

Course Description: Apprentice Teaching

An underlying philosophy of the FSU-Teach program is that with extensive, individualized, and ongoing coaching, preservice teachers' skills will improve at an accelerated rate. The FSU-Teach Apprentice Teaching program is an important part of this coaching. In addition to the mentoring provided by the classroom teacher to which the apprentice teachers are assigned, trained observers with considerable teaching experience observe and provide extensive feedback a minimum of 10 times during the semester.

Because apprentice teachers have taught at various levels in previous FSU-Teach courses, they assume teaching responsibilities quickly in Apprentice Teaching, which is their final teaching semester, and maintain their role as teacher for the equivalent of two six-week grading periods. Furthermore, each required weekly seminar on campus focuses on two of the state standards for new teachers. Apprentice teachers concentrate on teaching lessons each week in which they demonstrate competency of the particular state standards.

The purpose of Apprentice Teaching is to offer FSU-Teach students a culminating experience that provides them with the tools needed for their first teaching jobs. In Apprentice Teaching, students are immersed in the expectations, processes, and rewards of teaching. When making placements, FSU-Teach staff consider each apprentice teacher's characteristics and abilities as well as the cooperating teacher's teaching and mentoring styles. The hope is that the complementary strengths of the FSU-Teach apprentice teacher and cooperating teacher will generate a synergism that benefits both people professionally.

Apprentice Teaching reinforces and augments teaching strategies that students have developed through their coursework and field experiences. The program also attempts to fill in any gaps in students' professional development. In particular, Apprentice Teaching focuses on classroom management and time management strategies, parent/teacher communication strategies, school culture and school dynamics that make up an effective middle school and high school system, legal and logistical issues in teaching, the final portfolio, and state certification examinations.

FSU-Teach apprentice teachers explore professional development opportunities beyond the classroom, including attending conferences, subscribing to education journals, joining professional organizations, and conducting presentations in educational settings. The goal of Apprentice Teaching is to provide the experiences, information, and coaching that will enable these students to be successful teachers who are leaders in their schools and communities.

Course Procedures: Apprentice Teaching

Apprentice teachers sign up for two courses: the one-hour seminar and the six-hour Apprentice Teaching course. Master teachers teach the seminar, share their teaching experiences, and facilitate discussions, helping the apprentice teachers develop their own successful teaching identities. In addition to teaching the seminar, the master teachers observe the apprentice teachers at least once during the semester. If an apprentice teacher is having difficulties, more visits are required. FSU-Teach's goal is to provide whatever coaching is required to ensure that all FSU-Teach students reach a demonstrated minimum level of competence upon the completion of their Apprentice Teaching experience. The master teachers provide guidance on various needs of apprentice teachers, including help with curriculum, pacing, classroom management strategies, how to work with colleagues in the schools, job interviewing, and selection of compatible school environments as future job sites.

Apprentice Teaching students are required to teach two sections of a science, math, or computer science class in a public middle or high school. They remain on the school campus a minimum of four hours per day. Placements are made with advice from master teachers who know the FSU-Teach students well and who also know the available potential teachers in whose classrooms the FSU-Teach students will work. Every attempt is made to place each student with a cooperating teacher whose personality and teaching strengths will work best with that particular FSU-Teach student, to the benefit of both people. In addition, apprentice teachers are required to complete district requirements to qualify as substitute teachers, so they may substitute for their cooperating teacher in an event of an absence.

A recognition dinner is held each semester to honor students upon completion of Apprentice Teaching. Their family members and special friends are invited, as are their cooperating teachers, university facilitators, and FSU-Teach staff. Students are congratulated and celebrated as they complete the FSU-Teach program.

The Seminar

The Apprentice Teaching seminar provides a supportive environment where apprentice teachers share their experiences and work on solutions to difficulties they are experiencing. The seminar is a good forum for students to get the guidance they consistently want on classroom management. A typical weekly seminar session begins with an activity that involves apprentice teachers talking with each other or individually reflecting on an issue in the classroom that is associated with the topic or proficiency of the day. During the seminar, the apprentice teachers may be asked to create a product that they will use in the upcoming week. The seminar typically ends with apprentice teachers talking with each other about upcoming lessons and curriculum ideas. After the Seminar, the master teachers are available for individual apprentice teachers to talk about issues specific to their placement.

Course Objectives: Apprentice Teaching

Students Will Be Able To:

Design instruction appropriate for all students that reflects an understanding of relevant content and is based on continuous and appropriate assessments

Create a classroom environment of respect and rapport that fosters a positive climate for learning, equity, and excellence

Promote student learning by providing responsive instruction that makes use of effective communication techniques, instructional strategies that actively engage students in the learning process, and timely high-quality feedback

Fulfill professional roles and responsibilities and adhere to legal and ethical requirements of the profession.

Evidence (Student Products)

Weekly lesson plans and daily agendas
Sample assessments and student artifacts
Videotapes of teaching
Completion of appropriate sections of the final portfolio
Observer written feedback on teaching from the cooperating teacher, the university facilitator, and university instructors
Appropriate evaluations in the TDR

Written classroom rules and procedures
Videotapes of teaching
Completion of appropriate sections of the final portfolio
Observer written feedback on teaching from the cooperating teacher, the university facilitator, and university instructors
Appropriate evaluations in the TDR

Weekly lesson plans and daily agendas
Student work containing apprentice teacher written feedback
Videotapes of teaching
Completion of appropriate sections of the final portfolio
Observer written feedback on teaching from the cooperating teacher, the university facilitator, and university instructors
Appropriate evaluations in the TDR

Participation in campus professional development days
Reflection submission on the Code of Ethics and Standards Practices for Texas Educators

Submission of artifacts associated
with parent/teacher contacts
Completion of appropriate sections
of the final portfolio