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INTRODUCTION

The student teaching experience is the culmination for students in the education program at Saint Michael’s College. It marks a transition from student to novice teacher. As student teachers continue their path in teaching, student teaching creates conditions that allow them to learn from and reflect on their teaching practice. Student teachers will work with a cooperating teacher while a supervisor observes and consults with the student teacher over the course of one semester. This “triad” of individuals works as a team to develop the skills, pedagogical knowledge, and dispositions of the student teacher. For the student teacher this is a fulltime responsibility. This handbook provides information to make student teaching a more successful experience for all involved.

SAINT MICHAEL’S COLLEGE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT MISSION

The mission of the Education Programs at Saint Michael’s College is to contribute to the advancement of culture through education, with an emphasis on creativity, curiosity, contemplation, collaboration, reflection and social justice. Our programs are united by this vision and the following program outcomes:

• **Our graduates are passionate and curious scholars.** They skillfully use their research and analytical skills to investigate educational issues and identify the most promising developmentally based practices to support student learning. They aim to inspire similar levels of engagement, critical thinking, and curiosity in their students.

• **Our graduates are creative and integrative educators.** They are adept at both discipline-based and interdisciplinary teaching methods, using emerging technologies, social interaction, and imagination to support students’ achievement of rigorous academic standards. Understanding the connection between intellectual and emotional-social growth, they help their students gain self-knowledge and assume responsibility for their own learning.

• **Our graduates are reflective and contemplative practitioners.** They thoughtfully implement curriculum and assessments, drawing from a solid theoretical base to guide instruction and leadership decisions. They balance action with reflection to stay centered and purposeful in active environments, offering a role model for their students.

• **Our graduates are change agents committed to social justice and sustainability.** They provide their students with personalized learning opportunities in an environment that promotes cultural responsiveness, critical consciousness, and equity for all. They facilitate projects that engage their students in finding solutions to community-based problems and global issues.

• **Our graduates are collaborative and knowledgeable instructional leaders.** They are equipped with the understandings, skills, and dispositions needed to participate in and lead learning communities. They anticipate and navigate professional, cultural, and technological shifts, modeling for their students and colleagues what it means to be flexible life-long learners.
EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT TEACHING

Expectations for student teaching start before student teachers are placed at their respective school sites. Student teachers will consult with their advisor to ensure that all courses and Praxis tests have been satisfactorily completed. Student teachers will also submit an application to student teach to the licensure coordinator during the spring semester prior to student teaching. The Education Department determines the final school site and cooperating teacher for each student teacher. However, student teachers may request a preference.

Once a placement is determined, student teachers will meet with their cooperating teacher to discuss preparations for the student teaching semester and sign a letter of agreement. When student teachers begin their placement they are expected to act professionally and in accordance to the norms of their respective school. The student teacher is not expected to start teaching immediately; rather there are stages that are optimal for a successful and productive student teaching experience. What follows is a general overview of the student teaching semester. The exact timeline of the student teaching semester will be determined by the students, the curriculum, cooperating teacher, supervisor, and the student teacher. No two classrooms run similarly; therefore, each student teaching experience is unique.

1. Getting Started (weeks 1-2)

This is a phase of observation, orientation, and taking on modest responsibilities. Student teachers learn routines of the class and school, as well as how to navigate their way around the school building. As a general guide student teachers will:

✓ Learn each student’s name.

✓ Meet other teachers and school staff (such as the librarian, administrators, special educators, ESL teachers, and paraprofessionals).

✓ Obtain information about the school (such as the population served, its mission, philosophy, and objectives) and students including IEPs and ELL ACCESS Teacher Reports.

✓ Become familiar with the physical plant such as the gym, library, and auditorium.

✓ Learn emergency procedures such as fire drill, evacuation plans, and first aid.

✓ Find out where supplies are stored and how they are requisitioned.

✓ Learn how to use duplicating equipment and other available resources.

✓ Obtain extra teacher’s editions of texts used by the class, if available.

✓ Start a planning book and include a daily and weekly schedule.

✓ Carefully observe students in their classroom, making notes of their strengths, interests, areas of need, and friends.
1. Phase-in Period (weeks 1-2)

- Observe how teachers work to create a community of learners.
- Help/Support cooperating teacher in appropriate activities (work with individuals/small groups, begin to help grade/assess, plan and teach a brief lesson for a small group or the whole class).
- Begin to establish a presence beyond that of an observer.
- Establish regular meeting times with cooperating teacher to outline increasing responsibilities over the semester, to co-plan, and to debrief and reflect.
- Discuss timing of solo week and topic/timing of unit (minimum of 5 lessons) to occur later in the semester.

