Public School Mentor Teacher Guidelines

Dewar College of Education

Valdosta State University

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Public School Mentor Teacher Guidelines
Information, Schedule, and Evaluations
Fall, 2009

Research clearly indicates that the mentor teacher has the most influence on the student teacher during the student teaching experience. Your role is demanding, but also rewarding, as you guide the student teacher during the transition from student to teacher. Much of what the student teacher learns during this experience will be modeled after you, so it is important that you model different instructional strategies and encourage the student teacher to try them also.

This mentor teacher packet includes information and directions about orientation for the student teacher, planning/teaching expectations, solo teaching, evaluation of the student teacher, and evaluation of VSU supervisor. Attached to this information packet is a checklist for the mentor teacher (this form does **NOT** need to be returned).

All forms (evaluations of the student teacher and evaluation of the VSU supervisor) will be completed on-line; instructions are given later in this packet. If you have any questions, please call Dr. Julia M. Lee at 229-333-5925 or email julielee@valdosta.edu

Orientation for the Student Teacher

The orientation is important to help the student teacher know the procedures you use with students, your teaching schedule, school policies for teachers and students, and much more. The orientation activities may take place over the first few days of the student teaching experience and should include:

- Providing access to the teacher handbook or other documents which explain policies, rules, and regulations of the school or system.

- Providing a work place for the student teacher and any instructional materials and textbooks that will be needed by the student teacher to plan his/her instructional activities.

- Explaining the composition of the class(es) and calling attention to such factors as specific needs of students with exceptionalities as well as any other matters that are important for the student teacher to know.

- Discussing the lesson plan format to be used and establishing deadlines when lesson plans will be due to you for review. **Note: If plans are not submitted on time or if they are not of acceptable quality, the student should NOT be permitted to teach and the VSU supervisor should be notified.**

- Providing opportunities for the student teacher to become familiar with pertinent resources in the library, media center, and elsewhere.

Planning and Teaching Expectations

As quickly as possible, you should encourage the student teacher to assist you in classroom procedures and activities, which will begin to prepare him/her to assume some teaching responsibilities. How soon the student teacher assumes teaching responsibility for a class is dependent on his/her performance during this time of assisting you; also, the VSU supervisor should be consulted in determining the student teacher's readiness to assume responsibility for a class. This transition should be planned in such a way that both you and the student teacher feel confident in increasing the amount of responsibility. The students in your classes should always be given first consideration to ensure that any changes do not adversely affect them. Other factors to consider during this transition of teaching responsibilities are:

- Involving the student teacher with the classes as you are teaching to help the student teacher to become more comfortable in dealing with the students, to become more familiar with curricular expectations, and to develop his/her "teacher presence."

- Identifying clearly the lesson plan format you want from the student teacher and deadlines for submitting lesson plans. Discuss QCC/GPS requirements or other critical aspects of the lessons that he/she will be planning. You are invaluable to the student teacher as he/she prepares those first plans--how to get the students engaged, how to check if they learned what was taught, and much, much more. The student teacher's plans should include sufficient detail to demonstrate that he/she is well prepared and also permit you to confirm that expected curricular/instructional objectives are being met. Your review and feedback of the lesson plans is critical in helping the student teacher to achieve success as the plans are implemented!

- Reviewing any tests developed by the student teacher prior to their administration. After tests are given, the student teacher should review the results and grading procedures with you. This could be the basis for reflection by the student teacher on which instructional activities were effective and which ones could be improved.

- Reviewing the lesson plans and discussing them with the student teacher prior to their implementation should include feedback on how the plans meet QCC/GPS objectives, any expected local outcomes, how to engage the students more effectively, and how to sequence instruction and assess student learning effectively.

- Providing feedback frequently! Student teaching is a learning experience, and the student teachers have been told to expect feedback and constructive criticism from you on their teaching performance. Encourage the student teacher to reflect on his/her plans and teaching and help him/her consider ways to improve. A regularly scheduled time to discuss the student teacher's progress is highly recommended. If at all possible, avoid correcting the student teacher in front of the class!

Solo Teaching

Scheduling the solo teaching. Student teachers are expected to solo teach a full class/case load for a minimum of three weeks. The timing of this solo teaching and the length of it are dependent on the performance of the student teacher. The solo time may be longer if performance meets your expectations. After the solo period, you might wish to try team teaching together; or there may be a gradual shift of the teaching back to you full time. In any of these cases, the decision should be a collaborative one based on discussions with the student teacher and VSU supervisor.

After the solo teaching time, discuss with the VSU supervisor and student teacher specific activities that could be provided to the student to enrich or expand his/her professional development. These activities could provide experiences at other grade levels, assisting professionals such as media specialists, counselors, Title I teachers, etc.

Evaluation of the Student Teacher

You will be providing feedback to the student teacher constantly as you work together and as the student teacher begins to assist you with various classroom activities. Most of the feedback you provide to the student teacher will be informal, but you are expected to complete three formal evaluations and share these results with the student teacher and the VSU supervisor. These evaluations are collected by VSU to provide information about the overall performance of our student teachers within and across departments.

