Cooperating Teacher’s Role

1. Allow student teachers to assume responsibility and work into classroom routines gradually.

2. Provide the student teacher with information regarding school policies, procedures and rules necessary for the supervision of students.

3. Expect written lesson plans for all lessons taught by the student teacher.

4. Plan future lessons and assign responsibilities for the student teacher on a weekly basis.

5. Plan with the student teacher for the solo week and determine the unit topic if she/he will be teaching a unit of study. This should be completed by the second week of the placement.

6. Provide regular and consistent feedback to the student teacher and the university supervisor through the Weekly Evaluation/Observation Form (available online).

7. Observe the student teacher teach a lesson and provide feedback using an acceptable observation form (e.g., KTIP observation form, EKU observation form, district/school observation instrument).

8. Report to the university supervisor any concerns about the student teacher that need to be addressed or any concerns that may hinder a satisfactory completion of student teaching.

9. Complete a mid-term evaluation (EKU Form) on the student teacher’s progress, and provide a copy for the university supervisor and the student teacher.

10. Complete the final evaluation (EKU Form); give the original to the university supervisor and a copy to the student teacher. Be sure to review the evaluation with the student teacher and sign in all the appropriate places.

11. Provide the student teacher with assistance, guidance and counseling in matters concerning professionalism, confidentiality and future career directions.

12. Allow the student teacher to participate in professional development, department/team and faculty meetings and parent-teacher conferences when appropriate or as needed.

13. Suggest appropriate items for inclusion in the student teacher’s professional portfolio. Provide guidance and support to the student teacher in preparing and completing the professional portfolio.

14. Provide guidance for development of a collaboration task (KTIP Task D), a leadership task (KTIP Task F) and a professional growth plan (KTIP Task E). The development of a Unit of Study Work Sample (KTIP Task G – J-2) is also a requirement for completing the student teaching experience and the cooperating teacher should work with the student teacher on this unit. These tasks may be completed in either block of student teaching.
14. Guide the student teacher to be aware of the cultural diversity in the classroom and positively use this diversity to enhance the lessons being taught. In compliance with the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, the University requires teacher candidates to have twenty (20) hours of field experiences in which they interact with culturally and linguistically diverse populations as well as exceptionalities. The cooperating teacher has a responsibility to work with the student teacher as he/she applies his/her knowledge of diversity, including exceptionalities, to design lessons and to provide learning experiences for the students in the classroom.
Cooperating Teacher’s Guide to Supervising Student Teachers

The purpose of this guide is to clarify the role of the cooperating teacher as a member of the student teaching triad. More detailed information about the expectations and responsibilities of the university supervisor and the student teacher can be found on our Web site (www.education.eku.edu/fieldexperiences/FieldExp/).

Expectations of Cooperating Teachers

Cooperating teachers must meet minimum qualifications as set forth under Kentucky law (KRS 161.042). To be eligible for compensation from the Commonwealth of Kentucky, cooperating teachers must have a valid Kentucky teaching certificate and a minimum of 3 years teaching experience with a Rank II or 15 hours of college credit toward Rank II in the first 5 years of teaching and must have taught in the present school system at least one year.

Eastern Kentucky University has outlined the expectations for cooperating teachers on the Web site, www.education.eku.edu/fieldexperiences/FieldExp/. It is the expectation of the University that the role played by the cooperating teacher will facilitate the smooth working of the triad. It is important that the cooperating teacher: (1) provides daily, systematic feedback to the student teacher, (2) plan with the student teacher for lessons and units of study, (3) Formally observe the student teacher, (4) evaluate the student teacher using the mid-term evaluation, (5) complete the final evaluation of the student teacher, (6) periodically evaluate the portfolio, (7) address issues that impact the student’s performance as a teacher, (8) complete information forms requested by the Office of Teacher Education Services, (9) complete an evaluation of the University’s program, (10) work with the university supervisor and student teacher to facilitate the student teaching experience.
The student teacher responds best to collaborative rather than directive or nondirective models of supervision. The student teacher wants to be treated as a professional working together with the cooperating teacher in a mutually respectful classroom environment. While constructive criticism is expected and welcomed, it is best given in a manner that builds on the skills of the student teacher rather than destroys his/her confidence. For a successful mentoring experience and the development of a good rapport, the student teacher needs to know and understand the expectations of the cooperating teacher. Within the guidelines established by the cooperating teacher, the student teacher needs to be given sufficient opportunities to teach and opportunities to use strategies and activities in classroom instruction that he/she has developed.

The student teacher is required to write daily lesson plans and reflect on their effectiveness. Regular conferencing about lessons taught provides an opportunity for the student teacher to develop growth plans and to develop or hone her/his teaching skills. Weekly feedback using the evaluation instrument(s) provided is a good way for the cooperating teacher to monitor the progress of the student teacher.

