



Professional Semester III Final Report

Faculty of Education

Field Experiences

Fall Spring Semester, 2015 (Please check appropriate semester)

Professional Semester III is a five-course equivalent integrated semester including half-time teaching and professional study in curriculum design, leadership, advanced methods, and reflective practice. Intern Teachers are assigned full time to schools for the semester during which they assume responsibility for approximately one-half of the teaching day. PS III professional study is designed to complement and enhance the internship. The professional study components may occur on or off-campus and are coordinated by the Faculty Mentors in collaboration with Intern Teachers and school personnel.

Place a checkmark in front of the course in which you are registered

Education 4571 – Elementary Education
 Education 4572 – Secondary Internship
 Education 4573 – Special Focus Internship
 Education 4574 – Fine Arts Internship - Art or Drama
 Education 4575 – Fine Arts Internship - Music

Intern Teacher Matthew Fosen _____ Grade Level(s) 3-4 _____
 School St. Paul School _____ Administrator Mr. Gerry Muldoon _____
 Teacher Mentor Mrs. Jana Boschee _____ Faculty Mentor Mrs. Janice Rahn _____

Intern Teacher's Descriptive Report:

I was very fortunate to a part of a grade 3-4 multiage classroom, that was also a bit of a pilot-program for the School. Because of the coming expansion of the Catholic School district here in Lethbridge, St. Paul School is expecting a large shift in their numbers as a new school is built on the Northside. The idea behind the multiage classes was to try to integrate a wider range of ages together, as well as for the teacher to have the same students for 2 years in a row, to better guide their development. This situation, combined with a desire from the staff to integrate project-based learning into their curriculum, meant that I was coming into the school at an ideal time.

The goals of the School meshed perfectly with the ideas I had for my PIP, so I felt very fortunate to be a part of the grade 3-4 team at the school. Well before school started, in July, I had the chance to meet with them and be a part of the planning for the year, which also helped me tremendously, not only in further developing my PIP project, but also giving me a "big picture" view of what the students would be learning, and how all of the pieces fit together. The grade 3-4 teachers at the school are a truly phenomenal group, who made me feel welcome right away, and accepted and valued my opinions and ideas. For that I am, and always will be grateful.

That is not to say that I did not have any challenges during my time with the school. My previous teaching experience in the martial arts gave me a good skill set for handling a multi-age classroom, but there is a strong difference between teaching children physical skills and teaching them understanding of facts, history and issues. So, while my Physical Education classes went very smoothly, and the kids really enjoyed them, I struggled with getting the kids to connect to the material in Social Studies. I feel I have really grown in this area, as my

Intern Teacher's Descriptive Report (Continued)

observations of the students, my discussions with Mrs. Boschee and the other great teachers at St. Paul's and my attempts sometime falling flat, gave me a much deeper understanding and perspective of just what it takes to really get a child excited about learning, and therefore more eager to absorb information.

I tackled almost all of the classroom work through Art. Whether we were working on Social Studies, Health, or Religion, there was always an Art component to my teaching (which was both my PIP project idea and just a personal philosophy of mine). I learned quite a bit from this, discovering what worked and what didn't. Being a mature student, the way I absorb information is a little bit different from the average PSIII student. As a mature student, I find myself asking less questions than I used, and instead, learning more through my mistakes. In that sense, I have truly been blessed to have worked with Mrs. Boschee, who gave me all the freedom and latitude to try things, and wonderful feedback when I did fall flat. I can't stress enough about how amazing my experience at St. Paul's was, and how without really trying, the staff there transformed my learning experience there into what I consider my ideal experience.

Because of this freedom, combined with my desire to approach subject through art and project-based learning, my classroom ended up tackling material in a non-linear fashion. Sometimes, I felt this was an innovative and exciting approach, and was creating a learning environment that included many different learning styles. Other times I felt like I was juggling Faberge Eggs, questioning if I was taking the right approach at all, or if I was going completely off-base. And again, Mrs. Boschee's guiding hand in all of this was crucial to reinforcing my desire to step outside of the traditional teaching model. I spent a lot of time out of my comfort zone, and as a result, I really felt like I gained new perspectives and teaching and reaching students that I might not have otherwise gotten.

Thanks to the early planning of the grade 3-4 teachers, planning the projects and the necessary lessons to enable the students to succeed in was made a very manageable process. I was initially a little nervous about the idea of tackling both project-based learning and integrating art into core curriculum teaching. Having that Early July planning session, where the group collectively came up with the objectives that needed to be hit, and in what order, a very daunting task became a series of scaffolded lessons that easily transitioned from one to the next. Again, I am so grateful of the team I was able to work with, as they gave me the information and opportunities to succeed. As a result, when the first day of classes came, I had my entire time at the school planned out, and could quickly and easily adjust my lesson plans to better suit student learning, while still keeping on the stepped path that had been set up.

