“Experimentation is risky. We rarely know in advance what will give us life and what will sap life away. But if we want to deepen our understanding of our own integrity, experiment we must—and then be willing to make choices as we view the experimental results.”
—Parker J. Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*

“Please take a little risk every day. Let’s not ask our students to go it alone.”
—Mary Rose O’Reilley, *The Peaceable Classroom*

**Course and Contact Information**

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Course hours: Wednesdays 4-6 (we will not meet during fall and spring Fire-Up conferences)  
Classroom: varies by high school

**Textbooks**

Weinstein, Carol Simon. *Secondary Classroom Management.*  
Faculty Handbook, Student Handbook  
Team Four *Handbook for Interns and Mentor Teachers*

**Introduction**

Welcome to TE 801/803. This full year course has been designed to complement your fifth-year intern experience and will focus not only on issues of immediate interest and utility to you, but also on other issues of importance to the teacher’s roles which need to be considered as you begin your professional careers.

The course is intended to afford a professional’s perspective upon the daily pressures and emotions of the classroom. Meeting weekly in a small discussion and problem-solving forum, you will be expected to model best practices and to critique your successes or disappointments with encounters in the field. While the companion sequence TE 802/804 focuses on issues related to curriculum subject areas, TE 801/803 classes promote habits of mind that will inform you of the social, political, legal, and professional contexts that both hinder and enable teaching and learning in classrooms, schools, and communities.
You will learn about relationships with colleagues and about the effects of these relationships in the day-to-day experience of teaching. As a novice teacher you will explore and develop professional support networks of colleagues to whom you can turn to learn about the culture, history and traditions of your school. You will also learn about the importance of relationships with experienced practitioners who can serve as guides and mentors to you in your early years of teaching. In keeping with the intent to have a seamless relationship with the practicum experience, the course will remain flexible in order to address issues that will emerge in the course of your teaching experience.

**Goal of the TE 801/803 Sequence**

The goal of “Professional Roles and Teaching Practice I and II” is to acquaint interns with practical knowledge about the complex roles they may assume as educational leaders in the classroom and in the larger school community. This course addresses the questions: “What does the beginning educator need to know?” and “What does it mean to be a professional educator?” In its broadest interpretation, TE 801/803 examines the roles of the teacher in a political context. The word “political” here is intended to connote the way members of a society organize and manage their mutual interests and duties, including public education. It implies also the sharing or allocation of power and responsibility.

Whether the teacher is addressing issues of diversity in the classroom, which bear upon management style and instructional strategies; or matters of ethics connected to confidentiality and legal liability; or problems of accountability to parents and administrative supervisors; or stresses related to the search for employment—all these challenges and their successful resolutions depend on the teacher’s exercise of that most valuable and professional asset, good judgment, which is the foundation of ethical conduct.

Folded into this overarching goal are the four important MSU Teacher Preparation Program Standards for Interns (which will be used in assessing progress and success during the internship year):

- Knowing Subject Matters and How to Teach Them
- Working with Students
- Creating and Managing a Classroom Learning Community
- Working and Learning in a School and Profession

*Expanded descriptions of these Standards may be found in the Handbook for Interns and Mentor Teachers published by the Department of Teacher Education.*

**The Six Strands**

Interwoven through the TE 801/803 sequence are six strands:

- Classroom Teaching: Management and Instruction
- Professionalism in and beyond the Classroom; Law and Liability
- Establishing Positive Relationships with Parents and Community
- Diversity: Making Knowledge Accessible to All Students
- Emergent Issues: Pleasant and Unpleasant Surprises
- Preparation for Employment
1) Classroom Teaching: Management and Instruction

This strand pays particular attention to issues of developing an effective instructional classroom environment in which all students feel supported and valued. Many questions surface during this process. How does a teacher establish an orderly, humane teaching and learning environment? How does a teacher connect and communicate with all of the students in a class, especially those who are chronically late, who sleep in the back of the room, or who learn reluctantly? Should a teacher wait until all students understand a concept? What skills are desirable for a proactive, rather than a reactive teacher, who hopes to sidestep potential problems in the teaching/learning process? These questions do not comprise an exhaustive list; rather, they represent issues that you will confront in your classrooms and in this course during the year.

You will also analyze and share insights into management strategies, laying a foundation for a repertoire of effective responses to address situations studied through role-playing, readings, and case studies. The value of setting goals and expectations for oneself and for students will receive special attention.

