

The Acorn

A Newsletter for CSB/SJU Cooperating Teachers

Volume 6, no. 3--Friday, September 29, 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

In the last issue of *The Acorn*, I grounded my message in Cornelius Minor's *We Got This: Equity, Access, and the Quest to Be Who Our Students Need Us to Be*. In Minor's text, he references the metaphor of *Teacher as Superhero* to explore the incredibly complex nature of teaching. Actually, he pushes against this metaphor noting that it does



not allow heroes to "be imperfect or to be nuanced. It does not allow them to grow tired, to fail, to learn publicly, or to grieve" (p. 3). Consider Superman, as Minor does. Working alone, disengaged from humans, he is misunderstood and distrusted; his motives are unclear. Working alongside humanity, guided by a collective vision for better, Superman is most powerful. Interestingly, humanity is more empowered as well. The truth in this is that when the Hero looks at the people and situation as something to change or bend himself, the effect tends to the negative. When the Hero approaches the people or situation as an ally or collaboratively, there can be positive change (Minor, 2019, p. 27).

This makes me think of the movie *The Matrix*. There is a point in the film when the protagonist Neo goes to see the Oracle. While waiting to see her, he encounters a child and engages in a conversation that creates a radical shift. The child is meditating and bending a spoon. Their exchange goes like this:

Child: Do not try to bend the spoon. That is impossible. Instead, only try to realize the truth.

Neo: What truth?

Child: There is no spoon.

Neo: There is no spoon?

Child: Then you'll see it is not the spoon that bends; it is only yourself.

Like the Superhero and Neo, we have particular approaches and lenses with which we often see the world. Sometimes our approaches and lenses exist because they are what we have known and done. Sometimes they are imposed upon us. Sometimes, we have no idea how they have come to be. Sometimes we just "do" without including others or helping them to understand the how and why.

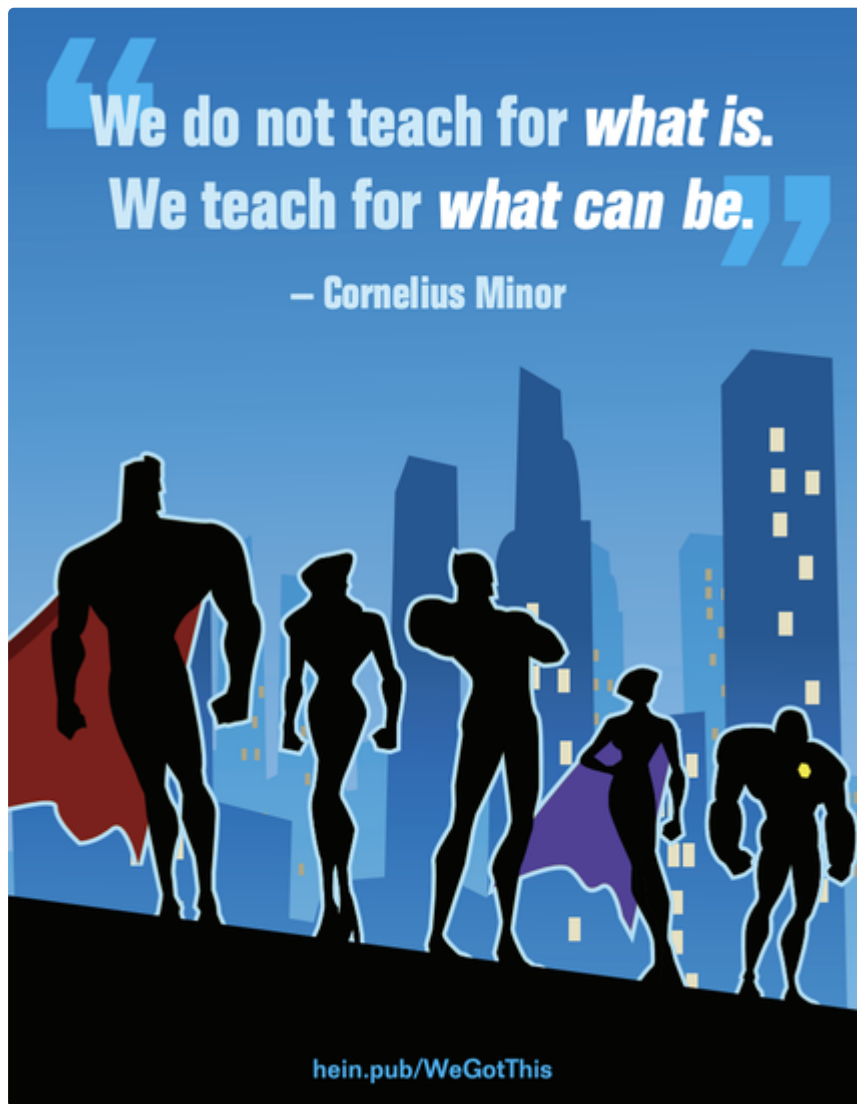
Superman and Neo's approaches begin with good intentions; they often take on positions that require others to bend to their will. However, their greatest successes come when they realize that they are more effective when they work collaboratively and realize that by changing the conditions to empower others positive change happens. Yes, both make individual moves that help and save others; there is no doubt about that. Yet, the collective work allows others to engage, develop, and rise.

