Cooperating Teacher Handbook

Partners for Success in Education

2016-2017
Based on a strong commitment to learning and teaching, the mission of the Clarion University School of Education is the preparation of effective, dedicated, and highly qualified professionals who are defined as learners constructing knowledge, skills and dispositions of a professional. Clarion’s Conceptual Framework for Learning and Teaching encompasses this mission and reflects the current knowledge base in the field of education as advocated by professional accrediting agencies.

**INTRODUCTION**

A Conceptual Framework for Learners: Constructing Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

The Conceptual Framework for Learners, designed by the School of Education, defines and describes principles of learning and teaching for administrators, teaching and human services professionals, students, families, policy makers, and others who make decisions about excellence in education. The Framework offers a foundation for articulating and discussing current learning theories and research on effective educational practices for professional education candidates as well as for the Clarion University and school faculty and for assessing professional candidate performance.

Pre-service teachers engage in several transitions at the end of their academic careers. The successful transition from the role of learner to the role of teacher relies on a successful collaboration between higher education and the broader educational community. This collaboration provides for the uniting of content knowledge and pedagogy with actual classroom practice. It also guides the pre-service teacher into reflective teaching practices under the mentorship of an educational professional, ensuring success for the pre-service teacher. This guidebook outlines policies and procedures essential for such a successful collaboration.

**ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COOPERATING TEACHER**

The most influential in the final preparation of a teacher education candidate is the cooperating teacher. The cooperating teacher, by virtue of the position, helps to determine who will enter the profession of teaching and the quality of future teachers.

**Relationship with the Clarion University**

Cooperating teachers enter into a partnership with Clarion University teacher educators in preparing future teachers. Cooperating teachers provide valuable feedback to the student teacher and to the Clarion University faculty regarding the teacher education program. The Clarion University provides support to the cooperating teachers through
frequent communication with the assigned Clarion University Supervisor as well as through professional development opportunities at the Clarion University related to their supervisory roles.

Cooperating teachers must meet the following criteria:

1. Bachelor’s degree, a master’s degree preferred
2. Valid teaching certification in the appropriate level and subject area. (This may be Instructional I or Instructional II).
3. Three years of successful teaching experience in an approved school entity.
4. At least 1 year of certificated teaching experience in the placement school as a full time employee.
5. Evidence of teaching effectiveness through district evaluation procedures.
6. Evidence of professional growth through additional graduate and/or in-service education.
7. Approval by Director of Field Services with input from Clarion University Supervisors.
8. Evidence of leadership qualities, professionalism, and effective communication skills.
9. Participation in appropriate training by the institution.

In addition, (1) a cooperating teacher must have be recommended/approved by the administrator of his or her school or agency, and (2) he or she must indicate a commitment personal desire and willingness to facilitate the growth of teacher candidates from student to professional.

**Relationship with the Teacher Candidate**

The following suggestions are offered to guide cooperating teachers in working with teacher candidates.

- Organize materials which will familiarize the student teacher with the school, agency, and community.
- Organize materials which will encourage the student teacher to quickly become familiar with the pupils and classroom; for example, seating charts, time schedule, inventory of instructional materials, and classroom rules.
- Organize materials which will acquaint the student teacher with the curriculum and needs of learners.
- Arrange a work space with supplies for the student teacher.
- Recommend classrooms to be observed by the student teacher.
- Encourage the student teacher to accompany and observe the same learners in other instructional settings i.e., music, art, physical education, and the library media center.
- Introduce the student teacher to the faculty, administration, and staff, and provide a tour of the school facility.
♦ Provide the student teacher with opportunities to observe and participate in activities each day.
♦ At the beginning, talk with the student teacher to set expectations and goals for the field experience.
♦ The Clarion University requires a unit plan or in its place a sequence of topically related lesson plans and suggests cooperating teachers offer/assign possible topics and a time line for completion.
♦ Maintain a record of the student teacher’s attendance and return to the Office of Field Services at the end of the placement.
♦ Set aside a time each day to communicate with and advise the student teacher.

Assigning Teaching Responsibilities

Cooperating teachers will:
♦ Assign the student teacher additional responsibilities each week, such as a new content area or course. This may vary according to the readiness level of the student teacher as perceived by the cooperating teachers.
♦ Encourage the student teacher to collaborate with other cooperating teachers and other Teacher candidates in the building.
♦ Assign the student teacher full-time responsibility for at least one week during the first half assignment and two weeks during the second half experience, depending upon individual performance and district policy. Be readily available to provide feedback to the student teacher during this time.

