

Duties and Responsibilities for the Cooperating Teacher

Virginia Wesleyan College appreciates the support of area teachers who accept our students as preservice teachers and acknowledges the great influence that they have on their development as teachers. While preservice teachers will learn a great deal about teaching from cooperating teachers, they should also be free to develop a teaching style that is comfortable for them. We hope that cooperating teachers will encourage preservice teachers to try strategies that may be innovative or a change from the daily routine.

Please arrange for the preservice teacher to have a desk and chair. Provide the necessary curriculum guides, teacher's editions, and other supplies that will make him/her feel like a professional.

The professional cooperating teacher will

- accept the preservice teacher as a colleague-in-training and introduce him/her to the students as a *teacher*. Please encourage the preservice teacher to participate in all facets of the school community.
- serve as a guide for the preservice teacher. Beginning teachers make the usual mistakes that novices make. We hope that these mistakes will be accepted and that the preservice teacher will be made aware of them when you confer at the end of the lesson or the end of the day. Constructive criticism is welcome but is always done in private and away from the students.
- understand that while preservice teachers have had course work in human growth and development, in teaching methods, and in the content areas, they have not applied this knowledge in the regular classroom. They have had some teaching experience during their early field experiences but preservice teaching is a much greater responsibility.
- model good classroom management skills. The beginning teacher cannot teach effectively if he/she cannot control the class. Management techniques that work for the master teacher may not be effective for the novice. Share ideas and encourage the preservice teacher to experiment with management techniques that fit his/her style.
- allow the preservice teacher to assume some teaching responsibilities in the first week of the placement. Some preservice teachers are quite anxious about fulfilling their role in the classroom and may need to start with several brief lessons.
- help the preservice teacher become familiar with the school environment. Plan for him/her to participate in a variety of activities such as parent-teacher conferences, PTA meetings, and faculty meetings.
- set aside time each week for a conference and an evaluation of the progress being made. Written comments help everyone to stay focused on areas for growth. There are times when it is helpful to tell the preservice teacher exactly what is expected during a particular lesson.
- complete both formative and summative evaluations. Formative evaluations encourage the preservice teacher to change and to grow professionally. The summative evaluation should not be a surprise since it is based on a series of formative evaluations.
- contact the college supervisor and the Director of Field Experiences if problems develop. When it becomes apparent that there are serious problems developing, contact the college supervisor to schedule a conference. Students who are not successful in this experience may have to withdraw from the program to take additional courses or make other changes before they return to the classroom.