



This course supports the assessments for Preclinical Experiences in Mathematics. The course covers 8 competencies and represents 2 competency units. This course may take up to 6 weeks to complete.

It is recommended that your observations in the classroom take no more than 2 months time unless you have made arrangements with the school administration for you to be on the campus longer.

## Introduction

### Overview

Preclinical Experiences in Mathematics provides students the opportunity to observe and participate in a wide range of in-classroom teaching experiences to develop the skills and confidence necessary to be an effective teacher. Students will reflect on and document at least 60 hours of in-classroom observations. Prior to entering the classroom for the observations, students will be required to meet several requirements including a cleared background check, passing scores on the state or WGU required basic skills exam, a completed resume, philosophy of teaching, and professional photo.

Over the course of your observations, you will

- examine the interaction between instruction and learning,
- review the impact of culture on learning,
- reflect on teaching strategies and assessment practices,
- consider current classroom practices as they relate to the student experience,
- address the needs of exceptional learners, and
- analyze general and program-specific instructional methods based on student needs.

Once you have completed a majority of your coursework and your initial preclinical experiences, you will enter and observe a live classroom. This will be an excellent opportunity for you to see real world examples of the principles you have learned. Theory often diverges from practice when it must be applied in a real-world, dynamic situation. In this course, you will reflect on your previous coursework and look forward to the requirements still needed for Demonstration Teaching and graduation.

### Getting Started

Welcome to Preclinical Experiences (PCE)! In Preclinical Experiences in Mathematics you will work with the Field Experiences Office to arrange to spend time (60 hours) in a 5th- through 9th-grade math classroom observing and participating in teaching and learning. You will take notes on your observations and what you think about what you're seeing. You will also engage with students (15 of the 60 hours), providing instruction, supervising learning activities and supporting your host teacher during this class time.



Please look carefully through the Course of Study, watch the introduction video, and meet with your course mentor. Once you have arranged the observation time through Field Experiences office, you will meet with the principal and host teacher. On a schedule agreed upon by the three of you, begin your observations. Keep a log of your observation times (a form for this is provided in your Task Stream task) and have the form initialed by your host teacher after each observation period.

When you attend the observations, please be professional in your appearance and conduct. Dress at least as well as the educators at the school. Be reliable, courteous and supportive at all times. Remember, you are really participating in a long professional interview. Many students will receive employment offers from their PCE site because of their excellent work during this time.

Don't hesitate to be in contact with your course mentor during this observation time. Near the end of your PCE observation time, arrange to do an interview with your host teacher (form is provided in Taskstream task). To complete PCE, you will submit an essay of your observation, attach the three forms provided in the task, attach a scanned copy of your observation notes, and submit all this together as a single document.

Enjoy this time. It's great to be at school, and remember that you can be a positive influence in many young lives.

### **Competencies**

This course provides guidance to help you demonstrate the following 8 competencies:

- **Competency 666.1.1: Classroom Management, Engagement, and Motivation**  
The graduate develops a classroom management plan that integrates best practices for engagement and motivation.
- **Competency 666.1.2: General Teaching Practices**  
The graduate evaluates the theoretical and practical implications of various general instructional strategies, models, and trends in the context of classrooms and schools.
- **Competency 666.1.3: Mathematics Teaching Practices**  
The graduate evaluates the theoretical and practical implications of various instructional strategies, models, and trends for mathematics in the context of classrooms and schools.
- **Competency 666.1.4: Academic Language, Metacognition, and Communication**  
The graduate evaluates the theoretical and practical implications of various strategies that are intended to support the use of academic language, metacognition, and communication in classroom contexts.
- **Competency 666.1.5: Educational Assessment**  
The graduate evaluates the theoretical and practical applications of various assessment practices as they relate to student learning and instructional design.
- **Competency 666.1.6: Educational Technology**  
The graduate evaluates various applications of technological integration in support of learning for all students.
- **Competency 666.1.7: Diversity, Inclusion, and Exceptional Learners**  
The graduate evaluates the theoretical, legal, ethical, and practical applications of teaching students with exceptional learning needs.



