



Masters of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Program Roles and Expectations

ROLE OF THE CLASSROOM MENTOR TEACHER

- Guide
- Advisor
- Collaborator
- Observer
- Reflective Practitioner
- Evaluator
- Facilitator of Learning
- Teacher

Responsibilities of the Classroom Mentor Teacher

Planning and Preparation

It is the role of classroom mentor teacher to:

- 1) Meet with his or her classroom mentor teacher as early as possible after the tentative teaching assignment has been arranged.
- 2) Review with the teacher candidate the curriculum to be covered.
- 3) Issue textbooks and other teaching materials to the teacher candidate.
- 4) Agree upon a tentative plan for the teacher candidate assuming teaching responsibility in the room.
- 5) Show the teacher candidate a Faculty Handbook and/or Student Handbook and review administrative regulations and routines; share the classroom discipline plan.

Teaching the Class

The primary role of classroom mentor teacher is to provide their classes with the best curriculum and the most expert teaching possible. To achieve this end, it is the mentor's responsibility to:

- 1) Determine when the teacher candidate should assume the major responsibility for teaching the class or classes.

- 2) Expose the teacher candidate to a variety of teaching materials and strategies.
- 3) Assist the teacher candidate with the development of effective classroom management.
- 4) Provide work and storage space for the teacher candidate, if possible.
- 5) Approve the teaching plan **prior** to having the teacher candidate take over the class.
- 6) Frequently observe the teacher candidate teaching the class and offer suggestions for improvement. Identify and analyze strong and weak areas.
- 7) Make contact with the teacher candidate during each class session (even if it's 2-3 minutes at the beginning or end of the lesson).
- 8) Inform the teacher candidate of where he/she may contact you, if you are going to be out of the classroom while class is in session.
- 9) Arrange with your colleagues the opportunity for your teacher candidate to observe their classes.
- 10) Encourage the teacher candidate to become involved in the total school program by participating in school assemblies, faculty and department meeting, PTO meetings, athletic events, stage productions, parent conferences, in-service meetings, etc.
- 11) Meet with the teacher candidate, apart from class time, on a **regular** basis to help review the progress to date, critique the performance of the teacher candidate, and assist in planning daily lessons for the upcoming week. In this way, teacher candidates will not feel "*deserted*" or "*left stranded*" by their classroom mentors.
 - a. Inform the university field supervisor if the teacher candidate is not satisfactorily meeting the basic needs and interests of the students. A three-way conference can be held at this point to determine whether (and/or under what conditions) the teacher candidate should continue.
 - b. Know and understand the roles of the teacher candidate and the university field supervisor.
 - c. Treat the teacher candidate as a novice colleague.

Evaluation of Internship Performance

It is the role of the classroom mentor teachers to:

- 1) Maintain responsibility for the evaluation of the students in your class/es.
- 2) Meet with the university field supervisor periodically to discuss the strengths and/or needs of the teacher candidate.
- 3) Encourage the teacher candidate to engage in self-evaluation and reflection activities. The teacher candidate is required to keep a reflection journal for these purposes.
- 4) Participate in the Mid-term (prior to full take over) and Final Evaluations of the teacher candidate's performance in collaboration with the university field supervisor and teacher candidate. The Midterm and Final Evaluation are returned to Central Washington University by the university field supervisor.

Classroom Mentor Teacher's Concerns

Some questions are asked repeatedly by classroom mentor teachers. Many of these questions cannot be answered unequivocally, but an attempt will be made here to at least provide some insights.

- How frequently should I leave the classroom? How much should teacher candidates be on their own?

There are several concerns apparent here. A recent survey of classroom mentor teachers found them most critical of other classroom mentor teachers who spent an inordinate amount of time away from the classroom. The implication then is that teacher candidates should not be regarded as substitutes, as individuals who release teachers to do other tasks. Rather they should be viewed as novice teachers placed in the classroom to grow professionally with the direct help and mentoring of experienced teachers. Thus, without the classroom mentor teacher's vital input, the student teaching experience becomes decidedly diluted and much less effective for the participating students. In the final analysis, the classroom mentor teacher retains the responsibility for the classroom, the students, and the teacher candidate.

- What should I do when the university field supervisor comes to visit?

