Dear Cooperating/Mentor Teacher:

On behalf of the entire Teacher Education faculty, we wish to extend our sincere appreciation for your willingness to work with a Mercer University Teacher Candidate in his/her student teaching or internship experience. We are aware of the time and effort required on your part to assist our student during this most significant aspect of teacher preparation.

In this Handbook you will find information and suggestions for Cooperating Teachers that we hope will be helpful during your work with our Teacher Candidate. We hope that you will take the time to read the Handbook so that you may ask for any clarifications that might be needed. In addition, the University Supervisor (US) may have particular expectations that will be discussed with you and the Teacher Candidate. The Handbook includes:

1. Information regarding the Teacher Education Program:
   - Roles and Responsibilities of the Cooperating Teacher
   - Phases of Student Teaching/Internship
   - Evaluation Information

2. Forms to be completed in your TOFES account
   - Cooperating Teacher Voucher. Please complete by deadline.
   - Instructional Lesson Plan Formats (for your information)
   - Formative Evaluation Observation
   - Mid Term Evaluation
   - Dispositions Assessment
   - Summative Evaluation
   - Assessment of Content Knowledge Form.

As the semester progresses, please feel free to share with the University Supervisor or us any concerns you have about our student or any questions you have about our program.

Again, thank you for sharing your expertise and your classroom with our student this semester. The important task of teacher preparation could not be accomplished without you.

Sincerely,

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Cooperating Teacher Responsibilities

Listed below are the main responsibilities when working with a Student Teacher or Intern:

- Work with the Teacher Candidate to plan the semester experience (Student Teacher only)
- Oversee the planning and implementation of all learning segments and lessons
- Conduct 3 Formal Observations spaced throughout the experience
- Conduct a Mid-Term Evaluation with the Teacher Candidate & University Supervisor
- Fill out the Summative Evaluation at the end of the experience and review with the teacher candidate
- Complete the electronic Dispositions Assessment form (via our website) at the end of the experience and review with the teacher candidate
- Sign the Teacher Candidate’s Time Log each week and at the end of the experience (Student Teachers Only)
- Complete the electronic Content Knowledge Form
- Meet with Teacher Candidate to share and discuss strengths and weaknesses throughout their experience
- At the first sign of trouble, contact the University Supervisor

Helpful Information for Cooperating Teachers

All Mercer University’s teaching Candidates have been required to:

- Contact the University Supervisor at the first sign of an issue or potential problem.
- Observe the same daily schedule/hours as the classroom teacher/mentor.
- Attend professional meetings, faculty meetings, parent meetings, workshops, conferences and sporting activities as required for the teacher (some schools may vary per administration).
- Adhere to the same holiday schedule as the system to which he/she is assigned.
- Sign in at the front office and wear the Mercer University name tag at all times.
- Contact his/her CT prior to all absences. The candidate is required to make up all missed days at the end of the experience (60 days are required).
- Dress professionally at all times. No jeans may be worn, even on days teachers may wear jeans. Candidates may wear school t-shirts on specified days, if teachers wear school t-shirts on certain days.
- Have all lesson plans approved by his/her CT prior to teaching the lesson.
- Be present with a school employee at all times when in the presence of children inside or outside the classroom.

In addition to supporting all teacher candidate requirements listed above, we ask that all Cooperating Teachers:

- Allow Candidates to be dismissed without penalty for GACE testing (test registration must be provided), scheduled Student Teaching/Internship seminars, and edTPA Support Sessions.
- Build a trusting and supportive relationship with the Teacher Candidate and consistently provide helpful and encouraging feedback to candidates after informal and formal observations.
- Talk openly and honestly with the candidate when discussing and completing evaluation forms.
- Provide a designated area for the teacher candidate to keep lesson plans and teaching materials.
- Do not expect the teacher candidate to serve as a substitute teacher or administer any standardized tests. However, the teacher candidate may work with a substitute for the CT when the CT must be absent.

