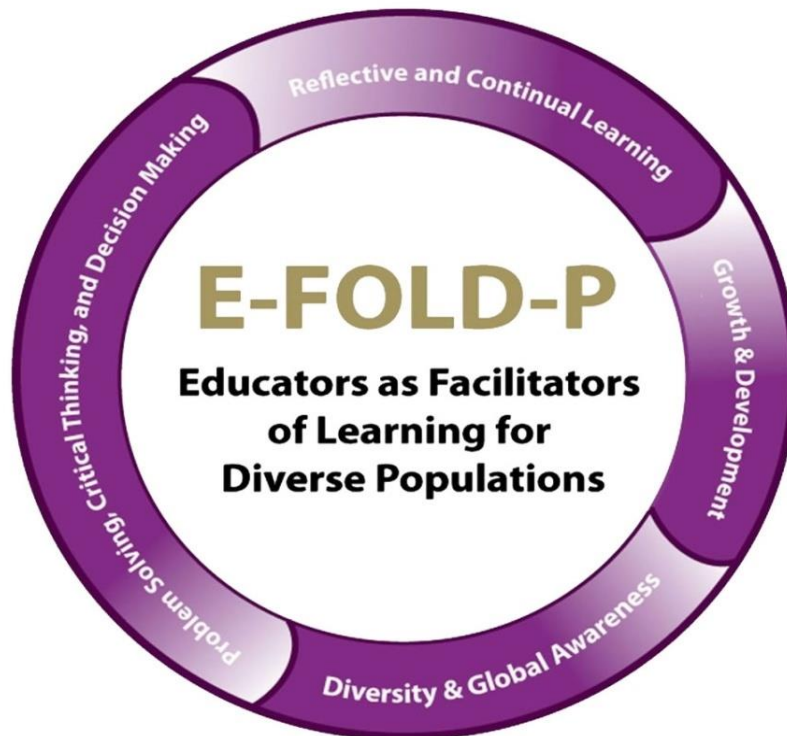


WHITLOWE R. GREEN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

COOPERATING TEACHER HANDBOOK



Permission granted from Western Oregon University to adapt circular design of conceptual framework for Prairie View A&M University, Whitlowe R. Green College of Education.

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ROLE OF THE COOPERATING TEACHER

Introduction

The cooperating teacher is the most important person in the training of the student teacher. The success of the student teaching program and the quality of the experiences of the student teacher depend largely upon the understanding, assistance, and enthusiasm of the cooperating teacher.

More specifically, the cooperating teacher is given the responsibility of guiding the growth and activities of a novice and of contributing to the continuous improvement of the teacher education program. At the same time the cooperating teacher must remember that his/her first responsibility is the tutelage of the pupils in the classroom.

The role of the cooperating teacher can be divided into the following general categories:

1. preparation prior to the arrival of the student teacher,
2. working as a team,
3. providing a good motivational atmosphere through effective orientation,
4. arranging for progressive induction through directed observation and participation in classroom activities,
5. promoting growth through demonstration teaching,
6. planning for teaching,
7. providing assistance in developing teaching and evaluation techniques,
8. promoting growth through continuous and cooperative evaluation. The cooperating teacher will complete at least 2 evaluations of the student teacher. Each evaluation must be at least 45 minutes of teaching and a conference held with the student teacher.

Preparation prior to the arrival of the Student Teacher

A student teacher should begin the day's teaching assignment with a keen desire to succeed. This desire may be enhanced or diminished during the early phases of the student teaching experience. Careful preparation on the part of the cooperating teacher prior to the arrival of the student teacher is most important.

The cooperating teacher should arrange to meet with the student teacher a few days prior to the first teaching day. Such a meeting should help the student relax and get acquainted with the cooperating teacher in a relaxed, less pressured type of environment.