- **Competency 666.1.8: Reflection, Evaluation, and Philosophy of Teaching**

The graduate evaluates educational observations and experiences connected to professional practices to support the development of appropriate teaching dispositions and a personal teaching philosophy.

### **Teaching Dispositions Statement**

Please review the [Statement of Teaching Dispositions](#).

### **Course Mentor Assistance**

As you prepare to demonstrate competency in this subject, remember that course mentors stand ready to help you reach your educational goals. As subject matter experts, mentors enjoy and take pride in helping students become reflective learners, problem solvers, and critical thinkers. Course mentors are excited to hear from you and eager to work with you.

Successful students report that working with a course mentor is the key to their success. Course mentors are able to share tips on approaches, tools, and skills that can help you apply the content you're studying. They also provide guidance in assessment preparation strategies and troubleshoot areas of deficiency. Even if things don't work out on your first try, course mentors act as a support system to guide you through the revision process. You should expect to work with course mentors for the duration of your coursework, so you are welcome to contact them as soon as you begin. Course mentors are fully committed to your success!

## **Preparing for Success**

The information in this section is provided to detail the resources available for you to use as you complete this course.

## **Learning Resources**

There are no specific new learning resources for this course.

Please be aware that as of December 2015, President Barack Obama replaced No Child Left Behind (NCLB) with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This new act reauthorizes the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation's national education law and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the new act. For additional information, please visit the following links from the U.S. Department of Education:

- [Webinar recording](#)
- [Read the ESEA now referred to as the ESSA](#)
- [Fact sheet on ESSA](#)
- [Transition Letter](#)

## **Pacing Guide**



The pacing guide suggests a weekly structure to pace your completion of learning activities. It is provided as a suggestion and does not represent a mandatory schedule. Follow the pacing guide carefully to complete the course in the suggested timeframe.

#### Week 1

- Preparing for Success
- Applying for In-Classroom Experiences
  - Field Experiences Application and Preparation
  - Demonstration Teaching Application and Preparation

#### Week 2

- Preparing for In-Classroom Experiences
  - In Classroom Preclinical Experiences: Professionalism
  - Observational Log and Field Notes

#### Week 3

- Classroom Observations
  - Classroom Management

#### Week 4

- Classroom Observations
  - Theory and Philosophy of Teaching

#### Week 5

- Classroom Observations
  - Addressing the Needs of Students
- Final Steps

*Note: This pacing guide does not replace the course. Please continue to refer to the course for a comprehensive list of the resources and activities.*

## **Applying for In-Classroom Experiences**

You must complete your field experiences application and be approved for entry into a classroom before you can begin your in-classroom preclinical experiences. This section walks you through the application process.

## **Field Experiences Application and Preparation**

Before you can begin your in-classroom experiences, there are a number of steps you must take to ensure your preparation and adherence to rules and regulations in your area. You should have



completed these steps as part of your Initial Preclinical Experiences course in a previous term, but if you have not already done them, you must complete them now before you can move on in this course.

You need to apply for field experiences so that your placement specialist staff member can obtain permission for you to begin in-school activities. You should submit all parts of your application no later than two months prior to the time when you plan to begin in-classroom preclinical experiences. You can learn more about these requirements in the [Field Experiences Handbook](#).

## **WGU ID Card**

You will need a current WGU student ID card for your in-classroom preclinical experiences. If you do not currently have one, request one now.

## **Background Check**

In order to prevent those who may pose a danger to children from working with them in the classroom, WGU requires all teacher certification candidates to provide verification of a cleared, current background check prior to placement in the classroom. Each state has a specific type of background clearance required.

Submit evidence of a current, cleared background check to [licensure@wgu.edu](mailto:licensure@wgu.edu). You may not participate in any field experiences, including the in-classroom preclinical experiences in this course, without a clearance on file.