2. Phase-in Period (weeks 3-4)

Student teachers begin to “test their wings” as teachers and begin to get more involved in planning conversations. Student teachers develop a good understanding of the big picture and the details of daily planning. As a general guide student teachers will:

- Observe and take notes of the many management techniques the cooperating teacher uses and try some of these.
- Co-plan lessons with cooperating teacher. (During this period the cooperating teacher will still lead the planning so the student teacher can see the thought processes and work involved.)
- Continue to support cooperating teacher with daily tasks and routines, during instruction, and with grading/assessment.
- Begin to plan and teach lessons in one subject. Have lessons prepared, written out, and checked by cooperating teacher.
- Every morning before school starts, clarify lesson plans and any schedule differences of the day.
- Start to gather materials for their unit.
- Discuss with cooperating teacher the next class or layer of responsibility they will assume.
3. **Co-teaching and Active Co-planning** (weeks 4-8)

During this phase, cooperating teachers and student teachers begin to work as partners, sharing the class, planning, and teaching together on a regular basis. As a general guide student teachers will:

- Regularly design and lead smaller activities, with the input and support of cooperating teacher.
- Share the responsibilities of teaching by creating handouts, projects, and assessing student learning.
- Add subjects or periods until the student teachers have experience planning and teaching each by the end of mid-semester.
- Usually facilitate mid-semester triad meeting with cooperating teacher and supervisor. Collaboratively develop concrete plans for assuming substantial responsibilities including “solo time.”

4. **Taking Over All or Most of the Classroom Responsibilities** (weeks 8-13)

This phase, which culminates in a solo experience, provides a significant amount of time for student teachers to understand, as much as possible, what it feels like to be a teacher. Cooperating teachers and supervisors provide support and monitor student teachers’ progress closely. The goal by the end of this phase is a consensus that student teachers are competent as novice teachers. Student teachers will:

- Increase the length and number of lessons taught independently until they assume total responsibility (planning, teaching, and assessment) for all classes for at least one week. Teaching of a unit may coincide with solo week or be planned for a different time.
- Participate in parent conferences as decided by the student teachers and their cooperating teachers.

5. **Phase-out/Closure** (weeks 14-15)

By this time, student teachers begin to hand back responsibility to cooperating teachers. Some student teachers, though, may need to take this time to finish a unit or project they began. Student teachers are encouraged to visit other classrooms during this time and will plan for the final conference.

During the semester student teachers are assessed in five areas: planning, instruction, evaluation/assessment, classroom environment, and professionalism. Each of these areas is subdivided into specific criteria that are used in Lesson Observations, Mid-Semester Student Teacher Assessment and the Final Student Teacher Evaluation. It is always difficult to assign a letter grade to the complex experience of student teaching. While student teachers are strong in some aspects of teaching, they may need improvement in other areas. Strengths and areas of improvement must be balanced in the final grade. It is not unusual for student teachers to receive “twos” and “threes” during their Mid-Semester Assessment.
The final grade will be discussed at the Final Evaluation Meeting. A narrative description of what the different letter grades mean can be found below.

**A**  
Highest level of performance in student teaching. The student teacher has clearly demonstrated that he/she is meeting the criteria on the evaluations in a consistent and exemplary manner. Student teacher seeks way to improve his/her performance. Student teacher accepts that he/she is responsible for meeting the needs of all students and for creating a positive classroom climate.

**A-**  
A productive classroom almost all of the time. The student teacher has minor inconsistencies in teaching, understanding student learning, accommodating students with special needs, maintaining a positive supportive classroom climate, working as a colleague and engaging in critical self-assessment.

**B+**  
The classroom is a productive place most of the time, but the student teacher lacks consistent attention to details. The student teacher is able to adequately plan lessons that meet the needs of the majority of students. The classroom climate is positive, but lack of clear expectations and/or consistency contributes to off task behaviors. The student teacher works well with other adults, but expects the cooperating teacher to initiate many activities. The student teacher needs some guidance in his/her self-assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses.

