



**College of Professional Education
Professional Development Center**

Mentor Teacher **HANDBOOK**



Guiding Interns

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The purpose of this handbook is to serve as a guide. The information enclosed is accurate at the time of printing; however, policies are subject to change based on state guidelines. Check with an advisor before making a major decision based on the contents of this handbook. Email is the best way to make first contact with an advisor.

Send suggestions and comments about this handbook to mwilliamslaing@twu.edu.

For the latest information check our website at www.twu.edu/professional-development-center.

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Texas Woman’s University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools [1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097, telephone number 404-679-4501] to award baccalaureate, master, and doctoral degrees.

Introduction

Mentor teachers are one of the most important resources in the intern teaching experience. The quality of the relationship developed between the experienced teacher and the beginning teacher is central to an effective and meaningful mentoring experience. The mentor serves as the confidante, the cheerleader, and the trusted counselor; sharing his or her knowledge, organizational skills, and wisdom with the intern.

Of all the intern's contacts, few are remembered as well as the mentor teacher. For that reason, mentor teachers are selected by the school district with care and with the knowledge that their experiences will provide a nurturing environment for the intern. It is of primary importance that the intern process be a positive experience for both the intern and the mentor teacher.

Further, the university supervisor plays an important role in assisting the intern and the mentor teacher. Because the intern is some distance from the campus, the university supervisor serves as a liaison between the university and the intern, and assists the mentor teacher in directing the intern's development.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide general clarification of the role of a mentor teacher.

Internship Mentoring/Supervision

Once a student is accepted into Texas Woman's University's Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Program or Post-Baccalaureate Program, he or she can elect to satisfy his or her professional practicum requirements through an internship or through traditional student teaching. If the student selects the internship, he or she must meet requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which includes holding a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, passing his or her content area TExES exam or completing a minimum of 24 hours in his or her area of certification (middle and secondary placement) if a state exam is not available, and completing 12 hours of pedagogy courses (EDUC 5113, EDUC 5123, EDUC 5131, EDUC 5133 and EDUC 5143).

When the student is hired as the "teacher of record" on a one-year probationary contract by a school district or accredited private school, the student must enroll in a two-semester internship program and he or she is assigned a university supervisor. (The university supervisor is an expert in the intern's field of study and is certified to supervise students in his or her specific discipline.) The employing school assigns a veteran teacher to serve as a peer mentor for the one-year internship.

Welcoming the Intern

It is important to establish a good working relationship with the intern. The mentor's and novice teacher's first conference together is a good time to get things started on positive and firm footing by:

- Utilizing the Intern Experience Checklist.
- Try to get to know each other as individuals by discussing backgrounds, interests, hobbies, and *concerns*.
- Spend some time clarifying roles, responsibilities, and expectations.
- Identify and discuss the concerns of the intern as he or she begins his or her teaching assignment.
- Provide some background on the school.
- Provide the intern with a packet of materials pertinent to your school (e.g., handbook, school rules, staff list, and exchange phone numbers and email addresses).
- Clarify any questions about policy or regulations the intern might have.
- Share your Classroom Management Plan as well as the school's Behavior Management Plan with the intern.

Responsibilities of Mentor

The mentor will serve in a strictly guidance and support role, and the confidentiality of information obtained by the mentor in his or her work with the new teacher must be maintained. Given their importance, we trust the mentor will assist the intern in the following:

- Introduce intern to administrators and school staff.
- Serve as a model for the intern's observations.
- Maintain a climate that allows the intern to develop the skills necessary for success in teaching.
- Encourage the intern to collaboratively make decisions leading to development of independence of his or her own teaching strategies.
- Acquaint the intern with resources (both material and human) which might aid in understanding the program and population served by the school.
- Acquaint the intern with appropriate student records and explain the manner in which they are to be kept and used, including the importance of confidentiality.
- Support the intern in developing classroom management strategies.
- Share "helpful hints," resources or interesting anecdotes.
- Provide opportunities for team planning and team teaching with the intern in the early weeks of the experience.
- Be specific, use examples, and provide a rationale when communicating with the intern, especially when providing feedback or constructive advice.
- Conduct conferences on a regular basis to provide constructive feedback so the intern can gain insight into his or her teaching behaviors.
- Observe and critique the intern's performance on a frequent and continual basis using the Mentor Teacher Observation of Intern Form.
- Allow the intern to formally observe you teaching the first two weeks of the semester using the Professional Intern Lesson Observation Form.
- Communicate with his or her university supervisor regarding progress, concerns, etc.
- Review *Educational Leadership's* article "The Good Mentor" for additional help in mentoring the beginning teacher.
- Complete and discuss the final evaluation and discuss it with the intern at the final three-way conference.
- Recommend a final grade that is reflective of the intern's performance to the university supervisor and return all forms.

Responsibilities of University Supervisor

In partnership with the campus mentor, the university supervisor provides coaching to help the intern develop effective teaching strategies, communication strategies with students and parents, and classroom management and organization skills. The university supervisor also provides the intern emotional support and guidance in decision-making.

Observation Visits and Feedback

The university supervisor visits the intern a minimum of 6 times each semester. During the first visit, the university supervisor meets with the campus mentor and the intern to review goals, objectives and expectations for the internship. During each subsequent visit, the university supervisor observes the intern's teaching performance and provides feedback based on a Visitation Report which addresses the following indicators:

- Delivering of comprehensive instruction to teach state-adopted competencies.
- Making content accessible by explaining the content clearly and reinforcing the material so students understand the lesson.

- Clearly communicating instructional objectives to students to ensure active participation by all students.
- Planning instruction that is comprehensive in relation to the subject and in accordance with state competencies.
- Allocating instructional time to maximize student achievement.
- Improving his or her teaching through self-assessment and reflection by engaging in a cycle of planning, teaching, reflecting, identifying problems and applying new strategies.
- Using informal and formal, as well as formative and summative assessments to analyze student work.
- Developing and maintaining effective classroom management and student behavior.

Benchmarks and Assessments

At the conclusion of each semester, the university supervisor and campus mentor will meet to review the intern's performance and assign a grade for the semester using the Evaluation of Professional Teaching Intern Performance, a form which addresses the following criteria:

- **Student Participation** – establishes and sustains a level of student rapport and a classroom environment that promotes learning.
- **Learner-centered Instruction** – designs learning activities that engage students in meaningful activities that equally promote self-directed and reflective learning.
- **Evaluation and Feedback** – learns to provide optimal settings that increase the ability of students to evaluate, differentiate and integrate information, think analytically, problem solve, communicate and reach sound conclusions.
- **Classroom Management** – sustains classroom management by establishing clear guidelines.
- **Professional Communication** – communicates effectively by presenting ideas and instructions clearly and meaningfully to students, adjusting the complexity of his or her language to the abilities of all students in the class.
- **Relationships** – encourages rapport and mutual respect among students, teachers, staff and the community.
- **Responsibilities** – places a high priority on teaching and exhibits professionalism in his or her interaction with peers and students, and, performs tasks which measure his or her ability to fulfill the responsibilities of teaching to ensure student learning.

