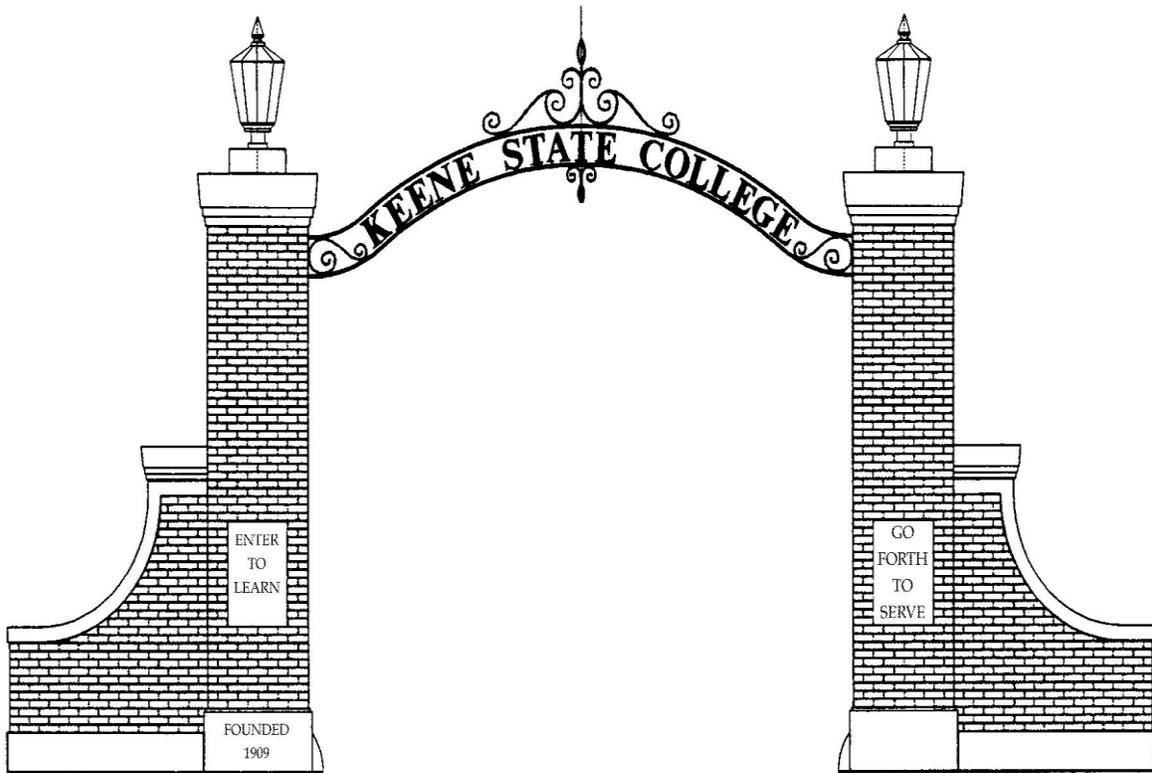


# Student Teaching Handbook

Secondary Education  
2016-2017



Educator Preparation Office  
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## **Welcome to the Student Teaching Experience**

A successful student teaching experience involves developing a good working relationship among the student teacher, the cooperating teacher, and the college supervisor, a relationship that will prepare the student teacher to become a colleague in this profession. This relationship is one of the most important of the student teacher's career. The cooperating teacher will become mentor, confidant, co-teacher, coach, and guide for the student teacher who will be experiencing the joys and frustrations of this career for the first time. The college supervisor will provide feedback to the student teacher and support for the cooperating teacher. In addition, the Educator Preparation Office will provide essential information, guidance, and reminders during this process to ensure that all requirements for the program and certification are met. Working together, we can make this crucial moment in the student teacher's professional life and development a successful experience.

## **The Danielson Framework for Assessment**

To facilitate the assessment process for Keene State College Educator Preparation Programs, we have adopted the guidelines outlined in Charlotte Danielson's book, *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*. We also follow NH State standards and the national standards of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). All student teachers are familiar with these standards from their Methods classes, and cooperating teachers will find these standards reflected in the observation and assessment forms used by the program.

Danielson outlines the following objectives that the successful student teacher should aspire to meet during the student teaching experience:

### **Planning and Preparation**

- Plan and teach individual lessons and whole curricular units that demonstrate clear instructional goals, accurate content knowledge, and effective teaching practices
- Plan and teach a variety of classes
- Handle a full teaching load
- Design, implement, and record effective assessment tools and outcomes
- Demonstrate an understanding and knowledge of students' abilities, interests, backgrounds, and special needs

### **Classroom Environment**

- Create an environment in which students feel respected by the teacher and their classmates and show respect to others
- Impart a sense of the importance of the content and the value of the activities and assignments required
- Communicate to students that their work is valued and have high expectations for their learning
- Handle classroom management issues effectively
- Use physical space to optimize learning
- Manage various learning groups (large group, small group, pairings, etc.), transitions, routines, and duties well

