

Education Curriculum Development(Internship Title)
Northeast Metro Career and Technical Center/
Century College

My position in the classroom setting was similar to the role of a teaching assistant, I interacted with the students, assisted with classroom activities, gave demonstrations, and was available for questions and individual assistance. Outside of the classroom I was responsible for prereading and organizing materials for in class meetings. And putting together work and information sheets for in class use.

I choose this site for my internship because I had completed a similar program during high school; and was interested in seeing the experience from a different side, through the role of a teacher or aid. I believed my past experiences and knowledge in regards to the topics I had previously learned would prove to be beneficial in this internship as well.

Creativity and flexibility in teaching and communication techniques turned out to be the most valuable as well as the most useful of skills during this internship experience.

Strengths of the internship included day to day variety as far as the students and seeing individual learning successes.

The only weakness of the internship was my wishing a had completed a class on the education of older populations of students instead of just Elm.Ed.to have had more to draw from, than just my personal experiences as a student.

My most significant learning experience was learning to adapt what knowledge and experiences I brought to the classroom and being able to communicate that information to others.

This internship was a positive experience and I would recommend a similar experience to another student.

My internship was at the American Indian Family Center on the east side of St. Paul. The main function of my position as a "social and community liaison" was working with the children at the center. The children I interacted with were in various stages in their development, and their ages ranged from infancy to the teenage years. On Tuesday nights I assisted the teachers with the Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) classes, Wednesday nights I co-facilitated the Girl Scout Troop, and as other events arose, I helped with these programs. For example, the American Indian Family Center has two communal baby showers planned in one year, and I was able to assist in one of them. One of the more important lessons I learned while serving my internship at the center was that gaining a person's trust is an important part of working within a community. An example of this would be one little boy, who from the start had anger issues, and anger was the form of expression he used to deal with his frustrations. However, by being consistent in dealing with him, I was able to gain his trust and he is now more open to me and I can now greet him with a hug. This would not have happened in the beginning of our relationship, but in using the communication skills I learned from my psychology classes I was able to get a positive response from him. My internship at the American Indian Family Center allowed me to apply my skills learned in my child development psychology class. I was able to draw on the different development stages that a child goes through as they grow and mature. I also had to use my knowledge of psychology and proceed within the ethical challenges of the American Indian community. The fact that I am an American Indian helped me to achieve and work in a professional manner within this community.

My position was a "social and community liaison" at the American Indian Family Center. In this position I worked to improve my communication and collaboration skills while actively participating in the various programs with the children of the center. I was able to build upon my knowledge of effective psychology strategies and concepts.

The skills that would assist a person in this type of internship would be the ability to co-facilitate and communicate in an effective manner. The knowledge of the culture of the American Indian would also be a positive aspect. The ability to be diverse in dealing with the various personalities of this community, or any other community for that matter. To summarize, the skills that would be most useful would be communication, the ability to have a diverse attitude and a knowledge of basic psychological concepts.

The strengths of this internship would be the variety of dealing with the various situations and using your creative skills to assist with the various programs. One of the weaknesses would be that the internship is not geared for a person that is not an American Indian.

My most significant learning experience was the importance of trust. The ability to gain an individual's trust is a gift and should be treated as such. It is something that must be earned and not taken lightly. Especially with a child, if their trust can be gained you can then assist them to gain the competency they need to face their daily challenges.

I would recommend this internship to an American Indian student, this helps them to understand the basics of their culture. I also believe a non-American Indian could do this internship, it would be a little more ethically challenging, but it is possible.

My internship was with Messiah Lutheran Church. One of the skills a person should have before beginning this internship is being very comfortable around different types of people. It is fairly common to be comfortable with one's peers, or similar age groups, but in this internship, both by chance and by design, I dealt with a variety of age groups, ranging from the very young (3 to 5 years) to the very old. Even in the suburban church where I worked, there were special communities, including African Americans, Asian Americans, and handicapped. One of the most difficult things for me was being comfortable with the diverse number of people I came into contact with.

One of the things I learned was that I was not as comfortable with people as I thought I was, especially considering it was my own church. I had difficulty interacting with handicapped populations; I had hoped to get to know them and that didn't happen. I learned the only way to get comfortable is to get comfortable.

Some of the strengths of this internship are, as I previously mentioned, dealing with a large range of individuals. Some of the weaknesses are it is slanted towards those who are frequent church goers. There also was the temptation to get involved in some of the administrative tasks of the church when the focus should be on interacting with people.

