Cooperating Teacher Handbook/2010-2011

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Information for the Cooperating Teacher

Introduction

The student teaching experience is the capstone of the professional development sequence and training of prospective teachers at Central Washington University. Follow up studies of our graduates substantiate the belief that student teaching is the most significant experience in the preparation of candidates for the profession of teaching. The Cooperating Teacher Handbook is developed as an initial overview and orientation to the expectations of student teachers and the role of the cooperating teacher in the student teaching process.

The Constructivist Learning Model

The constructivist learning model serves as the conceptual framework for our program in teacher education and graduate programs for the preparation of school counselors, school administrators, school psychologists, and other positions related to a variety of school roles. Constructivism purports that knowledge is the result of the individual’s view of reality, that is, learning occurs through the continual creation of rules or hypotheses, which allows the individual to explain what has been observed. There is a need to create new rules and formulate new hypotheses when students present ideas of reality which may not agree with those of the instructor. The constructivist learning model refers to that process of constructing or creating a new idea which can serve as a guideline for learning and teaching. This idea serves as a guide for similar subsequent actions.

The Constructivist Model has four basic components:

1. The learner creates knowledge.
2. Knowledge is “constructed” or made meaningful when the learner relates new information to prior or existing knowledge.
3. Knowledge as it is constructed is shaped by experiences and social interactions.
4. The members of a culture establish knowledge cooperatively.

A teacher in the constructivist classroom will be able to:

1. Seek out and use student questions and ideas to guide lessons and instructional units;
2. Encourage students to initiate ideas;
3. Promote student leadership, collaboration, seeking of information and taking action as a result of the learning process;
4. Use the thinking, the experiences, and the interests of students to drive the lesson;
5. Encourage the use of alternative sources of information;
6. Encourage students to test their own ideas, even predicting and speculating on outcomes;
7. Use cooperative learning strategies that emphasize collaboration, respect of individuals, and encourage the division of labor;
8. Provide adequate time for students to reflect on and analyze information; and
9. Encourage and support the collection of real evidence to support ideas and the reformation of ideas in light of new evidence or experiences.

The Theme of CWU's Teacher Preparation Program

Nearly a decade ago, the Center for Teaching and Learning adopted a program theme to serve as a visible reminder to faculty and students of what we are trying to become. We agreed that both our faculty and our graduates should be “facilitators of learning.” The term “facilitator” was chosen because of its consistency with the constructivist philosophy. The term reflects the view of the professional educator as one who encourages personal reflection and construction of knowledge, and who provides insights about formal knowledge, but who does not dictate how the knowledge will be constructed. It shifts the focus from what the professional educator does to what the student achieves. It reminds us that the success of our endeavor is measured not in seat time or credits earned but in knowledge, skills, and values acquired. Thus, we see ourselves, and we want our students to see themselves and us, as “facilitators of learning.”

By adopting this theme, the faculty wanted to emphasize that our role as facilitators extended to all learners. Just as our candidates were becoming more diverse, they also were being asked to teach in environments of changing cultural balance, of increasing numbers of children living in poverty and facing health problems, of homelessness, and disrupted family lives, and of increasing language diversity. Faculty were finding that tried and true methods were less effective than they once had been, and candidates were reporting that they felt under prepared and overwhelmed to address the needs of the children they encountered in the PK-12 schools. As the framework was modified to reflect multicultural and global perspectives in all aspects of the program, the theme also was extended to emphasize this important aspect of our programs. Thus, we wanted to be and to prepare “facilitators of learning in a diverse world.” The theme is intended to remind all of us in the field that there should be:

- A focus on learning as the important product of teaching, and the teacher’s role as a facilitator of learning: and
- An emphasis on individual differences and the impact of the racial, cultural, gender, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity of children on how to facilitate learning.
The Purpose of Student Teaching

Student teaching at Central Washington University is designed to provide students opportunities to: (1) practice and demonstrate their professional skills; and (2) gain practical knowledge from their experiences in the PK-12 public school system.