Essentially, go on with whatever you had planned to do as if the university field supervisor were not there. You can find perhaps a few moments to discuss your progress with our university field supervisor, but this discussion need not interrupt your regular classroom schedule.

- How many hours a day is the teacher candidate required to be in the school?

Teacher candidates are to be in the building the same time that the district requires a full-time, certified teacher to be there, unless there is a related student teaching activity that they are to attend. Classroom mentor teachers will be informed of such adjustments at the beginning of the student teaching internship.

- What should be done when either the teacher candidate or the classroom mentor teacher fails to assume responsibilities?

Realizing that each may have a different perception of a situation, both parties should make an effort to communicate with the other on a one-on-one basis. If this approach fails to produce the desired results, one or both should contact the university field supervisor who can then communicate with them singly and/or jointly to resolve the problem area.

- What is the biggest problem classroom mentor teachers and teacher candidates face?

It is difficult to imagine that a classroom mentor teacher and teacher candidate can spend many hours each week in the same classroom without communicating. But, the fact is that this is the most serious problem in the Master of Arts in Teaching Teacher Certification Program Internship. There are many roadblocks to effective communication, and some of the most frequently cited are:

No time before school or after school due to demands of preparation, university class schedules, and lunch and/or playground supervision.

No time during the school day since one or both of the parties must be working with pupils.

Feelings of inadequacy or insecurity on the part of the classroom mentor teacher or teacher candidate.

Over-concern for “hurting the feelings” of either party.

No place to talk in private.

These obstacles indicate some of the difficulties in developing good communication between the teacher candidate and classroom mentor teacher. However, as many excellent classroom mentor teachers have demonstrated, the situation is not impossible.

- What should be done when the teacher candidate possesses undesirable traits?

First, make sure you are on firm ground by conferring with your principal and the university field supervisor. Hairstyles and clothing fashions are not easy to agree on. Probably the best criterion here is whether or not the teacher candidate’s style is in conflict with the district's policy regarding professional dress, or is disruptive to students..

There are rare teacher candidates with problems of sloppiness, cleanliness, and odor. These matters need immediate attention and are frequently handled by the university field supervisor before the teacher candidate reports to the classroom. The best approach is to be direct and objective, but kind in dealing with a teacher candidate with such problems.

- What can be done about teacher candidates with glaring educational problems such as inability to use standard written and oral language?

One of the mysteries of student teaching is how an individual can enter the internship phase of professional preparation and lack these skills. These individuals are rare and must possess an uncommon talent for concealing their problems. The inadequacies show up when the teacher candidate must write on the chalkboard before the class or give oral instruction. These difficulties must be corrected, requiring the attention of the classroom mentor teacher and hard work on the part of the student. Often, student

teaching provides the first motivation these individuals have had to correct their deficiencies and some of them can do it quite rapidly. Usually, some compensation can be made while the teacher candidate works on a problem. Chalkboard assignments can be written on paper in advance with the spelling corrected, for example. Since it usually will be impossible for the teacher candidate to hide these problems from pupils, the teacher candidate needs to deal with the problem openly.

- What if my teacher candidate fails? Will I be regarded as a failure as a classroom mentor teacher?

Classroom mentor teachers become personally involved in the success of their teacher candidates. When teacher candidates fail, they sometimes feel guilty, wondering where they have gone wrong. In the vast majority of cases, these guilt feelings are not warranted. Most classroom mentor teachers go beyond the call of duty in helping their teacher candidates succeed. Because of this, there is a very small percentage of failure. Typically, less than one percent of students are dropped or removed from the program, and these teacher candidates agree that teaching is not the career for them.

Typically, teacher candidates with problems receive many more hours of help than do successful teacher candidates. In addition to the classroom mentor teacher, the university field supervisor, building principal, and university personnel are usually involved. No one person need feel responsible for the failure of a student teacher.

ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY FIELD SUPERVISOR

- Evaluator
- Guide
- Support for teacher candidate and mentor teacher

Responsibilities of the University Field Supervisor

The University Field Supervisor will:

- 1) Communicate regularly with the mentor teachers and administrators.
- 2) Troubleshoot any issues with mentor teacher and APT teacher candidate.
- 3) Observe intern at least four times throughout the school year for formal observations.
- 4) Conduct one meet and greet toward beginning of school year with intern and mentor teacher.
- 5) Check in with mentor teacher periodically.
- 6) Complete 4 formal observations.
- 7) Evaluate intern's work and readiness to continue in their APT program.
- 8) Complete 2 mid-term evaluations and 1 final evaluation in concert with the mentor teacher.

