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UNIVERSITY | 1895

**Gleazer School of Education**

AN OVERVIEW AT WHAT IT IS TO BE A COOPERATING TEACHER

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## Roles and Responsibilities of Cooperating Teacher

**This guide was developed to assist cooperating teachers understand their roles in helping to prepare new teachers through their student teaching experience.**

The basic role of a cooperating teacher is to supervise, model, guide and evaluate student Teacher Candidates in order to assist with the development of their teaching skills.

The candidate is a novice in the field of teaching and should be assessed with that in mind. The candidate is *learning* to be a teacher and the cooperating teacher is the instructor and model. The student teaching experience in the classroom is essential to the development of teaching skills and competencies that are required for certification. The cooperating teacher provides an essential service to the Student Teacher Candidate. In turn, the Student Teacher Candidate will be of service to the cooperating teacher and the students of the class by bringing new and innovative practices.

### 1. *Characteristics of Effective Cooperating Teachers*

#### a. Credential and Continued Professional Development

- Has a minimum of three years of successful teaching experience as evidenced by positive outcomes produced by her/his students and evaluations
- Is fully certified for the teaching position and teaches in the major field of preparation.
- Has recognized outstanding teaching abilities and therefore is recommended both by the appropriate persons within their school district
- Keeps abreast of new knowledge and procedures in both the subject field and the study of teaching and uses both knowledge of procedures in the subject area and in teaching in her/his actual work with students.

#### b. Disposition

- Demonstrates the ability to work effectively with persons of all levels of professional sophistication and status on a face-to-face basis, both individually and in groups.
- Demonstrates ability to interact with students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and ability levels in respectful, caring and supportive ways and is flexible and patient.
- Willingness to share classroom and school materials with the Student Teacher Candidate including manipulatives and teacher manuals.
- Has a positive attitude toward their profession, their position, their students, and their colleagues.

c. Professionalism and Classroom Experience

- Works effectively as a team member and understands and accepts the collaboration necessary for high quality supervision of Student Teacher Candidates.
- Has a balanced approach to instruction and knows the Standards, curriculum, key personnel, and objectives of the teacher preparation program in the subject area.
- Shows that s/he is a life-long student of teaching by employing an analytical approach to basic professional responsibility; objectively examines and assesses her/his own teaching and the teaching of others in order to continue personal growth.
- Exhibits a diagnostic decision-making approach to resolving problems encountered in teaching.
- When asked, can analyze, explain and otherwise communicate the rationale for her/his own approach to teaching.
- Displays the ability to accept and build upon the initial strengths and weaknesses of those assigned to work with her/him.
- Is willing to have a student teacher and work additional hours to accommodate Student Teacher Candidates' needs.
- Supports open communication through daily personal contact, daily conference, and ongoing feedback.
- Demonstrates appropriate planning and assessment as a model for the student teacher. This might include short- and long-term planning ideas, the encouragement of various lesson plans to meet specific lesson needs, and allowing student teacher to give, score, and implement assessments into instructional planning.
- Has established an effective classroom environment which enhances learning and is conducive for learning.

2. *Preparation for Student Teacher Candidates*

Student Teacher Candidates are required to report to the school at a time and date approved by the principal. The time that cooperating teachers spend in preparation for their arrival will help the student teacher candidate by providing a good learning atmosphere for the Student Teacher Candidates and communicating the expectations for their performance.

Before the Student Teacher Candidate arrives, cooperating teachers should complete the following:

- a. Prepare the pupils for the arrival of the Student Teacher Candidate
  - emphasize that the Student Teacher Candidate is a teacher
  - inform pupils that an individual (supervisor) from the University will be visiting several times during the semester



- b. Obtain copies of material for the Student Teacher Candidates such as:
  - school handouts
  - school orientation materials for new teachers
  - teachers' editions of textbooks
- c. Provide space such as a desk, table, file cabinet drawer, and/or cupboard for work and storage for the Student Teacher Candidate to organize materials/supplies.
- d. Go over the tentative timetable of experiences for the Student Teacher Candidate for the entire period of observation (observation, tutoring, teaching small groups, whole group instruction for one lesson, whole group instruction for longer periods, etc.) to be refined with the Student Teacher Candidate (see timetable for Suggested Activities at the end of this document).