Student teaching objectives are to be assessed by performance; i.e., the student teacher is expected to:
1. Demonstrate in a public school classroom their command of the skills and knowledge obtained in previous training as masters of the art and science of teaching in the teacher certification program;
2. Demonstrate in a public school classroom their command of the knowledge and skills obtained in their major and/or minor areas as knowledge specialists;
3. Demonstrate the physical and emotional stamina to work effectively in a public school classroom for a prolonged period on a full-time basis;
4. Demonstrate the ability to work effectively and autonomously in a public school classroom utilizing the Constructivist model of learning; and,
5. Identify social and governmental agencies and businesses and industries within the community and their relationship to the educational process.

The Task of the Cooperating Teacher

One of the most critical tasks cooperating teachers (Central’s term for the classroom mentor/host teacher) have is to establish personal rapport and credibility with their student teachers early in the student teaching experience. To quickly establish a relationship, you should review background information about the student teacher before he/she arrives in your classroom. The student teacher information is included in the student teaching application provided by the university supervisor. As you read about your student teacher, identify his/her strengths, experiences, and professional interests. Utilize this information to develop rapport and promote communication with your student teacher.

In addition, review your school building formalities: the school schedule, and school and classroom routines with your student teacher. Orient the student teacher to the facts of school life which have become “second nature” to you, but are unknown to the student teacher. If your building is large, a school map may be useful. If the school schedule is difficult to understand, have one available and be prepared to explain it more than once to your student teacher.

Having pertinent items ready when your student teacher arrives tells the student teacher you have been anticipating his/her arrival. Your preparation to receive the student teacher in your classroom models your expectations better than your words.
Private Work Area for the Student Teacher

The student teacher needs a private work area to perform his/her classroom duties. For the student teacher to begin to feel like a professional, he/she must have a private area in your classroom to keep books, supplies, and other teaching materials. If possible, provide a desk for the student teacher. If this is not possible, make available a table, a desk drawer, or cabinet space for the student teacher to use. If you have an office, consider sharing this and inviting the student teacher to use the appropriate areas to prepare teaching materials.

Educational technology, including audio/visual equipment and computers, school supplies, and copying equipment, should be as available to the student teacher as they are to you. Please explain any precautions or restrictions regarding equipment use to the student teacher. Be sure that the student teacher has access to the creative tools that enhance facilitation of student learning in the classroom. Your total openness with the student teacher will assist in making student teaching a rewarding and constructive experience for the student teacher.

Professional Status

Professional peer acceptance is of great concern to the student teacher. To help calm the student teacher’s apprehension about how he/she will be accepted by your students and professional colleagues, formally introduce the student teacher to your class and to your colleagues to facilitate the student teacher’s professional status. Do not use the student teacher’s first name with your PK-12 students. Do what you can to assist the student teacher to obtain the respect due any teacher.

Professional Involvement

Your responsibilities to the PK-12 students in your classroom require that you develop confidence in the personal and professional capabilities of the student teacher. Such confidence normally is developed over time as the student teacher becomes gradually more involved in the teaching process. Student teacher activities are described in a suggested gradual induction model in the four stages that follow.
The Stages of Student Teaching

Stage I: Approximate Time, Week 1

1. Observe and analyze teaching techniques and methods, including classroom management strategies based on Constructivism. Become familiar with:
   a. Classroom resources, e.g., books, supplies, schedules, and forms
   b. Building and district resources (library, audio/visual, reproduction, aides and specialists)
   c. Grading practices
   d. Building rules and regulations
   e. District policies
   f. Extra-curricular activities
   g. Pupils' names
2. Assist the teacher in correcting papers, housekeeping duties, preparing assignments and materials, helping individual pupils, and other related activities.
3. Assume “bit-teaching” responsibilities such as introducing lessons, making assignments, and conducting drills.
4. Conference regularly with cooperating teacher & discuss the extent to which student teaching is modeling constructivist attributes.

Stage II: Approximate Time: Weeks 2 - 4

1. Assume daily teaching responsibilities for a subject, a block, group, or other situation where it is necessary to plan, present, and evaluate lessons.
2. Gradually extend classroom responsibilities as competencies are demonstrated.
3. Continue conferences with cooperating teacher.
4. Prepare daily lesson plans that identify Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) and performance outcomes and meet cognitive, affective, and psychomotor needs of students. Begin to develop an instructional unit.

