

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPARTMENT OF INTEGRATED PROFESSIONAL STUDIES
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES PROGRAM

HDFS 296

FIELD EXPERIENCE

Spring 2010

Lawrence G. Shelton
Living/Learning C-150
Lawrence.Shelton@uvm.edu

Code: 13962
656-2008
Office Hours by Appointment

The primary **purposes** of field experience are to:

provide students opportunities to become involved with real people in real settings;
practice observation and interpretation skills;
apply concepts learned in the classroom to real situations;
bring experience back into future classes;
provide experience to reflect on and to analyze;
provide experience that may help students sort out interests, skills, strengths, needs, and future possibilities.

The **requirements** include:

- Work in a program or setting. Approximately three hours per week, or forty hours total, of work, reading and reflections are expected for each credit earned in a semester.
- Keep a journal of reflections on the experience and on the readings.
- Meet regularly with a field supervisor and with me to discuss the experience.
- Participate in five group meetings with other students enrolled this semester in HDFS 296.
- Submit your journal to me prior to each meeting.
- Learn as much as you can about the setting/program you are working in.
- Read and respond to any materials recommended by the agency supervisor or by me.
- Search out, read and analyze information about similar programs, and compare them to the program you are in.
- Develop an articulate interpretation of the setting/program using developmental and ecological concepts from HDFS courses.
- Submit a Mid-semester Assessment, due March 4.
- Submit develecollogical description and critique, due dates on the schedule.
- Submit a final assessment and reflective paper, due May 10.

Suggested Timeline

Dec	Define interests and potential learning goals Finalize resume Explore potential sites and choose three to contact Begin journal Complete interviews Meet with faculty supervisor to choose site
Jan 15	Confirm with site supervisor and set schedule
Jan 19	Submit completed Field Experience Record Begin internship work Submit journal to faculty supervisor before each scheduled meeting Choose readings with site supervisor and with faculty supervisor
Feb 8	Submit first version of <u>develeological description</u> of field site and your role
Mar 4	Submit <u>mid-semester assessment</u>
Mar 22	Submit first version of <u>comparative explanation</u> of the site
April 1	Submit <u>revised develeological description</u> of field site and your role
April 21	Submit <u>develeological critique</u> of the site
May 10	Submit <u>final assessment and reflective paper</u> on the field experience

JOURNAL

A journal is not simply a description of what you do. It is an opportunity to describe and to **REFLECT** on the experience and to explore the meaning of the experience to you. In your journal, I will expect to see several topics addressed, as described below. You will write in your journal regularly and submit it to me before each meeting. When I write comments or questions in your journal, you will respond to them and resubmit the entire journal, so we can establish a dialogue in it. You should date each entry in your journal.

There is no prescribed format for your journal. You may keep it as a word processing file, or handwritten in a notebook. It can be loose-leaf or bound. Whatever format you choose should have space left for me to comment or write questions and for you to respond to those. You may want to consider a format that allows you to record your initial thoughts and then return to elaborate on them later. This can be done by dividing the pages down the middle, or by writing on the right hand page and then using the facing left hand page for elaboration. You are expected to strive for the highest level and the most sophisticated thinking possible in your journal. The journal is the primary way you capture and communicate to me the experience of your field work and its meaning in the context of your career in HDFS.

Before you begin working, study any web site and documents available for the setting in which you will work. How do the agency's mission, marketing, and publicity reflect developmental and ecological perspectives?

For the first month or so, it will be appropriate to focus on OBSERVATION, DESCRIPTION, AND REACTION TO THE PROGRAM. This should include enough detail so you and the reader will have a clear and detailed understanding of what you are doing, why the program exists, the other people involved in it, and your interactions with them. Then should come your thoughtful reactions to any and all aspects of the experience, and the reading you are doing about it.

After you have become familiar with and comfortable in the program, turn your attention to DEVELOPMENTAL ANALYSIS OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROGRAM. With your background in human development, you will be able to describe the participants in the program from a developmental perspective. How old are they? What stage(s) are they in? What are their developmental concerns? What is their socio-historical context? Your journal should specifically consider concepts covered in HDFS 5, Human Development

With these considerations in mind, you can turn your attention to THE DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS AND PROCESSES OF THE PROGRAM. Does the program have an interest in facilitating the development of the participants? Is this a conscious, explicit goal? Or an implicit one? Or merely a potential one? How does the program attempt to facilitate development? How could it do so more effectively? How does your experience of the setting agree with the mission and other information provided in their web site and other materials?

Toward the middle of the semester, you will step back to focus more broadly on ECOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAM. Since development happens in context, you will describe the context for this program by developing a Bronfenbrennerian description of it. Describe the ecological environment of the program for you. Then describe the ecological environment of the program for other participants in it. How would Bronfenbrenner describe it? From a Bronfenbrennerian point of view, is the program in a setting? Describe the mesosystem in which it exists. To what extent is it likely to facilitate development of the participants in it? How does it reflect the macrosystem? If you have not taken HDFS 60 and HDFS 161, we will discuss alternatives to this part of the analysis.

In addition, you will CONNECT the experience to other experiences, courses, and reading that you have done.

As you learn more about the program you are participating in, compare it to others like it. Explore web sites of similar programs and compare them. How does your program differ from other programs? See if you can find web sites for agencies that regulate or provide support or guidance for programs like yours. Are there national guidelines for such programs? How does your program stack up against them? Use this information to develop recommendations for the program you are in. Develop a DEVELECOLOGICAL CRITIQUE of the program. How could it be improved to be more facilitating of development, within the ecosystem of which it is a part?

