

Union Graduate College

School of Education

MAT Program Supervisor Handbook

Qualifications

UGC **Supervisors** hold adjunct faculty status at Union Graduate College. Supervisors are current or retired local secondary teachers or administrators with academic expertise in the content area he/she supervises. Supervisors are expected to hold the excellent content and pedagogical knowledge needed to assess Intern performance accurately and to identify problem areas. More importantly, Supervisors possess the interpersonal and communication skills that will enable them to promote intern growth by suggesting improvements and identifying and reinforcing strengths. Above all, Supervisors are excellent listeners.

The School of Education encourages all participants in the MAT program to view learning and ability through the lens of a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006). According to Dweck, a growth mindset understands that ability can be developed. If you adopt a growth mindset, you are logically encouraged to embrace challenge, persist through setbacks, see effort as the path to mastery, and learn from negative feedback.

This is in contrast to a fixed mindset, in which ability is viewed as fixed. If your intern is avoiding challenge, acting defensively, seeing effort as fruitless, and viewing negative feedback as criticism, you will want to remind him/her of the importance of adopting a growth mindset.

Similarly, Supervisors are encouraged to adopt the view that teaching ability can be developed. Conversations with the intern should be phrased to encourage them to seek challenges and persist in the face of obstacles. Negative feedback should be presented in terms of growth, that is, “what the intern is still learning,” as opposed to a statement of ability, that is, “what the intern cannot do.”

Two chapters from Dweck’s book are included in this handbook for your edification and enjoyment. The Interns have read this material, and Supervisors may choose to encourage the Intern to revisit relevant ideas.

Supervisor traits are evaluated by Interns anonymously at the end of the Internship experience (and after grades have been given to Interns). The results are tabulated by the Dean of the School of Education and shared with the Supervisors.

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Roles and Responsibilities

It is useful for Supervisors to think of themselves as the folks who keep all the other players functioning. In that capacity, Supervisors have many roles and responsibilities. The Supervisor:

- serves as the liaison between UGC and Interns, Mentors, and secondary schools;
- visits each Intern on a bi-weekly basis to observe the Intern teaching, and discuss progress with the Intern and Mentor;
- provides biweekly written feedback to the intern regarding his/her teaching and professional growth;
- plays a helping/teaching role;
- provides assistance with the EdTPA;
- provides a more objective view than that of the Mentor on the Intern's classroom performance;
- monitors the Intern's progress;
- keeps the Faculty and Dean of the School of Education apprised of the Intern's progress;
- at the end of each trimester, holds a formal review of Intern progress with the Intern and Mentor;
- reviews the Intern's summary of this meeting
- evaluates the Intern, both in writing and by using the Evaluation Form accompanying this document;
- assigns a grade at the end of each trimester in consultation with the Mentor and the Intern; and
- attends an annual orientation, three end of term meetings, and, as needed, additional meetings to address Intern problems or changes in program requirements.

Supervisor Visits

Typically, the Supervisor visits full-time Interns at their school sites on a bi-weekly basis. These visits are sometimes announced and at other times are unscheduled surprises for the Interns.

The first visit takes place during the first week of school or early in the second week. It is an important visit for establishing the tone of the relationship which the Mentor, the Intern and the Supervisor will share. Sometimes, the Supervisor has not previously met the Intern and/or the Mentor, so time for amenities is allowed. The Supervisor should introduce himself or herself to the school principal and the department chair if these are new faces or, if they are not available, make an appointment for a quick chat. As a representative of UGC, a Supervisor will enter a school frequently, and these personnel should know exactly who the Supervisor is. During the first visit, important information is gathered from the Intern such as:

- 1) A map of the school
- 2) A bell schedule
- 3) Phone numbers of the Intern, the Mentor, and the department chair
- 4) The school calendar
- 5) A completed schedule (with room numbers, times) of the Mentor's classes with an indication of which classes the Intern will be teaching
- 6) Seating charts

At this first meeting, remind the Intern that he or she is to create a binder in which all lesson plans, seating charts, handouts, tests, quizzes, and observation notes from the Mentor and Supervisor are kept. Interns have heard this before in the summer, but it frequently sounds like new information to them. The binder should be available for the Supervisor to study on request and may form the basis for future conversations and material for a professional portfolio which Interns will develop in conjunction with their Union course work. ***In addition, the Supervisor should remind the Intern to practice video-taping his/her classes early in the year,*** in preparation for the EdTPA.