- Interact professionally with paraprofessionals and volunteers in the classroom

### **Instruction**

- Speak and write clearly and correctly
- Facilitate discussions, ask good questions, and answer students' questions to maximize their learning
- Monitor participation carefully so that all students are engaged
- Select groupings that are appropriate for the activity
- Choose appropriate materials and link content to students' knowledge
- Teach well-structured, well-paced lessons that accomplish instructional goals
- Provide helpful and timely feedback to students
- Demonstrate an ability to adjust plans to accommodate changes in scheduling, student needs, or opportunities for further learning

### **Professional Responsibilities**

- Reflect thoughtfully and thoroughly on teaching to determine successes and necessary revisions
- Maintain accurate records of students' work and progress
- Maintain appropriate professional contact with students' parents and guardians
- Maintain professional relationships with colleagues and participate in school events and projects
- Continue professional growth through organizations, study, and research

In addition, Danielson outlines important themes that should be a part of the student teacher's professional development:

### **Themes**

- Demonstrate a commitment to **equity** so that all students, particularly those of underserved populations, feel valued
- Demonstrate sensitivity to students of various **cultural backgrounds**
- Maintain **high standards** of achievement for all students
- Demonstrate an awareness of students' **developmental levels** and design assignments that are appropriate for those levels
- Accommodate students with **special needs**
- Incorporate appropriate and effective **technology** into the classroom
- While the primary contact during student teaching is between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher, the college plays an important part in ensuring that this experience is successful.

## **Your College Partners**

While the primary contact during student teaching is between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher, the college plays an important part in ensuring that this experience is successful. Each of your college partners plays a specific role in this enterprise and has particular responsibilities.

### **The Educator Preparation Office (EPO)**

The EPO coordinates the official communication with students around their eligibility and program requirements, contacts principals about placements, and regularly communicates with cooperating teachers about deadlines and assessment responsibilities. The staff in this office keeps our program running smoothly.

*The Clinical Field Experience Coordinator* oversees the **placement** of student teachers. In the semester before student teaching, students submit their student teaching applications through Tk20 (the college's online assessment program) and are assessed based on eligibility standards. The Field Experience Coordinator then works with the school sites and college program coordinators to find appropriate placements for our student teachers.

The Field Experience Coordinator is also responsible for recording the completed Student Teaching Placement Agreement form. Both the cooperating teacher and the principal must sign off on the placement for it to be finalized and then return the form to the Educator Preparation Office. **Students may not begin their student teaching experience until this form has been returned.**

Once the placement is finalized, the Clinical Field Experience Coordinator continues to act as a liaison between and resource for the school site and the college. The coordinator acts as the first line of communication between the school site and the college and helps to resolve problematic placement situations.

*The Educator Preparation Office Staff* coordinates the acknowledgement process for cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers receive their **compensation** from this office after the student teaching experience is completed and assessment documents have been submitted on Tk20. For each quarter of work with a KSC student teacher, cooperating teachers have the choice of receiving an honorarium or vouchers for KSC credit-bearing offerings. Cooperating teachers will also hear from the Educator Preparation Office at the start of each semester with orientation information and a schedule of important dates for student teaching. At the end of the semester, the EPO will ask for feedback about our programs and how we can better facilitate quality field placements. The EPO collates this information and sends it back to programs for their consideration.

### **The Certification Officer**

The Certification Officer recommends students for endorsement for initial licensure to the New Hampshire Department of Education. If a student teacher is offered a job before the state has issued final certification approval, the Certification Officer will provide, upon request, a letter to the school stating the student's status towards program completion and recommendation for endorsement for initial licensure. Ultimately, all final decisions about certification and student teaching rest with this office.

### **The College Supervisor**

The college supervisor's primary responsibility is to monitor the progress of the student teachers in the field. The college supervisor will visit the student teacher at least four times during a semester to conduct a formal teaching observation and provide feedback to the student teacher

based on the Danielson framework. During this visit, the college supervisor will need to talk to the cooperating teacher alone to discuss the student teacher's progress. The college supervisor will also meet with the student teacher alone to discuss the observation and the overall success of the placement. If it can be arranged, a three-way conference may also be part of the visit. The college supervisor will do a written observation and will provide both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher with a copy of this report.

Usually, the college supervisor will have been the student teacher's Methods professor and will, therefore, have already developed a good mentoring relationship with the student teacher. The college supervisor's visits, then, are not usually times of high anxiety. After the initial visit, most student teachers are pleased to discuss their classes with the college supervisor, to share their students' work, and to receive praise for their professional development, as well as constructive feedback from someone who has been monitoring and encouraging their growth for a long time. In other words, these visits are usually congenial times to celebrate the progress the student teacher is making toward becoming a colleague.

However, occasionally problems arise between student and cooperating teachers. In these cases, the college supervisor is there to act as a consultant and sometimes mediator so that these problems can be resolved, expectations can be clarified, and a plan for action can be developed. This is why both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher will have time to talk with the college supervisor alone.