At this meeting the cooperating teacher and the student teacher should confer about such items as the student's college preparation, major and minor fields, special interests, and the preparation and planning expected of the student teacher by the cooperating teacher. The student teacher should be given a copy of the textbook and shown areas of instruction to be covered. The student teacher's information sheet should be given to the cooperating teacher by the student teacher upon reporting for the first day of student teaching.

At the same meeting, the cooperating teacher should volunteer information on his or her educational background, interests and talents, and philosophy of education.

Working as a team

Since working with a student teacher differs from working independently in a classroom, it is necessary that the cooperating teacher plan to work with the student teacher and carefully monitor the student teacher's performance. The following suggestions will aid in cooperative teamwork:

1. Plan to work cooperatively with your student teacher from the beginning.
2. Plan to have the student teacher work with you in preparing and organizing teaching materials.
3. Plan to work with the student teacher in the interests of the pupils.
4. Plan to have many conferences with the student teacher, since to function as an efficient team, you and the student teacher must keep well informed as to each other's ideas, criticisms, and problems.
5. Plan to have conferences in which the student teacher, the university supervisor and you, can share information and discuss the student teacher's performance.
6. Inform the student teacher regarding school policies and activities, and prepare to share responsibilities concerning these policies and activities with the student teacher. It is important that the student teacher become aware of all phases of the teaching profession, including such things as cafeteria, bus, and other duties, the use of the teachers' lounge, keeping attendance records, etc.
7. Prepare the pupils for a new personality and a "team" of teachers prior to the arrival of the student teacher.

Providing a good motivational atmosphere through effective orientation

The following suggestions should help maintain a good motivational atmosphere for the student teacher. More important than a list of suggestions for providing a good motivational atmosphere are ENTHUSIASM and INTEREST on the part of the cooperating teacher. A high degree of motivation is likely to be maintained if the student teacher feels the cooperating teacher is enthusiastic about assuming the role of a cooperating teacher and is genuinely interested in

the student as a person and as a developing teacher. The following suggestions may help to maintain a good motivational atmosphere for the student teacher:

1. Arrange an introductory conference. You may want to discuss personal backgrounds, school policies, objectives, and classroom procedures.
2. Familiarize the student teacher with the school plant (library, classrooms, lunchroom, lounge, restrooms, offices, parking area, fire exit procedures, workroom, media center, audio visual materials, and equipment that is available).
3. Arrange for the student teacher to meet the principal.
4. Introduce the student teacher to faculty members and other personnel.
5. Discuss the student teacher's responsibilities and the method of reporting when absent. (Exchange home phone numbers).
6. Introduce the student teacher to the class. Explain to the class the responsibilities of the student teacher.

Arranging for progressive induction through directed observation and participation in classroom activities

An important phase of the student teaching experience is a combination of two special skills: directed observation and participation. These two skills involve the act of perceiving certain predetermined activities for a specific reason or purpose. The following suggestions will aid in directing observation and participation.

1. Generally allow about 1-2 weeks of observation time, gradually giving the student teacher more responsibility for the assumption of the actual teaching tasks. Give the student teacher guidance before he or she is allowed to take over the teaching of any class. Guidance may be provided by allowing the student teacher the opportunity to aid in the presentation of lectures or class discussions, to work in small groups, to set up demonstrations, etc. Such experiences also provide an opportunity for both you and the student teacher to assess teaching strengths and weaknesses.
2. Suggest that the student teacher take notes during the observation periods. Certain recorded ideas can serve as points for discussion during planned conferences.
3. Work closely with the student teacher so that maximum use can be made of observation periods.
4. Set specific goals for each observation. What is to be observed should be arranged ahead of time.
5. Allocate time for the purpose of allowing the student teacher to examine the cumulative records of the pupils. The cooperating teacher should arrange time for the student teachers to visit the various service areas of

the school such as administrative, guidance, library, audio-visual, health, etc.

