Cooperating Teacher Role Expectations
A Message from the Director of Teacher Education

Thank You!!! You play a very significant role in the professional development of teacher candidates, and we are grateful for your willingness to share your experiences – feats, follies, and all! We at UND Office of Field Placement & Student Teaching know how full your plates are, and we strive to make these partnerships mutually beneficial: our candidates are well prepared to assist you in your classroom, and in the reciprocal nature of education, our candidates will develop into a lead teacher with your guidance.

The role of the Cooperating Teacher may vary in methods of involvement; however, in every instance of hosting a teacher candidate, the Cooperating Teacher is the daily mentor, the one to share his/her resources, the one to provide constructive feedback, the one to guide the candidate to solve his/her own quandaries through guided questioning. In addition, the Cooperating Teacher shares responsibility for the students in the classroom; this shared responsibility may look differently in each classroom and at each level of education.

I am hopeful that by reading the following pages, you will be able to visualize a more complete picture of the Coop Teacher’s role. Resources are available to you on our Supervisor and Cooperating Teacher Blackboard site at http://tinyurl.com/ybsesz48. As always, if you have further questions, please contact our office – we are here to support you!

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Understanding Key Roles

Key Players
- Teacher Candidate
- Cooperating Teacher
- Supervisor
- Director
- Others

Roles of Key Players: Teacher Candidate
- **End Goal**: To show your professional competency as a practicing teacher
  - **Grow**: through semester to the end goal of taking on the entire classroom successfully
  - **Learn**: through semester so that you will become more confident
- **Your Role**: LEARNER-PROFESSIONAL TEACHER

Roles of Key Players: Cooperating Teacher
- Mentors you through the process of teaching on a daily basis; introduces you to faculty, students, parents
- Approves daily lesson plans (Use FEM); shares resources with you
- Has the final say on what happens in the classroom
- Shares more ownership of the classroom OVER TIME
- Evaluates your progress toward professional teaching level; helps you grow toward this

Roles of Key Players: Supervisors
- Liaison between the classroom teacher/school and UND; hired by UND
- Mentors you through the student teaching process periodically throughout the semester; you will meet during your first week of 5T or earlier
- Evaluates your progression toward professional level of teaching, and visits with you about your progress; helps you define goals to ensure growth toward this
- Facilitates discussion between you and cooperating teacher; and between you and me if problems occur in field
- Helps problem solve when necessary - communicate regularly!!!

Roles of Key Players: Director
- Visitor sometimes, problem solver other times; collaborator ALL THE TIME
- Decision maker
- When problems reach a level that involves decisions that significantly impact others (i.e., school, students, licensure, etc.)
- Involved when improvement plans or Action Plans are necessary
- Involved if unfair practices toward you (i.e., too much subbing, expected, etc.)

Roles of Key Players: Others
- **Principal**: runs the school; keeps rules and policies
  - Your role with the principal is to be one of her/his faculty members who is learning - she/he is your "immediate boss"
- **Who else?**
Important Perspectives:

**Perspective 1:**
It is natural for teachers to develop philosophies of teaching and opinions about how the student teaching experience should be, and many of these beliefs are based upon our own history of student teaching and how we were treated during that experience. It is important to note that just because something was done in the past, it does not have to be so in current times.

Today’s teacher candidates are prepared to a basic level of readiness for today’s classrooms, and it is the Cooperating Teacher – you - who helps to drive this basic level of readiness to the destination of full readiness for professional teaching by the end of the student teaching experience. It is imperative to understand that these teacher candidates are coming into this experience with:

- valuable insights, although not necessarily matured;
- excellent ideas based on current research, although not practiced regularly and not without imperfections;
- hopes and dreams with passions that should never be squelched, but that should be guided toward inclusion of reality;
- needs for continued guidance rather than “letting them go” immediately upon entering the classroom.

From this perspective, it becomes crystal clear that the Cooperating Teacher’s role is significant! You are a very important person in the equation of developing excellent teachers for tomorrow’s classrooms and you are needed in the student teaching classroom.

**Perspective 2:**
Just as it is important for you to understand that you are needed in the classroom and that teacher candidates have valuable ideas and skills that need honing, it would be very negligent of us to not acknowledge the level of risk that you take when hosting a student teacher. Today’s educational initiatives (teacher evaluation, high stakes testing for children/youth, etc.) have exaggerated the perception of risk that host teachers take on with a student teacher.

