

The University of Texas at Austin
College of Education

Becoming a Mentor
Practical Suggestions for A Professional Partnership

This document was prepared for:

The University of Texas at Austin
College of Education
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INTRODUCTION

You are about to embark on a very exciting journey of mentoring novice teachers. We also call them interns, student teachers (formerly apprentice teachers), and preservice teachers. The mentoring relationship will become the most significant connection that our students have between theory and practice. We hope that this document will answer the many questions that you may have and clarify the path you will take in accordance with the State of Texas Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS) and the Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS) frameworks (Appendix 1). The University of Texas College of Education could not do this without you!

As you consider this journey of guiding and supporting a preservice teacher you might ask yourself some of these questions:

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW AND BE ABLE TO DO?

- ↪ Teach
- ↪ Observe
- ↪ Document
- ↪ Inform
- ↪ Reflect
- ↪ Intervene
- ↪ Trust
- ↪ Let go

WHAT DO PRESERVICE TEACHERS NEED AS THEY GROW PROFESSIONALLY?

- ↪ Subject matter knowledge for teaching
- ↪ Authentic and meaningful contexts
- ↪ Strategies to represent and formulate that knowledge to teach it to others
- ↪ A balance of instructional and emotional support
- ↪ Opportunities to become a reflective practitioner

WHAT MAKES A COOPERATING TEACHER A HIGHLY QUALIFIED MENTOR?

Mentors who are cooperating teachers are able to provide a supportive classroom environment for preparing preservice teachers and they strive to exhibit the following, which was collaboratively compiled by cooperating teachers and teacher education faculty:

1. Teacher Performance

- ✓ Performs at the top levels of the PDAS
- ✓ Demonstrates and models proficient use of academic English (and academic Spanish or other language, in bilingual classrooms)
- ✓ Follows through with job-related commitments

2. Professional Dispositions

- ✓ Demonstrates behaviors that reflect commitment to ethical concerns
- ✓ Exhibits enthusiasm, flexibility, and open-mindedness

3. Mentoring Skills

- ✓ Models and encourages self-reflective practices
- ✓ Promotes a collaborative and non-threatening environment where mistakes are the building blocks of learning
- ✓ Provides constructive feedback and praise
- ✓ Communicates effectively
- ✓ Receptive to new ideas and practices

4. Diversity

- ✓ Actions are respectful of the numerous diversities within the school population and community (e.g., culture and language, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, physical and personal attributes, and disabilities).
- ✓ Actively promotes student appreciation of diverse groups and cultures through curricula and instructional activities

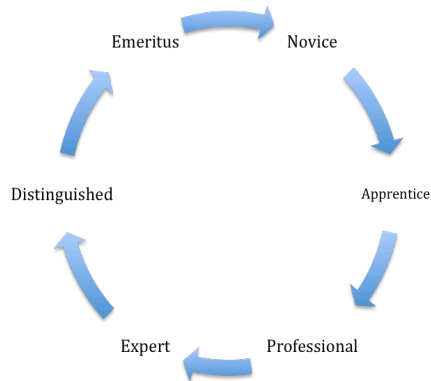
5. Special Populations and Inclusive Settings

- ✓ Collects and shares student information in order to plan and implement differentiated curricula and instruction
- ✓ Demonstrates knowledge of federal, state, and local policies/procedures
- ✓ Demonstrates knowledge of research-based strategies for all special populations

6. Technology

- ✓ Has or would be supportive of an interactive, technology-rich teaching/learning environment

In addition, as an experienced classroom teacher, you are prepared to take this step in your career path. In the “Life Cycle Model for Career Teachers” (Steffy & Wolfe, 2001), teachers progress through their careers following a predictable path of stages and transitions. By taking this opportunity to mentor a preservice teacher, you are engaging in an important process of your continued professional renewal.



The preservice teacher is in the “novice” phase and is benefiting from a mentor’s reflective practices. As an experienced classroom teacher, depending on your number of years in the classroom, you are in the “professional” or the “expert” phase of your career. You have self-confidence and you are a reflective practitioner. You thrive on the deeper understanding of teacher practices and continue to gain greater competence as you continuously examine teaching styles and strategies.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE JOURNEY OF THE PRESERVICE TEACHER?

