

## **Example of Advanced Program Discussion Board Activity**

The online course involved teachers with geographical variance that included ND, MT, WY, and TX. Some taught in urban districts while others taught in rural school districts. The teaching experience of the instructors varied from 3 years to 20 years of elementary or secondary teaching.

### **C. Identify the qualities that make a cooperating teacher effective in working with a teacher candidate.**

#### **The first second to respond wrote:**

To be an effective cooperating teacher, the teacher must be a good communicator, open, and knowledgeable in all subject matters. There are some teachers who are incredible teachers, but not great cooperating teachers. That is okay. It is a special skill to be able to verbalize all the ins and outs of the job. Just because you can do the job, doesn't mean you will be good at explaining *how* to do the job to someone else. Being able to communicate and explain the thought process behind the decision making to a teacher candidate is essential. I relate a teacher candidate to a three year old who excessively asks the question why. Teacher candidates want to know what you are doing in your classroom and why you make the decisions you make. A cooperating teacher must be open enough to share their thoughts and creative ideas. Finally, cooperating teachers must know their subject matter and about education. It takes years to have the foundational knowledge on subject matter in order to be able to share those concepts fully with a teacher candidate. With these skills, cooperating teachers will be able to help make a teacher candidate's experience a positive one.

#### **Second response:**

I agree, the cooperating teaching must be able to explain how and why they do what they do in the classroom and outside of the classroom (planning, etc.). Sharing thoughts and ideas allows the teacher candidate to see that it isn't always the first idea that is the best. That first idea can lead to many other ideas and these ideas are fine-tuned through collaboration.

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The cooperating teacher must be able to work with a variety of individuals. They must be open to accepting the teacher candidate as a "real teacher". They must also have excellent leadership, organization, mentorship, communication, and collaboration skills. The cooperating teacher must be professional and a reflective learner. The cooperating teacher must also be supportive and encouraging for the teacher candidate.

#### **Next Thread:**

You make a lot of valid points, but I think your most powerful statement was about the ability to work with a variety of teachers. I have had a few teacher candidates in the past and that was my biggest struggle. Each person is different and has different strengths. I am an extremely organized person, and it is hard for me to function in messy environments. I have had teacher candidates who are the exact opposite. Although it pushed me out of my comfort zone, I had to guide the teacher candidates to find a process that worked for them, even if it was different from my own process. Thank you for sharing your thoughts.

## **Identify the qualities that make a cooperating teacher effective in working with a teacher candidate.**

As I reflected on this question, there were several qualities that I felt a cooperating teacher needs in order to work effectively with a teacher candidate. I will be discussing a few qualities that I feel are most important in maintaining a healthy learning environment for all (teacher mentor, teacher candidate, and students). First, the cooperating teacher must be open-minded and willing to share his/her students with another individual. The cooperating teacher needs to be willing to take on extra responsibilities and patience mentoring a future teacher. Finally, cooperating teachers need to provide constructive and immediate feedback to help the teacher candidate grow and gain the most from their learning assignment. Cooperating teachers need to have conflict resolution skills when faced with issues that may arise with the teacher candidate. It is important that the cooperating teacher communicates effectively with the student teacher, so the student teacher can grow into an effective teacher. Although there are several

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I think your first point about being willing to share your students with another individual is a huge aspect I didn't cover in my response. It sounds so easy, but in reality it is much harder. In my experience, it has been hard to hand my students over and trust someone else to care for them the way I have. In the past, I have had teacher candidates from mid-October to mid-March and by October my class is well on our way to knowing each others ins and outs. I have learned their personalities and their learning styles. It is hard to see someone else come in and go through the process of learning them all over again. I often wanted to jump in and resolve a situation, but I had to remind myself that it was a learning process for me at the beginning of the year and the new teacher should be allowed to time to go through the same process. In the end, it is definitely worth it but at first it made me a little uneasy to trust someone else with my students. Thanks for sharing!

