

2013

***SPECIAL EDUCATION  
STUDENT TEACHING  
HANDBOOK***





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# **GENERAL INFORMATION**

## **Student Teaching Policies**

### **1. Attendance, Calendar and Transportation**

Student Teaching is mandatory. Absences are NOT permitted during the student teaching experience except for personal illness or a death in the immediate family. Should such conditions merit an absence, the cooperating teacher and university supervisor should be notified immediately, since adjustments within the classroom will need to be made. If absences accrue beyond three days, the student teacher will be required to make-up the time missed during student teaching or will be required to repeat student teaching another semester.

Student teachers will follow the calendar of the district where they are assigned to do their student teaching, not the WSU calendar. It is the student teacher's responsibility to locate his/her own transportation to and from assigned schools.

### **2. Substitute Policy**

It is the policy of Weber State University's College of Education that student teachers are NOT to be used as substitutes for employed teachers, even for short periods. Any deviation from this policy must be cleared with the Department of Teacher Education.

### **3. Problems and/or Grievances**

Should problems or grievances develop during the student teaching experience, the cooperating teacher and university supervisor should be made aware of the situation as soon as possible. The student teacher is encouraged to discuss professional problems at any time with his/her cooperating teacher, university supervisor, and then the Student Teaching Coordinator.

### **4. Compliance with District and School Policies**

The student teacher is required to adhere to district and school policy in the district where he/she has been assigned to student teach. This includes faculty meetings, teacher inservices, IEP conferences, and other teacher responsibilities before and after school hours. Student teachers must be at school one half hour before school starts and one half hour after school ends, or the district contract hours, whichever is greater.

### **5. Licensure**

Teacher candidates are not automatically licensed to teach after completion of the Teacher Education Program. Students will be recommended for licensure when all the USOE requirements have been met and grades and degrees have been posted on their official transcript.

# THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT TEACHER

## **Introduction**

As the student teacher, you will begin as an observer. Cooperating teachers should share objectives, lesson planning, and evaluation procedures, and discuss individual pupil problems.

As you demonstrate the ability to assume more responsibility, the assignments for designing and directing learning activities will be increased. It is recommended that you have the opportunity to observe lessons being taught in each area of the curriculum before you teach that topic independently.

**This transfer of teaching should be scheduled so you are in complete charge of the classroom for a minimum of either the last two thirds for full 15 week placement or 5 weeks of a 7 week placement. If you demonstrate the competence and initiative necessary to take charge earlier, you should be encouraged to do so.**

## **Grading System for Student Teaching**

Student teaching uses a pass/fail grading system. A variety of sources are used to evaluate student teachers. These include the university supervisor's observations, feedback from cooperating teachers, written midterm and final evaluations from the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor, Teacher Work Sample (TWS), Summary and Comprehensive Evaluations, and the student's portfolio. In some cases it may be determined that a student teacher needs additional time to become adequately prepared for licensure, resulting in a recommendation to repeat student teaching. It is necessary for student teachers to pass student teaching in order to be recommended for State of Utah licensure.

## **Requirements of Student Teachers**

The student teaching experience is an opportunity for you to further develop and demonstrate teaching, management, and professional competencies acquired during the teacher preparation program. You are expected to demonstrate these competencies in daily work in the assigned school.

### **❖ Professionalism (NCATE/CEC Standard 9)**

Adhere to the policies and philosophies of the hosting school and district where you are assigned.

Adhere to the Utah Professional Practices Advisory Commission's Standard of Professional and Ethical Conduct for Educators.

Professional conduct is expected. Keep confidences and respect the rights of others at all times.

Secure information pertaining to legal responsibilities for the classroom.

Maintain a positive attitude and develop a positive learning environment for the children within the classroom and school setting.

Demonstrate a positive regard for the culture, religion, gender and sexual orientation of individual students.

Be responsible, courteous, and dependable.

Professional dress is expected of all student teachers. Maintain a neat, clean, and appropriate appearance.

