

# Establishing Positive Relationships During the Student Teaching Experience

## **Professional Relationships**

- Interview the cooperating teacher to get to know each other.
- Ask for copies of texts you will need during the ST experience.
- Exchange phone numbers and email addresses. Establish appropriate times to call.
- Ask your cooperating teacher to help you understand the “ins and outs” of his/her thinking as he/she plans a lesson, prepares the materials, and delivers the lesson.
- Seek advice and feedback on your teaching. Ask to have a daily conversation with written back-up for later reference.
- Share daily and weekly plans with your cooperating teacher. Ask for feedback and suggestions.
- Set attainable, specific goals and share these with the cooperating teacher.
- Produce plans and materials on time to the cooperating teacher. Follow through on requests by the “due date” if not sooner.
- Listen! Your cooperating teacher wants you to succeed.
- Treat your cooperating teacher with respect and dignity.
- Refer to your cooperating teacher(s) in a respectful manner when speaking with colleagues, parents and/or students.
- Learn how to “bite your tongue” and swallow your pride.
- Laugh at yourself. ☺
- Say “Thank You” early and often.

## **Student Relationships**

- Write a letter of introduction to your students.
- Play a guessing game where students have to guess your “favorites.”
- Create seating charts in order to learn students’ names quickly and accurately.
- Take digital pictures of each student. Quiz yourself on the students’ names.
- Establish the goal of memorizing a certain number of students’ names and/or personal details each day.
- Have students create short autobiographies.
- Ask students to journal daily. Respond with personal comments or reactions.
- Have students complete a notecard with answers on each side to the following questions: “What are 3 things I should know about you?” “What are 3 things that will help you to learn better?”
- Have students answer a question each day upon entry to the classroom. (i.e.-“What’s your mother’s maiden name?”)
- Create a notebook with a page per student. Maintain anecdotal notes on each student.
- Have students create a personal “Letterman Top 10” list.
- Interview the cooperating teacher, asking questions about each student.
- Greet each student by name at the door at the beginning of the day or class period.
- Create unique ways to celebrate success (i.e., a round of applause).
- Demonstrate a warm, caring demeanor.
- Seek out opportunities to work with students.
- Interact in a relaxed and informal way with students.
- Move freely among students.
- Create an interest survey, using open-ended questions about the students’ favorites.
- Invite a few students once a week to have lunch with you.
- Ask a hard-to-know student to help with a special project.
- Incorporate the students’ names into learning activities.
- Survey the students’ learning styles.
- Establish boundaries. You can be friendly without becoming the student’s best friend.

## **Parent Relationships**

- Write a letter of introduction to the parents at the beginning of the ST experience.
- Write a letter of explanation to the parents at the beginning of each new unit of study.
- Call parents with positive news about their children.
- Follow up with problems or concerns immediately. Waiting can create problems.
- Treat parents and guardians with respect and dignity.
- Learn how to “bite your tongue” and swallow your pride.
- Laugh at yourself. ☺ Admit mistakes graciously.
- Create weekly reports or newsletters to keep parents informed.
- Invite parents to be part of the team. The focus should always be on the student.
- Proofread assignments and written communications carefully. These should be error-free.
- Listen, especially “between the lines.”
- Use reflective listening techniques.

## **Administrative Relationships**

- Introduce yourself to the building administrator(s) and other staff early in the student teaching experience.
- Thank the building administrator for approving and/or arranging your student teaching experience.
- Invite the administrator to observe you teaching at least once during the student teaching experience. Provide a lesson plan for his/her reference. Thank him/her for his/her time following the lesson.
- Ask the administrator for professional advice during the hiring process (resume, job search process, hints for the interview, etc.)
- Treat the administrator with respect and dignity. Address him/her as “Mr. Smith” or “Ms. Jones”.
- Refer to the administrator in a respectful manner when speaking with colleagues, parents and/or students.

### References:

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Goethals, M. S., Howard, R. A. & Sanders, M. M. (2004). *Student Teaching: A Process Approach to Reflective Practice*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Upper Saddle River NJ: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.

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