How MSU Graduates Feel About Their Internship

“At my current place of employment, I have been told that I came with the skills and abilities that the school district would expect from an experienced teacher. Hooray!”

“I feel that my internship at MSU prepared me very well for my teaching career. I first realized this in my interviews. I feel I was able to hold conversations with special education students. My employer felt if I could achieve success in this type of environment, I would be fine.”

“The reason I was offered the job is because of my professional development through a collaborative team of teachers, school leaders and MSU faculty. This model is recognized nationally as exemplary both by our rankings and also by the success of our interns in the job market.”

For more information:
Student Affairs Office
Michigan State University
College of Education
134 Chippewa Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824-1034
Telephone: 517.353.9680
Fax: 517.432.2716
E-mail: carlson@msu.edu
Visit our web site at
www.educ.msu.edu

Elizabeth Shaffer
Taking the Initiative to Engage Students in a Diverse, Urban Elementary School Classroom

I was so surprised when I found out,” Shaffer said. “It’s an honor, and I have been so fortunate. The internship in hard work, but it is such a great experience. As interns, we start out slowly with some responsibility and then we continue to gain more and more. As we gain more responsibility, you are getting all that experience. It was such a great experience, and I feel like I can handle any challenge. I am so grateful to be a part of this prestigious program.”

The internship combines classroom experience with 12 credits of grad- uate coursework. In fact, teacher candidates serve 30 weeks (900 hours) in K-12 schools during their internship year. The experience is organized to provide gradually increasing scope, intensity, and responsibility under the supervision of an onsite classroom teacher and field instructor. There is a strong infrastructure of support for students with interns assigned to MSU field instructors at a ratio of 5:1. The result is a new teacher who has had four years of undergraduate coursework in a major and minors, a structured curriculum in the teacher preparation program that encompass content and pedagogical knowledge and learning for all students, and early field experiences followed by an intensive, yearlong internship that is supported by field instructors, faculty members, and mentor teachers. “We believe this carefully designed yearlong internship is essential for developing outstanding beginning teachers,” said Mary Landberg, chairperson of the Department of Teacher Education. “MSU interns are supported and challenged in their professional development through a collabor- ative team of teachers, school leaders and MSU faculty. This model is recognized nationally as exemplary both by our rankings and also by the success of our interns in the job market.”

One indication of the national regard for the teacher preparation pro- gram came in 2002, when MSU was one of the first four universities to be asked to take part in the Carnegie Foundation’s initiative known as Teachers for a New Era. The Foundation selected MSU because of its outstanding reputation and ability to serve as a model for other universities. A key aspect of MSU’s approach to Teachers for a New Era is that it is an all-university effort, involving all of the colleges at MSU responsible for preparing teachers. This Pre-View project continues to improve the quality of our program. For Professor Tom Bird, who has taught a number of leadership roles in the program, the goal is to produce what he calls a “well-started novice,” some- one who has seen and been part of the teaching process from beginning to end and who is committed to improving as an educator in succeeding years of a teach- ing career. Often a new teacher is given the key to the classroom and turned to “sink or swim,” Bird said. By going through a powerful internship instead of the traditional 30 weeks of student teaching, students can try different teaching process from beginning to end and who is committed to improving as an educator in succeeding years of a teach- ing career. Often a new teacher is given the key to the classroom and turned to “sink or swim,” Bird said. By going through a powerful internship instead of the traditional 30 weeks of student teaching, students can try different teaching, students can try different teaching methods of teaching and face and resolve problems with the support of a mentor teacher and field instructors. “Ten weeks gives students just enough time to get into troubles,” Bird said. “Thirty weeks gives them enough time to start working their way out of it.”

Learning to Teach

Eliza...
“It’s challenging, but it is very beneficial because I was always learning from my experiences in the classroom and from our weekly level classes, and it was able to put all that knowledge to work right away.”

What Superintendents Are Saying About MSU Interns

“If students see a teaching intern all day long day after day, they wonder what it is going to be like. They have expectations,” Bigelow said. “If the intern is not there to guide them, it is a challenge.”