Technology available to be used within these structures includes:
♦ Email among cooperating teachers, teacher candidates, and Clarion University Supervisors.
♦ The Clarion University’s online learning management system, Desire 2Learn (D2L) is available to aid in organizing access among cooperating teachers, teacher candidates, and Clarion University Supervisors.
♦ Electronic journaling between teacher candidates and Clarion University Supervisors.
♦ Electronic evaluation reporting among cooperating teachers, teacher candidates, and Clarion University Supervisors.
♦ Video and audio recording of learning activities to be shared among cooperating teachers, teacher candidates, and Clarion University Supervisors as permitted by each school.
♦ The Office of Field Services website (and others) is for use by cooperating teachers, teacher candidates and Clarion University Supervisors with access to all required forms electronically. Some hard copy paper requirements for PDE will be maintained.
Assigning Other Professional Responsibilities
Cooperating teachers will:

- Require the student teacher with notice to attend co-curricular events, faculty meetings, parent-teacher conferences, parent-teacher organization meetings, and professional workshops as is appropriate.
- Require the student teacher to follow the reporting and dismissal times of the faculty.
- Require the student teacher to be prompt with assignments and responsibilities.
- Advise the student teacher regarding communication protocol with parents, such as telephone calls, progress reports, grade reports, and parent-teacher conferences and use of social media.
- Offer the opportunity for student teachers to accompany their cooperating teacher on fieldtrips and other off campus educational activities.

Relationship with Clarion University Supervisors
Cooperating teachers will:

- Share performance assessments, goals for improvement, and student teacher progress with Clarion University Supervisors during frequent communications via email, telephone, and in person when possible.
- Contact Clarion University Supervisors with any concerns regarding a student teacher’s performance.

Observing and Evaluating Student Teacher Performance
Cooperating teachers will:

- Observe the student teacher in a variety of instructional situations and offer critiques.
- Review student teacher’s lesson plans and provide feedback.
- Provide immediate and continuous informal feedback, particularly at the beginning of the student teaching experience. Informal assessment may include verbal comments, notations on lesson plans, and non-verbal communication.
- Identify strengths and the areas for improvement. Develop goals to address these areas collaboratively with the student teacher.
- Provide a formal assessment of teaching at least once each week using the clinical process:
  - Hold a pre-observation conference with the student teacher to determine the lesson objectives, procedures, and any concerns related to the lesson, pupils, and educational environment.
  - Beginning by week three, observe at least one lesson each week using the STPP form or similar format. At the end of week 4 complete a midterm STPP form and email a copy to the Clarion University Supervisor. Also, conference with the student teacher using the midterm STPP to address behaviors the cooperating teacher perceives as areas of concern.
Lesson Plan Components
Lesson plan components may vary by major. The student teacher will receive an initial format from their Clarion University Supervisor. The Supervisor will provide the lesson plan format to the cooperating teacher which is also available on the OFS website. The initial format is often expected to be used when the supervisor schedules his/her official observations. On a daily basis the district or other generic lesson plan format can be used as long as it includes these common threads Objectives

- Standards
- Assessment anchors
- Anticipatory set
- Procedures
- Closure
- Formative & summative assessments
- Adaptations when applicable

Unit Plan
The unit plan focuses on content knowledge and essential skills drawn from national and state standards, curriculum of districts and/or agencies along with the interests and needs of individual students at a specific grade level and course(s). A topic or theme is organized including specific knowledge, attitudes and skills for the students to achieve. The unit plan reflects originality and creativity and identifies outside resources.

Unit plan components vary by major. The student teacher will receive the required format from the Clarion University Supervisor. **However, teaching this plan is not a requirement for student teaching.** It is optional and will be decided by the cooperating teacher and Clarion University Supervisor. **This plan is only to be taught IF the cooperating teacher approves it.** In some situations a Clarion University Supervisor may require/accept a specific number of sequenced topically related lesson plans in place of a unit plan.

Providing a Final Evaluation and Grade Recommendation
- The cooperating teacher will monitor, evaluate, and review the student teacher’s activities throughout the placement. It is suggested that the following activities be completed to support the final evaluation and grade recommendation at the end of the placement period:
Meet daily with the student teacher to discuss professional elements:
- Student teacher/pupil interactions
- Student teacher/other teachers/principal/staff interactions
- Lesson plans
- Classroom/lesson activities
- Professional or unprofessional attitudes/behaviors.

Use the “Student Teaching Performance Profile (STPP) Rubric – as a guide for all evaluations. This document can be found on the OFS website, http://www.clarion.edu.

