



Job Search Communication Guidelines for Teacher Education Candidates

Teaching Philosophy ▪ Cover Letters ▪ Resumés ▪ Teaching Portfolio ▪ Interview Preparation

Prepared by the Laurier Career Development Centre
4th Edition

Table of Contents









Overview	3
Preparing a Teaching Philosophy	4
Cover Letters for Teacher Candidates	8
Resumés for Teacher Candidates	10
Sample Cover Letter and Resumé	13
Developing a Professional Teaching Portfolio	14
Types of Artifacts that might be found in a Teaching Portfolio	
Interview Preparation for Teacher Candidates	16
Sample Questions Asked During Teacher Candidate Interviews	
Common Role-Playing and Hypothetical Questions	
What to ask and what to avoid asking during an interview	
Vocabulary Builder 1: Sample Action Verbs for Teacher Candidates	24
Vocabulary Builder 2: Sample Keywords for Teacher Candidates	25
Summary	26
References and Resources	27

Overview

The task of preparing for a teaching job search can seem overwhelming. There are, however, time-tested strategies that can help you prepare for the application process as well as improve your odds of making a positive impression on prospective employers.

The Teaching Application Package

The following documents may be requested for a teaching application package and are usually made available to potential employers during teaching interviews. Be sure to review all application and interview instructions as specific requirements may vary between Boards and Schools.

-  Cover Letter
-  Application Form
-  Resumé
-  Student Teaching Evaluations (copies & summary)
-  Transcripts (usually undergraduate)
-  References
-  Teaching portfolio
-  Other information (only as requested)

This overview is designed to provide you with guidelines for preparing:

- A Personalized Teaching Philosophy
- A Targeted Cover Letter
- A Teaching Resumé
- A Professional Teaching Portfolio
- An Interview Agenda

Preparing a Teaching Philosophy Guidelines for Writing & Reflection

Building a Foundation for your Job Search

Prior to preparing your application material, taking the time to formulate and prepare a teaching philosophy can help you think through all the skills, values, beliefs, techniques and professional goals that define your approach and objectives as a teacher.

What is a teaching philosophy?

**“Your teaching philosophy statement provides a mechanism to communicate a rationale for educational practice
– in other words, why you do the things that you do in the classroom.”**
(Brookfield, 1990)

Did you know?

The real benefit of taking the time to develop and continually refine one’s teaching philosophy is that it forces you to think through and articulate your unique approach to teaching. The insights and information you garner while formulating your teaching philosophy will serve as the springboard for all components of your job search communications, including your resumé, cover letter, application form, interview responses and networking conversations.

Teaching Philosophy Continued

Format:

A one or two page narrative first person account that is reflective, personal, authentic, coherent, connected and logically presented.

Content:

Your teaching statement should describe:

- How you think learning occurs
- How you think that you can facilitate learning
- Your key learning goals for your students
- The actions you plan to take to encourage effective learning (e.g., describe how you structure your classroom or evaluate student performance)
- Your personal growth as a teacher throughout your student teaching practicum

Getting Started:

Self-Reflective Interview

Imagine that a reporter from a teaching journal asks to interview you for a special edition on the qualities of effective teachers. How would you respond to the following questions? (This is an ideal exercise to do with a friend.)

- What was your most successful teaching experience this past year? Describe the attributes that contributes to its success in the classroom.
- Which qualities of your most inspiring teachers do you try to embody?
- What metaphors come to mind when you think of the kind of teacher you are (or would like to become)?
- If you could give a gift-wrapped box containing your best teaching qualities, what would that box contain?

Teaching Philosophy Continued

Drafting a Teaching Statement:

In developing your teaching philosophy statement, you are trying to answer the question: “Why do I want to be a teacher?” Think about the questions you ask yourself when you are designing a lesson plan.

- What do I want students to learn?
- What can I do to facilitate their learning?
- What obstacles are there to student learning?
- What can I do to help students overcome these obstacles?
- What values do I want to inspire in my students?

The following reflective cues may spark your response:

- What motivated me to select the teaching profession?
- What is my personal definition of a great teacher?
- What do I want my students to gain from my teaching?
- Why do I select the assignment/experiences that I do for my students?
- What do I do to motivate my students to learn? How do I actively involve my students in the teaching/learning process?

