



TLC for Student Teacher Mentors

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Introduction

In the past, it was common for university-based, state-sponsored teacher preparation programs to dramatically segregate theory and practice. Candidates often spent over half their program in the classroom at the university before entering an actual school classroom. Such candidates had difficulty not only implementing instruction, but also making sense of the school culture within which they must work. Over the years the notion of *praxis*—the bringing together of theory and practice—has come to dominate teacher preparation. Researchers and practitioners alike now argue for placing student teachers into classrooms very early in their programs if not on the first day (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1995).

This argument is primarily supported by research that demonstrates that classroom experience, interwoven with instruction and mentoring from the university, leads to meaningful and positive teacher development. Indeed, it is at the school site that the candidate begins to transform from student to professional teacher. Near the end of a teacher education program, student teachers, particularly the more effective ones, identify more with the teaching profession than with their former identities as students (Tang, 2004).

Still, many universities have difficulty fully supporting this change. Most tenured professors who teach, for example, reading instruction, have not spent time in current school classrooms nor do they have practice in teaching multiple subjects. Accordingly, field supervisors who go to classrooms to observe and evaluate student teachers are usually not the same professors who teach the methods courses at the university. Indeed, it is a rare event to see one's professors at the school site. Many universities hire doctoral candidates, retired teachers, or part time faculty to perform student teaching supervision.

This division of labor is not simply habitual. It also has pragmatic and instrumental support. Nevertheless, it results in significant problems that inhibit the healthy development of new teachers. First, field supervisors may be unfamiliar with what student teachers are learning at the university. Thus, when they go to the classroom to observe a student, they must rely on their own experience (which may or may not be current), rather than on the expectations of the student teachers' instructors or the program. Second, because university program faculty and administrators cannot typically spend much if any time at the school site, nor interact with the master teachers or the administrators there, the school itself, and the master teacher in particular, are unaware of the university's expectations of their student teachers. While, typically, master teachers are given paperwork, sometimes voluminous in nature, they rarely have the time or the motivation to read through it, particularly if they host student teachers from different programs during the year. A third problem results from the first two. Classroom teachers and their administrators lack trust and a sense of collegiality with the university program's course instructors and administrators because, simply put, they don't know them. School sites operate as independent, self-regulating cultures, and for student teachers to be successful in them there

needs to be a positive and collegial relationship between the school personnel and the university personnel on behalf of the candidates' fieldwork experience.

As fieldwork programs gain increasing value in teacher preparation programs, it is essential to bring these groups together, not only to share expectations and requirements, but also to build the trust and familiarity necessary for on-going productive teacher preparation.

The resources, outlines, and guidance for the master teacher and fieldwork supervisor Workshops presented here are modest attempts to address these pressing problems. The first workshop focuses on developing a shared understanding of the different roles and perspectives in the fieldwork experience, specifically, those of the student teacher, the master teacher, and the fieldwork supervisor. The second workshop focuses on lesson planning, differentiated instruction, and learning some of the "myths" and "realities," about English learners. The third and final workshop covers the specific student teacher expectations for lesson planning, particularly during the "take over" period when the student teacher is responsible for planning and teaching the entire school day. All workshops emphasize differentiated instruction for all students and particularly English learners.

References

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Workshop 1: Master Teacher and Fieldwork Supervisor: Roles, Relationships, and Responsibilities

Suggested Resources: *Company in the Classroom: Building a Learning Relationship with your student teacher* from the Developmental Studies Center, available at <http://products.devstu.org>.

Objectives:

Master teachers, fieldwork supervisors, and student teachers have different points of view, levels of experience, learning needs, and responsibilities. The objective of this workshop is to support student teachers' instruction of English learners and to create an environment that will create supportive learning relationships among the various people involved in fieldwork. In addition, the workshops are an opportunity for master teachers and fieldwork supervisors to provide essential information regarding their fieldwork experiences to program faculty and administrators. Although these workshops were designed for master teachers and fieldwork supervisors, it is essential to share the information gathered with program instructors and administrators.

Materials:

Have all relevant materials related to student teaching available so participants can see the teacher education coursework and fieldwork requirements in the context of the entire program. Sample materials may include a summary of your project, the fieldwork and/or master teacher handbook used in your program, and a table of responsibilities of student teachers, master teachers, and fieldwork supervisors (during the first week and all weeks of student teaching). (Examples of these tables can be found in Activity 4 of this workshop, below.)