Additional benchmarks include submitting:

- Detailed weekly schedules to the university supervisor.
- Completed Class Background Survey by the third week of the first internship semester.
- Completed Lesson Plan for each observation.
- Reflections of each lesson delivered and observed by the university supervisor.
- Implement suggestions made by the university supervisor.
- Attain an overall acceptable rating (at least Beginning Competent) on observations conducted by the university supervisor, campus mentor, and if appropriate, the principal.
- Successfully pass the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibility TExES.
- Submitting the Professional Intern Satisfaction Evaluation.

Role of the Principal

The relationship between the beginning teacher and his or her principal is important in the intern's professional life and greatly impacts his or her decision to remain in teaching. In successful teacher mentoring programs, principals participate in mentor selection, facilitate assignment of new teachers to mentors, and supports and champions mentoring to the entire school community.

Role of the Director of the Professional Development Center

The director of the Professional Development Center is the liaison between the university, the intern, university supervisor, and the school district. The director:

- Oversees internship placement and progress.
- Provides internship eligibility documentation.
- Approves internship placement.
- Defines the performance expectations of the intern.
- Provides intern advice, support and guidance throughout internship experience.
- Maintains communication with district as needed.
- Reviews all intern evaluations.

Responsibilities of the Intern

Once an intern secures employment as the “teacher-of-record” in his or her certification field, the intern is responsible for planning, teaching, reporting on, and assessing student learning.

Texas Woman’s University’s internship program requirements are above and beyond any responsibilities assigned by the school in conjunction with employment as a teacher-of-record.

In order to accomplish these goals the intern should meet weekly with the mentor to discuss progress and obtain feedback on his or her performance. He or she is responsible for:

- Detailed lesson plans based on the classroom curriculum for all lessons taught.
- Performance-based assessments
- Evidence of cooperative learning, technology and multicultural perspectives in various lesson plans as well as appropriate modifications---each noted specifically in lesson plans
- Self Assessment/Reflections as assigned
- Grading
- Classroom Management and Discipline
- Portfolio
- Attendance at all meetings and professional development events
- Letter of introduction to parents (This is an optional assignment.)
- Evaluation of the university’s teacher education program
- Evaluation of the university’s internship program

Intern Program

■ PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Interns are members of the school staff; thus, they are obligated to follow the policies of the school system.

■ ASSESSMENT

The purpose of the internship semesters in the practice-based program is two-fold:

- To learn about content, pedagogy, technology, classroom behavior management and assessment/evaluation through course content
- To learn about schools, students, planning, and the teaching and learning process by working in a practice-based setting with mentor teachers and university supervisors

■ EVALUATION

Both the campus mentor and the university supervisor will jointly evaluate the intern’s performance and provide feedback to the intern on a regular basis. However, the university supervisor is

ultimately responsible for the intern's final evaluation and grade. The intern should discuss any questions regarding his/her final grade with the university supervisor or the director of the Professional Development Center.

■ **TIME COMMITMENT**

Interns are employees of the district, and thus are required to maintain the same school day as all employees of the district. Examples include:

- Staff meetings
- Parent and teacher meetings
- Student performances or athletic events
- In-service meetings

■ **HOLIDAYS**

Interns will observe their assigned school districts' holiday schedules.

■ **ABSENCES**

If an intern cannot avoid an absence, the intern is responsible for immediately notifying the following individuals on each day of the absence before the beginning of the school day:

- Follow district policy for absences to determine the person to contact; including the substitute line
- School Principal
- University Supervisor
- Director of the Professional Development Center

Under no circumstance should an intern be absent without notifying the school. (If the absence is longer than one day, the intern should call each day.)

■ **CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

It is normal for an intern to be concerned about classroom management. During the beginning week of the assignment, interns should meet with their school principal to discuss the school district's discipline plan and review his/her management plan.

Some of the following measures may help build the type of teacher-pupil relationship, which prevents management problems.

- Establish a climate that promotes fairness and respect for each student
- Seek to attain a high degree of participation
- Learn and make use of names quickly
- Be alert, redirect inappropriate, off-task or disruptive behavior promptly and consistently
- Encourage self-discipline and self-directed learning in the classroom, corridors and lunchroom
- Exhibit poise, dignity and calmness at all times
- Stop little things before they gain momentum
- Be warm and friendly, but be firm

■ **DUE PROCESS**

Due to the unique character of the internship and despite everyone's best efforts, occasionally the mentoring relationship is troubled and does not meet the needs of the beginning teacher. If the mentor teacher feels the intern assigned to him or her is not a good match, he or she should first contact the university supervisor.

If the situation is not a personnel issue, the university supervisor will schedule a meeting with the intern and mentor to carefully review the circumstances and collaboratively devise a plan of action, or Growth Plan to address the situation. If the problem cannot be resolved, the mentor and university supervisor should contact the principal concerning the placement and then contact Michelle Williams-

Laing, Director-Professional Development Center, at 940-898-2223 or mwilliamslaing@twu.edu. If a solution cannot be found, the university supervisor and Director of the Professional Development Center will jointly recommend options to the intern, which may involve failing EDUC 5936, Professional Internship.

It is important that the intern teaching process be a positive experience for both the intern and the mentor.

■ **GROWTH PLAN**

When the progress of an intern's professional development, as determined by the university supervisor and mentor teacher, and the director of the Professional Development Center, and/or department chair or principal, is less than should be demonstrated at a given point in the intern's experience, corrective actions should be suggested and the intern's progress evaluated. The university supervisor, in consultation with the campus mentor, will assess the intern's progress and develop a Growth Plan. The Growth Plan will be followed to establish expectations for the intern and a time-line for demonstration of expected behaviors. (A signed copy of the Growth Plan will be placed in the intern's student file at Texas Woman's University.)

Concerns should be summarized under appropriate areas like instruction, communication, professional development, compliance with policies/procedures, management of time/materials, and include any other areas for development.

■ **GRADE APPEAL**

Texas Woman's University provides the following grade appeal process for students who are dissatisfied with a grade:

- Student contacts instructor with concerns. If an agreeable solution is not found, the student will make a formal appeal. This appeal must occur in writing, within 10 regular business days after the grades are posted. Written appeal should include all paperwork the student has concerning the class (i.e., syllabus, assignments and evaluations returned to the student), and written justification.
- If not satisfied with formal grade, student makes appointment with department chair to formally appeal at this level.
- The department chair will ask for the documentation gathered at the first meeting and will request all materials that the university supervisor has concerning this student's grade (i.e., all assignments, evaluations, etc. not returned to the student's possession). A copy of the grade distribution (with all names, except appealing student, blacked out) and grading scale should be turned in to the chair. The department chair will review all materials and may meet with both student and university supervisor. If student is dissatisfied with the department chair's decision, the student writes a letter of appeal to the Dean of the College of Professional Education and each party forwards the already reviewed packet of information to the Dean.
- The Dean will review the request, the student's and university supervisor's documents, and will meet with the student, university supervisor and department chair as needed to review and clarify the request. The Dean will review all materials and render a decision in writing. Graduate students may appeal to the Graduate School Dean after this point.
- For additional information go to <http://www.twu.edu/downloads/cope/cope-grade-appeal-process.pdf>

■ **DISPOSITON POLICY** (*Adopted by the Professional Education Council, Spring 2010*)

The Teacher Education Program (TEP) focuses on preparing educators who respect difference, celebrate diversity, and demonstrate the requisite skills, knowledge, and dispositions expected of a professional in fostering student-centered learning environments.

