Preparing for your Practicum

Even if you are just beginning the school librarianship program, it is not too early to start thinking about your practicum. The course is taken at the end of the program prior to the portfolio course.

SLM 552 is completed under the direction of a school-based mentor librarian and a McDaniel College supervisor. Aside from the required 99 hours, candidates complete four assignments, reflect on their experiences through a learning log and perform a myriad of library tasks. Candidates who are not certified teachers must spend 40 hours teaching in the library setting as well as completing the other assignments. Candidates who are presently employed as school librarians complete the practicum in their own buildings.

By far, the biggest question always concerns the time involved in doing the practicum. Ideally a candidates should take off as much time as possible and complete the process in a school other than the one in which they are employed. For many candidates, however, that is an economic impossibility. The College, therefore, allows interns to spend planning time or other free time working under the supervision of the librarian in the building. Keep in mind that placement decisions in Maryland are made by the county supervisor, so don’t assume that working in your own building will necessarily be approved. It is a professional courtesy to contact your district library supervisor after taking several SLM courses. Most supervisors keep a running list of who needs practicums. Introduce yourself!

The SLM 552 practicum is the only course in the program that runs 15 weeks. In this course, *you* decide when the assignments are due, and you tell your college supervisor. If the required hours are not achieved or assignments not completed during one semester, the candidate has the option of taking an IP (in progress) and continuing into the next semester. Once the hours and requirements are finished, the practicum coordinator will file a form changing the IP to a letter grade. There is no extra charge to extend the practicum over two semesters and no need to register more than once.

Your practicum must be taken near the very end of your program.

The practicum course is offered during every fall and spring semester. The only exception is for Montgomery County candidates because sometimes there are summer school options. Keep in touch with the MCPS library supervisor! She needs to know almost a year before you plan to complete the practicum.