The Cooperating Teacher or other school employee, including a substitute teacher, must be present at all times when the Teacher Candidate is in the presence of children inside or outside the classroom.
Connected Learning Segment (CLS) Commentary

Note: To be used by students during fieldwork

Mercer Connected Learning Segment (CLS) Commentary Template

Teacher Candidate:
Grade Level:
Date:
Unit/Subject:

Compose a narrative response describing the effectiveness of the strategies you included in your connected learning segment (CLS) in each of the sections listed below. The purpose is to explain the rationale for choosing your strategies and analyze what went well and what you might do to improve student learning. You may use the guiding questions to help in developing your response. You do not have to respond to all of the questions. However, make sure your response is clear, concise and includes some evidence of theory and/or research.

Standards Correlation and Central Content Focus:

- How effective was your planning in terms of developing the central focus over the course of the learning segment? How well did students grasp the central focus of this learning segment by the final day?

Learning Targets:

- How effective were the learning targets that you used in this segment? Did the students understand the targets? Is there anything you would change about the way you designed or implemented the learning targets across the learning segment?

Academic Language:

- How did you scaffold the learning segment to support the demands of academic language so that students could learn, participate and engage in meaningful ways with the content?
- How did your CLS support the students’ receptive language skills (e.g., listening, reading) and productive language skills (e.g., discourse/speaking, syntax/writing)? Cite specific examples from the CLS.
- How well did students grasp the specific language function (usually identified from the verb in your standard) that students will need to engage in the content? Cite a specific task from your CLS that demonstrated opportunities for students to practice the language function.
- How did your learning segment promote a connection between reading and writing?
- Describe the learning strategies you used in your lesson plan to build knowledge of essential content-related vocabulary.

Learning Segment Scope and Sequence:

- How did your learning targets and tasks show a progression of learning over time and support the development of reasoning, problem solving, and/or critical thinking skills?
- How did your role and the students’ roles change over time to promote increased student ownership of the learning?
Differentiation/Planned Support (Context for Learning)

- How did you utilize the information you included in the context for learning (knowledge about your students) to inform critical decisions about what and how you taught? Provide specific examples.
- How did the lessons in your segment support the social, cultural, knowledge, skills, and/or interests of your students? Provide specific examples.
- How did the lessons in your segment support students with specific learning needs?
- What research based instructional strategies/theoretical principles did you utilize to ensure the learning needs of your students?

Assessment

- Describe both the formative and summative assessment measures you used in your CLS.
- What research based assessment strategies/theoretical principles helped guide you in your selection of assessment techniques?
- How did the results from these assessments provide specific information about student mastery of the skills identified in your central content focus?
- How were the assessments differentiated to address the needs of the various individuals or groups of students identified in your context for learning?
- How did you provide specific feedback to your students?
- How did you determine each student’s level of mastery of your central content focus?
- Will additional review be needed to help students grasp the content of your CLS?

Overall Reflection

- What part of your learning segment did you think was most effectiveness in terms of enhancing student learning?
- What would you change/improve about the way you taught this learning segment?
- What is one specific goal you would like to set to help you grow in your effectiveness as a teacher?
Connected Learning Segment (CLS) Template (3-5 days)

Teacher Candidate:
Grade Level:
Date:
Unit/Subject:

Standard Correlation:

Use the GSE or GPS standards and any other standards that are required in the county/school system in which you are placed. Write the whole standard and any element that will be used. Include all standards and elements that will be addressed during the CLS.

Central Content Focus:

Describe the central concept(s) or understanding(s) that you want students to gain by the end of this learning segment. Add an essential question for each day to reflect those concepts and understandings.

Learning Targets:

List what you want the students to know (knowledge) and be able to do (skills) at the end of this learning segment. These learning targets should help students grasp the central content focus.

Context for Learning:

List any special features of your school and/or classroom setting that will affect your teaching in this learning segment. Summarize the required or needed supports, accommodations, or modifications for your students that will affect your instruction. Also discuss how you will consider the cultural, social, emotional, developmental and interest needs of your students.

Academic Language:

Detail the specific academic language demands (language function, discourse and/or syntax) that will be used by students to participate in learning tasks through reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking to demonstrate understanding of the central lesson focus.

Key Vocabulary:

Identify specific academic vocabulary that students will need to understand the central content focus of the learning segment.