- 9) Provide support to interns and mentor teachers as needed.

Planning and Preparation

It is the role of the university field supervisors to:

- 1) Hold teacher candidates accountable for their understanding of “best practice,” relating theory learned to effective planning.
- 2) Advise teacher candidates on novel strategies for teaching episodes.
- 3) Provide insights on the effectiveness of planning to their teacher candidates.
- 4) Aid the teacher candidate in analyzing classroom problems.
- 5) Develop a Plan of Action with the teacher candidate when progress toward mastery needs remediation.

Teaching the Class

The primary role of the university field supervisor is to promote curriculum development and to encourage expert teaching. To achieve this end, it is the mentor's responsibility to:

- 1) Assist in the improvement of the teaching-learning process by serving as a mentor who is a fellow-teacher, counselor and, if necessary, troubleshooter. Observe the teacher candidate working with pupils at least once every two weeks.
- 2) May conduct regularly scheduled seminars with their teacher candidates. The seminars should provide activities and suggestions which stimulate and maintain the professional growth of the teacher candidates. Frequently teacher candidates feel insecure in the areas of classroom management, discipline and assessment; these would be excellent topics to include during discussion.
- 3) Serve as a resource for classroom mentor teachers, stressing the consultant and cooperative aspect of the mentor role.
- 4) Work with public school personnel to develop competency in guiding teacher candidates.

Evaluation

It is the role of university field supervisors to:

- 1) Meet with classroom mentor teachers to discuss the development and/or needs of the teacher candidates.
- 2) Encourage the teacher candidates to engage in self-evaluation activities.
- 3) Arrange additional three-way conferences as needed.
- 4) Meet with each classroom mentor teacher and teacher candidate to conduct three-way conferences for the *Mid-terms* and Final Evaluations of each teacher candidate's performance. The university field supervisor is responsible for returning the Final Evaluation forms.
- 5) Write recommendation letters upon teacher candidate's requests.

BUILDING HELPING RELATIONSHIPS

The primary concern of classroom mentor teachers and university field supervisors is “How can I build a helping relationship which will prove beneficial to the teacher candidates?” Perhaps the following questions adapted from Carl Rogers’ *The Characteristics of a Helping Relationship* can serve as a beginning point:

1. Can I behave in a way that will be perceived by the other person as trustworthy, dependable, or consistent in some deep sense?
- 2.. Can I let myself experience positive attitudes toward this other person—attitudes of warmth, caring, liking, interest, respect?
3. Can I be respectful of my own feelings, my own needs as well as those of another?
- 4.. Am I secure enough with myself to permit another person their individuality in teaching styles?
5. Can I accept each human characteristic of this other person? Can I receive that person as he/she is? Can I communicate this attitude?
6. Can I act with sufficient sensitivity in the relationship that my behavior will not be perceived as a threat?
7. Can I free the teacher candidate from the threat of external evaluation while providing feedback on professional teaching?
8. Can I meet this other individual as a person who is in the process of becoming a professional educator?

All parties—the teacher candidate, the classroom mentor teacher, and the university field supervisor—should bear in mind that student teaching is a learning experience. The teacher candidate is not expected to start as a polished, skilled teacher. When things go wrong, attention should be focused on the possible learning that can result rather than what went wrong. Similarly, when communication problems develop, the focus should be on listening to each other’s viewpoint and initiating discussion when something is not clear. Only through a cooperative effort on the part of all three persons can the student teaching experience bring positive growth.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN?

THE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

MAT candidates come with a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and comfort levels. For this reason, every intern takes on classroom responsibilities at a different rate. Candidates seem to follow a similar pattern although there will be individual variation. All phases and the designated amount of time in each phase is determined by the classroom, mentor, university field supervisor, in collaboration with the intern.