### *3. Orientation of Teachers*

The Student Teacher Candidates fall under the contractual obligations of their Cooperating Teacher. The Student Teacher Candidate should be aware of the requirements of the cooperating teacher by going over the following topics and/or providing the school district handbook for the Student Teacher Candidate to become familiar with.

- a. Orientation to the School
  - Familiarize the Student Teacher Candidate with the school campus.
  - Introduce the Student Teacher Candidate to faculty, staff, resource personnel, principal, vice- principal, counselors, secretaries, custodians, nurse, aides, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, etc.
  - Share with the Student Teacher Candidate all materials given to regular teachers. Include samples of any forms the teacher may be required to complete but be sure to remind the Student Teacher Candidate that all student information is confidential.
  - Provide the Student Teacher Candidate with schedules for both the school and the class s/he will be teaching.
  - Provide information about the departmental and school policies regarding curriculum and instruction, discipline procedures, attendance policy including absentee and tardy management, safety drill exercises, special schedules, handling of substance or parental abuse, and the proper methods of procuring needed equipment, materials and supplies. You may have all this in your faculty handbook.

- Brief the Student Teacher Candidate on any unwritten school policies.
  - Discuss emergency plans for tornado and fire drills.
  - Have the Student Teacher Candidate assist in supervision duties, i.e., recess, cafeteria, etc.
  - Acquaint the Student Teacher Candidate with the library, audio-visual aids, computers and/or computer lab, the location of supplies and materials. Explain policies regarding access to these support materials.
- b. Orientation to the class
- Familiarize the Student Teacher Candidate with management techniques used in the classroom.
  - Explain classroom schedules, routines, and grading procedures.
  - Discuss the expectations you have for the Student Teacher Candidate..
  - Plan with the Student Teacher Candidate for her/his *gradual* assumption of teaching responsibilities.
  - Discuss the need for both daily and long-term planning. Familiarize the Student Teacher Candidate with your method of lesson planning.
  - Allow the Student Teacher Candidate to assume responsibility for routine class duties starting right away. This will aid in allowing them becoming a contributing member of the teaching team.

#### 4. Evaluating a Student Teacher Candidate

The cooperating teacher provides important information during their supervision of the Student Teacher Candidate. In addition to general observation and feedback regarding the student teacher's behavior, it is expected that the cooperating teacher will consistently use *clinical supervision* techniques which involves observing and recording the Student Teacher Candidate's performance, providing specific feedback, and engaging in collaborative conference discussions in order to enhance growth in the student teacher's teaching skills.

- a. Suggestions for Developing Rapport
- In support of effective supervision, it is essential to develop open and truthful communication. This is key to a Student Teacher Candidate's progress. The following are some suggested guidelines for developing rapport with the Student Teacher Candidate.
- Respect for the teacher and her/his ideas can be key to building a communicative relationship. The Student Teacher Candidate should be treated as a co-worker rather than as a subordinate. Suggestions and/or corrections should not be made in front of the class, but shared in a private debriefing session. This is also true for suggestions the Student Teacher Candidate may have for their cooperating teacher.
  - In accepting the student teacher as a co-worker of equal status and ensuring the student teacher is similarly treated by the students, redirect the students to the

Student Teacher Candidate if they come to you for assistance as a way to support their authority as a teacher.

- Honest encouragement motivates a candidate's performance.
- Guidance and direction and positive feedback help the Student Teacher Candidate improve on a daily basis by both formative and summative methods.
- Not only be present at all times during the class of a Student Teacher Candidate, but also observe lessons closely. Provide prompt feedback via written anecdotal notes, scripts, verbal comment, or other observation data and put in the weekly journal kept by the Student Teacher Candidate

b. Cooperating Teacher- Student Teacher Candidates Conference Topics

Cooperating teachers should conference with Student Teacher Candidates and provide oral and/or written feedback daily in relationship to the observations and midterm and final evaluations. While the University supervisor will observe and evaluate the Student Teacher Candidate every other week to assess their performance, the cooperating teachers will assess more frequently. Conference topics will depend upon the needs of the Student Teacher Candidate and the classroom situation.