The bottom line is that you are responsible for each child’s academic achievement and emotional development, and the academic achievement must be measurable. Taking on a teacher candidate may seem like it is a greater risk than if you had chosen not to host him/her. Herein lies the second very important perspective: our teacher candidates should be viewed as an asset in helping children grow academically and emotionally – they are prepared and expected by their entire support system to be an asset to you and your students, not a liability. Research supports the fact that having a student teacher in the classroom provides added and essential supports for children, especially if you and the teacher candidate choose to implement the co-teaching model for student teaching.

The other part of the second important perspective is that there is a support system from the university for you and our candidates; this system consists of the Director of Teacher Education who will be in the field periodically to check on things and offer help if needed, the University Supervisor who will be in the classrooms more frequently to provide coaching, support and guidance, and to act as a liaison between you/the school and me. In addition, we have been developing even stronger partnerships with principals, and they have readily made themselves available to support our candidates and you throughout this process as well.
Collaboration: Partnerships in Practice

The relationship between the cooperating teacher, the supervisor, and the teacher candidate is one of *true partnership*. Historically, it has been a *cooperative* relationship where the cooperating teacher &/or the supervisor instructs the candidate in what to do, and the candidate would in turn do what was suggested.

Current practices illustrate a significant evolution of the relationship *to one of collaboration rather than cooperation*. Whether the cooperating teacher and the candidate have determined that they will implement the co-teaching model or the traditional model of student teaching, both avenues mandate collaboration; the former *cooperative* practice is no longer as useful or encouraged.

*Collaboration* means that each person brings ideas to the table and they are discussed from a professional perspective that *each holds value*. There is no longer one single expert and one single novice/learner; it is now understood that each party has valuable gifts to share. The former “single expert” is now “the one with real life professional teaching experience to share” and the former “novice/learner” is now “one who has relevant and innovative ideas based on current research and practice”; the two form a perfect equation of learning for both partners.

**THE COOPERATING TEACHER’S ROLE** in collaboration is to

1. Show that you value the teacher candidate’s ideas (this does not mean that every idea should be complemented, etc., but it should be considered = showing value);
2. Allow the candidate to try some things even if you know that the idea may not work – this is the chance for the candidate to learn why something might fail, to reflect on it, then to make things better the next time through guided questioning from you (cognitive coaching*);
3. Be willing to discuss difficult things with the candidate *respectfully* – awkward topics may include showing up on time, why the children may not be accepting of the candidate, varying philosophies on classroom management, etc.;
4. Build trust between you and the candidate from the very early stages – for example, once the placement is actually made and all parties are notified, that’s a great time to begin talking on the phone or in person about ideas!
5. Coach the teacher candidate in becoming *professionally* assertive in collaborations, and reflective in conversation and written communications;
6. Introduce the teacher candidate to all teammates and colleagues who will be working with you, and explain each person’s role to the candidate for planning purposes;
7. From the beginning of the experience, *co-plan* together for co-teaching lessons or even traditional teaching so that the candidate is immediately immersed in the experience and feels like a partner/collaborator right away – do not leave the teacher candidate to take over the classes immediately.
**General Expectations:**

Below is a list of the typical expectations of cooperating teachers.

*Cooperating teachers* are expected to:

1. Attend Teacher Talk at least once during the semester you are hosting a teacher candidate; however, attending both Teacher Talks is strongly encouraged!

2. **Initial Meeting:**
   a. Discuss with the candidate during your first meeting how you’d like him/her to report absences due to illnesses or emergencies. Share this with the University Supervisor as well.
   b. Work with the supervisor and candidate on choosing a consistent day of the week to turn in journal reflections.
   c. Discuss the beginning and ending dates to the experience:
      i. Fall semester: ALWAYS begins with the PD days at the beginning of the school year, and ends approximately 16 weeks later (if there are 5+ days off for holidays/breaks during that semester, then candidates must continue to teach into the 17th week)
      ii. Spring semester: NEGOTIABLE start date – EITHER begin immediately upon children’s return to school after the holiday break OR begin with UND’s start date, and end approximately 16 weeks later (if there are 5+ days off for holidays/breaks during that semester, then candidates must continue to teach into the 17th week)
      iii. Summer semester: NEGOTIABLE start date – MUST be a minimum of 10 weeks in length with NO days off. Since July 4th and Memorial Day are both in this semester, candidates must make up those days at the end of the experience to ensure a full 10-week student teaching experience. Last POSSIBLE date to end the experience is Reading & Review Day at UND (typically, first week in August)
   d. Discuss with the teacher candidate and the university supervisor the schedule of the day; plan together how the candidate should gradually take on a particular subject or class period.

3. Mentor the teacher candidate throughout the 16-week experience; develop a trusting relationship and environment.

4. Ensure that the teacher candidate is ready to take on the appropriate load of work at a given time (don’t hold them back, but don’t overload them 😊).