Dispositions are a vital component of teacher preparation. According to the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), they are defined as the “professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as educators interact with students, families, colleagues, and communities. These positive behaviors support student learning and development.” Prospective teachers at Texas Woman’s University are expected to develop and practice these attitudes, values, and beliefs throughout their preparation as professional educators.

Over the course of their preparation program, students will be evaluated to ensure they are upholding the standards spelled out in the dispositions for teaching policy. This policy will apply only to those students seeking teacher certification through TWU.

Professional Dispositions for Teaching

1. Exhibits sound and professional judgment by following established university or public school policies when interacting with peers, students, parents, or members of the community.
2. Maintains confidentiality of student records, correspondence, and conversations.
3. Uses emotional and social self-control and self-determination in personal interactions.
4. Demonstrates professional appearance and uses appropriate hygiene.
5. Maintains and uses a professional teacher-student and teacher-parent relationship.
6. Demonstrates positive attitudes toward the profession, students, parents, other educators, and support personnel.
7. Demonstrates ethical behavior as defined by the profession and Texas rules and regulations (Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators).
8. Exhibits a code of conduct that includes honesty, cooperation and integrity related to tests, assignments, interactions with TWU professors and personnel (TWU Student Code of Conduct).
9. Exhibits a collaborative approach applied to seeking solutions to problems with peers, students, faculty, parents, and administration.
10. Demonstrates the ability to work with diverse individuals.
11. Exhibits qualities of lifelong learning through engagement in completion of course requirements, continuous professional development, and is academically prepared. Lifelong learning is a term that applies to continuing one’s education through university or community-based programs.
12. Exhibits professional competence in oral and written language and includes electronic devices.

■ CONFIDENTIALITY

An intern may have access to student and/or other school records. It is important that these records remain confidential and are used in a professional manner. Intern must not release or discuss information with any unauthorized person.

■ CERTIFICATION

Interns are recommended for certification upon successful completion of the Teacher Education Program, including the internship and passing all TExES exams. To begin the process, interns should apply for certification on-line by visiting the State Board for Educator Certification’s website at www.tea.state.tx.us. If you have questions regarding this procedure, please contact Julia Tidwell, Linda Kobler or Brenda Wilson in the Office of Student Support Services, which is located in Stoddard Hall, Room 211. You may also reach them via the telephone at (940) 898-2211 for Ms. Tidwell, (940) 898-2203 for Ms. Kobler or (940) 898-2208 for Ms. Wilson. Individuals desiring to teach in accredited public and private schools in Texas must be certified through the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC). The administrative functions for the certification process are now conducted by the Educator Certification and Standards Division at Texas Education Agency (TEA).

■ TExES

A passing grade on all TExES exams for the student’s area of certification is required for teacher certification. Once all requirements for initial certification are completed, the intern can request a test "by examination only" for a second teaching field.

Texas Administrative Code State Board for Educator Certification

EDUCATORS' CODE OF ETHICS

CHAPTER 247 RULE §247.1

Purpose and Scope

(a) In compliance with the Texas Education Code, §21.041(b)(8), the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) adopts an Educators' Code of Ethics as set forth in §247.2 of this title (relating to Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators). The SBEC may amend the ethics code in the same manner as any other formal rule.

(b) The Texas educator shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard academic freedom. The Texas educator, in maintaining the dignity of the profession, shall respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty and good moral character. The Texas educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession. The Texas educator, in accepting a position of public trust, shall measure success by the progress of each student toward realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. The Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community. This chapter shall apply to educators and candidates for certification.

(c) The SBEC is solely responsible for enforcing the Educators' Code of Ethics for purposes related to certification disciplinary proceedings. The Educators' Code of Ethics is enforced through the disciplinary procedure set forth in Chapter 249 of this title (relating to Disciplinary Proceedings, Sanctions, and Contested Cases) pursuant to the purposes stated therein.

(d) As provided in §249.5 of this title (relating to Purpose), the primary goals the SBEC seeks to achieve in educator disciplinary matters are:

- (1) to protect the safety and welfare of Texas schoolchildren and school personnel;
- (2) to ensure educators and applicants are morally fit and worthy to instruct or to supervise the youth of the state; and
- (3) to fairly and efficiently resolve educator disciplinary proceedings at the least expense possible to the parties and the state.

(e) The following words, terms, and phrases, when used in this chapter, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

(1) Abuse--Includes the following acts or omissions:

- (A) mental or emotional injury to a student or minor that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning, or psychological functioning;
- (B) causing or permitting a student or minor to be in a situation in which the student or minor sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning, or psychological functioning;
- (C) physical injury that results in substantial harm to a student or minor, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the student or minor, including an injury that is at

variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline; or

- (D) sexual conduct harmful to a student's or minor's mental, emotional, or physical welfare.
- (2) Applicant--A party seeking any of the following from the Texas Education Agency staff or the State Board for Educator Certification: issuance of a certificate (including issuance of a new certificate following revocation, cancellation, or surrender of a previously issued certificate); renewal of a certificate; or reinstatement of a suspended certificate.
- (3) Code of Ethics--The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practices for Texas Educators, pursuant to this chapter.
- (4) Complaint--A written statement submitted to the Texas Education Agency staff that contains essential facts alleging improper conduct by an educator, applicant, or examinee, and provides grounds for sanctions.
- (5) Contested case--A proceeding under Chapter 249 of this title (relating to Disciplinary Proceedings, Sanctions, and Contested Cases) in which the legal rights, duties, and privileges of a party are to be determined by the State Board for Educator Certification after an opportunity for an adjudicative hearing.
- (6) Disciplinary proceedings--Contested case proceedings before the Texas Education Agency staff, the State Office of Administrative Hearings, and the State Board for Educator Certification that commence when a request for hearing is timely filed under Chapter 249 of this title (relating to Disciplinary Proceedings, Sanctions, and Contested Cases).
- (7) Educator--A person who is required to hold a certificate issued under the Texas Education Code, Chapter 21, Subchapter B.
- (8) Endanger--Exposure of a student or minor to unjustified risk of injury or to injury that jeopardizes the physical health or safety of the student or minor without regard to whether there has been an actual injury to the student or minor.
- (9) Good moral character--The virtues of a person as evidenced, at a minimum, by his or her not having committed crimes relating directly to the duties and responsibilities of the education profession as described in §249.16(b) of this title (relating to Eligibility of Persons with Criminal Convictions for a Certificate under Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 53) or acts involving moral turpitude.
- (10) Intentionally--An educator acts intentionally, or with intent, with respect to the nature of his or her conduct or to a result of his or her conduct when it is his or her conscious objective or desire to engage in the conduct or cause the result.
- (11) Knowingly--An educator acts knowingly, or with knowledge, with respect to the nature of his or her conduct or to circumstances surrounding his or her conduct when he or she is aware of the nature of the conduct or that the circumstances exist. A person acts knowingly, or with knowledge, with respect to a result of his or her conduct when he or she is aware that the conduct is reasonably certain to cause the result.
- (12) Minor--A person under 18 years of age.
- (13) Moral turpitude--Improper conduct including, but not limited to, the following: dishonesty; fraud; deceit; theft; misrepresentation; deliberate violence; base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or to gratify the sexual desire of the actor; drug or alcohol related offenses as described in §249.16(b) of this title (relating to Eligibility of Persons with Criminal Convictions for a