Materials/Instructional Technology:
List any materials needed (teacher/student) including technology, supplies, textbooks, and other resources particular to this learning segment.

**Differentiated Strategies:**

List specific strategies that will be used to meet the varied learning needs of the students as described in your context for learning.

**Assessment Strategies:**

Detail the ways that you will be checking for student understanding continuously throughout the learning segment. Give examples of specific uses of formative and/or summative assessments.

**Learning Segment Scope and Sequence:**

Provide an overview of the progression of your central content focus over time. Make a list including each day of the CLS and the key learning target(s) that will be addressed each day. The scope and sequence should demonstrate how skills and activities will become increasingly more complex over time.

**Theoretical Principles and/or Research Based Best Practices:**

Explain the educational theory and/or research used for planning the learning segment.

**Step-by-step Procedures: Complete this section for EACH day of the CLS.**

**Standard(s):** List the specific standard(s) and element(s) that will be addressed on this day of the CLS.

**Learning Targets:** List what you want the students to know (knowledge) and be able to do (skills) at the end of this lesson. These learning targets should help students grasp the central content focus.

**Introduction:** (______ minutes)

Explain how students will be involved in the opening of the lesson including elements such as prior knowledge check, review of previous learning targets and activating interest in the lesson content.

**Instruction:** (______ minutes)

Explain how you will present and engage students in the lesson content. Elements that might be detailed in this section include direct instruction, modeling, guided practice, demonstrations, directions for tasks, etc.

**Practice:** (______ minutes)

Explain how you will engage students in learning tasks to work towards mastery of the central focus. This might be done through strategies such individual or flexible groups, learning centers, performance tasks, etc. These tasks should specifically support your lesson learning targets and provide content application.
Closing: (_____ minutes)

Detail how students will be involved in strategies to review key concepts, summarize learning, clarify misconceptions and complete a final check of understanding.
Unit/Subject:

Standard Correlation:

Use the GSE or GPS standard(s) and any other standards that are required in the county/school system in which you are placed. Write the whole standard and any element that will be used.

Central Content Focus:

Describe the central concept(s) or understanding(s) that you want students to gain by the end of this lesson. Add an essential question for each day to reflect those concepts or understandings.

Learning Targets:

List what you want the students to know (knowledge) and be able to do (skills) at the end of this lesson. These learning targets should help students grasp the central content focus.

Context for Learning:

List any special features of your school and/or classroom setting that will affect your teaching in this lesson. Summarize the required or needed supports, accommodations, or modifications for your students that will affect your instruction. Discuss how you will consider the cultural, social, emotional, developmental and interest needs of your students.

Academic Language:

Detail the specific academic language demands (language function, discourse and/or syntax) that will be used by students to participate in learning tasks through reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking to demonstrate understanding of the content focus of the lesson.

Key Vocabulary:

Identify specific academic vocabulary that students will need to understand the content focus of the lesson.

Materials/Instructional Technology:

List any materials needed (teacher/student) including technology, supplies, textbooks, and other resources particular to this lesson.

Differentiated Strategies:

List specific strategies that will be used to meet the varied learning needs of the students as described in your context for learning.
**Assessment Strategies:**

Detail the ways that you will be checking for student understanding continuously throughout the lesson. Give examples of specific uses of formative and/or summative assessments.

**Step-by-step Procedures:**

**Introduction: (____ minutes)**

Explain how students will be involved in the opening of the lesson including elements such as prior knowledge checks, review of learning targets and activating interest in the lesson content.

**Instruction: (____ minutes)**

Explain how you will present and engage students in the lesson content. Elements that might be detailed in this section include direct instruction, modeling, guided practice, demonstrations, directions for tasks, etc.

**Practice: (____ minutes)**

Explain how you will engage students in learning tasks to work towards mastery of the central focus. This might be done through strategies such individual or small flexible groups, learning centers, performance tasks, etc. These tasks should specifically support your lesson learning targets and provide content application.

**Closing: (____ minutes)**

Detail how students will be involved in strategies to review key concepts, summarize learning, clarify misconceptions and complete a final check of understanding.