

Student Teaching Handbook - Fall 2013 / Spring 2014

Cooperating Teacher Roles & Responsibilities

Contents

Cooperating Teacher Roles and Responsibilities.....	2
I. Introduction.....	2
II. The Role of the Cooperating Teacher.....	2
Responsibilities of the Cooperating Teacher.....	4
You, Your Student Teacher, and Your Student Teacher’s University Coach.....	6
If Problems Arise.....	7
The Student Teacher’s Portfolio and Performance Assessment.....	8
III. Helpful References for the Cooperating Teacher.....	8
Criteria for Selection as a Cooperating Teacher.....	8
Invitation to Join the ‘Temple Teacher Network’.....	9
Clinical Practice Guiding Principles.....	9
Links to Resources.....	9

Cooperating Teacher Roles and Responsibilities

I. Introduction

Thank you for inviting a Temple University College of Education student teacher into your classroom. We appreciate your willingness to collaborate with us in preparing excellent teachers for the future.

We make every effort to provide our education students with a strong background in content knowledge, pedagogical theory, and teaching methods. We also provide many of them with early field experiences, which expose them to a variety of classrooms and students and give them practice at lesson planning and instructional delivery. Now they have an opportunity, working with you, to experience day-to-day life in real classrooms and schools, including all the highs and lows, good days and bad days, and especially the sense of accomplishment that comes from intensive engagement with students over time.

Student teaching is the culmination of any teacher education program, and student teachers report that it is the most critical element of their preparation. It represents their best opportunity for applying the research, theory, and best practices they have learned in university classrooms; receiving frequent, expert support and feedback; and reflecting on and learning from their practice. It is during this time that student teachers begin to develop their personal teaching styles as well as their understanding of how schools operate. We look to you to help them also develop a sense of professional efficacy, a commitment to high standards for all students, and the habits of mind of a good teacher, including the habits of reflective practice, continuous improvement, and lifelong learning.

II. The Role of the Cooperating Teacher

The cooperating teacher plays a critical role as the student teacher's model and mentor and has great influence over the student teacher's learning experience. Student teachers tend to adopt the practices of their cooperating teachers, sometimes without question, assuming that they have no choice. We encourage you, however, to engage your student teachers in ongoing conversations about your practice and to encourage them to ask questions, to think for themselves, to share what they observe about your classroom and practice with you, and to be willing to suggest to you and try out strategies and methods they have learned with which you might not be familiar.

Over time, as student teachers get to know you, your classroom, and your students, we ask that you increase their classroom and instructional responsibilities until they can become partners with you in teaching your students. You do not need to surrender your classroom to your student teacher (nor should you). We expect you to work collaboratively and productively together to offer enriched instruction and opportunities for individual attention to your students. When the collaboration between cooperating teacher and student teacher works well, the students benefit the most.

As we're sure you will recall, this period of student teaching generates both excitement and anxiety. We ask you not only to instruct your student teachers, but also to support and nurture them. Cooperating teachers, working closely with university coaches, help student teachers set short and long term goals, analyze what works and what doesn't and why, and develop their capacity to reflect on and learn from experience. We ask that cooperating teachers provide critical feedback but also encourage, recognize, and praise professional growth.

Our goal is to ensure that having a student teacher in your classroom is beneficial to you as well as to the student teacher. We hope that conversations with our coaches will help you gain insight into your practice and that our student teachers add capacity in ways that enable you to accomplish more than you might have achieved by yourself. Below are some suggestions for how you might effectively deploy your student teacher to accomplish this goal:

What student teachers bring to the classroom:

- Latest research and best practices
- Exposure to technology-based resources
- Ability to work with small groups/individual students
- Individual content expertise
- Enthusiasm/eagerness to learn

What cooperating teachers provide for student teachers:

- Mentoring
- Sound advice about good practice, what works and what doesn't and why
- Teaching tips
- Deep knowledge of students
- Deep knowledge of school as an institution

Models for effective collaboration:

- Student teacher works with small groups and individual students in need of special attention, helping to differentiate instruction in the classroom.
- Cooperating teacher and student teacher divide up subjects, each taking primary responsibility for certain content areas.
- Student teacher prepares special units or special content.
- Student teacher works with groups of students over time.
- Cooperating teacher and student teacher split up centers to provide more oversight and direction.
- Cooperating teacher and student teacher split up class and teach smaller groups the same or different content.
- Cooperating teacher and student teacher review assessments and reflect together on effectiveness of lessons.
- Cooperating teacher and student teacher plan together.