I would recommend this internship to other students, even non-churchgoers. I think working in a church is an excellent example of applying psychology in a non-clinical setting. Very few bachelor's level psychology students obtain doctorates, so the playing field is wide open.

Evaluating the Internship Experience

Homework Center Intern

The Saint Paul Public Library opened its first homework center in 2002. In January 2004, the fourth homework center was opened at the Rice Street Branch. The Homework Centers serve students of all ages. "They have couches, computers, reference books, office supplies, and mentors for homework assistance" (taken from job description). Students can work independently or receive help from mentors. As an intern, my responsibility is to ensure that students and parents feel welcome. I explain the services of the homework center to new students and give them a tour. I'm responsible for managing the daily operations of the center, tutors, and students. This includes disciplining inappropriate behavior and ensuring that the center is a safe and quiet place to work. I also mentor the students with homework help needs and foster relationships among students and tutors. I communicate concerns and suggestions to the Homework Center Coordinator.

What skills should a person have before beginning this internship?

It would be helpful to have some prior experience of working with students of all ages, volunteers, tutoring techniques, and management skills.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of this internship?

One of the responsibilities listed in the Homework Center Internship position is for the intern to participate in the planning process. However, this homework center was modeled after the other three centers, so there was little room for new ideas.

What was your most significant learning experience in the internship? What did you learn?

This internship gave me the opportunity to manage a center, tutors, and students. I was encouraged to make suggestions for the center. One of my suggestions was to design a mentor wall. On the wall I displayed pictures of the mentors and interviews (information about each mentor). I learned that I can be an effective leader, and that I enjoy work that allows room for suggestions and creativity.

Do you recommend this internship to students? Why or why not?

I think this internship offers a wonderful opportunity to manage daily operations of a center, mentors (volunteers), and students. The Rice Street community is also very diverse. Many of the patrons are Hmong, but I also met students from Eritrea, Bosnia,

Korea, Latin America, and Jamaica. This will give the intern exposure to a diverse community. This internship gave me the opportunity to reflect on learning from many of my psychology courses such as sociology, adolescent psychology, abnormal psychology, and early childhood development. My education courses were also very helpful.

My internship was as a Divorce Education Facilitator for the Sandcastles program at the Chrysalis center in Minneapolis. As a Sandcastles Facilitator worked on Saturday's at a four-hour workshop that helps children ages' 6-17 address many of the feelings they have when their parents are going through a divorce. The workshop fulfilled county mandates for education for divorcing parents and their families. In the class we helped children to learn new skills that can assist them in expressing their feelings.

I think that before a person would start this internship the skills they would need include interest in working with children and issues of divorce. Ability and willingness to listen actively, and respond to the children in an appropriate manner. They need to have an awareness of the issues affecting children and families today, and also have a respect for diversity. One of the biggest skills they must have is the ability to maintain client confidentiality.

I think the strengths of the program are that instead of children dealing one on one with a psychologist or individual therapy, they interact with children their own age that are going through the same thing. This helps them realize they are not alone, which I believe aids in helping them to open up much more with their peers, as well as the facilitators.

The weakness is that I don't believe that all the children should have the same length of a program. I felt that four hours was a long time for a 6-year-old to sit and pay attention. Also there should be a little more time with the children when their families are present at the end of the session. The facilitators of the children's groups as well as the parent's shared parenting group, meet in a room for the last 30 min with children and their parents present and go over in a general way what we did in each age group. I think

some more personalized time would be good. Time to go over what the children did in their workbooks, or what pictures they drew. A time that the parents could come to each age groups small group session and talk to the facilitator and the children.

Another weakness of the program was that when they didn't have a large enough group for one age group they would combine age groups. I found that this did not work as the children were no longer with only their peers. The younger children in the group would become quiet and were intimidated by the older children. The older children would either act tough, or show off in front of the younger children. Also the skills and exercises used in the different age groups do not work when groups are combined. The younger age group can't comprehend the older age group's exercises and the older groups are bored with the younger group's exercises.

The most significant learning experience in the internship for me was just how aware the children of all age groups are to their surroundings and how easy they are to talk about what they see and how they feel about it once they open up.

I do recommend this internship to other students, especially if they are looking at working with children in group therapy. It gives them a good chance to interact, and learn about different age groups and really see what skills are needed to most effectively help children communicate and express their feelings.