The Supervisor-Intern relationship is a nurturing one, so it is important at this first meeting not only to establish expectations but also to leave some time for open-ended conversation about how things are going, what the Intern may be worried about, how the classes look, etc. Time should be taken with the Mentor as well, perhaps mentioning the Mentor meeting that will be held at Union Graduate College and answering any questions. In spite of what looks like a long agenda, this first meeting usually lasts less than an hour.

Subsequent visits are more structured. Sometimes a conference before the actual classroom visit is possible and the Intern describes his/her expectations for the class that will be visited. During the class itself, Supervisors take some sort of notes of their observations about the setting, the students, the Intern's plans, the instruction, almost anything that the Supervisor notices. After the classroom visit, a conference is held with the Intern. The Mentor may be present or may choose not to be. Often, it is a good idea to let the Intern lead off the conversation with his/her own feelings about how the lesson went. What surprises were there? Were the plans followed? Did anything out of the ordinary happen? What is the Intern particularly proud of? What might be done differently if the lesson were to be taught again? If the Mentor is present, he/she will add comments. After listening (supervising is largely the art of being a very good listener), the Supervisor or Intern will summarize notes and observations, usually in a written form that the Intern can file in the binder.

Useful Pedagogical Knowledge

UGC has a recommended lesson plan format. This format was designed by the School of Education faculty to assist Interns in the development of the skills they will need to demonstrate on the ed TPA. This document is included on the next page; Interns have an electronic version of this form that will expand to accommodate as much text as needed for their plans.

Interns are expected to follow this format. Please encourage the Intern to use the lesson plan format, and ask the Mentor to support the Intern in this endeavor. If the Supervisor has questions about the format, the Intern should be more than able to provide insight as to the purposes of each section of the lesson.

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What follows is a list of some of the teaching methods and key instructional ideas that are introduced to students during the summer portion of the MAT program. A Supervisor should encourage Interns to experiment with a variety of approaches to instruction. This list provides some suggestions, and will be a useful conversation starter with the Intern.

Teaching Models

Madeline Hunter: a foundational direct instruction model that focuses on a balance between the introduction of new material and the need for students' to process and apply what they learn. The steps in the model essentially include: anticipatory set, input, check for understanding, guided practice, and independent practice.

Concept Development: a useful model for teaching pivotal concepts in a curriculum. The model steps students through a series of brainstorming activities followed by a consolidation of ideas into the development of a definition of a concept.

Concept Attainment: similar to concept development in that students develop the definition of the concept through guided practice. In concept attainment, students are presented with a series of examples and non-examples of a concept which allows them to develop a list of attributes and a definition.

Vocabulary Acquisition: used to introduce sets of new vocabulary through interactive, group-structured activity. Steps in the model include pretest, develop and discuss inventive spelling, hypothesize meanings, explore patterns, contextualize terms, evaluate and posttest.

Suchman Inquiry: a discovery learning model which steps students through a series of rounds with 'clues' that build toward an answer to an overarching question. In groups, students work to develop and ask questions until they can propose a possible answer to the overarching question.

Discussion: several methods for facilitating a teacher-lead discussion or a student-lead discussion are modeled including full class, small group, fish bowl, jigsaw, etc.

Cooperative Learning: the classical model of cooperative learning is taught including the five primary principles of the method: resource interdependence, individual accountability, group processing, roles and face-to-face interaction.

Instructional Concepts and Frameworks

Mastery Learning
Metacognition
Multiple Intelligences Theory
Advance Organizers
Bloom's Taxonomy
Acquisition-based vs. consolidation-based teaching

Instructional Topics

Differentiation
Lesson Planning
Classroom Management
Grading
Formative and Summative Assessment
Common Core and State Standards

Further Reading: Gunter, M.A., Estes, T. H., & Schwab, J. (2010) *Instruction: A models approach*. 6th ed. Boston, MA: A & B Publishing.

