



**Kremen School  
of Education and  
Human Development**

*Leadership for Diverse Communities*

**Education Specialist Credential  
Program**

**Veteran Practitioner Mentor  
Teacher Guide**

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## Veteran Practitioner Mentor Teacher

*For the purpose of this handbook, the district-provided Veteran Practitioners, who may be referred to as the Master Teacher, Cooperating Teacher, Mentor Teacher or the district supervisor, will be referred to solely as the “Mentor Teacher”.*

The Mentor Teacher is a key element in preparing the next generation of professional educators. The role of the Mentor Teacher is a complex blend of modeling, coaching, instructing, collaborating, and encouraging as candidates build competency in program standards. Mentor Teachers are expected to support candidates in developing the skills and knowledge to meet these standards. **Thank you for serving in this capacity!**

### *STATE REQUIREMENTS*

The Mentor Teacher Veteran Practitioner must hold a Clear Credential in the content area for which they are providing supervision and have a minimum of three years of content area K-12 teaching experience. The Veteran Practitioner Mentor Teacher must have demonstrated exemplary teaching practices as determined by the employing district and the university teacher preparation program. The matching of Teacher Candidate and the Mentor Teacher is a collaborative process between the school district and the program.

### *COMMON BEHAVIORS THAT MENTORS DEMONSTRATE TO THEIR STUDENT TEACHERS*

- Willingness to share professional skills, knowledge and expertise.
- Demonstrate a positive attitude and act as a positive role model.
- Exhibit enthusiasm in teaching and learning.
- Participate in ongoing learning and growth in teaching.
- Provide frequent constructive feedback to the student, starting with the positives.
- Exhibit excellent communication skills in both speaking and writing.
- Work as a member of the team and value the opinions and initiatives of others.
- Maintain confidentiality in working with students.

### *ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTES OF AN EFFECTIVE MENTOR TEACHER*

1. Build the relationship first, as student teachers need a comfort level to ask for help. Build and maintain trust.
2. Introduce the teacher candidate to the classroom and the students. Encourage the teacher candidate to introduce themselves to the students as soon as possible.

- a. Accept the teacher candidate as a co-worker of equal status.
  - b. Prepare your classroom students to treat the student teacher with respect before the student teacher arrives.
  - c. Help parents understand the valuable role the teacher candidate plays in the classroom.
3. Introduce the teacher candidates to other staff members in the school and give them an opportunity to regularly interact with others.
4. Help the candidate locate resource materials, equipment, and the key staff members on campus. Provide curriculum frameworks, and district guidelines.
5. Familiarize the teacher candidate with district and school programs (e.g., GATE, Special Education, Migrant Education, etc.), district and school testing programs and the administration's expectations for teachers.
6. Structure responsibilities which gradually induct the teacher candidate into full time teaching.
  - a. Work on one goal at a time, beginning with classroom management or a routine/procedure.
  - b. Help the teacher candidate to plan at least a week ahead.
7. Provide opportunities for the teacher candidate to study children and how they learn.
8. Encourage the teacher candidate to explore and take risks. Start out with a lot of structure, and then allow this person to take flight on their own.
  - a. After a few weeks, encourage him/her to take initiative and design materials to extend lessons.
9. Model teaching strategies that accommodate different learning styles.
10. Use a variety of teaching materials and resources to reinforce skills.
11. Conference regularly with the teacher candidate to discuss how things are going with lessons, preparation, or specific students and how things could be improved.
  - a. Collaborate with your student teacher, listen intently and let him/her/them come to their own realizations and conclusions.
  - b. Celebrate the big and little successes each day.
  - c. Share your teaching stories from when you first began.
12. Work with the teacher candidate in developing lesson delivery skills.

13. Work with the teacher candidate in developing classroom management skills. Explain your system and devise a way to work together.
14. Demonstrate sensitivity to the emotional needs of the teacher candidate during the stressful period of student teaching.
15. Observe the teacher candidate and provide honest, specific, and constructive feedback on lessons.
  - a. Encourage the teacher candidate to come up with specifics of what went well and then guide them to specifically what could be improved.
  - b. Have the teacher candidate pick one or at the most two ideas for improving the next lesson.
16. Have fun! A good laugh can really help a rough day go smoother! View this experience as an opportunity to exchange ideas and learn from one another – not as a competition or free labor.

### ***MENTOR TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES***

Mentor Teacher responsibilities fall under three domains: 1) providing a practice space, 2) making practice visible, and 3) engaging as a teacher educator.