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I think a good cooperating teacher is someone that has the ability to give constructive criticism, because it is important to be able to point out issues that might arise for a student teacher. Identifying the problems and addressing them early will allow adjustments to be made that will help void bigger issues down the road. It is important for the cooperating teacher, then, to be a good communicator as well. Finding the proper way to give feedback for a particular teacher candidate can make a big difference in how it is taken. I think it is also important that a cooperating teacher possesses some flexibility. While it is still the cooperating teachers classroom, the student teacher should be allowed enough space to grow and learn

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Constructive criticism is huge when helping a student teacher learn the ins and outs of being a teacher. I had an experience with a co-teacher who had a student teacher. The co-teacher didn't communicate very well with the student teacher and almost let him make mistakes, but never provided him with feedback to help him improve. I ended up having many conversations with him to guide him with working appropriately with students and how to differentiate teaching to help diverse learners. I didn't think that this was solely my responsibility. It did open my eyes to the traits that a cooperating teacher must exhibit as well as the responsibilities that the cooperating teacher is willing to add. Flexibility is another critical aspect. There will be times that issues arise and things do not go as planned. But the willingness to learn for them and move forward positively is necessary.

Thanks for sharing!!

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Qualities that make a cooperating teacher effective in working with a teacher candidate are being a good example for the teacher candidate to learn from. The teacher candidate is going to build his/her own idea of what it is like being a teacher by observing his/her cooperating teacher. The cooperating teacher should strive to help the teacher candidate have a positive teaching experience and love being a teacher. Another quality that will make a cooperating teacher effective in working with a teacher candidate is being open and honest with them. Establishing an open and honest relationship will help the teacher candidate feel comfortable to discuss his/her struggles or opinions. The cooperating teacher also needs to guide the teacher candidate by offering him/her ways to improve their teaching and praise them for their accomplishments. Teacher candidates need to hear that they are doing a good job, so that they can

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Yes!!! The cooperating teacher needs to be a good role model. Providing a positive and thorough experience for the student teacher is necessary in helping him/her grow into an effective teacher. It takes time and patience. The student teacher will have a lot of questions, but it is necessary to respect and answer the questions, so that the student teacher can gain confidence and competence. Your discussion gives a good summary on how a cooperating teacher can help mold a student teacher. Well done!

Thanks for sharing!

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I agree that both parties can bring new ideas and help one another out. I like the term collaborating, it reminds me of teamwork and the importance of sharing ideas, goals, and follow through to better both professionals' goals. Honesty was a great quality that you listed, if the cooperating teacher is not being honest about things they are seeing, then the experience wouldn't be as helpful for either party. There is a verse in Proverbs that says "an honest answer is like a kiss on the lips", being honest can be rewarding and beneficial. Being able to share honestly without hurting someone's feelings is also important, because like you said you want to help them gain confidence within themselves. You had great ideas, thank you for

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A cooperating teacher will need to have many different qualities to work with a teacher candidate. It is hard going into someone else's classroom and try to be a part of it. It takes a special person to be able to take you in as a cooperating teacher. You will need to be patient, trustworthy, and respectful while working with your mentor teacher. You will be there to learn and to share with your mentor. Education is constantly evolving and mentor teachers can probably learn something new from the cooperating teachers who are fresh out of college with fresh ideas.

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Great discussion on the qualities of a cooperating teacher! Trustworthy is one trait that I didn't think about, but it is definitely one that a cooperating teacher needs to exhibit. The student teacher must feel comfortable and able to share anything with the cooperating teacher and not feel like he/she will be seen as annoying or a bother. It does take a special person to be a cooperating teacher. Hosting a student teacher is a huge responsibility, so the individual willing to be the cooperating teacher must accept these responsibilities and be an effective mentor.

Thanks for sharing your ideas!

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I agree that it is hard to come into a new place that already has their routines and procedures and to just jump in. I think that having a cooperating teacher who is open-minded, welcoming, and eager to share their room and ideas will help everyone's experiences. I do agree with you that patience, respect, and trust are very important to remember. It will be nice to have that opportunity to fine tune my classroom, bags of tricks, and how I do things, while being able to help another person gain confidence in themselves and their skills.

**Next Thread:**

Identify the qualities that make a cooperating teacher effective in working with a teacher candidate.

1. Model Teacher – The cooperating teacher should provide a realistic model of a teacher. Transparency would be ideal for both teachers.
2. Teacher Learner – The relationship between the cooperating teacher and the student

