

# **The Cooperating Teacher**

It is the goal of student teaching to provide an authentic teaching experience in a supportive environment under the guidance of university and public school professionals. The role of a Cooperating Teacher is a critical factor in the successful student teaching experience. Research indicates that the Cooperating Teacher influences the aspiring teacher's growth and development long after student teaching has ended. The degree to which the Cooperating Teacher is willing to share the commitment to the profession, knowledge and teaching skills is a major determinant of success.

Based on the assumption that good communities of practice offer the best context for learning to be a teacher, we seek Cooperating Teachers with the following credentials:

## **Professional qualifications of the Cooperating Teacher**

1. Teaching licensure appropriate to the Teacher Candidate's areas of licensure preparation
2. Three or more years of successful teaching experience
3. Commitment to using a wide variety of teaching methods, techniques, and materials
4. Ability to effectively communicate knowledge and experience and to offer the Teacher Candidate ongoing constructive feedback
5. Commitment to co-teaching as an appropriate method for induction of Teacher Candidates

## **Personal qualifications of the Cooperating Teacher**

1. Expressed desire to work with Teacher Candidates
2. Regard for student teaching as a professional experience, not as a release from duties
3. Collegial working relationship with the school faculty and administration
4. Acceptance of Teacher Candidates as co-workers
5. Understanding of the personal and professional development of beginning teachers and possible related problems
6. Good physical and emotional health
7. Commitment to the teaching profession
8. Effective use of Standard English
9. Caring and effective classroom management
10. Willingness to assume school responsibilities beyond teaching
11. Honesty and tactfulness in supervision

## **Expectations of the Cooperating Teacher**

1. Collaborate with the Teacher Candidate in regard to various co-teaching methods to be used during key instructional times in the classroom. Research based co-teaching strategies include the following.
  - One teach, one support
  - Parallel teaching
  - Alternate teaching
  - Station teaching
  - Team teaching
2. Provide access to curriculum guides and the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.
3. Explain school policy, management, fire, tornado, and lock-down drills, discipline, and controversial community problems. Support the Teacher Candidate in such matters.
4. Model creation, teaching, and assessment of lessons.
5. Provide feedback on a regular basis.
6. Help the teacher candidate develop plans for a unit of instruction over which he/she will serve as lead teacher.
7. Discuss how to formulate long-range goals and plans for an entire semester or school year focusing on curriculum areas and skill development.
8. Plan daily for the next day. At the beginning of each day, review the day's schedule. Be sure the Teacher Candidate knows what he or she is to do that day. Duplicate the plans so that each individual's responsibility is clearly understood.
9. Share resources for the Teacher Candidate to incorporate in planning for instruction.
10. Show how to modify plans to provide for ALL students and revise as appropriate.
11. Discuss how to provide for a variety of learning styles when planning for instruction.
12. Review and critique the Teacher Candidate's lesson plans - individual, daily and weekly.
13. Plan cooperatively, but also require the Teacher Candidate to develop plans independently.
14. Support the Teacher Candidate in utilizing technology.
15. Discuss and support caring classroom management techniques.
16. Inform the University Supervisor or the Assistant Dean for Field Experience immediately when problems occur.

## **Conferencing Format**

During a successful conference, the Cooperating Teacher and the Teacher Candidate should:

1. Share areas of success and those of concern.
2. Plan for the next teaching segment. These plans should include the Teacher Candidate's responsibilities in planning and teaching, available resources, special events, and expectations.
3. Conclude with a summary of decisions that are made.
4. Keep the agenda problem-centered rather than person-centered.

5. Focus on the enhancement of teaching.
6. Schedule regular weekly conferences. These tend to be less threatening than infrequent conferences.
7. Provide an opportunity for both parties to communicate.
8. Avoid lecturing.

## **Unsuccessful Performance**

While the Cooperating Teacher and the Teacher Candidate are in the best position to resolve minor problems, the Cooperating Teacher should immediately notify the University Supervisor in the event of a major problem. The University Supervisor is prepared to initiate an appropriate “action plan.” Withdrawal can be considered:

1. When the “action plan” does not produce results
2. After conferencing with the Assistant Dean, the policy on withdrawal should be discussed with the Teacher Candidate.