Engage in professional activities that may benefit individuals with exceptional learning needs, their families, and/or colleagues.

Use copyrighted educational materials in an ethical manner.

❖ **Attendance**

**Student teaching is mandatory. Absences are NOT permitted during the student teaching experience** except for personal illness or a death in the immediate family. Should such conditions merit absence, you are responsible to notify the cooperating teacher and university supervisor immediately since adjustments within the classroom will need to be made. You may be expected to provide cooperating teachers with lesson plans and necessary material for instructing pupils. If absences accrue beyond three days, you will be required to make up the time missed during student teaching or you will be required to repeat student teaching another semester. You will follow the calendar of the district where you are assigned to do your student teaching, not the WSU calendar. It is your responsibility to locate your own transportation to and from assigned schools.

All student teachers are required to teach a minimum amount of teaching days according to their program in order to meet their student teaching requirement.

**Early Childhood, Elementary, Secondary, and Special Education – 60 contract days  
Masters – 50 contract days**

After you have successfully completed the minimum number of student teaching days, as determined by your University Supervisor(s), Cooperating Teacher(s), and the Student Teaching Coordinator, you will have then fulfilled your student teaching requirement. If your supervisors determine that additional time and experience is recommended, you may be required to extend your student teaching experience as needed.

❖ **Teaching and Management** (NCATE/CEC Standards 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)

Develop detailed lesson plans that are approved by the cooperating teacher and reviewed by the university supervisor. Most student teachers find it very helpful to plan their lessons at least a week in advance.

Teach students using effective instructional strategies. Incorporate evaluation, planning, and management procedures that match learner needs with the instructional environment.

Develop and/or select instructional content, materials, resources, and strategies that respond to cultural, linguistic, and gender differences.

Choose and use appropriate technologies to accomplish instructional objectives and to integrate them appropriately into the instructional process.

Employ disciplinary measures which conform to the instructions of the cooperating teacher.

Take the initiative in asking for suggestions and, having received them, either put them into practice or take the time to discuss them with the cooperating teacher. Remember the cooperating teacher has the final say in the classroom.

Know your behavior management plan. Have rules displayed in the classroom. Be sure both you and the students know what is expected.

Demonstrate a variety of effective behavior management techniques appropriate to the needs of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

Design, structure, and manage daily routines effectively including transition time, for students, other staff, and the instructional setting.



## Suggestions for an Effective Student Teaching Experience

### ❖ Prepare in advance

- Arrange a meeting at the school to meet the principal and cooperating teacher(s). You should make an effort to get to know the physical layout as well as the policies of the school.
- Learn about the community and the people who live there.
- Become acquainted with the curriculum, textbooks, materials, and instructional strategies that are being used for the specific subject(s)/grade(s) to which you have been assigned.
- Determine what aid can be expected from the university supervisor, and have a clear understanding of what the supervisor will expect from you. Primarily this can be accomplished by:
  1. Becoming thoroughly acquainted with this Student Teaching Handbook
  2. Set up a meeting with your university supervisor to become aware of observation and portfolio requirements specific to your supervisor.

### ❖ Learn from the cooperating teacher

Be mindful that a student teaching position is much like an apprentice within the school setting to which you have been assigned. You should recognize and respect the feedback and suggestions of the cooperating teacher and the school administration.

Be cognizant that the cooperating teacher is in legal control of the classroom and is legally responsible for it.

Accept the cooperating teacher's decisions and respect his/her opinions concerning the materials and methods by which they are to be presented.

Schedule time for frequent conferences with the cooperating teacher.

Establish openness to constructive feedback, recognizing that the cooperating teacher is eager to see you succeed.

Support the cooperating teacher in matters of school discipline.

Establish a willingness to assume teaching responsibility.

Establish a procedure for reviewing lesson plans with the cooperating teacher.

Give credit to the cooperating teacher for assistance rendered.

Understand that in an effort to resolve problem situations, you should begin with the cooperating teacher.

Participate in non-classroom activities in which the cooperating teacher has some responsibility.

❖ **Focus on teaching the students**

Your main concern should be pupil achievement rather than making a favorable impression on the cooperating teacher or university supervisor.

❖ **Focus on continual improvement**

Continually reflect on and evaluate each teaching experience—determining what went well, what needs to be improved, and how you can be more effective next time.

Stay aware of the extreme importance of your work.

Do not demand perfection from yourself; demand continual improvement.

Focus on the things that you can control.

❖ **Focus on student teaching**

Student teachers are cautioned not to overload themselves with additional university course or other responsibilities such as work during your student teaching experience. The amount of work you undertake during your student teaching experience has a direct relationship on your effectiveness as a teacher. Teaching is a responsibility that must come first. The obligation to the education of school pupils cannot be taken lightly; therefore, responsibilities other than teaching should be minimal.

## Activities Checklist for Student Teachers

The following orientation experiences are appropriate for the beginning weeks of your student teaching assignment. Efforts should be made to complete and check off the activities appropriate to your assignment.

### GENERAL ORIENTATION EXPERIENCES

*meet building personnel:*

- principal
- secretary
- teachers
- special education teachers
- custodian
- other personnel (media, PE, music, etc.)
- office (nurse)

*locate building areas:*

- tour the building
- media center/library
- outdoor areas
- cafeteria
- gymnasium
- teachers' work area
- supply room/ lounge

### DISCUSSION WITH COOPERATING TEACHER

*school policy:*

- discipline
- fire/disaster drill
- injuries/illnesses
- absence
- rules
- faculty meetings
- parking
- school calendar
- use of media center
- use of copy machines, etc.

*unit or room policy:*

- classroom rules
- curriculum
- teacher manuals
- basic routine
- management techniques
- pupils with special needs
- record keeping
- grouping
- available resources
- diversity issues

### OBSERVATION OF THE COOPERATING TEACHER'S PROCEDURES

- lecture
- use of textbook
- discussion
- whole class work
- small group work
- cooperative learning
- individualization
- communication
- interaction with parents/teachers
- questioning techniques
- reinforcement
- student/teacher interaction
- directions
- listening
- discipline
- motivational strategies
- lesson plans

### INTERVIEW WITH BUILDING PRINCIPAL

*school policy:*

- discipline
- fire/disaster drill
- injuries/illnesses
- absence
- rules
- use of media center
- use of copy machines
- parking
- faculty meetings
- communication with other faculty about students with disabilities

## Student Teaching Portfolio

The student teaching portfolio is the capstone product of your training program in Special Education. It is an organized collection of materials that have been creatively put together to best represent your philosophy of teaching and the related competencies needed to be an effective teacher. Well-done portfolios include brief illustrations of your skills as planner, instructor, decision-maker, and classroom manager. **The portfolio reflects what you have learned in your preparation program.**

The portfolio can also be used to illustrate or highlight your teaching competencies in an interview setting. As you are asked questions in an interview, you can use a page or section of your portfolio as an illustration of your answer to the interview question. Therefore, you need to organize your portfolio to find information quickly.

Each entry should be carefully selected and presented concisely. This requires writing and revision. The evaluation of your portfolio will take into account punctuation, spelling, grammar, appearance and overall organization of each section. It is your responsibility to edit each section carefully before turning the portfolio in for final evaluation. (NCATE/CEC Standard CC9: S8)

**Portfolios are due by the last week of the semester.** You should arrange to meet with your cooperating teacher and university supervisor together at the beginning of the semester to plan out a schedule to complete your portfolio in a reasonable amount of time.

**The Special Education website contains complete instructions for preparing your portfolio and the rubric used for its evaluation. The URL is <http://departments.weber.edu/specialed>.**

You must receive a rating of “met” on each section of the portfolio rubric in order to pass student teaching.

## Teacher Work Sample (TWS)

You are required to teach a comprehensive unit. Before you teach the unit, you will describe contextual factors, identify learning goals based on your state or district content standards, create an assessment plan designed to measure student performance before (pre-assessment), during (formative assessment) and after (post-assessment), and plan for your instruction. After you teach the unit, you will analyze student learning and then reflect upon and evaluate your teaching as related to student learning.

### ❖ Format

**Ownership.** Complete a cover page that includes a) your name, b) date submitted, c) grade level taught, d) subject taught, and d) your school assignment.

**Table of Contents.** Provide a Table of Contents that lists the sections and attachments in your TWS document with page numbers.

**Attachments.** Charts, graphs and assessment instruments are required as part of the TWS document. You may also want to provide other attachments, such as student work. However, you should be very selective and make sure your attachments provide clear, concise evidence of your performance related to TWS standards and your students' learning progress.

**Narrative length.** You have some flexibility of length across components, but the total length of your written narrative (excluding charts, graphs, attachments and references) should not exceed twenty (20) word-processed pages, double-spaced in 12-point font, with 1-inch margins.

**References and Credits** (not included in total page length). If you referred to another person's ideas or material in your narrative, you should cite these in a separate section at the end of your narrative under *References and Credits*. The American Psychological Association (APA) style is the recommended format (explained in the manual entitled "Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association"). (See APA website.)

### ❖ Instructions

Use the following 7 sections as a guideline to plan and create a TWS for a two or three-week long unit you both plan *and* teach.

#### Contextual Factors

The teacher uses information about the learning-teaching context and students' individual differences to set learning objectives and plan instruction and assessment.

Knowledge of community, school, and classroom factors:

Knowledge of characteristics of student(s):

Knowledge of students' varied approaches to learning:

Knowledge of students' skills and prior knowledge:

Implications for instructional planning and assessment

#### Objectives/Intended Learning Outcomes

The teacher sets significant, challenging, varied and appropriate objectives.

Alignment with national or state standards

Significant, challenging, and variety

Clarity

Appropriateness for students

### **Assessment Plan**

The teacher uses multiple assessment modes and approaches aligned with objectives to assess student learning before, during, and after instruction.

- Alignment with objectives and instruction
- Clarity of criteria for performance
- Multiple modes and approaches
- Technical soundness
- Adaptations based on the individual needs of students

### **Design for Instruction**

The teacher designs instruction for specific learning objectives, student characteristics and needs, and learning contexts.

- Alignment with objectives
- Accurate representation of content
- Sound lesson structure (Hunter, 4MAT, Inquiry, Direct Instruction, etc.)
- Use of a variety of strategies, activities, assignments, and resources
- Use of contextual information and data to select appropriate and relevant activities, assignments and resources.
- Integration of appropriate technology

### **Instructional Decision- Making**

The teacher uses ongoing analysis of student learning to make instructional decisions.

- Utilizes sound professional practices
- Adjustments based on analysis of student learning and incorporation of correctives and extensions.
- Congruence between modifications and objectives

### **Analysis of Student Learning**

The teacher uses assessment data to profile student learning and communicate information about student progress and achievement.

- Clarity and accuracy of presentation
- Alignment with learning goals
- Interpretation of data
- Evidence of impact on student learning

### **Reflection and Self-Evaluation**

The teacher reflects on his or her instruction and student learning in order to improve teaching practice.

- Interpretation of student learning
- Insights on effective instruction and assessment
- Alignment among objectives, instruction, and assessment
- Implications for future teaching
- Implications for professional development

You must receive a rating of “Met” for each section of the TWS in order to pass student teaching.

**Comprehensive Evaluation of Special Education Student Teaching** The Comprehensive Evaluation form is a detailed checklist of the knowledge and skills you must demonstrate as a beginning special educator. The Summary Evaluation form which accompanies it provides a rating system for the items on the Comprehensive Evaluation Form. Please be aware that the Comprehensive and Summary Evaluation Forms *must* be completed by your university supervisor and cooperating teacher by the end of your student teaching experience. Therefore, it is your responsibility to arrange an appropriate timeline to accomplish each item on the checklist.

The Comprehensive and Summary Evaluation forms are aligned with the Council for Exceptional Children *Knowledge and Skill Base for All Beginning Special Education Teachers of Students in Individualized General Curriculums*. The documents contain specific descriptors of each area to be evaluated during student teaching. The descriptors may be useful for the student teacher, the cooperating teacher, and the university supervisor in assessing the level of performance and pinpointing strengths and/or areas for improvement of the student teacher as observations are conducted. It may also be useful in reviewing specific components and requirements for the role of the special educator in planning the student teaching experience.

You must receive an overall rating of at least 80% with no individual scores rated below 3 on the Summary Evaluation form in order to pass student teaching.

# THE ROLE OF THE COOPERATING TEACHER



## Requirements for the Cooperating Teacher

### Model Best Practices for Instruction, Management and Organization

You have been selected to be a cooperating teacher because you model “best practices.” Remember that your classroom will be one of the models that your student teacher will have when s/he begins teaching. Take every possible opportunity to demonstrate effective practices for your student teacher and describe to him/her what you are doing and why.

### Model Professionalism

Professionalism is a subtle and complex concept. Students acquire professionalism from examples more than from description. You will be an important model of how a special education teacher should act as a professional.

### Give the Student Teacher Gradually Increasing Responsibility

As with any set of learners, student teachers have different needs for structure and independence, but virtually all learners benefit from a progression from simple to complex demands. Start the student teacher with easier tasks and increase his/her responsibility as his/her performance allows. The student teacher should assume your total teaching load for either the last 5 weeks of an 7 week placement or the last two thirds of the semester.

### Meet with Student Teacher and Provide Specific Feedback

Frequent, specific, and constructive feedback is crucial for your student teacher to attain the maximum benefit from the experience. Comment on positive aspects of the student's teaching, management, organizational, and professional behaviors; and give specific suggestions on how these can be improved. Praise progress. Use the General Comments Sheets provided in your packet to document feedback given to your student teacher.

### Evaluate the Student Teacher's Performance

Observe and critique the student teacher's performance on a frequent and continual basis. Periodic written evaluations should be made available to the student teacher and the university supervisor. Complete the two Interim Checklists for Student Teachers and the Final Cooperating Teacher Evaluation Form. **These evaluation forms should be mailed directly to the Student Teaching Coordinator.**

**If you ever have doubts about the student teacher's ability to pass, consult with the University Supervisor or Student Teaching Coordinator immediately. Remember to document concerns.**

## Suggestions for Cooperating Teacher

### Prepare in advance and help the student teacher get started

In a very real sense, the progress of the student teacher through the semester actually begins before the student teacher arrives in the classroom. Effective cooperating teachers begin preparing for their student teachers prior to their arrival. You are encouraged to make the following preparations:

1. Prepare the pupils for the arrival of the student teacher. The pupils should be prepared to regard the student teacher as another teacher in the room, and to welcome the additional teacher as a person who can make a positive contribution to their learning.
2. Place a table or desk in the room for use by the student teacher. Preferably, this will not be a child's desk.
3. Gather together materials that will help the student teacher understand curriculum and school policies (e.g., teachers' editions of textbooks, school district and state curriculum guides, school handbook containing school policies and procedures).
4. Clear a time for a conference with the student teacher during the first day. Items to be discussed should include:
  - a. An explanation of expectations for the student teacher
  - b. A description of the instructional programs
    - teaching schedule
    - curricular objectives for each group or individual
    - specific instructional methods
    - educational philosophy
  - c. A description of behavior management procedures
    - overall positive management plan
    - specific sequence of steps to be used to manage specific behaviors
    - individualized management plans for specific students (if any)
5. When the student teacher arrives, formally introduce the student teacher to the pupils in your classroom. If possible, allow the student teacher to share some interesting facts about him/her.

Most experienced teachers are well aware that the first few days of a new school year will set the tone for the balance of the school year. This is no less true with the student teacher, both in terms of feelings about the semester of student teaching and in terms of relationships with children. It is therefore incumbent for the university supervisor and you to work carefully with the student teacher to set the stage for a successful student teaching semester.

**Collaborate with the student teacher and increase his/her responsibilities**

Encourage the student teacher to collaborate with you in making decisions that lead to the development of independence of his/her own teaching strategies.

Prior to offering advice, encourage the student teacher to reflect about his/her planning, classroom practices, and decision-making.

Provide rationale when making suggestions to the student teacher.

**Help the student teacher by providing specific feedback**

Allow time for conferences with the university supervisor and the student teacher throughout the student teaching experience.

Be specific when communicating with the student teacher, especially when providing feedback.

Evaluation for professional growth purposes should be characterized by three essential elements:

1. It should be a continuous, ongoing process. The matter of daily and weekly conferences will be discussed later in this section.
2. It should be a team effort in which the student teacher, cooperating teacher, and university supervisor contribute in an atmosphere of open, constructive communication.
3. It should be directed toward self-evaluation by the student teacher. The cooperating teacher and university supervisor contribute by helping the student teacher become consciously aware of instructional behavior and by discussing alternatives to that behavior.

You can be a powerful force in encouraging self-evaluation and reflection by the student teacher. Specifically, you are encouraged to:

1. Provide ongoing evaluation of the student teacher's performance
  - a. Clearly define the management and instructional requirements and expectations of the student teacher.
  - b. Provide prompt feedback on specific strengths and weaknesses of daily lessons and procedures.
  - c. Use a variety of techniques to analyze student teacher performance, such as oral and written feedback, audiotapes, and various coding schemes.
  - d. Constructively critique every lesson plan at least one day prior to presentation and each unit plan at least one week before implementation.
  - e. Offer and/or demonstrate specific alternatives or additional suggestions for the student teacher to implement.
  - f. Avoid verbalizing negative comments to the student teacher in front of others (students, teachers, parents, etc.).
2. Communicate the value of continuous self-evaluation
  - a. Set an example by analyzing one's own instruction in relation to the elements of effective teaching.

- b. Show willingness to accept comments or suggestions about one's performance from building administrator and/or district supervisor.
- c. Acquaint the student teacher with district teacher evaluation procedures.

Because of the importance the evaluation process plays during the student teaching experience, the following specifically emphasizes two critical elements in the analysis and evaluation process—observation and conferences. You play a fundamental role in helping student teachers become more consciously aware of their classroom behaviors.

### **Help the student teacher develop role awareness**

To more fully develop the student teacher's awareness of the complete role of a teacher, the following three cooperating teacher competencies are recommended.

1. Instill within the student teacher the ethical responsibilities of the teaching profession
  - a. Demonstrate a commitment to the pupils and to the teaching profession.
  - b. Encourage the student teacher to participate in advanced courses, inservices, workshops, PTA, and other professional meetings.
  - c. Instill a desire to stay abreast of current educational information concerning subject content and teaching trends by sharing new materials, professional journals, and legislation.
  - d. Maintain a positive working relationship with colleagues, other school personnel, and parents.
  - e. Discuss and demonstrate appropriate teacher-pupil relationships.
2. Assist the student teacher in developing an awareness of a teacher's influences upon individual pupils
  - a. Set an appropriate example for the student teacher in behavior, personal appearance, speech, and appropriate mannerisms in school and in the community.
  - b. Set an example for the student teacher by dealing with all pupils in a fair and honest manner.
  - c. Explain the impact of positive and negative comments on pupils.
  - d. Help the student teacher in the development of good judgment in discussing or presenting controversial topics.
3. Help the student teacher recognize the non-instructional duties of a teacher
  - a. Stress the importance of accurately and promptly keeping necessary records.
  - b. Encourage willingness to work with pupils' extra curricular activities (e.g. clubs, organizations, etc.).
  - c. Stress the necessity of assuming duties assigned by the administration (e.g. lunch, hall, bus, etc.).
  - d. Discuss the importance of being available for parent conferences.
  - e. Guide the student teacher in developing appropriate communication between

home and school.

- f. Share duties and responsibilities with the student teacher.

### Conferences

Communication between you and the student teacher is essential to a successful student teaching experience. Lack of communication is usually a factor when a student has serious problems or fails student teaching. Effective communication is often difficult because daily schedules leave no time for conferences; the student teacher, cooperating teacher or both may feel insecure in their role; the cooperating teacher may be overly concerned about hurting the student's feelings; the student may be defensive; and/or there may be no place to talk in private. These obstacles are so great that good communication will *only* occur when both parties, the cooperating teacher and student teacher, work hard to overcome them. But the message is clear: Effective communication is so important that it cannot be left to chance.

This lends directly to the use of conferences as a device for effective communication. Planned regularly scheduled conferences are the essential basis for good communication. It is in the conference that the student teacher may become consciously aware of his/her instructional behavior as observed by the cooperating teacher. It is in the conference that he/she may begin an analysis of that behavior in terms of pupil response and learning. And, it is in the conference that the foundations of professional self-evaluation/reflection are laid. Thus, it is imperative that both the immediate and long-term goals of conferences be kept in mind.

Daily conferences of comparatively short duration will give attention to matters of immediate consequence—adjustment of plans, coordinating work schedules, identifying and solving daily problems, providing that needed “boost in morale,” and in general keeping things functioning smoothly. The timing of such conferences may vary from day to day, but this should not be left to chance.

Weekly conferences should also be scheduled, and it is probably best to reserve about one hour for this purpose. These conferences may be used for long-term planning, cooperative evaluation of the student teacher's competence, analysis of the cooperating teacher teaching procedures, and to develop in-depth understanding of pupil behavior and community relations.

The following guidelines are offered for the consideration of all cooperating teachers:

The time and place of the conference should be planned in advance. It should be canceled or postponed only when essential and it is not unreasonable to expect the student teacher to return to school for the weekly conferences. The setting should be informal and at a place where few interruptions are likely to occur. Regularly scheduled conferences will prevent the student from thinking that they are called only when there are criticisms to be offered.

A free interchange and exchange of ideas should characterize the conference. It is helpful if many of the topics are problem-centered in terms of seeking answers to methodological or curriculum problems. Alternative solutions to such concerns should be analyzed with both you and the student teacher offering ideas.

Analysis of the student teacher's performance or personal qualities should achieve an appropriate balance between strengths and weaknesses. Criticisms should be constructive but falsely optimistic praise may be as unproductive as overt negativism. It is interesting that some student teachers complain, “My cooperating teacher never tells me how I can improve,” while others state “My cooperating teacher only mentions the things I do wrong.”

You should not hesitate to offer suggestions and teaching ideas. Student teachers are eager for “tricks of the trade,” and sources of useful teaching materials. Be as specific as possible, to the extent of showing materials, modeling instructional and management techniques, and so forth.

The conference should contribute to the student teacher becoming increasingly self-directive and self-evaluative. Ultimately, most teachers will be essentially on their own in self-contained classroom situations and many of the qualities of continued professional growth begin during the student teaching semester.

Two or three conferences may be centered on the overall evaluation of the student teacher. For example some cooperating teachers use three such conferences:

An initial conference to set expectations and look over the evaluation instrument

A mid-placement conference to assess progress to date. This is an excellent time to go over the Interim Student Teaching Evaluation Form.

A conference at the termination of student teaching to explain the final evaluation and to discuss the prognosis for future professional success.