**B**  
Classroom objectives are implemented and successfully assessed most of the time, but there is inconsistency in the student teacher’s performance. The student teacher, at times, relies on the cooperating teacher for lesson ideas. Lesson plans are designed to align objectives with assessments and learning opportunities. Implementation of lesson plans is adequate with some inconsistencies such as articulation of goals, presentation of lesson plan, or assessment of objectives. The student teacher is able to meet most of the students’ learning needs in the classroom. A safe learning environment exists; however, learning opportunities for a productive learning environment are applied inconsistently. The student teacher consistently accepts responsibility for addressing the academic, social, and emotional needs of students. The student teacher may be defensive when feedback is initially given but does implement feedback most of the time or provides a sufficient rationale not to accept feedback.

Any grade below a "B" indicates that the student teacher has not met minimum standards required for recommendation for licensure.

While teaching is the primary focus during the student teaching semester, student teachers will be responsible for developing and preparing their Vermont Licensure Portfolio. As student teachers teach, they will be expected to collect evidence that they will use to prepare their portfolio. During the semester, student teachers will work with their seminar instructors to complete the portfolio for licensure.

**Responsibilities of the “Triad”**

The student teaching process is a continuous one that builds upon a student teacher’s experiences in the classroom and observations of those experiences by the cooperating teacher and supervisor. The relationship of student teacher, cooperating teacher, and supervisor is a dynamic process of give-and-take in which all individuals are colleagues collaborating to improve the student teacher’s teaching practice. Student teachers are not expected to excel at every aspect of teaching. The best student teachers demonstrate their ability to respond to constructive criticism with reflection, growth, and improvement.
ROLE OF STUDENT TEACHER

Student teachers are expected to:

1. Know the content of the subject area which they are teaching.

2. Perform all duties expected of a classroom teacher at their school (lunchroom or study hall duty, parent nights, all meetings) in a manner appropriate to a classroom teacher (dress, language).

3. Confer with cooperating teacher and appropriate consulting teachers including special educators and ESL teachers to develop an accommodations matrix and/or Can-Do Descriptors classroom profile.

4. Be present, prepared, and on time every day. Attend all meetings including EST, IEP, ESL, team, department, and faculty meetings.

5. Be absent no more than 3 times in the semester. Extra days must be made up at the discretion of the cooperating teacher and supervisor. All absences should be reported to the cooperating teacher and supervisor by 7:30 a.m. on the day of the absence. Lesson plans should be written and submitted for absence if teaching.

6. Follow the schedule of the school in which they are teaching even if it is in conflict with the schedule of Saint Michael's College.

7. Be open to suggestions, realizing that this is a learning experience and should be viewed as a unique time to receive detailed and constructive feedback on their performance.

8. Maintain a planning notebook which will provide the basis for ongoing conversations about teaching and learning.

9. Attend all meetings of and complete all assignments for the Student Teaching Seminar. As part of the Seminar, they will complete a licensure portfolio which will demonstrate their understanding of the Core Teaching Standards for Vermont Educators.

10. Work with their cooperating teacher in scheduling a teaching lesson each time their supervisor observes their classroom.

11. Freely bring any questions and concerns which they may have to the attention of their cooperating teacher, supervisor, and/or seminar instructor.

12. Design and adapt curriculum, unit and lesson plans, teaching materials and assessments based on students’ intellectual, moral and social development.

13. Organize and manage a variety of classroom settings in a manner supportive of student growth and learning.

14. Prepare for mid-semester and final evaluation meetings (these meetings are usually facilitated by the student teacher). Write memos stating reflections of meeting and “next steps” to improve teaching practice.
15. Students will maintain a daily journal. They will write reflections on the issues, concerns and celebrations of their student teaching semester experience, using the Hole and McEntree format (see article on Canvas) as general model. They will read the examples of journals on the Canvas seminar site to help them understand the criteria for a reflective journal entry.

- Students are required to complete at least three journal entries, written on three separate days, of one page (minimum) for every week of student teaching, starting from the initial teacher development days before students start and ending with the final week of the practicum.
- During the week after the mid-semester conference, one of these three entries will be a reflection on the conference.
- Student teachers are not expected to journal during the solo week. Instead, they will write one page of notes each day. (One possible format: What did the class complete? What did the class not get a chance to finish? What aspects of my teaching need revision and how do I know? What did I learn about my teaching presence? (See Daily Reflection sheet in Canvas Seminar.) They will then write a two to three page reflection on their solo week after the week is over.
- Students may receive other specific journal prompts from their supervisors.
- If the solo week extends for more than one week, students and supervisors may adjust the requirements accordingly.
- At the end of student teaching, instead of a final summary, students will submit a draft of portfolio entry 6.

