WARREN WILSON COLLEGE
FIELD EXPERIENCES
MANUAL FOR STUDENTS

2006-2007

Advice, Procedures, Information, and Requirements for Warren Wilson College students visiting and working in K-12 Schools

*The Warren Wilson College Teaching Candidate is a reflective innovator serving in communities with head, heart, and hands.*
Welcome to the Fieldwork Sequence in the Teacher Education Program!

There are multiple purposes for your participation in fieldwork:

- For introductory students, fieldwork is an opportunity to thoughtfully observe K-12 education from a new perspective – as a college student and a potential educator.
- For advanced courses, you will have an entry point to a school – a classroom to know well, a teacher to observe closely, a group of students to observe and some to work with directly.
- In many cases you will be useful to a school/ a teacher: You can enhance and extend the learning of the children in a classroom.
- As you prepare for student teaching, you will have a “laboratory” for understanding the theories presented in your professional and pedagogical coursework.

Your fieldwork placements will include opportunities to observe, to work one-on-one with individual learners, to aid the teacher in classroom projects, and more.

- You will have many different opportunities for making sense of your fieldwork experiences:
  - You will take notes as you observe, or scribble reflections as soon as you can afterward, capturing your experiences and impressions.
  - You will share your experiences by submitting observation journals and other reflections about your experiences (sometimes these will be on paper; often, they will be part of an on-line dialogue with your classmates and professors).
  - Your other Education courses may ask you to gather specific kinds of data in order to illustrate ideas or theories, or to have materials for projects or papers.
  - You will be asked to maintain a record of your fieldwork experiences for your advising file, so that you can demonstrate the diversity of your site placements over the course of your time in the Teacher Education Program.

Your experience will be evaluated through the collaborative efforts of your WWC Instructors and the teacher who hosts you in a local school (samples of these forms follow).

Fieldwork site assignments and other logistical issues are handled through the Education Department’s Administrative Assistant.

Wishing you exciting experiences and outstanding learning!

The Education Department
The Teacher Education Program at Warren Wilson College values professional dispositions in our colleagues, and models and promotes these dispositions to all candidates. The faculty strives to demonstrate what it means to be reflective and innovative teachers, serving in communities with head, heart, and hands. The Warren Wilson College Teacher Education Program values these professional dispositions toward teaching and learning. Faculty and candidates should all strive to demonstrate their understanding of these dispositions through practice.

1. Attitudes toward Learning
   a. Valuing reflective practice and innovation to meet the needs of each learner
   b. Having an ability to reflect on and respond to constructive criticism from peers, college instructors, host/cooperating teachers, and other school colleagues and administrators
   c. Demonstrating a willingness for continued learning, and openness to new experiences and new perspectives

2. Attitudes toward Learners
   a. Respectful consideration of individuals
      i. Protecting confidentiality
      ii. Maintaining professional discretion in the College community and classrooms and in their field placement schools and classrooms
   b. Sensitivity and respect for differences
      i. Physical
      ii. Cognitive
      iii. Linguistic
      iv. Socio-cultural
   c. Recognition of personal experiences and biases and the impact these may have on expectations and beliefs about teaching and learning
   d. Understanding, especially from the perspective of a classroom teacher, of how an individual’s home life, sexual preferences, religious practices, and other important differences will impact his or her experiences in a classroom – and the critical need for each human being to feel he or she belongs and is accepted.

3. Professional Behavior: Teachers need to make good decisions
   a. Making good use of free time
      i. recognizing that teachers are role models
      ii. making healthy life choices
   b. Upholding standards of professional appearance in a given school setting
   c. Practicing professional behaviors in College classes as well as field placements / school settings
      i. Punctuality
      ii. Dependability
      iii. Preparation
   d. Demonstrating professional commitment through participation in on-campus, local school, and community events.
FIELDWORK AT WARREN WILSON COLLEGE

Field experiences are a method for deepening the pre-service teacher's understanding of the program's central goal, which is to create teachers who are reflective innovators serving in communities with head, heart, and hands. Fieldwork enables students to observe and work with practitioners who share these same goals. Fieldwork experiences offer opportunities for candidates to interact with students with exceptionalities and students from different ethnic, racial, gender, socioeconomic, language, and religious groups. Fieldwork opportunities allow pre-service candidates to become involved in a variety of school-based activities focused on improving teaching and learning. Through the advanced fieldwork experiences, students have opportunities to become members of instructional teams in the school and to become more than witnesses to professional collaborative decisions.

