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University Coach Roles and Responsibilities

I. Introduction

As higher standards for student learning create ever-increasing demands on teachers, the demands on teacher preparation programs also increase. Your role in ensuring that we meet those demands is critical. We at Temple are grateful to have the support of experienced and expert educators in the field. We deeply appreciate your willingness to help prepare tomorrow’s teachers. The professional collaboration between the College of Education and our field-based partners ensures that our teacher candidates will receive the best possible preparation and become the kind of highly skilled and effective practitioners we all seek for the teaching profession.

This overview provides information regarding the student teaching experience and the role of the university coach in supporting student teacher achievement. Please read it carefully. It contains all of the materials, including the evaluation forms you will need to submit for the student teacher(s) assigned to you. Please pay special attention to our lesson planning template and expectations for lesson planning, Temple’s Standards for Skillful Teaching and the competencies we expect teachers to develop, student teacher evaluation criteria, and specific expectations for the student teacher and cooperating teacher.

At times, you might feel the need to speak with someone regarding concerns related to your assigned student teacher(s). We recommend that you discuss concerns, as appropriate, with 1) the student teacher and/or cooperating teacher, 2) the school contact (e.g., principal, assistant principal, lead teacher) for school specific issues, and/or 3) the College's Field Placement Coordinator, Bernie McGee, who can be reached at 215-204-1520 or mcgee@temple.edu.

II. The Role of the University Coach

The teacher preparation program at Temple University College of Education provides students with a strong background in teaching methods as well as contemporary research and theory. We recognize, however, that students do not fully realize the significance of what they learn in their university courses until they assume authentic responsibilities in a classroom. As you know, the student teaching experience is the culmination of pre-service teacher preparation and the best opportunity students have, before beginning their teaching careers, for practicing and applying the research, theory, and strategies they have learned in their teacher preparation program, receiving frequent expert support and feedback, and reflecting on and strengthening their practice. It is during this time that students not only begin to develop their personal teaching style, but also their understanding and appreciation of how schools operate, their sense of professional efficacy, and the habits of mind—including commitments to high standards for all children, lifelong learning, and reflective practice—that will continue throughout their careers.

The university coach plays a complex role in helping us achieve our goals for our pre-service teachers by serving as both the student teacher's guide/mentor and chief evaluator, as well as the primary liaison between the
university and the school. The coach helps set the tone for the entire experience and provides support to both the student teacher and the cooperating teacher to help them manage their relationship and ensure a meaningful learning experience for both. The coach should encourage the cooperating teacher to support the student teacher in growing and developing his/her own personal teaching style, by sharing the demands of classroom teaching, by modeling effective practice, and by mentoring the student teacher over the course of the semester as s/he gradually takes on more and more specific classroom responsibilities and becomes an integral member of the school staff.

Performing the roles of both mentor and evaluator can prove challenging at times. We strongly suggest that you sit down with both your student teacher and the student teacher’s cooperating teacher early in the semester to review your role and come to a mutual understanding. Especially during the first half of the semester, you will want to encourage your student teacher(s), set goals and priorities with them, and provide advice about how to improve. Eventually, however, you must evaluate the performance of your student teacher(s). If you do not pass them, they cannot become certified. Their future lies in your hands.

Understandably, for many students, student teaching is a period of both great excitement and anxiety. University coaches are selected on the basis of their professional experience and expertise as educators to help see student teachers through this challenging and rewarding experience. Coaches are expected to use their own in-depth knowledge of pedagogy and classroom management, professional experience, and communication and consultation skills in guiding and evaluating student teachers.

We expect university coaches to cultivate relationships not only with their student teachers but also with the cooperating teachers and with school leadership and staff. Because cooperating teachers are generally assigned by principals and university staff members are often not acquainted with cooperating teachers, we rely on coaches to identify any initial problems in the match between cooperating teachers and student teachers. We also ask you to report any concerns you may have about school placements or the extent to which a cooperating teacher is able and willing to perform his/her role. It is the coach's responsibility at the start of the semester to raise any concerns with the Field Placement Coordinator and/or the site-based contact to resolve the situation and secure a more appropriate assignment if warranted. In order to ensure the best possible experiences for all of our student teachers, we ask coaches to provide feedback on their student teachers’ placements at the end of each semester.

