The Cooperating Teacher

Cooperating teachers are the person with whom the teacher candidate will associate most closely during clinical experience. It is important to establish and maintain a positive relationship with the teacher candidate including a mutual exchange of information, ideas and concerns. Always feel free to call upon the university supervisor for consultation whenever any concern arises. If a situation needs immediate attention and the university supervisor is not available you should contact the Director of Clinical Experience and Outreach.

Cooperating teachers are selected jointly by the university and the local school authorities. The minimum qualifications for a cooperating teacher listed in the School Code of Pennsylvania include:

- Baccalaureate degree
- A valid teaching certificate (Instructional I or Instructional II) in the subject area taught
- Three full years of successful experience in an approved school
- A minimum of one year experience in the present school

Additional Kutztown University requirements:

- Expertise in her/his area of teaching
- Models the philosophy of “lifelong learning”
- Uses proven best practice teaching strategies
- Commits to mentor teacher candidates
- Allows the teacher candidate to participate fully in the teaching process
- Provides an equal educational opportunity to all teacher candidates
- Agrees to participate in an orientation program for cooperating teachers at KU
Selection and Participation of Cooperating Teachers

- Receiving schools agree to have only one teacher candidate assigned to a classroom where a KU teacher candidate is placed.
- Receiving school agrees not to use teacher candidate as a substitute teacher.
- Placement of a teacher candidate with a particular cooperating teacher must be confirmed by the administrator designated by the district (i.e., central office administrator or building principal) and the Clinical Experience and Outreach Office at Kutztown University.
- District policy dictates the placement frequency of a teacher candidate with an individual cooperating teacher.

Preparing for the Teacher Candidate

Prior to beginning the clinical experience, cooperating teachers will receive the teacher candidate’s resume. Candidates will arrange to make a preliminary visit to the school to present background checks and visit the classroom. At this time an opportunity exists to share standards, goals and objectives, curricular topics to be presented, and day-to-day procedures: arrival and dismissal times, daily sign-in procedures, use of security badges, parking regulations, weather delay or cancellation information, emergency guidelines and other procedures.

Maintaining the relationship

Formal communication: Cooperating teachers are expected to observe and evaluate a minimum of three lessons using the KU in-progress evaluation form (available on the KU website). The first evaluation could provide an evaluation of the teacher candidate’s general progress during the first week or two. The evaluations are usually of a specific lesson independent from the lessons observed by the university supervisor.

Informal communication: Informal feedback should occur frequently. Both cooperating teacher and teacher candidate may choose to communicate through journaling thus providing feedback about specific lessons and allowing candidates an opportunity to reflect on the day’s activities. Teacher candidates are encouraged to initiate discussions whenever and wherever possible (i.e., prior to the beginning of the school day, during preparation periods and/or after school).

Beginning the experience: Most teacher candidates approach their clinical experience assignments with a slight degree of trepidation. The first few days will be important in setting a positive tone for the experience. Teacher candidates may be eased into clinical experience in the following ways:

1. Find time for informal conversations.
2. Provide an overall picture of the school and classroom including: discipline policies–classroom rules and consequences, handling disruptions and violent behavior, and all emergency procedures including but not limited to: fire drills, bomb threats, lock-downs, and universal precaution/first aid.
3. Discuss standards, curriculum objectives and topics for the eight-week assignment.
4. Explain information pertinent to the teaching processes used in the various classes or subject areas noting where experimentation would be possible and/or appreciated.
5. Introduce the teacher candidate to colleagues and administrators.
6. Take time to acquaint the teacher candidate with all school facilities.

Timetable for participation

Individual differences will determine the timeline in which the teacher candidate will assume responsibility for teaching lessons. Generally, the sooner the candidate begins teaching, the better the experience. Teacher candidates should take on teaching responsibilities gradually with the goal of teaching 100% of your schedule for at least two weeks.
The first week may be devoted to observing students and routines, assisting with administrative details and analyzing lessons. Most teacher candidates are ready to begin teaching by the second week. Initial teaching could involve co-teaching, teaching a lesson later in the day after first observing the lesson or following the routine for a lesson previously observed. All lessons to be taught must be accompanied by a lesson plan.