Students are expected to write clearly, with attention to grammar, usage and mechanics. These are due to supervisors at a consistent time/day to be arranged with supervisors. Supervisors will provide weekly written feedback on journals; students are expected to read this feedback and incorporate it in further journal entries when relevant.

ROLE OF COOPERATING TEACHER

Cooperating teachers are expected to:

1. Assure that the student teacher has a clear understanding of specific content requirements, norms of the classroom and pertinent information about students in instructional and support plans (including IEPs and ELL ACCESS teacher reports).

2. Share expertise with the student teacher in the areas of formulating goals and objectives, establishing rationale, planning, developing instructional strategies, creating and implementing valid assessments as they pertain to the Common Core State Standards, and the Vermont Standards and Grade Expectations.

3. Meet with the student teacher on a regular basis for planning and feedback. Conduct four observations (one per month on average) during the semester using the forms provided.

4. Allow the student teacher to progressively become involved in planning, implementing, and assessing lessons and student learning.
5. Allow the student teacher to teach a lesson (as appropriate) when the supervisor observes.

6. Allow the student teacher to assume total teaching responsibilities for a minimum of 1 week.

7. Provide specific guidance by helping the student teacher identify her/his strengths and areas for improvement, and through “coaching,” to encourage critically reflective teaching practice.

8. Provide a role model for the student teacher, with the awareness that the cooperating teacher is an important influence and has a great impact on a student teacher’s training and future professional practice.

9. Prepare for mid-term and final evaluations of the student teacher by completing the appropriate forms and have a copy available for each party.

10. Share with the supervisor any concerns and/or celebrations about the placement and work cooperatively with all concerned to address and remedy issues which may arise.

11. Recommend final grade for student teaching.

**ROLE OF SUPERVISOR**

Supervisors are expected to:

1. Facilitate a supportive working relationship between the Education Department, student teacher, cooperating teacher, and school site.

2. Recognize and respect the cooperating teacher’s primary responsibilities and authority in the classroom by playing the role of advisor and supporter.

3. Acquaint cooperating school personnel with the mission, outcomes, organization, and policies of Saint Michael’s College Education Department.

4. Work with the cooperating teacher in planning an appropriate program of experiences for the student teacher. There will be three triad meetings. At the first triad meeting, the planning meeting, the supervisor will explain the process of supervision, review the responsibilities of each individual in the triad, and facilitate in the development of teaching goals for the student teacher over the semester.

   The second triad meeting is the mid-semester evaluation. All three parties complete the evaluation of the student and review it together at the meeting.

   At the last triad meeting, the triad completes the final evaluation and reviews the semester together. The student teacher usually is responsible for facilitating the second and third triad meetings.
5. Observe and confer with the student teacher in order to help improve her/his teaching skills. In addition to the three triad meetings, eight observations/visits will be made during the semester. During these visits the supervisor will:

   a) Review lesson plans.
   b) Confer with cooperating teacher and, when appropriate, the principal or other designated officials.
   c) Help the student teacher evaluate his/her own progress, and raise questions for reflection.
   d) Write observational notes and comments for student teacher’s review.

6. Be available to the cooperating and student teachers to address issues that may arise.

7. Take responsibility for scheduling mid-term and final evaluation meetings of the student teacher and assigning a letter grade for student teaching.

8. When asked by the student teacher, write a letter of recommendation which honestly reflects his/her strengths and weaknesses.

9. Cooperate with other Education Department faculty in evaluating and refining Saint Michael’s College Teacher Licensure program.

10. Respond weekly to daily journal entries from the student teacher. See Role of Student Teacher item#15 for more detail.
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Chair of Education Department:

Jonathan Silverman
654-2306
jsilverman@smcvt.edu

Administrative Assistant: Paula Henry
654-2417
phenery@smcvt.edu

Director of Graduate Education Programs:

Claudine Bedell
654-2741
cbedell@smcvt.edu

Administrative Assistant: Karen Abbott
654-2649
kabbott@smcvt.edu

LICENSURE COORDINATOR:

Karen Donovan
654-2826
kdonovan@smcvt.edu