Still feeling stuck?

If your philosophy statement seems too abstract, it may help to think about other instances in which you have facilitated learning outside of your official role as a teacher. For example, you may have had experience advising, tutoring, working with clients, mentoring a new work colleague or working as a camp counsellor. Ask yourself, how is teaching and learning in those situations similar to your role in the classroom? How is it different? What can I contribute to the wider educational community?

Teaching Philosophy Continued

Tips and Strategies:

1. Start working on your teaching philosophy early and revisit it every few months. It is a continually evolving document.
2. Save all teaching evaluations and evidence of positive feedback from students, parents, supervising teachers and principals.
3. Maintain a journal to reflect upon your teaching/learning experiences both in and outside of the classroom
4. Work on your teaching philosophy a little at a time; it will seem less daunting this way. This is a reflective piece that takes time and thoughtful effort to prepare.
5. Collaborate with a fellow teacher when working through the reflective exercises and ask for feedback from other teaching professionals.

A Final Thought:

Good teaching comes from years of trial and error, so it's wise to exercise a little humility as you begin your teaching career. There is nothing wrong with mentioning what you have learned from your mistakes and how this learning will make you a better teacher.

Avoid using superlatives such as, "My students say I'm the best teacher they've ever had." It is much more professional to say, "My student evaluations are consistently high." Remember that teaching is about the students. As such, try not to devote all of your statements to showcasing your sophistication in the classroom; rather, shift the focus to reflect how your students, colleagues, administrators and parents reacted to your use of innovative teaching techniques.

Cover Letters for Teacher Candidates

Purpose:

- Introduces you to prospective employers in a concise manner (1 page maximum)
- Provides an opportunity for you to express in a personal way:
 - your background
 - your desire to teach; what you offer to the students
 - your potential contributions to a school
 - your versatility
 - your willingness to broaden your qualifications
 - your interest in the area
 - and other appropriate information
- Demonstrates that you and your documents are worth serious consideration and an interview

Did you know?

Your cover letter is one of the most important parts of your application package.
Seek qualified feedback on your draft cover letter from someone with experience hiring teachers.
This includes principals, school district officials, career advisers, etc.

Cover Letters for Teacher Candidates Continued

Subject Line

Include a subject line to direct the reader to the purpose of your letter (e.g., re: Application for Grade 4 LTO Position #38675). Remember you are seeking to make a positive, professional and lasting impression that will prompt a prospective employer to seriously consider your full application package and call you in for an interview.

Address Line

Address your letter to a specific person, wherever possible. Call the school or board office directly or check their website to obtain the name and correct spelling of the individual or hiring committee to whom your letter should be addressed.

Body

Paragraph One – Introduction

Briefly outline your commitment to education and your knowledge and interest in the school board. The best way to approach this, and distinguish yourself as a candidate, is to do some **career research**. This includes reviewing the board's philosophy and objectives which may be available on their website or by conducting and *informational interview* with teaching staff, administration or board officials. You may also choose to include a summary of your own teaching philosophy, indicating how it aligns to that of the board.

Paragraph Two – Qualifications

Support your statement of interest in paragraph one, by describing specific skills and strengths that you have acquired and their relevance to student growth, classroom management, interactions with colleagues and parents as well as administrative capabilities.

Paragraph Three – Extra-Curricular Interests

Further distinguish yourself as a candidate by highlighting particular extra-curricular involvements that you might contribute to the school's athletic, music, drama or other extra-curricular activities. Include relevant community, board and committee involvement.

Paragraph Four – Closing

Restate your interest in a way that connects you to the school board and the position for which you are applying.

Personalize Your Cover Letter!

Look for job-relevant, yet creative ways to make your cover letter stand out.

For example, you may choose to include an appropriate graphic or a quotation that supports your teaching philosophy.