Phase in schedule

The Phase-In Schedule is a suggested sequence for the teacher candidate's assumption of responsibility. It is a norm from which the classroom mentor teacher, teacher candidate and university field supervisor will work when structuring a specific teacher candidate's internship. In instances where the intern is on emergency contract, is contracted as an emergency substitute, or has had previous field experiences in the classroom mentor teacher's room, the schedule might be accelerated; in instances where a teacher candidate is progressing slowly, the schedule will be adjusted accordingly.

In all cases, it is essential that the classroom mentor teacher remain actively involved in the room's instructional program, monitoring the teacher candidate's progress closely. The university field supervisor will work with the team to insure that the teacher candidate meets the minimum requirement of 720 hours of teaching responsibility.

The student teaching internship experience is divided into four phases

Phase I - Orientation

Phase II - Assuming Partial Responsibility

Phase III - Full Responsibility

Phase IV - Transfer of Responsibility, Working the Classroom, or Observing

As there will be many notes taken and provided to the intern, teacher candidates must keep all documentation in their Professional Education INTASC Portfolio. The notes, forms, lesson plans, handouts, school policies and memos should be readily available at all conference and meetings with the interns support team (school placement personnel and university personnel.)

Suggested Calendar Timeline

Route 2

Designed for para educators or instructional assistants, this route allows para educators to continue to work in their current position while they complete their internship. In so doing, they practice alongside their mentor teacher and gain insight about making the transition from a para educator to a classroom teacher.

Weeks 1-5

- Observations of Mentor Teacher and/or other classroom teachers
- Complete assigned Paraeducator responsibilities
- Weeks 6-10
 - Observations of Mentor Teacher and/or other classroom teachers
 - Complete assigned Paraeducator responsibilities
 - Co-Plan with Mentor Teacher
 - Assist with small group instruction
 - Plan 1-3 lessons for potential formal observation
- Weeks 11-16
 - Observations of Mentor Teacher and/or other classroom teachers
 - Complete assigned Paraeducator responsibilities
 - Co-Plan with Mentor Teacher
 - Plan Assessments with Mentor Teacher
 - Grade Assessments with Mentor Teacher
 - Assist with small group instruction
 - Take over responsibility for lead instruction with a small group and/or whole class.
 - Plan 6-10 lessons for potential formal observation
- Weeks 17-20
 - Observations of Mentor Teacher and/or other classroom teachers
 - Complete assigned Paraeducator responsibilities
 - Shift to responsibility for lead planning, assessing, and instruction for small group or whole group instruction for a period of the day (i.e. at middle and secondary levels, take over a prep; at elementary level, take over a portion of day)
 - Grade assessments on your own
 - Prepare for potential formal observation.
- Weeks 21-27
 - Full time “Student Teaching”
 - Shift in responsibility for full-time lead instruction.
 - If possible, mentor teacher assumes responsibility for your paraeducator duties during this time; otherwise, a leave of absence should be requested.
 - Prepare for potential formal observation.
 - Complete edTPA Planning, Instruction, and Assessment Tasks.
- Weeks 28 - end of the school year
 - Gradually return lead instructor responsibility over to mentor teacher.
 - Shift to observation and assistance.
 - Assemble portfolio and prepare to exit program.

Route 3

This route is designed for individuals who are not already working in the schools but who would like to do so eventually. The most traditional route of the three, this route is designed for an individual who wants the most in-depth mentorship. The internship is unpaid and continues for a minimum of 720 hours (90 full days), but the teacher candidate gradually assumes more and more responsibility for lead classroom instruction.

Weeks 1-5

- Observations of Mentor Teacher and/or other classroom teachers
- Weeks 6-10
- Observations of Mentor Teacher and/or other classroom teachers
- Co-Plan with Mentor Teacher
- Assist with small group instruction, assessment, and/or grading
- Plan 1-3 lessons for potential formal observation

Weeks 11-16

- Observations of Mentor Teacher and/or other classroom teachers
- Co-Plan with Mentor Teacher
- Plan Assessments with Mentor Teacher
- Grade Assessments with Mentor Teacher
- Assist with small group instruction
- Take over responsibility for lead instruction with a small group and/or whole class for a unit or series of lessons.
- Plan 6-10 lessons for potential formal observation

Weeks 17-20

- Observations of Mentor Teacher and/or other classroom teachers
- Shift to responsibility for lead planning, assessing, and instruction for small group or whole group instruction for a period of the day (i.e. at middle and secondary levels, take over a prep; at elementary level, take over a portion of the day)
- Grade assessments on your own
- Prepare for potential formal observation.