2) Professionalism in and beyond the Classroom; Law and Liability

What does it mean to be a professional educator? What do others, such as colleagues, parents, and community members, expect of educators? How can a perceptive teacher grasp the particular culture and history of a school and its community, and incorporate this knowledge in daily teaching strategies? This strand will focus on developing collegial relationships, and on sharpening survival skills necessary to negotiate the politics of the workplace. Additionally, you will generate a file of professional resources, organizations, and related social agencies whose interests often complement the efforts of the classroom teacher. By creating model community case studies, you will gain an understanding of ways in which you can adapt your subject matter knowledge base to meet the needs of students with whom you work. Finally, you must cultivate a working knowledge of legal issues that impact schools and pupils—matters concerning child abuse, legal liability, confidentiality, and appropriate disciplinary responses for infractions of school rules or community laws.

3) Establishing Positive Relationships with Parents and Community

Schools that encourage community and parental involvement experience markedly different successes from those of other schools. In these schools, teachers and parents share common expectations for student growth and achievement. How are these common expectations transmitted? What is the distinct role of the teacher, of the parent, and of the community, in this pooling of efforts? How can interns improve their expertise about issues confronting the school, the community, and educators? How can interns best prepare for a productive session of conferences with their students’ parents? Accountability is also a powerful issue in these considerations.

4) Diversity: Making Knowledge Accessible to All Students

Students in most classrooms come from diverse backgrounds, with differing ideas about the purposes of their education and their lifetime plans after high school. They appear in class with varying abilities, tastes, skills, and interests. Some have special needs. Minority students, whether African American, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, or others representing various ethnic or cultural groups, have concerns that must be respected and addressed. All young men and women expect to be educated in an atmosphere of fairness, free from the intrusion of bias or stereotyping. The teacher’s responsibility is to make knowledge accessible to all students, and to encourage each student to put forth the best possible effort. But how does a teacher meet the needs of all students when everyone seems to need something different?
In this course, you will consider your obligation to students in a diverse culture, and examine ways to meet this responsibility.

5) Emergent Issues: Pleasant and Unpleasant Surprises

The diversity of a school population often gives rise to unexpected behaviors and unforeseeable outcomes. Unprecedented issues emerge. A student becomes ill in class: where should s/he be directed to go? Another student, whose performance has been indifferent for weeks, suddenly scores 100 percent on the latest test…Has s/he cheated, or has s/he found new motivation to study? A teacher is fairly sure s/he smells marijuana smoke on a student’s clothing…Should s/he give the student a warning, or tell a counselor, or do nothing? How can a teacher construct a test that truly measures the material taught, yet doesn’t take twenty hours to grade? You will share, and discuss, and write about these kinds of emergent issues.

6) Preparation for Employment

You will fashion a strategic plan for obtaining a job. Included in the plan will be creation of a resume, the writing of a philosophy statement, the securing of references, and the accumulation of pertinent artifacts—all as part of a professional portfolio. Practice interviews will be scheduled, and you will have opportunities to attend job fairs on campus and in other locations. Familiarity with electronic media sites and faxed application blanks will aid you in your search for employment.

Professional Expectations and Guidelines

In this time of transition from being a student to being a professional teacher, it is important that you begin to see yourself as a lifelong learner rather than a student fulfilling university requirements. Both your school-based experiences and your university coursework are vital and integral components of your professional preparation. Because the way you conduct yourself in these settings reflects on you as a professional, we want to be clear about your responsibilities with regard to professional and ethical conduct. Failure to comply with these (and other university policies governing student conduct) will result in a review of your progress by your team and specific recommendations regarding your continued participation in the teacher certification program.

Attendance and Punctuality

Interns are expected to be present and punctual for professional commitments. Interns who must be absent from their placement or a seminar due to illness or emergency must inform all who are affected by such an absence. If the absence is planned or anticipated, those affected should be informed in advance.

The content of intern-year seminars is part of the Michigan teacher certification requirements, and 100 percent attendance is expected under normal circumstances. Excused absences from seminars will only be granted in case of illness or personal emergency (such as death in the family) or when an important school-related activity essential to the intern’s professional education (e.g. parent conferences) conflicts. Workshops or in-service training are generally not an adequate reason to miss class. For any type of absence, you will be expected to arrange for making up missed educational activities.