## **Basic Skills Exam**

You may not begin your in-school preclinical experiences until you have passed your basic skills exam and your scores have been posted to your Degree Plan. This is a WGU requirement even if you are in a state that does not require a basic skills examination. Some states require the Praxis I, and others have their own basic skills requirements. If your state does not have a basic skills requirement, you must take and pass the Praxis I basic skills examination.

Basic skills examinations are external exams. You must register and pay for basic skills exams either with Educational Testing Services (ETS) for Praxis exams or with your state if your state has its own exams.

## **Identify a District**

You must identify a district that will host you at the appropriate level for your program and area of certification. After you submit your school preference to WGU, you will receive an email advising you about how to contact that school and work with your placement specialist.

## **Professional Liability Insurance**



You must obtain and submit proof of professional liability insurance prior to entering the classroom. Find information about NEA liability insurance in the [Field Experiences Handbook](#) and the [student handbook knowledge base](#).

## **Code of Professional Behaviors and Dispositions**

Read the [Teachers College Code of Professional Behaviors and Dispositions](#), which includes the process for disciplinary actions. You may want to refer to this several times before and during your preclinical experiences to ensure that you are familiar with the requirements.

## **Demonstration Teaching Application and Preparation**

You should have previously completed your Demonstration Teaching (DT) application. If you have not already done so, complete that application now. It must be completed several months before you intend to begin your DT and cohort seminar, so failure to complete all parts of the application by the required deadline will cause you to miss the cohort you intend to be a part of and may result in a delay of your academic progress and graduation. Discuss your plans with your mentor and be sure you understand the deadlines and requirements for DT.

You need to apply for DT so that your placement specialist staff member can obtain permission for you to begin in-school activities and set up the required observations. You should submit all parts of your application and complete the required number of assessments and student projects by the dates listed in the [Field Experiences Handbook](#).

## **Completing the DT Application**

Talk about your plans for DT with your mentor and complete all required sections of the checklist for DT by the deadlines outlined for the cohort you wish to enter.

Many of the pieces of your DT application will be the same as those in your PCE application; however, if you take several terms to complete courses between PCE and DT, you will be required to renew and resubmit those documents.

## **Making Plans for Your Time in DT**

While in DT, you are strongly discouraged from working at another job. Think of DT as your full-time job during this period. You should be fully invested in teaching the students in your host classroom, including planning lessons, evaluating work, and reflecting on your experiences.

You can prevent your other obligations from become a hindrance in your successful completion of DT by planning appropriately. Make arrangements for the following and other obligations you may have such as:

- other job(s) and volunteer responsibilities



- child care, elder care, and pet care
- health insurance and other healthcare considerations
- financial obligations

Discuss your plans with your mentor.

## **Preparing for In-Classroom Experiences**

This section will help you prepare for your time observing classrooms in person. Remember that you represent WGU, and the teachers, administrators, and other people you work with in your host school are professional contacts that could help you secure a position as a teacher in the future. It is important that you prepare adequately for this experience so you can participate in an appropriate, professional manner.

### **In Classroom Preclinical Experiences: Professionalism**

As you observe in your preclinical setting, it is important that you present yourself in a professional, appropriate manner. You are a representative of WGU in your host school, and you should consider this experience as a partial job interview, as potential employers will likely want to talk with teachers and administrators who have interacted with you in a professional setting.

#### **Field Experiences Handbook**

You should have already become familiar with the Field Experiences Handbook in your PCE I course, but it is important that you read that handbook again before you enter the classroom for PCE II.

- [Field Experiences Handbook](#)

In the handbook, focus on the day-to-day things that you need to be aware of as you enter the classroom, including:

- dress code, including proper identification
- schedule and timeliness
- appropriate interaction with the host teacher, students, administrators, and others you may encounter in the classroom

Discuss these things with your host teacher or an administrator at the host school to ensure that you understand what is expected of you and how you can put your best foot forward as a potential teacher in this school or other schools.

You should refer back to the handbook throughout your observations to ensure that you are in compliance with all requirements.