INTRODUCTORY FIELDWORK

EDU 215 Classroom Observation K-12
Students considering a career in any form of pre K-12 education should begin with this course, which explores the nature of schooling and the experience of being a student and a teacher. The course spans the semester in order to give ample time for observing and, within limits, participating in local schools--public and private, traditional and alternative. Students are introduced to the world of educational research and the many perspectives available for understanding diverse students, teachers, and schools. Students are also introduced to the Teacher Education Program, PRAXIS I, and other admission requirements.

In this class you will visit at the Mountain Area Child and Family Center and at least four local K-12 schools. You will travel in small groups during regular classtime. You will write about your observations in an on-line forum, and what you learn from these observations will be incorporated into a final project and essay.

EDU 293 Explorations in Science Education
This course is for students considering a career teaching science to children or adolescents. The focus will be on the nature of science teaching in K-12 schools and in other settings not requiring teaching licenses, such as environmental centers. The course spans the semester in order to give ample time for observing and, within limits, participating in local schools and science centers. Careers in science education will be explored and discussed. Students will be introduced to the Teacher Education Program and provided information about state and other requirements for teacher licensing.

In this class you will visit school sites and other setting to observe science education in action.

EDU 305 Educational Psychology
In this course, students consider psychological principles and research findings as they apply to teaching and learning. Topics include examination of intelligence, cognition, motivation, cultural diversity, community and classroom leadership and management. In addition, students will examine a variety of instructional strategies and methods of assessing the learner’s progress.
Particular emphasis will be placed on the application of research-based practices as they can be observed and used in a variety of learning situations.

_A field component that provides opportunities for observation and teaching in a public school setting is an integral component of the course. Over the course of the semester, students regularly travel as a class group to observe and participate in a public school classroom._

**ADVANCED FIELDWORK**

The _advanced fieldwork assignments_ are more independently structured. Your fieldwork experience will enhance your other EDU coursework, but there are specific requirements for earning credit (awarded only on a P/F basis).

**EDU 335 Literacy Fieldwork K-6**
Elementary Education Students independently travel to and work with an assigned local teacher during literacy instruction for the duration of the semester. Students are expected to be at the site at least 10 of the 16 weeks of the semester. The class meeting time is reserved for these fieldwork experiences, but the student may arrange different hours for fieldwork with the approval of the instructor and the assigned classroom teacher. Students will complete an extensive observation log and submit a weekly reflective journal. This fieldwork course is designed to accompany EDU 321 Reading/Language Arts Curriculum. (Students are evaluated on a pass/fail basis.)

**EDU 435 Curriculum Fieldwork K-12**
Students independently travel to and work with assigned local teacher (K-6, or 9-12) for the duration of the semester, with a requirement of 30-40 contact hours. Students will work closely with the host teacher in order to understand and participate in curriculum design and, as appropriate, instruction. Students will serve in a classroom where they may apply to be placed as a student teacher in a subsequent semester. The class meeting time is reserved for these fieldwork experiences, but the student may arrange different hours for fieldwork with the approval of the instructor and the assigned classroom teacher. Students will complete an extensive observation log and submit a weekly reflective journal. This fieldwork course is designed to accompany EDU 402 Secondary School Curriculum or EDU 416 Integrated Curriculum K-6. (Students are evaluated on a pass/fail basis.)

**EDU 390 Pre-Student Teaching Field Assignment**
This course is a fieldwork opportunity for students who have a semester between their Curriculum Activities courses in the Elementary Education Major or the Secondary Licensing Program and their student teaching assignment. Registration for this course facilitates an extended on-site experience with the expected or requested cooperating teacher. In addition to observing in the classroom and assisting the teacher, students must do some project to benefit the classroom. This project may incorporate a service-learning extended project. For example, students enrolled might build a butterfly garden with the students in the classroom, or aid with technology utilization for a project, or do sustained tutoring with a select group of individuals.  
**Prerequisite:** Admission to the Teacher Education Program
Requirements for Advanced Fieldwork credit.

