FIELD EXPERIENCES: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION ASSIGNMENT

(Due to Methods Faculty: October 20, 2017)

ARC often hears from its graduates who are in their first year of teaching about how much things have changed in schools since they were students and just how complex and difficult a teacher’s day can be. To help our ARC students enter the program with eyes wide open, prior to your Methods session on Friday, October 20, 2017, you are required to spend two entire days observing in two local public schools at the middle AND high school levels and in the subject area in which you will be earning your certification. World Language, Music, Technology Education, and Family Consumer Science candidates may schedule an elementary observation in fulfillment of one of the two observations.

You must arrange for your two days of observation with the administration of the schools well in advance of the due date. The Classroom Observation form must be completed and handed in on Friday, October 6, 2017 to show that you have made arrangements for these required observations. In most cases, you can contact the principals directly to request arrangements or simply contact the Office of the Superintendent and ask with whom to inquire with about observations.

A formal letter is enclosed to accompany your requests to the districts. You can fax or scan/email copies of this letter to districts of interest.

Once your observations are scheduled, you are required to arrive before the start of the school day and stay for the duration of the day at both locations. During both observation days, we would like you to shadow one teacher for the full duration of the day so that you see the kinds of responsibilities teachers have in addition to instruction.

Instructions for students in Individual Education Plans (IEP) and Section 504 Plans

It is very important that one class you observe includes students who are English Learners or students with an IEP or Section 504 Plan. Please request the opportunity to observe a class in which there are students with an IEP or Section 504 to see how teachers accommodate and modify lessons for these students. Confidentiality about these students is strictly required of you. A breach in confidentiality is a violation of the Connecticut Code of Professional Responsibilities of Teachers and will have a negative impact on the assessment of your ARC Dispositions. Speak to no one about the students you observe.

FOCUS OF THE OBSERVATIONS: Focus your classroom observations on some of the following:

- Clarity of the instruction.
- Attentiveness of the students.
- Participation levels – interaction among students and between teacher and students.
- Lesson flow – connections between topics and sections of the lesson.
- Questioning techniques.
- Classroom management – discipline.
- Modifying instruction for special needs students.
- Rapport between teacher and students.
- Effectiveness of the lesson(s).

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REFLECTIVE JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT - You will be required to submit a 3-5 pages reflective journal entry (typed double-spaced) to your Methods instructors by the October 20 Methods class and be prepared to discuss your observations with your Methods cohort. At the beginning of the entry, identify:

- The schools you visited.
- Dates of the observations and the beginning and ending time of the days.
- Number of teachers, subjects, grade levels, and academic levels observed.
- The non-teaching duties (e.g., cafeteria supervision, faculty meeting, study hall, etc.) you observed teachers handling.

In your journal response, reflect on the teaching and learning that occurred during both days, as well as the non-instructional responsibilities of the teachers. **You must comment on the following question:**

- How did the teacher(s) make accommodations for students with an IEP or Section 504 plans?

In addition, you might answer some of the following questions, **but you are not limited to these questions or required to respond to all of them**.

- What did you observe during the day that was different from when you were in school at that grade level?
- What were the biggest challenges that the teacher(s) faced during the day?
- What kind of disciplinary situations, if any, did you observe? How were they handled?
- What similarities and/or differences did you notice in the teaching styles of the teachers you observed?
- How well did the lessons work?
- What did the students learn as a result of the lessons?
- What did the students have difficulty with in the lessons?
- What impressed you about the teaching your observed?
- What might you have done differently if you were the teacher? **Note, this journal entry is not to be a critique of the teacher you observed.**
- What surprised you about the teacher’s day and the teacher’s responsibilities during the school day?

Do not mention the real names of any staff members and if you refer to students, do so by first name or initial only.

It is most important to highlight **what you learned** during the course of your observations and **how your observations relate to your own perspectives and educational philosophy**. The questions that we provided should help you focus on the most important details that you were able to reflect on during the course of both observations.