The college supervisor also acts as the final evaluator to determine if the placement is successful, the provisional conditions under which a struggling student teacher may continue with a placement, if the student teacher should be removed from the placement, and whether the student teacher passes. The college supervisor works in close consultation with the cooperating teacher, the student teacher, and the Clinical Field Experience Coordinator so that decisions are mutually agreeable, but ultimately, it is the college supervisor's responsibility to determine if the student teacher passes the course. This allows the focus of the cooperating teacher's relationship with the student teacher to be on mentoring.

## **Your Roles and Responsibilities as a Cooperating Teacher**

Cooperating teachers have said that the most satisfying part of this work is watching the student teacher succeed, knowing that they have helped create a new colleague who will make valuable contributions to the lives of students and to the profession. That is why most teachers take on this responsibility and why many of them return to this work again and again.

### **Being a Mentor**

As a cooperating teacher, there will be times when you will find yourself learning from the student teacher, gathering new ideas, finding out new information, asking for an extra copy of a lesson plan for your future use. There will be times when you will watch a power struggle that has been going on in the classroom for weeks come to an end and know that the student teacher has finally gotten a handle on classroom management. There will be times when you watch a lesson or review a lesson plan and have no suggestions, only praise to offer. There will come a time when you coach your student teacher through job interview preparation and realize how

very much the student teacher has learned and how much you have contributed to that learning. There may even come that moment when you find yourself talking to your student teacher as a colleague and realize that you will miss the daily ritual of “talking shop” with someone who cares about this profession as much as you do.

This is what mentoring is all about. Your role is to model professional behavior for them, offer advice and encouragement as they grow into their new role, and then help them achieve their goal of becoming your colleague and part of the next generation of teachers. The world’s work is seldom more significant or more meaningful than this.

### **Providing Feedback**

You will be providing feedback and advice to the student teacher every day. This is a crucial part of your job because beginners need encouragement and suggestions, and your student teacher will look to you for both. While the two of you will undoubtedly develop your own routine around this, there are some important things about giving advice and mentoring to remember:

- ***Ask questions first.*** Always start by asking student teachers how the lesson or the day went. Encourage them to develop their own reflective and critical skills by finding out what they have realized on their own. You can then point out what they have missed.
- ***Always be encouraging.*** Some things will have gone well, and the student teacher needs to hear this praise from you so as to continue to build confidence and be ready to hear your suggestions.
- ***Phrase criticisms in the form of questions or suggestions.*** Questions will help your student teacher to think about how lessons can be revised and improved: “What else could you have said when Jane asked that question?” or “Have you thought about why Tom is behaving that way toward you?” Suggestions convey that you have confidence in the student teacher’s ability to problem-solve.
- ***Be ready to offer more direct guidance when needed.*** If your questions and suggestions are not leading to the improvement and progress you would like to see, you might need to be a little more direct in your approach. You might ask the student teacher to watch you do an activity and then analyze it with you. You might provide the student teacher with a few model tests or assignments to analyze and then ask the student teacher to base the next assessment tool on these. The student teacher may need you to help brainstorm about a different approach to take with a student or a task. You may also need to increase your expectations, requiring more formal lesson plans to prove planning ability, for example, or asking for more study in a subject area that seems weak.

### **Assessing the Student Teacher**

It is your responsibility to document the student teacher’s progress, and, when necessary, to record when insufficient progress is being made. You will receive a **field experience binder** through Tk20 with required programmatic evaluations.

You will conduct formal assessments at midterm and at the end of student teaching. At midterm (noted on the list of important dates you will receive from the EPO), you will use the **KSC Summative Evaluation Form** to assess the overall progress of the student teacher. A copy of your completed evaluation should be given to the student teacher and the college supervisor and be discussed during the college supervisor’s visit closest to midterm.

At the end of student teaching, you will provide feedback on the overall performance and progress of the student teacher in three ways. You will

- 1) complete the **KSC Summative Clinical Evaluation** form,
- 2) complete the **Teacher Candidate Dispositions Assessment** form, and
- 3) write a **formal letter of recommendation** for the student teacher.

In some disciplines, you will be asked to fill out a fourth form assessing content area knowledge. All of these documents should be reviewed with the student teacher and must be submitted through Tk20 by the due date provided by the Educator Preparation Office. The EPO will then process your compensation.

Usually, your letter of recommendation will be written at the end of student teaching; however, some student teachers are looking for jobs before student teaching is over and will need this letter earlier. Since your letter of recommendation is the most important one in the student teacher's file, we would ask that, if it is at all possible, you accommodate an early letter request.