1. Students must independently travel to and from work with an assigned local teacher (K-3, 4-6, or 9-12) for the duration of the semester.
2. Students are expected to be at the site at least 10 of the 16 weeks of the semester. The minimum contact time for EDU 335 Literacy Fieldwork K-6 is two hours per week; the minimum contact time for EDU 435 Curriculum Fieldwork K-12 and EDU 390 Pre-Student Teaching Field Assignment is four hours per week. Contact time is time you are at the school – transportation time is usually separate.
3. It’s not enough to be in the classroom – even if you are doing wonderful work. In order to maximize your experience and your preparation for teaching, you have to process the experience. Some examples:

   **EDU 335 Literacy Fieldwork K-6 students** will join an on-line discussion forum. Students are asked to reflect on how teachers monitor student development particularly with regard to reading and language arts. Students are asked to reflect on how these teachers address these differences particularly with regard to the teaching of reading and language arts.

   **EDU 435 Curriculum Fieldwork K-12** will submit their observation notes, and comment on one another’s experiences, on the wikisite [http://turchiwiki.wikispaces.com](http://turchiwiki.wikispaces.com) in the pages designated for this course. Special attention will be paid to professional standards for descriptions (especially protecting identities of children and students).

   **EDU 390 Pre-Student Teaching Field Assignment** students will also use the wikisite to reflect on their experiences and report on their “giving back” assignment as they prepare for student teaching.

4. Students are expected to keep a record (a log) of all visits, indicating date and times. In the case of inclement weather or illness, students must arrange with their host teacher to make-up visits that are missed in order to meet passing requirements. This log may be a part of your observation notes.
5. Students are also expected to sign in at the front office of the school with every visit. This serves as an independent verification of your observation times and is required as a security measure by the school.
6. The class meeting time is reserved for these fieldwork experiences, but the student may arrange different hours for fieldwork with the approval of the instructor and the assigned classroom teacher.

**Evaluation of Advanced Fieldwork:**

1. Students must submit observation notes (usually these are on-line) and make other commentary in a timely manner in order to receive passing credit for their fieldwork. The instructor will monitor on-line submissions and other requirements and warn students who are falling behind that their credit is in jeopardy. It is not acceptable for students to wait until the end of the term or semester to submit observation writings, because this precludes the professional dialogue that is an important goal of fieldwork. The Education
Department will confer as a group about students who are chronically late with fieldwork write-ups and students **will fail** if they are not able to keep up with this professional obligation. It is not sufficient to visit the school or even work in the classroom: you must process these experiences!

THE MINIMUM EXPECTATION IS THAT STUDENTS WILL POST 10 (ten) observation write-ups (5 each term) and make at least one substantial comment related to another student’s observation experiences each term.

(PLEASE note that this work is separate from the fieldwork-related coursework you may be completing at the same time).

2. After your fourth visit to the classroom we will use a form to check that you are meeting expectations in terms of dependability, punctuality, enthusiasm, preparation, initiative, and more (a sample form follows in this manual: the Education Department will mail out this and subsequent forms with an SASE).

3. After fall/spring break, you need to schedule and carry out an extensive interview with your host teacher about your questions and ideas for the classroom. At this time you should also receive feedback about your work with students.

4. At the end of the semester you will be evaluated again to show where you have grown and what you have accomplished. The host teacher will provide a feedback form, and you will receive a P/F grade for the semester.

**CRITERIA FOR FIELD PLACEMENTS**

Field placements require careful arrangements, and sometimes negotiations, between the EDU department and our friends and partners in local schools. We have a good working relationship with many local schools, and we work hard to maintain that relationship through clear communications, reasonable expectations on both sides, and Warren Wilson College students who understand that they are **guests** in local classrooms.

For the introductory level fieldwork, instructors work with school administrators to clear dates and times and access to classrooms. Transportation is generally worked out for the whole group, and gas subsidies can usually be offered. Students in these classes must recognize that they are short-term visitors and mostly observers. Teaching schedules and other variables may make it difficult for a Warren Wilson student to see exactly the class or grade level that was requested. In introductory fieldwork, where there is so much to begin to learn and experience related to schools, a change in plans may be disappointing – but it should not be treated as a crisis.

Each semester members of the department discuss upper level students who are “in the pipeline” for teacher licensure, needing advanced field placements with diverse learners and, ideally, a range of instructional and curricular philosophies. We look ahead to the student teaching semester, and design a sequence of field assignments that should give a candidate an appropriate mix of learners, teachers, school configurations, and communities.

As each semester the Education Department brainstorms about placements and “good fits” for students, individual transportation issues are taken into consideration, within reason. We know that car maintenance and gas is expensive, and yet to make sure to match the Warren Wilson
student with the best placement, an individually owned car may be necessary. This is especially true for student teaching.