Stage III: Approximate Time: Weeks 5 - 10

1. Assume full-time teaching, performing all instructional activities, classroom management, and pupil supervision.

Stage IV: Approximate Time: Weeks 11 - 12

1. When teaching competence is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the cooperating teacher and 11-12 university supervisors, the student teacher may observe other teachers.

Suggestions

The following activities for cooperating teachers are suggested to assist the student teacher meet program objectives:
1. Help the student teacher understand your responsibilities as they relate to the total school program. For example:
   a. Expose him/her to class activities and course offerings and explain how the activities are related to the constructivist theory.
   b. Expose him/her to and encourage him/her to participate in extra-class activities and other non-teaching duties.
   c. Acquaint him/her with the physical facilities of the school.
   d. Introduce him/her to the teachers and administrative staff in the school, and insure a welcome at staff and other professional meetings.
   e. Include him/her in parent contacts.
   f. Help him/her identify and obtain resource materials.

2. Assist the student teacher in defining his/her role in terms of duties and responsibilities. This may be done by:
   a. Scheduling a formal conference with the student teacher to clarify expectations with regard to classroom procedures.
   b. Providing opportunities for the student teacher to observe different instructional strategies appropriate to the teaching situation. Modeling and facilitating the development of the student teacher’s professional attitudes in contacts with the school and community.
   c. Facilitating the student teacher’s understanding of professional ethics.
   d. Acquainting the student teacher with the rules and regulations applicable to pupils and teachers in the school building and district.
   e. Insuring that the student teacher knows and understands the instructional goals and management systems for the class.

3. Engage the student teacher in progressively more responsible teaching experiences as appropriate skills and proficiencies are demonstrated.

4. Determine, in consultation with the student teacher, a time frame within which the student teacher would be expected to take full responsibility for the class.

5. Provide curricular resources to assist the student teacher in preparation for the development of instructional plans and activities.

6. Provide guidance in developing and implementing all aspects of the student teacher’s first lessons. Decisions concerning instructional goals, lesson objectives, activities, materials, and evaluation should be made jointly during Stages I and II.

7. Systematically observe and monitor the student teacher and carefully critique each lesson taught during Stages I and II, and periodically thereafter.

8. Ensure that the student teacher’s introduction to the practice of teaching is appropriate to his/her individual strengths and needs. The length of the initial period of observation may vary from student to student. During this period, the student teacher should be encouraged to become involved with the class by assisting individual students, collecting materials, and by observing the teacher and pupils, when otherwise not responsible for the class.

9. Remain in the classroom until you are satisfied the student teacher is competent to handle the class. Thereafter, observe frequently enough to provide the student teacher with adequate supervision and assistance. The student teacher should know where you are at all times when you are not in the classroom.
10. Keep the student teacher and the university supervisor informed of the student teacher’s progress. Offer critique as necessary in regularly scheduled conferences.

The Checklist for the Cooperating Teacher

1. Before the student teacher arrives

   ____ A. Review the student teaching application provided by Central Washington University.
   ____ B. Review this handbook and any other materials provided by Central Washington University.
   ____ C. Prepare your PK-12 pupils for the arrival of the student teacher.
   ____ D. Gather curricular materials the student teacher may use. Be sure to include teacher manuals when these are available.
   ____ E. Select a strong attribute from the student teacher's application which can be emphasized to students in order to build credibility for the student teacher.
   ____ F. Be willing to accept the student teacher as a partner in your instructional team.

2. When the student teacher arrives, but before pupils arrive

   ____ A. Have the principal orient the student teacher to the school.
   ____ B. Introduce the student teacher to the teachers in neighboring classrooms.
   ____ C. Provide the student teacher with a desk or table.
   ____ D. Orient the student teacher to what the class is doing.
   ____ E. Explain the schedule, facilities for lunch, etc.
   ____ F. Give the student teacher a seating chart.
   ____ G. Find out when and where student teaching seminars will be conducted.
   ____ H. Review the constructivist theory and how it may be applied in your classroom with the student teacher.
   ____ I. Develop a daily plan of how the student will observe, confer, assess, and reflect on his/her performance as a student teacher.

