

Grow Your Own (GYO) Cooperating Teacher's Handbook

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Department of Education
West Texas A&M University

The cooperating teacher is one of the most influential people involved in the preparation of professional teachers. Clinical teachers view their cooperating teacher as the model for all teachers. They quickly transfer their allegiance from university instructors and their philosophies to the cooperating teacher and his/her philosophy. Because the influence of the supervising teacher is so great, the work of the public school teacher who assumes the responsibility for the clinical teacher is critical to the teaching profession.

An effective supervisory experience is based on mutual respect and understanding between clinical teacher and cooperating teacher. With professional guidance from the public school teacher, a new professional can develop his/her potential for making lasting contributions to the education of children and youth.

The relationship between the supervising teacher and the clinical teacher is one of the most important factors in the Educator Preparation Program. The clinical teacher will gain much from the background and experience of the cooperating teacher. Thank you for choosing to have a WTAMU clinical teacher. We appreciate what you do and value your service.

The Grow Your Own (GYO) Grant is a new initiative to help place future educators in rural districts or help increase teachers in high need certification areas. This Clinical Teaching Placement will last for 28 weeks. The GYO Clinical Teachers will engage in typical Clinical Teaching and follow the same schedules for the WTAMU semesters; they will just attend both Fall and Spring semesters.

If you have any questions or concerns, contact me by e-mail or by phone.

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COOPERATING TEACHER'S GUIDE TO STUDENT/CLINICAL TEACHING

INTRODUCTION

Clinical (student) teaching is the final, and perhaps most important, phase of the Educator Preparation Program. The role of the public school supervising teacher is one of significant responsibility. The teacher often is the key to the success or failure of the clinical teacher. The purpose of this section is to assist you in becoming a more effective cooperating teacher.

For the purpose of this document, the following terms will be used to define the individuals:

- clinical teacher – reference to a WT student completing clinical (student) teaching
- student – reference to a public education student in the K-12 system
- cooperating teacher—classroom teacher in a public school; mentor to the clinical teacher
- field supervisor—WTAMU school liaison who will coach and observe the clinical teacher

SETTING THE STAGE

The supervising teacher must be willing to accept the clinical teacher as a fellow professional and let him/her know you are pleased to have assistance in the classroom. The clinical teacher will be accepted more readily by the students if he/she is:

- Introduced as a teacher and the role in the classroom is explained.
- Provided a desk or appropriate work area.
- Addressed as Mr., Miss, Ms. or Mrs. in the presence of the students.
- Is not criticized before the students.



ORIENTATION OF THE CLINICAL TEACHER

Your clinical teacher will be in unfamiliar surroundings and will not know how to react to certain situations. Therefore, the need to feel comfortable and confident in this new environment is extremely important. The following orientation procedures would be helpful for the clinical teacher:

- Provide the clinical teacher with an orientation packet (containing parking information, class schedules, class rolls and seating charts, and lesson plans for the first few days).
- Make arrangements for the clinical teacher to have access to textbooks, curriculum guides, and teacher's guides.
- Explain administrative procedures, classroom rules, and management systems.
- Provide the clinical teacher with information concerning what the students have been doing up to this point and what is planned for the remainder of the year.
- Provide a tour of the building.
- Encourage questions.
- Explain how to order supplies and secure equipment and materials.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Clinical teachers may adopt attitudes that are similar to their supervising teachers. This is especially true when there is mutual respect and rapport. **If you conduct yourself in a**

professional manner and exhibit a positive attitude toward teaching, your clinical teacher may follow this example. Professionalism in your clinical teacher can be encouraged if responsibilities are executed in an ethical manner.

INITIATING THE TEACHING EXPERIENCE

The clinical teacher can be helped to a good beginning by observing you teach, assisting you with individual and group lessons, teaming with you, and teaching independently for short periods.

With the clinical teacher, design a timeline under which s/he will **gradually** assume full responsibility of the class.