PLACEMENT PROCESS

The first contact and request for a placement is usually made by the Education Department’s Administrative Assistant or an instructor. We typically start by working with the principal or assistant principal of the school, identifying the course and the student(s) needing placement. The initial request letter outlines the expectations for fieldwork, but in the busy world of schools these requirements may need to be re-explained and discussed once the fieldwork assignment is underway. The key to successful advanced fieldwork is communication, and it is the responsibility of the Warren Wilson College student to be an accurate conduit of information between the College and the school site.

Many students are interested in alternative education sites, and there are some interesting possibilities locally. Please note that in order to qualify for NC licensure, the student teaching placement must be in a public school classroom, and the assigned teacher must have career status. Our school partners have additional concerns: they often choose to keep student teachers away from classes with important (for the school’s ABC evaluation) End of Grade or End of Course Tests. Or a principal may decide that a particular grade level or department is experiencing too much turnover or other situations to also host a student teacher. Please note: Local teachers and administrators are under NO obligation to work with Warren Wilson College students.

The Buncombe County Schools and the Asheville City Schools have central office personnel who are apprised of fieldwork assignments and who oversee student teaching placements. Once a student teaching application has cleared the Teacher Education Committee, it is forwarded to the school system for central office approval. At the same time, the cooperating principal (or designee) and the Education department faculty discuss possible placements and cooperatively agree on the candidate’s placement. The principal discusses the placement with the teacher and secures his/her agreement to having a student teacher assigned. The principal informs the central office the teacher has agreed, and the Education Department is notified and in turn notifies the student teaching candidate.

The three local charter schools have fewer administrative personnel, and generally the assignments are arranged among the school’s designated director, the potential cooperating teacher, and the Warren Wilson Education department.

In the introductory fieldwork sites, host teachers and principals are not asked to do formal evaluations of the Warren Wilson College visitor. Typically they give general impressions of whether the visitor(s) met professional expectations (see dispositions). However in the advanced fieldwork placements, host teachers are asked to take an active role in evaluating the Warren Wilson College student. The forms for these evaluations are included in this manual.
## General Academic Calendar for Fieldwork

This is an organizational template for

**EDU 335 Literacy Fieldwork K-6**  
**EDU 435 Curriculum Fieldwork K-12**  
**EDU 390 Pre-Student Teaching Field Assignment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEKS</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Organizational meetings during designated class time slots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Independent FW students will contact their assigned host school &amp; host teacher to determine days and times for classroom visits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>FW week 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>FW week 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>FW week 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 6     | FW week 4  
Required evaluation mailed to host teacher.  
Upon receipt, copy of evaluation given to student. |
| 7     | FW week 5 |
| 8     | FW week 6  
Required meeting with host teacher (scheduled at teacher’s availability/convenience);  
Report filed by student to WWC FW Coordinator  
Fall semester 2006 all-day shadowing on FRIDAY OCTOBER 20th |
| 9     | BREAK |
| 10    | FW week 7 |
| 11    | FW week 8 |
| 12    | FW week 9  
FW week 10  
Final evaluation mailed to host teacher.  
Upon receipt, copy of evaluation given to student. |
| 14    | Make up visits, other completions as approved by host teacher & FW Coordinator. |
| 15    | Continued make-up visits, other completions as above. |
| 16    | Instructor reviews reflections, host teacher commentary, related materials, and files P/F grade with the Registrar. |
Fieldwork Observation Notes requirements:

A reflection journal of your fieldwork experiences allows you to think about what occurs in the classroom whenever you are present, to analyze what it may mean, and to make revisions or changes in your style and response. The time and effort you put into a reflection journal and the analysis you give based on the goals of the Warren Wilson College Teacher Education Program will give you insight for both now and later as you student teach and prepare the Four Envelopes in your portfolio. These writing prompts are also on-line.

Observation write-ups must include:
1. **A description of what happened in the classroom the day you were present:**
   a. Your role and responsibilities
   b. The subject matter while you were present
   c. Observable responses of the students to the learning environment
2. An analysis of the classroom event based on the goals assigned that week
3. At least once each term you must make a substantial (written/on-line) comment on another student’s observation experiences.

**Visits 1, 2, 3 will concentrate on how teachers demonstrate passion for and commitment to learners and their learning.**
What evidence (examples) can you gather and share about how teachers …
1. Show caring and concern for the students?
2. Use knowledge of their students to create appropriate learning activities and experiences?
3. Understand their students, parents, and the community?
4. Demonstrate their theoretical understanding of human development through practical teaching decisions?