Resumés for Teacher Candidates

Purpose:

- Summarizes your background in a concise yet comprehensive manner (Note: 2 pages is the maximum limit for resumés)

Tip

Prepare your resumé with the assumption that your BEd year is over and include all student teaching or courses. Indicate which courses or practicum experiences are current or you expect to complete. You can include BEd (candidate) beside your name. Just remember to delete candidate once you have successfully obtained your BEd

Content:

Objective

A summary description of your career and teaching objectives and/or philosophy as it relates to the posted position

Professional Profile

A 4 – 6 point summary demonstrating of your qualifications for a teaching position. Typically your professional profile includes:

- Experience summary (related directly to the position)
- Relevant skills that you have demonstrated (can be identified through the job description)
- Achievements (evidence of your ability to contribute within a teaching environment)
- Qualities that you possess (describes the type of teacher you are)
- Bonus highlight (key certification, languages and/or additional qualifications that you possess)

Education

This section lists in reverse chronological order (most recent first) your educational achievements. For your teaching resumé, you may choose to include high school diploma and achievements in this section, particularly if there is a specific teaching-related program or certification that was obtained during that period. You may choose to include any outstanding academic achievements obtained either in high school or university (e.g., Ontario Scholar, Scholarships, Honour Roll status, etc.)

Resumés for Teacher Candidates Continued

Relevant Teaching Experience

Include in this section all direct teaching experiences, **paid and unpaid**, that you have obtained. This may include:

- Student teaching
- Supply teaching
- Summer or Volunteer teaching/instruction
- Teaching overseas

Additional Related Experience

Beyond direct teaching experience, include paid and unpaid experiences with responsibilities related to teaching. Some examples include:

- Coaching
- Camp counselling
- Child Care worker
- Residence Don
- Recreational positions
- Church teaching
- Band or Choir directing
- Big Brother/Sister

Be prepared to discuss the relevance of these experiences to the teaching environment.

Additional Qualifications (optional)

This can include formal Additional Qualification training from a faculty of education including: Special Education, Guidance, FSL, ESL, Computer Specialist etc. If you are planning on taking additional qualification courses in the immediate future, you may choose to include those courses indicating anticipated date of completion.

This section may also feature training or certification beyond your academic education that is relevant with the educational environment such as languages, workshops, First Aid, CPR, Crisis Intervention Training, etc.

Resumés for Teacher Candidates Continued

Extra Curricular Activities

Highlight any extra-curricular participation from university or high school, as well as community involvements that demonstrate your ability to contribute within a variety of settings. Also list other interests that may distinguish your candidacy including art, drama, music, travel, sports.

References

- A separate page that may be submitted with your resumé or, preferably, upon request by the potential employer.
- Ideally professionals who are able to endorse your work, approach and contribution within a teaching environment.
- Appropriate referees may include:
 - Professors
 - Principals
 - Teachers
 - Superintendents
 - Other educators
 - Other employers
- Ideally listed separately with complete contact information: name, position or title, address, phone number (usually business – home phone only with permission), email address, context and duration of relationship to candidate.
- You may choose to request a letter of recommendation from your references that will become part of your interview portfolio when meeting with prospective employers.

MADDIE PRIOR

BA, BEd (Candidate 20xx)

'Making Learning Fun'
mprior@wordpress.com

55 Rock Falls Road
Oshawa, ON M2G 1Z5

519-555-5555
www.linkedin.com/in/mprior

MADDIE PRIOR

BA, BEd (Candidate 20xx)

"A dedicated educator who makes learning fun."

55 Rock Falls Road
Oshawa, ON M2G 1Z5

519-555-5555
mprior@next.com

PROFESSIONAL GOAL

Elementary Teacher K-6

Dr. Annemarie Cadwell
Peel District School Board
210 Steeles Avenue
Brampton, ON M3G 1N2

QUALIFICATIONS

- Teaching experience gained in community settings and multicultural public school environments
- Ability to relate well with students, teachers, parents and administrators; committed to educational excellence
- Hands-on teaching style that offers differentiated learning opportunities through the use of diverse teaching strategies
- Noted ability to spark students' interest, engage them in learning and build lifelong learners
- Valued by staff, administration and parents as a teacher with an enthusiastic attitude and a wonderful sense of humour
- Anticipate 20xx completion of **Additional Qualifications Course: Special Education Part 1 & 2**

January 30, 20xx

Re: Open Positions - Elementary Teachers - Fall 20xx

Dear Dr. Cadwell

The Peel District's reputation for **excellence in education** was reinforced for me during the presentation of your district representative, Lou Dryden, at our recent Laurier Teacher Recruitment Fair. I was so impressed by your philosophy of inclusion supported by specific examples of innovation and classroom integration that I have been prompted to forward my resume for consideration for fall teaching positions. In addition to strong professional qualifications, you will find that I also have the personal qualities that fit your culture and enable me to make a difference with the children I teach.