## **Your Roles and Responsibilities as a Student Teacher**

As student teachers, you have already begun your professional work in the field during your Methods experiences where you learned and practiced the principles of professionalism that we expect to see in student teaching. Below are some important ground rules you need to remember:

- **Remember that you are a guest in this school.** The teachers and administrators there are under no obligation to allow us to use this placement site. Therefore, you must always behave in a professional and polite manner, not only to make your experience successful, but so that future student teachers will be welcome there.
- **Always be present, on time, and stay for the full school day.** Under no circumstances may you be absent without a compelling reason and without informing your cooperating teacher and college supervisor *prior to the absence*. You must always be at school early so that you have time to organize all your materials for the day and are ready to greet your students as they arrive. You should not leave the school until you are prepared for the next day and have your cooperating teacher's permission to do so. Be prepared to stay long after the last bell for faculty meetings, co-curricular activities, to provide extra help or make-up work for students, or to meet with students' parents or guardians.
- **Always be thoroughly prepared.** It is never acceptable to "wing it" while you are student teaching. You need to discuss with your cooperating teacher exactly what kind of lesson plans you will need to produce for each lesson and always keep the teacher fully informed well in advance about what you are planning to do. If your cooperating teacher wants formal, written lesson or unit plans from you, you must provide them.
- **Continually evaluate and increase your own content knowledge base.** If you discover an area in which you are weak, now is the time to study that area and improve your ability to communicate your understanding to students. You may no longer say, "I was never very good at . . ." when that subject is now an area you are expected to teach.
- **Reflect on your progress.** Each lesson should cause you to consider what went well and what could have been improved. Beyond that, you must also think about why techniques

worked or didn't, why certain students responded well or didn't, and what about your presence or presentation contributed to the success or failure of a particular lesson. Keep notes on changes you would make in the future.

- **Increase your knowledge of your students' abilities, learning styles, and lives.** The more you know about your students, the more easily you can adjust your lessons and methods to suit their needs and your own instructional goals. Be clear about whether the personal information that they share with you may be kept confidential or must be reported to your cooperating teacher.
- **Remember that your attitude counts.** Your cooperating teacher, college supervisor, and most importantly, your students will be able to sense whether you are enthusiastic about what you are doing. If you care about fostering the intellectual and personal/social development of your students, let that show. If you love your subject matter and want your students to love it, tell them that and tell them why. If you value education, make them feel that they are spending each day doing important work with you. If you are bored or lethargic, why should they be otherwise?
- **Know the school personnel and rules.** There are many key people in schools—principals, guidance counselors, administrative assistants, custodians. Introduce yourself to these members of the community you have joined, and learn their names. The first time these important people meet you should not be the first time you need help from them. In addition, most schools have a handbook outlining school policies. Read it and ask questions about anything you do not understand. Also, make sure you know the procedures you are expected to follow for a fire drill or emergency.
- **Behave in a professional manner in terms of how you interact with administrators, colleagues, and students.** Be mindful of how you speak and the language that you use; how you dress; how you organize your plans, files, records, and life; and how you behave in the community. Follow the dress code of the school, but then kick those expectations up a notch. Remember that your colleagues at the school are already employed; every day for you is determining whether you will be allowed to join them in this profession. You must be a model for acceptable adult behavior at all times, and you must *never* cross the line between professional and personal relationships with students.
- **Use your time well.** Past student teachers have said that the most important thing you can do to create a successful experience is to take full advantage of every opportunity for professional development that presents itself. Be on the lookout for these opportunities and be sure to document them for your portfolio. You might, for example, help with extracurricular school activities (yearbook, plays, music events, science or academic fairs, spelling or geography bees) and attend performances, assist a sports coach or attend games or practices, attend all meetings (faculty meetings, in-service days, parent conferences, open houses) in which you are allowed to participate, chaperone field trips or dances, or provide extra academic help to students before and after school. Each of these experiences will enhance your knowledge of your students' lives outside of your classroom. The wisdom gained and the relationships built will have a positive impact on your teaching.

## **How the Process Works**

Throughout student teaching, it's important to remember that the student teacher is truly both a "student" and a "teacher." The student teacher is still a student, receiving college credit, paying tuition, being graded, and needing to learn as much as possible from an experienced mentor. On the other hand, this student must end student teaching ready to be a teacher, able to manage the full-time responsibilities of a first job. If the transition to teacher happens too quickly, the learning time is truncated and the experience can be frustrating and unsuccessful. If it happens too slowly, the teacher preparation is truncated, and the student enters the job market feeling unprepared. It is a delicate balance.

We wish that there were a magic formula for how to make this transition successful, but there is not. A successful timeline will be different for each student teacher, not only because each student teacher is different, but also because the difficulty of the cooperating teacher's workload varies. A student teacher faced with five heterogeneously mixed middle school classes but only one preparation may be able to take on a full-load much faster than a student teacher facing three high school block periods with three entirely different preparations and levels. Also, a student teacher with a strong background in American literature or American history will take on the work of an American Studies course much faster than a student whose in-depth preparation has been in British literature or psychology.

So, instead of a formula, here are some basic guidelines you can use to help determine an effective timeline for responsibilities.

### **Appraising the Workload**

Before student teaching begins or on the first day, the two of you will need to talk about the workload. The cooperating teacher should explain the classes, review requirements, and be honest about the challenges and rewards of the load for the semester. The student teacher should express preferences and point out strengths in preparation. Keeping in mind the student teacher's need to experience success in order to build the confidence needed to face challenges later, it is helpful to make the first class the student teacher takes on be one that you both consider a good starting place for learning.

