessment/Evaluation:**

* How will you know if students learned what you wanted them to learn?

**Sample lesson templates can be found under FORMS on the Practicum website.**

**Teachers use a variety of lesson plan formats. You can find many outlines and templates by searching online for Lesson Plan templates for Ontario teachers. When you plan your lessons, choose a format that works for you.**

**Assessment and Evaluation**

The process of assessment and evaluation is important for both teachers and students. For teachers, assessment and evaluation will inform their planning and teaching, as they make decisions on approaches and strategies that will benefit their students. For students, assessment and evaluation provide them with meaningful feedback that can help them set goals for their own learning.

***Assessment*** *is the process of gathering information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the curriculum expectations in a subject or course. The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning.*

***Evaluation*** *refers to the process of judging the quality of student learning on the basis of established performance standards and assigning a value to represent that quality.*

(from Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario's Schools, First Edition)

**Briefly describe examples of some or all of the following assessment and evaluation strategies you observe in the classroom:**

* Curriculum-focused long- and short-term planning; keeping the end in mind; what students need to know and be able to do
* Selecting and using ongoing classroom assessment strategies and data to inform instruction and plan appropriate interventions to improve student achievement
* Using assessment and evaluation strategies that are appropriate to the curriculum and the learning activities, are fair to all students, and accommodate the needs and experiences of all students
* Providing students with numerous and varied opportunities to demonstrate the full extent of their achievement without overwhelming them
* Collecting multiple samples of student work that provide evidence of their achievement
* Referring to exemplars to assess and evaluate student work
* Using provincial achievement charts to assess and evaluate student work
* Selecting and using effective strategies to support students’ self-monitoring, self-assessment, and goal-setting for their own learning
* Informing and helping students and parents to understand the assessment and evaluation strategies to be used and giving them meaningful feedback for improvement
* Applying provincial report card policies and board guidelines for reporting on student achievement

(from the New Teacher Induction Program web resources)

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| **Assessment or Evaluation Strategy** | **Example** |
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**Classroom Management**

What routines have been established and rarely need to be articulated to students?

What are the classroom expectations and responsibilities? How were these developed? How are students reminded of them?

What strategies does the teacher use to signal to the students that she or he wants everyone’s attention?

How does the teacher deal with mildly inappropriate behaviours?

What are the consequences for more serious and disruptive behaviours?

How does the teacher reinforce appropriate behaviour?

What seems to you to be the greatest challenge in managing a secondary school classroom? An elementary classroom?

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| Classroom Routines |  |
| Expectations and Responsibilities |  |
| Strategies |  |
| Consequences/Reinforcements |  |
| Challenges |  |

**Differentiated Instruction**

**Differentiation is “a teacher’s response to a learner’s needs”. (*Ministry of Education)***

Differentiation occurs in the classroom when a teacher provides a variety of instructional strategies, learning environments, and strategies for assessment and evaluation, so that each student can demonstrate his/her learning in the way that is most appropriate and meaningful for him/her. Differentiation is based on a student’s readiness, interests and learning preferences. Teachers can differentiate according to content, process, and product.

**Use the questions below to guide your observation of differentiated instruction (DI) in the classroom.**

What examples can you see of differentiation?

How is differentiation integrated into the lesson?

How does a teacher determine which method for DI is appropriate?

What are the qualities of effective differentiation?

What are the implications for teacher planning and preparedness?

What effect do these strategies have on student learning?

What Ministry resources are available to support teachers implementing DI?

**Differentiated Instruction**

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| Examples |  |
| Integration Strategies |  |
| Determining Method of DI |  |
| Qualities of Effective DI |  |
| Implications for Planning |  |
| Effect on Student Learning |  |
| Ministry Resources |  |

For more information, visit

<http://www.edugains.ca/resourcesDI/Brochures/DIBrochureOct08.pdf>

**Special Education**

“Special education programs and services primarily consist of instruction and assessments that are different from those provided to the general student population. These may take the form of accommodations (such as specific teaching strategies, preferential seating, and assistive technology) and/or an educational program that is modified from the grade level expectations in a particular course or subject.” (Ministry of Education) <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/speced.html>

What does the Education Act require of Schools with regard to Special Education? (See the Ministry of Education website for information on these requirements.)

How does the Ministry of Education define “exceptional pupils”? What are the exceptionalities that are identified by the Ministry?

What is the role of the Individual Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) in a school?

Who serves on this committee?

How often does this committee meet?

What is an Individual Education Plan (IEP)?

What is the process for developing an IEP for a student?

What is the difference between an accommodation and a modification in an IEP?

If possible, provide examples of an accommodation and a modification from the lessons you are observing.

What services and/or supports are made available in your placement school to support students with special needs?

**Special Education**

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| Education Act Requirement |  |
| Definition of Exceptional Pupil |  |
| IPRC – purpose, membership |  |
| IEP – process for development |  |
| Accommodation |  |
| Modification |  |
| Services/Supports for students and teachers |  |

**Technology in the School**

What technologies are used in the classroom and in the school? Consider, for example, the use of TV monitors, smart boards, computer labs, laptops, projectors, etc.

In what ways are these technologies used to enhance learning?

Are there lessons or courses which support students’ critical use of technology? For example, students might be taught about ethical and responsible use of social media and the Internet, cyberbullying, etc.

Are students allowed to use social media as part of their learning? If so, briefly describe the ways in which it is used and to what effect.