5. Communicate professionally and include constructive criticism along with some ideas for solutions to the problems; allow the candidate to come up with his/her own ideas as well.

6. Communicate regularly – set aside daily/weekly timeslots to visit with the candidate and go over your list and his/her list of items to discuss. Discuss challenges to philosophy and practice, how to better a lesson, discuss controversial issues, and to co-plan!!!

7. Provide resources to the candidate; be willing to accept ideas and resources from the candidate as well.

8. Provide opportunities (within reason) for the candidate to take a chance, fail, learn from it, and grow to be a better teacher. There should always be an end result of students learning, so make sure there’s time to fail, and time to do it again in a better way for children.

9. Discuss and share all models of assessment for students, including special education, informal and formal teacher tests, rubrics, state tests, and how to use the results to plan and design curriculum.

10. Set up strategic observations in other classrooms for the candidate either at the beginning, middle or end of the student teaching experience. Each person’s classroom needs are different; therefore,
the timing of this is up to the cooperating teacher and the candidate. The supervisor must be informed of when these days will take place.

11. Demonstrate a commitment to the profession and to your teacher candidate by behavior, personal appearance, speech, and attitude.

12. Participate in formal evaluation conferences between the teacher candidate, the supervisor and you. Be ready with your own copy of the evaluation already filled out in pencil (pdf format of evaluation is found on the resource site [http://tinyurl.com/ybseybse48](http://tinyurl.com/ybseybse48).

13. Evaluate teacher candidates fairly, objectively, and accurately on each evaluation tool – PLEASE pay attention to the actual wording on the evaluations and what you actually see the candidate doing – do not exaggerate their progress.

14. Explain how you plan for instruction – this is not a skill that comes easily for many candidates. Please explain this process and how you do it – also, allow the candidate to modify the process to fit his/her mental processes as well. **Either way, planning is required!!**

15. Understand that your role requires you to be in the classroom to mentor the candidate through the daily activities until such time as the candidate is ready to fully adopt the content areas/class periods. This adoption must be gradual and your stipend is for providing this guidance.

16. Allow the teacher candidate to lead some of the parent-teacher conferences (not all unless you and he/she is ready for this!).

17. Evaluation of Student Teaching:
   a. Participate in formal evaluation conferences between the teacher candidate, the supervisor and you.
   b. Be ready with your own copy of the evaluation already filled out in pencil (pdf format of evaluation is found on the resource site [http://tinyurl.com/ybseybse48](http://tinyurl.com/ybseybse48). Please make sure to have this filled out by yourself in pencil PRIOR to the conference so that you are ready to discuss progress and come to agreement on scores more accurately.
   c. Establish mutually agreed upon dates and times for the Early Observation Report, and other visits (perhaps drop-ins as well) with the supervisor and candidate. All parties must be respected in this process; therefore, all parties should be in negotiation for times/dates.

**Additional Opportunities for Involvement:**

There are several opportunities to get more involved with student teachers! Here are a few ideas for you to consider. These are not required, but are strongly encouraged so that you can immerse yourself in the student teaching experience!

- Participating in Student Teacher Orientation (prior to beginning the student teaching experience)
- Participating in Mock Interviews (end of each semester)
- Coming to Senior Seminar to sit-in
- Guest speaking in Senior Seminar on a particular topic, or being part of a panel of experts
- Co-presenting at “Co-Teaching in Student Teaching”, and at “Supervision Basics for Hosting Student Teachers” workshops
- Chaperoning the Multicultural Field Trip (one or two semesters prior to student teaching) to Minneapolis/St. Paul
- Many other things as well!

*If interested in participating in these opportunities, please contact the Office of Teacher Education at 701-777-4128 and speak with Melissa or Jenny*
Training Options & Requirements for Cooperating Teachers:

The field of education has changed tremendously over the past two decades. Strong initiatives have been implemented both federally and locally which have influenced state and national academic standards in K-12 schools, and national accreditation standards for teacher preparation programs. Our former accrediting body, NCATE, has morphed into the newer accrediting body, CAEP, which has developed more complex standards for all teacher candidates to demonstrate, and more complex objectives and tighter data requirements for our teacher preparation programs. We view these new standards, objectives, and requirements as a positive challenge and eagerly work toward attaining them!

It is necessary, then, for our program to “tighten the belt” and document all trainings that our cooperating teachers have; if teachers have not had any training in supervising student teachers, then we need to ensure they have that training. This, in turn, will make certain that there is consistency in supervising student teachers; that they will have very similar supports that are consistent with our accreditation standards and requirements, while also providing very diverse experiences.