Supervisor's Observation Reports

Observation reports by Supervisors can and do take many different forms. What follows is a sample of one written observation of a Social Studies lesson:

To: *Student's Name*
From: *Supervisor's name*
Re: *Observation on January xx, 2xxx*
Date: *January xx, 2xxx*

Sara was teaching a lesson on the Spanish-American War. She spent the first few minutes taking care of announcements and items of business. Then the class took about five minutes for a quick review of what they had previously studied. She went around the room with a fast question and answer session that clearly indicated that the class had the knowledge she wanted them to have.

To reinforce the learning of the information and to introduce the next series of events, Sara developed and used a hands-on exercise. It was a flow chart that she had made into jigsaw puzzles for each student. She began by talking about a puzzle and how one has to study each part and how putting them together helps one to see the whole picture. Then students did the puzzle. After about ten minutes, they discussed what they had reviewed

and learned and the why's.

She concluded by having students get out their journals and she gave them two questions to think and write about. In effect, students were required to write about the implications of imperialism and the possible problems the U.S. would face in dealing with it. After they wrote for a few minutes, she told them to read pp. 127-30 for Thursday.

Although students did get a bit itchy for a few minutes toward the end, it was a fine lesson. In fact, she was effective in getting them back on task. There was a variety of activities including hands-on activities which required students to use knowledge they had acquired. The quick-fire review was very effective. Most students participated and seemed to know the content. The puzzle activity was quite clever and involved students. During the discussion after the puzzle, Sara made a point of reaching out to students who had not participated earlier, so that by the end of the class every student, except for the Oriental immigrant, had participated at least twice. She also enlivened the class by doing some chorus answering activities as a change of pace. The journal exercise, if it is followed up with discussion, is a good one because it requires students to think and deal with cause-effect relationships. The lesson flowed very nicely from the business section at the start through the sets and the closure.

Suggestions:

- 1. I would include more details on anticipated answers in the lesson plans. You left out some important causes when you did the closure: business investment, humanitarianism, yellow press, etc.*
- 2. Focus more on concepts and concept vocabulary such as conflict and multiple causation (compare it to other past and future wars) and interdependence with imperialism as an example. You could discuss the role of the media in society.*
- 3. Tie to more recent developments such as current relations with Cuba and Philippines, Cuban immigration, the Gulf War, etc.*

Questions:

- 1. Tina asked why you kept doing the same stuff. Think about it. Repetition is good but it can be overdone. I don't see enough classes to make a judgment here, but she raised the question, so you might want to think about it.*
- 2. What is the matter with Curt and the boy to the right of Tina? They were quiet*

and appeared a bit sullen. You might try to josh them into participating a bit more enthusiastically. Of course, it may simply be a bad day, but keep your eye on them.

3. *How many students do you think will do the assignment? What do you want them to get out of it? How do they know what you want?*

Other items:

Since I was there for homeroom I had time to go through your binder. You had a number of good exercises, and I'd like to mention them here. You have them doing a skills exercise on a time line and pictures. The outlining exercises look good, but be careful not to overdo a good thing. I really like the yellow journalism writing exercise. It makes them think and be observant.

Notice that this Supervisor began with a summary of what happened. The positive elements in the class are identified for the Intern. Beginning teachers are often unaware of the many good things they do intuitively. If the behavior is to be repeated, however, these intuitions must be brought to the attention and the consciousness of the Intern. One or two areas that might be improved are identified. **Since the Supervisor will not be mentioning everything that might be improved, it is important to isolate one or two of the most critical elements in need of correction.** Sometimes there may be discipline problems or it may be apparent that the Intern is not up to speed with the content. These matters must be attended to before the finer points of individualizing instruction or planning small group instruction may be taken up. The details vary with every situation, of course, but the wise Supervisor can assess the individual situation and pin point the areas of greatest need. **This Supervisor used questions to point out areas that need discussion. This strategy places the Supervisor less in a judgmental role and more in a "we're-all-in-this-together" mode.**

Please be assured that this is not a prescribed format. Surely every Supervisor will develop his or her own procedures. In the beginning, Supervisors use a wide-angle lens to give the Intern an impression of the entire lesson. Later, attention will be given to more focused observations. Perhaps the Intern wishes to encourage active participation of all students, or wants the Supervisor to focus on a particular student, and the Supervisor will adjust the observation accordingly. Developmental stages that occur as the Intern matures include an increasing concern with what students are doing rather than a preoccupation with "how I'm doing". Later, the Intern will be encouraged to focus not only on planning the content of the lesson, but on experimenting with the best possible teaching strategies that accomplish the goals of the lesson.