3. After the pupils arrive the first day when the student teacher is present

   ____ A. Introduce the student teacher in a way to convey respect and status. (Optional student teacher titles: teaching intern, co-teacher, or team teacher.)
   ____ B. Encourage the student teacher to look for various characteristics in pupils, e.g., those who respond quickly, those who seem reticent, those who are not attentive, etc.
   ____ C. Encourage the student teacher to associate names with faces as quickly as possible.
   ____ D. Invite the student teacher to shadow you, walking among pupils when you do, etc.
4. **At the end of the first day**

   A. Confer with the student teacher about his/her observations of pupils in the room.
   
   B. Confer with the student teacher on school routine.
      1) Time of arrival and departure for teachers.
      2) Time of arrival and departure for pupils.
      3) Bus regulations and duties.
      4) Hall duty, lunchroom duty, noon duty, and others.
      5) Office routine: reading faculty bulletin and checking mail.

   C. Reflect with the student teacher on above routine activities.

5. **During short conference periods throughout the remainder of the week**

   A. Acquaint the student teacher with available facilities:
      1) Introduce the student teacher to the librarian.
      2) Require the student teacher to become familiar with library materials relating to the curriculum for the grade or subject being taught.
      3) Show the student teacher where the audio/visual equipment is kept and describe how to check equipment in/out/return:
         a) video camera
         b) document camera
         c) TV/VCR
         d) laser disk
         e) overhead projector
         f) specialized AV carts with computers, etc.
         g) CD player
         h) tape recorder
         i) other equipment
      4) Show the student teacher where the art and school supplies are kept and when these may be obtained.
      5) Explain the policy of coffee and snacks in the teacher’s room.
      6) Introduce the student teacher to special consultants and other school personnel:
         a) secretary
         b) school nurse
         c) custodian
         d) school counselor
         e) psychologist
         f) other

   7) Give the student teacher a school handbook.
   8) Outline the daily schedule.
   9) Explain the behavior expected of students in halls, playgrounds, lunchrooms, parking lots, etc.
   10) Acquaint the student teacher with the local community.
11) Explain participation in specific extracurricular activities.
12) Explain when and where faculty meetings are held and require the student teacher to attend.

6. During planned conference periods throughout the quarter

A. Present an overview of the school and its services to the pupils.
B. Explain the philosophy of the school, objectives, etc.
C. Define and reflect on your philosophy of teaching and learning with the student teacher.
D. Allow the student teacher to refine his/her philosophy of teaching and learning based on constructivism.
E. Help the student teacher understand the basic principles of teaching and learning by observing you and through assigned reading on:
   1) Readiness
   2) Planning
   3) Motivation
   4) Principles of learning
   5) Characteristics and needs of pupils at level taught
   6) Evaluating lessons
   7) Evaluating pupils
   8) Bulletin boards
   9) Audio/visual aids
   10) Questioning
   11) Subject matter content
   12) Assignments
   13) Pupil participation activities
F. Help the student teacher learn the necessity of developing good personal relationships with the administrators, co-workers, parents, and pupils.
G. Assist the student teacher to develop a professional demeanor.
H. Assist the student teacher in developing classroom management skills that promote positive, effective learning.
I. Help the student teacher develop and respect personal integrity.
J. Help the student teacher see the need for self-improvement through reading, coursework, in-service meetings and self-reflection.
K. Help the student teacher to develop personal potential relative to the characteristics and abilities emphasized on the student teaching evaluation.

7. From the first day—participation activities for the student teacher

A. Give the student teacher papers to grade and grades to record.
B. Have the student teacher listen to pupils read, or help a small group, if appropriate.
C. Encourage the student teacher to work with individual pupils.
D. Have the student teacher scan tests and library books.
E. Have the student teacher participate in class discussions.
F. Make the student teacher feel a part of the classroom.
G. Provide opportunities for the student teacher to practice writing on the board.
H. Assign the student teacher routine tasks.

