Mentored Teaching Experience

The Mentored Teaching Experience is designed to bring together graduate student teachers with faculty, to encourage active and critical discussions about teaching and learning, and to encourage innovative teaching practices. As part of this mentored teaching experience, the student will, with the assistance of the faculty mentor, design and implement a specific project.

Students will develop a personal plan for this experience; a short written proposal co-signed by the faculty mentor and approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Education and Research, which will serve as the set of guidelines for this experience. This proposal should clearly state the student’s professional objectives, participation in the course, the project design and implementation and other interactions with the mentor.

Components of the Mentored Teaching Experience will include but are not limited to:

• Choosing a faculty member as a teaching mentor
• Holding regular meetings with Faculty Mentor and discussing teaching in general and the formulation and implementation of the teaching project
• Discussing and participating where possible in the course objectives, the course syllabus, papers, exams and general grading
• Observing the mentor’s teaching and discussing your observations with the mentor
• Formulating a teaching project (including a one page write-up of the proposal with the mentor’s sign-off) – the proposal will be approved by your Department and the Associate Dean for Graduate Education and Research
• Implementing and evaluating the teaching project
• Assessing the outcomes of the project, and reflecting on its implementation in a short paper

The faculty mentor will provide written commentary on both the project itself and the TA execution, report and reflection.

Departments will establish a minimum requirement of classroom involvement (e.g. lecturing, recitation or lab sections) appropriate to the student. Classroom involvement must exceed grading or preparing labs.

Examples of Teaching Projects:

Experiment with, implement or try a series of classroom assessment techniques. Evaluate the results and success of each one, and determine which one(s) were most successful and why.

One assessment technique: The Minute Paper. A few minutes before the end of class, the instructor asks the students to write the answer to two questions. 1) What was the most important thing you learned today? And 2) What questions are uppermost in your mind as we conclude this class session? This technique allows both teacher and student to focus on the learning process. The papers are collected, and questions can be summarized and addressed at the following class session. (Cross, “How to Find Out Whether Students Are Learning What You Are Teaching” from Nyquist, Preparing the Professoriate of Tomorrow to Teach.) (Reprinted by permission from Kendall/Hunt Publishing.)
Experiment with, implement or try a series of collaborative learning techniques. Evaluate the results and success of each one, and determine which one(s) were most successful and why.

One collaborative learning technique: Jigsaw Procedure. When you have information you need to communicate to students, an alternative to lecturing is a procedure for structuring cooperative learning groups called jigsaw (Aronson, 1978). In this activity, the instructor first divides up the materials to be given to the students, and gives each student one part of the set of the materials. Students are first asked to meet with someone else from the class who is a member of another learning group, and who has the same section of materials and a) learn and become an expert on their material and b) plan how to teach the material to the other members of their groups. Then the students meet with another person in the class from another group, but who has learned the same materials in order to share ideas on how the material may best be taught. These “practice pairs” review what each plans to teach their group and how. The best ideas of both are incorporated into each one’s presentation. Then the students go back to their small groups and a) tech their area of expertise to the other group members and b) learn the material taught by the other group members. Finally, the instructor must assess the degree of mastery of all the material and reward the groups whose members all reach the preset criterion of excellence. (Johnson, *Active Learning: Cooperation in the College Classroom*, p. 4:17) (Reprinted with the permission of Interaction Book Company.

Work with the faculty mentor to develop and implement your own:

- Course objectives and syllabus
- Pedagogical techniques to fulfill objectives
- Preparations of assessment instruments (test, exams, etc.)

These can be either for the mentor’s class or for your own. **All proposals for the mentored teaching project must be approved by the Department Chair and the Associate Dean for Graduate Education and Research.**

As part of the mentored teaching experience, student should consider taking advantage of the **Peer consultant Service** offered by the MSU TA Program. This is a confidential and free service for teaching assistants – consultants will either observe or videotape your class, and then discuss their observations with your afterwards. (See the MSU Ta Program information on page ____.)