During the second week, teacher candidates should assume responsibility for teaching a subject or class that was observed several times during the first week. Before the end of the first week, plan accordingly with the teacher candidate as to the subject or class in which the first lesson will be taught. Discussions about curricular topics, methods and materials used should occur prior to assigning the first lesson. The teacher candidate should continue with the teaching responsibility for this subject or class for the duration of the assignment.

It is recommend that teacher candidate increase the teaching load each week by adding a subject or class until the teacher candidate is teaching full time. Full time teaching should occur for at least two weeks; however, some extremely capable teacher candidates may be able to take full responsibilities earlier and for a longer period of time.

**Preparing for teaching responsibilities**

Teacher candidates must submit lesson plans two days prior to implementation to provide ample time to review the plans and to make necessary suggestions. The university supervisor will explain the lesson plan format that is required by the department or certification program during his/her first visit. Teacher candidates are not permitted to teach without a lesson or unit plan approved by the cooperating teacher. This two day prior approval schedule permits time for revisions before the lesson is taught.

The teacher candidate should be encouraged to try as wide a variety of teaching methods as possible. An effective cooperating teacher demonstrates best practice and models the use of a variety of instructional resources and media.

**Weekly schedules**

The supervisor builds his/her visitation schedule around the teaching schedules. Weekly schedules are turned in each Tuesday at the on-campus practicum. Please try to supply the teacher candidate with an accurate projection of his/her teaching responsibilities on a Wednesday to Tuesday cycle. The university supervisor will collect schedules for the next week at the required weekly practicum on Tuesday afternoon. Last minute changes in schedule are at times unavoidable but changes that occur soon after the weekly schedule submitted must be communicated to the supervisor.

**Evaluation**

Both cooperating teacher and the university supervisor will evaluate teacher candidates using three formative (in-progress) evaluations. The evaluation forms for both in-progress and final evaluations are available on the KU website. During the seven-to-eight week assignment evaluations are completed at regular intervals as listed on the Clinical Experience Calendar. Copies of evaluations should be shared and discussed with the teacher candidate and university supervisor.

Evaluations are based on the Charlotte Danielson Model Framework for Effective Teaching. The four domains include:

1. Planning and Preparation
2. Classroom Environment
3. Instruction
4. Professional Responsibilities

Final evaluations are submitted electronically to the office of Clinical Experience and Outreach.

Many supervisors and cooperating teachers use a modified “clinical supervision model”. This involves a pre-observation conference: lesson goal and objectives are discussed, possible areas of concerns are noted targets or goals are review. These targets could be skill-based (e.g., oral language, questioning, management) or content-based (e.g.,
depth of information, organization of concepts) and are a carryover from the previous lesson observation/evaluation. During the actual observation the teacher candidate’s performance is carefully viewed and recorded in detail. Concerns are noted and movement toward the targets is assessed. The final step is the post-observation conference: cooperating teacher and the teacher candidate review the observation report. Encourage the teacher candidate to make inferences about his/her effectiveness. The post-observation conference becomes a planning conference. Focusing on a small number of targets after each observation is more effective in facilitating improvements than identifying many targets.

If the teacher candidate is not responding to suggestions the university supervisor should be apprised in a timely manner. The use of a “three-way conference” (teacher candidate, cooperating teacher and university supervisor) is often helpful in clarifying situations offering suggestions and establishing a timeline for change. If needed, the chair of the department is available to mediate serious problems. The Director of Clinical Experience and Outreach should be notified of any concerns with teacher candidates or supervision.

Based on these formative (lesson) evaluations, as well as other informational observations, the cooperating teacher will write a summative (formal) evaluation forms and the supervisor will complete a PDE 430 form. Potential employers will read the summative evaluations as a part of the candidate screening process. The contents and appearance of the final evaluation are important. The Conceptual Framework Standards found on the website may be used to frame the narrative statements required on the final evaluation. Guidelines for writing narrative evaluations are available. A template for preparing the final evaluation is available and can be secured from the university web site.

As the instructor of record for the clinical experience and practicum course, the university supervisor has the sole responsibility for assigning the final letter grade to the teacher candidate for each assignment. In compliance with guidelines established by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), copies of evaluations shall not be distributed to individuals or outside agencies without written permission from the teacher candidate.