- Cooperating teacher and student teacher both initiate instruction and share ideas.
- Cooperating teacher and student teacher pool their resources and think together about how to help individual students.
- Cooperating teacher and student teacher observe each other, ask questions and offer feedback.

Responsibilities of the Cooperating Teacher

In addition to working individually with your student teacher in your classroom, we ask you to introduce your student teacher to your colleagues, arrange for him/her to visit other classes at the same level and at other levels, meet and get to know the school staff, and become familiar with school procedures and policies. For student teachers, you are the source of much, if not all, of the knowledge they will gain about schools and school communities during their semester with you. Please accept this professional responsibility and make integrating your student teacher into the life of the school a high priority.

We also ask you to provide us with two official evaluations, the [Mid-Semester Summary Form](#) completed at mid-semester and the [End-of-Semester Evaluation](#) at the end of the semester. The forms vary slightly and both should be completed online. Completing these evaluations gives you an opportunity to sit down with your student teacher and possibly the university coach to provide both formative and summative feedback.

Below is a list of the cooperating teacher's specific responsibilities:

1. Introduce the student teacher as a teacher's assistant or guest teacher rather than as a student (in order to create a higher level of respect and greater classroom rapport).
2. Provide a desk or table, chair, and a secure place for a coat and other belongings for the student teacher.
3. Introduce the student teacher to other faculty members and school staff and encourage student teachers to take advantage of the expertise of such colleagues, e.g., through participation in team meetings, joint planning, and observation of other classrooms.
4. Provide the student teacher with pertinent information about:
 - a. school mission, students, the community, special programs, and the daily schedule;
 - b. physical plant, including the location and use of specific resources (i.e., library, computers, audio-visual materials, duplication facilities, etc.);
 - c. school rules, regulations, discipline policies, professional norms, and health and safety policies;
 - d. classroom rules and procedures.
5. Orient the student teacher to classroom management procedures, classroom rules and policies. Write out or discuss classroom rules and policies and make seating charts and class lists available to the student teacher.
6. Familiarize the student teacher with all the forms, reports, etc., that teachers are responsible for keeping.

7. Share information about the curriculum, available instructional materials, and your planning and pacing. Discuss long-range curriculum plans with the student teacher, and review copies of texts, manuals, and media resources. Provide suggestions and/or guidelines for the theme and general content of early lessons or lesson series the student teacher might develop.
8. Model high-quality instruction and reflective practice. As important mentors, cooperating teachers are expected to demonstrate teaching methods consistent with contemporary research and standards of excellence. Allow the student teacher to observe you teaching each subject or class at first. Wherever possible, make explicit to your student teacher your instructional objectives, the theory or research on which you base your teaching, why you made specific choices (e.g., materials selection, instructional or management strategy, mode of assessment), and why you think particular actions were or were not effective. Encourage student teachers to participate in problem-solving conversations.
9. Discuss unique and relevant characteristics of individual students, including effective strategies for mediating behavior problems and/or differentiating instruction to meet the needs of these students.
10. Support the student teacher in gradually assuming teaching responsibilities. For example, student teachers may begin by working with an individual or small group before teaching the whole class, and should progressively increase the number of lessons taught or co-taught per day. By the end of the semester, the cooperating teacher and student teacher should be teaching effectively as partners. As a general practice, when the student teacher is teaching, the cooperating teacher should always be in the classroom.
11. Plan with the student teacher for specific teaching responsibilities each day. Share your lesson plans with your student teacher. Student teachers should submit lesson plans in advance to the cooperating teacher for most teaching responsibilities. Cooperating teachers should review the lesson plans and provide feedback.
12. Guide the student teacher in the use of specific student assessments and student performance data as appropriate. Explain the methods of assessment and grading you use, and how records are kept and reported to parents.
13. Encourage the student teacher to observe and participate in all school-related professional activities such as staff meetings, Individualized Education Plan planning meetings, professional development workshops, and planning for and conferencing with parents.
14. Observe, without interruption, the student teacher's professional practice (in and out of the classroom) and provide specific feedback and guidance. The cooperating teacher should provide both appropriate positive reinforcement and specific feedback, including suggestions for alternative approaches where appropriate. Constructive criticism should be delivered in a professional manner and in private.
15. Encourage your student teacher to ask questions and reflect on your practice and his/her own. Provide ongoing opportunities for the student teacher to feel comfortable discussing practice and soliciting

advice. In schools with more than one Temple University student teacher, we encourage cooperating teachers to work with their colleagues and the school leadership to arrange for the cohort to meet together and discuss their progress.