Activity 1: Community building. Take the time for the master teachers and field supervisors to introduce themselves. Have master teachers describe their schools, the grade levels they teach, and the names of the student teachers they have worked with recently from the program.

Activity 2: Terminology. If everyone in the teacher education program (at the university and in the field) uses the same vocabulary, all parties are more likely to understand what is required of them. Go over the terminology used in the program and have participants discuss the words. You may use terms like:

Student teachers: university teacher education candidates who are current students taking courses in the evening and working in the classroom during the day.

Master Teachers: Classroom teachers who have agreed to mentor and evaluate student teachers in their classrooms (also referred to as cooperating teachers or mentor teachers).

Fieldwork Supervisors: University employees, sometimes faculty or instructors, who observe, supervise, and evaluate student teachers (also referred to as university supervisors or field supervisors).

Allow for discussion and encourage people to share other terms that may be often used, yet are vague in meaning. Even if people do not agree with one another, discussing the semantic variations will increase communication and understanding.

Activity 3: Personal histories inform current realities.

A. Using poster paper to record responses, ask participants to first recall the experience of being a student teacher, the challenges and the opportunities. Then, have them describe the *most* helpful things a master teacher did with or for them when they were student teachers themselves. Facilitate review of responses.

Example responses:

- Helped with planning prior to the lesson
- Started off slowly, giving me ideas for my lessons
- Asked me to reflect on my performance before offering advice

B. Ask participants to describe the *least* helpful things a mentor or master teacher did when they were student teachers.

Sample responses:

- Provided no feedback; I felt completely on my own
- Interfered during my lessons
- Stayed in the back of the room talking to other adults
- Corrected me inappropriately in front of the students

C. Ask participants to identify the characteristics of the student teacher.

Sample responses:

- Timid
- Scared
- Thinks they are students' friends
- Opinionated
- Naïve

Again, facilitate participants' review and discussion of their responses. Focus on *recalling the experience of being a student teacher*, both the challenges and the opportunities. How did they feel when they were in that position?

D. Ask participants to describe the most important expectations they currently have of student teachers.

Sample responses:

- Professional behavior—timeliness, attire, social interactions, language, spelling, knowledge
- Open-minded, reflective, open to suggestions and constructive criticism
- Responsible and well organized

E. Ask participants to describe the expectations a master teacher has of the fieldwork supervisor.

Sample responses:

- Supports the student teacher's planning and reflection

- Works closely with the master teacher (available by phone and email for conversation and meetings with student teacher)
- Observes regularly and frequently
- Informs master teacher of observation schedule
- Supports and mentors the master teacher when appropriate

Break for Dinner

Activity 4: What does the first week look like for student teachers, master teachers and fieldwork supervisors? (Or, use the week of the program you are presently in.) Distribute and review a handout that lists the responsibilities of the student teacher, the master teacher, and the fieldwork supervisor during the first week (or any week) of the student teaching placement. An example handout follows here. [You may download a complete chart of first and second ten-week student teacher placement roles and responsibilities here.](#)

**Table of Responsibilities – First Full-Time Novice Teaching Placement
for Novice Teachers, Cooperating Teachers, and Supervisors**

