

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES COOPERATING TEACHER WITH A STUDENT TEACHER

COOPERATING TEACHER (CT)

A cooperating teacher is the campus-based mentor for the UTeach-Liberal Arts Program. Their role is to supervise and provide feedback to help student teachers develop effective teaching skills. The CT will be responsible for the student teacher for 65 consecutive full teaching days.

FIELD EXPERIENCES

Field experiences are an integral component of the UTeach-Liberal Arts Program and are built on strong collaborations with school districts. These experiences involve the observation of elementary, middle school and high school classrooms and are designed to be sequential, cumulative, and performance-based, while preparing our graduates to implement and evaluate effective practices with diverse student populations. Our future teachers engage in field experiences that assist them in mastering their subject knowledge and pedagogical skills, learning how to work collaboratively with stakeholders, developing dispositions to be active citizens, and offering students the opportunity to develop these characteristics themselves. (19TAC 228.15)

HIGHLY QUALIFIED COOPERATING TEACHERS (CT)

Certification

- More than three years of experience
- Currently certified in the certification category for which the student is seeking certification

Teacher Performance

- Performs at the top levels of teaching according to the evaluation systems their district follows
- Demonstrates and models proficient use of academic English
- Follows through with job-related commitments

Professionalism

- Demonstrates behaviors reflecting commitment to ethical concerns
- Exhibits enthusiasm, flexibility, and open-mindedness

Mentoring Skills

- Guides, assists and supports in the areas of lesson planning, classroom management, instruction, assessment, working with parents, obtaining materials and district policies
- Models and encourages self-reflective practices
- Promotes a collaborative and non-threatening environment
- Provides constructive feedback and praise
- Communicates effectively
- Receptive to new ideas and practice

Diversity

- Respectful of student diversity within the school population and community
- Actively promotes student appreciation of diverse groups and cultures through curricula and instructional activities
- Utilizes culturally and linguistically responsive strategies and techniques to address the needs of diverse learners

Special Populations and Inclusive Settings

- Collects and shares student information in order to plan and implement differentiated curriculum and instruction
- Demonstrates knowledge of federal, state, and local policies/procedures
- Demonstrates knowledge of instructional strategies for all special populations served in the classrooms
- Works collaboratively with family members and other support personnel to appropriately identify and address students' individual needs

Technology

- Supports interactive, technology-rich teaching/learning environments

BACKGROUND OF STUDENT TEACHER

UTL 360 - Problems/Principles of Secondary Education

Student teaching is a learning experience to help the individual student teacher develop or improve the skills needed for effective teaching. The combination of UTL 360 and 670 are the last courses student teachers take prior to certification. It is during the student teaching experience that most students will fully develop skills in classroom and behavior management.

UTL 670 - Directed Teaching in Secondary Schools

The UTL 670 Secondary School Teaching Practicum involves 65 consecutive full teaching days, Monday through Friday. Student teaching begins after the student teacher has completed the district student teaching orientation. In tandem with UTL 670, student teachers are also enrolled in UTL 360 Practicum Seminar, which involves 45 hours of class time on the UT-Austin campus. UTL 360 is conducted on Thursday evenings from 5:00 – 8:00.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENT TEACHER

- Contact Cooperating Teacher before or at the beginning of the semester to make introductions and schedule observation time.
- Recognize and accept that the Cooperating Teacher has the ultimate responsibility for what may or may not be done in the classroom.
- Know and follow the rules, regulations, and policies of the district and school, including irregularities in the schedule.
- Maintain an ethical and professional attitude. This includes a professional relationship with students, teachers, and administrators, professional dress, arriving with sufficient time to prepare, and utilizing discretion regarding student's confidential information.

- Be available for regular planning and feedback sessions with the Cooperating Teacher and Field Supervisor.
- Submit lesson plans in advance of observations and share copies with the Cooperating Teacher and Field Supervisor if being observed.
- Record and complete Attendance Documentation form with Cooperating Teacher's signature and return to UTLA Instructor by the last UTL 360 class meeting.
- Use e-mail to communicate with Cooperating Teacher, UTLA Instructor and Field Supervisor.
- Wear the UTLA lanyard and badge during the student teaching experience.
- Become familiar with the school climate and culture; and when possible, become acquainted with campus teachers, administrators and staff.
- Follow all university, UTLA, district and campus policies, regulations, and guidelines. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action and termination from the program.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COOPERATING TEACHERS WITH A STUDENT TEACHER