The preservice teacher that you are mentoring is a member of a cohort. That means that she or he is a member of a group of 20 - 25 students who follow the Professional Development Sequence (PDS) of courses during the last two to three semesters of the professional program. They take classes together, they may be placed in schools together, and they are becoming critical thinkers. All of this, while learning what it means to be reflective practitioners who collaborate, create, and even celebrate together.

Many individuals support the cohort students. The Cohort Coordinator oversees their Professional Development Sequence and gets to know them as he or she teaches them, places them in a campus setting, and learns about their strengths and challenges throughout the PDS. The Cohort Coordinator is also the UT faculty member with whom you connect as placements are made and through informal visits and meetings. The Cohort Coordinator also keeps track of the preservice teacher’s progress of his or her cohort members through the work of the University Facilitator (UF) who more closely supervises the interns and apprentice teachers in their placements.

The University Facilitator observes and provides feedback to the preservice teacher frequently during the semester. The University Facilitator also meets with the classroom teacher as they share insights and formal observations. At times, they talk informally, but at least once in the semester they meet to formally share their formative and/or summative evaluations of the preservice (PS) teacher.

The relationship between the cohort coordinator, the university facilitator, and the classroom teacher contributes not only to the quality of the placement, but also to your continued growth as a mentor and reflective practitioner.

Typically, the preservice teacher makes the strongest connection to the classroom teacher. These mentors are the ones who are most significant in the learning process. Classroom teachers are there on a daily basis as development emerges. Classroom teachers are the ones who are available for instant feedback and formative and summative evaluations, as the preservice teacher grows through the novice phase. The preservice teacher will look to the cooperating teacher as s/he benefits from that steady dose of daily reflective practice.

In addition, the preservice teacher will observe and interact with the cooperating teacher, and look for good ideas such as teaching strategies, transition cues, differentiation of student learning, planning and organization, and student assessment opportunities. The University Facilitator certainly appreciates that strong connection and works to build upon that foundation with further mentoring.

WHAT IS MY ROLE AS A MENTOR?

A mentor's role is one who wears many hats: coach, cheerleader, good listener, critical friend, assessor, evaluator, **role model**, and supervisor. You are an educational partner and your role is collegial and even emotional. Not too different than your average day as a classroom teacher or 'go-to' colleague, right?



Gaining clarity on these roles, and the impact they have on preservice teacher development, is an area for you to reflect on during your time with your preservice

teacher. Sometimes, when a mentor recognizes his or her role in educational terms, only then is significant growth fostered. However, it is up to you how you engage your preservice teacher with your professional and caring disposition as a reflective practitioner with their best interests in mind. Your best interest is student learning and, ultimately, that is our goal in placing a novice teacher in a carefully selected classroom, i.e., our student learning about how students learn.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MENTOR?

A novice teacher may realize that learning to teach is a complex, bewildering, and sometimes even a painful task. Simultaneously, the mentor finds out that the new-found teammates are *each* developing a new knowledge base, altering their level of cognition, and refining a new set of interpersonal skills.

Of course, a mentor is not just there to see what happens. You have accepted the responsibility of helping a novice teacher by modeling, guiding, observing, interpreting, explaining, and inquiring in such a way that will determine their subsequent actions, their contentment, their emotional well-being, and their performance. You are developing a professional partnership.

This mentor role is a perfect place to share, reflect, and learn together. The mentor's combined teaching experience and professional growth makes the field placement the prime place for a novice to learn and grow. This professional partnering is potentially a very satisfying time in a mentor's career.

HOW DOES A COOPERATING TEACHER DEVELOP A COLLABORATIVE AND CO-TEACHING RELATIONSHIP?

By being aware of and balancing the many roles of a highly effective mentor, you might consider this field placement as an opportunity for a team-teaching or a co-teaching approach. Many mentors have acknowledged that they themselves have learned from the preservice teachers who are inspired professionally as they exit their coursework and enter the "profession" more and more. They are excited to finally be in the classroom much more than just in their course work with us. By the time they enter this final portion of their professional development sequence of courses, they feel both anxious and invigorated. It's a perfect time to put them to work as a member of the team!

Being a highly effective mentor means more teaching time for the preservice teachers with little disruption to the teaching and learning process for the students. When teaching duties are shared, as opposed to staggered, as when taking turns, the cooperating teacher can provide immediate interventions for the novice teacher. Novices have expressed relief rather than feeling undermined when the students see the preservice teacher and the cooperating teacher as a team during the learning phase of the placement. Facilitating the professional growth of a preservice teacher who is a part of the "team," is an exciting learning model.