6. Give the student teacher a guide that lists specific items that may be needed during the teaching experience. The following are suggested:
 - a. Patterns of interactions among pupils and between the teachers and pupils.
 - b. The cooperating teacher's techniques for asking and answering questions, for administering praise, and for handling disciplinary problems.
 - c. The cooperating teacher's lists of rules and routines.
 - d. Behavioral problems and causes.
 - e. Use of technology/visual materials.
 - f. Taking care of the physical environment.
 - g. Providing for focal points upon which the student can center attention.
7. Be at your best as the cooperating teacher during the observation period so that the student teacher can view an example of polished teaching techniques and effective ways of handling various problems which arise in the classroom and within the school environment.
8. Share background information and relevant experiences with the student teacher.
9. Do not give the student teacher "busy" work. The most important experiences that the student teacher should have consist of preparing lessons, presenting the lessons to the class and evaluating each student's progress.
10. Allow the student teacher to teach a maximum of three (3) classes. The rest of the student teacher's school day should be spent planning, teacher aide activities, attending to duties, reports, etc. Gradually, increase the student teacher's teaching responsibilities so that by the last weeks the student teacher will assume full teaching responsibilities with a minimum of assistance from the cooperating teacher.
11. Do not point out the student teacher's mistake in the presence of the pupils. If a crisis does arise, a prearranged plan should enable the cooperating teacher to step into the situation without embarrassment to the student teacher.
12. Do not leave the student teacher alone in the classroom until adequate strength in classroom control has been demonstrated by the student teacher.
13. Reinforce that the cooperating teacher is legally responsible for whatever happens in the classroom. Therefore, it is most important to impress upon the student teacher that he/she never take any action in the classroom which may have legal implications.

14. Inform the student teacher as to where you can be located in case you have to leave the room. The cooperating teacher should always be available in the vicinity of the classroom.
15. Encourage the student teacher to be firm but fair in his/her approach to pupils. Caution the student teacher against making threats which are unreasonable and which cannot be carried out.
16. Contact the principal and the university supervisor immediately if the student teacher is having major problems.
17. Allow the student teacher to accompany you to pupil and parent conferences.

Promoting growth through demonstration teaching

Directed observation is valuable to the extent that it allows the student teacher the opportunity to observe a variety of effective teaching procedures. The cooperating teacher serves as a model teacher during the student teaching experience. Although no specific techniques or strategies are prescribed by the university, it is hoped that the cooperating teacher will demonstrate varied teaching methods and confer with the student about the intended learning outcomes of each method.

Planning for teaching

Good planning is essential to good teaching; therefore, the cooperating teacher should guide the student teacher in preparing plans. Preparation should include not only the planning but execution of the plans and an evaluation of the results.

As a cooperating teacher, your expertise may be of particular importance if the student teacher experiences difficulty in planning. The main problem may lie in the fact that many student teachers have made unit and lesson plans in preparatory courses for student teaching, but the student teacher has not tested these plans in actual practice. Your guidance and assistance in planning will be needed by the student teacher until he/she demonstrates planning competence for successful learning experiences.

The cooperating teacher may assist the student teacher in the initial attempts at effective planning by using the following suggestions:

1. Give the student teacher an overview of the goals of each class and discuss the present status of each class.
2. Provide related materials and resources for the student teacher to read.
3. Acquaint the student teacher with available teaching aids and resources.
4. Provide an outline of the year's work:
 - a. Indicate what part of the outline already has been covered.
 - b. Indicate the approximate time to be spent on each of the units in the outline.
 - c. Discuss the outline prior to the development of unit plans.

5. Provide an outline of a unit previously taught or currently being taught.
 - a. Encourage the study and use of several different methods of developing units of work.
 - b. Encourage the study of a unit outline prior to having the student teacher develop one.
6. Request that the student teacher make an extra copy of each lesson plan that is to be reviewed by the cooperating teacher. The cooperating teacher should review the plans and make suggestions prior to the presentation of the lesson by the student teacher. Provide a model daily lesson plan and unit plan for the student teacher.