Certificate under Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 53); or acts constituting abuse or neglect under the Texas Family Code, §261.001.

- (14) Neglect--The placing or leaving of a student or minor in a situation where the student or minor would be exposed to a substantial risk of physical or mental harm.
- (15) Recklessly--An educator acts recklessly, or is reckless, with respect to circumstances surrounding his or her conduct or the results of his or her conduct when he or she is aware of but consciously disregards a substantial and unjustifiable risk that the circumstances exist or the result will occur.
- (16) Sanction--
 - (A) a disciplinary action by the State Board for Educator Certification, including a restriction, reprimand, suspension, surrender, or revocation of a certificate; or
 - (B) a reasonable and lawful punitive measure imposed by the administrative law judge or presiding officer against a party, representative, or other participant involved in a disciplinary proceeding, hearing, or other matter under Chapter 249 of this title (relating to Disciplinary Proceedings, Sanctions, and Contested Cases).
- (17) State Board for Educator Certification--The State Board for Educator Certification acting through its voting members in a decision-making capacity.
- (18) State Board for Educator Certification member(s)--One or more of the members of the State Board for Educator Certification, appointed and qualified under the Texas Education Code, §21.033.
- (19) Student--A person enrolled in a primary or secondary school, whether public, private, or charter, regardless of the person's age, or a person 18 years of age or younger who is eligible to be enrolled in a primary or secondary school, whether public, private, or charter.
- (20) Texas Education Agency staff--Staff of the Texas Education Agency assigned by the commissioner of education to perform the State Board for Educator Certification's administrative functions and services.
- (21) Worthy to instruct or to supervise the youth of this state--Presence of those moral, mental, and psychological qualities that are required to enable an educator to render the service essential to the accomplishment of the goals and mission of the State Board for Educator Certification policy and this chapter. "Unworthy to instruct" serves as a basis for sanctions under §249.15(b)(2) of this title (relating to Disciplinary Action by State Board for Educator Certification) and is not limited to specific criminal convictions.

Source Note: *The provisions of this §247.1 adopted to be effective March 1, 1998, 23 TexReg 1022; amended to be effective December 26, 2010, 35 TexReg 11242*

CHAPTER 247 RULE §247.2

Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators

Enforceable Standards.

- (1) Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices and Performance.
 - (A) Standard 1.1. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district, educational institution, educator preparation program, the Texas Education Agency, or the State Board for Educator Certification

- (SBEC) and its certification process.
- (B) Standard 1.2. The educator shall not knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.
 - (C) Standard 1.3. The educator shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.
 - (D) Standard 1.4. The educator shall not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.
 - (E) Standard 1.5. The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or to obtain special advantage. This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents of students, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.
 - (F) Standard 1.6. The educator shall not falsify records, or direct or coerce others to do so.
 - (G) Standard 1.7. The educator shall comply with state regulations, written local school board policies, and other state and federal laws.
 - (H) Standard 1.8. The educator shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications.
 - (I) Standard 1.9. The educator shall not make threats of violence against school district employees, school board members, students, or parents of students.
 - (J) Standard 1.10. The educator shall be of good moral character and be worthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state.
 - (K) Standard 1.11. The educator shall not intentionally or knowingly misrepresent his or her employment history, criminal history, and/or disciplinary record when applying for subsequent employment.
 - (L) Standard 1.12. The educator shall refrain from the illegal use or distribution of controlled substances and/or abuse of prescription drugs and toxic inhalants.
 - (M) Standard 1.13. The educator shall not consume alcoholic beverages on school property or during school activities when students are present.
- (2) Ethical Conduct Toward Professional Colleagues.
- (A) Standard 2.1. The educator shall not reveal confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.
 - (B) Standard 2.2. The educator shall not harm others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system.
 - (C) Standard 2.3. The educator shall adhere to written local school board policies and state and federal laws regarding the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of personnel.
 - (D) Standard 2.4. The educator shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities.
 - (E) Standard 2.5. The educator shall not discriminate against or coerce a colleague on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, family status, or sexual orientation.
 - (F) Standard 2.6. The educator shall not use coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions or colleagues.
 - (G) Standard 2.7. The educator shall not retaliate against any individual who has filed a complaint

with the SBEC or who provides information for a disciplinary investigation or proceeding under this chapter.

(3) Ethical Conduct Toward Students.

- (A) Standard 3.1. The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.
- (B) Standard 3.2. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly treat a student or minor in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning, physical health, mental health, or safety of the student or minor.
- (C) Standard 3.3. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misrepresent facts regarding a student.
- (D) Standard 3.4. The educator shall not exclude a student from participation in a program, deny benefits to a student, or grant an advantage to a student on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, national origin, religion, family status, or sexual orientation.
- (E) Standard 3.5. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in physical mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of a student or minor.
- (F) Standard 3.6. The educator shall not solicit or engage in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.
- (G) Standard 3.7. The educator shall not furnish alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child or knowingly allow any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs in the presence of the educator.
- (H) Standard 3.8. The educator shall maintain appropriate professional educator-student relationships and boundaries based on a reasonably prudent educator standard.
- (I) Standard 3.9. The educator shall refrain from inappropriate communication with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, email, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication. Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:
 - (i) the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
 - (ii) the subject matter of the communication;
 - (iii) whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;
 - (iv) whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;
 - (v) whether the communication was sexually explicit; and
 - (vi) whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

Source Note: The provisions of this §247.2 adopted to be effective March 1, 1998, 23 TexReg 1022; amended to be effective August 22, 2002, 27 TexReg 7530; amended to be effective December 26, 2010, 35 TexReg 11242

Appendix

Texas Woman's University utilizes many methods to evaluate the university's interns and the intern program for the purposes of accountability, program improvement, and to grow knowledge of successful mentoring practices.