With a highly effective mentor, novice teachers gain significantly when the professional partnership or teaming includes these key elements in the classroom:

- ↻ CT provides a strong opportunity for the novice teacher to learn to collaborate
- ↻ CT arranges for frequent opportunities to partner in teaching, lesson planning, reflection, and organization.
- ↻ CT models best practices, scaffolds, and supports
- ↻ CT provides invaluable guidance in classroom management, parent conferences, and differentiation

(Nielson, et al., 2006)

WHAT ARE SOME SUCCESSFUL SUPERVISION STRATEGIES THAT FACILITATE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH?

Teaming does not just mean standing up in the front together to present a lesson. What are some other ways a mentor might “team” with the preservice teacher?

When the mentor works to maintain the dignity and respect of all involved in the teaching and learning process, she or he will promote positive learning for the “novice” teacher, as well as for the students involved in the instructional activity.

Consider one of the following situations unfolding as the novice teacher moves forward in his or her lesson:

- ↻ The sequence of the lesson gets off track.
- ↻ The overhead, the Elmo, the projector is malfunctioning.
- ↻ A student asks an unexpected question.
- ↻ The apprentice teacher makes an incorrect statement.
- ↻ Students are confused with the content or the instructions.
- ↻ A student becomes disruptive.

These are times when useful and practical supervisory strategies would be handy. These are also times when a cooperating teacher’s immediate adjustment, or lack of, may make or break the lesson or the novice’s emerging confidence.

The above scenarios are certainly normal during the novice learning process. Teaching takes practice; there are challenges to overcome, and mistakes to be made. How you choose to intervene should be recognized and acknowledged as effective supervisory responses to the comfortable professional partnering you have created.

One model of supervisory techniques (Post, 2007) is called “*The Cooperating Teacher I’s*”. Each of the interventions begins with the letter “I.” How handy, right?

Here are some I's that have never worked and those that highly effective mentors would not even consider:

- ⊗ Interfere
- ⊗ Interrogate
- ⊗ Impeach
- ⊗ Impugn
- ⊗ Impede
- ⊗ Insult

But, below is a list of I's that are highly effective intervention strategies that will be helpful choices, especially as the preservice teacher attempts the early lessons. As an experienced teacher, you have the advantage of not having to think too long on what to do and how to handle dilemmas such as those above. Anxiety does not prevail because *you* have handled situations like these numerous times in your own daily interactions with children. However, a novice teacher, in order to make a good decision, would need to take time to reflect; time, at the moment, is not what he or she has.

The mentor may be standing nearby, you may be at your desk, you may be conferencing with students during work time, you may actually be moving about the room; all would be considered an aspect of co-teaching as your eyes and ears (at least one, anyway) would be on the teaching and learning taking place.

What you will want to consider is choosing the least intrusive response depending on the situation at hand. It is likely that you will, by nature of being a highly effective mentor, be very prepared to use the following strategies without reading about them here. Perhaps, however, you have not had a reason to label these strategies and acknowledge them as effective supervisory techniques.

Each "I" (except ignore) provides immediate adjustment as you attempt to quickly assist the novice with a teaching dilemma while the lesson moves forward:

- ↪ Ignore – (passive, but often appropriate) not forgetting, just not necessary to the lesson to intervene in order to not threaten the novice teacher's confidence or growing authority. The message is sent that the preservice teacher is in charge and everything will work out fine. You will come back to it later.
- ↪ Intervene – not to interfere, but to take quick action that may not even be noticed by the preservice teacher and will not undermine his or her authority in the eyes of the students.
- ↪ Interject – to "jump in" with a quick voice-over with a comment or a word usually in the same tone as the novice in order to jump into and out of the flow of teaching, learning, or authority.

- ↪ Interact – whispers, notes, body language, signals initiated by either the CT or the AT; sometimes a brief redirect, reminder, or question allowing the PT to determine how to best proceed.
- ↪ Interrupt – when something pressing must be communicated immediately, highly visible and audible; safety issue, procedure reminder, time concern, a change.
- ↪ Intercept – the CT decides to take over the lesson and bring it to closure herself; may or may not be preplanned; class is out of control, PT is too nervous or ill, model an alternative teaching method in order to regain lesson meaning.