In making lesson plans to be used in the classroom, the student teacher and the cooperating teacher should be aware of the need to include: (1) objectives, (2) content, (3) pupil activities, (4) teacher activities, and (5) procedures for pupil evaluation. Through cooperative analysis of the planned activities, many potential difficulties may be resolved before the student teacher implements the lesson. Favorable results will be obtained through earnest cooperative planning and hard work. Frequent conferences are recommended to ensure that the overall objectives of the courses are being achieved and that students in the classroom are benefitting at an optimum level.

Providing assistance in developing teaching and evaluation techniques

One of the functions of the teacher is to create a democratic setting for learning. In creating this setting, a teacher may use a variety of methods in a given learning situation, keeping in mind that one learns best by doing; therefore, pupils need to be involved mentally and physically in the learning experiences no matter which methods are used.

Some approaches which may be used singly or jointly in presentation are: (1) lecture method, (2) recitation method, (3) socialized recitation, (4) problem-solving, (5) laboratory techniques, (6) educational television, (7) individualized instruction, (8) learning center approach, (9) micro-teaching, (10) non-grading, (11) inquiry approach, and (12) programmed instruction.

A major objective of the student teaching program is to help the student teacher develop an effective personal teaching style. If this objective is to be achieved, several conditions for growth should be provided. The following are suggested:

1. The student teacher should have many opportunities to teach. It is through adequate experience in actual teaching that a teaching style is developed.
2. The student teacher should have opportunities to observe and to experiment with a variety of teaching strategies and materials. Rigid teaching patterns should be avoided. The student teacher and cooperating teacher should feel free to learn from each other.

3. The student teacher should be encouraged to test the workability of an idea(s) and to show initiative in implementing ideas. Experimental ideas or teaching strategies should not detract from the learning situation.
4. The student teacher should be assisted in his/her attempts to perceive the classroom situation realistically. An ability to realistically perceive the total environment is sometimes limited, particularly when one is a novice teacher. The cooperating teacher then can be of great assistance in helping the student teacher analyze personal teaching behaviors and determine their influence on the total learning situation. The student teacher is more likely to develop an effective teaching style if he/she has accurate knowledge about the pupils. How the pupils perceive the student teacher, as well as, the student teacher's perception of self are also influential factors linked to the development of an effective teaching style.
5. The student teacher who has gained confidence in his/her ability as a teacher usually will not feel a need to adhere to prescribed teaching methods or textbooks and other external materials. Spontaneity should be encouraged. The ability to be flexible, to depart from predetermined plans, and to make independent judgments in the classroom are important elements in developing a classroom personality and a personal teaching style.
6. It is important to remember that the student teacher is learning to teach. The student teacher is expected to make some mistakes. During this crucial period of the beginning teacher's professional life, the cooperating teacher can be of great assistance in contributing to the student teacher's sense of security and success. When mistakes are made, encourage the student teacher to try different approaches in an attempt to resolve a problem.

Promoting growth through continuous and cooperative evaluation

The cooperating teacher should assess the progress of the student teacher on a daily basis. This assessment serves as a basis for conferences in an effort to help the student teacher conduct a self appraisal. Both strong and weak points should be noted (a positive approach with strong points given first is suggested).

Anything that is short of the cooperating teacher's expectations should not come as a surprise at mid-term evaluation, but should be discussed with the student teacher as soon as it is noticed. No final grade should be unsatisfactory unless it has been brought to the attention of the university supervisor and the student teacher prior to the mid-term evaluation.

The general descriptive evaluation, consisting of personality, loyalty and cooperation, professional zeal, social qualities, voice and speech, and use of

oral and written English, gives the cooperating teacher an opportunity to set an example for the student teacher.

Thank you for the important role that you play in mentoring our student teachers. Your willingness to allow them to join you in your classroom and to offer them your expertise, time and guidance is very much appreciated. Your cooperation and assistance make it possible for Prairie View A&M University to continue to produce productive people.