### **The Early Weeks**

The first weeks of student teaching are crucial for establishing your relationship and an overall plan for the experience. The student teacher should take on a first class as soon as possible. For fall student teachers, this is often the first day of classes so that the student teacher learns how to begin a school year and the students see the student teacher as their "real" teacher from the start. For spring student teachers, the transition often needs to wait until the end of a unit, but certainly by the beginning of the second week, the student teacher should have primary responsibility for one class.

At the beginning, the cooperating teacher is a presence in the room, observing and monitoring, prepared to answer questions if the student teacher needs help, and ready to give encouragement and advice after the lesson. The early weeks are a time in which the student teacher is gaining confidence and focusing on daily planning and preparation. During the other classes, the student

teacher should be observing, learning the routines, and memorizing students' names. The student teacher is using prep time to do long-term planning for that initial class and then for the next class the student teacher will take over.

One responsibility that cooperating teachers have identified as being a challenge is finding time within the busy school day to talk with the student teacher. However difficult it may be, it is essential that the two of you find this time. When the relationship between a cooperating teacher and a student teacher is unsuccessful, it is usually because they simply have not been communicating. Frustrations remain unexpressed, expectations are unclear, and resentments build. *It is absolutely crucial for the two of you to establish a time to talk and to remain firm in that commitment.*

### **Increasing the Load Gradually: The Bell Curve**

As soon as the student teacher is comfortable with the routine and workload of the first class, the two of you should select a second one for the student teacher to take on. Since the student teacher will have had time to prepare, the cooperating teacher will be able to review a full unit plan before the student begins teaching. At this point, the student teacher should know all the students' names and have a sense of their ability levels and special needs. The student teacher should take on additional classes at logical breaks, for example, at the beginning of a unit.

The next class is added as soon as possible after that and so on, until the student teacher is carrying the full load. Time spent with a full load must last a **minimum of three weeks**. Asking the student teacher to do a three-week unit on a specific topic that ends at Thanksgiving break or April break, for example, would be a logical way of arranging this final part of the load. Overall, then, the workload should follow a bell curve. For example:

#### ***Traditional Scheduling: 5 classes***

Weeks 1-3	One Class
4-5	Two Classes (same prep)
6-7	Three Classes
8-9	Four Classes (2 preps)
10-12	Five Classes (3 preps)
13	Three Classes (drop last 2 taken on)
14	Two Classes
15	Original Class

#### ***Block Scheduling: 3 classes***

Weeks 1-3:	One Class
4-8:	Two Classes
9-11:	Full load
12-13:	Two Classes
14-15:	Original Class

This timeline does not work for all situations or for all student teachers and could change for a variety of reasons. If the two of you have any questions about what is "reasonable," please talk with the college supervisor during a visit. The student teacher should not feel overwhelmed but should gain an understanding of how hard a teacher needs to work to do this job well. Student teachers also need to realize how requirements change for different class levels and how their available prep time will change as they move from having one class to a full load.

## A Few Suggestions to Make the Process Run More Smoothly

There are a few tips we would suggest that can help make the whole transition process easier. While these may seem like just good common sense, they are often overlooked and can make the relationship a little more difficult. We suggest

- **Introductions:** A seemingly small, but truly significant thing the cooperating teacher can do to help a student teacher feel comfortable from the start is to introduce him/her to the appropriate staff, faculty, and administrators in your school. The student teacher should know whom to contact in specific situations. Also, the student teacher should be introduced to the students on the first day in such a way that he/she is being introduced as one of their teachers, both in terms of what the student teacher is called (Ms. Smith or Mr. Jones, for example, rather than Jane or John) and in terms of authority and responsibility (“Ms. Smith will be teaching you beginning in two weeks” instead of “Ms. Smith will be helping me with your quizzes”).
- **Observations:** Student teachers learn a great deal by observing. The cooperating teacher will model, not only various methodologies, but also strategies for classroom management and handling the workload, ways to develop professional and productive relationships with students and colleagues, and techniques for establishing a positive classroom environment. It is helpful if the student teacher has time with the cooperating teacher to process all that he or she is seeing and learning during observation times. Toward the end of student teaching when the student teaching is no longer carrying a full load, it is helpful to observe a number of teachers in the building in a variety of disciplines to watch other new or master teachers at work.
- **Sharing materials:** While it is important that student teachers develop their own plans, they will learn what is possible and realistic from reading the cooperating teacher’s plans. All teachers rely heavily on our “files.” It is sometimes hard to remember what it felt like when no files existed, when every preparation was new, and when every question students asked was one we’d never answered before. Whenever possible and appropriate, cooperating teachers should share their files with student teachers, let them transform these materials into their own material, and use them as practice for developing units that are completely theirs.
- **Lesson and Unit Planning:** Planning and preparation, reading, researching, writing lesson and unit plans, and creating assessment instruments are all part of the student teacher’s homework. How formal these assignments are is up to the cooperating teacher. Cooperating teachers often ask for formal lesson and unit plans at the beginning to assess the student teacher’s planning skills and to know what content will be covered and how. Often these formal lesson plans decrease as time goes on and a more traditional planning book model takes over. However, some cooperating teachers ask for formal lesson plans for the entire semester because without those written plans they do not feel certain that the student teacher would prepare adequately or that they would have enough information about what is going on. In other words, this demand is often based on a question of trust because the cooperating teacher is not seeing clear evidence of preparation. The college supervisor will support the cooperating teacher’s request for formal plans if these are necessary.
- **Letting Go:** Cooperating teachers often identify “letting go” as the most difficult, yet *most important*, part of working with a student teacher. A student teacher will never develop the necessary skills to be an effective professional if the cooperating teacher is

always there to make sure everything runs smoothly. Letting a student teacher make mistakes or bad decisions and then handle the consequences of those decisions is an essential part of the learning process.