#### **Education Standards**





Standards-based instruction is extremely important to teaching and learning. It provides teachers with guidance regarding what should be taught at each grade level. Each state decides what standards to use for its students, so it is important for you to be familiar with the standards adopted by your state. For more information about Common Core or your state's education standards, visit:

- [State Specific Requirements](#)

## **Code of Professional Behaviors and Dispositions**

Read the following document, which includes the process for disciplinary actions:

- [Teachers College Code of Professional Behaviors and Dispositions](#)

You may want to refer to this several times before and during your preclinical experiences to ensure that you are familiar with the requirements.

## **Observational Log and Field Notes**

Throughout your field experiences for this course, you will keep an observational log and field notes to document your time in the classroom. Be sure to do this from day one of your observation so you will have all the information needed when you are finished with your field experiences.

### **Observational Log and Field Notes**

In part D of the PCE II student project assessment, you will complete an observation log, record field notes, and a related written reflection. Use the forms and directions provided in TaskStream to document your time and experience in the classroom throughout your field experiences. Note that you must log at least 60 hours of in-classroom observation, and you may need to log more than 60 hours (check the [Student Handbook](#) for your state-specific requirements).

For directions on how to receive access to project instructions and guidelines for submission, see the "[Accessing Student Project Assessments](#)" page.

As you reflect on the subject-specific coursework and observations for the various areas outlined in part D of the project, use the Secondary Mathematics Reflection Checklist to guide your analysis of your experiences. This document is in TaskStream.

Because it will not be possible for you to go back and redo your observation, you should become very familiar with the requirements of the student project for this course before and during your in-classroom preclinical experiences as they are described in TaskStream.

If you have questions about the requirements, please speak with your mentor and the course mentor for PCE II.

### **Preparing for Observations**





For several of the lessons you will observe, request a copy of the host teacher's lesson plans, notes, and/or learning objectives and relevant standards for the lessons. As you observe these lessons, reflect on what the teacher does to address specific learning goals and objectives. Also note how the teacher modifies instruction as needed during the lessons and what causes the teacher to deviate from pre-constructed plans (e.g., student questions, problems with technology, a fire alarm going off).

Read through the following website about instructional goals and objectives:

- [Writing Instructional Goals and Objectives](#)

You will be required to construct objectives for your lesson plans in Demonstration Teaching, so you should practice writing objectives now. You may want to write objectives related to the lessons you are observing in your host classroom or for other types of lessons. Identify the state and national standards related to your objectives and reflect on what type of teaching methods you might use to help students master the content in the lessons with the objectives you have written.

Consider the following questions:

- What would you do that is similar to your host teacher's techniques?
- What might you do differently?

## **Classroom Observations**

Each of the topics in this section is related to a specific part of the student project assessment. Be sure that you are familiar with the requirements in Taskstream before you enter the classroom so you can collect and reflect on the appropriate information for your project submission. As you work through each topic, you can also collaborate with peers and mentors in your learning community.

## **Classroom Management**

You have learned about many aspects of classroom management in previous courses of study. Recall the competencies you demonstrated as part of Classroom Management, Engagement, and Motivation:

- Classroom Management Strategies
- Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Self-Efficacy, and Self-Esteem
- Managing Routine Misbehaviors
- Evidence-Based Strategies
- Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation
- Technology for Classroom Engagement and Motivation
- Best Practices to Encourage Interaction, Motivation, and Engagement
- Instructional Interventions
- Creating an Emotionally Safe Classroom



Instructional strategies, such as those you learned about and practiced in the Introduction to Instructional Planning and Presentation and Advanced Instructional Planning and Presentation courses of study, can also be part of your classroom management plan.

Effectively managing your classroom is critical for ensuring that your students learn important information and skills and also in establishing and maintaining a healthy classroom environment. In this section, you will focus on the classroom management plan of the teachers you observe in your field experience, and you will write your own classroom management plan.

## **Your Classroom Management Plan**

What will you do to effectively manage your classroom and maximize student learning when you teach your own students? In your preparations, you should create a classroom management plan. If you have already begun to compile notes on the way you would design a classroom management plan (for example, as part of your Classroom Management course), review those notes now.