INTERN EXPERIENCE CHECKLIST

The following are suggested orientation experiences and teaching activities. It is not essential to complete all of the items listed, but efforts should be made to address those appropriate to your situation and grade or subject level.

Orientation Experiences

Met building personnel:

- Principal
- Secretary
- Mentor Teacher
- Other Teachers
- Special Teachers
- Custodian
- Cafeteria Workers
- Other Staff

Located building areas:

- Toured the building
- Examined curriculum material
- Located library
- Observed playground area
- Observed lunchroom area
- Informed about copiers, projectors, etc.

Discussion with Mentor Teacher

School policy:

- Discipline
- Daily Schedule
- Fire Drill, etc.
- Injuries & Illness
- Absence
- Rules (Classroom & School)
- Faculty Meetings
- Ethics/Legal Issues
- Purchasing & Budget
- School & Community Resources

Room policy:

- Testing Practices
- Transitions
- Students with special needs/referrals
- Housekeeping
- Record Keeping & Curriculum Records
- Social and Work Climate
- Grouping
- Curriculum materials
- Cultural & linguistic factors
- District standards/benchmarks

Observation of Mentor Teacher with Attention To:

- Lecture
- Use of textbook
- Discussion
- Media (video/filmstrips)
- Whole class
- Small group
- Groups working simultaneously
- Individual student
- Disabled student
- Gifted student
- Use of information technology

- Budgeting time
- Questions
- Restatements & Reinforcement
- Experiment
- Interaction
- Directions
- Listening
- Conclusions
- Evaluations
- Parent & Teacher communication

Assessing Performance:

- Evaluate performance with mentor teacher
- Assess daily activities and learning with students
- Evaluate Teacher Education Program

Summary of Updated InTASC Core Teaching Standards

The standards have been grouped into four general categories to help users organize their thinking about the standards:

The Learner and Learning

Teaching begins with the learner. To ensure that each student learns new knowledge and skills, teachers must understand that learning and developmental patterns vary among individuals, that learners bring unique individual differences to the learning process, and that learners need supportive and safe learning environments to thrive. Effective teachers have high expectations for each and every learner and implement developmentally appropriate, challenging learning experiences within a variety of learning environments that help all learners meet high standards and reach their full potential. Teachers do this by combining a base of professional knowledge, including an understanding of how cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical development occurs, with the recognition that learners are individuals who bring differing personal and family backgrounds, skills, abilities, perspectives, talents and interests. Teachers collaborate with learners, colleagues, school leaders, families, members of the learners' communities, and community organizations to better understand their students and maximize their learning. Teachers promote learners' acceptance of responsibility for their own learning and collaborate with them to ensure the effective design and implementation of both self-directed and collaborative learning.

Standard #1: Learner Development. The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

Standard #2: Learning Differences. The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

Standard #3: Learning Environments. The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

Content

Teachers must have a deep and flexible understanding of their content areas and be able to draw upon content knowledge as they work with learners to access information, apply knowledge in real world settings, and address meaningful issues to assure learner mastery of the content. Today's teachers make content knowledge accessible to learners by using multiple means of communication, including digital media and information technology. They integrate cross-disciplinary skills (e.g., critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, communication) to help learners use content to propose solutions, forge new understandings, solve problems, and imagine possibilities. Finally, teachers make content knowledge relevant to learners by connecting it to local, state, national, and global issues.

Standard #4: Content Knowledge. The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.

Standard #5: Application of Content. The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.

Instructional Practice

Effective instructional practice requires that teachers understand and integrate assessment, planning, and instructional strategies in coordinated and engaging ways. Beginning with their end or goal, teachers first identify student learning objectives and content standards and align assessments to those objectives. Teachers understand how to design, implement and interpret results from a range of formative and summative assessments. This knowledge is integrated into instructional practice so that teachers have access to information that can be used to provide immediate feedback to reinforce student learning and to modify instruction. Planning focuses on using a variety of appropriate and targeted instructional strategies to address diverse ways of learning, to incorporate new technologies to maximize and individualize learning, and to allow learners to take charge of their own learning and do it in creative ways.

Standard #6: Assessment. The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.

Standard #7: Planning for Instruction. The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

Standard #8: Instructional Strategies. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

Professional Responsibility

Creating and supporting safe, productive learning environments that result in learners achieving at the highest levels is a teacher's primary responsibility. To do this well, teachers must engage in meaningful and intensive professional learning and self-renewal by regularly examining practice through ongoing study, self-reflection, and collaboration. A cycle of continuous self-improvement is enhanced by leadership, collegial support, and collaboration. Active engagement in professional learning and collaboration results in the discovery and implementation of better practice for the purpose of improved teaching and learning. Teachers also contribute to improving instructional practices that meet learners' needs and accomplish their school's mission and goals. Teachers benefit from and participate in collaboration with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members. Teachers demonstrate leadership by modeling ethical behavior, contributing to positive changes in practice, and advancing their profession.

Standard #9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice. The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.

Standard #10: Leadership and Collaboration. The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

Professional Teaching Intern Self-Assessment/Reflection

Intern _____ Observation Date _____
 Mentor Teacher _____ University Supervisor _____
 Observer's Name _____ Title of Lesson _____

	How were the following aspects of your lesson effective for all students?	How did you depart from what you planned?	What might you change to improve the lesson?
Subject matter knowledge and instructional strategies to make content meaningful			
Student grouping and classroom behavior management and participation			
Materials, Resources & Technology			
Overall assessment of your teaching strategies			

Mentor Teacher Observation of Intern

(Completed by Mentor Teacher)

Formally observe Intern six times during semester.
Discuss with and make a copy for the intern and university supervisor.

Intern Name: _____ Date: _____

Mentor Teacher: _____ Time: _____

Absences: _____ Tardies: _____

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY OBSERVED:

STRONG POINT (S) OF THE LESSON:

SUGGESTION (S) FOR IMPROVEMENT:

1=STRONGLY AGREE	2=AGREE	3=DISAGREE	4= STRONGLY DISAGREE	N/A=NOT APPLICABLE
THE LESSON WAS WELL PLANNED	1	2	3	4 N/A
USED CLASS TIME EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY	1	2	3	4 N/A
DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS HANDLED APPROPRIATELY	1	2	3	4 N/A
DEMONSTRATES PROFESSIONALISM AND WORKS WELL WITH COLLEAGUES, STAFF AND STUDENTS	1	2	3	4 N/A
THERE IS A NEED FOR A THREE-WAY CONFERENCE	1	2	3	4 N/A

COMMENTS:

Professional Intern Lesson Observation

(Completed by Intern)

Formally observe Mentor two times during first 2-weeks of each semester.
Make a copy for the university supervisor.

