

To: Classroom Teachers and Principals
From: Instructors in the Mathematics for Elementary School Teacher's Program,
Mathematics Department, University of Utah
Re: Classroom Visits by Pre-service Elementary School Majors for the purpose of
observation and small group teaching experiences

The Mathematics Department of the University of Utah offers a two-semester sequence of courses in Mathematics for Elementary School Teachers. These courses (Math4010 and Math4020) are required for the Elementary School Teaching Major. They were designed in collaboration with the Mathematics Department and the Educational Studies Department and their consent is consistent with the recent guidelines published by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM).

In this sequence of courses, K-6 pre-service teachers are provided with a conceptual framework for mathematics, especially for those aspects normally learned in primary and elementary school. The sequence of courses examines the conceptual background of the K-6 mathematics curriculum. Through a combination of mathematical content and pedagogy, pre-service teachers develop the skills needed to provide strong mathematics programs in elementary schools.

Students in this sequence of courses are expected to spend six hours each semester visiting an elementary school classroom, observing an experienced teacher for three hours and teaching a small group of pupils for three hours. The lessons presented to the pupils are based on the topics developed in the Math4010-4020 sequence. These are:

Math4010: Numbers and Arithmetic operations
Math4020: Geometry and Measurement; Probability and Statistics.

In the past, the opportunity for students in the Math4010-4020 sequence to have some practical experience in discussing mathematics with elementary school pupils has made a valuable contribution to the student's understanding of the need for effective communication, precise development of mathematical ideas, ability to handle pupils' questions and deal with differing levels of comprehension. While these classroom visits in no way replace the student-teaching experience, which is undertaken later in their university program, this practicum provides a very useful introduction to the classroom experience for prospective elementary school teachers.

The course instructors are extremely grateful to the classroom teachers and principals who have allowed the students in Math4010-4020 sequence to visit their schools. The opportunity you provide the university students is a highly valued contribution to the professional development of the next generation of school teachers.

We appreciate your willingness to be involved in this program. If you have any further questions or comments concerning this program, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Sincerely,



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