

# The College of New Jersey

## School of Education

Office of Support for Teacher Education Programs  
and Global Student Teaching  
<http://www.tcnj.edu/step>

### The Cooperating Teacher

The overarching goal of TCNJ School of Education is to create agents of change. The cooperating teachers play a vital role in this effort and in TCNJ's professional education programs. There are times when the cooperating teachers act as a role model, facilitator, peer, counselor, evaluator, instructor, and learner. They should be experienced and certified in their fields of teaching, meet the standards set forth by TCNJ, and view the teaching profession in a positive light. The cooperating teachers must personally exhibit high quality teaching and commitment to ongoing professional growth, including participation in college sponsored orientation sessions or other pertinent and relevant professional development opportunities for cooperating teachers. These individuals are a critical link in the teacher preparation process. Through thoughtful guidance and diligent supervision, they will be able to provide invaluable direction to the activities, methods, and techniques developed and implemented by the teacher candidate and model the tenets of the conceptual framework.

#### The cooperating teacher is expected to:

1. be familiar with the mission and Conceptual Framework for Professional Education
2. Become familiar with the expectations of TCNJ for its teacher candidates as outlined in the TCNJ Dispositions Rubric and Lesson Observation Rubric found on the STEP website (<http://step.tcnj.edu/forms/>)
3. accept and nurture the teacher candidate as a professional
4. participate in orientation of the teacher candidate to the school, organizational structures, and support services
5. recognize that the professional and legal responsibility of the classroom remains in the hands of the cooperating teacher
6. demonstrate positive human relations and professionalism
7. familiarize the teacher candidate with communities, families and cultures represented within the classroom and the school
8. co-plan and co-teach with the teacher candidate
9. acquaint the teacher candidate with the yearly plans and work collaboratively to decide their responsibility will be in regards to the overall plan
10. establish a policy, in collaboration with the supervisor, regarding when to submit lesson plans to be reviewed and discussed with the cooperating teacher.
11. discuss with the teacher candidate and supervisor a timetable for assuming responsibilities in the classroom, using the suggested timeline in the Clinical II handbook as a guide
12. provide opportunities for the teacher candidate to gain experience in a variety of instructional contexts
13. provide the teacher candidate with opportunities for practicing a variety of functions, such as participation in team or department meetings, record keeping, using guidance services, one-to-one pupil conferences and parent conferences

14. encourage the teacher candidate to develop her/his own teaching style
15. encourage the teacher candidate to incorporate inquiry, critical thinking, creativity, independent thinking, and interdisciplinary approaches in planning for instruction
16. work in consultation and collaboration with the supervisor(s) about the teacher candidate's progress and alert the supervisor(s) when any problem emerges. **If the teacher candidate is experiencing great difficulty, the cooperating teacher must inform the TCNJ supervisor and outline the specific issues of concern. This should result in a conference with the supervisor. The issues should be addressed as early as possible in order for the appropriate intervention to be designed**
17. contact the teacher candidate's department at the College if you do not see the supervisor once every two weeks;
18. guide the teacher candidate to analyze and interpret her/his experiences to see relationships among theory, principles and practice, and to engage in reflection
19. **provide regular conference time** to discuss with and provide feedback to the teacher candidate on matters related to instructional strategies, classroom management, and lesson/unit planning
20. make any specific request concerning changes in dates of the culminating experience according to "Calendar and Schedule" policy, to be approved by the department chair and coordinator. These requests cannot be approved by the supervisor(s)
21. complete formal mid-term and final evaluations of the teacher candidate in the Livetext system. These forms may be viewed at: <http://step.tcnj.edu/forms>
22. complete the necessary online forms for stipend payment in a timely manner. The links for the forms will be sent via email.



# How to Begin the First Day...

An introductory conference should be planned between the cooperating teacher and teacher candidate at a time that is mutually convenient. During this meeting, both parties should discuss how they will work together as a team to co-plan and co-teach during the semester. The beginning weeks should be an orientation process for the teacher candidate. This is a crucial time, for these weeks set the stage for the remainder of the clinical field experience.

## Suggestions for the first day:

1. Acquaint the teacher candidate with the classroom and other school facilities such as the media center, cafeteria, offices, restrooms, and parking
2. Provide the teacher candidate with the school's policy manual or faculty handbook. Particular attention should be made regarding the school's electronic communication policy with students, parents and staff. All communication with families should be sent by the cooperating teacher.
3. Prepare a desk or work station for the teacher candidate. It is important that they have a place for professional and personal belongings
4. Discuss expectations for arrival and departure time, sending lessons plans in advance, professional dress and communication
5. Set a specific time each day to provide feedback and to co-plan. Set a longer time to meet once a week.
6. Supply the teacher candidate with texts and other materials and information they will be using
7. Have the student teacher observe you at work and take note of the general classroom routine
8. Have the teacher candidate begin to learn students' names and build individual relationships with them
- 9.

## In the Weeks that Follow...

### *Have the teacher candidate:*

10. acquire background information on students with whom they will be working and review cumulative records, if school policy permits
11. gain a general understanding of the various techniques associated with classroom management and those that foster self-discipline
12. gain an understanding of the school environment and the responsibility of the teachers to the school, community, and profession
13. observe instruction to analyze how students react and respond to various methods and settings
14. observe other classrooms in the school or district
15. learn and practice using various technology tools
16. perform routine classroom procedures and assume instructional and managerial responsibilities for the classroom when appropriate
17. develop daily lesson plans

The cooperating teacher's leadership and guidance will enable the teacher candidate to construct and implement effective and appropriate instruction. The cooperating teacher can assist the teacher candidate in developing into an exemplary teacher by:

1. sharing "helpful hints" based on their own experience
2. being flexible in responding to changing needs and concerns of the teacher candidate
3. being a good listener
4. modeling reflective practice that revolves around skills of instruction and knowledge of subject matter

5. guiding the teacher candidate in problem-solving
6. structuring conferences with clear goals and objectives
7. being clear, direct, specific and honest when communicating with the teacher candidate
8. explaining the reasons behind decisions and suggestions given to the teacher candidate
9. providing encouragement and praise when warranted
10. encouraging self-confidence and self-reliance
11. modeling collegiality and professional ethics
12. being an active learner
13. meeting and communicating with the College supervisor to discuss the candidate's progress to date
- 14.

# Checklist for Cooperating Teacher:

The following checklist highlights some of the expectations, roles and responsibilities of the cooperating teacher. It is meant to be used as a guide as you work with your teacher candidate.

## *Did you...*

1. have an initial conference with the teacher candidate before the start of the clinical field experience?
2. share classroom routines, procedures, policies (including electronic communications with students, parents and staff) and faculty handbooks?
3. orient the teacher candidate to the building, community, and resources within the building and community?
4. introduce the teacher candidate to the school staff and the class?
5. review the grade level curriculum guides and overall plans for the semester?
6. sequence teaching responsibilities so that the teacher candidate becomes involved gradually in the operations of the classroom?
7. model effective teaching and co-teaching?
8. review lesson/unit plans and provide feedback before the teacher candidate teaches the lesson?
9. set aside regular conference time to discuss theory and practice?
10. encourage the teacher candidate to become a reflective practitioner?
11. complete necessary assessments and evaluations of the teacher candidate?
12. alert the College supervisor if any problems were evidenced and inform the teacher candidate of same?