16. Coach the student teacher with his/her performance by completing the [Mid-Semester Summary Form](#) and assess the student teacher's performance by completing the [End-of-Semester Evaluation](#) and discussing these forms with the student teacher and the university coach.
17. Contact the student teacher's university coach immediately if the student teacher's behavior or performance falls below acceptable school standards. In addition, if, at the middle of the semester, you have serious concerns about the student teacher's progress, discuss your concerns with the university coach who will initiate a [Student Teacher Growth Plan](#) and report your concerns to the Field Placement Coordinator.

Please address any questions or concerns not answered here, as well as concerns about the student teacher's development, to the university coach first, and then to Bernie McGee, Field Placement Coordinator, at (215) 204-1520 or mcgee@temple.edu.

You, Your Student Teacher, and Your Student Teacher's University Coach

In our materials, we describe the cooperating teacher as the student teacher's mentor and the university coach as the student teacher's coach and evaluator. It is the coach who ultimately evaluates the student teacher, turns in a formal grade, and determines whether or not s/he is recommended for certification, but in many ways your day-to-day role as mentor is more significant and more influential.

Both research and anecdotal evidence suggest that cooperating teachers are powerful figures in the life of a student teacher. Student teachers observe their cooperating teachers every day and tend to assume that your practice sets the standard they should aspire to reach. When you manage your class or instruct in ways that they might find hard to emulate, they don't know how to respond. There is no way for them to learn that there are multiple paths toward successful teaching unless you make that clear to them. For these reasons, open communication between the cooperating teacher and student teacher is essential.

We request cooperating teachers whose practice and dispositions match those we value and teach our students, but that is not always the case. Please be sure to review our standards and make sure that you are familiar with our expectations and goals. In addition, please speak with your student teacher often and explain what you are doing and why. Encourage the student teacher to ask questions and support his/her effort to develop a comfortable teacher identity, which may or may not be similar to your own. Whenever possible, encourage your student teacher to bring his/her prior knowledge into the classroom and to try new strategies that might not be part of your usual repertoire. Your support is critical to helping your student teacher grow into the kind of independent, reflective practitioner we are seeking to prepare.

Your student teacher's university coach will make one informal visit and four formal visits. During the informal visit, the university coach will introduce himself/herself to you, share his/her contact information with you, and answer any questions you may have. The following four formal visits will be ones that the university coach contacts the student teacher to schedule in advance. (See the [Student Teaching Observation Calendar and Guide](#) for an approximate timetable of when each visit will occur throughout the semester and what the responsibilities of the university coach, student teacher, and cooperating teacher are before, during, and after each observation. Other important deadlines are included on it, as well as the Student Teaching Calendar).

The infrastructure of student teaching works best when there is good communication among all participants. Ask your student teacher's coach for e-mail and/or phone contact information so you can stay in touch. If you have any concerns about your student teacher's behavior, professionalism, or capacity to succeed in the classroom, please raise them immediately with the coach. The coach is the liaison between the classroom and the university and will report your concerns to the Field Placement Coordinator.

Although the coach's role is focused on the student teacher, if you would like feedback as well, please feel free to ask for it. If you and your student teacher are co-teaching a lesson, the coach can discuss it with both of you. Your willingness to model reflective practice, to ask questions about your own teaching, to welcome feedback, and to demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement will have a powerful positive effect on your student teacher and might be beneficial to you at the same time.

If Problems Arise

Communicating daily with your student teacher and regularly with the student teacher's coach is the best way to avoid misunderstandings, but sometimes problems arise. If you have concerns about your student teacher, please speak first to the student teacher directly and then to the university coach. You should address concerns about your role or our expectations to the coach who will try to troubleshoot with you and also bring your concerns back to the university's Field Placement Coordinator.

