

FOR THE COOPERATING TEACHER

Student teaching is the capstone experience for the student to connect educational theory and subject matter content to the practice of teaching. The student has had a wide range of field experiences before entering the classroom for student teaching. The student teaching semester provides an opportunity for the teacher-in-training to plan, implement and evaluate professional decisions in the school setting. It is at this time that the individual makes the transition from student to professional educator. The cooperating teacher plays a critical role in helping make that transition.

From Student to Teacher

Student teachers frequently go through several stages during the student teaching experience. The beginning days may find them anxious, overwhelmed, tired and prone to self-doubt. As they become more familiar with the setting, they begin to see themselves as a member of “the team.” With increasing responsibility for preparation and teaching, the realities begin to sink in. Morale can be fragile at this point, although most student teachers feel quite good. As the student teacher assumes full responsibility for the class, he/she settles down to the job of teaching and begins to *feel* that he/she *is* the teacher.

Careful planning and preparation on the part of the cooperating teacher can help to alleviate anxiety and ensure that the placement gets off to a smooth start. The cooperating teacher can set the climate for the experience by creating orientation plans that allow the student teacher to be comfortable and informed right from the start of the placement. The transition from “college student” to “beginning teacher” takes time; the efforts of the cooperating teacher at the *onset* of the placement will help to make this transition easier and more successful.

Responsibilities of the Cooperating Teacher

The responsibilities of the cooperating teacher can be divided into five areas: orientation and introduction, planning, supervision, evaluation, and outside classroom activities.

Orientation and Introduction

1. Get acquainted with the student teacher by reading the student teacher’s resume.
2. Attend the Student Teaching dinner to meet the student teacher, college supervisor, and Education Department faculty and staff. During this occasion pertinent information regarding the student teaching experience will be provided.
2. Prepare the class for the student teacher. Do activities such as a guessing game about the student teacher’s “favorites” or a nametag activity to prepare the class for the arrival of the student teacher.
3. Clearly outline expectations for the student teacher.
4. Provide information about the school

6. Encourage the student teacher to use self-evaluation on a regular basis.
7. Provide a set of teacher manuals/textbooks for the student teacher along with helpful materials such as a planning book, class rules, schedules and curriculum guidelines.

- b. well-defined objectives
 - c. a clear, explicit plan for *teaching* the content of the lesson
 - d. teaching activities that meet the stated objectives
 - e. behavior management procedures
 - f. provisions for differentiated instruction
 - g. materials identified for use with the lesson
 - h. evaluation procedures specifically designed to assess students' learning.
5. Encourage the student teacher to plan activities and assessments built around the use of technology.

Supervision

1. Schedule conferencing time on a regular basis. In addition, impromptu conferences may occur daily depending on the student teacher's needs and the cooperating teacher's time. Develop an atmosphere of free and cooperative sharing of information and feedback.
2. Provide written tips, hints, and suggestions on lesson plans and teaching.
3. Encourage the student teacher to try his/her own ideas. Provide room for risk-taking and possible failure. Try not to jump in and fix the problem, unless absolutely necessary.
4. Provide time for the student teacher to instruct alone in the classroom, if feasible. This can be a helpful way to increase the student teacher's confidence.
5. Inform the college supervisor immediately when a serious problem occurs.

Evaluation

1. Review the document, "Student Teaching – The Final Grade" early and often during the term. (See Appendix S.)
2. Provide feedback on a regular basis. This should be part of both daily and weekly conferencing. Use the "Weekly Check-In" form to frame these conversations. (See Appendix R.) Be tactful, yet honest. Limit major suggestions for improvement to 2-3 issues at any one time. Do not leave the student teacher in doubt as to how she/he is developing as a professional. The student teacher should know that she/he may have challenges and there will be questions and some confusion at times. (Also see Appendix Q, "Coaching Throughout the Student Teaching Experience.")