- **Follow the preferred pacing schedule, which is included in this packet, at your discretion the timeline may be modified at clinical teacher's skill level**
- **During the first few days, much of the time will be spent in observation.**
- In the succeeding weeks, the teaching time should be increased until the full teaching load is assumed by the clinical teacher.
- **You should remain in the classroom during the first few weeks of clinical teaching and gradually leave for longer periods of time.**

Other suggestions to assist the clinical teacher in a smooth transition from a passive to an active role are to allow him/her to:

- Tutor individual students.
- Move about the room and assist individuals with classroom assignments.
- Teach the same lesson to a different class or a similar lesson to the same class **after** observing you teach.
- Plan several mini-lessons before assuming the responsibility for an entire class period.
- Self-evaluate after each presentation.
- Present concepts, plan lessons, manage the classroom, review curriculum materials, and help perform routine duties.

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

A satisfactory clinical teaching environment is based on a good relationship between the supervising teacher and the clinical teacher. Mutual understanding and acceptance are essential. Establish a close relationship with your clinical teacher.

- Include activities away from the classroom (i.e., gatherings with other teachers, informal school functions, committee meetings.)
- Help the clinical teacher develop an independent teaching style.
- Provide an environment where there is neither too much pressure nor protection.
- Treat the clinical teacher as a colleague, not as a subordinate.
- Monitor increasing responsibility for planning by the clinical teacher.
- Critique in private.
- Allow the clinical teacher to work with you on a problem.

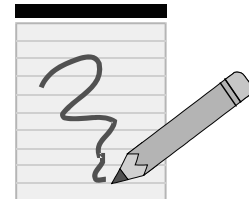
ACCENTUATING THE POSITIVE

Clinical teaching can be a frightening experience even for the highly confident and competent. The supervising teacher should avoid discussing the most severe disciplinary problems and any negative working conditions.



Before arrival, the student teacher has been cautioned about entering into negative discussions about students, other teachers, administrators, or working conditions. Other ways you can assist the clinical teacher are as follows:

- Be positive and professional in discussions about students, teachers, and administrators.
- Compliment whenever the occasions arise.
- Share methods you find to be most helpful in understanding students.
- Discuss ways to view behavior problems objectively.
- Be a good listener.
- Be careful not to embarrass others.
- Emphasize those aspects of teaching which are good and worthwhile.
- Allow and encourage independent decision making as appropriate.



STUDENT DATA (ORIENTATION TO TYPE OF STUDENTS)

To plan effective teaching units and lessons, a teacher must know and understand the students in the classroom. Students are from a variety of social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. There are a number of ways that you may help your clinical teacher to become familiar and more empathetic with the students being taught by encouraging him/her to:

- Share impressions and information concerning students.
- Explain cumulative records, test scores, and observation reports.
- Become involved in such activities as parent conferences and ARD meetings.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

There are many commonplace classroom procedures that are routine to you but are new to the clinical teacher. Make a special effort to acquaint the clinical teacher with procedures as quickly as possible by allowing him/her to:

- Handle student requests for leaving the classroom.
- Review the teacher's responsibilities in case of fire and storm drills.
- Take and report attendance for each class.
- Follow school procedures when a student reports to class late.
- Know the rules for hall and library passes.
- Observe the procedures for issuing and collecting textbooks.
- Know the procedures for reporting suspected child abuse cases.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Most clinical teachers are apprehensive about being able to manage students in their classes. It must be remembered that they are limited regarding the disciplinary measures that may be used. It is never permissible for them to administer corporal punishment. They should develop a personal management plan. You will assist the clinical teacher to acquire good classroom management skills if you:

- Share the school's discipline management plan.
- Discuss those management techniques that have proven successful for you.
- Permit the clinical teacher to assume responsibility for classroom management.
- Stress the importance of fair, equal treatment when dealing with behavior problems.
- Discuss options to management problems in a professional manner.
- Determine the clinical teacher's limit of responsibility in management issues.

WHEN TO INTERCEDE

The clinical teacher is well aware that the best interests of your students must always be served. Try to build a cooperative atmosphere in the classroom so that you can comment without taking control. Many times, a well-timed question will get a discussion back on the right

track. There may be occasions when you feel you need to intercede. At this time, you should arrange a conference with the clinical teacher. Interceding is in order if the clinical teacher:

- Fails to observe a potentially dangerous disciplinary situation.
- Has lost control of the class.
- Conveys inaccurate information that would require frequent re-teaching.
- Has significantly departed from the approved lesson plan.