**Responsibilities of the University Coach**

University Coaches will:

1. Help introduce the student teacher to the school and the community (e.g., providing background information on the school, explaining school rules/norms).
2. Contact the cooperating teacher within the first week of student teaching. Since it’s often challenging to catch cooperating teachers during the school day for any length of time, we encourage you to discuss with the cooperating teacher the best way to stay in contact, which might prove to be via e-mail.
3. Make one initial visit to the school and four official visits to observe classroom performance and complete feedback and evaluation forms.
4. Maintain regular communications with the student teacher, cooperating teacher, and school administration; work with the seminar instructor as much as possible to coordinate feedback on lesson planning, pedagogy, and the student’s ability to enact Temple’s Standards for Skillful Teaching. Contact the university’s Field Placement Coordinator as needed. Notify the Field Placement Coordinator of any initial problems related to the student teacher’s placement so any necessary adjustments can be made.

5. Help promote a positive relationship between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher by clarifying the roles and responsibilities of each and helping them to resolve any differences that may occur. Review the objectives and requirements of student teaching with both the student teacher and the cooperating teacher and explain the process used to evaluate the student teacher.

6. Serve as a representative of Temple University College of Education at the school and use professional courtesy in all interactions with Temple students and school faculty and staff.

7. Become familiar with the program's Temple Teaching Standards and use these to focus your coaching of student teachers. Please pay particular attention to encouraging student teachers to use research-based strategies and helping them meet the needs of diverse learners. Where possible use specific examples from your experience and/or their experience to make connections to education theory and research.

8. Encourage the student teacher to assume increasing responsibilities and independence in teaching, classroom management, and other professional responsibilities.

9. Observe the student teacher and provide specific feedback. Complete a written Student Teacher Teaching Observation Report (ST-TOR) form online after each visit.

10. Help student teachers reflect on and improve upon their planning and instruction by periodically meeting with him/her. Help student teachers to identify strategies that were successful, cite evidence, analyze why they were successful and identify strategies that were not successful, and why they were not successful and discuss possible changes. Encourage student teachers to draw on their knowledge of education research and theory.

11. Encourage student teacher participation in professional learning communities within the school and attendance at grade and department team meetings. If you are supervising several student teachers in the same school, we encourage you to hold group meetings and discuss issues of common concern together. We also encourage you to facilitate meetings between the student teachers and cooperating teachers (and school leadership whenever possible and appropriate) to share experiences and encourage collaboration.

12. Support the cooperating teacher as he/she works with the student teacher to help develop specific skills and learn more effective teaching techniques for diverse learning styles and abilities. Encourage the cooperating teacher to model his/her own reflective practice for the student teacher.

13. Complete a mid-term evaluation of the student teacher's performance assessing her/his competency as a pre-service teacher using the Pennsylvania Statewide Evaluation Form for Student Professional Knowledge and Practice, the PDE 430. If it appears that a student's successful completion of student teaching is in jeopardy, the supervisor should convene a meeting with the student teacher and cooperating teacher to discuss and
complete a Student Teacher Growth Plan and notify the field coordinator that a STGP has been implemented for that student teacher.

14. Complete a Summary TOR and Final PDE 430 to capture the student teacher's work at the end of the semester and his/her progress throughout the semester.

15. Discuss your Summary TOR evaluation and comments with the student teacher in a Final Coaching Conversation prior to submitting the final grade.

16. Consider the cooperating teacher's assessments (Mid-Semester Summary and End-of-Semester Evaluation) and her/his classroom observations when determining a final course grade.

Relationships with Cooperating Teachers

As Temple’s representative at the school site, we depend on you to maintain good communication and a good working relationship with cooperating teachers. We encourage you to obtain contact information and discuss the best way for you to communicate, which might be via e-mail. We look for cooperating teachers who are able to model practices consistent with our standards for skillful teaching, but we are not always successful in this effort. If, as you observe your student teachers, you develop any concerns about your student teacher’s cooperating teacher, or have difficulty communicating with a cooperating teacher, please report those concerns to the Field Placement Coordinator. At the end of the semester, we will ask for your feedback on your student teachers’ placements and their cooperating teachers.

We ask cooperating teachers to complete two feedback/assessment forms for their student teachers and to meet with them regularly to discuss lesson plans, instructional delivery and classroom management. Those forms will soon are to be completed on-line; please review them and take them into consideration in grading your student teacher’s performance at the end of the semester.

The Seminar, the Student Teaching Portfolio, and the Senior Performance Assessment (SPA)

Student teachers are all enrolled in a Student Teaching Seminar course designed to support them in student teaching and help them prepare their portfolios. Good communication between coaches and seminar instructors makes this process go much more smoothly for the student teachers. If you do not know your student teachers’ seminar instructors, feel free to ask for their names and email addresses so you can contact them. For their portfolios, student teachers are required to submit lesson plans that conform to Temple’s Lesson Planning Framework. The template requires them to plan and reflect in greater detail than you might think is necessary on a regular basis for a classroom teacher, but the detail they provide enables their seminar instructors to evaluate their understanding of their practice as well as their ability to enact the Temple Teaching Standards. In order to avoid confusion, please encourage your student teachers to use the Lesson Planning Framework so that the lessons they prepare for you, with some added reflection, can go right into their portfolios.