	NOVICE TEACHER	COOPERATING TEACHER	UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR
WEEK 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn students' names. Draw a classroom map that includes the seating arrangement. Learn school site procedures such as supplies, lunch, office referrals, playground assignments, bell schedules, emergency procedures, etc. Review student behavior expectations, policies for homework, grading, make-up tests, lavatory use, pencil sharpening, etc. Learn your Cooperating Teacher's expectations of you and discuss what you hope to get out of the experience. Share your strengths (special talents) and focus areas for growth with the Cooperating Teacher. Discuss with your Cooperating Teacher how you will be introduced to the class. Determine, with your Cooperating teacher, your work space inside the classroom for schoolwork and personal belongings. Request copies of texts, supplementary materials, teacher's guides, course outlines, etc for you to review and understand. Assist with roll taking, forms, and routine activities. Assist CT with walking students to and from the classroom when dismissing to and from lunch, recess, etc. Observe your CT's teaching and management strategies. Take notes, ask questions, and discuss observations with him/her. Collaborate with CT to assess student work and reflect upon students' progress in meeting learning objectives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist individual students as needed. Monitor/supervise small group activity. Teach lesson to individual student or small group using full lesson plan format. Review all oral/written comments made by your CT and Supervisor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide the NT with seating chart, attendance cards, cumulative files, etc. Review students with special needs, IEP interventions, etc. Schedule a weekly meeting time to review school procedures, bell schedules, emergency procedures, behavior policies, policies for homework, grading, and attendance. Discuss how you plan to formally introduce the NT to your class and subsequently introduce NT to class. Provide an area/desk for your NT to use and store personal and professional belongings. Provide copies of teacher's guides and texts. Model how to use each guide effectively. Provide opportunity for the NT to follow your procedure for taking roll or any other opening activity. Guide the NT in how to walk students to and from the classroom. Observe the NT and offer suggestions. Model good teaching strategies with explanations of what you are doing and why during instruction. Discuss specific techniques NT should use to manage the students. Review student work samples and identify criteria used. Identify specific students needing assistance and provide opportunities for your ST to work with identified students. Help the ST plan a small group lesson. Define the differences between supervising, monitoring and instructing small groups. Guide the ST in the lesson writing process. Request that all lesson plans be turned into you 24 hours in advance of instruction so that you can provide appropriate feedback both prior to and after instruction. Read all lesson plans and provide written comments and suggestions on the plan. Return the plan in a timely manner. Observe NT performance during instruction and provide written and oral feedback. Discuss with the NT possible methods for delivering feedback, e.g. journal format, comments on lesson plans, meetings, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet NT and review guidelines and expectations. If NT is working with an individual student or monitoring a small group, observe him/her and provide written feedback at least once during the first week. Introduce yourself to the Cooperating Teacher and school Principal. Meet with CT to review their responsibilities to observe the NT, provide written and oral feedback, offer suggestions prior to instruction, and explain and demonstrate how to write lesson plans and meet individual student needs. Check in at the school office at each visit. Locate a quiet, private area on campus to conduct debriefing conference. Act as a liaison for the University, school site, and Novice Teacher. Get the phone numbers and email address for Novice Teacher and give them yours.

- A. Facilitate discussion and critique of the each person's activities and responsibilities.
- B. Discuss those things that should be added, clarified, and/or omitted.
- C. Discuss the difficulties participants see in fulfilling these responsibilities.

Activity 5: What do you need to learn to make student teaching more successful?

Using poster paper to record responses, question participants as to what they need to learn more about in order to make the student teaching experience more successful, particularly in terms of preparing candidates to teach English learners. This information can help guide and structure subsequent workshops for this group.

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Workshop 2: Lesson Planning and Differentiated Instruction for English Learners

Suggested Resources:

Video: Gusman, J., (2004). *Differentiated Instruction and the English Learner*. This video presents examples of ways to differentiate instruction in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. It is designed to help educators create effective language acquisition programs that meet No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements. Available at <http://www.nprinc.com/ell/vell.htm>

Book: Samway, K. D. & McKeon, D. (2007). *Myths and realities, second edition: Best practices for English language learners*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. Provide one book per participant, or copy (with permission) from the book chapters 3 through 6 (25 myths) from the book. Each participant does not need a full set; it is sufficient for each group to simply have copies of the myth(s) that the group will study and present.

Objectives:

Although teachers may be familiar with differentiated instruction for special needs students, they are less likely to be equally informed about using similar strategies for English learners. This workshop includes video viewing and discussion, small group work, and a presentation on specific issues related to English learners. The objectives here are for master teachers and fieldwork supervisors to learn methods of (and support the practice of) differentiated instruction. In addition, a small group activity enhances participants' abilities to articulate their own reasoning behind pedagogic choices about English learner instruction by identifying and correcting common, widespread misunderstandings about English learners and second language acquisition.

Materials:

Have copies of a strong, traditional 30-minute lesson plan. Also, each table should have large easel paper and markers.

Activity 1: Applying the levels of English language development (ELD).

A. Distribute definitions of the five levels of English language development (as shown below). Briefly review the definitions.

B. View the video, *Differentiated Instruction and the English Learner*. Stop the video at different points to discuss specific differentiation strategies. After viewing the video, discuss its key points and the questions it raised.

C. Ask participants to articulate why educators would choose particular methods, strategies, or materials in differentiating instruction for English learners.

D. Distribute copies of the 30-minute lesson plan. Participants form groups of 2-6. Assign one English Language Development level (from 1 to 5) to each group. Ask them to spend 15-20 minutes designing effective ways adapt the lesson to the assigned ELD level. (ELD levels are presented at the end of this workshop outline.)

E. Each group reports to the large group about the adaptations they decided upon. Use Socratic questioning to uncover participants' reasoning for their choices of methods, strategies, and/or content.

