Making the Most of Your School Internship Abroad

A Course for Student Music Teachers | TEAM Project OER Collection

Welcome to this open educational resource (OER) course, designed for music education students preparing for, undertaking, and reflecting on a school internship abroad.

A school internship abroad is a special placement and a wonderful opportunity for growth. You are not just stepping into a new classroom — you are navigating a new educational system, a new musical culture, and very likely a new language. That might feel disorienting at times, but it is also where some of the most significant professional and personal growth happens. This course offers tools to help you make the most of that experience: to notice what is happening around you, to reflect on what it means, and to bring something lasting back with you.

What This Course Is About

Here you will find practical tools for all phases of your school internship abroad — before you leave (preparation), while you are there (placement), and once you return (debrief). The materials support you in preparing well, observing and reflecting along the way, and reflecting on the experience once it is over.

The materials address core aspects of the student teacher experience in an international context:

- Preparing for your placement through structured conversation with your mentor teacher
- Exploring your own cultural identity and musical background as a foundation for intercultural learning
- Navigating the challenges of teaching music in a foreign language
- Documenting your experiences and reflecting regularly throughout the internship
- Closing the experience with a structured debrief — alone or with your mentor teacher or university supervisor

Course Materials at a Glance

The course consists of the following open educational resources. You are welcome to select the ones most relevant to where you are in the process, though you might find it helpful and interesting to explore them all.

Title	What it offers you
Introductory Conversation Guide	A structured worksheet for your first meeting with your mentor teacher, covering the school context, mutual expectations, roles, communication, and logistics.
Cultural Reflection Tree	A visual reflective exercise that invites you to examine your own cultural identity, musical background, and assumptions about music education. You can begin before departure, return to it throughout your placement, and revisit it again after the internship has concluded.
Tips for Language-Sensitive Music Teaching	Practical tips for teaching music in a language that is not your primary language, including vocabulary preparation, non-verbal communication, and strategies for the multilingual classroom.

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Photo Journal Prompts	Guidance for keeping a photo journal throughout your internship: a hands-on way to document and reflect on people, places, and moments that matter to you.
Voice Memo Prompts	A set of reflective prompts for short daily or near-daily recordings or journal entries — helping you reflect on what mattered to you and why.
Debrief Conversation Guide (Condensed)	A focused reflection guide for the end of the internship, covering key themes from reflection on your professional growth to cultural dimensions, language, and next steps. Can be used independently or with your mentor teacher or university educator.
Debrief Conversation Guide (Extended)	A fuller version of the debrief guide with additional prompts and interviewer guidance — for use in a structured conversation with a university educator, or as a more in-depth self-reflection.

How to Engage with These Materials

We suggest the following as a starting point:

- Before the internship begins: Use the *Introductory Conversation Guide* to structure your first meeting with your mentor teacher and get a fuller picture of the school where you will intern. Begin the *Cultural Reflection Tree* individually — it works best when you start it before departure, though you can use it at any time. You might also use the *Tips for Language-Sensitive Music Teaching* to help you prepare.
- During the internship: Keep the *Voice Memo Prompts* close and reflect regularly — even a few minutes every day or two makes a real difference over time. The *Photo Journal Prompts* will help you document what strikes you. If language is a challenge, revisit the *Tips for Language-Sensitive Music Teaching*.
- At the end of the internship: Return to your *Cultural Reflection Tree* and see what has shifted. Then use either the condensed or extended *Debrief Conversation Guide* to close the experience thoughtfully — on your own, in writing, or in conversation with your university educator.

The tools are designed to be flexible — use them in ways that suit your context and your own pace. You may share these open educational resources freely, with proper attribution.

Further Reading

All materials in this course emerged from the TEAM[1] (Teacher Education Academy for Music) project, a pan-European research initiative that studied school internships abroad in music education and developed practical tools grounded in that evidence. If you are interested in reading more, please visit the TEAM website:

https://teacher-academy-music.eu/publications

[1] This OER was developed within the project TEAM – Teacher Education Academy for Music, Future-Making, Mobility and Networking in Europe. www.teacher-academy-music.eu. Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.