EDUCATION & ACHIEVEMENTS

Bachelor of Education Primary/Junior
Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON

20xx (expected)

Bachelor of Arts Major: Sociology, Minor: English
York University, Toronto, ON
Gold Medal Recipient for highest academic achievement

20xx
20xx

As you will see, my qualifications are a direct match to your stated requirements:

- Completion of a Bachelor of Education degree** by summer of 20xx with enrolment in Special Needs AQ courses to advance my skills and contribution in this area
- Teaching and instructional experience** with elementary students - experience adapting classroom material for individual students, working collaboratively with classroom teachers, and promoting a positive learning environment for students
- Diverse teaching experiences** - successful education of students from Grades 1 through 6
- A reputation for **developing excellent rapport** with students, colleagues, administration and parents
- A **passion for the creative arts** including a background in music and drama

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Student Teacher (Grade 6)
Gateway Hills Public School, Baden, ON

August 20xx - present

- Wrote and implemented Individual Education Plans (IEP) for students
- Developed and introduced creative lesson plans (i.e. Jeopardy, Time-O)
- Taught a range of subject areas including reading, math, spelling and writing

Instructor (Grades K-6)
Conestoga Educational Centre, Cambridge, ON

Summers 20xx - 20xx

- Created and taught functional life skills and geography classes
- Developed and incorporated rubrics in lesson plans

I am eager to begin my professional teaching career with the right Board and am confident that I will be an enthusiastic and resourceful addition to your teaching staff. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the open fall teaching opportunities that you have with you at your convenience. I look forward to hearing from you.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Visit Supervisor, Family & Children's Services, Oshawa, ON

20xx - Present

Piano Teacher, Royal Conservatory

20xx - Present

Drama Club Member, Assistant Director, Oshawa Little Theatre

20xx - 20xx

Sincerely,

"Maddie is an outstanding young educator who has excellent rapport with individuals regardless of their age or ability. She is able to create an atmosphere where others feel capable and cared about while maintaining appropriate social interactions with them." -Julia Rosenblank, PhD, Principal, Baden, ON

Maddie Prior
Teacher Education Candidate
Encl.

Developing a Professional Teaching Portfolio

Purpose:

Beyond a random collection of teaching-related assignments and achievements, a professional teaching portfolio is a 'purposeful organized, self-reflection collection of evidence' produced by a beginning [and experienced] teacher to demonstrate professional growth and achieved competence in teaching knowledge and skills.

Did you know?

A professional portfolio is a useful research for all aspects of your job search. If your portfolio is kept well organized and current, it can be a helpful and distinguishing job search resource for use during the interview process as well as provide great support material for performance and promotion discussions.

Content:

There are two types of content that comprise a professional teaching portfolio:

Artifacts or support documentation which demonstrate what you know about teaching and learning

Reflections which are explanations of what you were thinking when you created the artifacts, what impact that artifacts had on your learning or that of your students, and what you would do the same and differently the next time. Beyond simple artifacts, reflections demonstrate that you are a thoughtful and self-aware educator.

Developing a Professional Teaching Portfolio Continued

Types of Artifacts that might be found in a Teaching Portfolio

Anecdotal records	Goals Statements	Professional development plans
Article summaries or critiques	Individualized education plans	Professional reading list
Assessments created or taken	Interviews with students & teachers	Projects
Awards and certificates	Interdisciplinary lessons	References
Bulletin board ideas	Journal entries	Research papers
Case studies	Learning centres	Rules and procedures
Classroom management plans	Lesson plans	Schedules
Community resources documents	Letters to parents	Seating arrangements diagrams
Communications between teacher & community (press releases)	Management strategies	Self-assessment instruments
Communications between teacher & parents (newsletters, websites)	Media competencies	Subscriptions to professional journals
Computer programs	Meetings and workshop logs	Teaching philosophy
Co-operative learning plans	Observation reports	Testing modification examples
Curriculum plans	Peer critiques	Theme studies
Essays from university courses	Philosophy of teaching and learning	Transcripts
Evaluations	Pictures & photographs	Unit plans
Field-trip plans	Position papers	Videotapes of your teaching & critiques
	Problem-solving logs	Volunteer experience descriptions
	Professional memberships	Work experience descriptions

