



Dear Cooperating Teacher,

Thank you for welcoming a Kent State University student teacher to spend this academic year in your classroom. We know the stresses teachers experience and appreciate this sacrifice of time and heart, particularly during this strange time for schools functioning during a pandemic. You are truly giving back to the profession by agreeing to mentor one of our student teachers. By “paying it forward” in this way, you are showing appreciation to those who mentored you!

This fall, the student teacher assigned to you will be enrolled in what we call the “Practicum” course. A main requirement of this course is that your student teacher spends 96 hours in your classroom. Due to the fluid nature of schooling in response to the pandemic, we realize that their interactions with you and your students may include online environments. Preservice teachers may complete their required hours in a variety of ways and at your mutual convenience. The only rule is that the hours must be spread out throughout the semester, so that the student teacher is a regular presence in your classroom, both online and in-person.

Throughout the remainder of the 96 hours that your student teacher spends with you this fall, we would encourage you to put him or her to work as much as possible in either, or both, a face-to-face or remote learning setting! Here are some possible activities for your student teacher to perform—he or she could:

FACE-TO-FACE SETTING	REMOTE LEARNING/ONLINE SETTING
Watch you teach a lesson and then teach it to the next class	Watch you lead synchronous online instruction then lead the next synchronous session of the same class/prep
Team-teach a lesson with you	Co-lead a synchronous online lesson or online discussion with you
Work with small groups of students during workshop time or independent work portions of lessons	Work with students in breakout rooms during synchronous sessions
Create bulletin boards or other physical learning environments (doors, hallways)	Create online learning environments using GSuite products or other online learning apps
ACTIVITIES FOR EITHER ENVIRONMENT	

Plan a lesson with you, then teach it while you observe and debrief about it later
Do some grading, provide feedback to students, and assist with grade book management
Observe other excellent teachers within your building, regardless of subject area

Additionally, we want our student teachers to adhere to district policies and University policies regarding online interactions with students. In most cases, preservice teachers should not be working 1 on 1 with individual learners in the online setting. Please make sure to review these policies with your student teacher *before* engaging in online interactions.

This will be an extremely busy semester for your student teacher, perhaps even more than the actual student teaching semester that will begin in January. This fall, he or she will not only be taking the Practicum course, but also a methods course, and any remaining needed content courses in the Arts and Sciences college. There are several assignments the students must complete within the Practicum course. Probably the most complex assignment your student teacher will be completing this fall is the 5- to 10-day integrated unit or the KATE: Kent Assessment for Teacher Educators. This assessment is modeled after the edTPA, the national teacher education assessment that your student teacher will submit in March during student teaching. The KATE has 3 segments: The lesson plan task; the instruction task, and the reflection task. Upon request, I will gladly send you this assignment as well as the syllabus for the Practicum course. It may be helpful for you to refer to alongside your student teacher as you plan for your time together this fall.

Of course, we realize that the creation and the teaching of this unit will involve not only individual work on the part of your student teacher, but also much negotiation and discussion with you. As well, we acknowledge that response to the COVID19 crisis may require that most components of this unit be prepared for online learning. With these ideas in mind, we ask that you please look carefully at your curriculum map and work with your student teacher to choose a topic or theme that could be taught in 5-10 days that fall somewhere between the middle of October and Thanksgiving. Of course, it is certainly acceptable for you to share some teaching ideas that have been successful for you in the past. However, we ask that you allow the student teacher some freedom to arrange these ideas and put them together in such a way that he or she is substantially responsible for the unit. We need to know that our future teachers are capable of putting together an instructional unit!

In addition, the student will need to videotape at least one lesson which will serve as their observation of their teaching. This video will be securely uploaded to the KSU learning management system, Blackboard Learn, and viewed only by the students' Practicum Instructor. Please let your student teacher know if there are any students that cannot be videotaped based on the blanket form given at the start of the year. Additionally, we would ask if you could query your administration to learn if they want the KSU preservice teacher to send out additional permission forms.

It hardly needs to be said that we are guests in your classroom. We just hope that you will allow your student teacher to “test his or her wings” as much as possible this fall. Keep in mind that your informal feedback is extremely important to your student teacher and very much valued by him or her and by us at Kent State. We don’t anticipate any problems! However, if you have some concerns about your student teacher’s performance in any area, please contact the Practicum Instructor who has been assigned to your student teacher.

Finally, full time student teaching begins the second week of Spring Semester on **Monday, January 25th and continues for 13 weeks of in-school time, meaning April 30, 2021 will be the last day.** (You'll notice that this is actually a 14-week period. This is because we are figuring that your school district will probably have a week-long spring break sometime during this period. All KSU student teachers should take the same spring break as their assigned school district). All student teachers should follow exactly the same time schedule that their cooperating teacher does during the school day.

Again, thank you so much for agreeing to work with us to prepare these future teachers.

Sincerely,



Kristine E. Pytash, Ph.D.
Coordinator, ADED Program
On behalf of the ADED faculty

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