ENCOURAGING CREATIVE TEACHING

The acceptance of a clinical teacher includes the responsibility to allow the clinical teacher some freedom for personal growth and individuality. Only by your permission and through your encouragement can the clinical teacher dare to be creative. Creative teaching will occur if you will allow him/her to:

- Rearrange the classroom setting or employ a different approach or technique.
- Invite the use of some of the concepts taught at the university.
- Provide assistance in locating materials and resources for creative lessons.
- Suggest ideas for consideration in lesson development.
- Share creative successes with other faculty members.

LESSON PLANS

An essential ingredient for successful teaching is careful planning. **Your clinical teacher is required to prepare detailed lesson plans that are written and approved by you prior to the teaching experience.** The clinical teacher should:

- Prepare lesson plans using a familiar format.
- Turn in lesson plans at a certain time each week.
- Develop lessons using TEKS.
- Select the objectives of the lesson.
- Decide which activities, techniques, or strategies will be used.
- Plan appropriate assessment techniques.
- Decide on the materials and equipment required.
- Determine the amount of class time needed to complete the lesson.

TECHNIQUES FOR ASSESSING STUDENTS

Assessing student progress is the final step in the completion of the clinical teacher's lesson plan. Well-developed objectives and procedures comprise the other two steps. The clinical teacher has learned several accepted methods of assessment, but it is only with your permission that these can be put into practice. The clinical teacher can become more proficient in student assessment if you make certain he/she:

- Uses assessment procedures that match the stated objectives and are consistent with district policy.
- Develops materials that match the abilities of the students being taught.
- Is aware of the variety of successful methods of assessment currently being used in the classroom.
- Has self-made tests critiqued before they are administered.
- Has the scored test checked for accuracy and uniformity.
- Is assisted in interpreting test results in terms of student achievement
- Understands the process for parent conferences regarding students who are failing.

TEACHING MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

The clinical teacher has been exposed to many different materials and resources throughout the college years. This knowledge may not transfer without your guidance. Better and more creative lesson plans can be prepared if you share your personal collections of materials and provide the clinical teacher with the opportunity to:

- Locate technological aids such as films, computers, computer programs, and videotapes.
- Become aware of community resources such as the regional service center, public library, service organizations, businesses and industry.

- Review field trip procedures.
- Explain procedures concerning the use of library and human resources.
- Work with teacher aides and volunteers.

INCREASING THE CLINICAL TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITY

The classroom teaching responsibilities of the clinical teacher should be expanded as rapidly as abilities permit. **Rushing the clinical teacher builds anxiety; however, too much observation increases boredom and discontent.** The judgment of the supervising teacher is the best evaluation of readiness.

- Assign routine tasks and individual tutorial responsibilities.
- Expand the teaching experience to include mini-lessons, one class period, several class periods, and then the entire day.
- Leave the room for increasing periods of time.
- Observe at least one lesson being taught each day.
- Discuss instructional strengths and problems.

CONFERENCES

You and your clinical teacher will need to plan and evaluate together. Formal conferences should be arranged when both of you can relax and have ample time to discuss problems and plans. The following suggestions should prove helpful in planning productive conferences with your clinical teacher:

- Schedule conferences at least once a week.
- Encourage conference participation as a colleague.
- Review proposed lesson plans.
- Provide feedback regarding the teaching performance during the week.
- Maintain copies of written feedback.

PROVIDING THE CLINICAL TEACHER WITH A CONTINUOUS EVALUATION

The supervising teacher should make continuous evaluation of the clinical teacher's progress and should establish regular periods to discuss the clinical teacher's performance. To evaluate effectively, the supervising teacher should:

- Evaluate the individual as a clinical teacher, not as an experienced teacher.
- Encourage the clinical teacher to use self-evaluating techniques. Video and audio taping are excellent methods for self-evaluation.
- Include such items as personal appearance, work habits, mannerisms, and voice in the evaluation.
- Observe the clinical teacher in actual teaching situations and make notes that can be used as the basis for critiques.
- Be frank and professional in the evaluation.
- Point out strengths and criticize weaknesses constructively.
- Use formal evaluation instruments to make the final evaluation.

