



CONNECTICUT
COLLEGE

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

COOPERATING TEACHER HANDBOOK

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Our Conceptual Framework: Mission and Goals

Cooperating Teachers are essential to our program. To help orient you to our Conceptual Framework, we share with you below some key excerpts from the mission statements of Connecticut College and the Education Department, as well as the Education Department's Goals for Teacher Education.

As a Department, we work hard to ensure that our courses reflect these mission statements and goals. We are always happy to answer any questions that you have about them.

Mission of the College and the Education Department

"Connecticut College educates students to put the liberal arts into action as citizens in a global society." –*Connecticut College Mission Statement, 2005*

"The Connecticut College Education Department operates on the understanding that inherent to American education is a set of political, economic and cultural relationships that reflect the dominant social arrangements of U.S. society. The Department therefore regards teaching as primarily a political act. The goal of the Teacher Education Program is to produce critical educators who understand that one of the consequences of living in a pluralistic society is the existence of a variety of conflicting views of what it means to be educated. As such, it works to instill in students a sense of responsibility to participate in the political process by which educational policies are initiated, employed and resisted." –*Philosophy of the Education*

Department, Connecticut College, 2005

In preparing teachers for the nation's public schools, the Connecticut College Education Department begins with the understanding that the transformation of PK-12 schools and classrooms into sites of social justice¹ and mobility is central to a democratic society. Indeed, we believe that the nation's widely declared goal of raising educational achievement for all children will only be realized when schools are engaged in building a more equitable and democratic community. (*Rethinking Schools*)

Therefore, we believe that public school teachers should not only be dedicated to furthering the academic success of their students but also to the work of "teaching for the society we want to see." Educating teachers to see schooling as an opportunity to create a multiracial, multi-vocal² democracy capable of addressing the serious social, economic and environmental problems of society is integral to the department's mission.

The Education Department Goals for Teacher Education

"Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity OR it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world."

—Paulo Freire

The Education Department at Connecticut College aims to develop teachers as intellectuals and mediators of social change with solid academic records and a strong commitment to their professional life. Critical pedagogies underlie our teacher certification program, therefore, teacher candidates must attain high levels of achievement within their discipline(s). That is, they must demonstrate understanding of the major concepts, assumptions, processes of inquiry and ways of knowing central to their discipline(s). Moreover it is expected that candidates learn to interrogate this knowledge base as they critically engage power/knowledge relations that (re)produce social and educational inequalities.

The teacher certification program at Connecticut College is designed for students who wish to become certified as professional educators. However, we are not a "how to" program, nor do we offer lock-step "training." Our goal is to prepare educators who see schooling as an opportunity to create a multiracial, multi-vocal democracy capable of addressing the serious social, economic and environmental issues in contemporary society. We are proud that our alumni teach in schools and educational settings throughout the world.

¹ For the purposes of this document, the term "social justice" refers to (classroom) spaces that enact the imperatives of a critical democracy: equality, equity, and diversity.

² The term "multi-vocal" refers to the notion of "many voices."

The goals of the program are:

- **Goal I:** To educate teachers who understand that excellence in teaching begins with deep knowledge and a critical understanding of their subject matter as a means of developing high standards of achievement and excellence for their K-12 students.
- **Goal II:** To educate teachers who understand that education and schooling are shaped by larger socio-historical, political, economic, and geographic contexts.
- **Goal III:** To educate teachers who construct critical pedagogies that are situated in and shaped by local contexts and community knowledge.
- **Goal IV:** To educate teachers who understand the relationship between power and knowledge and who create classrooms as critical sites of action where essential questions about (in)justice as related to opportunity, conditions and outcomes are addressed.
- **Goal V:** To educate teachers who understand literacy as having multiple dimensions, forms and functions that develop both inside and outside of schools. Literacies are meaning making processes in which the dynamics of power, voice, access, identities, and representation are operating.
- **Goal VI:** To educate teachers who understand assessment and evaluation as forms of inquiry and ongoing processes of reflection and praxis.

Introduction to the Cooperating Teacher Handbook

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a Cooperating Teacher for a Connecticut College Student Teacher. We provide this **Cooperating Teacher Handbook** as a resource for you to review at the outset of the student teaching experience and to consult, as needed, throughout the semester. This Handbook offers a quick overview of our program's conceptual framework, followed by specific details concerning the student teaching experience and your crucial role within it.