The following are typical conference topics and may be discussed with the Student Teacher Candidate during the assignment:

- The purpose and effectiveness of the supervising teacher's methods
- Individual pupil characteristics, backgrounds, abilities, and/or problems
- Daily schedule and time allotments
- Classroom organization and procedures, including record keeping and seating arrangements
- Use of technology
- Overview of classroom work underway
- Classroom management techniques, alternatives
- Consideration of techniques used with individual pupils, groups of pupils or whole classroom
- Ways to motivate student learning
- Questioning techniques and activities to enhance higher level thinking on the part of the students
- Dealing with emergencies
- Bulletin boards and displays
- Arranging for field trips using available resources
- Evaluation and growth and development of pupils
- Action plan for At-Risk students
- Personal adjustment to the teaching role
- Professional ethics
- Prioritizing the Student Teacher Candidate's areas for professional growth (e.g., work on the one or two most crucial; helping the Student Teacher establish realistic goals, develop strategies for implementation, and determine assessment).

### c. Suggestions for Effective Conferences with Student Teacher Candidates

The cooperating teacher and the Student Teacher Candidate should have regularly scheduled, frequent conferences. This might include lesson planning, discussion about particular students, or ideas for teacher led activities, but always hold a conference after observing the Student Teacher Candidate deliver a formal lesson.

Listed below are suggestions for conducting effective conferences to support the student teacher's instructional improvement.

- Be prepared for conferences by planning the key points to be discussed, bringing notes, observation materials, sample of students' work, records and other applications. Be prepared to provide specific suggestions/coaching for improvement with tangible ideas.
- Create a supportive atmosphere and conduct the conference where you have a full degree of privacy and a minimum of interruptions.
- Review the Student Teacher Candidate's performance objectively, looking for strengths as well as needs for improvement.
- Focus on a collaborative approach to analyzing the Student Teacher Candidate's performance and determining changes to be made. Attempt to draw analyses from the Student Teacher Candidate's reflective, self-analytical skills. If the Student Teacher Candidate does not have the skill to be self-analytical in some areas, provide them with more directive information, but continually move back to collaboration to continue the self-analytical development.
- Limit the conference to a discussion of one or two important items so as to not overwhelm the Student Teacher Candidate.
- Conclude each conference with plans for a desired change.
- Focus attention on the objective teaching-learning situation rather than on the Student Teacher Candidate.

### Identifying the Unsuccessful Student Teacher

While each Student Teacher Candidate is unique, there are some standard issues that arise with some candidates.

These may include:

- Tries to teach with incomplete or nonexistent lesson plans.
- Does not implement the suggestions of the Cooperating Teacher or University Supervisor.
- Has a negative attitude toward teaching, children, teachers, etc.
- Is defensive when receiving constructive criticism.
- Does not try to vary strategies.
- Makes excuses about poor performance or complains about the workload, the children,



etc.

- Never volunteers or goes “over and above.”
- Does not volunteer to help or take charge.
- Does not ask for help.
- Does not take time to meet with Cooperating Teacher or University Supervisor.
- Is sarcastic to the children or adults.
- Is late or frequently absent.
- Cell phone usage during class
- Shows little awareness of classroom outlines or procedures.
- Demonstrates inflexibility in attitudes and practices.

If the cooperating teacher observes any of these issues, they first should conference about them with the university supervisor and the Student Teacher Candidate. The university supervisor will relay the concerns to the appropriate people to put together a plan for the Student Teacher Candidate to work on them.

## Suggested Activities for Student Teaching Placement for Cooperating Teacher

(Revise as needed for 6, 7, or 8 week placement)

### Week One

- Give student teacher his/her own work area
- Exchange contact information and discuss what to do if the student teacher needs to be absent
- Discuss arrival and departure expectations
- Discuss dress code
- Orient to students and relevant personal information
- Get copy of school calendar
- Discuss computer etiquette and use of your supplies. Remind student teacher not to use personal electronics during the school day.
- Tour building, teach copier use, show supplies
- Introduce to faculty, principal, and students
- Teach hidden rules of building/district
- Talk out loud about routines and procedures
- Give student teacher the daily/weekly schedule of activities for the class
- Clearly explain all behavior management routines and procedures
- Explain class expectations for seeking help or getting permission with two teachers in the room
- Plan for next week's activity, such as read aloud, for student teacher to teach next week