- Supervise the student teacher for 65 consecutive full teaching days and serve as a teaching model for the UTLA student.
- Allow the student teacher primary responsibility for classroom management while providing support when necessary.
- Phase in student teachers to take over a minimum of 2 classes for a six-week period, including lesson planning and grading.
- Meet with your student teacher to plan and schedule lessons.
- Require lesson plans from the student teacher in advance of teaching assignments, in addition to following all district and campus policies regarding lesson plan submission.
- Evaluate required lessons taught by your student teacher by observing the taught lesson and completing the appropriate observation form.
- Plan time to debrief and provide feedback to the student teacher about the lessons they have taught.
- Complete Formative and Summative evaluations and meet with the student and Field Supervisor for the Formative and Summative conferences.
- Verify with a signature and date that you have completed Cooperating Teacher training and have read the roles and responsibilities of a Cooperating Teacher.
- Communicate with the UTLA Instructor at the first indication of problems.
- Use e-mail to communicate with your student teacher, UTLA Instructor and Field Supervisor (if applicable).
- Meet deadlines as established by UTLA.

BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR STUDENT TEACHER

Below are suggestions to help the student teacher become an accepted member of the professional staff of the campus.

- Introduce the student teacher to other campus teachers, office personnel, and your students.
- Have curriculum materials available for the student teacher to use.

- Provide a small workspace.
- Provide the student teacher some background on the district, campus, and students in your classroom.
- Get to know each other as individuals by discussing backgrounds, interests, hobbies, and concerns.
- Exchange all contact information in case of emergencies.
- Clarify any questions about policy or regulations the student teacher might have.

LEAVING THE CLASSROOM

It is suggested that you not leave the classroom until you are confident that the student teacher can handle the particular teaching assignment planned. Even then, the length of time you leave the classroom should be brief early in the student teaching experience. Until the student teacher has developed adequate classroom management and teaching skills, it is suggested that you stay near the classroom when leaving the student teacher alone. The welfare of the students should take priority.

REQUIRED OBSERVATIONS

Regular observation of your student teacher accompanied by feedback is the most important task. You should formally document your student teacher teaching four to five times. If you feel that the student teacher needs more formal observations, contact the UTLA Instructor with a rationale.

SCHEDULING OBSERVATIONS

Scheduled and random observations are essential to the development of student teachers. It is suggested to schedule some observations with the student teacher and randomly observe at other times. This allows the CT to observe student teachers at their best and how they usually teach.

Dates for the Formative and Summative Observation will be scheduled by the student teacher with the CT's approval. The CT and Field Supervisor are required to observe and evaluate the same lesson and then participate in a debriefing session together with the student teacher. The debriefing session is a scheduled time after the observation.

OBSERVATION FORMS

Observation forms serve as the official documentation of each student's required observations for teacher certification. These forms are used to summarize and record the results of each student's observation and debriefing session.

The observation forms below can be provided by the student teacher or downloaded from the UTLA website to be used to observe the student teacher.

- UTL 360/670 Observation Form
- Formative Observation Assessment
- Summative Observation Assessment

RECORDING METHODS

Cooperating teachers will evaluate the student teacher teaching their lesson using the appropriate form. CTs will rate each observable behavior and cite specific examples as supporting evidence.

When observing and evaluating the student teacher a variety of methods can be used to record one's thoughts such as scripting, checklists, T-charts, etc. CTs should identify the student's strengths, successes, areas of concern, and how they may improve. It is very beneficial to the student teacher if comments about the lesson taught are also included.

DEBRIEFING SESSION

After informal observations, a debriefing session will be conducted to provide feedback about the lesson taught. The debriefing session should occur between 30 to 45 minutes. Evaluators will discuss with the student teacher their strengths, areas of concern, and ways to improve in preparation for their next lesson. When completed, the student teacher, evaluator and UTLA Instructor will receive a copy of the observation.

After the Formative and Summative Observation, the student, CT, and Field Supervisor will schedule a 45-60 minutes conference to discuss the lesson observed. These observations and debriefing sessions are required for teacher certification. It is important the following information is recorded on the observation forms – name of student, date, start and stop time, and signatures. The student teacher, CT, and Field Supervisor will all receive a copy of these forms.

INDIVIDUAL GROWTH PLAN

When a student teacher is struggling, the UTLA Instructor has the option to develop an Individual Growth Plan (IGP) to help improve the student teacher's skills. Anyone working with a student may identify the student for evaluation at any time. If you choose to refer a student, contact the UTLA Instructor and provide a rationale and documentation. This documentation is vital if the student is dropped or fails the course.

The IGP identifies weaknesses and provides a description of performance issues, target goals, deadlines, and consequences for failing to meet those goals. It is important to keep accurate records of observations and feedback sessions for your student teacher. The UTLA Instructor will meet with the student teacher to review and monitor the student's progress and discuss the results of the IGP.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHING AND THE STUDENT TEACHER

School districts in the area have different policies when it comes to substitute teaching. During the student teaching experience, the UTLA policy is that UTLA student teachers do not substitute. If they are paid for substitute teaching during this period of time, these days will not be counted toward their required 65 days of student teaching.