Interview Preparation for Teacher Candidates

Purpose:

The purpose of the job interview is to find a suitable match between your needs, skills and experience, and the needs of a school or board. Your resumé has already demonstrated that you, along with a select group of applicants, meet the minimal criteria. The interview is your opportunity to distinguish yourself as the right and best candidate for their current or future teaching position.

An essential component to ensuring a successful interview happens before the interview even begins. Interviewers consistently state that candidate preparation makes the difference between a mediocre and a spectacular interview. Teacher education candidates are no exception. There is some very specific homework that you can do to ensure that you are putting your best foot forward during interview sessions.

Homework that can be done prior to an interview include:

- Inquire about interview logistics (e.g., who you will be interviewing with as well as location, timing and structure of the interview)
- Scrutinize the job posting to identify key criteria that may be addressed in the interview
- Reflectively review your resumé, cover letter, application, teaching philosophy and teaching portfolio to identify the key contributions, skills and experience that you have that are applicable to this specific teaching position
- Research the school or board to determine philosophies, needs, culture and goals
- Research the community to determine socioeconomic and demographic composition, community challenges and opportunities
- Network with other teacher candidates and teachers to understand issues and share tips on preparing for interviews
- Prepare and practice responses to possible interview questions
- Meet with a career consultant for a mock interview session to obtain objective feedback on your interview style and responses as well as identify improvement opportunities

Following the interview, it is important to take some time to evaluate what went well and what opportunities you have to make changes to your future interviewing approach. You have an opportunity to include or restate pertinent information in your follow-up thank you letter to the interview committee or key contact person.

Pages 16 to 22 contain sample lists of questions that teacher education candidates may be asked, or may want to ask during an interview. For further information on interviewing, refer to the Laurier Career Centre's guidebook entitled 'The Interview'.

Sample Questions Asked During Teacher Candidate Interviews

QUESTION	WHAT THEY ARE REALLY ASKING	TIPS
1. What is your greatest strength as a teacher?	How do you perceive your talents and abilities as a teacher? Will you be an asset to our school and our students?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ They are asking you to sell your best qualities here; don't let them down. ▪ Have 4-6 responses written and ready.
2. What is your greatest weakness?	How honest are you being with us and yourself? How realistic are you? What skeletons do you have in your 'teaching closet' that we should know about?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Present only 'workable improvement opportunities'. ▪ Provide insight into how these areas are being addressed, or how impact can be minimized. ▪ Don't offer more than required or requested.
3. Tell us about yourself	What makes you special? Why should we hire you? How organized and concise are you? How confident are you? What might you bring to our children? Who are you? Do we want you to work with our children?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use most of your response time marketing your key attributes. ▪ Have several powerful selling points ready - practice your 'elevator speech' in advance. ▪ Give a brief, concise, memorable answer in less than 2 minutes. ▪ This is no time for humility, but don't step over the line towards arrogance either.
4. What is your philosophy of classroom discipline?	Do you even have a plan? How will you implement your plan? Do you think this is important? Are you going to be able to control kids?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be ready to give an example of a discipline 'ladder' or plan. ▪ Be prepared to tell why you like it, and give examples of how it has worked for you. ▪ Recognize that discipline is one of the most important areas of concern in schools today. You need to handle this subject well.
5. What steps would you take with a student who is disruptive in your classroom?	Do you have a classroom discipline plan? Can you handle most discipline problems yourself, or will you send students to the principal's office at the drop of a hat? What is your philosophy on classroom discipline?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See question 4 tips. ▪ Reaffirm your philosophy of discipline.

