

Initial Interview with Cooperating Teacher

Physics 209 – *Introduction to Teaching High School Physics* – is all about helping you, the teacher candidate, to get a better grasp of what it means to actually be a secondary-level physics teacher. To this end, there is no one better prepared to help you understand the implications of being a high school physics teacher. Before your first visit to your cooperating teacher's classroom, arrange for a short (15-30 minutes) before- or after-school meeting with your cooperating teacher for the purpose of conducting an informal interview.

OBSERVATION: Prepare for that first meeting by preparing a list of questions that you will ask your cooperating teacher about what it really means to be a teacher. You should ask the following or similar questions as you feel comfortable:

1. How do you feel about being a high school physics teacher?
2. What do you like most about being a high school physics teacher?
3. What do you like least about being a high school physics teacher?
4. What are the greatest problems associated with being a high school physics teacher?
5. How much time do you put in as a high school physics teacher?
6. How many “preps” and classes do you teach each day?
7. What sort of non-teaching duties do you have as a teacher? Consider asking about:
 - committee work
 - graduation
 - open house
 - faculty status
 - teachers union
 - hall duty
 - cafeteria duty
 - overseeing detention
 - intervention
 - overseeing student activities
 - group sponsor
 - class advisor
 - sports
 - competitions
8. Why did you become a high school physics teacher?
9. Do the rewards of being a high school physics teacher outweigh the concerns?
10. Would you recommend the job of high school physics teacher to a friend? Why or why not?

Take brief notes as you listen to your cooperating teacher. Do not attempt to take detailed notes; this will only serve to slow down the interview and increase the demands on your cooperating teacher's time. If you wish to make detailed notes, do so immediately after the interview from memory. Do this only after you have departed the company of your cooperating teacher. Do not mix your notes with your analysis or reflection that will come later. Each section – observation, analysis, reflection – should be clearly discernable in your clinical report.

ANALYSIS: Analyze the observation you have just made and documented by answering these and/or similar questions of your own. What have you learned from your cooperating teacher that most surprised you? Amused you? Disappointed you? What do you feel are the motivating factors behind your

cooperating teacher's answers? Do you feel that your cooperating teacher enjoys being a high school physics teacher? Be certain to cite evidence for your conclusions from your observation.

REFLECTION: Make two side-by-side lists of the reasons for becoming a teacher and for not becoming a teacher. Score each with 3 points for a very serious reason, 2 points for a moderate reason, and 1 point for a weak reason. Add up each column to find the totals. Do you have good reason to become a teacher?

Reasons for becoming a teacher	Points	Reasons against becoming a teacher	Points
+ TOTAL		- TOTAL	

CRITERIA: A thorough report will touch upon many of the following items: