

University of Louisville
Office of Educator Development and Clinical Practice

Cooperating Teacher Information Guide
Fall 2015

The Office of Educator Development and Clinical Practice (OEDCP) at the University of Louisville serves as the organizational hub for communication and data collection related to field experiences and clinical placements (student teaching) for student teacher candidates.

When students reach the final phase of their Teacher Preparation Program, they are placed in one of our established partner schools within the Jefferson County Public Schools or within one of the Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative (OVEC) districts for their culminating experience of student teaching. Placements are also made outside of our partner schools on an as-needed basis.

During the final phase of the Teacher Preparation Program, **Student Teacher Candidates** work with a **Cooperating Teacher** and a **University Supervisor** in order to demonstrate skills acquired in previous field experience placements and to begin to extend these abilities as they grow into the teaching profession.

The **Student Teacher Candidate** is defined as a U of L student who is completing an intensive clinical placement under the guidance and supervision of a cooperating teacher and a university supervisor.

The **Cooperating Teacher** is defined as a certified teacher who is mentoring a teacher candidate in the area in which the candidate is earning his/her certification. A minimum of 3 years teaching experience and completion of co-teaching training modules are required for eligibility.

The **University Supervisor** is defined as a U of L clinical faculty member or individual hired by the university to support, provide feedback, and assess a teacher candidate. The University Supervisor serves as a link between the cooperating school and the university.

The cooperating teacher influences the quality of the student teaching experience more than any other individual involved in the process. It is primarily the classroom teacher who guides the teacher candidate's professional growth throughout the student teaching experience. Therefore, it is our intent to provide you with guidelines and recommendations that will support you as you help the student teacher candidate demonstrate understanding and proficiency as a professional educator.

The Student Teaching Experience lasts for a approximately 15 weeks beginning around **August 10th** (or depending upon the start date of the school district for teachers) and ending **December 4th, 2015**. There are two placement periods during this time frame. The First Placement time frame is **August 10th through October 9th**; the Second Placement time frame is **October 12th through December 4th, 2015**. Many students complete two separate placements in order to allow for experiences at various levels.

Enclosed you will find copies of the assessment documents needed for the assessment phase of the student teaching experience. These forms are: **(1) Source of Evidence: Context, (2) Source of Evidence: Lesson Plan, (3) Source of Evidence: Observation of Teaching, (4) Source of Evidence: Post Lesson Reflection, (5) Rubric for Effective Use of Technology, (6) Teacher Candidate Dispositions Assessment, and (7) Student Teaching/Advanced Practicum Grading Rubric.**

The Role of the Cooperating Teacher Fall 2015

It is our intent that the following guidelines and procedures will assist you in supporting your student teacher candidate throughout the student teaching experience.

Pre-arrival Preparations

Cooperating teachers have found it important that their classes and the school be prepared for the arrival of the student teacher. The following are suggestions, which will be helpful:

- ✓ Explain to the students in your class that there will be two teachers in the classroom for a few weeks
- ✓ Point out that both teachers will have many different experiences to share with the class.
- ✓ Give examples of how the teaching team will work together (co-teaching)
- ✓ Explain that the students should look to both teachers for instruction and assistance, when appropriate.

Students need time to become adjusted to the idea of working with two teachers in the classroom. They will manifest the cooperating teacher's attitude toward the student teacher so be aware of your actions toward the teacher candidate. To help develop the status of the student teacher candidate as another teacher in the classroom, it is important to refer to the student teacher as "Mr. Robinson," "Miss Hardy," and the like, or as the "other teacher" rather than the "student teacher candidate."

Helping the Teacher Candidate Get Started

One of the cooperating teacher's first concerns is to help the teacher candidate feel secure in the new situation. Teacher candidates and cooperating teachers have listed the following suggestions as helpful:

- ✓ Establish a time to co-plan with the student teacher candidate
- ✓ Accept the teacher candidate as a person. Establish rapport as soon as possible.
- ✓ Consider the teacher candidate as a member of the faculty. The teacher candidate should be included on faculty lists, taken to meetings, and encouraged to participate in committee work.
- ✓ Introduce the teacher candidate to school staff members.
- ✓ Design seating charts enabling the teacher candidate to identify students quickly.
- ✓ Provide a desk or a place for the teacher candidate's books and papers.
- ✓ Explain "formal" and "informal" classroom and school policies.
- ✓ Avoid correcting the teacher candidate in front of the students.
- ✓ Share daily chores.
- ✓ Provide an opportunity for the teacher candidate to have uninterrupted conferences with you.
- ✓ Provide an opportunity for the teacher candidate to teach units as you observe and assist.

Planning with the Teacher Candidate

The need for planning is fourfold: (1) to assist in clarifying the teacher candidate's purposes and procedures; (2) to learn of the expectations of the cooperating teacher; (3) to communicate the student's intentions to the cooperating teacher for constructive comments; and (4) to develop skills in lesson planning.

During the beginning days of student teaching, it is necessary to meet in order to begin the process of co-planning. Texts, curriculum guides, sample lesson plans, daily schedules, sample report cards, and school handbooks should be made available to the teacher candidate.

The cooperating teacher should give constructive criticism and provide adequate time for the teacher candidate to make suggested revisions to lesson plans. In addition to such informal conferences, about one hour per week

should be set aside for an uninterrupted conference to evaluate progress toward goals, to reassess the plan for the unit and the next week, and to handle problems which have not already been discussed and solved.

The cooperating teacher should:

- ✓ Be specific. An anecdotal record of the teacher candidate's actual behavior, expressions used, timing, etc., will help the teacher candidate evaluate teaching effectiveness.
- ✓ Encourage self-evaluation. Ask such questions as "How well did you meet your lesson plan objectives?" "What is your evidence?"
- ✓ Give definite suggestions. Include in the suggestions, techniques for motivating students, presentation of materials, etc.
- ✓ Indicate successes as well as suggest improvements for the teacher candidate. Conferences with the teacher candidate may be planned to discuss things such as adjustment to the school, classroom routines, evaluation, observations, lesson planning, professional activities, teaching materials, or basic subject matter and the teacher candidate's personal problems.

A teacher candidate must be continually informed of the rate of progress being made so that the teaching ability can be compared with teaching potential. It is expected that the teacher candidate would then capitalize on strengths and work toward overcoming weaknesses.

Helping the Teacher Candidate Teach

The cooperating teacher may wish to consider the following suggestions to help the teacher candidate become more effective:

- ✓ The teacher candidate should have the opportunity to take the lead with instruction as often as possible.
- ✓ The teacher candidate should not feel that there is only one correct pattern of teaching, but should begin to acquire a repertoire of strategies.
- ✓ The teacher candidate will need help to see the students as individuals. The teacher candidate should develop keener perceptions of the students' needs, interests, and aptitudes. The cooperating teacher should provide the teacher candidate with seating charts, arrange work with individuals and small groups, hold frequent informal conferences, and encourage the teacher candidate to take advantage of opportunities to meet parents.
- ✓ The teacher candidate should realize that good teaching is creative. To achieve this creativity, the teacher candidate must feel that actions are not narrowly outlined by a teaching manual, textbook, cooperating teacher, or University Supervisor.
- ✓ The teacher candidate should be encouraged to use a wide variety of teaching techniques. Student and teacher demonstrations, laboratory work, group discussions, lectures, question-and-answer periods, directed study, audiovisual presentations and other meaningful experiences should be employed.

Above all, one must remember that the teacher candidate is learning to teach. A teacher candidate is expected to make some mistakes. If this were not true, there would be little need for student teaching. Often the teacher candidate will recognize his or her teaching weaknesses and modify the approach to a given situation. It is the function of the cooperating teacher and the University Supervisor to work together to provide needed assistance in this regard.

Observing the Teacher Candidate

Every teacher has favored ways of presenting an idea or concept, leading a discussion, motivating students, or handling discipline problems. Frequently, it is difficult to sit silently in the back of the room and watch a teacher

candidate make mistakes or exercise what appears to be poor judgment. On the other hand, if the cooperating teacher interrupts, corrects and questions the teacher candidate in front of the class, the candidate soon loses the opportunity to develop and maintain rapport with the students. This situation can usually be avoided when the cooperating teacher and teacher candidate plan together.

The cooperating teacher will set up two (2) official observations or one (1) during each placement period. If your teacher candidate is with you for one placement only, then you will be completing only one official or formal observation using the assessment documents provided. Teacher candidates will use the U of L Lesson Plan template and provide a hard copy of the lesson plan to the cooperating teacher at least two (2) days prior to the scheduled observation.

Activities Related to Classroom Teaching

While the primary purpose of student teaching is to provide an opportunity for the student to learn to teach in a specialized area, there should be an opportunity to experience as many aspects of the total teaching situation as time permits and engage in the co-teaching strategies as tools for instruction.

During the student teaching period, the teacher candidate may engage in as many of the following activities as possible:

- ✓ Observe teachers in a variety of academic disciplines.
- ✓ Study students' records in the presence of a certified employee -- cumulative records, achievement test scores, reading-grade-placement scores, etc.
- ✓ Seek supplementary materials that may be used to help present effective lessons -- books, models, charts, posters, filmstrips, community resources, etc.
- ✓ Provide help for a variety of students: the gifted, the learning disabled, those who have been absent, and those working on special projects.
- ✓ Involve students in experiences such as reading, writing, speaking, listening, and reasoning.
- ✓ Discuss grading standards and grading problems with the cooperating teacher.
- ✓ Become acquainted with library resources.
- ✓ Become acquainted with duties and responsibilities of administrative and special service personnel.
- ✓ Attend staff meetings.
- ✓ Administer achievement tests.
- ✓ Assist in supervision of study halls and homeroom.
- ✓ Become acquainted with school procedures in requesting equipment and supplies.
- ✓ Become acquainted with the total school program through conferences with the principal and the superintendent.
- ✓ Learn how to use the copier and media lab equipment.
- ✓ Participate in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Assessment Requirements

Cooperating teachers will formally observe at least **one lesson** by mid-semester (end of the First Placement Period) and **one lesson** at the end of student teaching (end of the Second Placement Period). Please follow the **Steps to Completing a Formal Observation**, which is included in the section entitled **Assessment Forms**.

At mid-semester (end of the First Placement Period) and at the end of student teaching, (end of the Second Placement Period), cooperating teachers will also complete a **Student Teaching/Advanced Practicum Grading Rubric**. While the Source of Evidence forms reflect on one observed lesson, the **Student Teaching/Advanced Practicum Grading Rubric** reports on the candidate's progress toward standards over time.

Cooperating teachers will also complete a rubric for the **Effective Use of Technology** and a **Teacher Candidate Dispositions Assessment** at mid-semester and at the end of student teaching. Cooperating teachers will receive an email from the OEDCP with a link to complete the rubric.

In summary, our office hopes that you find this information helpful as you engage in the coaching cycle of support for our teacher candidates from the university. If you should ever need to talk about any aspect of the program, please do not hesitate to call your university supervisor or placement coordinator.

Thank you again for hosting a teacher candidate from the University of Louisville.

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