QUESTION	WHAT THEY ARE REALLY ASKING	TIPS
6. What kind of classroom-management plan do you like best? How would you implement it in your classroom?	If we walk into your classroom, what will we see going on? How will your lessons be planned? Will your students be on task and challenged?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You need to explain your management plan briefly, completely and in an organized way. ▪ They are looking for an intellectually stimulating, organized, respectful environment in which students do well academically and socially. ▪ Explain how you'll implement your plan in terms of behaviour; recall your teacher-education classes and your student-teaching experiences. ▪ Some form of this question is almost guaranteed to come up, so prepare your response in advance.
7. Why do you want to be a teacher?	How dedicated are you? Do you have a passion for children and the teaching profession? How will our children benefit by having you as a teacher?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If you have a passion for kids, this one should be easy. Don't get carried away though; keep it simple. ▪ Stay away from, "my family members have been teachers." This may work against you.
8. Why do you want to teach in this school/district/board/city?	Do you care where you teach? Did you take the time to research us? Are you right for our school and our children?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Without overdoing it, tell them how great they are based on your research, first-hand knowledge and/or experience. ▪ Emphasize that you believe that this is the right fit for you.
9. Why should we hire you for this position?	Can you convince us that you're the one? How much confidence do you have in yourself?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be ready to make a powerful statement about your value to the school or district. ▪ Retain a balance of confidence without arrogance.

QUESTION	WHAT THEY ARE REALLY ASKING	TIPS
<p>10. What are your goals in education? Where do you see yourself five years from now? How does this position fit into your career plans?</p>	<p>Do you want to stay in one position for the long haul, or will you be here a year and then move on? Are you a stable person? Have you set goals for yourself? Have you given any thought to the future?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ They want another perspective on you. ▪ They might not want to hire someone who just wants a foot in the door prior to moving on. ▪ There's nothing wrong with simply saying that you have one goal in mind right now, and that is to become the best teacher possible.
<p>11. What would we see if we walked into your classroom?</p>	<p>What is your philosophy of education? What kind of teacher are you? Do you have a well-managed classroom? Are your students interacting with you and the other students?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A good time for name-dropping. Show off your knowledge of new and proven methods and trends (e.g., grouping of students, Co-operative learning, use of educational technology and hands-on teaching materials, etc.) ▪ Paint a picture but avoid the tendency to go into too much detail. They might be interested in the way you'll arrange students' desks, but they don't need to know what's inside each desk.
<p>12. What are some of the trends, issues and methodologies in education that relate to your specific curriculum area or grade level?</p>	<p>Do you know what's going on in education today? Do you have a passion for the profession of teaching?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read educational journals and periodicals regularly. ▪ Familiarize yourself with current trends and buzzwords in education. ▪ Talk with your peers and other educators in your field. ▪ Visit schools as often as you can to observe the latest teaching methods. ▪ Join an education-related professional association.

QUESTION	WHAT THEY ARE REALLY ASKING	TIPS
13. What book are you currently reading or have you read recently?	Teachers need to be avid readers; are you a reader? What are your interests? How well-rounded are you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This question is often asked, so be ready for it. ▪ If you've lost the recreational reading 'bug' because of your hectic schedule, take some time to read a variety of fiction, non-fiction and professional books.
14. What are some of your hobbies or leisure-time activities?	How well-rounded are you? What do you do outside of school that would transfer positively into the classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Here's another opportunity to sell your unique self; take advantage of questions like this. ▪ Emphasize any of the hobbies or leisure-time activities that could carry over to your classroom. ▪ Don't just answer, respond!
15. What special skills or talents will you bring to your classroom?	How well-rounded are you? Do you have a wide variety of interests and experiences that will make you an exciting, stimulating teacher?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes! This is your time to shine. ▪ Be prepared to state in an organized, succinct fashion any skills or talents you'll bring to their school, but be careful that you don't over do it.
16. How would you involve the community in your classroom?	Are you willing to reach out and seek community expertise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be familiar with this concept. ▪ Be prepared to give examples of community members visiting the classroom, as well as local field trips you might have taken.
17. Would you be willing to teach at a different grade level or teach a different subject?	Are you flexible? Do you have enough confidence to consider other grade levels or subject areas? How's your attitude?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You need to think about this possibility in advance. The interviewer(s) may have already found the right person for the posted position, and now they are looking for someone who can adapt to their needs if another position becomes available. ▪ A positive response could distinguish you.