(Post, 2007)

Although numerous supervision and intervention models exist, in this “I” model each of these practical approaches is highly effective and relatively painless, especially when the mentoring is already perceived as a team approach or a partnership in student learning. Recognizing that you could actually use just these six intervention strategies during an instructional activity allows you to label and then comment on your action or intervention in a follow-up reflective conversation – informal or formal.

At the beginning of the semester, or early in the learning process, each of these interventions may be used multiple times in one lesson. As the novice becomes more experienced and more confident, and even less emotionally concerned, intervention becomes less persistent, less necessary, and less frequent.

- ↪ Take a look back at the scenarios to consider which “I” would be most practical and helpful in the moment.

You may already have used these adjustments in other situations, but you may not have recognized or acknowledged this as a supervisory skill. The reflective post-conference, either an informal follow-up conversation or a planned meeting, is the critical point in time for addressing the use of any of the interventions.

WHAT ARE SOME ADDITIONAL SUPERVISION TIPS?

1. Do not assume that the novice teacher can articulate what his or her needs are. Asking “what can I do for you today” is not the best approach to mentoring.
 - ↪ Instead, through observation and reflective conversations, plan to model, list, or share strategies that may work for the upcoming lesson, transition, or activity. For example, let your preservice teacher know where and how he or she may find the necessary resources or materials needed. They may benefit from tips on how to be best organized or prepared before the students walk in. They may not

realize that the sequence of a particular math lesson is most important today. They may struggle with transitions, so a reminder of a phrase or cue that works may help. Early in the field experience, you might point out what to observe or make notes on to aid the novice in being ready for that part of the day or lesson in the future.

2. Do not make a habit of missed opportunities by simply commenting on discipline or management.
 - ↗ Instead, for example, take the lead on sharing teaching strategies or differentiation ideas. Student learning is still the ultimate goal, so offering ideas on how to find out what students do or do not understand or quick assessment strategies may be helpful. Perhaps suggest or model different student grouping configurations along with explanations regarding the value of these varied learning opportunities for students.

3. Do not dance around the issues.
 - ↗ Instead, guidance through planned observations and follow-up reflective conferences will chart the course for the most efficient learning for the novice teacher. Plan to follow a path of successful sequential reflective conferences. Informal comments and conversations will naturally occur throughout the field experience, but be sure to plan for formal written observations and follow-up reflective conversations for the most effective mentoring to take place.

4. Do not throw your preservice teacher into the teaching role without the valuable insights and professional expertise that you have.
 - ↗ Instead, plan to model, team, brainstorm, discuss, intervene, support. Gather formative data. Provide honest and direct feedback. Maintain a trusting relationship.

(Carver & Katz, 2004)

WHAT ARE SOME FOCUSED OBSERVATION STRATEGIES TO PLAN FOR A PRESERVICE TEACHER TO OBSERVE THE CT TEACHING A LESSON?

Modeling teacher behavior through planned observations:

From the first day of the field experience, the novice teacher should be involved in planned observations of the cooperating teacher during instructional time. Here are some suggestions to structure these focused observations (student observing mentor).

- ↗ Prior to the lesson, discuss particular teaching behaviors that occur during a lesson and choose one for the intern/apprentice teacher to observe:

- Communicating learning expectations to the students
 - Checking for understanding
 - Moving around the classroom
 - Using technology to aid in teaching
 - Calling on students/wait-time/getting to the answer
 - Varying the cognitive level of questions asked
 - Redirecting or stopping inappropriate behavior that may occur during the lesson
 - Modifying instruction to adjust to different learning styles and abilities
 - Maintaining appropriate pacing of the lesson
 - Opening, making connections, and closing the lesson
- ↗ Ask him or her to take notes during the lesson and write down questions about what is observed (Appendix 2).
 - ↗ Discuss and debrief the lesson later the same day.
 - ↗ Ask the novice teacher to keep these observations for future reference.

WHAT ARE SOME OBSERVATION STRATEGIES FOR THE MENTOR TO USE WHEN OBSERVING A PRE-SERVICE TEACHER IN ACTION?

Each semester, new mentors ask about the best or most effective type of written observation notes. There are several specific observation strategies in addition to the most common “record what you observe.”

Observation Strategies for General Data Gathering:

- ↗ Fold a sheet of paper in half vertically and unfold. On the left, record as many observations, interactions, phrases, notes about individual students, and the like for a specified amount of time, typically the duration of a lesson. On the right, make a comment about each observation you record. A subjective thought, a good idea, a correction, something to watch for, etc. This observation guides the follow-up reflective conference (Appendix 3).
- ↗ Script teacher words and student words along with notes about the environment, individual students, lesson flow, etc. Note positives and give suggestions or ideas for challenges. Share these notes in a follow-up meeting (Appendix 4).
- ↗ Divide a paper into 4 squares and note observations into pre-labeled categories such as: positive comments, improvement needed, management strategies, movement around the room, student needs, lesson plan guidance, assessment noted, etc. This is good for a quick check and perhaps a less formal follow-up (Appendix 5).

Observation Strategies for Specific Data Gathering:

Specific observation techniques may be used when the mentor or the preservice teacher note a need for objective data or question certain behaviors or effectiveness (Correia & McHenry, 2002).

- ↗ Focus on Words – recording exactly what you hear the teacher say for a *focused need*, e.g., transitions, sequence, management, lesson flow (use script observation form)
- ↗ Tracking Time – keeping track of time during the lesson/time management (use vertical fold or script form)
- ↗ Classroom Sketch – sketch or diagram a map of the classroom for reasons of organization, movement of teacher, safety of students, disruptive activity (sketch basic classroom arrangement and make notes directly on map)
- ↗ Strategy Survey – reviewing variety and/or effectiveness of teaching strategies, grouping of students, assessment methods (make list or checklist)
- ↗ Sights and Sounds – videotape/audiotape for preservice teacher and/or student behavior data
- ↗ Collections – reviewing data and artifacts together such as student journal entries, assessments, lesson plans, photographs, completed work, unit plan progress

HOW SHOULD I PREPARE FOR AND CONDUCT A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE FORMAL OBSERVATION?

Before a planned observation of your preservice teacher:

Depending on the specific circumstances and time in the field experience, review the lesson plan for feedback purposes and/or plan to:

- Discuss together the goals of the lesson to be observed.
- Discuss the success indicators of the lesson. Ask: “How will you know if the students are on task?” or “How will you know if they have learned?” (see more sample questions below)
- Discuss the materials and the preparation needed for the lesson.
- Discuss approaches, strategies, and decisions that may need to be made during the lesson.
- Explain the methods of data collection you will use for the observation. Some lessons involve anecdotal writing; others may involve timing, tallying, or coding.

During an observation:

- Focus on the observation goals that were agreed upon before the lesson.

- Write down questions, comments, and suggestions for later discussion.
- Look for positives, as well as suggestions for improvement.
- Collect data on both teacher behavior and student behavior that may prove useful to your apprentice teacher.
- Focus on behaviors that the preservice teacher can alter or change. Frustration is only increased when a preservice teacher is reminded of shortcomings over which she or he has no control.

Post-observation conference:

- Pick an appropriate time and place for your discussion. Talk to the preservice teacher as soon as possible after the observation of the lesson – remember that timing is important.
- In order to emphasize the feelings of collegiality, be seated in chairs that are side-by-side – not across from one another.
- Talk in private.
- Begin by asking the preservice teacher how she or he felt about the lesson. If needed, encourage him/her to discuss some of the success indicators of the lesson. Ask:
 - “How could you tell that the students were engaged?”
 - “How could you tell that they were successful during guided practice?” (see more samples below)
- If your preservice teacher is unsure of how to respond when you ask these questions, begin by pointing out a few positives that you observed.
- Share the data you collected during the observation. Together, summarize and reflect on impressions and assessments of the lesson.
- Check for clarity of communication.
- Give your preservice teacher an opportunity to ask questions s/he may have. Feedback is most useful when the receiver formulates a question that the observer can answer.
- End on a positive note.
 - Concentrate on what has been learned from this lesson and how it can be effectively used next time, i.e., goal-setting.
 - If the lesson did not go as planned, remind the novice teacher that tomorrow is a new day and a new opportunity and that s/he is here to learn.

WHAT IS REFLECTIVE CONFERENCING, WHY IS IT IMPORTANT, AND HOW IS IT BEST ACCOMPLISHED?

