

# The Acorn

A Newsletter for CSB/SJU Cooperating Teachers

**Volume 6, no. 2--Friday, September 15, 2023**



## **Growing, Nurturing, and Supporting CSB/SJU Student Teachers**

*The Acorn* is a newsletter for the cooperating teachers working with student teachers from the College of St. Benedict/St. John's University. This publication is intended to help our cooperating teachers understand their roles and responsibilities as well as provide them with current research and best practice in working with student teachers. Additional information helpful to mentorship, pedagogy, and current issues in education is often included.

## **A Message from the Director of Student Teaching**

We're just a few weeks into student teaching, and good things are happening. Our student teachers are reporting positive engagement with students and teachers, and they are feeling ready to take on responsibility for lessons, small groups, and other classroom activities.

This is an exciting start to their professional journey through student teaching, and it is framing their experience. Thank you, cooperating teachers, for including them in the processes to start the year!



As we do in our own classrooms, we anticipate potential shifts. That is the intention of this message. The "honeymoon period" will soon wear off and the demands of edTPA, taking on more classroom responsibilities, and balancing college and career life will soon hit. The potential incongruity between classroom and field experiences with current classroom situations may create some dissonance. How they saw themselves as capable leaving the sheltered nature of CSB+SJU may be changing and creating feelings of inadequacy, powerlessness, vulnerability, or fear. It is in these moments when it is important to take TIME TOGETHER for conversation and to lead with a LISTENING ear.

As members of a Benedictine community, we at CSB+SJU are reminded to "Listen with the ear of our heart." Coming from a place where respect and value for persons, dignity of work, community and

justice are central to our being, we know that listening is embedded in all of these. Our student teachers will experience bumps and sometimes feel unimportant or unheard; we aim to elevate and give voice to everyone so that they can personally and professionally develop agency and efficacy. This work cannot be done alone. It requires mentorship—caring, supportive people who engage in the building of persons.

This idea of listening is obviously not new. In 1989, Stephen Covey published *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* in which he highlighted the idea to “Seek first to understand, then to be understood” (p. 239). Covey encouraged “empathetic listening” (p. 240) and giving “psychological air” (p. 241) to others in the listening process; essentially, he was telling us to stop our inner monologue of fixing or responding in order to hear the message and value the person. Covey reminded readers to pause and give time for others to be heard. The message of giving time and voice is clear here!

Again, we are reminded of the importance of listening in Cornelius Minor’s *We Got This*. In our “quest to be who our students need us to be,” Minor posits that the most radical of all teacher behaviors is “authentic listening and the actions that result from it” (2019, p. 15). Both our students and our student teachers ask for our time and energy, and this can be exhausting! We are working hard to do all the things that our schools, students’ families, and educational systems require of us, and it seems there is no time to pause. However, in order to meet needs, build relationships, and improve teaching and learning, we need to take time in our communities and with individuals to really listen. Minor sees this as our superpower (p. 11)! Listening creates opportunities for mentors to affect change by beginning with what is most essential—the deep humanity and intention of a person.

Throughout the student teaching experience, I encourage you to take REGULAR TIME to LISTEN. Anticipating that there will be times when conversations about mistakes, improvements, or feelings of fear, vulnerability, or inadequacy come into play, having routines for conversation can ease the stress and anxiety of these moments.

#### References:

Covey, S. (1989). *The 7 habits of highly effective people: Powerful lessons in personal change*. Simon & Shuster.

Minor, C. (2019). *We got this. Equity, access, and the quest to be who our students need us to be*. Heinemann.

## Coaching Adult Learners and Mentoring Student Teachers Requirements

Effective July 1, 2022, all individuals who serve in the capacity of cooperating teacher or university supervisor for student teachers are required to complete training on coaching strategies for adult learners. To meet this PELSB and State requirement, CSB/SJU provides three options for cooperating teachers and university supervisors:

1. For members of Education Minnesota, complete the training through their professional development platform: <https://meaonline.educationminnesota.org/catalog/courses/1333521>
2. For members of the CSB/SJU student teaching community, complete the training with us using this link: [Coaching Adult Learners training](#)
3. For individuals who have completed training with another placing institution, provide evidence in the form of a CEU certificate or letter from the granting institution to the CSB/SJU Director of Student Teaching via email at [jmeagher001@csbsju.edu](mailto:jmeagher001@csbsju.edu)

This training is required once every five years. A statewide system of reporting completion is in process to ensure all cooperating teachers and university supervisors who serve the state's student teachers have met this requirement. CSB/SJU will be reporting our completers to that entity each semester.