The Temple program emphasizes reflective practice as a critical standard. In your conversations with your student teachers and in your assessments, please help your student teachers understand and practice reflection.
particular, you can help them focus on student learning outcomes and assessment data as a means of determining whether or not they have met their objectives. You can also help them by reminding them of research and theory that they can use to guide their decision-making and evaluate their lessons. Other areas in which student teachers often need support include differentiating instruction, getting to know their students and using their prior knowledge to inform the student teacher’s decision-making about curriculum and lesson planning, and techniques for engaging students in instruction and managing their classrooms with the help of carefully planned lessons and engaging pedagogical techniques.

Some student teachers feel overwhelmed by the responsibility of preparing their portfolios on top of student teaching, but experience tells us that most student teachers accomplish this task without undue stress. Under no circumstances should they need to take time off from student teaching to prepare their portfolios.

III. Assessing the Student Teacher’s Performance

Providing Feedback to Student Teachers: What to Look For

During the course of the semester you are required to complete (online, in a platform called TK20) 7 forms for each student teacher. The PDE 430, required by the state, will be completed twice, once at the mid-point of the semester and once at the end of the semester. The Student Teacher Teaching Observation Report (TOR) will be completed a minimum of four times, following each required observation. This is a form generated by the teacher education program, which asks you to assess teaching practices related to our standards. Additional forms can be completed if additional observations are warranted. Finally, at the end of the semester, University Coaches will also complete one Final PDE-430 and one Summary TOR, capturing your overall feedback on the student’s development throughout the semester and level of success at the end of the semester.

These forms are the official record of your supervision, but please feel free to use additional means of communicating your observations and suggestions to your student teachers whether they fit on the forms or not. We expect you to use good professional judgment in order to provide student teachers with the feedback and coaching they need to develop their teaching practice over time and to become reflective practitioners.

We do not expect our student teachers to meet all of our standards initially, although some may. Student teachers generally need practice simply planning and executing lessons successfully before they can focus on critical thinking or create activities that promote active learning. Because they must respect the climate their cooperating teachers have created, they don’t always have opportunity to establish their own learning communities or teach the way they (or we) would prefer.

We expect you to consider these constraints when you observe and provide feedback. When appropriate, helping student teachers envision alternatives to the teaching practices they observe can be very useful. Coaches can also help student teachers negotiate with their cooperating teachers when they want to try something new. They sometimes feel compelled to emulate their cooperating teachers even when those practices do not enable
them to enact our standards. They will appreciate your help in figuring out how to fit into the classrooms and schools to which they have been assigned while trying to gain some experience trying out the methods and approaches they have learned at Temple. For an overview of a suggested timeline for observations and document submission, see the Student Teaching Observation Calendar and Guide. An overall Student Teaching Calendar with key dates and deadlines is also available

Feedback and Assessment Forms

At the beginning of the semester, you will receive an email explaining how to complete and submit student teaching coaching and evaluation forms online. You will submit 4 Teacher Observation Reports, 2 PDE 430s, and 1 Summary TOR. Links to copies of each form are provided here so you print the documents for note-taking purposes during your observations should you choose to do so.

We encourage you to set goals with your student teachers so that you have an agenda for each observation and each conference. All student teachers want to do well from the beginning and will be disappointed with low ratings, even when those ratings are satisfactory as measures of their progress as a pre-service teacher during student teaching. It is very important for you to explain how the assessment system works; that they are just starting out, that their skills will almost certainly develop over time, and that they can only master certain skills once they have mastered others. In addition, they have the whole semester to prove that they understand and can enact Temple’s standards for skillful teaching. No one expects them to do it perfectly (or at all) at the start.

From time to time, university coaches and/or cooperating teachers become concerned about the ability of a student teacher to complete student teaching successfully. When that is the case, the coach, after consulting with the cooperating teacher, should convene a meeting to discuss a Student Teacher Growth Plan that will ultimately be submitted to the Field Placement Coordinator via TK20. This process is critical in helping us monitor our student teachers, provide support for any who are struggling, and identify problems in time to address them.

Determining the Grade for Student Teaching

University Coaches determine the final grade for student teaching with input from cooperating teachers.

