

Overview of the Student Teaching Experience

Student Teaching offers the Education major the opportunity to think and perform like a teacher; to move toward a practical understanding of the complexities involved in teaching and learning; to move from an Education major who is 'learning to teach' to a professional educator who 'teaches to learn.'

A student teacher is a learner and an apprentice in the teaching profession. Each of the University of Maine at Farmington's student teachers has a common knowledge base that reflects their specific Education program. The programs work with the preservice student in developing content knowledge, pedagogical skills and dispositions. Some of the skills are: observation, instructional planning and assessing, interpretation, and analysis. These skills are developed by analyzing samples of student work, comparing different curricular materials, interviewing students to uncover their thinking, studying how different teachers work toward the same goals, and observing what impact their instruction has on students.

Student Teaching emphasizes professional growth and understanding by learning how to work with families and colleagues in a collaborative and respectful way, utilizing community resources, developing an effective reflective practice, engaging in professional conversations about the teaching and learning processes, and acting on feedback; all of which lead to the goal of helping all learners realize and work toward their potentials.

UMF offers Education Programs that result in teacher candidates being eligible for Maine State certification in one of the following areas: K-3 Early Elementary; K-8 General Elementary; 7-12 English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Life Science, Physical Science, Social Sciences; K-12 School Health Education; K-8, 7-12 Special Education.

All Education majors meet specific eligibility requirements in order to student teach. However, they are like all learners in that student teachers will be at varying levels in relationship to the many demands of student teaching and in developing an understanding of the complexities of the teaching profession. Students will move through the 'stages' of student teaching at differing speeds. The final evaluation process of the Student Teaching program should clearly reflect the student teacher's performance and level of understanding at the end of their experience.

The ideal model for the Student Teaching experience is a ***COLLABORATIVE MODEL***. Students will have one placement over a 15-16 week period or two placements, each about 8 weeks. The phases of the ***Collaborative Model*** act as a guide for the student, the mentor teacher and the University supervisor. When a student has two placements she or he may complete the full cycle during each placement or may not, but the expectation is that every student teacher will reach the final phase at some point during their student teaching, and take over all responsibilities for the full teaching load for a minimum of one full week.

The stakes are high during student teaching, not just for the teacher candidate, but also for the mentor and students. This experience has the potential to dramatically increase the capacity of new teachers and is a once-in-a career opportunity that can set the stage for future success.

THE COLLABORATIVE MODEL

BEGINNING PHASE: *very brief*

The mentor teacher models effective instruction and the student teacher observes, assists, and does some teaching. It is **MOST IMPORTANT** at this beginning phase to establish communication and reflective processes. **This is a good time for the mentor teacher to talk with the student teacher about her/his vision of good teaching.**

INTERMEDIATE PHASE: *for 2-4 weeks*

The student teacher plans with the mentor, assists with the teaching and classroom routines. Reflection and communication practices should be practiced routinely building on a collaborative relationship.

THE MID-POINT PHASE: *for many weeks*

The student teacher and the mentor teacher are working as a team. They plan together and decide who will be responsible for the curriculum delivery, assessment of learners, recording and analysis of assessment data, and evaluation of instruction. This provides an excellent opportunity to develop special projects that engage students in authentic tasks and encourage critical thinking. Use of videotaping, working with small groups of students to ensure conceptual understandings, and observing and providing feedback to each other are things that can happen during this phase.

FINAL PHASE: *minimum of one full week, more time if possible*

The student teacher takes over as 'lead' teacher, assumes full responsibilities for the full teaching load, and all non-teaching duties. The mentor teacher observes and gives in depth feedback and advice. The mentor teacher and student teacher will plan a phase out period at the very end of the student teaching experience.



***THE COLLABORATIVE MODEL for the
STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE***

***MENTOR TEACHER
MODELS***

***STUDENT TEACHER
ASSISTS***

TEAM TEACHING

***STUDENT TEACHER
TEACHES***

***MENTOR TEACHER
OBSERVES & ADVISES***