INFORMATION FOR COOPERATING TEACHERS
Michigan Technological University
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Thank you for your interest in serving as a teacher mentor for a Michigan Technological University Teacher Candidate. You have been selected as a potential Cooperating Teacher because you have been identified by MTU Teacher Education faculty and/or your school administrators as someone who is not only an effective educator, but as someone who has also demonstrated qualities that suggest you will be a skilled student teacher mentor. Serving as a mentor is a professionally enriching and personally satisfying, but challenging role. To support you in this role, Michigan Tech’s Teacher Education faculty will work closely with you, providing information and assistance to help you be successful. Supporting the growth and development of a teacher candidate is a shared responsibility, and we invite you to contact the Student Teaching Coordinator and/or University Supervisor(s) at any time.

Deciding to Accept a Student Teacher
The student teacher’s portfolio will be available for your review. This portfolio will provide you with some fundamental information with which you may begin to know a prospective student teacher. If you find that the information provided in the student’s portfolio is not sufficient for you to make a decision about accepting this student into your classroom, you may request a pre-acceptance interview with the student. This interview will permit you to become better acquainted with the student’s preparation and background experiences. The student should be able to use the portfolio during the interview to provide evidence of claims about experience and capabilities. The Student Teaching Coordinator is also available to meet with you to inform you decision.

Student Teaching Internship Handbook
This Student Teaching Internship Handbook contains all of the information provided to student teachers prior to the internship. Please carefully review that handbook to familiarize yourself with policies and requirements related to the student teaching experience. The information in this document (“Information for Cooperating Teachers”) is meant to supplement, not replace, the information in the “Student Teaching Internship Handbook.”

Requirements of the Cooperating Teacher
The Teacher Education program requires that all cooperating teachers do the following:
1. Attend a student teaching orientation with the student teacher prior to the start of the student teaching internship.
2. Attend mid-semester and end-of-semester meetings with other cooperating teachers and MTU faculty to provide input on the internship experience and processes for the purpose of ongoing program improvement and to resolve any issues that have arisen.
3. Help the student teacher obtain parental permission to video record in your classroom.
4. Complete the Student Teaching Instrument four times during the semester, in Weeks 3, 6, 9, and 12. The completed instrument must be returned at the end of these weeks to effectively facilitate the assessment process.
5. Attend debriefing/goal setting meetings with the student teacher and university supervisor following each classroom visit.

6. Communicate with the university supervisor on a regular basis. Communicate with them immediately if issues arise that cannot easily be resolved between you and the student teacher. Performance problems should always be identified and discussed as early as possible.

**Pre-Student Teaching Meeting with the Student Teacher**

Orientation to the school community is critical to the student teacher’s confidence and ultimate success in student teaching. Once a placement is approved, the student teacher will be asked to schedule a meeting with you to gather information and begin planning for the internship. The following lists will provide ideas about what to discuss at this meeting.

**Teaching Responsibilities**
- Student teacher’s class schedule
- Textbooks and associated materials used in assigned courses
- Long range plans for each class so that the student teacher may begin to do background reading and preparation
- Lesson plan expectations

**Instructional Resources**
- Technology available in the school and related security issues
- District and school websites
- Appropriate instructional materials

**Classroom Policies**
- Classroom rules and management plan
- Grading policies and procedures

**School Policies and Procedures**
- Student Handbook
- Teacher Handbook (classroom policies regarding discipline, attendance, grading, passes, emergency procedures, etc.)
- Teacher computer accounts, including passwords

**Community and Student Needs**
- General socioeconomic and cultural background of student population

As the student teacher becomes acclimated to the classroom in the first few weeks, you might also want to share the following information:
- Duties outside of the classroom (e.g., hallway supervision)
- Media center, computer labs, and technology coordinators
- Community resources to enhance instruction
- Recording absent and tardy students
- Hall passes
- Specific health/participation restrictions of any student (allergies, diabetes, etc.)
- Responsibilities to students with special needs
- Parent involvement in the school, expectations to communicate and work with parents
- Parents nights, open houses, faculty meetings, department meetings, committee meetings
Preparing Students and Colleagues