At the end of the semester, you will write a SUMMARY AND EVALUATION. You will review the experience as a whole, focusing on the highlights and challenges of your participation, the effects of your participation on the internship setting, and what you learned or gained from the experience. What effect has the experience had on your development?

You may submit your journal by e-mail, if it is electronic, or by putting it in my mailbox in Living/Learning C-150. After I have reviewed it, I will place it in the appropriate section of the file drawer labeled "Papers for Student Pickup" and you can retrieve it when convenient. You should then review my comments and questions, and respond to them in the journal as indicated. I will place your journal in an envelope with your name on it, which you should leave in the drawer so we can continue to use it.

GRADES

Your grade for the field experience will be based primarily on your reflection and analysis of the experience. You are expected to be responsible to the program you are in, and to do the very best job you can. Your grade, however, is not based on how well you do in the program, or on how well the program staff like you, or on how hard you work. The agency staff will not grade your performance. You may want to ask the program staff or your supervisor for an evaluation for your file and/or a letter of recommendation for employment or graduate school.

Your grade is based on my evaluation of: **a) Your responsibility** in making timely appointments with me and in submitting your journal prior to each meeting, and **b) The reflectiveness and elaborativeness** of your journal and our discussions. You must address the issues described above in your journal and submit the defined components according to the suggested timeline.

As a guide to expectations, these are the potential characteristics of journals and the grade they would be assigned.

- D. A record of your activities.
- C. Description of your activities, conversations, and important issues that have come up.
- B. Description with some analysis and reflection on the experience and the readings, and connections to other courses, etc.
- A. Elaborative description, explanation, analysis, interpretation, reflection, connection to concepts from other courses and readings, responses to my questions, etc.

Reflections on Reflection

A **reflective journal** differs in important ways from an activity log or a diary of events. The latter merely record what happened. A reflective journal records your thoughts and feelings about what happened, the importance and meaning of what happened, and more.

The American Heritage College Dictionary, 3rd Edition [1997, Houghton Mifflin] defines reflection as “3a. mental concentration; careful consideration. b. a thought or an opinion resulting from such consideration.” To reflect on means “To form or express carefully considered thoughts about.”

In your reflective journal, you will record what happened and what you did, what events you experienced. This will provide the reader a clear more or less objective description of your activity and experience. Then you will add a description of how you felt and what you thought about the event, or your subjective experience of the activities and events.

After thoroughly describing the experience, you will move to reflective analysis of the experience. Questions such as these may guide your analysis:

- Why did the event happen?
- How do other participants view it?
- How do today's experiences related to what you're learning in HDFS?
- How does a developmental perspective apply to the experience?
- How do you interpret the event from an ecological perspective?
- What else could have happened, and how would the outcome have been different?
- What did you learn from this observation or experience? How will that understanding be useful in the future?
- What reading or conceptual framework relates to your understanding of this entry?
- What questions remain, or were generated by your analysis?

Examples from student writing, and reflective questions:

1. *“It has been a very positive experience for me and I now have a better understanding of where some of my strengths and weakness are as an individual and as a professional in a child care setting.”*

What about it was positive? How have you changed as a result of the experience?
What are your strengths and weaknesses as an individual? As a professional in a child care setting?
If your understanding is better now, what was your understanding of your strengths and weaknesses before this experience?

2. *“_____’s setup is much more structured. I think that it is really important to keep the kids on a common schedule. The only thing that I thought was good with [another program] is that it gave the kids time to let out pent up energy from sitting in school all day long.”*

How was the setup structured?
Why is it important for kids to be kept on a common schedule?
What was not good about “the other program”?
Why do the differences between the two programs exist?
How might you apply to each program what you have learned in courses, to make the programs better for children's development?

Due 4 March 2010

Initiative:

Are you reading suggested materials and writing about them in your journal?

Have you researched the site you are working in and sought out materials about similar programs?

Have you attended scheduled meetings and come prepared to participate?

Have you submitted your journal in advance of each meeting?

Have you responded in depth to questions/comments in your journal?

Review your journal and provide examples of each:

Does your journal provide an elaborative view of your thoughts and feelings about the experience you are engaged in?

Does your journal provide a developmental interpretation of the participants in the setting?
Have you considered pertinent material in your human development and other texts?

Does your journal provide an ecological analysis of the program, using the concepts of Urie Bronfenbrenner?

Are you connecting your experience to reading and concepts from other courses?

Reflection:

What changes would you make in the field experience for the remainder of the semester?

Semester _____ Date Initiated _____ Credits _____

Permission _____ Enrolled _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phones _____ E-mail _____

Agency _____

Address _____

Supervisor[s] _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Role in field site: _____**Progress:**

____ Expected outcomes discussed.

____ Enrollment completed.

____ Readings recommended by Agency supervisor.

____ Readings recommended by Faculty supervisor

____ Dates for submission of journal established.

____ Develcological Description submitted.

____ Mid-semester Assessment completed.

____ Comparative Explanation submitted.

____ Revised Develcological Description submitted.

____ Develcological Critique submitted.

____ Final assessment and reflective review submitted.

____ Course and supervision evaluation submitted.

**When the details of your internship are established, give a photocopy of this record to me,
with your internship schedule attached.**