Intern Name: _____

Date: _____

Mentor Teacher: _____

Time: _____

DESCRIBE THE OBSERVED LESSON AND WHAT THE TEACHER DID TO PROMOTE LEARNING:

HOW DID THE STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THE LESSON'S OBJECTIVES?

STRONG POINT (S) OF THE LESSON:

WHAT DID YOU DISCUSS WITH YOUR MENTOR TEACHER FOLLOWING THE LESSON?

HOW CAN YOU APPLY THE IDEAS FROM THIS LESSON TO YOUR OWN CLASSROOM?

TEXAS WOMAN’S UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION (COPE)
PROFESSIONAL INTERN PROGRAM/PROCESS EVALUATION

- 1 – Strongly Agree
- 2 – Agree
- 3 – Disagree
- 4 – Strongly Disagree

Optional

Name _____

Circle One

Professional Intern Mentor Teacher University Supervisor

Please check the appropriate box	1	2	3	4	Comments
To be completed by the Mentor Teachers, Interns and Supervisors:					
I have a clear understanding of the university’s expectations for my role as a Professional Intern, mentor teacher, or university supervisor.					
COPE's Professional Intern Handbook and guidelines assisted me in understanding the university’s requirements of the intern assignment.					
There was an effective working relationship among the Professional Intern, mentor teacher and university supervisor to facilitate the professional development of the Professional Intern.					
Criteria to be used in evaluating the Professional Intern and other expectations were clarified at the beginning of the experience.					
To be completed by Mentor Teachers Only:					
I was involved in the school district’s decision to assign a Professional Intern to work with me.					
I would like another Professional Intern next year from Texas Woman’s University.					
I received adequate guidance and supervision from the university supervisor and he/s made the specific number of visits as noted in the handbook.					
The Professional Intern Program builds on the student’s command of basic skills and understanding, while providing intensive support for students who lack basic skills as defined by state adopted standards.					
Professional Intern Performance Evaluation helped me assess my Professional Intern’s abilities.					
I would recommend that another Professional Intern be placed under the supervision of this university supervisor.					

1 – Strongly Agree 2 – Agree 3 – Disagree 4 – Strongly Disagree

Please check the appropriate box	1	2	3	4	Comments
To be completed by the Professional Interns Only:					
The enrollment process provided enough time to meet the application requirements.					
My university supervisor and mentor teacher met with me to facilitate my professional development at mid-term and at the conclusion of the internship.					
The observation reports I received from my university supervisor were helpful.					
The observation reports I received from my mentor teacher were helpful.					
To be completed by Professional Interns and University Supervisors:					
The school setting(s) provided a professional training atmosphere for the intern.					
The school staff, principal, counselor and other teachers were receptive to having Professional Interns.					
The mentor teacher(s) provided effective guidance and supervision to the Professional Intern, following the specific guidelines set in the Professional Intern handbook.					
I would recommend that another Professional Intern be placed with this mentor teacher.					
The intern guidelines provided realistic expectations about the program.					
The intern program prepared the Professional Intern to adjust his/her teaching and classroom behavior management technique to respond to unique teaching situations.					

___Post-Bac

___MAT

___Master's

Beginning Date _____

Texas Woman's University

EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHING INTERN PERFORMANCE

This form was aligned with Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TExES) domains and standards.

INTERN: _____ Student ID#: _____ Date: _____

Grade Level/Subject: _____ School/District: _____ Certification: _____

I have reviewed available evidence of this professional teaching intern's growth and development according to the standards articulated by the State Board for Educator Certification and I have assessed the professional teaching intern's progress on the attached form. Based on a consideration of the available evidence, **in my professional judgment, the teaching performance of the professional teaching intern is / is not (circle one) sufficient to recommend for a Teaching Credential.**

Mentor Teacher Signature

Date

TWU Supervisor Comments:

TWU Supervisor Signature

Date

I, the intern, have read this evaluation of my teaching performance and I (check only one statement):

_____ concur with this assessment

_____ disagree with the conclusion and have submitted a rejoinder

Intern Comments:

TWU Intern Signature

Date

Each item is to be rated in one of the following categories: (Check appropriate level for each of the criteria below.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 4) PROFICIENT: | The intern is consistently performing the skill at an independent level, requiring limited supervisory feedback from the Mentor Teacher and University Supervisor, and demonstrating extensive teaching knowledge. Such students may be able to self-initiate and self-assign tasks. |
| 3) ADVANCED COMPETENT: | The intern is consistently performing the skill at a level requiring occasional Mentor Teacher or University Supervisor suggestions or directions, often requiring monitoring only and intermittent feedback. |
| 2) BEGINNING COMPETENT: | At this level the intern needs frequent and specific directions from both the Mentor Teacher and University Supervisor. Demonstrations by appropriate teaching models are required. This student needs corrective feedback and moderate supervision. |
| 1) DEVELOPING: | At this level, the intern was instructed to perform a skill but cannot or will not. These students have not demonstrated the ability to independently assume teaching duties. |

Rev: Jan. 2012

Please check the appropriate level of expertise.

DOMAIN I: Active, Successful Student Participation in the Learning Process (InTASC Standards III, V, VII) <i>Intern establishes and sustains a level of student rapport and a classroom environment that promotes learning.</i>	Proficient 4	Advanced Competent 3	Beginning Competent 2	Developing 1	Not Applicable N/A
1. Creates a physical environment that engages all students.					
2. Encourages students to actively participate.					
3. Connects learning to real-life applications.					
4. Insures the success of all students.					
5. Stimulates critical thinking.					
6. Provides opportunities for problem solving.					

Commended Areas

Improvement Areas

DOMAIN II: Learner-Centered Instruction (InTASC Standards I, II, IV, VII, VIII) <i>Intern designs learning activities that engage students in meaningful activities that equally promote self-directed and reflective learning.</i>	Proficient 4	Advanced Competent 3	Beginning Competent 2	Developing 1	Not Applicable N/A
1. Plans and implements learner-centered instruction and procedures that support students.					
2. Conducts lessons based on appropriate goals and objectives, following approved scope and sequences.					
3. Establishes and communicates learning goals for all students.					
4. Organizes written lesson plans according to a prescribed format and maintains lesson pace.					
5. Organizes curriculum to support student understanding through appropriate instructional strategies.					
6. Demonstrates sound knowledge of subject matter.					
7. Provides adequate wait time during questioning.					
8. Focuses student attention by motivational techniques connected to learner interests.					
9. Builds on student's command of basic skills and understanding while providing intellectually challenging academic expectations.					
10. Demonstrates knowledge of students' developmental levels and uses a variety of instructional strategies and resources to respond to students' diverse learning needs and abilities.					
11. Respects diversity among students.					
12. Uses appropriate equipment and technology effectively.					
13. Improves teaching practice by soliciting feedback and engaging in cycles of planning, teaching, reflecting, discerning problems and applying new strategies.					