Reflective thinking begins with a question or a dilemma. Reflective practitioners will:

- ↻ Gather information
- ↻ Study a problem

- ↗ Gain new knowledge
- ↗ Make a sound decision
- ↗ Bring about new learning

Intentional teaching is deliberate and involves critical thinking. By connecting practical classroom applications to reflective thinking practices, all levels of teachers are able to not only understand their own practice, but are also able to decode, acknowledge, and communicate their decisions, strategies, and understanding of their practice. Making informed decisions and maintaining highly effective teaching and learning strategies is necessary to a consistently successful classroom.

A direct correlation exists between the level of questioning, the structure of the questions, and the production of professional, reflective thought. Consider the following as you engage in planning for reflective conferences as you guide and support the novice teacher:

- ↗ In the same way we plan for higher level cognitive thinking for our students, we might ask preservice teachers questions at varying levels of critical thinking during the planning conference prior to observing a lesson (mentor observing preservice teacher) and during the post-conference for reflective thinking and evaluating.
- ↗ The questions are purposefully focused, composed, and posed to deliberately engage the intellectual functions of teaching during reflective conferencing, and ultimately reflective thinking, as the novice teacher grows professionally and moves through the life cycle of teaching.

WHAT ARE SOME REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS I CAN USE WHEN CONFERENCING WITH MY PRESERVICE TEACHER?

The purpose of the following list is to show how skilled mentors intentionally pose questions. Their intent is to engage, mediate, and thereby enhance the cognitive functions of teaching.

Planning Conference – The Mentor might ask:

- ❖ “What is your lesson going to be about?” (describe)
- ❖ “As you see the lesson unfolding, what will students be doing?” (translate)
- ❖ “As you envision this lesson, what do you see yourself doing to produce expected outcomes?” (predict)
- ❖ “What will you be doing first? Next? Last? How will you close the lesson?” (sequence)

- ❖ “As you envision the opening of the lesson, how long do you anticipate that will take?” (estimate)
- ❖ “What will you see students doing or hear them saying that will indicate to you that your lesson is successful?” (operationalize criteria)
- ❖ “What will you look for in students’ reactions to know if your directions are understood?” (metacognition)
- ❖ “What will you want me to look for and give you feedback about while I am watching this lesson?” (describe)

Post-Conference or Reflective Conference – The Mentor Teacher might ask:

- ❖ “As you reflect back on the lesson, how do you feel it went?” (assess)
- ❖ “What did you see students doing (or hear them saying) that made you feel that way?” (recall)
- ❖ “What do you recall about your own behavior during the lesson?” (recall)
- ❖ “How did what you observed in student behavior compare with what you planned?” (compare)
- ❖ “How did what you planned compare with what you did?” (compare)
- ❖ “What were you thinking when you decided to change the design of the lesson?” (metacognition)
- ❖ “What hunches do you have to explain why some students performed as you had hoped while others did not?” (analyze)
- ❖ “What did you do (or not do) to produce the results you wanted?” (cause-effect)
- ❖ “As you reflect on this discussion, what big ideas or insights are you discovering?” (synthesize)
- ❖ “As you plan future lessons, what ideas have you developed that might be carried forward to the next lesson or other lessons?” (self-prescription)
- ❖ “As you think back over our conversation, what has this coaching session done for you? What is it that I did (or did not) do? What assisted you? What could I do differently in future mentoring sessions?” (evaluate)

(Costa & Garmston, 1994)

Reflective thinking is a cornerstone to successful teaching. These above questions are only examples and are not meant to be prescriptive or complete.

HOW CAN I FACILITATE SUCCESSFUL REFLECTIVE THINKING?

Studies show that using a reflective model of conferencing assists preservice teachers in engaging in deeper understanding of their practice by allowing them to explain what has happened during the lesson or instructional activity (Janssen, 2009). As mentors, we should realize that, typically, preservice teachers are still in the early stages of the reflective thinking process.

In order to best facilitate the reflective model of conferencing, try beginning the reflective process with a situation in which the preservice teacher has experienced success. Successful experiences might include:

- ❖ The students gathered and engaged appropriately at the start of the lesson. How did this happen?
- ❖ When the teacher and students easily handled the instructional materials during the lesson, what did you do that allowed this?
- ❖ I observed the students in tune with the lesson objectives during the planned group work. What did you do that made it run so smoothly?
- ❖ When the students completed the activity in the allotted time and were able to report back their findings, what was in your plan that prepared them for this success?