Incompletes

University policy: When special or unusual circumstances occur, the instructor may postpone assignment of the student’s final grade in a course by use of an I-Incomplete. The I-Incomplete may be given only
when: The student (a) has completed at least 12 weeks of the semester (6 weeks in the summer session), but is unable to complete the class work and/or take the final examination because of illness or other compelling reasons; and (b) in the instructor’s judgement, can complete the required work without repeating the course.

Active Participation

Regular attendance, professional conduct, and active participation in class are required for successful completion of this course. Through classroom participation, you have the opportunity to share with peers the understandings you are drawing from events at your field placement as well as what you are learning from course readings, projects, and other class activities. Remember that teachers are not silent people; rather, they have a willingness to share their points of view in discussions with colleagues. You are encouraged to use class discussions as an opportunity to share experiences and to clarify your thinking about issues you are confronting. Ask your peers for suggestions and ideas about how to handle specific situations you are concerned about in your class and/or in school. Through sharing what is happening in your classroom and in your school, you will discover that many of your colleagues are experiencing similar situations. Collaboratively, you can build a repertoire of possibilities to meet your needs and those of your colleagues.

Policies and Procedures

Your Intern Handbook contains important information about policies and procedures for the internship year (confidentiality is especially important). Please take time to become familiar with your handbook.

Assignments
*(a detailed explanation of each assignment will be provided in a separate handout)*

Reflections: You will have opportunities to write reflective narratives about issues facing classroom teachers today. The topics will be drawn from our class discussions, your experiences and/or our readings.

E-Partners: You will converse through electronic dialog on a weekly basis. These discussions can cover the many issues that you are facing as a beginning teacher, and you will be asked to detail both new insights and also issues that you are facing in the classroom.

My-Turn Discussions: Each of you will be asked to lead a class discussion on an issue from your reflections or E-partner conversations. These student-led discussions will allow you to delve deeper into topics that interest or frustrate you, along with providing feedback from the entire classroom community. These issues may lead to further work toward an Issue Analysis or Case Study or they may provide further insight for the School/Community/Parent Study (see explanations below).

Professional Portfolio: Work on developing your portfolio will begin in TE 801 and will be completed in your second semester in time to be of use to you in your job search. You should begin to compile evidence of your early accomplishments during this term. Your portfolio outline will be due during the first semester.
Issue Analysis/Case Study: Each student will present a brief analysis of a significant educational issue or a case study. The case study will focus on a problematic issue of your choosing identified within your school. To assist you in this assignment, we will examine several cases in class as well as brainstorm possible topics for your written assignment. You will be expected to gather information about the issue from readings and conversations with knowledgeable persons and make a verbal presentation during class. Each presentation must be supported by relevant documentation. Students will sign up for presentation dates.

School/Community/Parent Study: Teams will be formed to study a school and its community in some depth, attending to organizational and cultural issues within the school and to social characteristics of the community and families that the school serves. Many of these issues will be faced as we meet in differing schools with different communities and learning atmospheres. Near the end of the second semester, each team will make a presentation on the findings of this study. Proposals and drafts will be due during the first semester.

Course Evaluation (For 801)
*assignments and weights for 802 assignments will be subject to discussion within our established classroom learning community.

The weighted value of each component is:

1) Active participation and attendance (including school tours)—10%
2) Reflections—20%
3) E-Partners—5%
4) My-Turn Discussions—5%
5) Professional Portfolio Development (philosophy statement, resume, etc.)—20%
6) Issue Analysis/Case Study Paper and Presentation—25%
7) School/Community Study Preparation —15%

Your assessment in this class will be based on the following criteria:

Completeness: The paper or the activity should be consistent with expectations established for the assignment. If you are uncertain or unclear about the expectations, call or meet with me to clarify your understandings.

Evidence of professional habits of thinking, action, and communication: Are you demonstrating: curiosity about teaching effects on students; open-mindedness to new points of view; willingness to learn new ideas as well as techniques; willingness to question your own thinking; ability to consider alternatives and to change your mind for good reasons; initiative to learn colleagues’ ideas; initiative to accept personal responsibility in order to achieve goals; and personal organization, along with proper use of Standard English and rules of documentation.

Evidence of understanding course ideas: Your work should demonstrate that you are growing in your understanding of ideas presented in class and in your readings and that you are making connections between those ideas and your other experiences and knowledge.

*Policy on due dates: Late assignments without valid excuse (see attendance) may be refused or graded on a different standard because of the extra time taken to complete them. If you are ill, have a family emergency, etc. that will prevent you from submitting your assignment on time, please contact me in advance or as soon as possible to explain why your assignment will be late.