<b><i>Providing a practice space</i></b>	<b><i>Making Practice Visible</i></b>	<b><i>Engaging as a Teacher Educator</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow candidates to take instructional risks</li> <li>• Give opportunities for candidates to try out new methods they are learning in program</li> <li>• Support candidates as they learn and apply ideas about child development &amp; how to work in diverse, high-needs schools</li> <li>• Support candidates in successfully completing their course requirements, as needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model unit and lesson planning and share rationale for sequence, strategies, etc.</li> <li>• Model instruction and share rationale for teaching moves</li> <li>• Model fostering a positive classroom climate</li> <li>• Debrief lessons after teaching and describe how this informs subsequent lessons</li> <li>• Utilize co-planning and co-teaching methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan weekly structured meetings with candidates</li> <li>• Build in opportunities to talk with candidates about planning and instruction</li> <li>• Observe candidates and provide formative feedback</li> <li>• Continuously provide feedback on planning and instruction once the candidate takes the lead</li> <li>• Participate actively in classroom (observing, modeling classroom</li> </ul>

<i>Providing a practice space</i>	<i>Making Practice Visible</i>	<i>Engaging as a Teacher Educator</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retain the legal responsibility for the classroom at all times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model how to work with an instructional team (other teachers, SPED, EL, Coaches, parents, etc.)</li> <li>Model how to create appropriate teacher-student relationships with students in order to enhance student learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>management, and co-teaching)</li> <li>Participate in collaborative learning</li> <li>Ensure that candidate demonstrates Professional Expectations</li> <li>Engage in at least two (2) joint meetings with the candidate and University Coach</li> <li>Provide mid-semester evaluation and input toward the final evaluation</li> <li>Provide recommendation letters as requested by candidates</li> </ul>

In addition to the Mentor Teacher responsibilities outlined in the table, here are some pointers to help you have a smooth semester:

**ORGANIZATION**

How do we manage our time and stay organized? How do we share physical and mental space?

- Be flexible
- Provide a workspace or area for the candidate
- Establish SACRED planning time – but keep scheduling FLEXIBLE - Planning time is essential so a formal consistent time each week is critical
- Have a pre-arranged time to communicate, plan, debrief, and assess
- Find creative or technological solutions for communicating
- Come prepared with ideas, questions, dilemmas
- Recognize the priorities that may pull you away from scheduled planning times and establish alternatives
- Use technology (email, phone, etc.) if needed to create/preserve planning time
- Prioritize obligations (meetings, etc.) at school to ensure success of co-teaching
- Communicate openly and honestly about what your needs are (e.g., alone time vs. collaborative time)

- Advocate for candidate to assist with technological resources

### *COMMUNICATION*

How do we establish clear communication in light of dynamic evolving role of the teacher candidate?

- Have and express clear expectations from the beginning and continue evolving them
- Assign roles
- Be open & kind to each other
- Discuss what you and your candidate are learning together in your classroom
- Use planning/prep/conference period to delegate and accomplish tasks for preparing for next class, grading, corresponding with families, etc.
- Ask questions

### *OPPORTUNITIES*

How do we create opportunities for the candidate to try out methods when the Mentor Teacher does not practice methods taught in the teacher education program?

- Be open to new ideas
- Use the University Coach to help in planning
- Ask clarifying questions to push candidate thinking and planning
- Ask for justifications and rationales for new ideas with data
- Focus efforts where strengths exist

### *APPROACHES TO TEACHING*

How do we reconcile two different approaches to teaching, especially when you have strong-willed individuals? What happens when a Mentor and candidate disagree on approaches?

- Be open to new ideas
- Compromise and negotiate
- Communicate: talk about approaches as early as possible
- Figure it out before/after class, NOT in class; avoid conflict during class
- Be metacognitive about your teaching approaches
- Listen to the candidate's experiences and feelings
- Reflecting protocols on how the lesson went after
- Don't take things personally! Assume good intentions
- Bring in an outside individual if candidate doesn't respond to feedback
- Allow plenty of time ahead to review materials and lesson plans

- Prevent conflicting messages to students by talking about differences ahead of time (e.g., regarding discipline). It's like parents – talk about differences ahead of time (or discuss after the fact); communication between Mentor Teacher and Candidate is critical; differences can be ok!

### ***EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS***

How do we manage different expectations for student behavior and performance between teacher candidates and Mentors?

- Communicate the school site's rules
- Develop norms together before school starts
- Reflect if those norms are working in the first week with each other & students
- Never disagree in front of the students
- Figure out who has a lower or higher behavior threshold
- Have clarity on amount of candidate ownership and Mentor support; have open and flexible communication about roles in classroom
- Assist candidate in establishing explicit expectations and consistency

### ***LESSON PLANNING***

How do we ensure that the candidate develops lesson planning skills and address issues such as when the candidate submits a late and/or underdeveloped lesson to Mentor?