F. Reflect on how master teachers might work with student teachers to provide differentiated instruction to English learners.

Activity 2: Myths and realities of English learners.

This exercise relies on the book by Samway and McKeon, which is presented with short, easily comprehensible background, research, and vignettes. The reading generally sparks useful discussions about the myths and realities of English Learners. Depending on both the number of participants and the time allotted, decide in advance which myths to discuss, and how many myths you will distribute to each small group.

Groups of three or four participants sit together to read and discuss their myths. Do group members agree with the authors about the “myth” vs. the “reality” presented? Why? Each group prepares a brief presentation on each myth, with examples from their own work in classrooms. Participants write both myth and reality on the large paper, with bullet points to highlight some particular experiences of group members in that area.

Allow small groups 15-20 minutes to discuss each myth, and about 5 minutes to present each myth to the larger group. Select the number of myths that time allows. Even working with one myth for each group generates great and useful discussions!

See the following page for document listing the five levels of English Language Development.

Five Levels of English Language Development from www.cde.ca.gov

Beginning — Students performing at this level of English-language proficiency may demonstrate little or no receptive or productive English skills. They are beginning to understand a few concrete details during unmodified instruction. They may be able to respond to some communication and learning demands, but with many errors. Oral and written production is usually limited to disconnected words and memorized statements and questions. Frequent errors make communication difficult.

Early Intermediate — Students performing at this level of English-language proficiency continue to develop receptive and productive English skills. They are able to identify and understand more concrete details during unmodified instruction. They may be able to respond with increasing ease to more varied communication and learning demands with a reduced number of errors. Oral and written production is usually limited to phrases and memorized statements and questions. Frequent errors still reduce communication.

Intermediate — Students performing at this level of English-language proficiency begin to tailor their English-language skills to meet communication and learning demands with increasing accuracy. They are able to identify and understand more concrete details and some major abstract concepts during unmodified instruction. They are able to respond with increasing ease to more varied communication and learning demands with a reduced number of errors. Oral and written production has usually expanded to sentences, paragraphs, and original statements and questions. Errors still complicate communication.

Early Advanced — Students performing at this level of English-language proficiency begin to combine the elements of the English language in complex, cognitively demanding situations and are able to use English as a means for learning in content areas. They are able to identify and summarize most concrete details and abstract concepts during unmodified instruction in most content areas. Oral and written production is characterized by more elaborate discourse and fully-developed paragraphs and compositions. Errors are less frequent and rarely complicate communication.

Advanced — Students performing at this level of English-language proficiency communicate effectively with various audiences on a wide range of familiar and new topics to meet social and learning demands. In order for students at this level to attain the English-proficiency level of their native English-speaking peers, further linguistic enhancement and refinement are still necessary. Students at this level are able to identify and summarize concrete details and abstract concepts during unmodified instruction in all content areas. Oral and written production reflects discourse appropriate for content areas. Errors are infrequent and do not reduce communication.

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Workshop 3: Mentoring Student Teachers

Suggested Resources:

Hicks, C., Glasgow, N. & McNary, S. (2005). *What Successful Mentors Do: 81 Research-based Strategies for New Teacher Induction, Training and Support*. San Francisco: Corwin Press.

Background and Rationale:

The workshop presented here was created in response to the suggestions of our master teachers and fieldwork supervisors in our program. Specifically, they requested assistance with mentoring; they wanted to learn effective ways of communicating critical feedback to their student teachers, methods of modeling and demonstrating teaching approaches, methods of evaluating student teachers' performance, and methods of handling common problems that may occur with student teaching placement. To this end, we offered this workshop, designed to introduce and give practice in several mentoring skills, particularly *Active Listening* and *Role Play*.

Materials Needed: Cue Cards (described below), poster paper, pens.

Role-Play Scenarios, Preparation:

Prior to the workshop, design two role-play scenarios, one between a master teacher and a student teacher, the other between a student teacher and a Field Supervisor. Focus the scenarios on the situations that unfold when giving critical feedback to a student teacher. Use the conflict and tension as an opportunity for all participants to learn.

Print four Cue Cards printed (in advance) based on real-life event that have occurred in the teacher education program. Cue Card 1 describes the student teacher's role and Cue Card 2 the master teacher's role. Similarly, Cue Card 3 describes the student teacher and Cue Card 4 describes the fieldwork supervisor. Use the "you" pronoun in the description, rather than "he" and "she."