Due to this, the following guidelines are put in place:

1. **Course/Workshop on Supervision/Hosting Student Teachers:** Cooperating teachers are required to have training on hosting/supervising teacher candidates; this training must be documented by the Office of Field Placement & Student Teaching.
   
   a. **Trial Semester:** If a cooperating teacher would like to host a teacher candidate for one semester before committing to continuously hosting candidates, that is just fine. After that semester, however, if the cooperating teacher would like to continue hosting, then the training will be required.
   
   b. **Out-of-Area Cooperating Teachers:** Since the likelihood of hosting our candidates on a regular basis is very slim for cooperating teachers who are out-of-state or who are in a setting that does not typically host our candidates, the “trial semester” rule (above) will apply. However, should the cooperating teacher be from an area where our candidates regularly will be (i.e., Fargo, Hillsboro, specific partnership schools in the Twin Cities, etc.), and he/she would like to continue hosting, then he/she will need to complete some form of supervision training.
   
   c. **Location of Training:** It does not matter where the supervision of student teaching course/workshop was offered, as long as it was offered from either a teacher education institution or an online training institution that is specific to training cooperating teachers to host teacher candidates. For example, if a cooperating teacher has had professional development on co-teaching from St. Paul State University’s Academy for Co-Teaching, that will definitely suffice; if a teacher has taken a course on personnel supervision during graduate studies, again, this will certainly suffice. We will simply need to be told when and where the training took place for our documentation.
   
   d. **Types of Trainings:** There are different types of trainings that will suffice for this requirement. The Office of Field Placement & Student Teaching works with Distance Education at UND to offer a few options:

   i. **TL900 Supervision of Student Teachers:** This is an online, work-at-your-own-pace option for teachers to complete independently. It is comprised of 7 modules that include audio powerpoints and requires a brief reflection after each module is completed. The entire course will take no more than 15 hours of time, all included. This option is paid for by the Office of the Associate Dean; therefore, there is no cost to the cooperating teacher for this 1-credit PD course.

   ii. **TL900 Co-Teaching in Student Teaching:** This is an online, work-at-your-own-pace option for teachers to complete that will require them to apply the strategies in tandem with their teacher candidate. It includes the basic strategies for co-teaching, and its foundation of research for effectiveness. Co-teaching is now
required in many school districts across the country; therefore, this course is strongly encouraged and immediately applicable to every student teaching experience and continuing professional practice! This option is paid for by the Office of the Associate Dean; therefore, there is no cost to the cooperating teacher for this 1-credit PD course.

iii. **Co-Teaching Workshops**: This is a series of workshops or one all-day workshop on co-teaching strategies. The workshops consist of: (1) the basics of co-teaching, (2) communication and parity in co-teaching, and (3) strategic planning and implementation of co-teaching in the classroom. There is a 1-credit option with these workshops for the cooperating teacher and the teacher candidate to work on a co-teaching project that will follow the workshops. I am currently working with districts on modes for offering these workshops in the schools. There is no charge for the workshops; if teachers choose the 1-credit option, it will be paid for by the Office of the Associate Dean, which means there will be no cost to the cooperating teacher.

2. **Inter-rater Agreement Training**: Once every other year AND every time there is an updated evaluation, cooperating teachers who plan to host teacher candidates must participate in Inter-rater Agreement Training. This practice is now required by our accrediting body to ensure accurate assessment of our candidates, and to avoid “muddied data” when trying to use the data to improve our programs. *This is a 3-hour training that is required. The teacher candidate may cover the classroom while you are at this training.*
   a. **Offerings**: This will be offered in-person once/semester (once/year down the road), and all materials will be posted and available online in our Blackboard Resource Site for coop teachers and supervisors to review.
   b. **Out-of-Area**: It is expected that you will review these materials and discuss together on your own so that the evaluation of our candidates is both accurate and consistent with each person’s understanding of the criteria. This will yield consistency in evaluation of our candidates regardless of their location for student teaching.

3. **Teacher Talks**: Teacher Talk occurs twice per semester in Grand Forks. For all in-area cooperating teachers and supervisors (within a reasonable distance), it is expected that you will attend at minimum one of the two Teacher Talk sessions in Grand Forks during the semester you are hosting a teacher candidate. *It is strongly recommended* that you attend both Teacher Talk sessions as valuable information is shared, cooperating teachers and supervisors guide the agenda, and the second Teacher Talk responds to the first. At times, Teacher Talks may have trainings that will partially suffice for the supervision training; however, Teacher Talk cannot be counted on as the only venue for that training since it serves other purposes.
**Developmental Phases of Student Teaching:**

Historically speaking, there were four distinct phases that candidates went through in their student teaching experiences. This, however, is not reflective of today’s real classrooms or the requirements of today’s teacher candidates. Although there are certainly phases the candidates go through, realistically, these phases ebb and flow in and out of each other throughout the experience with the overall progression heading toward full teaching responsibility. Due to the uniqueness of each classroom, the lines between phases can be blurred. The lines between phases are further muddled with the Co-Teaching Model implementation - the most valuable format for student teaching. This is strongly encouraged for all student teaching relationships.