EXTRA CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

The clinical teaching experience is not complete until the clinical teacher has had an opportunity to gain practice in managing extra class assignments. Becoming an accepted member of the teaching team includes participating in special duty assignments. You can provide such opportunities if you

- Explain the method that the principal uses in making extra duty assignments.
- Explain the rules that should be followed in supervising students outside of the classroom.
- Invite the clinical teacher to attend professional meetings.
- Expect the clinical teacher to attend all faculty meetings.
- Require the clinical teacher to be present during teacher workdays and in-service meetings.

- Allow the clinical teacher to participate in hall duty, cafeteria duty, and bus duty with you.
- Encourage the clinical teacher to attend P.T.A. meetings.
- Accompany the clinical teacher to contests or other student activities that you sponsor.

WORKING WITH THE FIELD SUPERVISOR

The field supervisor is interested in providing a meaningful experience for students. You and the field supervisor are a team with common goals: to provide the best in learning for your students and to assist the clinical teacher to realize the highest level of teaching potential. Your working relationships with the field supervisor will be enhanced if you will:

- Be frank and candid in your discussions concerning the clinical teacher.
- Be open to comments and suggestions.
- Ask for assistance as needed.
- Provide a chair and continue working when the field supervisor enters your room.
- Route all questions and problems through your field supervisor.
- Assist in scheduling to allow for pre and post conferences with the clinical teacher, cooperating teacher, and administrator.

CULMINATING THE TEACHING EXPERIENCE

During the final week, the cooperating teacher should gradually resume major teaching responsibilities. Culminating activities designed to assist your clinical teacher in making the transition are as follows:

- Arrange for visitations in other classrooms.
- Review the final evaluation form followed by a frank discussion regarding weaknesses and strengths.
- Discuss the overall experience with the clinical teacher.
- Share copies of innovative materials to use the following year.

CONFERENCEING STRATEGIES

Daily conferencing with your clinical teacher will help develop an open communication necessary for skill building. On a weekly basis, maybe at the end of the week, you should plan a more in-depth conference to look back over successful lessons as well as specific needed areas of growth. Develop a beginning and predicted ending for the conference.

INITIATING THE CONFERENCE

- Use non-threatening statements.
 - “You had a reason for_____. Help me know what it is.”
 - “Were you aware that_____?”
 - “Were you aware when_____?”
 - “Was today typical when_____?”
 - “Often times we as teachers_____, tell me more about what influenced your decision to_____.”
- Work from a teachers strengths--avoid the “but...” Instead try:
 - “Now that you have successfully_____,let's start working on_____.”
 - “Now that you have a handle on_____,let's focus on_____OR practice_____.”
 - “The next step from here is_____.”
- Describe behavior rather than making judgments.
- Use caution in your questions and avoid emotionally charged words.
 - Replace “problem,” “trouble,” “bored” with “**situation**” or “**challenge**” and mention what you saw and heard to support this.

- Avoid the use of "I"
 - "I liked the way you_____."
 - "If I were you I'd_____."
 - Replace with:
 - "You used good judgment when you_____." (Describe behavior.)
 - "Your lesson was impressive because you_____." (Be specific.)
 - "You may want to try_____." (Suggest alternative.)
- Develop alternatives or suggestions in advance.

ENDING THE CONFERENCE

- Try to end upbeat and build a bridge.
 - Examples of bridge building statements:
 - "It will be a learning experience for me to see how you develop these ideas."
 - "Let me know how well our ideas worked and whether we need to rethink them or develop some new ones."
 - "I'm looking forward to our next observation."

GIVING FEEDBACK IN A CONSTRUCTIVE WAY

- Focus on the actual performance and behaviors rather than on personality.
- Focus on facts rather than on assumptions or inferences.
- Focus on the specific and concrete rather than the general.
- Focus on sharing information rather than on giving advice.
- Look for alternatives rather than the one “best way.”
- Limit feedback to what can be used and managed rather than to everything observed.
- Focus on things that can be changed rather than those over which the peer has no control.
- Suspend your judgment—ask, “Why?” first.