We offer this Handbook as a set of guidelines for working with your student teacher (ST). Given the wide variation in school settings and protocols, we allow for flexibility within the student teaching experience as long as Connecticut state guidelines are met. Ultimately, the cooperating teacher (CT) and the ST determine much of the teaching experience.

Please note that the first three weeks are an observation period. During this time the students are engaged in a rigorous teaching methods course on campus with significant reading and writing expectations. As a result, CTs are asked not to require STs to teach or plan extensively during this period. STs will complete a ten-week minimum of full-time student teaching. Once the formal student teaching experience begins the pace of instruction will depend upon the ST's abilities, the challenges of the class, and the demands of the subject.

While we offer this Handbook as a resource, we in no way mean for it to replace other forms of communication. We will be in touch with you personally before, during, and after the student teaching semester. In addition, please feel free to contact us directly with any questions that you may have about the content in this Handbook or your role.

We look forward to seeing you out in the schools in the near future.

Thank you again for all you do on behalf of our students and your own.

Notes to the Cooperating Teacher:

Introducing Student Teachers to the School and Classroom

We have broken the guidelines into sections below on orienting the ST to the school and also orienting the ST to your classroom (and you!).

Guidelines for Orientation to the School:

1. **Introduce** the student teacher (ST) to the **principal**, and when appropriate, the department chairperson, and other administrative officers.
2. **Introduce** the ST to your fellow department or grade level **colleagues**.
3. **Introduce** the ST to members of the **faculty and staff** with whom s/he will need to establish a working relationship (i.e., guidance personnel, deans, secretaries, school aides, cafeteria and custodial staff).
4. **Arrange a tour of the school building** to help the ST learn about the **facilities** and services that are available, such as the library, technology center, guidance and medical offices, cafeteria, faculty room, department office, copying room, computer lab, and any subject-specific resources.
5. **Inform** the ST of the daily **arrival and departure times** for teachers, as STs are required to spend the full day in the school.
Ensure the ST obtains a copy of the **school calendar, class schedule, and bell schedule**. It is the ST's responsibility to submit this information to their College Supervisor(s) early in the semester in order to coordinate visits.
6. **Identify any supplies** that are available for the ST's use and, when appropriate, the procedures for ordering.
7. **Share** any essential **procedures related to instructional and assessment materials** (e.g., for making copies, for borrowing shared resources, etc.).
8. **Share** any essential **school policies** and procedures (e.g., for checking in and out of the school building, for teacher absences, etc.).
9. **Share** a copy of the school's **handbooks** for teachers and for students if they exist, and highlight/review key content.

Guidelines for Orientation to the Classroom:

1. **Share** a little bit **about yourself** with the ST, and also **contact information** (e.g., phone number and email) in case of an emergency.
2. **Provide** an **overview of content and material** you intend to cover during the student teaching period early in the semester.
2. **Review** with the ST any **key materials and texts** used in your classes. If possible, make copies available to the ST of any materials to be reviewed or otherwise used with students during the semester.
3. **Discuss** with the ST the **instructional and disciplinary responsibilities** that you expect the ST to assume in your classroom.
5. **Plan** for **informal meetings** with the ST following each of the ST early teaching experiences to provide your reactions, suggestions, and guidance to improve the ST teaching.
6. **Schedule** at least **one regular meeting time per week** when you and the ST can meet together and discuss teaching and classroom dynamics and ideas for next steps to improve teaching approaches.
7. **Agree** on a **procedure for absences** so the ST knows what to do if ill and unable to come to school.
8. **Prepare** your **students** for the arrival of the ST. You may decide to explain the purpose of student teaching, emphasizing the legitimate professional status of the ST.
9. **Introduce** the ST to your classes.
10. If possible, **arrange** for an additional desk, table, or area in your classroom that can serve as a **workstation for the ST**.
11. **Offer guidance** about how to set up a grade book, handle late or missing work, take attendance efficiently, curve or weigh grades, address tardies or skipping, and manage the class effectively.
12. **Offer** guidance about how to construct tests, create essay prompts or other assessments, review in preparation for assessments, and grade—including any time-saving tricks you have.

In addition, for Secondary CTs Only:

- **Give** the ST a copy of your **full teaching schedule**, including room numbers.
- **Discuss** the number, grade level, types of **classes** the ST will teach and **any extra assignments** such as study hall.
- **Share** copies of the **course of study for each class**. If possible, identify the content area(s) or class(es) that the ST will teach first and the curriculum unit(s) to be taught. This will allow time for the ST to prepare in conjunction with the ST's teaching methods coursework.

Notes to the Cooperating Teacher: Assessing Teaching Readiness and Development

As a CT, you will be engaging in formative and summative assessment of the ST, alongside the formative and summative assessment conducted by the College Supervisor. In the sections below, we offer guidelines for ongoing assessment and also information about the required assessment materials that you will need to collect and provide to the College Supervisor at the end of the student teaching semester.

Guidelines for On-going Assessment and Evaluation:

1. Help the ST **understand** that **ongoing assessment and formal evaluation** are important parts of the student teaching process and help the ST determine next steps in order to improve their teaching and meet their own teaching goals.
2. **Observe** the ST continuously during the early weeks—for portions of lessons and/or for the duration of full lessons. **Provide feedback** on planning and performance and feel free to use the Student Teaching Rubric, included as Appendix X, as a tool for focusing your observation and debrief session with the ST. Please make sure to provide support that helps foster the ST's learning and growth as a teacher; constructive critiques are welcome.
3. **Allow** the ST to begin to **practice some autonomy** in the classroom and lead the class alone without another teacher or school official present in alignment with current practices in Connecticut for supervising the STs. Optimally, a CT would enable an *elementary* ST to teach the class on their own by the third week of the semester and would leave a *secondary* ST to teach a class on their own by the fourth week. A helpful guideline for CTs is to plan to be present continuously at the beginning of the semester, intermittently in the middle of the semester, and increasingly at the end so you can document the ST's development and transition the classroom back to your sole leadership.
4. **Conduct** frequent **informal and formal conferences** for the purpose of reviewing lesson plans, discussing video clips of the ST's practice, and analyzing examples of student work. Frequent communication outside of class is particularly important when the ST is teaching primarily on their own.
5. During the last few weeks, **observe** at least one **full lesson in each class (secondary) and/or content area (elementary)**. **Conduct** a post-observation **conference** with the ST in which you share a written evaluation of the ST's teaching—this can be done using the Student Teaching Evaluation Mid-Term and Final Ratings form or the longer Student Teaching Rubric provided in your CT packet.
6. **Confer** with the **College Supervisor** during observation visits. Bring any problems to the College Supervisor's immediate attention.

Guidelines for Final Evaluation:

1. **Collect throughout the semester information (“data”) for inclusion in the final Student Teaching Rubric**, which is submitted to the College Supervisor just before the end of the semester.
2. **Prepare** the final Student Teaching Rubric. Discuss with the ST the checklist of competencies and how you rated the ST *before* you submit the form to the College where it will become part of the ST's final placement file.

Suggested Sequence for Student Teachers

The table below offers a rough sequence of things that a ST *should* be doing. It represents a generalized list, not to be thought of as an exact or complete timeline. The language of the table treats each item as the responsibility of the ST. You, as CT, are encouraged to read the table to get a sense of the flow of the student teaching experience and to assist the ST in addressing these responsibilities.

First Week: Observation Week 1 <i>The student teacher (ST) should...</i>	
<p>Determine with the CT what content the ST will teach first.</p> <p><i>Elementary STs:</i> one component of the curriculum (e.g., morning meeting, language arts, math, etc.)</p> <p><i>Secondary STs:</i> one component of a lesson or class period.</p> <p>Observe the CT's classes and those of other teachers in the department and/or school, focusing particularly on those subjects or areas to be taught first.</p> <p>Get to know students. Learn their names. Gather information and documents regarding the students' learning needs in your classes such as individualized learning plans (IEPs).</p> <p>When appropriate, prepare seating charts for classes.</p> <p>Accompany and assist the CT in out-of-class assignments in the library, cafeteria or other school spaces.</p> <p>Assist with grading tests or quizzes, checking homework or homeroom responsibilities, if applicable.</p>	<p>Identify with the CT the first curriculum unit(s) to be taught and review a draft of the unit plan(s).</p> <p>Take a tour of the library, technology center, or other resource area and identify curriculum resources or materials you may draw on as you develop curriculum.</p> <p>Identify the procedures for borrowing and using shared materials.</p> <p>Prepare a bulletin board, if applicable.</p> <p>Discuss existing class routines with the CT and which, if any, of these routines you can adapt, alter or extend.</p> <p>Discuss with the CT any classroom systems for the storage and distribution of materials.</p> <p>Tutor a student individually or assist in facilitating a small group activity such as a group discussion or an in-class activity or assignment.</p>

Second Week: Observation Week 2 <i>The student teacher should...</i>	
<p><i>Elementary STs:</i> Plan and teach a fifteen-minute mini-lesson to the whole class.</p> <p><i>Secondary STs:</i> Plan and teach a fifteen-minute mini-lesson to the whole class in whichever class you will be teaching first.</p> <p>Continue with the preparation of curriculum unit(s).</p>	<p>Continue with responsibilities given by the CT during the prior week.</p> <p>Establish a time when you and your CT can meet daily for instructions, planning and feedback. This will be essential once you begin to student teach.</p>
Third Week: Observation Week 3 <i>The student teacher should...</i>	
<p>Prepare the following week's lesson plans and review them with the CT.</p> <p>Continue with preparation of curriculum unit(s).</p>	<p>Continue with the responsibilities given by the CT during the prior weeks.</p> <p>Meet with your CT on a regular basis.</p>
Fourth Week: Student Teaching Week 1 <i>The student teacher should...</i>	
<p><i>Elementary STs:</i> Teach a maximum of two content areas or activities each day.</p> <p><i>Secondary STs:</i> Teach one or two classes depending on individual circumstances—single preparation if at all possible.</p> <p>Collect feedback and suggestions regarding your teaching.</p> <p>Continue your observations of other classes and—when appropriate—observe other classes you will be teaching.</p> <p>Continue to assist with homeroom, out-of-class assignments, and test grading and other assessments.</p>	<p>Begin limited participation in your other classes or content areas and activities. For example, facilitate exercises, conduct quizzes or facilitate group discussions.</p> <p>If ready, work with the CT to select an additional class or content area to teach and begin your involvement in that curriculum and/or class.</p> <p>Prepare lesson plans for the following week and review with the CT.</p> <p>Assume responsibility for some homework checks and record keeping.</p> <p>Begin to collect student work—possibly making copies of: 1) one assignment that represents high-quality work, 2) an assignment that represents average-level quality and 3) an assignment that is below average.</p>

Fifth Week: Student Teaching Week 2 <i>The student teacher should...</i>	
<p><i>Elementary STs:</i> Teach at least two content areas or activities each day.</p> <p><i>Secondary STs:</i> Teach at least two classes (ten class periods—single preparation recommended).</p> <p>Grade any assessment the CT has constructed and administered.</p> <p>Analyze your own assessments for issues in construction and seek feedback on the assessment from your CT regarding student learning.</p> <p>Plan for re-teaching on the basis of assessment results.</p>	<p>Continue participation in other content areas and/or classes.</p> <p>Identify the third content area or class and prepare lesson plans for the following week. Review these plans with the CT.</p> <p>If possible, arrange to videotape a lesson next week.</p> <p>Make concrete arrangements for using educational technology next week if you have not integrated technology already.</p> <p>Continue collecting student work, and begin collection of (other) artifacts for the portfolio.</p> <p>Consult with your CT about the portfolio and discuss possible unit topics.</p>
Sixth Week: Student Teaching Week 3 <i>The student teacher should...</i>	
<p><i>Elementary STs:</i> Teach a full day every day. <i>Secondary CTs:</i> Teach a minimum of two to three classes block schedule or to three to four classes traditional schedule.</p> <p>Continue any homeroom and out-of-class responsibilities and continue participation in all other classes/activities.</p> <p>Videotape several lessons. Review and critique those with your CT.</p> <p>Begin thinking about possible topics for the curriculum unit assignment.</p>	<p>Prepare and review with your CT your lesson plans for week five.</p> <p>In consultation with your CT, select a fourth class and/or content area/activity to teach.</p> <p>Prepare unit and lesson plans for the coming week, and review those with your CT.</p> <p>Use educational technology in at least one class.</p> <p>Continue collecting artifacts for the portfolio.</p>

Seventh Week: Student Teaching Week 4 <i>The student teacher should...</i>	
<p><i>Elementary STs:</i> Teach a full day every day. <i>Secondary CTs:</i> Teach a minimum of two to three classes block schedule or to three to four classes traditional schedule.</p> <p>Continue any homeroom and out-of-class responsibilities and continue participation in all other classes/activities.</p> <p>Videotape several lessons. Review and critique those with your CT.</p> <p>Prepare and review weekly lesson plans and tests with the CT.</p>	<p>Choose a video clip of a lesson/class for your fellow STs to critique.</p> <p>Begin sketching a unit plan for the curriculum unit assignment.</p> <p>Discuss with your CT the Student Teaching Evaluations Mid-Term ratings form. (You and the CT should complete the form as often as is helpful, and at least twice during the semester—in the middle and at the end of the student teaching experience).</p> <p>Continue collecting artifacts for the portfolio.</p>
Eighth Week: Student Teaching Week 5 <i>The student teacher should...</i>	
<p><i>Elementary STs:</i> Teach the full day every day. <i>Secondary STs:</i> Teach 3/4 to 4/5 of a full teaching schedule (at least two preparations).</p> <p>Continue planning and/or teaching for your curriculum unit assignment.</p>	<p>Prepare and review weekly lesson plans and tests with the CT.</p> <p>Continue collecting artifacts for the portfolio.</p>
Final Weeks: Student Teaching Weeks 6-10 <i>The student teacher should...</i>	
<p>Video-tape additional lesson(s). Evaluate and review with your CT and/or fellow STs. Decide which video clips to share with the College Supervisor and/or include in your portfolio.</p> <p>Continue weekly conferences with the CT.</p> <p>Continue planning and/or teaching for your curriculum unit assignment.</p> <p>Conduct final tests or end-of-unit assessments of students.</p>	<p>Gradually return texts and all other borrowed materials to their appropriate sources.</p> <p>Observe other classes as well as the CT's class during the last few days.</p> <p>Have a last conference with your CT to review overall performance and to discuss performance according to department rubrics.</p> <p>Complete and discuss with your CT the Student Teaching Evaluations Midterm and</p>

<p>Complete assessment tasks and grading and record grades in your roll book.</p> <p>Continue collecting artifacts for your portfolio.</p>	<p>Final Ratings form, and discuss together the content the CT added to the Student Teaching Rubric.</p>
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Additional Professional Activities

In addition to any items included above, there are some other required and optional student teaching experiences that do not necessarily have to occur at a particular time. That said, many should occur at some point, and others might occur, if possible and desired by the CT and/or ST.

Required Experiences for Student Teachers:

1. Teaching a multimedia lesson that incorporates audio-visual components and/or some form of technology—for example, screening for student all or some of a film that aligns with lesson objectives, in-class activities, and/or discussion prompts, presenting an interactive lecture using a Smart Board, or incorporating a video clip into a PowerPoint presentation.
2. Attending faculty and department meetings.
3. Examining student records (and experiencing the school's record-keeping system) under the supervision of the CT or a guidance counselor—for example, reviewing cumulative folders, testing documentation, or health and attendance records.
6. Beginning a content area enrichment file and/or compiling a bibliography of supplementary materials in particular subject areas, including a list of professional journals and other resources on hand in the school's library.
7. Collecting ideas for class activities such as learning exercises or review activities.
8. Attending at least one after-school event such as a concert, play, PTA meeting, or athletic event.

Optional Experiences for Student Teachers:

1. Helping plan and participate in a field trip.
2. Tutoring a student after school.
3. Assisting in an extra-curricular activity.
4. Participating in a parent conference led by a CT.
5. Inquiring about the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) tests or other standardized tests administered to students in your school, examining copies of standardized tests administered to students, and/or reading teacher's manual for administering, scoring and interpreting standardized tests.
6. Requesting an observation from a school administrator/department chairperson.

7. Participating in a formal Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting regarding one of your students.
8. Participating in visitations with another ST and discussing lessons together, focusing on objectives, procedures and evidence of student learning.