At approximately the end of week four of the placement, the cooperating teacher will prepare a mid-placement review using the Student Teaching Performance Profile (STPP) to evaluate the student teacher’s performance. This is to be shared with both the student teacher in person and the Clarion University Supervisor via email or fax. The mid placement STPP is informal (not a file document) in-so-far as grade evaluation but it is notice to the student teacher and supervisor of areas of strength and needs observed by the cooperating teacher.

During the final week of the placement, the cooperating teacher completes the final STPP with an accompanying narrative (or letter of recommendation) and confers with the student teacher. The form is signed by both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher.

Cooperating teacher recommends a final letter grade to the Clarion University Supervisor that reflects the student teacher’s professional proficiency. The grade is indicated on the Attendance and Grade Recommendation form reviewed and signed by the cooperating teachers and student teacher.

Cooperating teacher mails the final STPP form and the Attendance and Grade Recommendation form to the OFS in the postage-paid envelope, which is part of the student teaching packet mailed to the cooperating teacher before the student teacher’s arrival. (These may also be given directly to the Clarion University Supervisor for delivery to OFS)

For additional information and access to all forms, please do any and/or all of the following:
- Communicate frequently with the Clarion University Supervisor assigned to the school. This is usually the same supervisor assigned to the student teacher. Use email whenever possible for this communication because this provides a dated and content specific record of communication, which may be useful in future communications.
- Please disregard any CDs or flash drives or previous hard copies of cooperating teacher Manual that you may have from previous years.
- Frequently refer to the Office of Field Services web section for cooperating teachers at http://www.clarion.edu/. This will contain the latest updated information.
- If you have any concerns regarding the Clarion University Supervisor, please contact the Director of Field Services immediately by phone at 814-393-2144 or 814-393-2508.
- Basic scheduling and payment questions can be answered by the OFS staff at 814-393-2144.
♦ *Stipends for Cooperating teachers* are paid according to PASSHE policy and only after Cooperating teacher Personnel Data Form is on file in the OFS.

### Formative Evaluations

Formative evaluations/reports provide teacher candidates with immediate and continuous feedback on performance throughout the field experience. This feedback can be formal and informal. Informal feedback includes comments on lesson and unit plans, brief conferences, notes in the journal, and verbal comments. Formal feedback occurs after an observation and/or conference and provides teacher candidates with objective data, information, suggestions for improvement, and specific goals for improved performance.

### Summative Evaluations

The student teacher will receive summative evaluations and letter grades from the cooperating teacher and the Clarion University Supervisor. These evaluations and grades will be discussed in conference with the student teacher. The Clarion University Supervisor is the professor of record and will submit final grades to the Clarion University. **Factors determining the letter grade will be detailed on the Student Teacher Performance Profile (STPP) and in the written narrative. Please use the STPP form that aligns with the major. They can be found at [www.clarion.edu](http://www.clarion.edu/).**

It is recognized that growth in student teacher competence is sequential and developmental throughout the student teaching experience. Performance during the first half of the semester, therefore, may not reflect all of the standards noted in the grading guidelines. There must be, however, evidence of performance which meets most standards. It is expected that performance during the last few weeks of the semester will reflect adherence to all of the standards.

### Letter Grades

A letter grade of “A” indicates that the student teacher almost always demonstrates outstanding performance in the majority of student teaching competencies as indicated on the final STPP. In addition, these teacher candidates have reflected a strong desire to succeed, shown initiative in assuming professional responsibilities, attempted to involve themselves in the total school environment, and have designed and delivered instruction that reflects creativity and an organized lesson plan. They have thoroughly completed required assignments in a timely manner.

A letter grade of “B” indicates that the student teacher demonstrates competent performance in the majority of student teaching competencies as indicated on the final STPP. These teacher candidates understand the concepts and implement the instruction well. They have completed required assignments with varying degrees of promptness, thoroughness, and creativity.
A letter grade of “C” indicates that the student teacher demonstrates satisfactory performance in the majority of student teaching competencies as indicated on the final STPP. Typically, these teacher candidates rely on their cooperating teachers and their Clarion University Supervisors for decision-making, resources, and content knowledge. Maturity and leadership skills must be further developed. These teacher candidates require assistance and mentoring. They have completed required assignments with varying degrees of thoroughness and promptness. The student teacher earning a “C” is required to meet with the Assistant Dean.

A letter grade of “D” indicates that the student teacher demonstrates unsatisfactory performance in the majority of student teaching competencies as indicated on the final STPP. All required assignments may not have been completed. The student teacher is not eligible for certification and graduation in the degree program and must meet with the Director or Dean for options.