QUESTION	WHAT THEY ARE REALLY ASKING	TIPS
18. Would you be willing to pursue additional qualifications, credentials or certification?	How is your attitude? How flexible are you? Are you a teacher who will increase our staffing options?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School districts are frequently required to employ teachers who have special credentials in order to qualify for special program funds. The more you have, potentially the more valuable you are to the district. ▪ In a competitive hiring process, the candidate who possesses or is willing to pursue 'extras' will likely move forward. ▪ This is a perfect time to tell the hiring panel how important professional growth is to you, your students and their schools.
19. What is your philosophy of team teaching?	Are you flexible? Do you work well with others? Do you have experience in team teaching? Do you know anything about the methodology of team teaching?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be prepared to talk about this concept in a favourable way. ▪ Share a few positive points in favour of team teaching such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A powerful and efficient method for dealing with a large number of students ○ Fosters collaboration and sharing of ideas ▪ Emphasize your willingness to try, your enjoyment of teamwork and your desire to do whatever is best for your students.
20. What were you hoping we would ask you today, but didn't?	Is there anything special about yourself that you want us to know?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Speak up - cover any strengths or unique contributions that you have that may have been minimized or omitted up to this point.
21. Do you have any questions for us?	Are you interested enough in our district/board to ask questions? How prepared are you to ask questions? Have you given this some thought?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be sure to have at least one question ready to ask from a list of questions; this will demonstrate organization and preparation. ▪ NEVER say. "No, you have answered all my questions."

Common Role-Playing and Hypothetical Questions

Here are some of the most common hypothetical or role-playing scenarios presented during interviews. Rehearsal of responses and obtaining feedback from trusted sources will help ensure your success.

What would you do in the following situations?

- One of your students becomes disruptive.
- A student reveals some very personal concerns and then withdraws and says nothing further.
- One of your students becomes violent.
- A parent becomes very angry during a parent-teacher conference.
- One of your students doesn't respond to your discipline plan.
- Take a position on Whole Language or Phonics and defend it.
- You suspect a project turned in by a student was completed by a parent or someone else.
- After you've given an assignment, you notice a student quietly crying.
- Two of your students are fighting.
- You observe a student cheating on a test during class.
- A student reveals a situation at home that makes you think s/he may be a victim of some kind of abuse.
- You disagree with your principal's method of handling a given situation.
- One of your students becomes belligerent and defies you.
- A student brings you some money, says s/he found it, and then wants to know if s/he may keep it.
- You feel your principal is not supporting you in a difficult situation.
- A student has an accident on the playground: S/he is on the ground unable to move.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all the scenarios you could possibly encounter during an interview. What it reveals is that most scenarios presented will involve a **confrontational situation** with a parent, a **discipline/behaviour problem** with a student and a **difference of opinion** with administration.

What to ask and what to avoid asking during an interview

Questions to Ask

In general, you would like to ask questions that demonstrate your talent, knowledge, enthusiasm and interest.

Talent

- I've had great experience co-ordinating a community golf basics program for kids over the past three years. Would a program like that be of interest to the students here?
- I've been involved with theatre production previously and really enjoy that process. Does your school offer any music or drama for the kids or the community?

Knowledge | Enthusiasm | Interest

- In what ways do the parents get involved with the school?
- What kinds of cross-cultural activities do you offer to the kids and the community (assuming an ethnic diversity exists)?
- What new innovations or programs has the school or the district implemented for...(your grade level or subject area)?
- Does the school or board have a mentor-teacher program?
- Does the school or board have a standardized general discipline plan?
- Are the classrooms self-contained or departmentalized?
- Is there team teaching?
- Do you offer professional growth opportunities for new teachers?
- What are the strengths of this school/board?
- How do administrators offer teacher support if the need arises?
- How would you characterize school morale?
- When will you be notifying candidates of your hiring decisions?

Questions to avoid

- Anything related to salary, benefits, bargaining unit
- School hours (or info that can be found on a website)
- Time off, vacation or leave information
- Composition of the community (i.e., religious, racial, political, socioeconomic)
- A litany of questions regarding disciplinary concern
- Extracurricular obligations
- Opportunities to transfer to another grade or department (wait until after you are hired!)

