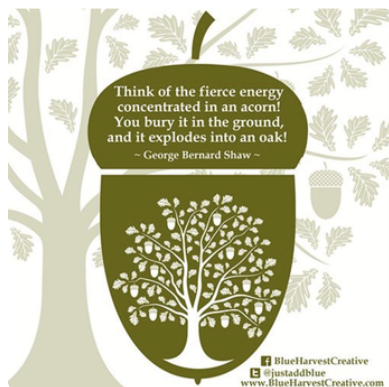


The Acorn

A Newsletter for CSB+SJU Cooperating Teachers

Volume 6, no. 9--Friday, January 12, 2024

Weeks 1-2 of Spring 2023 Student Teaching



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

Thank you for hosting a student teacher from the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University! We appreciate your time and mentorship of our teacher candidates as they near the end of their journey to become professional educators.



In the past semester, I have been fortunate to get to know our Spring 2024 student teachers and have been struck by their engagement and enthusiasm. They are excited to enter classrooms and get going with the work they have been studying and training to do. At the same time, they may be anxious or hesitant as they know they are entering into a school year that already has established systems, routines, and classroom practices that are unfamiliar to them. It is with that frame of unfamiliarity that I write this message.

With eagerness and some trepidation, student teachers enter the classrooms of their host teachers. They come with hopes and goals; they often want to dive in and take on the full experience right away. In these early days of student teaching, it is important that we, as cooperating teachers, hold tight to two attributes—active listening and patience.

As a Benedictine institution, we are guided by the *Rule of Benedict* which begins with listening: “Listen...incline the ear of your heart.” We are encouraged to pause our own intentions and approach our work and engagement with others aligned to our hearts, to the compassion and empathy needed when we are in community with one another and working toward similar purposes. As we listen, we suspend our internal monologue to “hear” with our ears, eyes, and hearts what others are expressing. Our student teachers may stumble, be unclear with what they are trying to express, or have challenges. When this happens, having created a culture built on what Yolanda Seeley-Ruiz calls “critical love”—a deep ethical commitment to caring for the communities we serve—a dialogue centered on heart-listening can ease the conversation.

The interesting conundrum of the spring student teaching situation—where existing classroom and school relationships and routines collide with unfamiliar, enthusiastic newcomers—requires a great deal of patience for both cooperating and student teachers. Both people need to recognize that the student teacher is entering a place where there is already a deep knowledge of the curriculum, students, structures, and the community; that schools are highly nuanced places, and that each school and classroom is highly contextualized (Mosley Wetzel, Hoffman & Maloch, p. 19). These things take a long time to learn and understand. As cooperating teachers, we sometimes make assumptions that student teachers know things that they don’t—how to use various equipment, how to communicate with parents, how to deal with difficult student situations. As student teachers, we sometimes pretend to know more than we do because we don’t want to be vulnerable. The collision of “should” know and “does” know can be frustrating. Likewise, the disparity between “want to do” and “ready to do” in terms of taking on classroom responsibilities feel stunting to a student teacher. Entering this time with patience is necessary. To be patient and allow the process to unfold. To be patient and allow the student teacher to muddle through part of a lesson. To be patient in realizing that all student teaching experiences are decidedly different. To be patient in having necessary conversations. Although Benedict did not write a chapter specifically on patience in his Rule, patience is smattered through his teachings, and we are reminded that patience is a choice.

With an ear and eye toward listening and patience, there are a few recommended things to know and do early in the placement:

- *Try to follow the CSB+SJU timelines—“gradually immerse student teachers into the teaching process...with support and empathy” (Meyer Schweinberg, p. 8).
- *Schedule time to regularly engage in conversations about school, teaching, and providing feedback
- *“Eliminate the evaluative from your discourse patterns” (Mosley Wetzel, Hoffman & Maloch, p. 54)
- *Help student teachers engage in a reflective practice with a focus on improvement and processes (p. 55)
- *Model for your student teacher the listening and patience necessary to do this valuable work.

References:

- Meyer Schweinberg, C. (2015). *Learning to teach: Responsibilities of student teachers and cooperating teachers*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Mosley Wetzel, M., Hoffman, J.V & Maloch, B. (2017). *Mentoring preservice teachers through practice: A Framework for coaching with care*. Taylor & Francis.

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.learnupon.com/users/sign_in?next=%2Fdashboard
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

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.

The First Two Weeks for Student Teachers

Week 1 with Students:

- Help the student teacher get to know your students, the teachers, and the school
- Review the Orientation Guidelines/Checklist
- Assist the student teacher in setting up observations—one of the cooperating teacher and another of a colleague
- Allow the student teacher to assist with planning, preparation of lessons and materials, monitoring of individual and group work.
- Develop a schedule to build reaching responsibilities up to full teaching responsibilities for a minimum of 3 full weeks for 12- and 16- week placements, 2 for 8-week placements.
- Discuss goals the student teacher has and begin providing feedback toward those goals.

Week 2 with Students:

- Work with the student teacher in lesson planning (reviewing plans daily) and management design.
- Co-teach lessons throughout the day
- Conduct informal observations and provide actionable feedback.
- Complete [feedback form](#) (optional). Feel free to email any celebrations or concerns to Jennifer Meagher at jmeagher001@csbsju.edu
- Elementary: Allow the student teacher to solo teach 30-40 minutes per day and lead morning meetings/classroom routines.
- Secondary: Allow the student teacher to fully teach at least one section

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 to Support Teaching and Mentoring



Tech Tools for 2004

Jen Gonzalez curates an annual list of the best tech tools for educators this year. Check out her list [here](#). Continue on to the Cult of Pedagogy website for more great ideas.



Supporting Student Teachers

Resilient Educator offers a number of helpful articles, lessons, and other materials related to the work teachers do. Included in these materials are ideas on working with student teachers. Check them out [here](#).



I Still Have Hope

In this video, 2022 Teacher of the Year, Kurt Russell shares a message of hope and support for teachers as they continue the often challenging work of educating today's children in an environment that often pushes back. Check it out [here](#).



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Jennifer Meagher

Jennifer is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