As the preservice teacher begins to feel comfortable with the reflective thinking model, move forward in the same or future conferences using this strategy for the problem areas of the lesson. As you become more comfortable yourself, the beginning teacher will begin to appreciate thinking reflectively about what happened during the lesson.

Just as we know to begin any conference with the “positives,” consider moving through deeper reflective thinking about teaching in the same way.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK?

Positive, supportive communication skills are a prerequisite not only for a professional partnership, but also for effective feedback promoting essential professional growth for the novice teacher. Quality feedback should be:

- ↻ both oral and written
- ↻ frequent

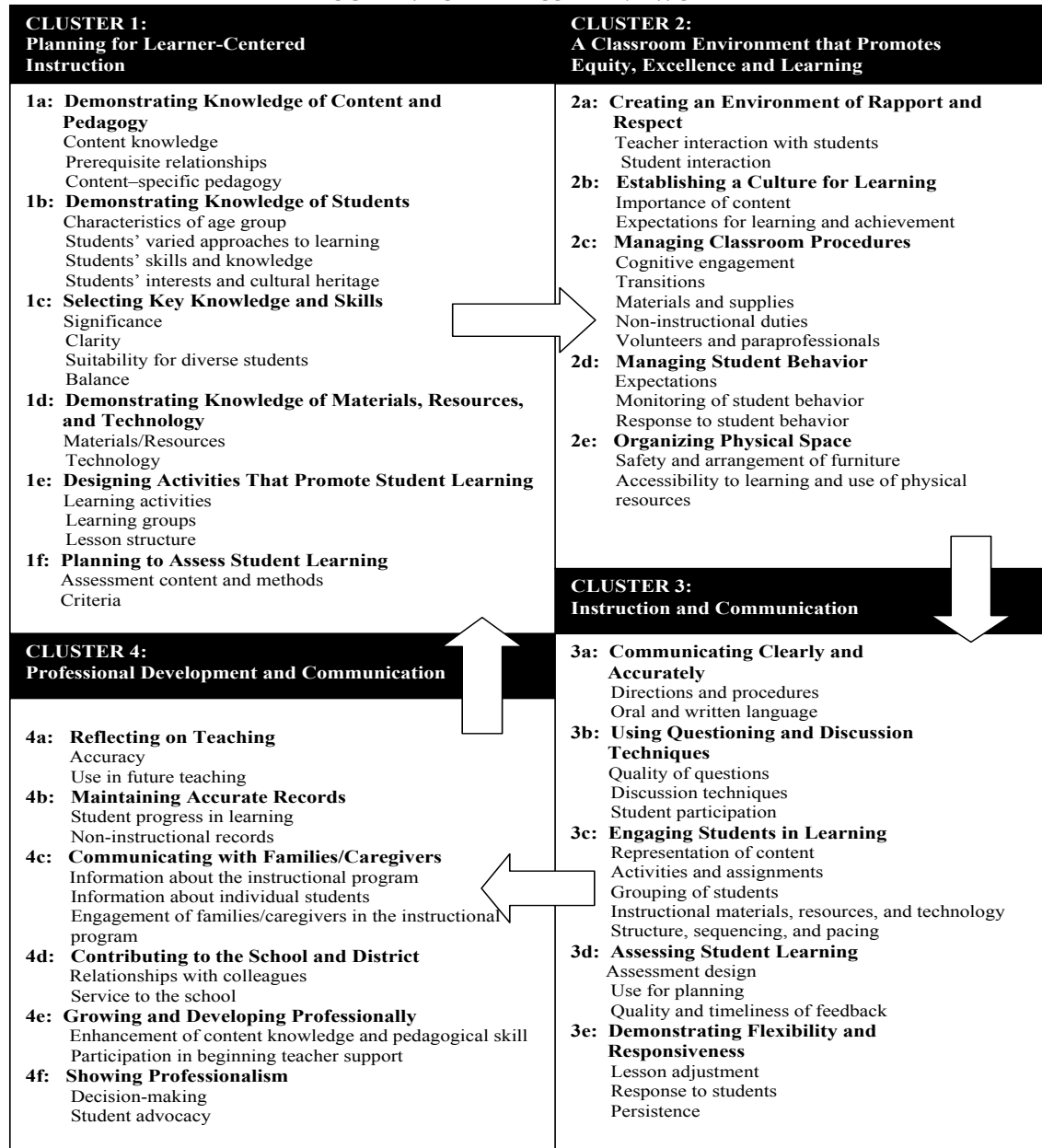
- ↻ relevant
- ↻ objective
- ↻ promoting reflection and goal-setting
- ↻ balanced positive and negative
- ↻ balanced on lesson delivery and student learning