Making the Jump from the beginning of the program to the internship wasn’t easy, Shaffer said. “This college prepared us well to the internship program. I already knew the students did that make me smile. Now that I am near the end of the internship, I can reflect back on what I have learned. I feel proud of our students that broadcast school news and events through the school’s interior television. She also organized a Reading Buddies Program, which allowed her students with learning disabilities as well as regular students to read together.

Research is an ongoing effort, she also noted that many of her students did not have access to computers at home. As a result, she incorporated technology into her teaching in an effort to expose them to computers.

In Bigelow’s case, teaching is not always visible to students during the early days,” said Shaffer, who grew up in the Detroit suburb of suburban Lansing, Bigelow taught American and British literature, history courses, and one course on understanding Shakespearean multiculturals.

“The most rewarding part of the internship program to the fifth year’s biggest challenge was classroom management. She said that from the start of the internship, it was dealing effectively with unruly or disrespectful students.

In Bigelow’s case, a teaching intern is rotated away from the classroom and put into a subject area. “I was told to go ahead and make the course my own,” Bigelow said. “That was great, but it was also very stressful. It was a very worthwhile experience because I had the opportunity to design a course essentially the way I saw things fitting together.”

Saying About MSU Interns

“There is much more work involved in a fifth year and there is a financial strain to it. But in the long run it is going to get you better job and make you a better teacher, then it is all worthwhile.”

For Bigelow, it has been a year in the classroom he won’t soon forget. For future interns, it allows them to experience, manage and organize, learn more about you, and open up teaching to their many experiences.

“My time is then flexible and open to go out on our own. If there is a project or a research opportunity, you can learn about that knowledge to work right away.”

“Chris Bigelow is a novice teacher, and will be for some time to come. But thanks to a remarkable internship year, Bigelow is also quick to point out that he is no longer an intern or a teacher. “I wasn’t a teacher, but I was an intern,” Bigelow said. “I really only understand what it is like when you are teaching five days a week, and you help students make those connections in their daily work. It was a very worthwhile experience because I had the opportunity to design a course essentially the way I saw things fitting together.”

Throughout all of it, Bigelow said he was always supported. He developed a strong working relationship with his mentor teacher that was based on mutual respect. “My mentor teacher was always open to his ideas and plans, and he validated my own ways of presenting the material. There were no rules that I had to follow. I was free to teach in my own way. If I was interested in teaching the theme-based English class focusing on multiculturals.

For Bigelow, it has been a year in the classroom he won’t soon forget. For future interns, it allows them to experience, manage and organize, learn more about you, and open up teaching to their many experiences.

“I was told to go ahead and make the course my own and decide what I wanted to teach to one semester,” Bigelow said. “There was a little bit of stress with that. Okay, I have all this knowledge, I have all this experience, and now what do I want to teach? It was a very worthwhile experience because I had the opportunity to design a course essentially the way I saw things fitting together.”

Through all of it, Bigelow said he was always supported. He developed a strong working relationship with his mentor teacher that was based on mutual respect. “My mentor teacher was always open to his ideas and plans, and he validated my own ways of presenting the material. There were no rules that I had to follow. I was free to teach in my own way. If I was interested in teaching the theme-based English class focusing on multiculturals.

“I definitely felt like I was a teacher the way I was in school for the whole year,” Bigelow said. “Being in that classroom right from the beginning, and in my own class that one day of my own from the first day. I felt like a member of the faculty.”

“I found a way to teach the students how to deal with the material, now how do I work with it?’ But it was a very worthwhile experience because I had the opportunity to design a course essentially the way I saw things fitting together.”

Throughout all of it, Bigelow said he was always supported. He developed a strong working relationship with his mentor teacher that was based on mutual respect. “My mentor teacher was always open to his ideas and plans, and he validated my own ways of presenting the material. There were no rules that I had to follow. I was free to teach in my own way. If I was interested in teaching the theme-based English class focusing on multiculturals.

“Those classes make us better teachers,” she said.

“Those classes make us better teachers,” she said.

“Those classes make us better teachers,” she said.

“Those classes make us better teachers.”