A letter grade of “E” indicates that the student teacher has earned unsatisfactory ratings in all of the student teacher competencies as indicated on the STPP. The student teacher has failed to complete one or more required assignments. The student teacher is not eligible for certification and graduation in the degree program and must meet with the Director or Dean for options.

**THE SCHOOL/FIELD SITE RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Each school/field site has regulations, procedures, institutional practices, and professional expectations for personnel, which apply to students assigned to the district or agency. The student **MUST** become aware of the expectations, rules, and the code of conduct at this assigned district or agency. **Students are guests of the school district or agency and may be removed by the district or agency officials.** Teacher candidates must abide by the Clarion University’s Student Rights, Regulations and Procedures Handbook and all other regulations, procedures, institutional practices, and professional expectations for students, which apply to students assigned to the district or agency.

**TEACHER CANDIDATE GUIDELINES**

In addition to the policies outlined below, Teacher candidates must carefully review the Office of Field Services web page at [http://www.clarion.edu/](http://www.clarion.edu/).

**Absences:** Teacher candidates are to be in attendance for the entire day and to assist in co-curricular activities as may be directed by the cooperating teacher and the Clarion University Supervisor. Absences due to illness or personal emergencies require timely
notification of BOTH the cooperating teacher and the Clarion University Supervisor. Other absences must be approved by the Director of Field Services along with the cooperating teacher and the Clarion University Supervisor. Teacher candidates are permitted up to four absences (including job fairs and interviews) for the ENTIRE SEMESTER. Absences in excess of four days may result in a lower course grade and will have to be made up at the end of the semester. Attendance records are maintained and recorded on the Attendance and Grade Recommendation form by the cooperating teacher and are submitted to the Office of Field Services at the conclusion of the semester.

**Calendar.** Teacher candidates will follow the calendar of the school district or agency, not the Clarion University calendar, during their student teaching assignment. This includes in-service days, vacation breaks, and holidays. Dates for beginning and ending assignments are designated by the Office of Field Services and are noted on the Center Sheets which are supplied to the teacher candidates, the Clarion University Supervisors, the cooperating teachers, and the cooperating school districts.

**Confidentiality:** Teacher candidates are to maintain confidentiality concerning pupil records and information related to the personnel and operation of the districts and agencies in which they are completing their assignments. Therefore, permission must be obtained from parents or legal guardians, cooperating teachers, and school administrators before recording, photographing, video taping, or collecting student products that may be used to identify the students outside the classroom.

**Communication:** is a requirement for the professional field and needs to be established and modeled between the cooperating teacher, Clarion University Supervisor, and student teacher. Communication is the key to success for the student teacher during this capstone experience. Email is the primary mode for communication between Supervisor and student teacher. The Supervisor is expected to be in weekly email communication, and preferably more often, with the assigned student teachers. Similar email communication is expected between the Supervisor and the cooperating teacher of all assigned student teachers. Student email addresses are located in the Clarion University Directory. The Supervisor is expected to use the school contact information provided by the OFS to communicate with the cooperating teachers at the beginning of each course placement to obtain email addresses and other pertinent information. This contact MUST be done during the first week of the placement.

**Corporal punishment:** Teacher candidates are NEVER to administer or act as witness to corporal punishment.
**Coursework and/or employment during student teaching:** Student teaching is a full-time responsibility and must occupy the full focus of the student teacher. Coursework other than required professional seminars may not be taken unless approved by the Dean’s Office (201 Stevens). No consideration will be given to outside employment in relation to attendance, preparation, and evaluation of teaching performance.

**In-service days:** Teacher candidates are expected to accompany their cooperating teachers to in-service seminars, faculty staff meetings, school and agency functions, including any extra-curricular activities directed by the cooperating teacher and the Clarion University Supervisor. Teacher candidates may be excused from meetings by the cooperating teacher *IF* it is determined that topics are sensitive and inappropriate for their participation or involve confidentiality concerns.

**Serving as substitute teachers:** Teacher candidates are **NEVER** to serve as substitute teachers because they do not hold a valid Pennsylvania certificate, nor are they employees of the district or agency. Serving as a substitute teacher places the student teacher in legal jeopardy and in violation of the school code and the agency regulations.

**Transportation of pupils:** Teacher candidates are **NEVER** to transport pupils.

**Work stoppages:** Should a work stoppage occur at a school or agency, teacher candidates are **NOT** to report to their assignments nor enter the facilities. Teacher candidates are to contact Clarion University Supervisors or the Office of Field Services for direction. Teacher candidates are to remain neutral.

