

**Western Illinois University (WIU)  
Faculty Mentor Program  
For  
English Education  
Teacher Candidate  
And Mentors**



*Revised September 2011*

Faculty Mentor \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Candidate \_\_\_\_\_

### **MENTOR PROGRAM – FACULTY AND TEACHER CANDIDATE INFORMATION**

Thank you for agreeing to mentor one of our teacher candidates. As you know, this is a challenging time for beginning teachers as they are attempting to integrate what they learned in college with what they encounter in schools. Teacher candidates may be inclined to adopt the practices of the school cultures in which they are placed, while that may not be the philosophy of teaching that we encourage. This might be a necessary survival tactic, but I am convinced that our job is to help them imagine other possibilities. We often can help them value their undergraduate learning and intellectual habits by reminding them of some alternatives, for example, to be good listeners.

#### **Requirements:**

Teacher candidates will submit one journal entry each week, and they need to use the journal as a place to reflect and question the complexity of learning how to teach. The 10 entries that candidates write to you will be CONFIDENTIAL, so they may share concerns with you without having to fear reprisals.

**TEACHER CANDIDATES MUST WRITE AND SUBMIT ONE REFLECTION PER WEEK. IF THEY DO NOT, PLEASE E-MAIL THEM WITH A REMINDER.**

**Listed below are some instructions and suggestions that may be useful to you. I also have attached a list of prompts that teacher candidates may use.**

1. Starting early in the semester, candidates need to submit one entry each week. If they get behind you may want to help them understand the value of reflection in practice. The purpose of the journal is **to encourage reflection in practice**, so please contact the teacher candidate who is not completing responses in a timely fashion.
2. You and your assigned candidate can decide how he or she will submit and how you will respond to entries. You may want your candidate to send you their entry on Friday, or you may ask for the entry over the weekend. **Consistency is important.**
3. Try to both acknowledge accomplishments and move teacher candidates to think through new challenges. Try never to criticize administrators, teachers or students; the key is to remain professional. I encourage teacher candidates to ask questions and to try to figure out why professionals do things the way they do. **Negative talk and thought creates dead ends.**
4. If you are concerned or troubled by a response or something that is happening in the school, please see or e-mail me at [BK-Sonnek@wiu.edu](mailto:BK-Sonnek@wiu.edu). If I am informed about problems or potential problems early in the semester, I can take appropriate action to help the semester progress smoothly.
5. We may want to think of the journal as beginning conversations with teacher candidates by asking questions, offering different interpretations, and presenting scenarios in different landscapes. Avoid offering too much advice.
6. Teacher candidates need to complete 10 single-spaced one-page entries by the end of the semester. When they have completed the journal requirement, **please fill out the attached completion form**, so that I may forward the appropriate paperwork to the Education Department recommending the teacher candidates for licensure.

7. Should a candidate mention anything in his or her journal that you think might be legally problematic (suspected abuse, etc.), please see me or remind the teacher candidate of his/her legal responsibilities. We are obligated by law to inform authorities of such knowledge.
8. Remind candidates that they are guests in teachers' classrooms and communities. Teaching is about 90% relationships, and our teacher candidates often need someone to guide them through relationship dilemmas. While we may not always agree with a teacher, we can avoid criticism by asking student teachers to try to understand the teacher's reasoning while also imagining how they might handle the situation differently in their own classrooms. While not all mentoring teachers are ideal, they are all devoting a tremendous amount of energy into mentoring our teacher candidates. Modeling good professional attitudes and behaviors is our primary role.
9. I may visit teacher candidates while they are working in schools. If you think we need to visit a candidate, or if you would like to, please talk to me.
10. Your response lengths are up to you. I often respond within a day or two each week with a paragraph or two (sometimes more), addressing issues of concern or success or whatever else I think may help the teacher candidates.
11. Several mentors in the past have met with and/or spoken with their candidates. It is up to you and the teacher candidate to determine if you would like to consider this as one of the journal entries—I have no problem with this.