The University Facilitator will schedule frequent observations and conferences with the apprentice teacher and the cooperating teacher's ongoing and timely informal and formal feedback will be both corrective and encouraging on the spot, as well as during more formal planned conversations. The intern or student teacher will consistently count on the trusted mentor for support, guidance, and honesty during what may be the most valuable learning experience of the PDS.

THANK YOU!

We could not do our jobs here in the College of Education without your caring and intentional guidance of our most precious elementary education preservice teachers. Mentors are the ones who provide the connections for the students between theory and practice. Successful, reflective practice of informed teaching is our goal. We appreciate you and all of the time and effort you put into what you so successfully do each day.

OUTLINE OF TxBESS FRAMEWORK



Appendix 2

Preservice Teacher Focused Observation Form

Preservice Teacher Name _____ Date _____

Subject or Lesson Title _____

Cooperating Teacher and Grade Level _____

1. How does your CT transition or gather the students and/or gain attention to begin the lesson?

2. How does the CT prepare or organize the necessary materials/supplies/technology?

3. What does the CT say or do to begin the lesson? (state objective? connect to prior learning? have students get materials out? review?)

4. What is the sequence or the procedures of the lesson? (use back if necessary)

5. What are some examples of questions that the CT uses to engage or check for understanding?

6. How does the CT manage specific behaviors/groupings of students/transitions?

7. Did you notice differentiation of instruction and any forms of assessment?

8. What do you want to remember in order to teach this lesson or subject?

9. What questions do you have? (use back)

Four Square Observation Form

Preservice Teacher _____
 Cooperating Teacher/Grade _____
 Lesson or Subject _____
 Date _____ Time _____

For a quick or informal observation. Personalize your headings!

<p><u>Activity/Lesson/Objective</u></p>	<p><u>Way to Go!</u></p> <p>☺</p> <p>☺</p> <p>☺</p>
<p><u>Students to Note</u></p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p><u>Something to Try Next Time</u></p> <p>★</p> <p>★</p> <p>★</p>

Strategy Survey Observation Form – Samples

List Strategies Observed (see sample form). Check or tally frequency.
Choose one type based on desired focus:

- Instructional Strategies
- Grouping for Learning Strategies
- Assessment Strategies
- Management Strategies
- Others?

Preservice Teacher _____
Cooperating Teacher _____

Instructional Grouping Assessment Management Other _____

Lesson: Read Aloud Date: 10/5/08 – 10/9/08

STRATEGY	Frequency	Comments
Higher Level Questioning	x x x x x x x x x	great use of Bloom’s
Cultural Connections	x x x	text to student, student responses
Differentiated Instruction		how to get to this?
Graphic Organizers	x	would be helpful to have some prepared

Preservice Teacher _____
Cooperating Teacher _____

Instructional Grouping Assessment Management Other _____

Lesson: Math Date: 10/21/08 – 10/25/08

STRATEGY	Frequency	Comments
Checking for Understanding	/ / / / / / / / / / / / / /	Great job checking before moving on
Informal Practice	/ / / / /	Be sure to give lots of practice time
Thumbs up/Thumbs down	/ / / / / / /	Nice informal and informative
Collecting HW and checking		Need to really check HW/timely
Recording on clipboard	/ /	Try some more of this!
Test review	/	Very creative and well-prepared

Strategy Survey Observation Forms – Blank

Preservice Teacher _____

Cooperating Teacher _____

Circle One:

Instructional Grouping Assessment Management Other _____

Lesson:

Date(s):

Strategy Observed	Frequency	Comments

Preservice Teacher _____

Cooperating Teacher _____

Circle One:

Instructional Grouping Assessment Management Other _____

Lesson:

Date(s):

Strategy Observed	Frequency	Comments

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