



Qualities of Strong Mentor Teachers

UMF's Field Experience Programs believe that mentors should be selected based on the following:

The Mentor Teacher should

- **Have mentoring experience**
 - /teaching for at least three years
 - /participating in mentor training as required

- **Have mastered the basic skills of teaching**
 - /content competence
 - /successful classroom management skills
 - /organizational abilities (daily tasks, student records, management of classroom materials)

- **Understand the need for flexibility, in attitude and in practice**
 - /flexibility with pedagogical choices
 - /ability to adjust to various organizational problems that occur during the course of a day in a classroom

- **Accept the possibility that pedagogical styles other than the ones they use may be successful**
 - /mentors who are comfortable with their own style should be able to accept different approaches without being threatened or feeling the need to be unduly critical
 - /mentors need to be able to accept the possibility that other pedagogical styles may ultimately be successful

- **Realize that possessiveness of students and classroom policies is detrimental to a mentoring relationship**
 - /mentors need to acknowledge the possibility that the novice may eventually be a rival for her strong performance in the classroom as it relates to content and student relationships

- **Have the ability to confront troublesome situations as necessary**
 - /the mentor needs to be assertive with direct feedback when the teacher candidate needs to do things differently or with more rigor. This can be accomplished in a respectful, caring manner.

- **Have a professional vision beyond their own classroom**
 - /when the mentor is involved in professional organizations and conferences she is able to introduce teacher candidates to the exciting world of research and professional interactions.

IMPORTANT THINGS THAT MENTORS DO for the TEACHER CANDIDATE (TC)

WELCOME:

- Provide a physical space (desk, an area to work and keep belongings).
- Introduce the TC to your space – where things are in the classroom, show them around school, make them feel welcome.
- Encourage the TC to introduce himself or herself to the class in an engaging way.
- Arrange for a tour of the school.
- Introduce the TC to other staff members.
- Arrange for the TC to observe in other teachers' classrooms.

TEACH USING A COLLABORATIVE MODEL:

- TC observes and assists mentor, discussion follows.
- Co-teach with the TC, debrief, help TC to reflect upon lessons and offer suggestions.
- Allow TC to assume full responsibility of teaching. Mentor observes, provides written feedback, helps student to reflect and offers suggestions.

ALLOW TIME:

- Provide a regular time in the day to be involved with the TC.
- Regularly review lesson plans. All lesson plans will be in UMF format.
- Plan with the TC - what are your upcoming plans, how do they fit with what the TC is doing?
- Check in regularly with the TC. How is s/he doing, any needs or concerns, are goals being met? Often specific questions need to be asked to probe for information; many TCs quickly say, "Everything is fine."

INFORM:

- TC should be provided any information you receive regarding school scheduling or changes.
- Provide school rules/policies so the TC can be clear and consistent in enforcing them.
- Be clear with expectations. It is your classroom – provide the TC with guidelines and specific ways you want things handled.
- Give notices about any out-of-school or extra activities such as open houses, parent conferences, performances, etc.
- Let UMF supervisor know early on if you have any questions, problems, or suggestions regarding your TC or the Program's expectations.

OFFER RESOURCES:

- Provide texts, curriculum guides, manuals, and materials that the teacher candidate will need. TCs are expected to research their own materials to use in lessons in addition to drawing from resources you provide.
- Suggest people the TC might go to for resources in the school or community.
- Offer your experience, share what you have found to be successful strategies in managing the multiple tasks of a teacher.
- Ask the TC questions about areas of expertise they can share and about what they learn in their programs.

BE ACCESSIBLE to the pre-service teacher:

- Encourage the TC to come to you with questions and concerns, for support, for help in making decisions, and in finding resources.
- Find a regular time when you and the TC can meet, put the time in your planners!

OBSERVE:

- Observe on a daily basis. Make it a routine and an expectation.
- Have the TC observe you teaching and working with students; debrief after the observation.
- Mentor observes TC teaching and working with students; gives feedback, both orally and in writing.
- A minimum of two formal written observations must be submitted to field supervisor; use the *Classroom Management Observation Checklist* form for the first eight weeks. Use format of your choice in the second eight weeks.

GIVE FEEDBACK, ENCOURAGE REFLECTION:

- On a daily basis, verbal feedback and reflective conversations are essential.
- Allow for two way conversations and encourage the TC to be reflective.
- Enable the TC to hear and see what is working and why. Provide positive feedback.
- Provide the TC with suggestions for improvement. TCs feel that this is critical to their growth and learning.
- Encourage the TC to provide their own thoughts on how they are performing and guide their reflections.
- Provide written feedback on lessons observed at least 2-3 times per week.

ASSESS AND EVALUATE:

- Formative, ongoing assessment of the TC on a regular basis in the form of verbal and written feedback helps the TC be more effective and provides specifics for reflection.
- Evaluation of the TC occurs at the midpoint and end of placement. TCs are also expected to evaluate their own strengths and areas for improvement.

ASK ABOUT and ASSIST TEACHER CANDIDATES with PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- Lesson Plans
- Assessment and Evaluation Forms
- Teacher Work Sample
- Other Assignments

**ALL FORMS ARE AVAILABLE AT:
<http://www2.umf.maine.edu/fieldservices/>**