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<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>How it Plays Out TODAY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td><em>Orientation consists of assimilating the candidate into the classroom and school environment, priming the students for when the candidate begins, and ongoing discussions that allow the candidate to feel welcome and valued. This is a MUCH shorter phase than in the past – typically now, teacher candidates are introduced to the class before the student teaching experience even begins, and learns about them before entering the classroom. Other times, teacher candidates “loop” with the same cooperating teacher for their methods course (semester prior to student teaching) so he/she already knows the students very well and can begin co-teaching immediately.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td><em>Observation is no longer when a candidate sits in the back of the room and takes notes on what they see; rather, it is now the study of classroom management, students’ development and learning patterns, classroom organization, etc., that develops from actively participating with the students and teacher. <em>Active participation</em> is key to this phase! Notes should be taken in this phase, but most important is the discussion between the cooperating teacher and the candidate regarding specific items and the subsequent reflection practice (i.e., journal reflections).</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td><em>Participation begins MUCH earlier than before, especially in co-teaching environments. For those who are not co-teaching, participation will still begin during the Observation Phase. <em>Participation</em> allows for more than simply working with the kids and learning from them, it also requires that the candidates are active participants in the planning, preparation, and instruction of curriculum, and their continued involvement in the school community at every level appropriate at the given time.</em></td>
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| Full Teaching Responsibility  
| (which can look differently than before) | *Full teaching responsibility* is exactly as it states: the candidate has the lead teaching role and is responsible for all curriculum writing, planning, and implementation for a minimum period of 10 consecutive days (5 consecutive days in each of the two 8-week placements for Music and Kinesiology students). In the co-teaching format, this means that the teacher candidate is the lead planner, and assigns the cooperating teacher his/her role in the co-teaching plan. After the co-teaching time has passed, it is assumed that the cooperating teacher will leave the classroom for singly led subjects during this time. |
Welcoming Your Teacher Candidate:

When hosting a teacher candidate, there are a few things to keep in mind to ensure the experience will be top-notch for you and him/her, and especially for your students. First, the teacher candidate is both nervous and excited, and may show both of these emotions in strange ways. Second, the candidate has great ideas to bring to the table, and in combination with your experience and ever-flowing supply of ideas, the experience should be fantastic! In order to ensure this, we strongly suggest that the following take place at the forefront of the experience:

☐ Arrange to meet with your teacher candidate before the official start of the experience. Spend time learning about one another as people, not just as educators.

☐ Introduce the teacher candidate to other faculty members, support personnel and administrators (prior to or right at the beginning of the experience).

☐ Tour the school...staff work areas, the lounge, adult restrooms, etc.

☐ Post the teacher candidate’s name (Mr./Ms. Smith) along with your name near the classroom door.

☐ Send a note to families to let them know you will have a teacher candidate co-teaching with you.

☐ Provide a desk (preferably not a student-size desk) or designate a work area for the teacher candidate with supplies and copies of necessary manuals, textbooks, the current read-aloud book, etc.

☐ Provide a picture of the class or individual students to help the teacher candidate learn names more quickly.

☐ Review items in the faculty handbook that directly affect the teacher candidate: the contractual day, issues related to school security, etc.

☐ Share that “bit of information” that matters: “There is a ‘Peanut Free’ table in the cafeteria” or “Staff members never park in Lot A.”

☐ Explain any staff activities or special events the teacher candidate could choose to participate in or attend.

☐ Discuss classroom rules and expectations for student behavior as well as acceptable rewards and consequences. Review the student handbook.

☐ Assemble a binder with useful information including class lists, daily schedules, classroom rules, discipline referral forms, etc.

☐ On a desk-top calendar or planner, mark important dates for faculty meetings, your week for hall duty, school-wide music programs, etc.

☐ Start a file with your favorite tried-and-true activities and good teaching ideas. Encourage your candidate to add to it throughout the experience.

☐ Leave an inspirational quote or article related to teaching on the candidate’s desk that might spark an interesting discussion.

☐ Gestures of kindness, no matter how small, have a positive impact.

☐ If your teacher candidate will start later in the school year, send an email or letter from the class a few weeks before to share information about current units, upcoming special events, etc.