Commended Areas

Improvement Areas

DOMAIN III: Evaluation and Feedback on Student Progress (InTASC Standards VI, VIII) <i>Intern learns to provide optimal settings that increase the ability of students to evaluate, differentiate and integrate information, think analytically, problem solve, communicate and reach sound conclusions.</i>	Proficient 4	Advanced Competent 3	Beginning Competent 2	Developing 1	Not Applicable N/A
1. Engages students in problem solving, critical thinking, and other activities to make subject matter meaningful.					
2. Aligns assessment and instruction, including goals, objectives and strategies.					
3. Utilizes multiple tools for assessment.					
4. Facilitates students self-assessment.					
5. Monitors students' performance and participation.					
6. Provides immediate and constructive feedback.					
7. Adjusts teaching according to students' performance and re-evaluates.					
8. Reinforces student learning.					
9. Communicates with students, families and other audiences about student progress.					
10. Consistently maintains student records and data.					

Commended Areas

Improvement Areas

DOMAIN IV: Management of Student Discipline, Instructional Strategies, Time and Materials (InTASC Standards I, III) <i>Intern sustains classroom behavior management by establishing clear guidelines.</i>	Proficient 4	Advanced Competent 3	Beginning Competent 2	Developing 1	Not Applicable N/A
1. Implements approved campus/district discipline-management policies.					
2. Establishes a climate that promotes effective instruction.					
3. Uses instructional time effectively.					
4. Starts class promptly with little confusion.					
5. Maintains established rules and enforces procedures for student behavior consistently and fairly.					
6. Redirects inappropriate, off-task, or disruptive behavior promptly and establishes a risk-free environment.					
7. Effectively and efficiently manages materials.					
8. Uses a variety of appropriate materials.					
9. Engages students and moves freely around total class during lesson.					
10. Remembers and refers to students by their names.					
11. Encourages self-discipline and self-directed learning.					
12. Promotes social development and group responsibility.					

Commended Areas

Improvement Areas

DOMAIN V: Professional Communication (InTASC Standards III, V, X) <i>Intern communicates effectively by presenting ideas and instructions clearly and meaningfully to students, adjusting the complexity of his or her language to the abilities of all students in the class.</i>	Proficient 4	Advanced Competent 3	Beginning Competent 2	Developing 1	Not Applicable N/A
1. Complies with all verbal and written directives.					
2. Teaches sessions with enthusiasm and confidence.					
3. Uses correct oral and written grammar.					
4. Uses effective verbal and nonverbal communication with students.					
5. Uses appropriate and accurate written communication with parents, staff, and community.					
6. Provides genuine encouragement for all students.					
7. Displays professional courtesy.					
8. Maintains professional image through appropriate dress and behavior.					
9. Exhibits respect for students, parents, staff, and community members.					
10. Communicates on students' level of understanding.					
11. Listens carefully to others and accepts constructive feedback.					
12. Adapts in a flexible manner.					

Commended Areas

Improvement Areas

DOMAIN VI: Professional Development (InTASC Standards IX, X) <i>Intern places a high priority on professional development and exhibits professionalism in his or her interactions with teachers and students, and, performs tasks which measure his or her ability to fulfill the responsibilities of teaching to ensure student learning.</i>	Proficient 4	Advanced Competent 3	Beginning Competent 2	Developing 1	Not Applicable N/A
1. Maintains a professional relationship and works cooperatively with colleagues, staff and University Supervisor.					
2. Collaborates with colleagues and is receptive to suggestions.					
3. Uses ethical judgment and discretion with confidential information.					
4. Demonstrates a commitment to students, district and community; dependable.					
5. Abides by school operation schedule (arrival/departure).					
6. Attends intern related activities.					
7. Attends school related meetings such as PTA, in-service and events.					
8. Complies with all campus, district, state, and national policies and procedures.					

Commended Areas

Improvement Areas

SUGGESTED GRADE: P (Pass) F (Fail)

RETURN COMPLETED EVALUATION TO:

Texas Woman's University
 College of Professional Education
 Attn: Michelle Williams-Laing
 P. O. Box 425769
 Denton, TX 76204-5769
 Phone/Fax: 940-898-2223

One copy each to office, principal, and student

Educational Leadership

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The Good Mentor

James B. Rowley

Can you name a person who had a positive and enduring impact on your personal or professional life, someone worthy of being called your mentor? Had he or she been trained to serve in such a role or been formally assigned to help you? I frequently ask veteran teachers these questions. As you might guess, most teachers with 10 or more years of experience were typically not assigned a mentor, but instead found informal support from a caring colleague. Unfortunately, not all teachers found this support. In fact, many veterans remember their first year in the classroom as a difficult and lonely time during which no one came to their aid.

Much has changed in the past decade, however, because many school districts have established entry-year programs that pair beginning teachers with veteran, mentor teachers. In the majority of such cases, the matching occurs before they meet and establish a personal relationship. This prevalent aspect of school-based mentoring programs presents special challenges that are further exacerbated when mentor teachers receive no or inadequate training and only token support for their work.

Qualities of a Good Mentor

During the past decade, I have helped school districts design mentor-based, entry-year programs. In that capacity, I have learned much by carefully listening to mentor and beginning teachers and by systematically observing what seems to work, and not to work, in formal mentoring programs. As a result of these experiences, I have identified six basic but essential qualities of the *good mentor* and the implications the qualities have for entry-year program design and mentor teacher training.

The good mentor is committed to the role of mentoring. The good mentor is highly committed to the task of helping beginning teachers find success and gratification in their new work. Committed mentors show up for, and stay on, the job. Committed mentors understand that persistence is as important in mentoring as it is in classroom teaching. Such commitment flows naturally from a resolute belief that mentors are capable of making a significant and positive impact on the life of another. This belief is not grounded in naive conceptions of what it means to be a mentor. Rather, it is anchored in the knowledge that mentoring can be a challenging endeavor requiring significant investments of time and energy.

What can be done to increase the odds that mentor teachers possess the commitment fundamental to delivering effective support? First, good programs require formal mentor training as a prerequisite to mentoring. Veteran teachers unwilling to participate in a quality training program are often indicating their lack of dedication to the role. Second, because it is unreasonable to expect a teacher to commit to a role that has not been clearly defined, the best mentoring programs provide specific descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of mentor teachers.

Third, good mentoring programs require mentors to maintain simple logs or journals that document conferences and other professional development activities involving the mentor and mentee. But such

record-keeping devices should keep paperwork to a minimum and protect the confidentiality of the mentor-mentee relationship.

Finally, although the majority of mentor teachers would do this important work without compensation, we must not overlook the relationship between compensation and commitment. Programs that provide mentors with a stipend, release time from extra duties, or additional opportunities for professional growth make important statements about the value of the work and its significance in the school community.