In the event of a work stoppage by Clarion University faculty, teacher candidates must **NOT** report to their placements. They must stay home and wait for further directions provided by the Director of Field Services.

**Social media:** Student teachers are not permitted to establish contact or electronic relationships with students through social media technology.

**Withdrawal, Reassignment and/or Termination of a Field Assignment**
A student may be removed from a field placement for unsatisfactory academic performance, not meeting requirements of the profession, or unacceptable behavior. It should also be noted that, since each student’s situation is different, each case that falls under this policy would be determined on a case-by-case basis. Clarion University may remove the field participant from a field assignment for any of the following reasons:

1. **Behavior unacceptable to school district or agency:** If the behavior exhibited by the field participant is not acceptable to the business organization, school
district, or agency, the school district or agency initiated process will be followed.

2. *Behavior unacceptable to the Clarion University:* If it is determined by the Clarion University Supervisor that the behavior exhibited by the participant is not acceptable to the Clarion University, the Clarion University initiated process will be followed.

3. *Unsatisfactory academic performance within a school district or agency:* If it is determined by either the cooperating teacher or the Clarion University Supervisor or by the administrator of the district or agency that the teaching/clinical competency of the student is at an unsatisfactory level, the Clarion University initiated process will be followed.

**Initiation Process for Withdrawal, Reassignment and/or Termination**

**District or Agency Initiated:** A request by the cooperating teacher and/or district administrator to terminate a student from a field assignment will receive an immediate response. A thorough review of the events leading up to the request by the school district or agency will determine whether or not remediation, withdrawal or termination is appropriate.*

If the behavior exhibited by the field participant is not acceptable to the school district or agency, the school district or agency decides unilaterally as to whether the student will be automatically terminated from that field assignment or whether further review will be given by the administrator in collaboration with the cooperating teacher, the Clarion University Supervisor, and the Director of Field Services to determine the appropriate course of action to be taken. If the school district or agency gives further review with the student and improvement is evidenced satisfactorily to the district or agency, no further action will be taken by the district or agency. However, if the behavior continues, at the discretion of the school district or agency, the field assignment will be terminated. Moreover, if the assignment is terminated by the school district or agency without further review being permitted by that school district or agency, then the second level of review under the Clarion University initiation process will be followed at this point.

**Situational:** A student who withdraws from a field experience citing extenuating circumstances that are beyond that student’s control, such as health or other personal reasons, may request future consideration. Conditions for that reconsideration should be stated in writing by the student to the Director of Field Services.*

*If the initiation process is instituted by either the district or is situational, then the Director of Field Services, in conjunction with the Clarion University Supervisor and the student, will make an initial determination. Such determination shall be placed in writing by a letter and given to the student from
the Assistant Dean/Director of Field Services as to how the student will proceed in his or her degree program.

**Clarion University Initiated:** If it is determined by the Clarion University Supervisor that the competency of the student is at an unsatisfactory level performance (whether academic, professional, or behavior related), based on the competencies indicated on either the appropriate evaluation form for whichever field assignment the student is participating in, or are not in the best interest of the clients, a three-way conference of the cooperating teacher, the Clarion University Supervisor and the student will be held to discuss the concern, possible outcomes, and remedial strategies. This action will result in earnest attempts by the cooperating teacher and the Clarion University Supervisor to assist the student with acknowledging problems and making corrections as documented in writing in the student observation reports. If the initial conference did not alleviate the unsatisfactory level of performance by the student, a second level of review will result with a committee consisting of the above identified three parties in conjunction with the Assistant Dean/Director of Field Services.

At the second level of review, it will be determined whether there will be a withdrawal, reassignment or termination of the field assignment. This committee may recommend an intervention course, if available, within the student’s degree program. If the student is given the option of the intervention course and elects to take the same, a student, upon successfully completing such course, may be reassigned to a field assignment. If a remediation strategy is inappropriate for the situational reasons of the student, recommendations for other available options will be discussed on an individual basis with the student at the time of the termination of the assignment. In the event the second level of review process is being used as a result of the initial school district or agency initiated process, then the cooperating teacher will not be a part of the review at this second level.

*As earlier noted, Clarion University recognizes that the COOPERATING TEACHER is most influential in this final preparatory stage of CUP’s teacher education candidates. The University thanks you for accepting this responsibility and filling a position that helps to determine who will enter the profession as quality educators.*

*Thank You!*

**H. Daniel Shaffer, Director**

*Clarion University Office of Field Services*