

Novice Notes



**What you learn
after you know it
all is what counts.”**

—JOHN WOODEN
UCLA CHAMPIONSHIP
BASKETBALL COACH

Top 10 Tips

1. BE ENTHUSIASTIC!
2. Always over-plan—there won't be time to get off task.
3. Define your roles and rules the first day.
4. Get to know your students' names right away.
5. Speak to students as they enter and leave the classroom.
6. Send a letter home informing parents who you are and what your goals are. Parental communication is important!
7. Listen to everything your cooperating teacher says. Ask for opinions, ideas, and feedback.
8. Get to know the building staff—teachers, administrators, secretaries, and janitors.
9. Be organized and ready to think on your toes. Teachers really do have to make last-minute changes and decisions.
10. ENJOY YOUR STUDENTS!

Adapted from Page Mitchem's article in the *New Teacher Advocate*

**For Tomorrow's
Teacher**

What to Expect

Challenging Circumstances

Student teaching must be your priority. Field-based teacher education is intensive—you will be involved

in the school and the lives of students.

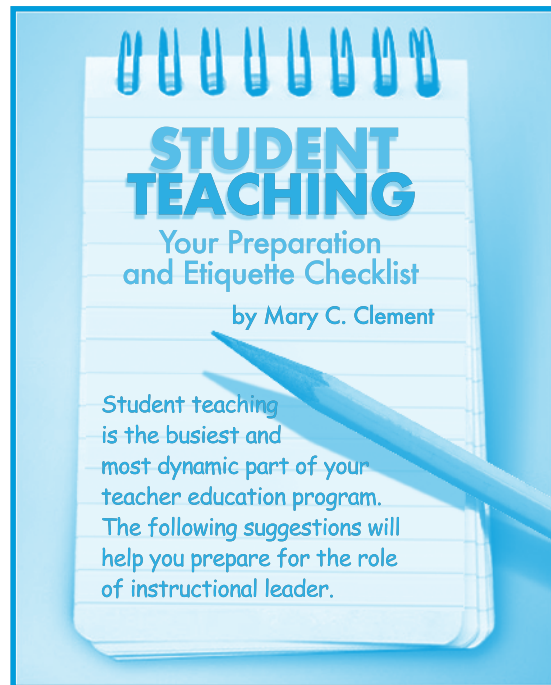
Therefore, it is not a good time to work at another job, be a dorm supervisor, or serve as president of your fraternity/sorority. Student teachers with spouses and children should arrange for help from family members.

- Examine your school, home, and work responsibilities. Will the time commitment and rigor of teacher preparation fit with all parts of your life?
- Clear your schedule to concentrate on student teaching.

Hard Work

The teaching profession is one of great responsibility, and student teaching is your apprenticeship in assuming that charge. Professionals take the initiative in knowing their job responsibilities and keeping up with new educational practices. Student teachers must develop instructional objectives that connect curriculum and performance standards to real-world use and students' interests. Specific instructional objectives should guide lesson planning and inform students of a teacher's intentions.

- Have you read the student/teacher handbook for your school? Know school policies going into the classroom.
- Do you know instructional objectives of the school, district, and state, as well as course curriculum?



How to Prepare

Academically

Courses in methods and management are critical to teaching success; however, consider

special education, Spanish, or English as a Second Language (ESL) when selecting elective courses. The more prepared you are for teaching diverse populations, the easier it will be to take charge of a classroom. If possible, finish your coursework before student teaching so that you may concentrate on student teaching itself.

- Take electives that will empower your teaching abilities.
- Complete your coursework before student teaching.

Personally

Student teaching hours start as early as 7 a.m. and end about 4:30 p.m. You also may have after-school duties and meetings. If you don't own any, purchase comfortable shoes that look nice. Once placed, meet with your assigned teacher. Ask for the school calendar, daily schedule, and map of the school. Find out whether you will need an ID badge or other security pass.

- Meet with your assigned teacher.
- Turn in paperwork and obtain schedules.