For example:

Cue Card 1: Student Teacher

- *You are a student teacher in the second week of your first placement.
- *All of the students are English learners and you don't speak their primary language.
- *You want to teach some of the lessons you have prepared but aren't sure they'll work with Els.
- *You have not yet shown the lessons to the master teacher.
- *The master teacher has introduced you to the students but you don't feel supported to teach by the master teacher.
- *You are thinking about talking to your Supervisor about this but have not, nor have you said anything to the master teacher about your feelings.
- *The master teacher has asked for this after school meeting.

Cue Card 2: Master teacher

- *You are a master teacher with 5 years of teaching experience.
- *This is your first student teacher.
- *You speak your students' primary language.
- *You are disappointed that the student teacher is so passive in the classroom.
- *You feel that the student teacher acts as if he/she is the students' buddy rather than a teacher.
- *You are worried about offending the student teacher by criticizing or doing too much directing.
- *The Supervisor emailed you a couple of days ago and asked how the student teacher is doing.
- *You asked the student teacher to meet with you after school.

Activity 1: Active listening. Introduce, discuss, and practice Active Listening, a simple communication tool in which the listener restates the speaker's statements, checks for understanding, and uses voice tones and facial expressions that indicate to the speaker that the listener is taking his or her words seriously.

(<http://www.mindtools.com/CommSkill/ActiveListening.htm> has good resources on active listening.)

Activity 2: Identifying Problems. Ask the group to spend 5-10 minutes writing notes on the specific problems they had and/or wanted help with one of the student teachers with whom they are working now or in the past. Use the table of Roles and Responsibilities to locate these problems whenever possible. (The full text of the Roles and Responsibilities for ten weeks is provided at the end of this workshop text. (Provide poster paper for them to write their responses.) Ask participants to review their notes and report the problem(s) they would like to focus on the most. (Note responses on large paper.)

Sample responses:

- Difficulty with giving critical feedback
- Student teacher is not accepting or acting on suggestions
- Student teacher does not follow lesson plan
- Being flexible; in tune with the student teacher's particular learning style
- Student teacher tries to be the students' friend
- Monolingual student teachers unable to work with ELD 1 students
- Understanding my relationship to the Supervisor

Activity 3: Matching mentoring strategies. Teachers should generate mentoring strategies of their own or from the text. Together, the facilitator (who should be familiar with the text) and teachers identify appropriate strategies that address the problems listed. These are shared with the group one concept at a time. It's best if multiple copies of the text are available for participants; if not, have the facilitator read the strategies aloud. Be sure to discuss these questions as you review each strategy:

Would this work? (Why or why not?)

Why does it seem to be a useful or weak strategy?

Activity 4: Role play. Identify two of the most problematic areas participants have discussed; use those to set up a role playing scenario with participants. Ask them to volunteer and use the Cue Cards (as described above).

Using the Cue Cards, one volunteer plays the student teacher and the other plays the master teacher (or fieldwork supervisor). During the role play, other participants sit, observe, and take notes while seated in a semi-circle around the pair.

After each of the two role plays, debrief the experience, first with the two people acting out the parts, and next with the group that was observing them.

These questions should get the conversation going:

- *What was working?*
- *What was not?*
- *Discuss whether and how Active Listening was used.*

Workshop Recommendations:

At the last workshop, ask participants to provide written recommendations for the program's improvement. Their focus on elements to improve will stem from their experiences as master teachers and fieldwork supervisors. We suggest providing the questions listed below. As prompts, you may follow-up by re-sending these questions through email so that participants can answer electronically. After receiving the responses, summarize them and provide them to the teacher education program faculty and administrators, and give or send copies to participants.

1. What changes to the fieldwork segment of the Program would you suggest to better prepare pre-service teachers to meet the needs of English learners?

2. *What do you think student teachers should learn prior to their first placement that appears to be absent from the Program presently?*

3. *What materials or activities could the Program provide you to make your work with student teachers more effective?*

Follow up this workshop by sending a report the Department or Program Chair of the participants' recommendations. Request that program administration respond to the issues raised by workshop participants. Once obtained, distribute the response to the participants.

A sample recommendation that was very popular among our participants was to have a "Meet and Greet" session at the start of each academic term. At this event, not only would student teachers meet their master teachers and fieldwork supervisors, but also a fieldwork program representative would go over the roles and responsibilities with all parties in the same room. Our participants thought this one event would reduce several of the most common problems they encountered.

Table of Roles & Responsibilities – First Full-Time Novice Teaching Placement

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