Dear Principal and Classroom Teacher,

Thank you for agreeing to host the 3rd Year Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood and Primary) preservice teachers in your school. This information letter will provide you with details about the Classroom Helpers program which forms part of the preservice teachers’ course at Australian Catholic University (Melbourne Campus). The Classroom Helpers program will be the first formal opportunity to learn about primary school education for these Bachelor of Education preservice teachers.

In 2002, staff members from both Catholic Education Office Melbourne and the Australian Catholic University developed a voluntary Classroom Helpers program to address several needs. The program provided opportunities for teachers and children in schools to gain additional classroom assistance during literacy and numeracy lessons and for preservice teachers, in Bachelor of Education courses, to gain valuable classroom experiences linking theory and practice.

In 2007, the Classroom Helpers program became a compulsory component of the coursework for preservice teachers enrolled in literacy and mathematics education units and the Professional Experience Program. Indeed the Classroom Helpers program is integral to all three of these. This means that preservice teachers working as Classroom Helpers in schools (from all education sectors) are expected to attend literacy and numeracy lessons in the same class, if possible, for a number of weeks from March to May.

It is anticipated that schools, classroom teachers and children in schools would benefit by having additional regular classroom assistance for an extended period and that preservice teachers would see how classroom routines and children’s learning evolve over time.

In 2012 during Semester 1, the 3rd Year BEd (Early Childhood and Primary) preservice teachers will be working in schools to support the classroom teacher and learn more about the practices of teachers in primary school settings. The dates of these visits can be seen below.

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<tr>
<th>School visit number</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wednesday March 21st 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wednesday March 28th 2012</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Wednesday April 18th 2012</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Wednesday May 9th 2012</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Wednesday May 16th 2012</td>
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One important detail about these preservice teachers is that they are at the beginning of the primary teaching aspect of their Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood/Primary). The focus of their studies and workplace experiences leading up to 2012 has centred on early childhood learning and development. Most of these experiences have taken place in early childhood learning centres and kindergartens.

The 3rd Year Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood/Primary) preservice teachers are expected to complete tasks as directed by the classroom teacher and contribute enthusiastically to the life of the classroom and school in which they have been invited to join. Some of the expectations include:

• To assist a group of children comprehend a task set by the classroom teacher
• To lead a small group using a literacy or mathematics-based game, task or activity
• To take notes for their focussed observations of classroom practices and of developments that they are noticing in children’s progress in both literacy and numeracy during the course of the Classroom Helpers program
• To view, with the teacher’s permission, one of his/her weekly planners for literacy and mathematics
• To interview two children using excerpts from the Early Numeracy Interview: one child in Prep using the Prep/First Year of School Detour, and one child in Year 3 or 4 using the Number domains. This would require consent from the children’s parents/caregivers. These practices have been cleared with the ACU Ethics Committee.

For further clarification on the expectations of the Classroom Helpers program for the 3rd year Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood/Primary) preservice teachers, please see the information that is attached to this letter.

Furthermore, it is expected that preservice teachers participating in the Classroom Helpers Program will carry the necessary Working with Children Check approved documentation whenever they are in schools.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support with the preservice teacher education programs at Australian Catholic University.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Matt Sexton Lecturer (Mathematics education) 03 9953 3283
Ms Anne-Marie Dawson Assistant Head of School, Academic Programs & Professional Experience 03 9953 3266
Dr Bernadette Summers Course Coordinator BEd (EC and Prim) 03 9953 3553
Classroom Helpers Program 2012 for 3rd Year Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood/Primary) Preservice Teachers