We started with projects about Identity, starting simple with facts about themselves and their family, moving up to portraits of themselves, then branching out into a display about an aspect of their identity they wanted to share with the rest of the school. Culminating in Identity Day, the students had a chance to share a part of themselves, while learning a little bit more about themselves. It was an easy transition from Identity, where we had discussed where the student's families had come from, into the history and peoples of Alberta. As the students learned about what part of the puzzle that makes up Alberta, they also continued honing their drawing skills, and these two branches came together to create a comic of the history of Alberta. This project became the highlight of my PIP presentation, as it demonstrated not only their learning, but also the growth they had undergone since the beginning of the year. From there,

the class transitioned into the regions and resources of Alberta, and also transitioned from drawing to painting, where they came together to create a mosaic mural for the school
Intern Teacher's Descriptive Report (Continued)

about the resources and regions in Alberta, showing that other elements they had learned in other classes – a little bit of science, some language arts, even some math in figuring out how to make everything fit – came together. Like the comic project before, the finished product was a solid example of cross-curricular learning. And without the careful planning of the entire team at St. Paul's, it wouldn't have been possible.

Throughout all of my lessons, I was very conscious to integrate technology at every opportunity. These kids live in a digital world, and it would be a crime not to acknowledge that. From interactive websites to SMART board lessons, to having the students do their own research with laptops and iPads, striking an important balance between technology and traditional pencil and paper learning was a key goal of mine. I am an avid lover of technology, and have gotten quite adept at it, but I am also a lover of working with pencil and paper, so it was important to me that I had both aspects of education equally represented.

One of the first things I developed after plotting the kid's learning course was to develop the tools for assessing their progress. Most of the projects were assessed through rubrics, using the school's established format of Excellent/Proficient/Adequate/Limited. This allowed me to conform to assessment practices already in place, which was a big help. Thanks to that, the rubrics developed into a flexible format that gave a good gauge of student's performance.

Finally, the one thing I felt grew the most in my time at the school was my class management skills. Teaching a classroom of children social studies or art is very different from teaching the martial arts. And while I carried many of the strategies from my martial arts days over to the classroom, I learned to temper that with the freedom the kids needed to be successful as artists. It was an interesting balance to strike, and I did struggle with it at times, my desire for discipline and order conflicting with the needs for expression and creativity of the assignments the kids were doing. This is an area I know will continue to develop, so it is refreshing to look back over the last 16 weeks and reflect on how I have developed, grown and changed as a teacher.

I can't stress how positive of an experience I had at St. Paul. I have learned so much, and I owe it all to my mentors and peers at St. Paul School. This has been one of the best collaborative experiences I have had to date. My time at St. Paul has been everything I had hoped for from a teaching experience. I am going to miss the kids so much! I'm going to miss the staff too, but the rapport I built with the kids was the highlight of my time there and I am determined to find time in my Spring schedule to come back and volunteer at the school, just so I can keep a connection with the kids and the school.



Intern Teacher



Dec. 15, 2015

Intern Teacher Signature

Date

**This page is to be attached to the Intern Teacher's Report.
School Administrator Comments:**

I had the opportunity to observe Matthew throughout his practicum at St. Paul. From these observations, I have concluded that he is a good elementary teacher with a strong understanding of the needs of the students in his care. He had an interesting teaching assignment. He taught a grade 3/4 multi-age class. Within the grade structure students were at a variety of levels and different needs. Some students in the class were very busy. Matthew worked hard to keep them engaged and help them feel part of the community. He also developed lessons that were designed to engage all the students. He taught one student who was very volatile as he suffered from a brain injury. This made the classroom dynamic difficult at times. When the student had a "melt down", Matthew was very good at bringing the rest of the class to safety and keeping them calm.

As I observed his lessons it became clear that Matthew is a strong elementary teacher with a very good understanding of how to engage students in. He is able to clearly explain what he wants the students to learn. The classes were well organized to ensure that individual needs were met. Transitions from one activity to another were very smooth. A variety of instructional strategies were used in the lesson and each was specific to the subject matter. When appropriate, Matthew's questions were clearly phrased and took into account the needs of the students in the class.

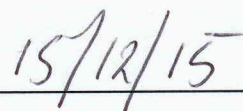
Throughout his practicum I observed his art classes on a regular basis. This seems to be a strength of his. He did a very good job setting up the lesson and making sure it went smoothly. He taught the lesson to the group making sure that he demonstrated the skills needs. He then organized the students into groups. If necessary, he retaught the skills. He also made sure that no students were left out and each had a partner or were part of a group.

Prior to going into education, Matthew was a martial arts instructor. He taught these skills in his PE class. When I visited the gym I was impressed how he was able to organize the group as if they were part of his martial class.

