

# Role of the Student Teacher

The student teacher is a representative of The University of Scranton and a guest in the host school. The student teacher, entering a professional situation, is expected to display a professional manner and is responsible for developing a positive working relationship within the assigned school setting. Confidentiality is an important component of being in the classroom and of maintaining positive relationships with administrators, faculty, staff, students, and parents. This includes maintaining privacy regarding children's personally-identifiable information, academic records, and class lists (including names, addresses, phone numbers, birthdates, and any other information pertaining to students).

Each student teacher is assigned to work with a cooperating teacher, an experienced teacher in his or her assigned grade/subject area. During the student teaching experience, the pre-service teacher will be both teacher and learner. No one is more important in helping the student teacher fill both of these roles than the cooperating teacher. The cooperating teacher can be a friend as well as mentor, counselor, and guide. Although the cooperating teacher is there to aid the student teacher, he or she has one overriding concern – the welfare of the students.

Student teachers are bound by all the rules and requirements that apply to the full-time faculty at the assigned school. They should learn those rules and requirements and feel free to ask the cooperating teacher for guidance when questions arise. The student teacher, developing a positive working relationship within the school setting, should always confer with the cooperating teacher or university supervisor prior to taking any action.

Because student teaching is a full-semester, full-day, full-time clinical experience, student teachers are not permitted to take coursework beyond the thirteen credits that comprise the student teaching experience. It is not unusual for student teachers to spend sixty hours or more per week preparing for and participating in the student teaching experience; therefore, student teachers are discouraged from engaging in other activities that might detract from their ability to put forth their utmost commitment and dedication (i.e., employment, varsity sports, or demanding social clubs).

## **Student Teachers' Responsibilities** (adapted from *Villanova University Student Teaching Handbook*, 2012)

- Become an integral part of the instructional staff at your schools. Accept willingly duties commensurate with your role as a teacher. This may include in-service and parent conferences, supervisory duties (i.e., cafeteria duty, hall duty, etc.), as well as extra-curricular activities. Seek innovative ways to make a contribution. Coaching sports teams, planning field trips, helping out with plays, shows, clubs, academic teams, etc., are activities that are fun and meaningful for you and your students.
- Prepare complete, concise daily lesson plans and review them with your cooperating teacher at least three days in advance of teaching the lesson. Keep them in a binder to be shared with your university supervisor when he or she comes to observe. You may also be required to prepare unit plans, bulletin boards, learning centers, and other materials.

- Maintain a receptive attitude toward your cooperating teachers. They have volunteered to share their knowledge and experience with you as their contribution to the profession. They are your immediate supervisors in all school activities, so follow their instruction and advice.
- Student teachers are expected to partake in the responsibilities and obligations, curricular and auxiliary, of their cooperating teachers. Obtain a copy of the teacher policy manual for your school, and study it thoroughly. You are expected to follow those procedures and to obey those rules and regulations as if you are one of the faculty.
- University of Scranton supervisors are there to provide you with constructive criticism that will help you learn and to become a good teacher. Accept the comments and instructions gracefully and with openness to change.
- Be a positive role model for your students. Exhibit good manners, habits, behavior, and language. Present the best possible image, starting with professional dress and appearance.
- Learn as much as you can about your students through observation, school records, test scores, etc., and use that knowledge to fashion individual learning activities.
- Learn as much as you can about your profession by observing other teachers / classrooms / disciplines when possible. Make a point to observe special education settings as well as familiarize yourself with adaptations and accommodations in the classroom to which you are assigned and other classes you observe.
- Make seating charts and learn your students' names within the first few days. There is no better tool of classroom management than simply calling each student by name.
- Be friendly but not familiar in your relationships with students and staff. Do not put yourself into situations or conversations which may call into question your professional ethics or judgment. Be an adult role model, not a pal. Do not allow students to ask you personal questions or delve into your personal life. Maintain a professional relationship with students and staff at all times. Do not engage in social networking with students.
- Comply with all reasonable requests made by your cooperating teacher, including helping with routine tasks, attending meetings, correcting papers, etc.
- It is up to YOU to take the initiative in resolving questions, problems, and differences. Keep your university supervisor informed of both progress that you have made and problems that you have encountered. Seek the advice of your cooperating teacher daily. While you are developing your own personal style in the classroom, respect the varying styles and experiences of others. If differences or problems begin to keep you from doing your best, you must take the initiative immediately and talk to someone about it.
- Remember that you are not just representing yourself. You are following in the footsteps of University of Scranton graduates who have created a tradition of preparedness that schools have come to expect. You are also a harbinger for classes of University of Scranton student teachers to come. Comport yourself with the grace and spirit of community expected of a graduate of this university.