University Coaches assess achievement by:

- observing the student teacher's lessons in the classroom;
- conferencing with the student teacher about his/her classroom experience to learn about his/her knowledge of teaching, content, and classroom management;
- reviewing lesson plans and other materials generated by the student teacher; and
- consulting with the cooperating teacher and, at times, other school faculty and the school principal.

Please consult the Student Teaching Grading Guidelines for more detail as to how to assess the student teacher’s growth at the end of the semester.
The final grades for each student teacher should be submitted via email to the Field Placement Coordinator by the deadline given (see the Student Teaching Observation Calendar and Guide and the Student Teaching Calendar). Since the Field Placement Coordinator is the official instructor of record for all student teachers, undergraduate and graduate, he will submit the official grade. The Field Placement Coordinator may adjust a final grade when he, in consultation with the Associate Dean of Teacher Education, deems such action is necessary or appropriate. The student teacher may appeal the final grade through a formal process after the semester has ended.

If you have any questions or concerns, contact Bernie McGee, the Field Placement Coordinator: mcgee@temple.edu.

IV. Helpful References for the Student Teaching University Coach

Clinical Practice Guiding Principles

Behind all of our procedures and policies related to field experiences, we have identified 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.

Temple’s Standards for Skillful Teaching

Temple’s teaching standards permeate our program and guide how we assess our ability to prepare our students for teaching. They incorporate the skills, competencies, and habits of mind we try to ensure that all of our students acquire. Traditional categories for assessing teaching performance, such as planning, instructional delivery, and classroom management, are incorporated into the standards. We expect you to give feedback that matches those categories, but we also ask that you become familiar with our standards and incorporate feedback that relates directly to them. For example, feedback on instructional delivery should consider deep content knowledge, real world connections, active learning, and critical thinking as goals. Overall, we ask you to reinforce reflection as a primary tool for teacher improvement by helping your student teachers learn how to reflect in ways that provide insight into their practice and a pathway to improvement.

Lesson Planning Framework

All field-based courses, including practicum courses, as well as student teaching seminars, require students to use Temple’s Lesson Planning Framework for their lesson planning. The framework (or “template”) is designed to encourage student teachers to think deeply about curriculum and lesson planning, to provide detailed information about their lessons, and to reflect in detail about their practice and how they might improve. We use it...
to assess their capacity to plan instruction and to teach effectively. It is not designed to be a practical, day-to-day tool for teachers.

The template emphasizes “backwards planning,” starting with proposed learning outcomes and then moving backwards to describe how to achieve those outcomes. Identifying the evidence the student teacher will use to evaluate the success of the lesson is an important part of the planning process. We encourage our student teachers to think about varied types of assessments, which might include reports and projects and other applications of knowledge, and not simply to rely on conventional tests.

We also expect student teachers to consider the context for their lessons, including demographic information about their students, their families and their neighborhoods, students’ prior knowledge, and knowledge of the special needs of their students. They should be able to situate a particular lesson in a broader understanding of the curriculum unit in which the lesson is embedded. They should be able to connect an individual lesson to what comes before and after. They can only accomplish this level of control if they understand the purpose of the lesson. To grasp the purpose, especially in cases where they are following a script, they need to investigate the curriculum guide and discuss the lesson with their cooperating teacher. By asking questions about the purpose of the lesson, university coaches can help to motivate student teachers to learn more about the context for their teaching and student learning.

Supplemental Resources

Additional resources have been developed for university coaches should they like to use or reference them in their work with student teachers:

- **Student Teaching Observation Calendar and Guide:** This document outlines the key responsibilities of university coaches, student teachers, and cooperating teachers before, during, and after each school visit or observation. It also outlines the necessary actions for university coaches, student teachers, and cooperating teachers to complete at the mid-point of the semester and at the end-point of the semester. The dates and deadlines included in the document are suggestions in order to keep everyone on pace. Temple is aware that school and personal schedules vary, making adjustments necessary at times; please follow the document’s guidelines to the extent that you feel they are supportive of your work.

- **Student Teaching Note-taking Guide:** This document outlines suggestions for how the university coach, particularly those new to working with student teachers, may want to organize themselves for note-taking during the formal observations.

- **Student Teaching Post-Observation Conversation Guide:** This document suggests a potential agenda for a post-observation conversation that includes the university coach, the student teacher, and potentially, the cooperating teacher. Its content and structure reflects Temple’s teacher education program’s emphasis on coaching (in which the university coach and cooperating teacher
are able to model and encourage inquiry-based practice and reflection) and on the use of student work as evidence to discuss the strengths and areas of growth within the student teacher’s developing practice.