Does the school have a cell phone policy? Outline the key elements of this policy.

BYOD – “Bring Your Own Device” – Is this program in place in the school? How is this program implemented? What consideration is given to issues of equity and inclusion? For example, what accommodations are made for those who do not have their own devices to bring?

**Technology in the School**

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| Examples |  |
| Impact on Learning |  |
| Critical Use of Technology |  |
| Social Media and Learning |  |
| Cell Phone Policy |  |
| BYOD |  |

**Extracurricular Activities**

Become involved in an extracurricular activity of your choice—for example, the drama club, choir, yearbook committee, student council, or an athletic team. Observe the workings of the group involved in the activity.

* What effect does participation have on students? teachers?
* What impact does this particular activity have on the school? On the larger community?
* How does the activity affect teachers’ work? Students’ learning?
* What procedures are in place for organizing activities both within and outside of the school?
* What are the responsibilities of the teachers who are involved in extra-curricular activities as supervisors or coaches?

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| --- | --- |
| Example |  |
| Impact on the School, Community |  |
| Impact on Students, Learning |  |
| Impact on Teachers, Staff |  |
| Procedures for Organizing Activities |  |
| Responsibilities of Supervisors/Coaches |  |

**Safe and Accepting Schools**

The *Accepting Schools Act* is legislation that builds upon the *Equity and Inclusive Education* and *Safe Schools Strategies.* These strategies were developed to help make our schools safe, inclusive and accepting places to learn. Visit the Ministry of Education site and identify the components of the comprehensive plan that this legislation is part of. <http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/safeschools.html>

The initiatives listed below have been launched by the Ministry of Education to support schools in the implementation of the Accepting Schools Act.

* [Ontario Standing Up For Bullied Students](http://news.ontario.ca/edu/en/2012/06/ontario-standing-up-for-bullied-students.html)
* [Premier McGuinty Joins “It Gets Better” Project](http://www.videodelivery.gov.on.ca/player/download.php?file=http://www.media.gov.on.ca/b402deab288bf184/en/pages/text.html)
* [Ontario's Safe Schools Strategy](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/ministry.html)
* [Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.pdf) (2009)
* [Giving Bullied Students Hope](http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2011/11/giving-bullied-students-hope.html)
* [Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/prevention.html).

Select ONE of these initiatives and briefly describe what is involved in it.

How has your placement school implemented the recommendations of the Accepting Schools Act?

What impact have the school-based initiatives had on individual students and the school community?

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| Accepting Schools Recommendations |  |
| School Implementation – Examples |  |
| Responsibilities of Teachers, Students, Staff |  |
| Impact on Students |  |
| Impact on School Community |  |
| Impact Beyond the School |  |

**Final Reflection: Your Vision, Stance, Mission, & Professional Identity**

﻿Thinking about why you are doing what you are doing –in a lesson, a course, a program, life –is helpful in many ways to your growth and development as a teacher.

One of the characteristics of many of the best teachers is that they have a "vision," a "stance", or a "professional identity" and sense of "mission" about what they are doing. Such teachers have a certain presence, a "psychological strength" and "professional dignity" that helps them maintain their integrity, independence of thought, and passion in the face of challenges and difficulties.

What, exactly, is a **vision** of education?

What does it mean to have a **vocation**, **stance**, **professional identity**, or **mission**"

A **vision** of education is "a teacher's conscious sense of self, of one's work, and of one's mission . . . a personal stance . . . that rises from deep within the inner teacher and fuels independent thinking . . . Vision is a matter of the heart and the spirit, of personal morality and passion" (Duffy, 2002, p. 334).

A **vision** of education is "a set of images of . . . what teachers hope could be or might be in their classrooms, their schools, their community and, in some cases, even society"; a 'reach' that "inspires and motivates . . . , and invites [teachers] to reflect upon their work" (Hammerness, 2003, p. 145).

A "**stance**" is "a point of view . . . a philosophy, an attitude, a bearing, a way of encountering students based on a set of core values" (Fried, 2001, p. 139).

**Identity** refers to "the beliefs people have about themselves" to "who or what someone is, the various meanings people can attach to themselves, or the meanings attributed by others" (Korthagen, 2004, pp. 81, 82).

**Mission** is "concerned with such highly personal questions as to what end the teacher wants to do his or her work, or even what he or she sees as his or her personal calling in the world. In short, the question of what it is deep inside us that moves us to do what we do . . . deeply felt, personal values that the person regards as inextricably bound up with his or her existence" (Korthagen, 2004, p. 85).

Having a **vocation** to teach . . . means that teaching is not simply a job but is work that provides "enduring personal meaning" (p. 9) and that draws on "a sense of agency and commitment" (p. 15) "work that "embodies their vision of teaching, their beliefs about students and what they need, and their moral character as individuals" (Hansen, 1995, p.150).

**Final Reflection**

In light of the definitions above, as you conclude the first practicum, use the questions below as a guide for a final reflection.

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| What experiences and professional learning from this first practicum have informed my vision of education? |
| Why have I chosen to become a teacher? What is my "mission"? |
| What qualities do I have that suit me to being a teacher? What areas can I still improve upon? |
| If a "vision" of education is a set of goals, ideals, beliefs, and principles that guide one's work, what is my vision of education? |
| In making the transition from being a student to becoming a teacher, what particular difficulties and dilemmas have I encountered? |
| What experiences have strengthened my understanding of myself as a teacher? |
| Is teaching the right career choice for me? How do I know? |