## **What To Do When Problems Arise**

For the vast majority of student teachers, this semester is the best experience of their college career. They become professionals and use all the skills they have developed during their years of education. For most student teachers, this is an extraordinarily satisfying experience, and they leave feeling ready to take on the challenge of their first job. For most cooperating teachers, the wonderful process of mentoring student teachers and watching those new professionals take on the challenges of their first job is satisfying and joyful. Most of our students are very successful and seen as well-prepared, desirable colleagues and candidates for jobs. In fact, most student teaching situations end in celebrations! However, some do not. When something goes wrong, because the consequences for the cooperating teacher, the student teacher, and the students are so significant, the situation needs to be handled in a decisive but sensitive manner.

### **If the Cooperating Teacher Has Concerns**

Since cooperating teachers work with student teachers on a daily basis, they will be the first people to notice problems that the student teachers are having. These problems may occur in any of the four areas discussed in the Danielson model and/or in the content areas. For example, the student teacher may come to school unprepared; not be willing to do the necessary studying to correct an area of content weakness; have difficulty establishing a good rapport with students; seem timid, uncomfortable, or simply unhappy in front of the classroom; or not behave professionally in terms of clothing, language, or interaction with others.

If the cooperating teacher perceives problems at any time, the following procedure should be followed:

1. ***Talk directly to the student teacher first.*** Remember that student teachers are new at this, and they may simply not be aware of the problem. One word of advice from the cooperating teacher may change the behavior.
2. ***Call or email the cooperating teacher.*** If the student teacher does not respond to suggestions or if the issue is one that the cooperating teacher feels uncomfortable raising with the student teacher, then it is best to contact the college supervisor as soon as possible. The two of you can then discuss the problem and determine if the college supervisor needs to contact the student teacher or if a three-way conference should be arranged.
3. ***Document the behavior.*** If the problem is serious enough that it might lead to removing the student teacher from the school, the cooperating teacher should document the behavior. This means keeping a simple record of what happens and when. It is also important that the cooperating teacher document and date any conversations about the problem with the student teacher so it is clear that the student teacher was made aware that the problem existed.
4. ***Contact the Educator Preparation Office.*** If an unresolved issue continues after a 3-way conversation among the student teacher, the cooperating teacher, and the college supervisor, the college supervisor will contact the Educator Preparation Office to work out a solution.

### **If the Student Teacher Has Concerns**

Occasionally, a student teacher will begin to feel that the experience is not going as well as it should. Student teachers talk to each other, and so it can become clear fairly quickly when one's experience is not matching up to what all the others seem to be going through. If a student teacher is still teaching one class a couple of times a week while everyone else has taken on full responsibility for a second course, or if a student teacher has never been left alone in the classroom after five weeks of teaching, the student teacher may begin to sense that something is missing from the experience and that, therefore, something is missing in the preparation he or she is receiving.

While keeping in mind how important the relationship with the cooperating teacher is, the student teacher should follow the same procedures as those recommended for the cooperating teacher: 1) talk to the cooperating teacher, 2) contact your college supervisor to discuss the problem, 3) keep track of the issue and the conversations you have about it, and 4) if a three-way conversation does not help resolve the issue, your college supervisor will contact the Educator Preparation Office about next steps.

### **When Solutions Fail**

Almost always, a conversation that allows difficulties to be discussed openly and a plan of action to be put into place will solve whatever problem is occurring. However, when a solution to ongoing problems cannot be found, there are generally three options:

#### ***Option #1: Placement Change***

If a student or cooperating teacher wants to initiate a placement change, this **request must be made in writing to the Educator Preparation Office**. The request should include a brief explanation of the reasons for this request. The college supervisor should be copied on the placement change request. The person not requesting the change will be asked to provide a statement of the situation from their point of view. Cooperating teachers may provide this information either by narrative or through Tk20 evaluations. A hard copy of all materials (including Tk20 notes or evaluations) will be placed in the student teacher's file and will be available to other personnel on a "need to know" basis.