Public School Administration

- Periodically recommends teachers under his/her supervision who are qualified, capable, and desire to work with teacher candidates to the university
- Advises the university officials concerning assignments of candidates and the approval of assignments
- Insures the continuity of all education programs, including clinical experience as it relates to the classroom
- Advises university officials of any problem that may affect the school program, the teacher candidate, or the public school students
- Acts as a counselor or professional advisor to those who may approach him or her for help
- Advises the university and offers suggestions for improving the teacher preparation program effectiveness

Compensation for Cooperating Teachers

- Stipend rates are set annually by the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE).
- Stipends are paid for each eight week assignment and are based on a two-step scale.
- First time cooperating teachers are paid a first step stipend ($122.50) subject to change based on PASSHE rate.
- Stipends increase to the second step for the second teacher candidate (and all subsequent teacher candidates) after the cooperating teacher participates in an orientation session at KU ($245.00) subject to change based on PASSHE rate.
- Attendance at the new cooperating teacher orientation is a one-time only requirement.
- Stipends for all fall cooperating teachers are paid in January; stipends for all spring cooperating teachers are paid in June.
Kutztown University
Teacher Certification Programs

Art Education (K–12)

Elementary Education
- Pre-K - Gr 4   Early Childhood Education
- Gr 4-8    Middle Level Education
  - Math & Science
  - Math & Social Studies
  - Math & English/LA & Reading
  - Science & English/LA & Reading
  - Science & Social Studies

- Special Education  N – 8 ( w/ El Ed dual major)
  Mentally and Physically Handicapped‡ (MPH)
  Special Education MPH & Elementary Education PreK-4
  Special Education MPH & Elementary Education Gr 4-8
  Visual Impairment ‡ (VI)

- Special Education VI & Elementary Education PreK-4
- Special Education VI & Elementary Education Gr 4-8

‡ Available only as dual certification program with Elementary Education.

- Library Science (K–12)
- Music Education (K–12)

- Secondary Education (7-12)
  - Social Studies
  - English
  - Modern Language
    - French–German–Spanish
  - Mathematics
  - Physics and Mathematics
  - Science

Kutztown University Cooperating School Districts

Berks County: Antietam, Boyertown, Brandywine Heights, Conrad Weiser, Daniel Boone, Exeter, Fleetwood, Governor Mifflin, Hamburg, Kutztown, Muhlenberg, Oley Valley, Reading, Schuylkill Valley, Tulpehocken, Twin Valley, Wilson, Wyomissing

Bucks County: Central Bucks, Palisades, Penrbridge, Quakertown

Carbon County: Lehighton, Palmerton, Panther Valley

Chester County: Owen J. Roberts, Coatesville, Downingtown

Lancaster County: Cocalico, Conestoga Valley, Ephrata, Hempfield, Lancaster, Manheim

Lebanon County: Lebanon, Palmyra

Lehigh County: Allentown, Catasaqua, East Penn, Northern Lehigh, Northwestern Lehigh, Parkland, Salisbury, Southern Lehigh, Whitehall-Coplay

Montgomery County: Colonial, Methacton, Norristown, North Penn, Perkiomen Valley, Pottsgrove, Pottstown, Souderton, Spring-Ford, Upper Moreland Township, Upper Perk

Montgomery County: East Stroudsburg, Pleasant Valley

Northampton County: Bangor, Bethlehem, Easton, Nazareth, Northampton, Pen Argyl, Saucon Valley, Wilson Area

Philadelphia County: Philadelphia City

Schuylkill County: Blue Mountain, Pine Grove, Pottsville, Saint Clair, Schuylkill Haven, Tamaqua

Intermediate Units: Berks County IU #14; Carbon-Lehigh IU #21, Chester County IU #24, Colonial-Northampton IU #20, Lancaster-Lebanon IU #13, Schuylkill IU #29, Bucks County IU #22, Montgomery County IU #23

Career & Technical Centers: Berks (BCTC), Lehigh Career & Technical Institute, Reading-Muhlenberg CTC, Bethlehem Area Vocational Technical School

Other: Maryland School for the Blind; Kidspeace; Parochial Schools; Private Schools; Public Libraries; Roberto Clemente Charter School; Overbrook School for the Blind; Ramey Unit School, Aguadilla, Puerto Rico