The following information is presented to act as a guide to support the classroom teacher and the 3rd Year BEd (Early Childhood/Primary) preservice teacher (PST) with the school visits that form part of the Classroom Helpers program in 2012.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Visit</th>
<th>Suggested tasks/activities for the PST</th>
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| 1     | - Introduce yourself to the principal, classroom teacher, school staff members and students  
       - Observe the actions of the classroom teacher on how he/she welcomes students and enacts the routines for start of the day. Assist the classroom teacher when asked. Record some of the actions/strategies used by the classroom teacher.  
       - Observe the mathematics lesson using the EDMA 262 - Focussed Observation sheet for PEP school visit sheet (first page only)  
       - Discuss with the classroom teacher how he/she plans for mathematics and literacy learning  
       - Ask the classroom teacher if assistance is required to: prepare and hang displays of student work; sorting of resource cupboards; preparation of learning centre resources; sorting of take home books, etc.  
       - Inform the classroom teacher and Numeracy Coordinator/School Mathematics Leader about the details of the EDMA262 Assessment Task 2, especially the details about the students. Ask if they would know of suitable students to interview and tell them that you will have the information letter and ethics forms ready for the next visit. |
| 2     | - Hand out permission forms for the ENRP mathematics interview (EDMA262 Assessment Task 2)  
       - Visit the school resource centre (library) to familiarise yourself with the teaching resources for mathematics and literacy education; Make a list of the resources that are used to teach Number, Measurement and Geometry concepts, as well as a list of resources that are used to teach reading, writing, speaking and listening.  
       - Observe the mathematics lesson using the EDMA 262 - Focussed Observation sheet for PEP school visit sheet (second page). Focus attention on the components of the mathematics lesson (beginning, middle and end) and how the teacher supports student learning during the phases of the lesson.  
       - Ask permission to meet with the Numeracy Coordinator/School Mathematics Leader (if possible). Ask questions about: the documentation that teachers use to support mathematics teaching, e.g., scope and sequence charts, VELS and AC documents, planning proformas, mathematics policy etc. |
| 3     | - Ask permission to work with a small group of students in mathematics. Use questions from Probing questions sheet to prompt student thinking. Guide your work with the small group using information from the Classroom Helper in the Numeracy Classroom (downloadable from the EDMA262 LEO site). Take notes of some of the teaching strategies that you used when leading the small group (constructivist aligned approaches). Reflect on these notes.  
       - Inform the classroom teacher about your insights into how the students engaged with the learning set for the task. Seek feedback from the classroom teacher on how well you led the small group  
       - Ask permission for a copy of the classroom teacher’s mathematics planner  
       - Ask the classroom teacher if assistance is required to: prepare and hang displays of student work; sorting of resource cupboards; preparation of learning centre resources; sorting of take home books, etc. |
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| **4** | • Make sure that you have parent/caregiver consent to interview the two school students. Ask for a quiet space to conduct the interviews (space MUST be in visibility of a registered and qualified teacher). Set the space up for the interview.  
  • Conduct the ENRP mathematics interviews with the two students.  
  • Ask the classroom teacher if assistance is required to: prepare and hang displays of student work; sorting of resource cupboards; preparation of learning centre resources; sorting of take home books, etc. |
| **5** | • Ask permission to work with a small group of students in mathematics. Use questions from Probing questions sheet to prompt student thinking. Guide your work with the small group using information from the Classroom Helper in the Numeracy Classroom (downloadable from the EDMA262 LEO site). Take notes of some of the teaching strategies that you used when leading the small group (constructivist aligned approaches). Reflect on these notes.  
  • Inform the classroom teacher about your insights into how the students engaged with the learning set for the task. Seek feedback from the classroom teacher on how well you led the small group  
  • Ask the classroom teacher if assistance is required to: prepare and hang displays of student work; sorting of resource cupboards; preparation of learning centre resources; sorting of take home books, etc. |
| **6** | • Ask permission to work with a small group of students in mathematics. Use questions from Probing questions sheet to prompt student thinking. Guide your work with the small group using information from the Classroom Helper in the Numeracy Classroom (downloadable from the EDMA262 LEO site). Take notes of some of the teaching strategies that you used when leading the small group (constructivist aligned approaches). Reflect on these notes.  
  • Inform the classroom teacher about your insights into how the students engaged with the learning set for the task. Seek feedback from the classroom teacher on how well you led the small group  
  • Discuss with the classroom teacher the mathematics foci planned for the rest of the term (this is important for your extended practicum that you will do in June). Show him/her some of the resources/tasks/games/activities that you have explored in EDMA262 for the teaching of Number, Measurement and Geometry.  
  • Visit the school resource centre (library) to investigate and identify the teaching resources for mathematics and literacy education you will use for the extended PEP in June  
  • Ask classroom teacher to complete and sign the Classroom helpers form (downloadable from the EDMA262 LEO site) |