The Educator Preparation Office, in consultation with the college supervisor, will facilitate any necessary meetings with the student teacher and cooperating teacher and assess the need for a placement change, based on submitted materials. If a placement change is warranted, the Educator Preparation Office will:

- Determine an end date for the current placement and communicate this to the college supervisor, student teacher, and principal and cooperating teacher at the current placement site
- Ensure that Tk20 evaluations are submitted (an evaluation is needed no matter when the student teaching placement ends)
- Work with other school administrators or principals to arrange a new placement by
  - establishing a start and end date for the new placement with the student teacher and the placement site (principal and cooperating teacher)

- ensuring that information on integrating the student teacher into a new placement is communicated to the student teacher and the new placement site
- placing hard copy documentation of the placement change in the student teacher's file, including print outs of all Tk20 notes/evaluations
- informing the student teacher if a new criminal record check is needed

Prior to a new student teaching placement, the student teacher will submit a plan to the Educator Preparation Office and college supervisor explaining the student teacher's goals and objectives for the new placement to be shared with the new cooperating teacher, college supervisor, and the principal. Once the placement has been determined, the Educator Preparation Office will inform the new cooperating teacher about the Tk20 binder for evaluating the student teacher and the payment agreement forms.

### ***Option #2: Withdrawal from Student Teaching***

Withdrawing is a student teacher's decision, and as a student teacher, you have the right to withdraw at any time. If at any point during student teaching, you should begin to feel that this profession is not right for you and that you do not want to continue, you should immediately talk to your college supervisor about why you are considering withdrawing; sometimes a good conversation results in devising a plan for completing the student teaching experience. However, if you still feel the desire to withdraw after consulting with your college supervisor, you should contact your academic advisor and the Educator Preparation Office before making a final decision. You need to consider the impact such a decision will have on your graduation plans, since withdrawal could mean the loss of an entire semester's worth of credits. Your academic advisor will be able to explain your options for completing your academic career.

We should note, though, that when a student teacher withdraws for the right reasons, this can be a very wise choice and a good career move. You need to do what is best for you and rest assured that the cooperating teacher, college supervisor, and EPO will do their best to help you during this time of transition.

If you do make the decision to withdraw, you will need to **submit a narrative** explaining the situation to the Educator Preparation Office; a copy of this narrative should be sent to your college supervisor. The narrative should include your perspective on the placement. A copy of the narrative will be placed in your file and be available to other personnel on a "need to know" basis.

The Educator Preparation Office will then determine an end date for the placement and communicate this to the student teacher and the current placement site (principal and cooperating teacher). In addition, the EPO will request that the cooperating teacher submit Tk20 evaluations no matter when the placement ends. All applicable payment agreement forms will then be processed.

### ***Option #3: Removal from Student Teaching***

Occasionally, the college supervisor will find it necessary to remove a student teacher from a placement. If a student teacher consistently fails to meet the basic expectations around content knowledge, planning and preparation, and professional behavior, the student teacher will first be

invited to withdraw. If the student teacher refuses that option and the behavior remains unchanged, the student teacher will be removed from student teaching. The college supervisor will make this decision in consultation with the cooperating teacher, the appropriate administrators at the school, and the Educator Preparation Office. It will be handled in an appropriate and respectful way, taking into account the needs of everyone involved.

**Note:**

- If a student withdraws or is removed after the seven-week mark in the semester, there is no tuition reimbursement.
- Student teachers could re-take student teaching if they receive a “W” for the course.

The removal process will be guided by the following protocol established by the Educator Preparation Office:

**Step One:** The college supervisor will request the removal of the student teacher in writing to the Educator Preparation Office. The request will include a brief statement as to the reasons for the request.

**Step Two:** The student teacher will submit a narrative addressing the reasons precipitating the removal, from their perspective, to the Educator Preparation Office and their college supervisor.

**Step Three:** The cooperating teacher will be asked to address the reasons precipitating the removal, from his or her perspective, either by narrative (copied to the college supervisor) or through Tk20 evaluations. A hard copy of all materials (including Tk20 notes or evaluations) will be placed in the student’s file and are available to other personnel on a “need to know” basis.

**Step Four:** Based on the submitted materials, the Educator Preparation Office, in consultation with the college supervisor, will facilitate any necessary meetings with involved parties and facilitate the removal.

**Step Five:** The EPO will then determine an end date for the placement and communicate this to the student teacher and the current placement site (principal and cooperating teacher). Once the placement has been ended, all applicable payment agreement forms will be processed after the submission of evaluations by the cooperating teacher. The Educator Preparation Office will ensure that there is clear communication with the school site and cooperating teacher concerning the completion of necessary paperwork.

### **The Importance of This Partnership**

Each of us has a student teaching story to tell. Some of us were placed with wonderful mentors who guided us into the profession with a gentle but firm hand of support. Others of us were thrown into the lion’s den while our cooperating teachers disappeared. The “Student Teaching Saga” is a shared experience, one some of us treasure and others of us would rather forget.

As a cooperating teacher, you will now be part of someone else’s student teaching story. We want to do everything we can to make sure the story is a good one with a happy ending for all concerned. That takes cooperation and open communication among the cooperating teachers, college supervisors, and student teachers. We appreciate your commitment to the process of

creating new teachers and look forward to working with you. We hope that you will feel supported by us and will be pleased with the student teacher we have sent you.

