Dear Cooperating Teacher,

On behalf of the Luther College Education Department, I thank you for providing professional mentorship to your Luther student teacher. Your student teacher’s supervising teacher and methods/portfolio supervisor look forward to working with you to maximize the student teaching experience.

The information provided here serves as a guide to your role as cooperating teacher. This section and the Luther College Student Teaching Handbook provide you with information to support you in this role. Please never hesitate to contact any of us in the education department if you have questions before or during the student teaching experience.

Sincerely,

Dr. Barbara Bohach
Education Department Chair

Primary Role and Responsibilities of the Cooperating Teacher:

- Orientation
- Modeling/Guidance
- Lesson Planning
- Gradual Release of Responsibility
- Observation
- Assessment
- Conferences
- Teamwork
- Documentation
- Portfolio Guidance
- Students

1. Orientation:
Make your student teacher feel welcome and comfortable. Your student teacher should contact you prior to the start of their student teaching experience and exchange contact information with you. Provide necessary information, curriculum materials and documentation that your student teacher will need to feel that they are a part of your school staff. (See Checklist in Appendix to the Student Teaching Handbook.) Introduce your student teacher to your school staff and in your school newsletter to families. Provide a desk or appropriate workspace for your student teacher. Develop a relationship as teaching partners. Model professionalism and expect professionalism. The online cooperating teacher seminar, will explain the relationship of the cooperating teacher with the student teacher, the college
supervisor and the student's methods advisor, as well as giving suggestions and answering questions related to this experience.

2. **Modeling and Guidance:**
   You are now the practicum student's primary teacher. The cooperating teacher is responsible for showing the novice how to connect theory with practice and how to put into practice effective instructional strategies. Share methods that you have found successful and discuss the supportive research. Help your student teacher to understand that she or he need not be a carbon copy of you, but should try to develop his or her own teaching style.

3. **Lesson Planning:**
   Planning is a critical factor in effective teaching. The cooperating teacher should assist the student teacher to write lesson plans with sufficient detail so that the student teacher (or another person qualified to teach the subject) could teach from them. Written plans should include the essential lesson elements of objectives tied to standards, materials, procedures, differentiation, assessment and reflection. (See sample format in Appendix to the Student Teaching Handbook.) It is important that the cooperating teacher review and give feedback on the lesson plans before the student teacher teaches the lesson to ensure continuation of the curriculum. Encourage the practicum student to ask, “Why am I teaching this?” and “Why am I using this activity?” The cooperating teacher should assist the student teacher to analyze, reflect and assess the effectiveness of the plan following the lesson. Lesson plans need to be available to the college supervisor prior to each observation.

4. **Gradual Release of Responsibility:**
   Your student teacher will soon be teaching in their own classroom, so this is an opportunity for them to try out their wings with support and guidance from you. The student teacher should begin by observing. This is an opportunity to learn student names, routines and procedures. They should first assist, then team with you, and finally teach alone. Begin leaving the room for brief periods while the student teacher is conducting class as soon as you feel comfortable doing so, and increase your time away from the classroom. Even after your student teacher has assumed the full teaching load, you should observe them in action at least one full class per day. Require lesson plans from the student teacher at least two full days in advance or in accordance with your school’s policy. Your student teacher should plan and teach a minimum of ten full days within each seven-week placement. More days are optimal if the schedule permits. (Many Luther College students teach 3 full weeks.)
# Suggested Student Teacher Involvement Schedule for Cooperating Teacher (7 weeks)

| Week 1-7 (Ongoing) | • Attend all faculty meetings & professional development workshops  
• Be a part of meetings with parents and other staff members (including parent/teacher conference, IEP reviews, etc.) |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Week 1**          | • Observe cooperating teacher  
• Become familiar with daily routines, discipline plans, expectations  
• Learn student names and seating chart  
• Become familiar with texts, and other curriculum materials  
• Review and become familiar with district, school and classroom policies  
• Become familiar with the office area, librarian, special teachers, custodial staff, lunchroom staff and playground areas  
• Look for opportunities to interact with students: Greet students, facilitate practice sessions, tutor small groups or individuals, assist with lessons |
| **Week 2-3**        | • Plan lessons for one new subject each week  
• Begin team teaching, and serve as team teacher for all lessons by the end of 3 weeks.  
• Assume clerical responsibilities for the classroom  
• Plan unit outline |
| **Week 4**          | • Plan lessons for at least 3 subjects  
• Finalize plans for new unit  
• Begin fulltime teaching |
| **Week 5-6**        | • Full time planning  
• Full time teaching  
• Prepare, develop and administer assessment instruments |
| **Week 7**          | • Begin phasing out of teaching  
• Complete necessary student assessments  
• Observe other building teachers  
• Complete all portfolio artifact preparations from experience |
4- Week Gradual Release of Responsibilities for Student Teachers

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• Become familiar with daily routines, discipline plans, expectations  
• Learn student names and seating chart  
• Become familiar with texts, and other curriculum materials  
• Review and become familiar with district, school and classroom policies  
• Become familiar with the office area, librarian, special teachers, custodial staff, lunchroom staff and playground areas  
• Look for opportunities to interact with students: Greet students, facilitate practice sessions, tutor small groups or individuals, assist with lessons |
| Week 2 | • Plan lessons for one new group/ subject each day  
• Teach or serve as team teacher for all lessons by the end of this week.  
• Assume clerical responsibilities for the classroom |
| Weeks 3 | • Full time planning  
• Full time teaching  
• Prepare, develop and administer assessment instruments |
| Week 4 | • Begin phasing out of teaching  
• Complete necessary student assessments  
• Observe other building teachers  
• Complete all portfolio artifact preparations from experience |

5. Observation:
Even during the time the student teacher is doing their full teaching you should be in the classroom at least some time every day to give feedback and encouragement. Prior to an observation, discuss and agree on the specific teaching element you will be observing. (See suggestions in Appendix to the Student Teaching Handbook.) Look for and emphasize the positive, as well as suggestions for growth, as the practicum student gradually increases his/her teaching responsibilities.

6. Assessment Conferences:
Have a conference every day with your student teacher if possible, but no less than two or three times per week. Encourage your practicum student to use video or audiotapes for self-evaluation. Ask questions that assist the practicum student to reflect: “What worked well? What would you do differently? Why?” Be specific and concentrate on only one or two areas in your discussion.

7. Teamwork:
It is important that the cooperating teacher, the student teacher, and the college supervisor work together as a team to make this a positive learning experience. Plan a midterm conference when the three of you can meet to discuss progress and areas for growth, using the ten Luther teaching competencies as a guide to set goals for the second half of the experience. Near the end of the seven weeks, the cooperating teacher will meet with the college supervisor and the student teacher to complete the summative evaluation and to determine the assignment of the “credit/no credit” grade for the student teaching experience.
8. Documentation:
Take notes during your observations and document both positive areas and areas of concern that you will share with your student teacher. This documentation will also be useful when completing the summative evaluation. **If problems or concerns arise at any time, please contact the college supervisor in a timely fashion so that these issues can be addressed.**

9. Portfolio Guidance:
Throughout the student teaching experience your student teacher will be working on their advanced portfolio. Work as a team with your student teacher and their supervisor to support thoughtful choices to include in this portfolio. Take time to review and encourage the reflection and growth demonstrated in the portfolio entries.

10. Students:
Both you and your student teacher know that the well-being and academic growth of the students in your classroom is your first priority. Your modeling, guidance and support will help your student teacher to become a confident and successful professional.