The good mentor is accepting of the beginning teacher. At the foundation of any effective helping relationship is empathy. As Carl Rogers (1958) pointed out, empathy means accepting another person without making judgments. It means setting aside, at least temporarily, personal beliefs and values. The good mentor teacher recognizes the power of accepting the beginning teacher as a developing person and professional. Accepting mentors do not judge or reject mentees as being poorly prepared, overconfident, naive, or defensive. Rather, should new teachers exhibit such characteristics; good mentors simply view these traits as challenges to overcome in their efforts to deliver meaningful support.

How can we encourage mentor teachers to be more accepting of new teachers? A training program that engages prospective mentors in reflecting on the qualities of effective helpers is an excellent place to begin. Reading and discussing passages from the works of Rogers (1958) and Combs, Avila, and Purkey (1971), for example, can raise levels of consciousness about this important attribute. Equally important in the training protocol is helping prospective mentors understand the problems and concerns of beginning teachers (Veenman, 1984; Fuller & Bown, 1975) as well as stage and age theories of adult development (Loevinger, 1976; Sprinthal & Theis-Sprinthal, 1980). Training exercises that cause mentors to thoughtfully revisit their own first years of teaching in light of such research-based and theoretical perspectives can help engender a more accepting disposition toward beginning teachers regardless of their age or prior life experiences.

The good mentor is skilled at providing instructional support. Beginning teachers enter their careers with varying degrees of skill in instructional design and delivery. Good mentors are willing to coach beginning teachers to improve their performance wherever their skill level. Although this seems obvious, many mentor teachers stop short of providing quality instructional support. Among the factors contributing to this problem is a school culture that does not encourage teachers to observe one another in their classrooms. I often ask mentors-in-training whether they could imagine helping someone improve a tennis serve or golf swing without seeing the athlete play and with only the person's description of what he or she thought was wrong.

Lacking opportunities for shared experience, mentors often limit instructional support to workroom conversations. Although such dialogue can be helpful, discussions based on shared experience are more powerful. Such shared experiences can take different forms: mentors and mentees can engage in team teaching or team planning, mentees can observe mentors, mentors can observe mentees, or both can observe other teachers. Regardless of the nature of the experience, the purpose is to promote collegial dialogue focused on enhancing teacher performance and student learning.

What can we do to prepare mentors to provide instructional support? The quality of instructional support that mentor teachers offer is largely influenced by the degree of value an entry-year program places on such support. The mentor training program should equip mentors with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions prerequisite to effective coaching. Such training helps mentors value description over interpretation in the coaching process; develop multiple methods of classroom observation; employ research-based frameworks as the basis for reflection; and refine their conferencing and feedback skills. Finally, we need to give mentors and mentees time and opportunity to participate in the pre-conferences, classroom observations, and post-conferences that lead to quality clinical support.

The good mentor is effective in different interpersonal contexts. All beginning teachers are not created equal, nor are all mentor teachers. This simple fact, when overlooked or ignored by a mentor teacher, often leads to relationship difficulties and diminished support for the beginning teacher. Good mentor teachers recognize that each mentoring relationship occurs in a unique, interpersonal context. Beginning teachers can display widely different attitudes toward the help offered by a mentor. One year, a mentor may work with a beginning teacher hungry for advice and the next year be assigned a beginning teacher who reacts defensively to thoughtfully offered suggestions.

Just as good teachers adjust their teaching behaviors and communications to meet the needs of individual students, good mentors adjust their mentoring communications to meet the needs of individual mentees. To make such adjustments, good mentors must possess deep understanding of their own communication styles and a willingness to objectively observe the behavior of the mentee.

How can we help mentors acquire such self-knowledge and adopt a positive disposition toward adjusting their mentoring behaviors? Mentor training programs that engage mentors in completing and reflecting on self-inventory that provide insight into their leadership or supervisory styles are particularly helpful.

The Supervisory Beliefs Inventory (Glickman, 1985) offers an excellent vehicle for introducing mentors to the challenges of interpersonal communication. In similar fashion, *The Leadership Adaptability and Style Inventory* (Hersey & Blanchard, 1974) can provoke mentors to reflect on the appropriateness of their mentoring behavior given the maturity and commitment of their mentees. In my own mentor training, I follow discussions of such theoretical perspectives with the analysis of videotaped conversations between mentors and mentees from the *Mentoring the New Teacher* series (Rowley & Hart, 1993).

The good mentor is a model of a continuous learner. Beginning teachers rarely appreciate mentors who have *right* answers to every question and *best* solutions for every problem. Good mentor teachers are transparent about their own search for *better* answers and *more effective* solutions to their own problems. They model this commitment by their openness to learn from colleagues, including beginning teachers, and by their willingness to pursue professional growth through a variety of means. They lead and attend workshops. They teach and enroll in graduate classes. They develop and experiment with new practices. They write and read articles in professional journals. Most important, they share new knowledge and perplexing questions with their beginning teachers in a collegial manner.

How can we ensure that mentors continue their own professional growth and development? Quality entry-year programs establish clear criteria for mentor selection that include a commitment to initial and ongoing mentor training. In addition, program leaders work hard to give veteran mentors frequent opportunities to participate in high-quality professional-growth experiences that can enhance their work as a mentor teacher. Some programs, for example, reward mentors by giving them additional professional development days or extra support to attend professional conferences related to their work.

The good mentor communicates hope and optimism. In "Mentors: They Simply Believe," Lasley (1996) argues that the crucial characteristic of mentors is the ability to communicate their belief that a person is capable of transcending present challenges and of accomplishing great things in the future. For mentor teachers working in school-based programs, such a quality is no less important. Good mentor teachers capitalize on opportunities to affirm the human potential of their mentees. They do so in private conversations and in public settings. Good mentors share their own struggles and frustrations and how they overcame them. And always, they do so in a genuine and caring way that engenders trust. What can we do to ensure that beginning teachers are supported by mentors capable of communicating hope and optimism? Quality programs take the necessary precautions to avoid using veteran teachers who have lost their positive outlook. If teachers and administrators value mentoring highly and take it seriously, mentoring will attract caring and committed teachers who recognize the complex and challenging nature of classroom teaching. It will attract teachers who demonstrate their hope and

optimism for the future by their willingness to help a new teacher discover the same joys and satisfactions that they have found in their own career.

The Mentoring Leadership and Resource Network

The Mentoring Leadership and Resource Network is an ASCD network dedicated to supporting educators everywhere with best practices in mentoring and induction. For six years, the network has provided assistance and free advice to mentors and mentoring programs. In addition, the network sponsors a Spring Symposium each May and an annual meeting at the ASCD Annual Conference in March.

The Mentoring Leadership and Resource Network has five main purposes:

- To provide an organizational vehicle for a mentoring initiative;
- To increase the knowledge base and general awareness of best practices in mentoring and induction;
- To promote and provide effective training for new teacher mentors;
- To establish mentoring of new teachers as the norm in schools; and
- To establish, through mentoring, the norms of collegiality, collaboration, and continuous professional development in schools.

For more information, visit the mentoring Web site (<http://www.mentors.net>).

References

Are there any more current references that could be added to this list or developed as a Resource List?

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