Thank you for your time and attention to this responsibility. The information you will glean from these trainings should be valuable to your role.

## **Weeks Three and Four with Student Teachers**

### **For Candidates in 12- or 16-week placements:**

#### **Week 3 with Students:**

- Work with the student teacher in lesson planning (reviewing plans daily) and management design.
- Co-teach lessons throughout the day.
- Conduct [ONE FORMAL observation](#) and provide actionable feedback.
- Set goals for addressing improvement areas.
- Elementary: Allow the student teacher to solo teach 30-40 minutes per day and lead morning meetings/classroom routines adding time as the student teacher is ready.

#### **Week 4 with Students:**

- Model teaching, learning, and assessment for the student teacher
- Conduct informal observations and provide actionable feedback
- Co-teach in classes/subjects the student teacher is not leading
- Elementary: Allow the student teacher to fully teach in one subject, minimum

### **For Candidates in 8-week placements:**

#### **Week 3 with Students:**

- Work with the student teacher in planning, preparation of lessons and materials, monitoring student work.
- Review the student teacher's lesson plans
- Co-teach in subjects/classes the student teacher isn't leading
- Conduct [ONE FORMAL observation](#) with actionable feedback
- Elementary: Allow the student teacher to solo teach 30-40 minutes per day, adding more time as the student teacher is ready.
- Secondary: Allow the student teacher to teach at least one section of a course, building to two sections by the end of the week

#### **Week 4 with Students:**

- Model teaching, learning, and assessment for the student teacher
- Conduct informal observations and provide actionable feedback
- Co-teach in classes/subjects the student teacher is not leading
- Review the student teacher's goals and performance, setting new goals for the remainder of the placement
- Elementary: Allow the student teacher to teach building to half of the day

- Secondary: Allow the student teacher to teach up to two classes less than a full-time load, if the student teacher is prepared to do so

## Quick Links

[CSB/SJU Student Teaching Handbook](#)

[Student Teaching Observations 2023-2024](#)

This observation/evaluation form should be used to complete observations throughout the placement. Six formal observations of the student teacher are required within the span of student teaching. We ask that you complete 6 for a 16-week placement, 5 in a 12-week placement, 3 in an 8-week placement, and 2 in a 5-week placement. The entire form does not need to be completed for each observation; however, by the end of the placement, each part should be addressed.

Additional Forms:

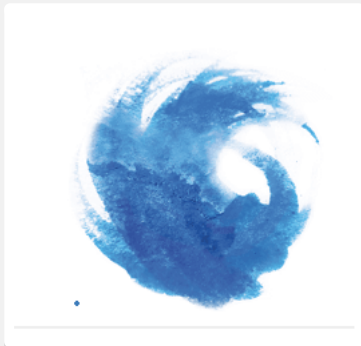
[Cooperating Teacher Information](#) (if not completed in the past three years)

[Feedback](#) (week 2 and as needed after)

[Cooperating Teacher's Final Evaluation of Student Teacher](#)

[Cooperating Teacher's Dispositional Evaluation of Student Teacher](#)

## Great Resources for Teachers and Transformational Coaches



### Coaching Tools

Elena Aguilar and the Bright Morning team offer several resources to assist in coaching conversations and supporting others in their journeys toward transformation. Check them out [here](#).



### Listening is a Teacher's Most Powerful Tool

In this article, Beth Pandolpho shares how a shift in how she listens transformed her teaching. Check it out [here](#).



### What you Discover when You Really Listen

In this TEDTalk, Hrishikesh Hirway explores what you discover when you really listen. Check it out [here](#).

COLLEGE OF  
Saint Benedict



Saint John's  
UNIVERSITY

## CSB/SJU Education Department


Jennifer L. Meagher, EdD.


Director of Elementary and Secondary Student Teaching


Terri Rodriguez, PhD.

Chair

 37 College Avenue South, St Jo...

 [jmeagher001@csbsju.edu](mailto:jmeagher001@csbsju.edu)

 320-363-5709

 [csbsju.edu/education](https://csbsju.edu/education)