***Thank you once again for mentoring an English Education teacher candidate. Teacher candidates seem delighted with having a contact and helper to see them through their first teaching experience.***

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## Teacher Candidate Journal

The purpose of this journal is for you to take time during your teaching experience to reflect on your activities, successes, challenges, and other feelings. By responding to some prompts, you may focus your attention on important teaching and learning issues. By choosing your own topic, you will think analytically about what you see and do while in the classroom. Your tendency might be to merely tell what happens during any given day, but that is better left to your personal diary. **Instead, aim for discussion, analysis and reflection.** Your faculty readers hope that you will pose questions and show that you are capable of entering real teaching conversations. Reflection necessitates that you think about your successes, as well as your vulnerabilities and difficulties.

### Teacher Candidate Requirements:

1. Attempt to meet your WIU faculty mentor the week before you leave campus. If this is not possible, please contact your assigned faculty no later than a week or two afterwards.
2. Give your WIU faculty mentor any logistical details, such as your schedule, e-mail address, and permanent phone numbers. Initiating the conversation is your responsibility, and you should begin this as early as possible.
3. At a minimum you are required to write one single-spaced page each week; remember to begin early in the semester. Each entry should be titled according to the issue(s) you have chosen. We no longer require that you must respond to the prompts; they are provided for your convenience.
4. While you will not need to write a final-draft copy, your journal entries should be proofread and your assignments as error free as possible.
5. This journal is important as teacher reflection is an integral part of teaching effectively. You must complete the journal to be recommended for licensure. I will check with your English department faculty mentors throughout the semester to discuss your progress.
6. **By the final meeting at WIU, you must complete Reflective Essay II (see requirements on page 7). The rubric in your packet outlines for you what must be addressed in your essay. Since the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards are covered in your standard, simply write the date you finished them.**
7. If you are struggling and need help during your candidate teaching experience, or if you want to talk about curriculum, job hunting, etc., please feel free to call or e-mail me.
8. Remember that you are a guest in your mentor teacher's classroom and school. While you may not always understand why he or she does things a particular way, you will want to take every opportunity to ask questions. Your journal entries should always be respectful of other professionals. This doesn't mean that you cannot imagine other possibilities, but it does mean that you will need to maintain your professional dispositions.
9. Attached is a list of prompts for you to choose from. You may respond to several of these prompts during your candidate teaching, if you wish.
10. Date all your entries.
11. **You must submit a minimum of 10 journals to be recommended for licensure.**

**Prompts: Choose prompts as you find them helpful. Title all journal entries.**

1. Describe a post-teaching conference that you had with your mentor teacher after you taught a lesson. While you will want to write about the focus of the conversation, please also write about how your behavior during the conference both encouraged and discouraged productive and reflective conversation.
2. Visit at least two different teachers teaching at your school. What did you learn from watching these teachers' interactions with students?
3. Describe the culture of the school during the first week and then again during your final weeks. What are the stated and unstated rules? How do the faculty interact among themselves and with administrators and students? Can you describe the student body? What does this community value in schools?
4. Describe how your mentoring teacher integrates technology into his/her curriculum. How can you add or create productive activities that incorporate technology?
5. Attend an English/language arts faculty meeting and try to understand how the department allows differing views about teaching English/language arts. Consider the areas where there are a range of visions: canonical/young adult literature; accessibility to Advanced Placement classes; grammar in context or as a discrete unit of study; personal/creative/academic writing; writing across the curriculum, collaboration among teachers, and so forth.
6. While still candidate teaching, summarize a recently published journal article you read that has helped you become a more successful teacher. If you shared this article with your mentoring teacher, include his or her reaction to the article and your summary.
7. Too frequently we think of diversity as ethnic diversity. Think about the range of definitions of diversity that might include, but are not limited to: socio-economic, religious, learning accommodations, and so forth. Then try to describe diversity within your classroom and your school. For instance, city and rural students might be an obvious distinction.
8. Most new teachers will encounter students who are better readers and writers than themselves. Talk with your mentoring teacher about how to challenge these students and report your conversations in your entry. You might also identify such a student or group of students and think about how you can continue to meet their educational needs.
9. How do you manage disruptions, assemblies, scheduled and unscheduled events that interfere with your teaching and learning plans? Observe your teacher or yourself for one day, noting all the time spent on secretarial and non-teaching duties. Talk with two other teachers about how they manage these disruptions without losing focus.
10. Describe one of your successes or achievements. This might be a description of a particularly excellent class, or helping a student who needed extra attention. Can you identify why you thought this a noteworthy success or achievement?
11. Describe a particularly difficult student. How do you account for his or her difficulties? What strategies are you implementing to help this student?
12. Describe a particularly interesting or good student. How do you account for his or her success? What traits do you admire in this student? What strategies are you implementing to challenge this student?
13. Make an appointment with a school administrator and ask about his or her job. What are the challenges a principal or counselor faces? How do they spend their time? How does the administrator think of his or