Consider the following questions:

- What would you add to the plan or change about it, given your additional experience and learning?
- What have you seen other teachers do that is particularly effective that you might like to incorporate into your classroom management plan?

Reflect on classroom management and write in your journal about the classroom management plan you would like to implement in your own classroom.

## **Host Teacher's Classroom Management Plan**

Set up some time to talk to your host teacher about the classroom management plan. Find out how the teacher communicates this plan to students and parents. If the teacher has a letter that is sent home to parents, ask to see this communication.

If possible, talk to several other teachers at your host school about their classroom management plans.

Consider the following questions:

- How do these differ from your host teacher's plan?
- How are they similar?
- How do these plans affect your own ideas about classroom management?

## **Classroom Management Observations**

Complete the following part of the student project in [TaskStream](#):

- part A of the PCE II student project assessment



For directions on how to receive access to project instructions and guidelines for submission, see the "[Accessing Student Project Assessments](#)" page.

Part A of the PCE II student project assessment is all about classroom management. You will need to describe the classroom setting you are observing, discuss the classroom management strategies used, evaluate the impact of various factors on the classroom environment, and discuss your own classroom management plan.

As you are observing in your in-classroom preclinical experiences, be sure to take notes on the specific issues and aspects of classroom management that are outlined in part A of the student project. When you have completed your observations, you will need to write a response to these prompts as part of your project.

Because it will not be possible for you to go back and redo your observation, you should become very familiar with the requirements of the student project for this course before and during your in-classroom preclinical experiences as they are described in TaskStream.

If you have questions about the requirements, please speak with your mentor and the course mentor for PCE II.

## **Theory and Philosophy of Teaching**

Every educator has a philosophy of teaching, even if it is not explicitly stated. There are also some codified theories of teaching that you may have learned about in your previous courses of study. A teacher's philosophy of teaching is influenced by the many experiences that teacher has, including the study of other philosophers' and theorists' ideas about teaching and learning. Your own philosophy of teaching is likely an amalgam of the ideas you have encountered in your various educational experiences.

In this section, you will analyze your philosophy of teaching and also talk with your host teacher about philosophies and theories of teaching. As you observe your host teacher, look for ways in which you two approach teaching in similar and different ways. You will probably find that, regardless of a teacher's philosophy, practice and theory do not always match up.

### **Philosophy of Teaching**

In previous courses, you should have written a personal Philosophy of Teaching Statement. You also submitted this as part of your Field Experiences Application. Review that statement now.

In your journal, answer the following questions:

- What are the major components of your philosophy of teaching?
- How do you think your philosophy might be different from or similar to the philosophy of other teachers?
- What influenced your philosophy or encouraged you to include or exclude various components?



Make additions or changes to your Philosophy of Teaching Statement based on your recent experiences and learning.

## **Teacher Interview**

Complete the following part of the student project in [Taskstream](#):

- part B of the PCE II student project assessment

Part B of the PCE II student project assessment is an interview with the teacher you are observing. You will discuss the teacher's philosophy of teaching, lesson plans, and use of technology, among other things. Use the Teacher Interview Form provided in TaskStream.

You are also asked to note differences between theory and practice, so be sure to take notes on the specific theories you have learned about and how they relate to the practices employed in the classroom you are observing, as outlined in part B of the student project. When you have completed your observations, you will need to write a response to these prompts as part of your project.

Because it will not be possible for you to go back and redo your observation, you should become very familiar with the requirements of the student project for this course before and during your in-classroom preclinical experiences as they are described in TaskStream.

You may also want to share some instructional and/or learning objectives you have written with your host teacher and discuss how the teacher creates lesson plans. If the teacher uses personal notes or notes in textbooks to develop lessons, how do these translate into meaningful instruction for students?

If you have questions about the requirements, please speak with your mentor and the course mentor for PCE II.

