EDUC 352 practicum candidates have opportunities to work collaboratively with other candidates and clinical faculty to critique and reflect on each other’s practice. On campus students often meet face-to-face for reflective conversations while distance and online students typically use discussion board threads to communicate about improving their practice and their students’ learning. The unit believes it is important that candidates learn from each other.

The following discussion board thread is from an assignment written after a diversity practicum experience. The words in *italics* have been changed to protect the privacy of the schools and/or individuals involved in the experience.

Example of feedback shared by candidates on a discussion board assignment:

**Feedback on Practicum**

Where to start....

This was an experience that impacted my future as a teacher and honestly as an adult in communities. I completed my practicum in *an urban elementary school in Minnesota*. Pulling up to the school I knew that this was going to be 3 days of stress and learning that I would never forget. The teacher that I was able to observe was one of the most task-managing/student-managing women I have ever had the privilege of being around.

The students in my practicum knew that I was different and not from around there, it was not only because I was a different skin color either. Students in these classrooms were given clothes, food and many other things to accommodate to the school’s education system. I realized the benefits I had from a family that had dinner ready for me when I came home, and that dinner was not just from Taco Bell like *one of my students* might have had. I was able to see students go from sharing pencils with each other to punching that same classmate in the back of the head on the playground. I had never really witnessed a fist-to-fist fight from students so young, when I saw things happen like this I would break it up and honestly was not easy. I had many jaw dropping events happen, but none more than the experience that overruled that time I had with *John (not the student’s real name)*. *John* was a student that had the worst attitude coming into class I had ever seen. He would walk in when he wanted and walk out when he wanted. Ms. *Jones (not the teacher’s real name)* realized that she could only contact the parent so much until she just ignored *John* when he would do this. One day Ms. *Jones* asked me to help with his math and I knew I was in for quite an experience when this happened. *John*’s mathematics was not at a 4th grade level and we were working on subtraction using blocks. He started off my complaining and eventually I was able to relate the blocks to something of interest to him. We practiced a few problems together and eventually *John* was doing problems by himself. I had never come so close to tearing up when he ran over to Ms. *Jones* and showed her what he had done, by himself. It was an experience that I will never forget and will have memories and skill learned that will help me further my future as a teacher.

**Parent Post**

Sounds like you had quite an eye opening experience that will help you in the future. Thanks for sharing.
**Parent Post**

It sounds like you had a really good experience. I think it will be very valuable to see how a teacher deals with behaviors like John's. Classroom management will be a huge factor when we become teachers. I hope you can use some of the techniques your teacher used for your future classroom. I love that you were able to work with John on math and were successful teaching him.

**Parent Post**

I think it is great how you related the children's home/school life to your own! I had a similar process in which the students in my classroom had received numerous benefits from the school as well. It almost makes you feel super greatful about how you were raised because these low incomes students have such a different way of life. I am very surprised to hear that your students were getting into fist fights at such a young age. That is so sad to hear. I think it is great how you jumped right in and broke it up though. I can't even imagine having a student like the one you had described, John. As a teacher, I feel as if this would be very difficult, because he is not only affecting himself, but his classroom as well. I think it is great that you were able to incorporate the blocks into something interesting for him. I would have been so touched if he had shown the teacher what he had accomplished after working so hard! Sound challenging, but sounds like it was a great experience!

**RE: Feedback on Practicum**

**Parent Post**

It sounds like you had a very eye-opening experience. Classroom management experience and experience with behavioral problems will be very beneficial to you in your future classroom. I'm sure it was very difficult to handle behavioral difficulties like John's. But, that is experience that will be very valuable to you as a future teacher. I hope you will be able to use some of the techniques you witnessed your assigned teacher using in her classroom in your own classroom some day! It sounds like you had a wonderful experience! :)

**Parent Post**

You must have had a wonderful experience “Candidate’s name removed”. It is interesting to hear the differences between different practicum classrooms, and how student behavior changes from class to class. In the classroom I was in the students were very polite and respectful. I never saw anything along the lines of a fight. It’s interesting to hear your stories and others stories. Sounds like you had a great time.

**RE: Feedback on Practicum**

**Parent Post**

It's the experiences like the one with John that make it all worth it huh? The things some of these students have seen at age 10 or 11 I may never see in my life. Like you, I was very fortunate to be born into a family who is there whenever I need them, to this day. I enjoyed reading about your experience and it sounds like it was incredibly rewarding for you.