8. When the student teacher first begins teaching

A. Check lesson plans carefully. Require them the week prior to teaching.
B. Suggest improvements in the plans based on constructivist theory.
C. Evaluate the teaching for strengths and weaknesses.
D. Give additional responsibilities gradually.
E. Leave the room for short periods when you are sure the student teacher can handle the situation.
F. Treat the student teacher in a professional manner. Do not criticize the student teacher in front of pupils, but later, lead the student teacher in a reflective discussion of the activities that need to be improved.
G. Refrain from interrupting the lesson when the student teacher is teaching.
H. Require the student teacher to attend professional meetings for which attendance is required of you.

9. During full-time teaching

A. Check lesson plans carefully. A substitute should be able to follow them.
B. Encourage the student teacher to use new ideas.
C. Stay out of the room as much as possible. Both student teacher and pupils react differently when the cooperating teacher is in the classroom.
D. Set high standards and expect the student teacher to meet them.

10. Forms to be completed: During the experience of hosting and supporting your CWU student teacher, you will be asked to complete several forms, either individually or in conjunction with your student teacher and/or university supervisor. Below is a list of forms that must be completed. It is suggested that the forms be completed in the order listed here. None of the forms will take inordinate amounts of time to complete and will add to the body of information about both Student Teacher and University Field Supervisor performance.

A. A-19 Invoice Voucher (a state form required for you to receive the remuneration for hosting your Student Teacher). Completed individually by you and returned to the Office of Field Experiences in the SASE provided.
B. Cooperating Teacher Experience and Orientation Form (a University-required program form to be completed in conjunction with the University Field Supervisor and returned to the Office of Field Experiences in the SASE provided.
C. Documentation of Collaboration and Discussion of Constructivism Form (a University-required program form to be completed in conjunction with the
Student Teacher after a discussion has occurred on the purpose and use of Constructivism in the student teaching placement). The Student Teacher will be responsible for submitting this document to the University Field Supervisor.

___ D. Student Teacher Attributes Scale form (a University-required program form to be completed solely by the Cooperating Teacher, shared with the Student Teacher and delivered, by the Cooperating Teacher, to the University Field Supervisor for inclusion in the Student Teacher’s departmental folder as evidence of successful completion of the program.) This form must be completed twice—once just prior to or at mid-experience and once just prior to or at the end of the experience.

___ E. Video Critique form (an optional University-required program form to be completed in conjunction with the Student Teacher and provided, by either the Student Teacher or the Cooperating Teacher, to the University Field Supervisor for inclusion in the Student Teacher’s departmental folder as evidence of successful completion of the program.) Note: This form is optional for the program but may be required by the University Field Supervisor for program completion.

___ F. Cooperating Teacher Comments for University Supervisor form (an optional University/program form designed to give the Department of Education and the individual University Field Supervisor feedback from the Cooperating Teacher. The form is sent directly to the Cooperating Teacher near the end of the quarter, along with a SASE, and is sent back to the Office of Field Experiences, tabulated, and then released to the University Field Supervisor. Cooperating Teacher comments may be kept confidential (there is no space for a name on the form), but the forms are eventually distributed to the University Field Supervisor for professional reflection and improvement). This form is optional.
Lesson Planning

The student teacher will prepare daily lesson plans several days before they are to be taught so they can be reviewed by the cooperating teacher and revisions may be suggested. The cooperating teacher remains responsible for the classroom throughout the student teaching experience. The student teacher should only be allowed to present lessons if the cooperating teacher has approved them prior to the day they are to be taught.

Lesson plans should include enough details so the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor can evaluate them. They must provide sufficient information for the student teacher to use them with confidence and so that a substitute would be able to follow them.

The Integrated Unit Plan Format and Rubric (included in the back of the handbook) includes the following:

1. **Objectives/EALRs** – Written in clear and measurable terms.
2. **Materials** – Specific materials needed for the lesson should be identified.
3. **Procedures** –
   a. The introduction should promote interest, motivate students, and relate the lesson to prior and future instruction.
   b. Lesson content and student activities should be carefully designed and described.
   c. Concluding activities should be described.
   d. Closure is conducted by the student teacher at the end of each lesson with a check for understanding. **Pupils** are to generate a summary or review of key lesson components.
4. **Evaluation and Rationale** – A rationale and assessment must be given for each activity. Note whether a formal or informal assessment of student performance will be conducted to indicate mastery of lesson objectives.