## **Addressing the Needs of Students**

You have looked at the different characteristics that all students and especially exceptional learners in your classroom may have in courses of study such as Educational Psychology and Diversity, Inclusion, and Exceptional Learners. As a teacher, you are responsible for creating the best possible learning environment for all students in your classroom; however, because different students have different needs, creating a non-restrictive, productive educational environment can be difficult.

Understanding how to address diverse students' needs begins with recognizing and understanding the needs in your group of students. In this section, you will observe ways in which your host teacher addresses the needs of different students in the classroom and reflect upon ways you might address similar needs in a different way in your own classroom.



## Teacher/Student Observation Form

Complete the following part of the student project in [TaskStream](#):

- part C of the PCE II student project assessment

Part C of the PCE II student project assessment asks you to document characteristics of the classroom climate, teacher responsiveness, academic language and discourse, general effective teaching practices, and instructional planning, presentation, and assessment. Use the Teacher/Student Observation Form provided in TaskStream.

Take notes on the specific aspects in which you felt the teacher you observed excelled, as well as things you felt you might approach differently, as outlined in part C of the student project. When you have completed your observations, you will need to write a response to these prompts as part of your project.

Because it will not be possible for you to go back and redo your observation, you should become very familiar with the requirements of the student project for this course before and during your in-classroom preclinical experiences as they are described in TaskStream.

You may also want to discuss why your host teacher does things a certain way.

Consider the following questions:

- What influences the host teacher's practice?
- How does the teacher decide what type of modifications to make to a lesson?

Reflect on your own influences and how you would do things in similar or different ways in your own classroom.

If you have questions about the requirements, please speak with your mentor and the course mentor for PCE II.

## Reflection

Part D of the PCE II student project assessment asks you to reflect on your subject-specific coursework and observations of the six areas of observation. You should use the PCE Reflection Checklist (located in Taskstream) as a guide when writing your reflections. The reflections require you to provide your own thoughts and considerations based on your observations.

Reflective practice is an important skill of all educators. Being able to reflect on experiences, observations, and lessons taught provides the professional foundation for improvement and meeting the needs of all students. Becoming a reflective practitioner will allow you to refine your skillset to become an ever evolving educator.



Keeping a journal of observations and reflections is an excellent way to incorporate reflections into everyday practice. Reflecting on readings, observations, and even jotting down new ideas and thinking through them will lead to better, thoughtful teaching.

For each observation or taught lesson, you should follow a structured path of reflection. Here is a method for reflective teaching:

Process to follow:

- document/record the lesson or plan
- conduct observation/teach the lesson
- gather feedback
- contemplate the lesson and feedback

Research new approaches or different methods

- enact a change for the next time

Questions to ask yourself:

- What went well?
- What did not work?
- How can it be changed?
- What would be most effective?

Looking for additional information on reflective writing? This Prezi will help guide you on writing a reflective essay:

- [Reflective & Analytic Writing](#)

Here are some articles with an excellent perspective on reflective practice:

- [Reflective teaching: Exploring our own classroom practice](#)
- [Reflective Practice and Professional Development](#)

Using your notes from the observation form, complete the following part of the student project in TaskStream. Use the PCE Reflection Form provided in Taskstream.

- part D of the PCE II student project assessment

For directions on how to receive access to project instructions and guidelines for submission, see the "Accessing Student Project Assessments" page.

## **Final Steps**



Congratulations on completing the activities in this course! This course has prepared you to complete the assessments associated with this course. If you have not already been directed to complete the assessments, schedule and complete your assessments now.

## **Accessibility Policy**

Western Governors University recognizes and fulfills its obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and similar state laws. Western Governors University is committed to provide reasonable accommodation(s) to qualified disabled learners in University programs and activities as is required by applicable law(s). The Office of Student Accessibility Services serves as the principal point of contact for students seeking accommodations and can be contacted at [ADASupport@wgu.edu](mailto:ADASupport@wgu.edu).

## **Course Feedback**

WGU values your input! Please submit any feedback you have using the following form:

[Course Feedback](#)