A sheet entitled "Intern/Mentor Team Teaching/Planning Guidelines" (appended) is a useful discussion guide with Interns and Mentors to make sure that requirements are being met. It also helps to answer the inevitable questions about how much autonomy the Intern has in classes. **UGC expects Interns to be involved in the classroom from the very first day, taking attendance, teaching a small portion of a lesson, collecting and grading papers as initial experiences, for example. Responsibilities for planning and teaching are phased in gradually, and the time-line is different for each Intern, but, under no circumstance, is the model "sink or swim" for the Intern.**

Intern, Mentor and Supervisor Evaluative Conferences

At least three times during the Internship, the Intern will meet with the Mentor and UGC Supervisor to review the Internship. These conferences typically occur about two weeks before the end of the trimester. That is, conferences occur in early November, early March, and early June. At these conferences the Intern is provided with formalized feedback on his/her progress.

These conferences are described in a document titled: *Indicators of Teacher Performance: Formative and Summative Evaluation Guide* in the Evaluation section of this binder. Interns, Mentors, and Supervisors have been provided with copies of this document and it will serve as the basis for discussions about an Intern's strengths and areas in need of improvement.

Prior to meeting, each of the three participants use the *Indicators of Teacher Performance: Formative and Summative Evaluation Guide* (appended) to indicate their impression of the Intern's performance in the categories listed. These ratings indicate whether the listed characteristics could best be described on a five-point scale as outstanding, skillful, fundamentally sound, needs improvement, or unsatisfactory. It is not as important for all three parties to agree on their ratings as it is to make sure that all essential points are raised for discussion and explanation. The Intern should hear positive feedback as well as areas in need of improvement at each of these conferences.

What if the Intern disagrees with the Mentor and/or Supervisor? It is unlikely. A distinguishing characteristic of the UGC program is its insistence on Interns becoming self-reflective. Interns are quite likely to assess themselves relatively accurately. If they don't, the differences in opinion should become the basis for a conversation.

It is useful for the Supervisor to think of and write down specific examples that illustrate a successful completion of particular items since these can be helpful in the final written evaluation at the end of the Internship.

The Intern is required to take notes during these sessions and compose a written summary of the

major strengths and areas in need of improvement that are discussed. The Intern must hand one copy of his/her summary to the Mentor and another to the Supervisor. The Supervisor should review this reflection, and bring it to the attention of the Dean if the document reveals that the Intern shows a lack of insight regarding his/her progress in the Internship.

Grading

The Supervisor is responsible for assigning each Intern a grade for the Internship experience at the end of each trimester. Although the Supervisors discuss ways to balance the criteria spelled out in the "Indicators of Teacher Performance Formative and Summative Evaluation Guide," they have agreed that the grading is a judgment call and total uniformity is not possible. Interns are having experiences that are at once universal and unique. One Supervisor's expectations and evaluations may differ from another Supervisor's.

Grades should usually be discussed with Interns before they are assigned.

Acceptable grades are A, A-, B+, B, & B-. Grades of C or lower indicate that the Intern is not successful, and a thorough discussion with the Dean of the School of Education is in order.

End of Trimester Supervisor Meetings

At the end of each trimester, all the UGC supervisors attend a half day meeting at the UGC campus. These meetings serve as an opportunity to keep the Faculty and Dean apprised of student progress. It is also a time when Supervisors' questions about their grades can be discussed with each other and The School of Education Dean and Faculty.

End of Trimester Reports

Each supervisor will prepare a written summary of the Intern's strengths and recommendations for the Supervisor meeting. These summaries should align with the items on the Evaluation Guide, and include both strengths and areas in need of development. Reports should be more descriptive than general. Examples of descriptive reports can be found on the pages that follow.