her role in nurturing teachers and helping the faculty improve? What are the community issues that are particular to this school that have an impact on learning and teaching? What does the principal look for when hiring new teachers? Take some time to use any of these questions or make up your own questions before you meet with the administrator. Then write a journal entry summarizing your visit. Discuss any surprising or interesting findings.

14. Watch yourself and other teachers, noting behaviors that not only earn students' respect but also behaviors that earn respect from other professionals.
15. Once you have been in a classroom for awhile, you may be keenly aware of what you know and do not know. You might also be grateful for some classes that you took, or you might wish you had taken other courses that would have better prepared you. Take some time to reflect on these observations.
16. Tell about a lesson plan that didn't go as well as planned. What could you have done better to bring about a different outcome?
17. Write a thank you note to your mentoring teacher that describes in detail his or her talents and specific actions he or she took that were helpful.
18. Most educators confront our own failures and lack of knowledge every time we enter a classroom. What strategies will help you better deal with your own lack of knowledge and what can you do to improve?
19. And finally, to be submitted for certification recommendations, each of you must complete Reflective Essay II and the Western Teacher Work Sample and upload them to Clara Carrigan, English Education Secretary.

**If you have questions or concerns, contact:**

**Dr. Bonnie K. Sonnek, Director  
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[BK-Sonnek@wiu.edu](mailto:BK-Sonnek@wiu.edu)  
Home: (309) 833-5920  
Office: 226 Simpkins Hall**

**Send completed materials to:**

**Clara Carrigan  
English Education Secretary  
[CM-Carrigan@wiu.edu](mailto:CM-Carrigan@wiu.edu)  
Office: (309) 298-1216  
Office: 226D Simpkins Hall  
Mailing Address: WIU  
1 University Circle  
Department of English & Journalism  
Simpkins Hall 226D  
Macomb, IL 61455-1390**

## Reflective Paper #2 Directions

**Reflective Paper #2** must be submitted to your major department the semester you are candidate teaching. The paper must be approved by the major department before certification will be processed.

Reflect on your candidate teaching experience by addressing each of the following items in your paper. Use the scoring rubric (See APPENDIX C) to organize your paper and to ensure you address each item listed below. For style and grammar, consult the APA (American Psychological Association) style manual, which is available where textbooks are sold, in the Reference section of the Malpass Library, in the back of the style manual used in ENG 180 & 280, or summarized on a website such as: :  
<http://www.wooster.edu/Academics/Areas-of-Study/Psychology/> (APA Style Guide).

1. Provide an example from your candidate teaching that illustrates your understanding and application of each of the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (IPTS). Refer to website: <http://www.isbe.net/profprep/pcstandardrules.htm>. In your discussion, identify each standard by either including a heading for the standard prior to addressing it in your paper or typing the name of the standard in bold in the body of the paragraph that addresses the standard.
2. Provide an example from your candidate teaching that illustrates your understanding and application of each of the 8 TEP candidate dispositions. Refer to website: <http://www.wiu.edu/coehs/cpep/tep/dispositions.php>. As in your discussion of the IPTS standards, identify each disposition with a heading or put it in bold in the narrative.
3. Considering the IPTS, TEP dispositions, and your candidate teaching experience, identify and reflect on your strengths and weaknesses as a teacher.
4. In addition to addressing each of the three items listed above, your paper will be evaluated on organization, spelling, sentence structure, grammar, and writing mechanics.

NOTE: Your answers to the above items should prove helpful in organizing your reflections on your candidate teaching as you prepare to interview for teaching positions. Principals/superintendents typically ask questions of teacher candidates that are similar to those listed above during the interview process.

