

First Year ED390C Assignments Spring 2009

Journals

Purposes:

- Journals provide an opportunity for you to think and write reflectively about children's learning and your teaching, and to develop your professional persona.
- Journals give your supervisor and peers insight into your experiences and provide a place for dialogue about your development as a teacher.
- Journals provide a way for you to make explicit connections between your placements and the academic content of your courses.
- Journals help you uncover the kinds of questions that lead to topics for M.A. Projects.

Requirements:

- Journals are due each Monday, beginning with Week 2 of 390C, (February 2nd). Please email your weekly journals to your supervisor before attending 390C for the week.
- Thirteen journals are due this semester. Ten are journals to supervisors (to which your supervisor will respond in writing) and three are peer journals (you will exchange journals and responses with another student). With peer journals, please also submit a copy to your supervisor so s/he can stay informed about what is going on in your placement. Also submit a copy of your peer's journal and your response to your supervisor as well. ****The end of placement journal and the Plans for your Three-day Solo should not be used as peer journals; they must be submitted for supervisor response.**
- Please use the "header" feature in your word-processing program to put your name, your supervisor's name, the date, the journal number and the name of your school and grade level at the top of each page. **See the DTE website for guidelines in naming journal documents.** This will be of great help in supervisors' record keeping and will help you organize your journals at the end of the semester!
- All journals will consist of reflective writing (also referred to as *free-write*) on what you have observed and learned during the week. In addition to this free-write, some weeks have an assigned topic (classroom map, for example) to which you respond.
- You can also keep a running list of "I wonder" questions in your journals. This list, and the kind of thinking that generates it, will be of great value to you when it comes time to consider M.A. research topics.

- In order to provide sufficient depth and complexity, each journal should average 6 - 10 pages in length (double-spaced). Students usually spend about 4 hours per week planning and writing their journals.
- Late journals may not receive a written response from your supervisor. They will, however, be discussed in the end of placement conference.

Journal Pass

You have one journal pass to be submitted in lieu of the free-write portion of a journal or on a week when a specific journal topic is not assigned. Use it to relieve overload if stress levels go up.

"In Lieu" Journal

Because we only have thirteen journals this semester, we would like you to consider doing something in lieu of writing that 14th journal...go to a museum, attend a workshop, see Della's slideshow when she returns from Italy, interview a teacher or student at your school, etc. You don't need to write anything up or turn anything in, just consider some way to self-direct your professional development.

Confidentiality and Evaluation

Journals remain in your permanent DTE file. They are read by your own supervisor and sometimes are discussed in staff meeting with all DTE supervisors, Paul, and Della. In DTE, the entire staff participates in mentoring all students.

Although not given a letter grade, all journals will be evaluated on the basis of inclusion of the requirements listed above. They are expected regularly and on time for full credit. Supervisors will let you know if your journals are not meeting expectations and will give you suggestions for improvement. Journals are 30% of your final grade for 390C.

Journal Assignments

Each week, you are asked to choose topics from your student teaching experiences and reflect upon them (free write). However, on weeks with assigned topics, your 6-10 pages will consist of an assigned topic in addition to the free write component. This semester you will have 5 assigned journal topics. The 1st journal and 13th journal have specific due dates. The remaining 3 journal assignments do not have due dates, but must be completed prior to the end of the semester.

Assignment 1

Journal 1: Map of the Classroom

Purpose:

To think deeply about the relationship between both the physical arrangement and time schedule of a classroom and the effective learning environment of that classroom.

To introduce your supervisor and supe group to your classroom.

Please make a map of your classroom using 18x24 paper or larger. Do not worry about having it exactly to scale as you show the relationship between the parts in order to communicate how the environment influences children's learning. As you work on this, please take the opportunity to ask the teacher why things are arranged as they are. Things to consider include: the position of windows, doors, furniture, electrical outlets, water, supplies, traffic patterns, storage for children and teacher, teacher space (is there any percentage of the classroom that is off-limits to the students?), quiet areas, etc. How does all of this influence the distribution and collection of teaching materials and student work? How is culture represented in the classroom? Also, please include a weekly schedule template with time blocks...how time is mapped in the classroom throughout a week. This will help you when you begin planning for your three-day solo teaching later in the semester.

Once you have completed the map, write an analysis of your map experience, going beyond simple description to discuss the relationship between the environment and the teacher's use of space to promote efficiency, cultivate the classroom culture, and support students' learning.

Assignment 2

Context for Learning/Student Study

Purpose:

A part of the PACT event in which you will provide relevant information about your instructional context and your students as learners of mathematics. This task is an overview of your knowledge of your students and how that knowledge influences the instructional decisions you make.

For this assignment you will complete the "Context for Learning" form and then respond to the prompts in the "Context Commentary." Both the form and the prompts are found in the Handbook for the event that Julie McNamara will send you.

More info to come soon!

Assignment 3

Three-day Solo Plan

Purpose:

To help you create effective plans for your solo teaching this semester.

For this journal assignment you will turn in your plans for your three-day solo. Please meet first with your cooperating teacher to discuss ideas for what you will be teaching. We recommend that you maintain the continuity of classroom routines and curriculum, and find a place within the usual schedule to incorporate something you have planned or created. You should develop a general plan for the activities across the three days, along with specific lesson plans for individual lessons. (Use the time schedule template you created in the Map of the Classroom journal assignment.) We will discuss planning during 390c in March, and please consult with your supervisor as needed.

Please give your plan to your supervisor one week before your solo so that you have time to incorporate any modifications you may have after receiving your supervisor's feedback.

****This journal should not be used as a peer journal.****

Assignment 4

Advocating for public education: Why doesn't somebody do something about... ?

This journal assignment is part two of a 4-semester sequence to give you a chance to advocate for good policies and practices or to speak out for change if you see things that are not working well. Last semester you wrote a letter to the editor. This semester you will make an appointment with an elected/appointed official to discuss an issue, which can be drawn from your experience as a student teacher and should include 1-3 bulleted points with anecdotes to back them up. You can schedule a group meeting (with fellow DTE students), but each student must do an individual write-up of the experience. Make sure to document the process of making and keeping this appointment from the beginning. You can search the web for "communicating with an elected official" to find info and details on where to find people, how to address them, and basics of effective communication.

Assignment 5

Journal #13: End of Placement Journal

Purposes:

To document your experiences and areas of growth

To think about future areas of your development as a teacher

In this journal, we'd like you to reflect upon your development as a teacher over the entire course of your placement.

- First, read through each of your prior journals. Choose memorable quotes from these journals and insert them (using italics) into your journal.
- Next, respond to your own quotes. What issues, questions or themes were addressed? What new insights do you have, and what new questions are raised from your current viewpoint?
- Please scan and label photos that capture the essence of this placement. Be sure that you are in at least one of them. You should include 2-3 photos of students involved in various activities, contexts, etc.
- Also please scan in one or two work samples that reflect children's learning and which are representative of your teaching.
- Finally, reflect on which specific issues or areas of growth you would like to tackle in your next placement.