Preparing to help your student teacher transition effectively into your classroom includes informing students and other faculty about the arrival of your student teacher. For example, you might prepare the class for the arrival of the student teacher by promoting the idea that having another teacher will be a profitable and an enjoyable experience for all concerned. This can be done by:

- Learning some things about the student teacher personally and building enthusiasm for the student teacher by relaying something about him or her to the class.
- Explaining that the student teacher will be a part-time teacher for a period of 15 weeks.
- Speaking of the student teacher as a fellow teacher.
- Assembling any materials that describe your school context and sending them to your student teacher or providing them during the pre-student teaching meeting.

As soon as possible, provide a place for the student teacher to keep personal belongings and a place to work. It would help if a desk would be available for the student teacher in your classroom, placed so that the student teacher may observe you and the class without interference.

Easing the Transition to the Classroom

The student teacher's first contact with you and the students is important for all concerned. The student teacher will probably feel insecure, have feelings of anxiety, and need to make many adjustments in a relatively short period of time. Here are some suggestions to increase the chances that your student teacher will get off to a good start in your classroom:

- Encourage a free exchange of ideas.
- Accept the student teacher as a member of the faculty, using "we" rather than "I" in front of the class to help provide needed status.
- Right from the start, encourage some participation in routine activities such as:
  - Checking attendance and tardiness
  - Passing out materials
  - Using room resources during study periods
  - Helping individual students who have been absent and those with special projects
  - Correcting and evaluating students’ papers
  - Arranging bulletin boards
  - Going to school assemblies
  - Attending faculty meetings
  - Assisting in school-wide activities
  - Administering assessments
  - Sitting in on conferences between teachers and parents
  - Attending local or regional professional meetings

Helping Your Student Teacher in Planning

Good planning is the basis of successful teaching. When done properly, good planning will increase both the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching. The task of planning should also be a cooperative one, but the cooperating teacher should provide opportunities for the student teacher
to take on increasing levels of responsibility. Eventually, all student teachers should plan some lessons entirely on their own, without building from lessons taught by the cooperating teacher.

While the student teacher has had some lesson planning experience, planning for a “live” classroom will be a new challenge for them. You should expect that the student teacher will write daily plans for each lesson taught, and that these plans will be sufficiently detailed so that another teacher could teach from them if needed. These plans will be recorded digitally in Google Drive and shared with both you and the candidate’s university supervisor. Students will also be required to complete capsule plans on a weekly basis and share them in Google Drive for your approval before each weekend.

All daily lesson plans developed by your student teacher should meet with your approval before they are used. You should ask to see these plans well before they are to be used. To help your student teacher refine his or her daily lesson planning, the following suggestions are offered:

- Help the student teacher assemble necessary materials (basic text, outside sources, and supplementary materials).
- Call attention to activities in the lesson that may challenge different students.
- Push the student teacher to articulate their reasoning for instructional decisions.
- Call attention to ways and places that different forms of assessment might be used.
- Help the student teacher consider what formative assessment tells them about their students and how they might adapt their instruction in response.

Providing Ongoing Mentoring and Feedback
Making the work of teaching explicit to your student teacher is one of the most valuable mentoring moves you will make. We recommend making a habit of modeling and explaining best practices. You can support the student teacher in learning about teaching by doing the following:

- Demonstrate and discuss methods and resources for creating daily lesson plans that are sequential and integrated
- Demonstrate and discuss the use of curriculum guides, teachers’ manuals, and other resources for your grade/subject level.
- Explain the philosophy of classroom management, the specific techniques that are to be used, and how management is to occur when the cooperating teacher and student teacher are both in the classroom.
- Present demonstration lessons using varied teaching strategies and discuss them with the student teacher.
- Be explicit about how formative assessment is incorporated into a lesson and how it is used to inform/adapt instruction.