### Disposition with Indicators

1. **Collaboration:**

***Works together with others to achieve a common goal in all academic and professional settings.***

- Cooperates with others
- Makes contribution to group effort
- Shares information and materials with others
- Assists peers
- Supports decisions of group willingly, even if different from own
- Volunteers to participate in group effort
- Supports work of others
- Plans and sets goals and priorities with others
- Establishes professional goals that are aligned with those of the organization
- Makes relevant contributions to discussions

2. **Honesty/Integrity:**  
***Demonstrates truthfulness, professional behavior and trustworthiness***
  - Models behavior expected of both teachers and learners in an educational setting
  - Communicates without intent to deceive
  - Gives credit to others when using their work
  - Acts with honesty and integrity in all academic and professional situations
  
3. **Respect:**  
***Honors, values, and demonstrates consideration and regard for oneself and others***
  - Demonstrates a friendly and caring manner to others
  - Interacts in a polite and respectful manner with students, peers, colleagues, and supervisors
  - Uses appropriate professional language
  - Takes care of property of others in all academic and professional situations
  - Demonstrates empathy and concern for others
  
4. **Commitment to Learning:**  
***Demonstrates a respect for and is serious about knowledge acquisition***
  - Values knowledge, content, and experiences presented in preservice academic programs
  - Takes initiative to expand knowledge base
  - Actively engaged during instructional time and field experiences.
  - Seeks opportunities to learn new skills
  - Uses credible and data-based sources
  - Demonstrates enthusiasm for the subject being taught
  - Demonstrates positive attitude toward learning
  - Demonstrates intellectual and academic curiosity
  
5. **Emotional Maturity:**  
***Demonstrates situationally appropriate behavior***
  - Uses appropriate strategies to respond to emotional and emergency situations
  - Responds to situations professionally
  - Uses appropriate tone of voice
  - Initiates communication to resolve conflict
  - Maintains emotional control
  - Uses self-disclosure appropriately
  - Uses appropriate non-verbal expressions
  - Acts from a positive frame of reference most of the time, including when changes occur
  - Adapts to unexpected or new situations
  - Accepts less than ideal situations when necessary
  - Demonstrates good personal hygiene
  - Dresses appropriately for the situation
  
6. **Responsibility:**  
***Acts independently and demonstrates accountability, reliability, and sound judgment***
  - Gives priority to health and safety concerns of others, as well as self.
  - Protects personal health to avoid absences
  - Accepts consequences for personal actions or decisions
  - Submits individual and/or group assignments on time or follows procedures for extensions
  - Prepares for classes, meetings, and group work
  - Manages time effectively
  - Completes assigned tasks from group activities within an acceptable time frame
  - Seeks clarification and/or assistance as needed
  - Prioritizes work based upon established goals
  - Returns borrowed materials in a timely manner
  - Takes initiative to get materials and notes when absent from meetings or classes
  - Seeks/locates needed resources
  - Ensures accuracy of information for which he/she is responsible
  - Arrives for class on time
  - Attends class regularly



7. **Fairness:**

***Demonstrated commitment to meet the education needs of all students in a caring, non-discriminatory, and equitable manner.***

- Responds appropriately to actions and reactions of others
- Accepts feedback from others
- Identifies personal responsibility in conflict/problem situations
- Considers opinions of others with an open mind
- Displays equitable treatment of others
- Uses sound judgment in decision making
- Takes action to solve problems in an equitable manner
- Makes decisions and acts with honesty and integrity

8. **Belief that All Students Can Learn:**

***Demonstrates behaviors that support a culturally diverse educational environment that provides opportunities for all students to learn.***

- Listens attentively to others in a variety of contexts
- Acknowledges perspectives of individuals from diverse cultural and experiential backgrounds
- Interacts appropriately in relation to cultural norms
- Appreciates and embraces individual differences
- Demonstrates positive attitudes toward diverse cultures and learners
- Conveys high expectations for achievement

## Teacher Candidate Requirements Completion Sheet

(NOTE: When completed, please give this to Clara Carrigan, English Education Secretary)

When your mentee has completed his or her 10 responses, please sign the bottom of this sheet and place it in my mailbox. **We cannot recommend teacher candidates for certification until we have this form.** I hope you will continue to share your time with teacher candidates.

Please take a minute or two to comment on the faculty mentor program. I appreciate suggestions and observations to help us improve our mentoring program.

*Thank you so much,*

*Bonnie*

Teacher Candidate's Name \_\_\_\_\_

English Faculty Mentor's Name and Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date teacher candidate completed 10 entries \_\_\_\_\_