Problems

Not every problem can be anticipated, of course, and Supervisors would not want an exhaustive list because then, surely, they would not go to work the next morning. However, here are some problems that have emerged in the Supervisors' meetings with the Dean and possible ways of addressing them:

- 1) **Problem:** The Mentor doesn't understand his/her role or the UGC philosophy with respect to

- a) co-planning
- b) team teaching
- c) lesson planning
- d) Intern autonomy
- e) observation/feedback

Solution: Encourage the Mentor to attend Mentor meetings. Encourage the Mentor to re-read the Mentor Handbook and discuss the salient parts with him/her.

- 2) **Problem:** There is a personality or philosophical conflict between the Mentor and the Intern.

Solution: Encourage discussion with the Intern, Mentor, and Supervisor. Clearly, the Mentor's philosophical and curricular decisions will hold sway, but open discussion is possible.

- 3) **Problem:** The Mentor's methods or philosophy differ from those taught in UGC's courses.

Solution: This is a tricky problem. It is not the Supervisor's responsibility to comment on the methods or philosophy of the Mentor. The Intern may bring up discrepancies, but is encouraged to be creative about reconciling these differences. Often in the course of pre-planning, a desired approach can be explored and agreed to by the Mentor.

- 4) **Problem:** The Intern is torn in two directions between his/her UGC course work and the responsibilities of the Internship.

Solution: This is a problem almost every Intern faces at one time or another during the Internship. Help the Intern prioritize his/her goals. The Internship is critical,

and the Intern has already demonstrated academic ability. Keep things in perspective. Point out that there are predictable highs and lows in an Intern's experience. It is an important life lesson when an Intern learns that he/she will come out of the slump.

- 5) **Problem:** A transfer from one Mentor to another seems in the best interest of the Intern.

Solution: A transfer is possible, but it should be effected only after considerable discussion with all parties, particularly the Faculty and Dean of the School of Education. All parties should agree that all avenues to solve problems creatively have been exhausted. All parties should be informed of the transfer. There should be no surprises. Transfers will be managed by the Dean in collaboration with the Faculty and Supervisor.

- 6) **Problem:** The Intern is not succeeding in the Internship.

Solution: Not everyone can teach. Not all Interns should be recommended for certification or receive the MAT degree from UGC. At the same time, the program is designed to help the struggling Intern succeed. That is what distinguishes the program from the "sink or swim" nature of many student teaching experiences.

One of the risks in trying to be patient and supportive is that it sometimes takes a long time for the Intern, Mentor, Supervisor and Dean to make decisions on what to do about an Intern's continuation in the program. When decisions are delayed too long, students suffer. Therefore, we need to follow these procedures in dealing with at risk Interns:

Early October: Supervisors should bring to the attention of the Faculty and Dean any Intern who is experiencing difficulty early in the Internship. This process may be initiated by the Mentor, Intern, or Supervisor. An early conference that includes the Supervisor, Mentor and Intern should be held to identify problems and solutions. **This conference should clearly inform the Intern in writing of the problems, the prescriptions, and the help available from the Mentor and the Supervisor.** The Dean and Faculty may be involved in the conference; if not, they should be informed both before and after the conference.

Early November: At the regular end of trimester conference, the status of the Intern should be reviewed. If there has been little progress, the Intern should meet with the Supervisor and Dean to discuss these options: 1) change of

placement at the end of the first trimester (perhaps the Mentor has not been effective or there is reason to hope that a different teaching assignment would help), 2) change of program (e.g., reduced course load), 3) dismissal from the program.

Second Trimester: These same steps should be repeated if needed during comparable time frames in the second trimester since problems can sometimes disappear and then re-emerge.

Third Trimester: If sufficient progress has not been noted, the Intern should not continue into the third trimester. Late in the third trimester, it is often too late to remove the Intern from the program.

Conclusion

Supervising Interns is a rewarding experience that allows teachers to pass on knowledge gained from years of experience. It is a crucial responsibility to the improvement of our profession and of education.

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