**Next Thread:**

A. Identify the qualities that make a cooperating teacher effective in working with a teacher candidate.

- a. Knowledgeable in the course curriculum and content area in which they teach
  - i. It is very important for the cooperating teacher to know the most current information in the content area that they are teaching in. By knowing the standards and bench marks, they can then show the student teacher how to incorporate them into their lesson plans to make sure they are covering everything they need to cover.
- b. Approachable, accommodating and open-minded
  - i. These are 3 key characteristics that cooperating teachers need to have in order for the student teacher and themselves to have a good experience. The cooperating teacher needs to make the student teacher feel comfortable enough for them to ask questions throughout their student teaching experience. Cooperating teachers also need to be open to suggestions and ideas from the student teacher as they start to take control of the classes.
- c. Confident and professional
  - i. Cooperating teachers need to show confidence in their teaching and in their classrooms to let the student teacher know that they can be trusted and that their experience will be the best that it can be. There are many different co-workers and administrators that a teacher works with on a daily basis so setting good examples in being professional with the many different people a teacher works with is also very important for the cooperating teacher.
- d. Encouraging, empathetic, understanding, kind and compassionate
  - i. Encouraging, empathetic, understanding, kind, and compassionate are the “feel good” qualities that cooperating teachers need to support the student teachers as this is the first time they have been given a responsibility of this caliber

in their college careers. Cooperating teachers must put themselves in the shoes of the student teacher and remember that things might not always go as planned but it's not the end of the world if something needs some tweaking in the end.

e. Ability to lead, discipline and mentor

i. These three characteristics are very important to have as a cooperating teacher. You need to be able to lead your student teacher with confidence, reinforce the importance of discipline and in the end, be a mentor for them should they have questions or ideas throughout their student teaching experience.

### **Next Thread:**

Good cooperating teachers are positive, patient, and open to sharing. A good cooperating teacher recognizes that mistakes will be made, that is a part of the process of learning. A negative attitude towards the process of cooperation, the students, or the profession of teaching makes for a poor experience. A cooperating teacher must be patient and understand that mistakes will be made. Whether working with colleagues, or student teachers, the process of collaboration takes time and energy. Cooperating teachers need patience.

Lastly, I feel that a good cooperating teacher is open with those they are cooperating with. They are open to different teaching styles, constructive criticism, and new experiences that allow them to grow as a professional as well. They can communicate questions and concerns without causing conflict. As teachers, it is easy to close our doors and focus only on the students we have in our classroom. In this closed

### ***C. Identify actions that make a cooperating teacher effective in working with a teacher candidate.***

Three main things come to mind when I am thinking about an effective cooperating teacher working relationship:

- Communication
  - Both parties are willing to share thoughts and ideas
  - The importance of sharing information and life-lessons
  - Being able to explain and have reason for why things are done, and communicating that
  - Express goals and encourage one another
- Open-mindedness
  - Being willing to share ideas
  - Allowing them to try new things, even if it doesn't work out in the end, but be there to support and help think of ways to make them better
- Brainstorming
  - Share ideas of things that may help one another out
  - Think of ways to improve on particular areas within the classroom
  - Identify areas that need attention and work together to solve those things

I think that staying positive and remembering that you are collaborating and working as a team of professionals is very important.

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Willing to give up control - a cooperative teacher needs to be willing to turn the control and teach of the class over to the student teacher, they need to be there to support the student teacher but give them the room to manage and teach the class on their own.

Willing to try new things- the cooperative teacher needs to be willing to try new things. The student teacher is going to have his or her own new ideas on how to teach the students, the cooperative teacher should support the student teacher to be effective.

Involved and engaged – the cooperative teacher needs to be engaged with what is happening in the classroom. The teacher should be in the background when the student teacher is teaching. It is not effective for the cooperative teacher to be regularly absent from the classroom.

Reflective- a cooperative teacher should reflect on their own lessons and model active reflection to their student teacher. The cooperative teacher should review the student teacher's reflections and make suggestions to improve each lesson. This will benefit both the cooperative and student teacher.

Sharing- a cooperative teacher must be willing to share their teaching materials, activities and lesson plans. An effective cooperative teacher gives the student teacher copies of anything that would be useful

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One of the most important qualities an effective cooperating teacher needs to possess with working with future teachers is the ability to clearly communicate, especially early on in the student teaching experience. Often times, the future teacher has many questions that they may not express and do not know where their boundaries are in the classroom. I had a similar experience with this when I student taught. I was under a very veteran cooperating teacher who simply assumed that I knew what should be going on and how manage the classroom, lessons and students (I took his full load of classes my 3rd day in) and didn't feel like he needed to give me much more guidance. He also told me that in teaching you either sink or swim so he was just going to throw me off the dock, which left me feeling very uncomfortable in the classroom and 2 weeks in I didn't receive a very good review from him. Cooperating teachers need to be able to support the teacher candidates that are with them to help them when they are struggling and praise them when they are doing well.