- Plan ahead
- Refer back to submission date and have a conversation with the candidate about what you expect for next time (ask why the lesson plan was late and underdeveloped)
- If it happens again, alert the University Coach

**\*\*If you are experiencing a challenging situation with a candidate, please contact the candidate's University Coach as soon as possible.**

### ***MENTOR TEACHER ROLES***

1. Introduces and acquaints the Teacher Candidate with school and classroom management procedures including the dress code, child abuse reporting, incident reports, specialized programs, library resources, technology, state and/or district frameworks, content standards, disciplinary and emergency procedures.
2. Arranges for the Teacher Candidate to attend grade level and or Professional Learning Communities, Student Study Team/IEP, faculty, parent/school meetings



and to participate in parent conferences, as needed to fulfill coursework requirements.

3. Arranges a weekly planning period with the Teacher Candidate. Discusses and plans for opportunities for Co-teaching. Gives continuous feedback to the Teacher Candidate - both written and verbal. Uses effective questioning strategies to help the student become skillful in self-assessment and goal setting.
4. Assigns responsibilities to the Teacher Candidate and assists the Teacher Candidate in meeting competencies.
5. Models effective teaching methods for a given school subject before asking Teacher Candidate to teach the subject.
6. Arranges for the Teacher Candidate to have ample teaching opportunities. Reviews all lesson plans of Teacher Candidate at least one day prior to teaching.
7. Gives continuous feedback to the Teacher Candidate - both written and verbal. Uses effective questioning strategies to help the student become skillful in self-assessment and goal setting.
8. Maintains communication with the University Coach regarding the student's progress. Changes the class schedule when necessary to facilitate the observation of the Teacher Candidate by the University Coach.
9. Agrees to complete required Midterm Evaluation and Final Evaluation online forms by a designated date, as set by the University Coach.
  - a. When evaluating, the Mentor Teacher considers the candidate's stage as a beginning teacher and gives input regarding course credit to the University Coach.
  - b. A letter of reference is optional.
10. Participates in a Midterm Evaluation conference and Final Evaluation conference with the University Coach and Teacher Candidate.
11. Informs University Coach of Teacher Candidate's absences, inappropriate dress or concerns regarding professionalism.

# Mentor Teacher Professional Development Requirement and Resources

## *PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODULES*

The Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) requires that all Mentor Teachers participate in a minimum of ten (10) professional development hours in order to serve as a Mentor Teacher. Several options are available to all Mentor Teachers.

1. Free online Mentor Teacher self-paced training modules are offered [here](#)
2. Free K-12 Online Teaching Academy videos and strategies to enhance any teacher's online and virtual teaching skills are offered [here](#). Mentor teachers are encouraged to scroll through these videos to find those that meet their needs.
3. Resources for teaching online and virtually can be found at:
  - a. [Fresno County Superintendent of Schools \(FCSS\) Distance Learning Resources](#)
  - b. [FCSS Instructional Technology Resources](#)
  - c. [Fostering Relationships with Student Remotely](#)
  - d. [Lessons from the Field: CTC Remote Learning Guidance](#)
4. Website resources
  - a. Article: [How to be an Exceptional Mentor Teacher](#)
  - b. Teacher website for requesting that donors pay for classroom materials: [DonorsChoose.Org](#)
5. Video Resources
  - a. [Mentoring in Action video library](#)

Fresno State is currently developing a database of Mentor Teachers so that we can track which Mentor Teachers already met the ten (10) professional development hours requirement. Some Mentors Teachers are also Induction Mentors and have engaged in district-sponsored training in Induction or Coaching skills. These trainings will count as part of the State's required hours.

## *MENTOR TEACHER CONFERENCE*

In addition to the initial 10 hours of Mentor Teacher professional development, the CTC requires all Mentor Teachers to participate in two (2) hours of program-specific professional development every year. This requirement can be met through attendance at the annual Mentor Teacher Conference at Fresno State [budget permitting] or through

assigned professional Mentor Teacher modules. Mentor Teachers will receive an invitation to the conference through email.

### ***MENTOR TEACHER INCENTIVES FROM FRESNO STATE***

- \$150 stipend for attending the Mentor Teacher Conference (invitation will be emailed);
- \$450 refund on registration fees for courses taken at Fresno State within a two-year period, beginning fall 2018 for qualified Mentor Teachers; and
- Fresno State library privileges.

For more information, please contact the [Office of Clinical Practice](#)

