

SpaceLink - Practicum Experiences/Assignments - Fall 2002

Overview of the Experience and Assignments

All students involved with the SpaceLink practicum are required to write a one-page pre experience reflection (due September 17, 2002) and a post experience reflection (the Visit #4 reflection). The teacher candidates will complete a reflection after each visit. The focus questions for each reflection assignment are included in the visit descriptions below. Two-page reflections are required with Visits 1, 2, and 3. A four-page reflection is required with Visit 4. Teacher candidates are expected to exhibit professional behavior, wear the uniform provided, and be on time for each visit.

Visit #1 PreLaunch Training – Expectations/Reflection Assignment

During the first visit, teacher candidates will receive an individual orientation/training and their uniform. They will work closely with the SpaceLink staff. The teacher candidates will explore exhibits, ask questions, and observe the environment/visitors/staff. This first visit is designed to boost confidence and give the teacher candidate the opportunity become more independent and learn where to go for help if needed. Teacher candidates are expected to explore enthusiastically and learn as much as possible.

Focus Question/s for two-page reflection paper:

Reflect on how and what you learned during your orientation/training – what were the highlights of the experience? What did you realize about yourself as learner? What insights for teaching did you gain by reflecting on your personal learning experiences?

Visit #2 The Launch – Expectations/Reflection Assignment

During the second visit, the teacher candidate is expected to interact with the visitors and the environment in a professional and independent manner. The staff is always available for questions and support. The expectation is that the teacher candidate will be as independent as possible. During this visit, the teacher candidate is required to see the planetarium show. The primary challenges for this visit involve interacting with visitors and making keen observations noting which areas of the exhibit are most popular and intriguing for children and adults. Keep noting how student groups have been prepared for the visit – talk to the teachers, student visitors, and the staff to learn about effective field trips.

Focus Question/s for two-page reflection:

How does the exhibit engage visitors? What aspects of the exhibit are most interesting to adults and/or children? How can SpaceLink-like experiences be incorporated into a classroom environment?

Visit #3 In Orbit – Expectations/Reflection

During this visit, the teacher candidate is required to watch a “demonstration” in the SpaceLink exhibit. At this point, the teacher candidate will interact independently with visitors. The teacher candidate should observe and interact with one or two visitors in a focused manner. These interactions should be with children if possible. If not, then the interaction can be with any visitor. The purpose of this focused observation is to make note of how each visitor approaches the experiences and to find out what they are thinking as they move through the exhibit – a mini case study. You need to interact verbally and help facilitate the learning with the visitors you choose to study. Keep noting how student groups have been prepared for their visits – talk to the teachers, students, parents, and the staff to learn about field trips dos and don’t – gather your ideas on most promising practices for organizing a field trip.

Focus Question/s for two-page reflection:

What did you learn about one to one facilitation from these focused experience/es... about yourself as a facilitator, about the learning process/es, about the visitors.

Visit #4 The Landing - Expectations/Reflection

The teacher candidate will be interacting independently with visitors. Keep noting how students have been prepared for their visits – talk to the teachers, students, parents, and the staff to learn about field trips dos and don’t – gather your ideas on most promising practices for organizing a field trip. Take time, as you are interacting, to actively think about the dispositions, knowledge, and skills you have gained/fortified during the practicum. **Remember to bring an extra shirt with you, your uniform shirt will be collected.**

Focus Question/s for four-page reflection:

How would you set up a field trip to SpaceLink – what would you/your students do in advance, during, and after – important ideas to consider? How do you see yourself using The Maryland Science Center for your own professional development across your career? What knowledge, skills, and dispositions have you gained or fortified through your SpaceLink practicum experience?