Student teachers see their cooperating teachers as Heroes, and they want to see how they can become heroes themselves. They are wanting to understand the hows and whys of the choices and conditions of the classroom. They are looking for ways to find success and be empowered. Creating conditions for improvement can require some bending. Thank you for that work!

References:

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

Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L. (1999). *The Matrix*. Warner Bros.



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

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 Five and Six with Student Teachers

For Candidates in 12- or 16-week placements:

Week 5 with Students:

- Co-teach in classes/subjects the student teacher is not leading
- Elementary: Allow the student teacher to fully teach in one subject, minimum
- 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
- Discuss lesson planning techniques and whether or not to continue with CSB/SJU full lesson plans
- Conduct [one formal observation](#)
- Encourage the student teacher to observe another classroom or two based on areas needing improvement; upon completion, discuss what was discovered and what could be implemented in current practice

Week 6 with Students:

- Complete the progress report on your student teacher if you believe there are areas of concern: [feedback form](#)
- Follow week 5; add time if the candidate is ready
- Discuss planning, assessment, and class management techniques
- Co-teach in classes/subjects the student teacher is not leading
- For 12-week placements: review goals and revise teaching calendar as necessary to address those goals and observational data

For Candidates in 8-week placements:

Week 5 with Students:

- Discuss lesson planning and management techniques
- Encourage the student teacher to observe another classroom or two based on areas needing improvement; upon completion, discuss what was discovered and what could be implemented in current practice
- Co-teach in classes/subjects the student teacher isn't leading
- Conduct [one formal observation](#)
- Elementary: Solo teach at least ½ of the day, more if the candidate is prepared
- 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

Week 6 with Students:

- Discuss lesson planning and management techniques
- Informally observe and provide actionable feedback
- CT to complete [feedback form](#) if you believe areas of concern need to be addressed
- Elementary and Secondary: Aim for solo teaching full time for 5-10 consecutive days

Quick Links

[CSB/SJU Student Teaching Handbook](#)

[Student Teaching Observations \(by Cooperating Teacher/University Supervisor/Director\)](#)

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:

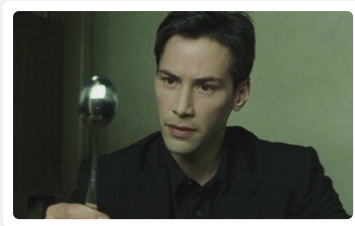
[Cooperating Teacher Information](#) (if not completed in the past three years)

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

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

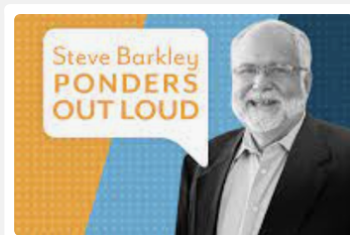
[Cooperating Teacher's Dispositional Evaluation of Student Teacher](#)

Great Resources for Teachers and Transformational Coaches



The Spoon

In this YouTube clip, we see the visit to the Oracle. Check it out [here](#).



Steve Barkley Ponders Out Loud

Steve Barkley's podcast engages teachers and educational leaders in ideas and processes that will facilitate the changes necessary to reach students and prepare them for the 21st century. Check it out [here](#).



Onward

Elena Aguilar's ONWARDthebook website offers us a wealth of articles, tools, and resources to cultivate resilience as individuals and educators. Check it out [here](#).

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