These evaluations will be completed on-line. The evaluation materials are located at the following Student Teacher Assessment website:

http://asp.valdosta.edu/sta

When you go to the above website, you will note that there are four forms for you to complete. Three of these are evaluations of the student teacher and should be completed as explained below. The other form is the mentor teacher's evaluation of the VSU supervisor and should be completed near the end of the semester. **After you complete each form, please click the "Submit" button only ONE time—this may take a few seconds. Please print a copy of the evaluation BEFORE you click the "Submit" button.**

First Evaluation -- This should occur soon (a week or two) after the student teacher has started any teaching responsibilities. High expectations should be established during this first evaluation to identify strengths as well as areas needing improvement. In fact, the scoring on this evaluation should be relatively low since the student teacher is just beginning. After you complete the form on-line, please print a copy of your evaluation for the student teacher and the VSU supervisor. Please schedule a time to discuss your evaluation of the student teacher with him/her; be sure to include in your discussion ways in which the student teacher can improve his/her performance.
Please submit first evaluation on-line by: Friday, September 18, at 3:00 p.m.

Second Evaluation -- A second formal evaluation should be completed around the mid-term point. The results of this evaluation can be compared to the initial one to determine growth and to identify areas for additional growth. Again, the emphasis is on promoting growth, not determining a grade. Please print a copy of your evaluation for both the student teacher and the VSU supervisor. Discuss your evaluation results with the student teacher and VSU supervisor; again, please suggest ways for the student teacher to improve his/her performance. Solicit feedback from the VSU supervisor regarding his/her evaluations of the student teacher.
Please submit second evaluation on-line by: Thursday, October 8 at 3:00 p.m.

Third Evaluation -- The last evaluation should be done near the end of the semester as the student teacher completes his/her teaching responsibilities. Please print a copy of your evaluation for both the student teacher and the VSU supervisor; this evaluation should provide the focus for a discussion with the student teacher and VSU supervisor regarding the overall student teaching experience and the assignment of a final grade. This data is important in helping VSU identify overall program strengths and weaknesses**.**
Please submit third evaluation on-line by: Friday, November 20, at 3:00 p.m.

All three forms are to be completed on-line. Please submit evaluations by the dates shown.

Overall Grade -- The student teaching experience is graded as "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory." The VSU supervisor should solicit your input regarding the student teacher's overall performance; however, the final grade for the student teacher is the ultimate responsibility of the VSU supervisor.

Evaluation of the VSU Supervisor

On the Student Teacher Assessment website is an evaluation form for your use (the mentor teacher) in evaluating the VSU supervisor; please complete this form by **Friday, November 20, at 3:00 p.m.**

Student Teaching Honorarium

Because of state budgetary cutbacks, the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) no longer provides funds to pay stipends to mentor teachers. At the present time, it is not known if or when these funds may again be available.

Student teaching is probably the most valuable part of a teacher training program, and the guidance provided by mentor teachers is invaluable. Please accept the appreciation of the faculty of the College of Education for the outstanding job that you do in helping us to prepare future teachers.

Substitute Teaching

Student teachers are **NOT** allowed to serve as substitute teachers during the semester they are student teaching.

Questions

If you have questions regarding this information or during the student teaching experience, please contact Dr. Julia M. Lee at 229-333-5925 or email to julielee@valdosta.edu

Attachment:

- Mentor Teacher Checklist – do NOT return this form

Fall 2009 Student Teaching Schedule

Fall Semester Student Teacher Orientation	Thursday, August 13, 2009, 9:00 a.m. in the Bailey Science Center Auditorium
First Day of Student Teaching	Monday, August 17, 2009
Fall Career Day	Wednesday, November 18, University Center, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Fall Student Teacher Training Session	To be announced
Last Day in Schools	Friday, December 4, 2009
Graduation	Saturday, December 12, PE Complex

NOTE: All VSU student teachers are to be excused to attend the Fall Career Day and the Fall Student Teacher Training Session. It is mandatory that all Student Teachers attend these sessions.

Mentor Teacher Checklist

As the mentor teacher, I:

____ Provided orientation activities to prepare student teacher--school policies, materials, classroom procedures, established work place for student, etc.

____ Discussed with student teacher--lesson planning, format, and deadlines for plans to be submitted.

____ Began involving the student teacher with the students and in assisting me.

____ Met with VSU supervisor for orientation session.

____ Discussed beginning of teaching responsibility for student teacher--which class and when.

____ Asked the student teacher to do a self-evaluation soon after he/she began teaching and to discuss the results with me.

____ Completed the first evaluation on-line and discussed it with the student teacher. Continued to encourage the student teacher to reflect on his/her performance.

____ Maintained regularly scheduled interactions with student teacher about planning, teaching, discipline, etc.

____ Scheduled solo teaching schedule (minimum of three weeks) and reviewed expectations that should take place during this time.

____ Continued to encourage student teacher to reflect on his/her performance.

____ Completed mid-term evaluation on-line and discussed with student teacher.

____ Discussed student teacher's progress with VSU supervisor and solicited feedback.

____ Discussed with the student teacher his/her activities after the solo teaching period; this could include shared teaching responsibilities, team teaching, as well as the student teacher observing other teachers such as special education teachers or teachers at other grade levels.

____ Completed final evaluation on-line and discussed with student teacher. Met with VSU supervisor to discuss overall performance of student teacher.

____ Completed VSU supervisor evaluation on-line.