Professionally

Over-prepare for the classroom—preparation increases your confidence. Always have a Plan B in case Plan A's intentions go awry. Don't forget to

create a bag of tricks—that stash of emergency ideas, lessons, and games that you’ve collected from field experiences, readings, and peers. While it’s fine to ask a cooperating teacher for suggestions, have a few ideas of your own to bounce off the experienced teacher.

- Do you have a back-up plan?
- Have you created a bag of tricks?

Where to Start

Appearance

Leave your blue jeans and T-shirts at home. You are a teacher in the making; therefore, you must look professional. Men: add khaki slacks and ties to your wardrobe. Women: find skirts, jumpers, and dress slacks. Student teaching is not the time to “make a statement” through personal dress or appearance.

- Is your wardrobe appropriate?

Professionalism

Punctuality and professionalism go hand in hand. Being tardy or absent is simply unacceptable. Student teacher is a position of responsibility upon which teachers and administrators depend. Furthermore, how you manage time will enhance or undermine your effectiveness as a classroom teacher.

The day you begin student teaching, arrive early to meet the school secretaries. Give them a card with your name and your cooperating teacher’s name, as well as your address, phone, and an emergency contact. Give your teacher a card also.

Learn students’ names as quickly as possible. Make a copy of the teacher’s seating chart or create one. Observe students for their learning styles and for management issues; grade papers to audit students’ prior knowledge and skills. Assist whenever you can, asking the simple question, “How can I help?”

Discuss team teaching with the teacher, and outline how you will gradually take full responsibility for classes. Keep your college supervisor informed and take advantage of observations! Don’t miss out on valuable feedback and ideas from your assigned teacher and college supervisor.

- Do you have an information card for the office?
- Do you have a notebook for observation notes and a plan for teaching?

Your Role

In the Classroom

Preservice teachers who enter their cooperating teachers’ classrooms determined to be “good guests” are most likely to be rewarded with teaching opportunities and ever-increasing responsibilities. Though student teaching is your time to gain vital classroom experience, the cooperating teacher is the one accountable. Try to put yourself in that teacher’s place. Cooperating teachers do not know you, your attitude, abilities, personality, and teaching philosophies. Some teachers view a student teacher as a burden and see “doing it themselves” much easier.

- Are you in the mindset of a guest?
- Have you put your cooperating teacher’s mind at ease?

With the Teacher

Observe your cooperating teacher. Listen. Learn. Cooperating teachers know their students and the environment in which they teach. Being critical is easy, but seeking the voice of experience in your teacher benefits you more. Even when placed with an ineffective cooperating teacher, a preservice teacher can learn a great deal. When a situation is difficult or feelings are hurt, asking for another setting is not the solution.

Choosing to stay and work things out is in your best interest. Communicate well to prevent small problems from escalat-

ing into major ones. Be careful of “knowing it all.” That attitude undermines the relationship with the cooperating teacher and limits personal opportunities for growth.

- Commit to working with your cooperating teacher.
- Listen, learn, and communicate well.

With the Students

Be a role model for the students. Demonstrate a positive attitude in your countenance and your actions. Smile a lot. It encourages a good outlook. A negative attitude will destroy a preservice teacher’s relationship with students and other educators. Building a good rapport is necessary for obtaining strong references from mentors and others. Occasionally, go “above and beyond” assigned duties—the extra effort may be viewed as a sign of caring.

- Smile, be courteous, and enjoy your class.
- Show you care with extra effort now and then.

In the Teachers’ Lounge

Cooperating teachers expect cooperation, support, and respect from preservice teachers. Be careful about what you hear and say, especially in the teachers’ lounge. Teachers may vent about students or criticize one of their peers, but you should not comment. Your words will be viewed in an entirely different light. Leave what you hear in the lounge and ignore gossip.

- If you can’t say anything nice, say nothing at all.

For Your Future

Student teaching is the opportune time to add to your permanent teaching files. Keep good records of teaching materials, plans, and units. Take pictures of bulletin boards and student activities. Arrange these pictures and samples, along with recommended items, into an outstanding portfolio.

- Save, save, save.