

THE COOPERATING TEACHER

A. Expectations

The success of teacher preparation is dependent upon the efforts of an effective cooperating teacher and a dedicated clinical supervisor. Each ensures the success of the Kean University program by providing a candidate with an appropriate initiation into the culture of the school and the classroom. Modeling exemplary classroom practice, a cooperating teacher offers the clinical practice: pre-professional student creative opportunities to apply theories and principles studied in the university classroom. Cooperating teachers are expected to:

1. provide opportunities for the clinical practice student to interact with P-12 students to design, instruct, and assess student learning;
2. provide opportunities for the clinical practice: pre-professional student to interact with P-12 students in a total school setting. These experiences include leading/co-leading small group instruction, providing 1:1 in-class support, co-teaching with cooperating teacher.
3. share curricular and instructional ideas, resource materials, and suggestions with the student and clinical supervisor/clinical instructor;
4. model appropriate language and positive classroom management;
5. encourage the use of current innovations and developments such as thematic teaching, the use of manipulative materials, and cooperative learning strategies; and
6. reinforce the awareness of state and national standards and initiatives, including NJCCC Standards (2011); and *NJ Professional Teacher Standards for Teachers (2015)*.

B. Responsibilities

The cooperating teacher is responsible for:

1. welcoming discussions about lesson plans, teaching strategies and assessment with the student;
2. modeling effective classroom management techniques;
3. teaching lessons that serve as models for the clinical practice: pre-professional student;
4. assigning the clinical practice: pre-professional student to classroom activities in keeping with his/her level of ability and interest, no later than the third week, with opportunities for individual instruction and progression to small groups and finally, to leading or co-leading the entire class;
5. reviewing and signing lesson plans; observing and critiquing lessons taught by the clinical practice: pre-professional student;
6. assessing regularly the activities of the clinical practice: pre-professional student in the classroom;
7. helping the clinical practice: pre-professional student reflect on his/her development as a teacher;
8. remaining in the classroom with the teacher candidate. The student teacher shall be under the direct and continuous personal supervision of the appropriately certified cooperating teacher
9. conferring with the clinical supervisor for additional help, insights, or information;
10. conferring informally with the clinical practice: pre-professional student at or near the end of each day he/she spends in the classroom and begin planning for the next week's participation;
11. communicating with the clinical supervisor, or program coordinator as needed;

12. completing at least one (1) final performance competency assessment of the clinical experience: pre-professional;
13. participating in university-sponsored professional development activities; and
14. completing the final competency online or, if completed in paper form, returning the completed form to the clinical supervisor. Directions to submit online final assessments are found on the TPC website at www.kean.edu/~tpc.

C. Professional Development Hours

Professional Development Hours are awarded to cooperating teachers who mentor clinical experience: pre-professional students. A list of the programs and their respective professional development hour credits is located in Appendix N.

In order to receive a certificate awarding professional development hours, cooperating teachers are asked to visit the website at www.kean.edu/~tpc and complete an online Request for Professional Development Hours. A paper copy of the form can be downloaded from the website. Certificates will be mailed to the cooperating teacher’s home address based upon the following schedule:

| | <u>Form Due to College of Education</u> | <u>Certificate Mailed</u> |
|-----------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Fall Semester | November 1 | by April 1 |
| Spring Semester | March 1 | by June 1 |

D. What can I do when I see my student teacher struggling during a lesson?

It’s important to remember that student teachers are still students: They are not experienced teachers, and they will make mistakes. When they do, an effective cooperating teacher will guide the student teacher back on track before significant damage can be done to the student teacher’s confidence or to students’ learning and safety. Cooperating teachers must walk a fine line between allowing student teachers to make mistakes and learn from them, and ensuring that students receive quality instruction.

A 2007 study by Donna M. Post identified the following strategies used by experienced cooperating teachers when student teachers had difficulty during a lesson. Choosing the least intrusive action appropriate for the situation allows the cooperating teacher to keep the lesson on track without causing much damage to the student teacher’s development or to the students’ learning. Most of the following techniques can be used several times within a single lesson. It is a good idea to discuss the strategies with your student teacher before using them, and to always address his or her struggles in a conference after class.

Effective I’s (lowest level of disruption to highest)

Ignore: If the problem can be discussed at a later time and the situation will not cause harm to students, the cooperating teacher may refrain from any action that would undermine the student teacher’s authority. This should be a conscious choice on the part of the cooperating teacher. Examples include: ignoring a

spelling error in a word that the students already know how to spell; choosing not to draw attention to a grammatical error or mispronunciation.

Intervene: Cooperating teacher intervention is used when the student teacher is not aware of a problem or not experienced enough to solve it. Intervention is usually unnoticed or appreciated by the student teacher, and does not disrupt the student teacher's lesson. Examples include: moving an overhead projector that blocks students' vision; turning off Bunsen burners accidentally left on.

Interject: The cooperating teacher may interject a very short comment that does not interrupt the flow of the lesson and is quickly forgotten by the students and the student teacher. Examples include: providing a word that the student teacher is struggling to find; correcting word pronunciation.

Interact: The cooperating teacher sends a verbal or nonverbal message that requires a few seconds of the student teacher's attention and quickly redirects the student teacher's actions or thoughts. Students may or may not be aware of the interaction. This is the most common cooperating teacher response to a student teacher's struggle in front of the class. Examples include: writing a few words on a sticky note to draw the student teacher's attention to a cheating incident or sleeping student; telling the student teacher in a low voice that it's time to get ready for lunch or that he or she has missed a step in giving directions for a class activity.

Interrupt: A cooperating teacher may choose to interrupt when something important needs to be communicated immediately. An interruption is highly visible and/or audible to the student teacher and students, and disrupts the flow of the lesson. An interruption lasts longer than an intervention, but the student teacher always finishes the lesson. Examples include: speaking aloud to remind the student teacher and class of a classroom rule; providing an example that would benefit the students and student teacher.

Intercept: The cooperating teacher completely takes over the lesson and brings it to closure, moving the students, student teacher, and cooperating teacher toward a common goal. This action is most intrusive and may leave the student teacher feeling disappointed. Examples include: bringing a class's behavior under control when the student teacher is unable to do so; ending a student teacher's long and boring lecture; stepping in when the student teacher is unable to proceed due to illness, nervousness, or lack of preparation.

Based on: Post, D.M. (2007). The cooperating teacher I's: Effective mid-lesson responses to student teachers' critical teaching incidents. *Action in Teacher Education*, 29(1), 61-70.