



# September Experience

## ELEMENTARY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

*This sheet is intended to give WCE students basic information about the Elementary Education Department's **September Experience** for interns.*

### **When will the September Experience begin and how much time will I spend in my school?**

This internship experience generally begins on the first official teacher workday in the district where you are placed. Most school districts return to school during the final week of August; you will need to be proactive and find out the precise date for your district. You should also communicate with your collaborating teacher well in advance to determine if there might be reasons for you to report prior to that first official day.

You will be required to spend a **minimum of 40 hours** in the school as part of your September Experience; however, the intern is **strongly encouraged to spend as much time as possible in the school** during the three weeks prior to the beginning of the WWU academic term. This will be highly advantageous for your professional preparation!

### **What other days and times will I spend in the school after that first teacher preparation day?**

In addition to the first teacher workday, you will also be required to be in attendance the day students return to school. Beyond these two days, you should work out a schedule of attendance with your collaborating teacher, with input from your university supervisor, that will enable you to learn how a teacher creates a learning community, initiates communication with parents, begins teaching the curriculum in different subject areas, and does all the other organizational things so important for a smooth-functioning classroom.

Because important “back-to-school” activities may occur at various times in different classrooms, the formulation of your September Experience attendance schedule is best done by the intern and collaborating teacher, with input from the university supervisor.

As you formulate that schedule, in addition to being mindful of the requirement to be present for a **minimum** of 40 hours, you should arrange to observe or participate in certain key activities:

- The school’s first faculty meeting of the year
- Formulation and teaching of classroom rules & procedures
- Beginning of instruction in all major curricular areas
- Large and small group learning activities
- Back to school nights for parents (if these occur during September Experience)
- Any other activities your collaborating teacher identifies as significant

### **What if I am beginning my full-time Internship Quarter 3 in the Fall?**

If your Internship Quarter 3 begins in the Fall, you will be full-time in your school, and thus do not need to be concerned about minimum hours for a September Experience; you will also most likely attend many of the events specified above as a matter of course, although you ought to

read the list carefully to make sure. If you are doing your full-time internship abroad, your September Experience assignments/requirements will be handled on an individual basis.

### **What will my role be in the classroom during the September Experience?**

Your role will vary depending on whether you are engaged in the September Experience during your first, second, or third quarter of internship. If this occurs during your first internship quarter, you will be just getting to know the teacher, students, and school; thus, your role will most likely be rather limited. If September Experience occurs during your second quarter, you will already be familiar with the teacher and school and it is likely the collaborating teacher will ask you to take a more active role. If this is your full-time internship quarter and you are preparing to assume full responsibility for that classroom in a matter of weeks, you will most likely be asked by the teacher to lead some or many of the back-to-school activities. In each of these cases, the details of your role will be negotiated with the collaborating teacher.

### **What assignments will I be doing as part of the September Experience?**

You will later be provided with a syllabus outlining the full details of the September Experience curriculum. You will engage in such learning activities as these:

- Interview the teacher to uncover the values, beliefs, and assumptions underlying the classroom culture.
- Study the physical environment of the classroom.
- Engage in classroom observation to determine what practical measures the teacher is taking to communicate his/her values and expectations to help children learn how to function in that learning environment.
- Interview another professional in the school (administrator, staff, support professional) to learn more about the functioning of the school and resources to support children and families.
- Collect artifacts of parental communication.
- Analyze how children are being taught rules, routines, and procedures.
- Study children's social participation.

Many of these assignments will be related to learning activities in other courses, including ELED 470, 425, and 471.

### **How will my learning during the September Experience be assessed?**

Your supervisor during the September Experience will be a Western faculty member. You will create a folder for your inquiry during these First Weeks of School that will be assessed on the basis of completeness, presentable form (e.g., organization & conventions of standard English usage), the quality of your observation, and your insight and/or probing questions about the manner in which a teacher initiates a classroom learning community.

**The course will be graded on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis.**

**Mandatory orientation meeting will be late spring quarter.**

**Date and location will be announced.**