### Week Two

- Student teacher begins assisting with morning preparation
- Explain grading routine
- Encourage student teacher to assist
- If a class activity is routine (such as morning message), assure that the student teacher develops an accurate written copy of the routine to follow
- Determine which class activities/lessons require full lesson plans. The student teacher should plan to develop several full lesson plans each week.
- Student teacher begins teaching one activity with a written routine or lessons with lesson plans approved by the cooperating teacher
- Give immediate feedback regarding performance
- Complete your first observation form.
- Student teacher should have lesson plans for Monday ready by Friday for your review
- Begin to discuss what the student teacher will do for a Sequence of Lesson Plans/Unit for ePortfolio
- Conference with the student teacher to plan, discuss their teaching strengths, and to determine areas for improvement

### Week Three *(begin part-time teaching)*

- Encourage student teacher to work with individuals
- Student teacher adds another activity/lesson to teaching routine, having responsibility for at least two activities/lessons
- Conference with the student teacher to plan, discuss their teaching strengths, and to determine areas for improvement
- Student teacher should have lesson plans for Monday ready by Friday for your review
- Complete one *Lesson Critique* form and share with student teacher.

### Week Four *(continue part-time teaching)*

- Student teacher adds another activity/lesson to teaching routine, having responsibility for at least three activities/lessons
- Student teacher should have lesson plans for Monday ready by Friday for your review
- Conference with the student teacher to plan, discuss their teaching strengths, and to determine areas for improvement

**Weeks Five and Six** (*Increased Teaching*)

- Student teacher adds another activity/lesson to teaching routine, having responsibility for at least four – five activities/lessons
- Student teacher should have lesson plans for Monday ready by Friday for your review
- Conference with the student teacher to plan, discuss their teaching strengths, and to determine areas for improvement

**Week Seven** (*begin full-time teaching*)

- Student teacher has responsibility for all activities/lessons or team teaches as needed
- This is usually a good week for the student teacher to do their Sequence of Lesson Plans/Unit for ePortfolio
- Student teacher should have lesson plans for Monday ready by Friday for your review
- Conference with the student teacher to plan, discuss their teaching strengths, and to determine areas for improvement
- Using the forms provided, complete one *Lesson Critique* form and also complete the Midterm Evaluation forms.

**Weeks Eight and Nine** (*continue full-time teaching*)

- Student teacher has responsibility for all activities/lessons -
- Student teacher should have lesson plans for Monday ready by Friday for your review
- Conference with the student teacher to plan, discuss their teaching strengths, and to determine areas for improvement
- Complete the fourth (observation) evaluation

**Week Ten** (*continue full-time teaching*)

- Student teacher has responsibility for all activities/lessons or team teaches as needed
- Student teacher should have lesson plans for Monday ready by Friday for your review
- Conference with the student teacher to plan, discuss their teaching strengths, and to determine areas for improvement
- Complete a Lesson Critique form.

**Week Eleven** (*begin to decrease teaching*)

- Student teacher drops one or more activities/lessons to teaching routine, having responsibility for some activities/lessons or team teaches as needed
- Student teacher should have lesson plans for Monday ready by Friday for your review
- Student teacher can assist, team teach, observe, or work with individual students during the time they no longer have full responsibility
- Conference with the student teacher to plan, discuss their teaching strengths, and to determine areas for improvement
- Complete a lesson critique form and the fifth (observation) evaluation.

**Weeks Twelve and Thirteen** (*decreased teaching*)

- Student teacher drops one or most activities/lessons to teaching routine, having responsibility for some activities/lessons or team teaches as needed
- Student teacher should have lesson plans for Monday ready by Friday for your review
- Student teacher can assist, team teach, observe, or work with individual students during the time they no longer have full responsibility
- Conference with the student teacher to plan, discuss their teaching strengths, and to determine areas for improvement

**Week Fourteen**

- Student teacher drops most activities/lessons or team teaches as needed
- Student teacher can assist, team teach, observe, or work with individual students during the time they no longer have full responsibility
- You are encouraged to arrange visits to other classrooms for the student teacher to observe
- Conference with the student teacher to plan, discuss their teaching strengths, and to determine areas for improvement
- Complete the Final InTASC and Disposition Evaluations.