**Common Concerns and Problems of the Student Teacher**

Student teachers come to the classroom with a variety of concerns and feelings. Some of these are stages of development common to many student teachers and include a series of phases:

- **Anxiety and Euphoria** – This is the beginning phase of student teaching and is about whether student teachers can succeed and manage the classroom. With early success, they can achieve a great sense of accomplishment.
- **Confusion and Clarity** – After assuming small teaching and administrative tasks, student teachers often become confused about the complexity of the classroom or the rules and routines in the school. As they teach more, they begin to see the fit between classroom management and teaching the lesson.
- **Competency and Inadequacy** – In this phase, the student teachers begin to “get the hang of it.” They begin to see the gaps and inadequacies in their skills. This is a place they need constant feedback and encouragement from the cooperating teacher.
- **Criticism and New Awareness** – As the student teachers become more confident, they view the work of the cooperating teacher in a more critical manner, and they can more easily evaluate themselves objectively. They become more aware of the hidden dimensions of the classroom and begin to shape their relationships with students.
- **More Confidence and Greater Inadequacies** – As confidence builds, student teachers may reject suggestions from the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor. They may feel they “know it all.” However, as they observe other teachers in the building, outstanding faculty or other student teachers, they realize that there is still much for them to learn.
- **Loss and Relief** – The end of student teaching is a mixture of sadness and joy. Student teachers are sad to leave the classroom where they have developed strong relationships with student and teachers. Yet, they are relieved that this phase of their training is complete.
Student teachers may bring personal problems with them (e.g., a difficult marriage, financial problems, insufficient support from significant others, a need to work outside the school day). These problems can influence their student teaching. They often do not anticipate the energy needed to teach every day, expect the demands of after school duties, or realize the expectations associated with being a teacher.

When a student teacher needs early and constant assistance, then the responsibility of the triad is elevated. Planning, feedback and plans of action become even more important, and all parties need to provide feedback and understand their role. Problems should be addressed early, and the triad should keep open lines of communication. If a student teaching problem is not resolved in this way, the Assistant Director of the Office of Teacher Education Services should be consulted.

**Observations and Growth Plans**

Providing consistent feedback and developing plans of action to address areas of growth are crucial in the development of student teachers. It is recommended that cooperating teachers receive training in the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP) and use the observation instrument (IPR) and growth plan process (KTIP Task E) to help guide student teachers. These and other forms are provided at the Teacher Education Services Web site ([www.education.eku.edu/fieldexperiences/FieldExperi](http://www.education.eku.edu/fieldexperiences/FieldExperi)). The student teacher, with the help of the cooperating teacher and university supervisor, should identify areas of growth and then provide evidence through a plan of action that this need is being addressed.

**Portfolios**

Student teachers are required to keep a portfolio organized around the Kentucky Teacher Standards. They come into student teaching with an acceptable portfolio that reflects their undergraduate work. During student teaching, they develop and extend the portfolio to reflect more accurately their work as a teacher. Cooperating teachers can assist student teachers in the portfolio process by helping them choose artifacts to include that will show their growth as a teacher (e.g., samples of work, lessons, student activities, pictures of classroom activity). The portfolio provides a rich source of material for evaluating the student teacher’s performance and assists the triad in developing growth plans.

**Evaluation**

Student teachers receive a satisfactory (S), unsatisfactory (U), or an incomplete (I) for a final student teaching grade. A mid-term grade is given as well. These grades are posted in the University computer system by the university supervisor and are heavily influenced by the assessment of the cooperating teacher.
It is important that the cooperating teacher regularly assess the performance of the student teacher and weekly provide feedback regarding her/his strengths and areas of growth. Using the KTIP process and helping the student teacher develop a growth plan (Task E) is a good way to monitor progress. Try to view evaluation as a part of the process for continued growth. Do no expect the student teacher to model your teaching practices exactly. Concentrate on a few growth areas and help the student teacher develop needed skills in those areas. Cooperating teachers are asked to complete a program evaluation to help the University assess its teacher education program and make changes as warranted. Student teachers are asked to provide evaluation data regarding cooperating teachers as well.

**Mentoring**

A successful cooperating teacher develops a positive working relationship with the student teachers; one in which he/she feels comfortable receiving constructive criticism and making plans to correct deficiencies. The mentoring skills the cooperating teacher brings to the relationship with the student teacher are critical for developing such a relationship. Below are some “Hints for Successful Mentoring:”

- Set a positive tone
- Listen carefully and probe gently
- Establish a foundation for building trust by sharing experiences and professional goals
- Facilitate reflection by clarifying, specifying, rephrasing and redirecting as needed
- Shift conversations gradually to issues of student learning (e.g., lesson plans, assessment)
- Wrap up conferences by reviewing what has transpired, record strengths and growth areas and generate items for the growth plan
- Provide resources to help the student teacher grow professionally

**Tuition Fee Courses/Stipends/Payment for Supervision of Student Teachers**

Cooperating teachers qualify for two (2) benefits from the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board. First, teachers qualify for tuition free courses at any public institution in Kentucky—three (3) hours for each eight weeks of service as a cooperating teacher. Second, cooperating teachers are paid a stipend from KEPSB for their service. In addition, Eastern Kentucky University pays cooperating teachers a modest stipend.

**Cooperating Teacher’s Checklist**

The following items are required to be submitted to the Office of Teacher Education Services

- Personal Information Form and Student Teaching Agreement
- Pages 1-9 Taxpayer Identification Number Request
- Tuition/Stipend Voucher
- Faculty Disposition Assessment (Complete Online)  
  [www.coe.eku.edu/TeachersAdmissionCert/admissions.php](http://www.coe.eku.edu/TeachersAdmissionCert/admissions.php)
- Program Evaluation Survey (Complete Online)  
  [www.education.eku.edu/fieldexperiences/Field Exp/](http://www.education.eku.edu/fieldexperiences/Field Exp/)