Student teachers, you will be the ones telling the story about your student teaching experience, and we hope that the story will be filled with great memories, touching moments, important insights, and lots of laughter. This experience marks the beginning of your career, and those of us filling mentoring roles in your life look forward to welcoming you into the profession.

We do want to say, though, that for a few student teachers who successfully complete their placement, this experience is the one that makes them know for sure that teaching is not for them, at least not right now. While it is easy to see this realization as some kind of failure, it is really a step toward clarity about the direction your life should take. The skills you will develop in student teaching will be valuable no matter what job you pursue after graduation. If you begin to feel that teaching is not a career you want to commit to at this time, please do not hesitate to talk to your college supervisor or cooperating teacher. You will not be the first person who has chosen a different career path after successfully completing student teaching. It is often said that teaching is not a job but a lifestyle. There is no shame in deciding that this lifestyle is not for you and choosing a better path for your own happiness and satisfaction. Remember that, if at any time in the future you should decide that you want to return to the classroom, this door will still be open to you.

**Good luck to you all as you begin to write the story of your professional career.**

## **Appendix:**

### **College Policies Related to Student Teaching**

#### **I. Placement Sites**

The Educator Preparation Office oversees all student teaching field placements and is responsible for making formal arrangements with participating schools and teachers. Students may not set up their own placements, and assignments are not permitted in schools previously attended by the student teacher or where relatives are students or employees. The Educator Preparation Office follows a placement process that has been vetted by the NH Department of Education and which takes into consideration what certification the student is seeking, whether the school is public or private, and if it is an approved placement site.

#### **II. Criminal Records Check Requirements**

As part of the student teaching placement process, students are responsible for completing a criminal records check, following the regulations of public school districts. These requirements must be completed prior to the beginning of student teaching, and all steps of the process and requirements are communicated by the Educator Preparation Office. For New Hampshire placements, the process includes having a criminal record release authorization form notarized and completing a fingerprinting appointment with a NH police department. Students should be prepared to pay for this criminal record check process. Non-compliance with this policy could result in a delayed start to student teaching.

#### **III. Substitute Teaching Policy for Keene State College Student Teachers**

The full-time field experience aspect of student teaching is critical in demonstrating that the student teacher meets required state and national standards. Given the importance of this final field-based experience and in light of possible liability issues, we have approved the following policy regarding KSC student teachers serving as substitute teachers during student teaching. A KSC student teacher may serve as a substitute teacher at the school where he/she is student teaching if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The school agrees to hire the student teacher as a substitute under the school district's existing policies and practices, unless the district chooses to waive any or all of them.
2. The cooperating teacher believes the student teacher is able to take over full responsibility of the classroom.
3. The student teacher substitutes in the classroom(s) where the supervised field experience is occurring.
4. The student teacher stops student teaching and becomes the substitute for the day under the school's liability policy.
5. No more than six days per semester are used for substitute teaching.
6. The student teacher is allowed to count the days of substitute teaching toward meeting the minimum standard of required days for student teaching.
7. The student teacher is not used as a substitute during any work action or strike situation.

If a student teacher is hired as a substitute, it is the expected 1) that the student teacher is being hired because the cooperating teacher will be absent that day and 2) that no additional substitute

teacher will be hired. If the cooperating teacher is absent but the student teacher is not hired as a substitute, the principal of the school will communicate to the college supervisor the name of a teacher from the school who will serve as the teacher of record in that classroom and in the supervisory role for the student teacher. If the student teacher will be serving as teacher of record in the classroom in the absence of the cooperating teacher, he/she will be hired as a substitute teacher and be paid.

#### **IV. Attendance Requirements**

All student teachers must meet state certification requirements for time in the classroom.

Therefore, student teachers must

- complete a **minimum of 66 days** for a semester placement
- attend student teaching every day of their field placement unless their placement school is not in session due to weather or other cancellation
- follow the placement school calendar and teacher contract hours, except for the start and end dates of student teaching, which are set by Keene State College
- report all absences to the cooperating teacher and the college supervisor (who is responsible for maintaining attendance records) prior to the absence
- complete make-up days if a student teacher's attendance drops below the 66-day expectation; the college supervisor, with input from the cooperating teacher, will determine the number of days that must be made up based upon the student's demonstration of competencies and will communicate the number of days to the Educator Preparation Office
- complete make-up days at the end of the placement if the college supervisor deems it necessary to ensure a student teacher's demonstration of competencies

Student teachers should direct questions regarding absences/make-up days to their college supervisor. Non-compliance with this policy could result in the removal from a placement.

#### **VI. Early Completion of Student Teaching to Accept a Job Offer**

Occasionally, a student teacher will receive a job offer before completing the 66 required days of student teaching. Every case is considered individually; however, the following criteria will guide the decision process:

- 1) The student must be meeting or exceeding expectations for all performance standards.
- 2) The student must have a mentor teacher in the school with whom to work.
- 3) The college supervisor must continue the student teaching visits and complete the process.
- 4) This action must be recommended by the college supervisor and approved by the certification officer.
- 5) The student must complete at least 10 weeks of student teaching.
- 6) The exception works best when student teachers are being hired by the schools in which they are student teaching.