**Visits 4, 5, and 6 will concentrate on how do teachers demonstrate agility and creativity in teaching that is based on their knowledge of academic subjects.**
What evidence (examples) can you gather and share about how teachers …
1. Plan lessons and instructional activities based on their knowledge of subjects and connections between subjects?
2. Demonstrate agility by adapting teaching strategies to the needs of students?
3. Creatively prepare materials to fit the understanding of students in the class?

**Visits 7, 8, and 9 will concentrate on how teachers demonstrate initiative and responsibility in managing and monitoring student development and learning.**
What evidence (examples) can you gather and share about how teachers …
1. Create and maintain a positive atmosphere for learning?
2. Ensure that students are treated fairly?
3. Assess and document student progress?
4. Use information about student progress to shape curriculum and instruction?

**Visit 10 will concentrate on what your observations have shown you about self-reliance and collegiality within the teaching profession.**
What evidence (examples) can you gather and share about how teachers …
1. Get support, help, or advice as needed?
2. Work collaboratively within a school community?
3. Participate in the wider public or educational community in order to contribute to the teaching profession?
WWC Education Program

Fieldwork Evaluation Form

Student: _____________________________________________________________

THIS FORM WILL BE MAILED TO HOST TEACHERS WITH A SELF-ADDRESSED
STAMPED ENVELOPE AT MIDTERM.

Please rate the student on the following dimensions by checking one of the three boxes to the right. Additional commentary would be appreciated but is not required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Consistently meets expectations</th>
<th>Generally okay, but a discussion is needed to be clear about expectations</th>
<th>This is a problem area that must be addressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEPENDABLE (the student is consistently present at the scheduled times)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ON TIME (the student arrives when expected)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROPRIATELY DRESSED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONVEYS ENTHUSIASM (good attitude expressed about work with students)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREPARED (the student makes him/herself familiar with materials or is otherwise ready to work with the assigned students)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INITIATIVE (the student is looking for activities to be involved in or suggesting ways to contribute to the tutoring session or class as a whole)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSTAINED ATTENTION (the student is appropriately involved throughout the session)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROPRIATE TRANSITION (the student returns “control” of designated students to teacher, is responsible for getting them to the next activity, etc.)</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Additional comments?

Host teacher signature ______________________________________ date ____________
WWC Teacher Education Program

FIELDWORK Host Teacher Documented Discussion

Student: ________________________________

PLEASE USE THIS FORM DURING OR IN YOUR FIRST VISIT AFTER SPRING/FALL BREAK

Discuss any questions or concerns arising from the first feedback form
What are three questions you (the WWC student) have about the classroom you are visiting or the specific students with whom you are working?

Summarize your discussion of these questions and related topics here (attach additional notes as necessary):

Other comments from the host teacher?

Host teacher signature ___________________________ date ______________
FIELDWORK **Host Teacher FINAL EVALUATION Form**

Student: ________________________________

**THIS FORM WILL BE MAILED TO HOST TEACHERS WITH A SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please again rate the student on the following dimensions by checking one of the three boxes to the right. Additional commentary would be appreciated but is not required.</th>
<th>The student has exceeded expectations</th>
<th>The student has met expectations</th>
<th>The student has NOT met expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEPENDABLE (the student is consistently present at the scheduled times)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ADDITIONAL AREAS TO BE EVALUATED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student has demonstrated growth in his/her skills in working with small groups and individual students</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student has demonstrated good collegial or professional relations (working well with other adults in the school)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student has been an asset to this classroom</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Host teacher signature ________________________________ date ________________________________
The Warren Wilson College Teaching Candidate is a reflective innovator serving in communities with heart, head, and hands.

**Advice About Visiting, Observing and Working in K-12 Schools**

As a guest in a local school -- public or private, traditional or alternative -- you may discover a different set of norms and expectations from the comforts of the Warren Wilson campus. These guidelines should:

* Help individuals make the best possible impression on those who may be future employers, colleagues, or friends;
* Assure the college maintains its good reputation and that future students enjoy a welcome and easy access to school sites throughout the area (your hosts are our colleagues and friends);
* Protect both undergraduates and K-12 from misunderstandings or other difficulties regarding safety and appropriateness.

