

STUDENT TEACHING

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Student teaching is a culmination of many years of classroom learning. My field is History and Secondary Education. After years of learning about History, it was my turn to put all I had studied to use. Since elementary school through junior and senior high as well as college, it was I who was being educated. Now it was my chance to get up in front of a class. I now had the responsibility of educating over one hundred young people. One grows up fast when faced with the reality that you alone are responsible for the student learning and enjoying History and Economics. Student teaching is worth it just to see how history can be applied to the classroom.

I did my student teaching at Norwalk High School. It is a large industrial city and it has two thousand four hundred students in the school in which I taught. The school itself was huge and it took me several days to find my way around the place. It is a four-year old building and it enjoys many conveniences such as air conditioning, television, and other luxuries that older schools may lack. Most important to the history teacher is the resource center and the library. All schools have the library and many possess a history resource center. One should check out both immediately on entering student teaching. These areas are stocked with filmstrips, overhead transparencies, movies and books which are an invaluable aid to the teaching of history.

Standing up in front of a class and teaching is a wonderful experience. After years of letting the teacher and the professor do all the talking, it becomes your turn. I taught World History to tenth graders and a Civics-Economics class to ninth graders. In World History, we covered the Middle East, Latin America, Greece, Rome and South East Asia. The course is designed to acquaint the student with exotic cultures. A good well-rounded course of study at Wesconn helped me through this course. It is much safer to take a little of everything in history than to

concentrate in one region of history. The lack of a wide background in history leaves you open to the possibility of getting an area to student teach that you know nothing about. That leaves you with a lot of last minute homework to do. It also leads to a poor relationship with your cooperating teacher who is wondering just what you were doing for four years in college.

My students were on the whole quite cooperative and interested. I did not run into any serious discipline problems. The biggest problem was attendance. Some students didn't bother showing up. Once in class the students are generally interested in what you are doing. Most have a youthful curiosity in the strange customs, religion and politics of other societies that they might otherwise never confront. The students are full of questions. These questions about the clothes that ancient peoples wore, the things they ate and drank and the religion that they believed in.

You should diversify your method of teaching as much as possible. By using a variety of filmstrips and other media one can illustrate a lesson much easier than just lecturing. Trying to get the students involved in discussion will help the students. Once the first few days are over you really get used to your classes and your subject. Once the early jitters are over you can concentrate on teaching the subjects and helping the students learn history.

Overall I had an excellent student teaching experience. My cooperating teacher at Norwalk High School was very helpful. He used his long years of teaching to help me. A good working relationship with your teacher at the school is essential if your student teaching is to be enjoyable and an aid to you. Now it is back to Wesconn for one more semester of classes and I am back to being a student again.