

Step 1: Inquiry Approaches to Teaching

Step 1 invites students to explore teaching as a career at no cost. In Step 1, students teach science or math lessons in elementary classrooms to obtain firsthand experience with planning and implementing inquiry-based curriculum. Master teachers teach Step 1, so students have direct access to people who love teaching and who believe that teaching is a rewarding career choice. A low-socioeconomic-status elementary classroom provides the future teachers with a first taste of teaching in a supportive, diverse environment.

An introduction to the theory and practice necessary to design and deliver excellent inquiry-based science and mathematics instruction provides the scaffold for the early field experience. The FSU-Teach instructor or master teacher and the elementary school mentor teacher emphasize both inquiry and classroom management techniques.

Course Procedures: Step 1

Students attend 1.5 hours of class on campus each week to design and deliver excellent science or mathematics lessons that they present as three lessons in a third-, fourth-, fifth-grade classroom during the semester.

Students, working alone or in pairs, teach three hands-on science or mathematics lessons (chosen from National Science Foundation–developed modules) in a local low-socioeconomic elementary school. The students post their written lesson plans in the 5E format to the class website on Blackboard. The students also send each lesson plan as an email attachment to the master teacher at the University and to their mentor teacher at the elementary school before they teach the lesson. The mentor teacher reads the lesson plan and responds to the University students. The mentor teacher provides written feedback at the end of each lesson and works with each student or pair of students to help them improve their teaching abilities as the semester progresses.

The classroom fieldwork is supplemented with two observations during which FSU-Teach students observe exemplary classroom teachers. The FSU-Teach students reflect on each of these classroom visits by answering questions, which are posted on the discussion board of Blackboard, within one week after each visit.

Attendance is crucial in Step 1 classes, so a rigorous attendance policy is enforced in this class.

A mentor teacher completes one evaluation per team of FSU-Teach students for each lesson they teach. Master teachers evaluate and comment on FSU-Teach students' lesson plans, requiring rewrites as necessary. Master teachers also observe and evaluate each team of students during one of their field lessons.

Course Objectives: Step 1

Students Will Be Able To:

Utilize content knowledge to plan and teach three upper elementary grade lessons

Utilize exemplary sources of inquiry-based science and mathematics lessons

Write performance objectives and assessments of those objectives for each lesson

Design and teach three inquiry-based lesson plans using the 5E model

Determine personality and learning styles using survey instruments such as the Keirsey Temperament Sorter and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences and discuss the implications for teaching and learning

Use probing questions to elicit feedback to determine students' acquisition of knowledge

Evidence (Student Products)

A paragraph in each lesson plan that provides background information on the concepts presented
Content accuracy throughout a lesson plan
Observations by the mentor teacher and the master teacher

Participation in model lessons presented in class
Sources of lessons cited in each lesson plan

Performance objectives and corresponding assessments included in each lesson plan

Three inquiry-based lesson plans
Written feedback by the mentor teacher for three inquiry-based lessons
Written feedback by a master teacher for at least one inquiry-based lesson

Completion and analysis of survey instruments
Participation in class discussions on the implications of personality and learning styles for teaching and learning

Participation in class discussions on questioning strategies
Extensive examples of possible questions and expected responses listed in each lesson plan
Written feedback for every lesson from the mentor teacher

Implement safe classroom practices

Assess commitment to pursue teaching as a career path

Safety issues addressed in each lesson plan

Observations by the mentor teacher and master teacher

Participation in a class discussion on intentions to pursue teaching as a career path