As a teacher, Matthew presents a professional appearance and manner. He fulfills his professional obligations. Collaboration is important in today's education and Matthew was part of the Professional Learning Community. He also contributed to Inclusive Education Committee and sat in on meetings with guardians to discuss programming and student needs. In these meetings Matthew has the maturity and confidence to contribute to the discussions. This could be due to the fact that he has a broader experience that most PSIII students.

Matthew has been a welcome addition to the St. Paul School community and I wish him all the best in his teaching career.





School Administrator Signature

Date

This page is to be attached to the Intern Teacher's Report.

Teacher Mentor Comments:

Matthew worked as PSIII intern teacher in my multi-age Grade 3 and 4 classroom September to December, 2015. In this time, he successfully demonstrated the knowledge, skills, and attributes to support student learning as outlined by the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Employing his life experience, dynamic personality, and mature judgment, Matthew thoughtfully carried out the responsibilities of a half-time classroom teacher.

Matthew was consistently well-prepared, planning detailed unit and lesson plans which included learning objectives, learning materials, assessments, and rubrics. As he designs future learning projects, Matthew might consider strategies to encourage the students to take responsibility for their learning objectives, emphasizing process, and taking ownership away from the teacher. This is a difficult balance to strike, especially when experimenting with cross-curricular AND multi-age instruction. Matthew integrated fine arts and social studies outcomes which increased student engagement. To account for this classroom situation, Matthew scaffolded his lessons and activities, building skills toward a clear end point. Matthew provided clear expectations for his assignments through detailed rubrics. He completed report card marks and comments in a timely manner for the subjects he taught in our classroom, and for three other Physical Education classes. His contributions to parent meetings were positive, honest, and focused on student growth.

Respectful and consistent relationship with students created a safe space for learning. Matthew clearly expressed, expected, and reinforced positive learner behaviours. Supporting systems already in place, as well as developing his own behavior reward programs showed Matthew's ability to effectively monitor and manage procedures and routines. Matthew's students clearly appreciate his caring presence as is evidenced by their wish to engage him in conversation and comfort in asking him for help. He was one hundred percent engaged with them and to his subject matter. His passion and enthusiasm for encouraging their growth and development was sincere and consistent.

Matthew is a team-player; showing flexibility and a willingness to help. Even when he was not expected to be teaching, he stayed with the class assisting students with their learning objectives. Matthew calmly adapted to the busy and spontaneous schedule of elementary school life, including serious and ongoing behavioural issues of one of his students. He maintains a professional appearance and demeanor, providing a clear leadership role in the classroom. Matthew had opportunities to demonstrate and develop skills as a team member of our multi-age Grade 3/4 teacher team, as part of individual student intervention teams, and as a whole staff. He enthusiastically and confidently contributed to conversation and shares the workload. In future, he can consider how he might capitalize on the expertise of the rest of the team.

Matthew has been a valuable part of our classroom community. Our students have grown in skills and abilities because of his work with them. That is the ultimate test of a teacher.

Jana Boschee



Dec 15, 2015

Mentor Teacher Signature

Date

This page is to be attached to the Intern Teacher's Report.

Faculty Mentor Comments:


Mathew Fosen was diligent in communicating with me before and throughout the practicum. His unit and lesson plans were well developed. They clearly communicated the desired learning objectives and the links to the program of study. He outlined learning activities, designed to develop knowledge and skills. His planning showed conscious thought to such variables as pacing, resource management, and student dynamics as well as formative and summative assessment. His units of instruction showed an understanding of the scope and sequence of the curriculum, performance assessments as well as time management.

Mathew created engaging units that integrated art across the curriculum in project-based learning. He collaborated with a team of teachers across grade levels to plan projects and to define project-based learning with engagement and problem solving as the focus. He clearly demonstrated his understanding of the contextual variables affecting teaching and learning. He adapted and differentiated his planning and teaching with awareness and good judgment. The classes had a broad range of abilities, motivational levels, and therefore classroom management challenges. In the classes I observed, the materials were well organized, and the pacing kept students motivated through different teaching strategies and transitions. Students had the ability to focus independently, showing respect for each other and the teacher. In our meetings, he asked relevant questions that showed his genuine desire to motivate students.

In his inquiry project, Mathew researched how he could motivate students by integrating Art and Social Studies. He also wanted more time for art by teaching through drawing and visual representation in an identity project and in a self-published comic on the settlement of Alberta. He presented the final outcome and talked about his process to university faculty, PSIII interns and parents at a PSIII symposium celebrating inquiry in teaching.

Mathew learned the value of developing relationships with his students and how to work with parents. He invited them to attend his presentation at the PSIII symposium and had a student speak at the end. Mathew acted on feedback from his mentor, administrator and myself. He was critically reflective and implemented suggestions while developing his own teaching style and philosophy. I would like Mathew to continue to work on listening instead of speaking, and to be collaborative in his relationship with other teachers.

I have read the complete Final Report and certify that the assigned grade is PASS.


Faculty Mentor Signature

Dec. 15 2015