### **Completing the student teacher's assessment form**

There is probably no task that is faced by cooperating teachers with more apprehension than the writing of evaluations. “Am I being fair?” or “Will the reader understand what I mean?” are typical concerns. This is a job that must be done, however. It should be remembered that student teaching is just one phase in the professional growth of the teacher and that this phase is focused on helping the student move in the direction of professional maturity. Written evaluations should reflect this.

The following suggestions are provided:

- ❖ The complete evaluation is a combination of ratings, and written narrative comments. The ratings fulfill certain obvious functions, serving as a set of norms on which all student teachers are compared. The narrative recommendations may be used to elaborate on or supplement the ratings. For example, you may wish to explain why a certain item was rated as it was.
- ❖ Generally speaking, most student teachers' ratings will fall within the 3, or possibly 4 range. A rating of 5 should be used sparingly and should reflect a truly “outstanding” student teacher performance that is comparable to a master teacher.
- ❖ The written comments should state the conditions under which the student teacher has worked and the types of experiences involved in. This would include the organizational nature of the class (self contained, resource room, team-teaching, etc.), the subjects taught by the student, the nature of the group of children, and the duration of the student teaching experience.
- ❖ The comments should be objective and as informative as possible. Generalities, inferences, and hidden meanings are pitfalls in accomplishing this. Both strengths and weaknesses of the student teacher should be discussed if appropriate. These should be specific and supported by examples. Employers will also be interested in any useful talents displayed by the student teacher such as musical ability,

bilingualism, leadership skills, etc.

# THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR



## Requirements of University Supervisors

Communicate expectations and supervisory practices to the cooperating teacher, the student teacher, and to the school principal.

Observe the student teacher *at least* three times during the semester. In some cases more observations are warranted to ensure the student teacher is making adequate progress.

Provide timely, specific oral and written feedback to the student teacher regarding his/her instructional, management, organizational, and professional behavior. Emphasis areas have specific observation instruments to provide consistent feedback to student teachers.

Confer with the cooperating teacher regarding the student teacher's progress.

Consult with the student teacher regarding development of his/her portfolio.

Examine, critique, and evaluate the student teacher's portfolio.

Examine, critique, and evaluate the student teacher's Teacher Work Sample.

Complete a final evaluation on the student's classroom performance.

Rate and sign the Summary Evaluation of Special Education Student Teaching.

Assign a grade (Pass/Fail).

# EVALUATION FORMS

## Evaluation Forms

Cooperating teachers complete two evaluation forms about a student teacher's competencies during the student teaching placement. The first evaluation form is the Midterm Evaluation. Students should note that the Midterm Evaluation Form is only a summary of competencies rated at that point of the semester. Both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher should sign the Midterm Evaluation. The cooperating teacher should mail a copy of the interim evaluation to the Student Teaching Coordinator

The second evaluation form completed by the cooperating teacher is the Final Evaluation Form. It is completed at the end of the student teaching placement. The Final Evaluation form is signed and dated by both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher. A copy of this form can be made for the cooperating teacher and student teacher, but the original must be mailed to the Student Teaching Coordinator who is responsible for placing it in the student teacher's placement file.

The university supervisor is responsible for completion of an Observation Form at each visit. The student may request a copy of each Observation Form. The university supervisor also completes a Midterm and Final Evaluation Form, either independently or in conjunction with the cooperating teacher. These forms should be signed by the university supervisor and student teacher and mailed to the Student Teaching Coordinator who is responsible for placing them in the student teacher's file.

The university supervisor is also responsible for evaluating the student teacher's portfolio and Teacher Work Sample. Successful completion of each section of the portfolio and Teacher Work Sample is needed for a passing grade in student teaching.

Finally, the university supervisor at the completion of the student teaching placement completes the Summary Evaluation Form. This final evaluation form is signed and dated by both the university supervisor and the student teacher. The student teacher may request a copy of this final evaluation, but the university supervisor will forward the original copy to the Student Teaching Coordinator who is responsible for placing it in the student teacher's placement file.