Vocabulary Builder 1: Sample Action Verbs for Teacher Candidates

Achieved	Designed	Instructed	Promoted
Acquired	Developed	Interacted	Proposed
Administered	Devised	Interviewed	Recommended
Advised	Drafted	Introduced	Recruited
Advocated	Encouraged	Investigated	Reorganized
Analyzed	Enriched	Judged	Represented
Assessed	Established	Led	Researched
Assigned	Evaluated	Maintained	Resolved
Attained	Exceeded	Managed	Revamped
Authored	Executed	Maximized	Revitalized
Built	Expanded	Mentored	Selected
Chaired	Expedited	Moderated	Scheduled
Coached	Facilitated	Modeled	Solicited
Collaborated	Formulated	Negotiated	Solved
Communicated	Fostered	Operated	Spearheaded
Completed	Founded	Organized	Supervised
Composed	Generated	Originated	Supported
Conceived	Guided	Participated	Taught
Conducted	Handled	Perfected	Tested
Consulted	Helped	Performed	Trained
Coordinated	Implemented	Persuaded	Troubleshoot
Crafted	Improved	Pioneered	Tutored
Cultivated	Increased	Planned	Updated
Created	Influenced	Prepared	Utilized
Delegated	Initiated	Presented	Wrote
Delivered	Installed	Presided	
Demonstrated	Integrated	Produced	

Vocabulary Builder 2: Sample Keywords for Teacher Candidates

Accreditation
Adaptive technologies
Administration
Alternative
Assessments
Athletics/coaching
At-risk
Classroom teaching
Cognitive capacity
Course design
Curriculum
Developmental levels
Developmentally appropriate
Differentiated instruction
Dynamics
Education Quality and Accountability
Office (EQAO)
Explicit teaching
Gifted
Graphic organizers
Guided practice
Hands-on

High-risk
Inclusion classroom
Inclusive
Individual education plan (IEP)
Individualizes
Instructional technology
Instructional styles
Instrumental music
Interdisciplinary
Language arts
Language expression
Learning disabilities (LD)
Learning centres
Lesson plans
Mainstream
Media Literacy
Model
Multicultural
Manipulatives
Parent-teacher
Peer counselling
Performance-based

Problem solving
Process writing
Research
Scholastic standards
School-wide
Shared reading
Special needs
Standardized testing
Styles of learning
Student services
Student teaching
Teaching methodologies
Test-taking skills
Textbook review
Thematic
Think-aloud
Transformational practices
Transition plans (TP)
Universal design
Whole language
Word wall

Key References & Resources*

Enelow, Wendy S., Kursmark, Louise M. (2005 2nd Edition). Expert Resumes for Teachers and Educators. Jist Works, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Foster Jr, Bill R., Walker, Michael L., Song, Kim Hyunsook (2007). A Beginning Teaching Portfolio Handbook. Pearson Education, Inc., New Jersey

Kursmark, Louise M. (2006 2nd Edition). Best Resumes for College Students and New Grads. Jist Works, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Lalonde, J. Daniel and Travers, Alan (2006 13th Edition). What's Next? A Job Search Guide for Teachers. Lakeside Publishing, Kingston Ontario.

McDonald, Jeanette (2006). Developing a Philosophy Statement and Teaching Dossier. Presented at Laurier University, February 2006.

Montell, Gabriela. How to Write a Statement of Teaching Philosophy and Accessed December, 2007 at [http://chronicle.com/jobs/2003/03/2003032702c.htm]

Warner, Jack and Bryan, Clyde (2003 2nd Edition). Inside Secrets of Finding a Teaching Job. Jist Works, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Writing Tips to Help You Get Started on a Teaching Portfolio. Accessed November 2007 at [http://dept.washington.edu/cidrweb/resources/writingtips.html]

*NOTE: This module is available electronically and can be downloaded through www.wlu.ca/career. Additional employment preparation resources including the Career Centre's Job Search, Resumé and Interview guidebooks are also available by visiting our website, or the Career Development Center which is located at 192 King Street North, Waterloo, ON.