Occasionally, but rarely, there are problems with the “fit” between cooperating teachers and student teachers. Occasionally, but rarely, the content expertise of the cooperating teacher and the certification area of the student teacher don’t match. We need to address these situations immediately so we can make adjustments that enable the student teacher to complete the program without delay. If for some reason you are unable to reach the university coach quickly, please contact Temple’s Field Placement Coordinator, Bernie McGee, at 215-204-1520 or mcgee@temple.edu.

The Student Teacher’s Portfolio and Performance Assessment

During the student teaching semester, student teachers are enrolled in a seminar course designed to support their teaching and also to help them prepare their portfolios and get ready for Temple’s final performance assessment. Through their portfolio, we expect student teachers to write authoritatively about what they have learned in student teaching and to demonstrate their ability to enact our standards for skillful teaching. Sometimes student teachers get overly stressed out about these additional responsibilities of their seminar course and feel as if they have to make choices between focusing on their student teaching and on their portfolios. From our perspective, student teaching is their primary responsibility. If they have difficulty completing the requirements for their portfolios, they should discuss the problem with their seminar instructors.

III. Helpful References for the Cooperating Teacher

Criteria for Selection as a Cooperating Teacher

The Pennsylvania Department of Education has identified specific qualifications for cooperating teachers. The state requires that each cooperating teacher must have:

- At least three years of teaching experience; one of which is in the district to which the student teacher candidate is assigned; and
- Certification in and a teaching assignment appropriate to the subject competency of the student teacher candidate.

In addition, cooperating teachers must have completed a program of preparation on observation and evaluation skills developed by the college or university (these guidelines serve to meet part of this requirement). We will also offer workshops and discussion sessions from time to time which we encourage you to attend.

The State System of Higher Education has also determined specific university requirements for the selection of cooperating teachers based upon the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) *Standards for Field Experience in Teacher Education*. The College of Education relies on district and school administrative staff to help make appropriate assignments based on these standards.

Temple also has criteria of its own. We expect the cooperating teacher to demonstrate expertise in instruction, classroom management, and continuous improvement, including the capacity to reflect on teaching

practice and to use data, including student achievement data, to drive classroom decision-making. We look for teachers who are able to meet the individual learning needs of all students and to support the development of these qualities in others. In addition, the cooperating teacher must have the time and commitment to serve in this important role.

Maintaining good communication among all parties involved in our field experiences is a high priority for us. Please make sure we have your e-mail address so that we can contact you to inform you about policies and procedures, changes in our program, and professional development opportunities.

Along with many school leaders, we at Temple view cooperating teachers as critical collaborators in teacher preparation. Your ability to serve as a mentor to a new teacher deserves much more recognition than it gets. We recognize that these basic requirements just skim the surface of what we know a strong cooperating teacher will provide to our student teachers. We will do everything we can to make the experience valuable and satisfying to you. Please do not hesitate to give us feedback and request support and guidance from our faculty and staff if we can help you in any way.

Invitation to Join the 'Temple Teacher Network'

In an effort to reach out to and partner with classroom teachers, Temple has formed the Temple Teacher Network, which extends throughout the School District of Philadelphia, across charter schools in Philadelphia, and to schools across the region. We are looking for classroom teachers who would like to work with us to prepare the next generation of teachers and to strengthen classroom practice in a way that benefits all students. If you would like to join or get more information, please contact Juliet Curci (Juliet.Curci@temple.edu).

Clinical Practice Guiding Principles

Behind all of our procedures and policies related to field experiences, we have identified a set of [Clinical Practice Guiding Principles](#) that help us focus on reaching our goals. We use these principles to help us make decisions about the character and quality of our field experiences and the demands we make on university coaches, cooperating teachers, and students in the field. We ask you to review these principles and help us ensure that they play a prominent role in our field program.

Links to Resources

Becoming familiar with the [Temple Teaching Standards](#) and [Lesson Planning Framework](#) will greatly help you to support your student teacher. Our best teaching practices map onto local and national standards and will probably be familiar to you, but if you have any questions about them, please feel free to ask your student teacher or his/her coach for clarification. Our lesson planning template is almost certainly more complex and detailed than the one you use, but it is designed to enable us to see clearly how our student teachers think about their teaching. They need complete our lesson planning template only for lessons that they share with their coach and/or include

in their portfolio. Please share your lesson plans with your student teacher and help him/her plan effectively in as much detail as necessary to teach lessons effectively on a daily basis.