Weeks 21-27

- Full time "Student Teaching"
- Shift in responsibility to full-time lead instruction.
- Prepare for potential formal observation.
- Complete edTPA Planning, Instruction, and Assessment Tasks.
- Weeks 28 - end of the school year
- Gradually return lead instructor responsibility over to mentor teacher.
- Shift to observation and assistance.
- Assemble portfolio and prepare to exit program.

Route 4

This route is for individuals who are working in the school district as conditional hires or emergency hires in high-need areas. A district will occasionally hire individuals with

considerable work experience or education to teach a content area without a teaching license. To continue working in this position, however, the individual has a certain amount of time to obtain an initial certification. Route 4 teacher candidates work with their own students, in their own classroom and receive compensation from the district for doing so. A mentor teacher guides these candidates as they “learn the ropes” and complete the responsibilities of the internship through APT.

As the Route 4 candidate is immersed in their own assigned classroom, observations and supervision differs from other alternative routes.

Route 4 candidates must have a mentor teacher employed in the building of their placement. Mentor teachers must meet weekly for at least one hour with the intern to participate in planning, creating and reviewing lesson plans, creating and reviewing assessments, as well as review candidate’s progress and growth.

The mentor teacher of a Route 4 intern must formally observe the intern teach 3 times per quarter (once per month). The intern is responsible for documenting the observations by placing the appropriate forms and notes in their Professional Education INTASC Portfolio.

Interns seeking certification through Route 4 of the Master of Arts in Teaching Teacher Certification Program at Central Washington University must demonstrate a record of being supervised and observed by an administrator (building or district). The first observation should occur within the first 6 weeks of school. Coordinate with administration to obtain three additional observations throughout the year for a total of four administrative observations.

STAGES OF STUDENT TEACHING

STAGE 1

1. Observe and analyze teaching techniques and methods, including classroom management strategies based on Constructivism.
2. 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
3. Assist the teacher in correcting papers, housekeeping duties, preparing assignments and materials, helping individual pupils, and other related activities.
4. Assume “bit-teaching” responsibilities such as introducing lessons, making assignments, and conducting drills.

5. Conference regularly with classroom mentor teacher & discuss the extent to which Student Teaching is modeling constructivist attributes.

STAGE II

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 classroom mentor 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.

STAGE III:

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

STAGE IV:

When teaching competence is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the classroom mentor teacher and university supervisor, the Candidate may observe other teachers.

Suggestions

The following activities for classroom mentor teachers are suggested to assist the Candidate meet program objectives while completing their clinical experience:

Help the Candidate understand your responsibilities as they relate to the total school program. For example:

- Expose him/her to class activities and course offerings and explain how the activities are related to the constructivist theory.
- Expose him/her to and encourage him/her to participate in extra-class activities and other non-teaching duties.
- Acquaint him/her with the physical facilities of the school.
- Introduce him/her to the teachers and administrative staff in the school, and insure a welcome at staff and other professional meetings.
- Include him/her in parent contacts.
- Help him/her identify and obtain resource materials.

Assist the Candidate in defining his/her role in terms of duties and responsibilities. This may be done by:

- Scheduling a formal conference with the Candidate to clarify expectations with regard to classroom procedures.
- Providing opportunities for the Candidate to observe different instructional strategies appropriate to the teaching situation.
- Modeling and facilitating the development of the Candidate's professional attitudes in contacts with the school and community.
- Facilitating the Candidate's understanding of professional ethics.

- Acquainting the Candidate with the rules and regulations applicable to pupils and teachers in the school building and district.
- Insuring that the Candidate knows and understands the instructional goals and management systems for the class.

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

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

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

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

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

Ensure that the Candidate'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 Candidate 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.

Remain in the classroom until you are satisfied the Candidate is competent to handle the class. Thereafter, observe frequently enough to provide the Candidate with adequate supervision and assistance. The Candidate should know where you are at all times when you are not in the classroom.

Keep the Candidate and the university supervisor informed of the Candidate's progress. Offer critique as necessary in regularly scheduled conferences.