Lesson plans should be flexible enough to meet changes that occur during teaching. The student teacher should be encouraged to anticipate potential difficulties and be prepared to handle problems that occur.

The importance of planning cannot be overemphasized. The first long-range plans and the first few weeks of daily plans should result from a sharing of ideas. This procedure establishes a pattern which may be altered as the plans improve and as greater independence is earned by the student teacher.

Observing, Conferring, Assessing, and Reflecting

The activities of observing, conferring, assessing, and reflecting are essential to the professional growth of the student teacher. Activities must be observed in a systematic manner so that objective data are gathered. Supervisors must confer with the student teacher to ensure that data collected are interpreted in a manner that promotes
professional growth. The student teacher must be able to determine his/her own effectiveness in (a) meeting the objectives of the lesson taught, and (b) in meeting the objectives of the student teaching program.

Observing
The student teacher is under constant observation but must be systematically and objectively observed, especially when teaching lessons. Cooperating teachers should use one or more instruments for assessment to ensure objective data are collected.

Conferring
Conferring with the student teacher gives the cooperating teacher opportunities to provide highly individualized instruction.

Cooperating teachers should be well prepared for both formal and informal conferences. Analyze data collected during the observation to identify critical episodes, patterns, and learning consequences. Anticipate the student teacher’s needs, interests, and probable behavior. Have observation data readily accessible.

Set the stage for formal conferences by arranging a time and place that is as free from interruptions as possible. Begin the conference by focusing on one or two important issues. Assist the student teacher in identifying what he/she does well by helping analyze their teaching. Record, in writing, the major topics discussed and any plans or actions to be taken in the future.

Listen carefully. An effective conference contains a mutual exchange of ideas and discussion topics. Encourage the student teacher to analyze his or her progress and identify steps towards improvement.

Assessing
The objective and critical analysis of your student teacher’s progress is not a simple task. You will find the task easier if you use a systematic and objective technique of data gathering and data interpretation. While “gut level feelings” may be accurate, they are never credible without objective data for support.

The student teacher’s growth is recorded on a State of Washington pedagogy assessment instrument provided by Central Washington University. Evaluation will involve the cooperating teacher, the university supervisor and, when appropriate, the building principal. Evaluation requirements and guidelines include, but are not limited to:
1. A three-way conference at mid-term. The cooperating teacher and the university supervisor review the evaluation form together and then discuss the results with the student teacher.

2. At the end of the university term, a final evaluation conference is conducted in the same manner as the mid-term.

3. University supervisors observe the student teacher present a variety of lessons. University supervisors will formally observe and confer with the student teacher a minimum of four times.

4. Some techniques to assist in promoting the student teacher’s growth include:
   a. A daily reflective journal may be kept as an anecdotal record and reflection on daily happenings.
   b. Conferences may be either formal or informal:
      1) Normally informal conferences are brief. They may take place before or after school, during free periods, during lunch or after a lesson presentation.
      2) Formal conferences should be scheduled regularly. Suggestions should be specific and recorded in writing. The evaluation form and/or observation forms provided by CWU may be used as a guide.

5. The university supervisor is responsible for arranging and completing the final evaluation. The evaluation form provided by Central Washington University is used for this final report. Student teaching grades are recorded as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

6. Recommendations for the student teacher’s placement file are optional and are written only at the discretion of the cooperating teacher, and at the specific request of the student teacher.

Reflecting

It is critical that you, as the cooperating teacher, provide ample opportunities for your student teacher to reflect on the daily and weekly classroom activities. It is through this activity of “reflection” that the student teacher can weigh the effectiveness of his or her positive impact on student learning. It is suggested that this reflective process be a consistent component of the daily instructional activity.

From the reflective activities, your insights and experience can assist the student teacher to seek alternative ways to improve previous instructional activities. This daily activity may be the most rewarding to you as a cooperating teacher and most insightful for the aspiring teacher.