Whether you plan to be a future public schoolteacher or not, whether you intend to teach away from North Carolina or in a different context, you must be very sensitive to the requirements described below. **Students who cannot respect these guidelines cannot participate in fieldwork at schools.**

1. **Making Arrangements -- initial arrangements are usually made by the Education Department’s Administrative Assistant or the Education Faculty member**

By request of Asheville City Schools and Buncombe County Schools, the WWC Fieldwork Coordinator will make initial contact for placement. Your first contact after orientation should identify your assignment and purposes in visiting; it should request specific dates and times **no less than one week in advance**. You are to give your host teacher your phone number, and you should expect to make a follow-up/confirming call. Principals are generally hard to reach on the first call: you should leave a clear message (“I want to confirm that it is okay for me to arrive on XX date and see XX class,” etc.) often the secretary or other office worker can relay a message and confirm your approval. **It is a very bad idea to arrive at a site unexpected, because you are likely to be turned away (having wasted your time).**

2. **Keeping Appointments and Demonstrating You are Conscientious and Responsible**

Even the most carefully made contacts can be botched by late arrivals or missed meetings. Leave plenty of time to find a school -- and a place to park. The Education Department maintains a collection of maps and direction sheets to aid your navigation. Double check that you have the phone number of the school and the name of the person you are to meet. If you are in a long-term assignment, ask your host teacher for a calendar of his/her scheduled field trips, testing days & school closing days.

If you **must** be late or change an appointment, call and apologize. Never simply skip an agreed upon visit or observation; this is rude. It is likely to cause your host to think you are not seriously interested and not worthy of future arrangements. It is also possible that the individual would hold your irresponsibility against other WWC students.

It is worth noting that you can be perfectly organized and punctual and responsible and things can go wrong. Teachers have been known to forget to warn WWC students about field trips, testing days, and other schedule changes. These surprises can be frustrating and inconvenient, and the only real recourse is to understand the enormous number of pressures and competing interests that teachers must balance.
3. Dressing Appropriately and Other Miseries of Being a Grown-up

K-12 students can be very easily distracted. They can be public – and even LOUD – with their judgments of your dress, hygiene, jewelry, etc. Different schools have different written and unwritten expectations and it is in your best interest to overdress until you become a part of the community. Think about the impression you want and need to make.

For Asheville City and Buncombe County Schools: No dreadlocks, bare bellies, cut-offs, facial piercing. Buncombe County also expects NO blue jeans. It is amazing what a difference wearing a jacket (tweed or linen or corduroy, for instance) can make when you are trying to be treated as an adult. In most cases shorts or very short skirts are not appropriate. Visible piercings (other than ears) are likely to draw unwanted attention and can be disruptive. T-shirts may be too casual; remember that most schools prohibit advertising for alcohol or tobacco or other provocative designs. Be clean and odor free. If you smoke, beware of strong odors.

**YES we believe you should appraise yourself and perhaps reign in your personal style.**

4. Maintaining Your Attitude and Being Ready for Weird Moments -- Professional Demeanor as a Role and a Safety Net

One of the greatest difficulties about operating in a school as an undergraduate is that your status is not always clear. You may find yourself in situations where kids are testing your authority to make them do something, behave decently, follow directions, etc.

There are no formulas for dealing with these tests. The best advice is that you make sure that you are a role model and a responsible person -- not a parent, and not a friend. Kids have been known to ask embarrassing personal questions, sometimes just to watch a visitor squirm. Younger students may want to hug you, sit on your lap, and otherwise claim you as their own! Be aware of what's appropriate in the classroom, and act in line with those expectations. With older students, especially high school ones, be very careful to maintain an appropriate physical and social distance: adolescents have been known to take advantage of the awkwardness as you try to act as an adult/ authority.

Most students are happy to have you around. Be careful in your new role, but don’t let that keep you from getting to know the school and the people in it.

5. Don't Make Promises You Can't Keep

Please be aware that students may ask if you will be back, ask if you will promise to keep working with them indefinitely, etc. Even if your intentions are good, be careful about what you say you will do. A teacher may change your assignment -- ask you to tutor a different child, or work with a different group of students. Try not to set kids up for disappointment in you. You do not want to make offers you will later regret -- volunteering time or efforts that become difficult to fulfill. Don't let your enthusiasm for a setting or a classroom run ahead of what you can manage.

6. Appropriate Follow-up and Building Your Own Reputation

A quick thank you note at the end of your ten weeks is appropriate (addressed to the principal and the teacher, usually). If you have promised to share your written report or other work that results from your visit, you should do so.