As the student teacher assumes more of the responsibility for instruction, the cooperating teacher should be a source of ongoing support and feedback. Deliberately planning and setting aside specific time for collaborative planning and reflection can make the interactions between you and the student teacher more productive.

- **Require written lessons plans enough in advance** that there is time to review all plans and provide appropriate feedback.
- Provide opportunities for the student teacher to prepare and develop original teaching plans using a variety of strategies and materials.
- Guide the student teacher in planning assignments and homework that provide appropriate challenges for students in the class.
- Assist the student teacher in accommodating students with special needs.
- Assist in creating a classroom climate that encourages questioning and self-reflection,
- Help the student teacher monitor effective use of time.
- Plan with the student teacher for effective assessment of learning.
- When appropriate, leave the student teacher alone in the classroom so that he/she can have a feeling of independence and an opportunity to learn from his/her mistakes.
- Introduce the student teacher to professional journals, resources, and organizations.
- Invite the student teacher to faculty/curriculum meetings, parent meetings, and parent/teacher conferences when appropriate.

The evaluation of student teaching is integral to the mentoring relationship beginning on the very first day. Student teachers are typically anxious to know how they are progressing. Expect your student teacher to regularly ask you, "How did I do?" Since you are the "counselor on the job", you are often in the best position to answer this question. As the cooperating teacher, you are in an excellent position to observe and communicate the strengths and weaknesses of your student teacher as he/she directs the classroom activities. To help the student teacher make progress toward the learning goals for student teaching, the cooperating teacher is encouraged to regularly use the criterion on the Student Teaching Instrument to focus teaching reflections and discussions about the student teacher’s progress.

- Provide regular oral and written feedback on various aspects of teaching performance, including classroom presence, effectiveness of specific lessons for the class and for particular students, and current strengths and weaknesses.
- Collaboratively set goals for improvement and assist the student teacher in implementing recommendations.

Remember that just like your own students, each student teacher is an individual. While it's easy to compare your student teacher with previous student teachers, such comparisons may overshadow the individual's particular strengths and areas for growth. Remind yourself to resist the temptation to compare.

Developing Professionalism
The opportunity to introduce a student teacher to what it means to be a professional educator is an important part of the student teaching experience and a fulfilling aspect of mentoring. Your student teacher will become a more ethical, mature professional when you discuss and model the roles and level of professionalism expected of a teacher, such as restricting discussions of students and colleagues to “inside the classroom”, being a role model in the classroom, using appropriate language and dress, and showing respect for others and for diversity. Take advantage of opportunities to integrate the student teacher into the school and teaching community as a professional colleague.
Addressing Concerns
If the student teacher's progress is not satisfactory, discuss the specifics of the concern with him or her immediately. Document all discussions and work together to develop strategies to overcome the problem. If areas of concern cannot be addressed between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher, notify the university supervisor and schedule a three-way conference to determine a course of action. Always feel free to invite the assistance of a school or university administrator if you feel this would be helpful and/or necessary.

Summary
The suggestions presented above are offered as a guide for you to consider in helping your student teacher get the most value from the educational experiences of student teaching. Circumstances vary considerably from one situation to another. You are the best judge as to whether the student teacher is demonstrating sufficient ability in assuming responsibilities in the classroom.

All suggestions presented in this handbook must be viewed in terms of your specific school requirements and the student teacher’s needs. In case of question or doubt, always feel assured that you have the freedom to interpret the requirements of the situation in the way you feel best until you have time to talk to the university supervisor. Any change of schedule or organization that you may make in order to give the student teacher a more varied and a richer experience is greatly appreciated. Please communicate any such changes with the university supervisor to help him or her support the candidate during this student teaching experience.

Thank you for your commitment to enhancing the teaching profession by supporting a teacher candidate’s learning, growth and induction into the teaching profession!